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## WELL-BEING, INCLUSION AND THE REDUCTION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

#### E UDC

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## EVOLUȚIA SALARIILOR ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA. CORESPUND OARE ACESTEA COSTULUI VIEȚII?

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**Abstract.** Any state, in promoting economic policies or development strategies, sets as its main goal the "well-being growth" or "improvement of the quality of life of the population". In this context, the main objectives focused on well-being and quality of life of population can also be found in the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030", such as: "increasing income from sustainable sources and mitigating economic inequalities; increasing people's access to physical infrastructure, public utilities, and housing conditions; improving working conditions and reducing informal employment" (National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030"). The central public authorities are making colossal efforts to achieve these objectives. One solution to these objectives would be aligning the minimum salary with the current well-being standards in the Republic of Moldova through institutional methods. To achieve the objectives outlined in the Strategy, the state needs a "coherent income policy" that would lead to poverty reduction and ensure a sustainable increase in the population's wellbeing without affecting employment levels and economic development. More specifically, a "coherent salary policy", given that the salary constitutes the main form of "productive income" for the population, which, in a way, reflects the functionality of the economy and the labor market.

Keywords: salary evolution, minimum salary, cost of living, poverty, well-being

JEL: J30, J31, H55

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Introducere. Orice stat, în promovarea politicilor economice sau a strategiilor de dezvoltare își propune drept scop principal creșterea bunăstării sau a calității vieții populației. În acest context, și conform Strategiei Naționale de Dezvoltare "Moldova 2030" pot fi regăsite astfel de obiective principale axate pe bunăstare și calitate a vieții populației, precum: "creșterea veniturilor din surse durabile și atenuarea inegalităților economice; creșterea accesului oamenilor la infrastructura fizică, utilitățile publice și condiții de locuit; ameliorarea condițiilor de muncă și reducerea ocupării informale" (Strategia națională de dezvoltare "Moldova 2030").

Autoritățile publice centrale depun eforturi colosale pentru realizarea obiectivelor date. Una din soluții a acestor obiective ar fi corelarea salariului minim

cu standardele de bunăstare existente la moment în Republica Moldova prin metode instituționale.

Trebuie menționat faptul, că în ultimii ani Republica Moldova s-a confruntat cu un șir de provocări și tendințe economice și sociale negative atât la nivel național, cât și la nivel regional, care pot avea consecințe semnificative pentru următorii ani. Pandemia COVID-19, războiul din Ucraina, criza energetică, procesele inflaționiste etc., au condus nu numai la un declin economic și la destabilizarea situației macroeconomice, dar și la creșterea costului vieții în țară, la o înrăutățire simțitoare a calității vieții populației și la creșterea nivelului sărăciei. Datele statistice indică o creștere a ratei sărăciei până la 31,6% în 2023 (CBGC, 2023).

Pentru depășirea acestor provocări, dar și realizarea obiectivelor indicate în Strategie, statul are nevoie de o politică coerentă a veniturilor care ar conduce la reducerea sărăciei și ar asigura o creștere durabilă a bunăstării populației, fără a afecta dezvoltarea economică. Mai concret, o politică coerentă de salarizare, dat fiind faptul că salariul constituie principala formă de venit productiv al populatiei care reflectă, într-un fel, funcționalitatea economiei. Cu cât este mai mare ponderea salariilor în totalul veniturilor disponibile ale populației, cu atât economia națională este mai funcțională și are șanse mai mari de dezvoltare durabilă. În 2022, ponderea salariilor au constituit 50,7% din totalul veniturilor disponibile ale populatiei (Biroul Național de Statistică, 2023). De regulă, nivelul salariului, ca venit obținut pe piața muncii este determinat în rezultatul confruntării cererii și ofertei de muncă și este puternic dependent de nivelul productivitătii muncii. Cu toate acestea, salariul îndeplinește și o serie de funcții sociale, precum cea de reproducție (salariul nu poate fi mai mic decât un anumit minim necesar pentru reproducerea lucrătorului și întretinerea familiei lui), și cea de justiție socială (salariul trebuie să se bazeze pe principiul "pentru o muncă egală salariu egal"), iar statul are obligațiunea directă de a interveni pe piața muncii prin măsuri de politică de salarizare de a asigura aceste functii. Stabilirea salariului minim reprezintă un mecanism important pentru asigurarea unui trai decent și reducerea riscului de sărăcie în rândul angajaților. Un salariu minim adecvat contribuie la diminuarea inegalitătilor sociale și sustine dezvoltarea economiei nationale, prevenind astfel încetinirea ritmului său de creștere. În acest context, piața muncii se remarcă drept una dintre cele mai vulnerabile piețe economice, având un impact semnificativ asupra nivelului de trai al populației. În Republica Moldova, aproximativ 20% dintre angajati (conform datelor Organizației Internaționale a Muncii, 2023) lucrează pe baza unui salariu minim, ceea ce subliniază importanța unui prag salarial adecvat pentru protectia socială si bunăstarea acestora. Prin realizarea acestor funcții sociale ale salariului statul ar asigura o funcționalitate mai bună a pieței muncii, care ar conduce la o creștere a nivelului ocupării, la o reducere a migrației internaționale de muncă, respectiv la o dezvoltare economică durabilă. Analiza evolutiei salariilor, corelarea acestora cu costul vietii din Republica Moldova, precum și impactul evoluției salariilor asupra pieței muncii și dezvoltării

economice reprezintă scopul de bază al articolului dat.

Evoluția salariilor în Republica Moldova. Primii ani de tranziție la economia de piață a afectat puternic veniturile reale ale populației din Republica Moldova, ceea ce a generat o creștere necontrolată a sărăciei. Privatizarea în masă a întreprinderilor, reformele din sectorul agricol, dependența economică excesivă de Federația Rusă a condus la astfel de fenomene ca inflația galopantă, stoparea activității întreprinderilor, șomaj deghizat, intensificarea migrației de muncă. În mod evident, aceste provocări au afectat și evoluția salariilor, astfel încât acestea nu mai pot îndeplini funcțiile sale sociale.

Doar începând cu anii 2000, relațiile economice de piață au început să se consolideze, iar situația economică să se stabilizeze. În această situație, și salariile au început să înregistreze o tendință de creștere spectaculoasă. Astfel, din 2000 până în 2023 salariile au crescut de la 407,9 lei până la 12209,2 lei (Figura 1).

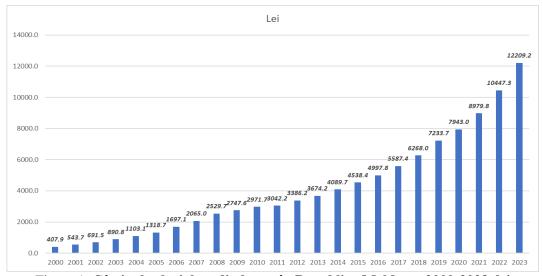


Figura 1. Câștigul salarial mediu lunar în Republica Moldova, 2000-2023, lei Sursa: BNS

Cu toate acesta, nu se poate spune că nivelul salariilor corespunde unor standarde de bunăstare comparabile cu cele din țările europene. Republica Moldova continuă să fie catalogată drept cea mai săracă țară din Europa, respectiv, cu cel mai mic nivel al salariilor.



Figura 2. **Harta salariilor în Europa** *Sursa: Harta salariilor în Europa (2024)* 

În general, salariul se formează în rezultatul confruntării cererii și ofertei forței de muncă de pe piața muncii. În cazul unei depășiri evidente a ofertei față de cererea forței de muncă, mărimea salariului tinde să scadă, iar pentru salariații de pe treptele inferioare această mărime poate să coboare sub limita asigurării unui nivel de trai decent. În astfel de situații, a apărut necesitatea intervenției statului în vederea asigurării unei protecții sociale a celor mai expuse categorii de salariați. Prin negocierea salariului minim între actorii sociali de pe piața muncii se asigură corelarea acestuia cu un anumit minim al nivelului de trai decent.

În Republica Moldova, în calitate de reper al minimului de trai decent s-a stabilit minimul de existență, care servește și un reper pentru politicile de protecție socială. Cu toate acestea, depășirea minimului de existență de către salariul minim în sectorul real al economiei, s-a înregistrat doar în ultimii ani, începând doar cu 2015 pe când în sectorul bugetar, începând cu 2021 (Tabelele 1, 2), ceea ce indică gradul de vulnerabilitate a economiei.

Așadar, salariul minim reprezintă în primul rând o categorie socială și numai în al doilea rând o categorie economică.

Tabelul 1. Evoluția minimului de existență și a salariului minim în Republica Moldova, 2005-2018 lei

	1101001010101										
	2005	2006	2007	2010	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Minimul											
de											
existență	766,1	935,1	1099,4	1373,4	1612.3	1627,1	1734,1	1799,2	1862,4	1891,0	
Total											
populație											
Populație											
aptă de	809,2	987,0	1159,5	1453,1	1710,0	1726,8	1842,2	1914,7	1984,5	2016,1	
muncă											
Salariul											
minim în											
sectorul	550	700	900	1100	1400	1650	1900	2100	2380	2600	
real al											
economiei											
Salariul											
minim în		200	400	600	600	1000	1000	1000	1100	1100	
sectorul		200	400	000	000	1000	1000	1000	1100	1100	
bugetar											

Sursa: BNS

Tabelul 2. Evoluția minimului de existență și a salariului minim în Republica Moldova, 2019-2023 lei

Minimul de existență	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	2031,2	2088,4	2154,0	2628,4	2877,1
Total populație	2031,2	2088,4	2154,0	2628,4	2867,4
Populație aptă de muncă	2194,0	2247,6	2310,5	2818,3	3056,4
Salariul minim în sectorul real al economiei	2775	2775	2935	3500	4000
Salariul minim în sectorul bugetar	2000	2000	2200	3500	4000

Sursa: BNS

Definirea nivelului de trai, costului vieții și a altor concepte ale economiei bunăstării. Pentru stabilirea salariului minim pe țară, autoritățile publice și actorii sociali din piața muncii – sindicatele și patronatele – se bazează pe mai mulți indicatori care reflectă bunăstarea și calitatea vieții populației. Printre acești indicatori se numără coșul minim de consum, minimul de existență, nivelul de trai, standardul de viață sau costul vieții. Aceste criterii sunt influențate semnificativ de contextul social-economic al țării, gradul de dezvoltare economică, conjunctura economică, productivitatea muncii, evoluția prețurilor, precum și de alți parametri macroeconomici.

Aceste concepte, țin de economia bunăstării și sunt utilizate în politicile sociale și anti-sărăcie. Aplicarea lor în formularea politicilor de salarizare necesită o clarificare detaliată a conținutului și metodologiei de calcul pentru fiecare indicator, astfel încât să se identifice care dintre aceștia este cel mai relevant în stabilirea salariului minim pe țară. O astfel de abordare ar putea contribui semnificativ la îmbunătățirea bunăstării și calității vieții populației, asigurând

totodată o funcționare eficientă a pieței muncii din Republica Moldova. În mare măsură, nivelul salariilor determină *nivelul de trai* existent în țară, iar politica de salarizare are menirea de a interveni pentru a ameliora situația legată de nivelul de trai.

Nivelul de trai exprimă gradul de satisfacere a nevoilor populației și poate fi calificat drept un indicator fundamental în politica socială. Nivelul de trai este determinat de condiția umană, poziția socială, stilul de viață, cultura, valorile și aspirațiile, în legătură cu posibilitățile de satisfacere a nevoilor populației. Determinarea mărimii nivelului de trai presupune o anumită metodologie de calculare a componentelor sale, o analiză a inegalităților economice și sociale, precum și a dimensiunilor acestora. Indicatorii de măsurare a nivelului de trai sunt în dependență de gradul de dezvoltare economică, dezvoltarea serviciilor, dezvoltarea învățământului, structura ocupațională, contribuțiile populației și a companiilor orientate spre bunăstarea socială a țării.

În afară de acest concept în analiza bunăstării populației se utilizează și conceptul de cost al vieții. În ultimă instanță nivelul de trai al populației depinde de costul vieții care reprezintă totalitatea cheltuielilor gospodăriilor pentru bunuri alimentare și nealimentare, a serviciilor utilizate, necesare unei familii, într-o perioadă determinată de timp și este determinat prin calculul sau estimarea bunurilor și serviciilor pe care gospodăriile trebuie să le consume pentru a atinge un anumit grad de satisfacție sau pentru a atinge un anumit nivel de trai. Prin urmare, este vorba despre un concept teoretic exprimat prin intermediul unui indice care măsoară variațiile cheltuielilor lor pentru a atinge acest obiectiv. Acest concept de cost al vieții este foarte indicat în domeniul politicilor veniturilor și de salarizare. Principala problemă constă, însă, în dificultatea calculării exacte a costului vieții, deoarece gradul de satisfacție a gospodăriei se bazează pe elemente subiective.

Costul vieții se măsoară prin stabilirea costului mediu al coșului de bunuri și servicii care sunt esențiale pentru existența oamenilor care locuiesc într-o zonă anumită. Totodată, reieșind din faptul că costul vieții se bazează pe preferințele subiective ale fiecărui individ sau gospodărie în parte, problema aprecierii acestuia este destul de complexă și dificilă. Luând în considerare nivelurile de consum reprezentate în coșul de bunuri și servicii care ar reflecta costul vieții, acesta ar fi suma de bani de care are nevoie o familie într-o anumită perioadă de timp pentru asigurarea unui trai decent.

Deseori, în analizele costului vieții se utilizează nivelul și evoluția indicelui prețurilor de consum (IPC) care este utilizat în mod obișnuit ca referință atunci când se vorbește despre schimbarea gusturilor și obiceiurilor gospodăriilor unei țări sau teritorii odată cu creșterea prețurilor. Pornind de la datele de preț oferite de acest indice, este posibil să se analizeze tendințele existente în ceea ce privește mărimea și structura consumului populației. Acestea pot fi analizate în anumite perioade de timp, precum și exprimarea acestor variații prin procente în raport cu un an de bază. Analizând evoluția indicelui prețurilor de consum (IPC) pentru Republica Moldova din ultimii ani, se observă o creștere constantă a acestuia pe fundalul unei creșteri evidente a veniturilor disponibile a populației și a salariilor.

Cu excepția ultimului an, care a dat peste cap toate creșterile salariale și a venitului disponibil din anii precedenți. Respectiv, s-a redus și puterea de cumpărare a veniturilor populației și, respectiv, a avut loc o degradare a bunăstării oamenilor (Tabelul 3).

Tabelul 3. Indicii preturilor, veniturile disponibile, salariile, anul precedent=100

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Indicele preturilor de consum (IPC)	106,57	103,05	104,84	103,77	105,11	128,74
Inclusiv, la mărfuri alimentare	107,93	105,39	107,61	107,35	106,96	131,89
Câștigul salarial mediu lunar	5587,4	6268,0	7233,7	7943,0	8979,8	10447,3
În % față de anul precedent	100,0	112	115	110	113	116
Venituri disponibile – total*			2880,6	3096,6	3510,1	4252,6
În % față de anul precedent*			100,0	107	113	121

Sursa: BNS

Ambele concepte, *costul vieții* și *puterea de cumpărare a veniturilor populației*, devin instrumente utile atunci când se compară condițiile de trai între diferite țări, orașe sau regiuni (informație utilă și pentru persoanele care călătoresc). Acest lucru este posibil ținând cont de prețurile bunurilor și serviciilor din aceste țări. În acest sens, pot fi menționate și diverse metode de calcul ale costului vieții.

Cercetările costului vieții sunt utile și în cazul analizei evoluției acestuia în promovarea politicilor veniturilor și de protecție socială. De exemplu, în 1973, Congresul SUA a promulgat o lege pentru o abordare a ajustărilor costului vieții (COLA)<sup>1</sup>. Ajustările COLA pentru beneficiile de securitate socială și de *venit suplimentar de securitate* (SSI) au fost instituite astfel încât plățile să țină pasul cu inflația. De exemplu, în decembrie 2018, COLA era de 2,8%, iar sumele majorate urmau să fie plătite, începând cu ianuarie 2019. Nivelurile de plată federale SSI au crescut cu același procent (Învățați Afaceri, 2022).

Costul vieții poate fi un reper semnificativ în stabilirea salariilor de către angajatori în funcție de orașul în care se află compania. Un salariu poate oferi un nivel de trai mai ridicat într-un oraș în care cheltuielile zilnice precum chiria, mâncarea și divertismentul sunt mai mici. În schimb, un salariu mare poate părea insuficient într-un oraș scump precum New York.

Calcularea costului vieții este o procedură destul de complicată și complexă. Deseori în calcularea costului vieții se folosesc și anumite metode de alternativă ca bine-cunoscutul *Big Mac Index* sau *Costul Borșului* (de regulă, folosit în Ucraina ca un indice al costului vieții).

Big Mac Index este o modalitate neoficială de a determina paritatea puterii de cumpărare (PPP). Indicele Big Mac se bazează pe teoria paritătii puterii de

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<sup>\*</sup>datele pentru evoluția veniturilor disponibile sunt valabile doar din 2019, deoarece a fost modificată metodologia lor de calcul și nu pot fi comparate cu datele din anii precedenți.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> De la *Cost of living adjustment* 

cumpărare, conform căreia cursul de schimb ar trebui să egalizeze costul unui coș de mărfuri în diferite țări. În loc de coș de consum se ia *burgerul* standard, produs de McDonald's care există practic în orice țară. Acest lucru se face pentru a determina puterea de cumpărare a dolarului american în funcție de cursurile de schimb reale ale monedelor diferitelor țări sau evoluția prețurilor care se răsfrânge asupra costului vieții. Revista "The Economist" efectuează astfel de studii din 1986. Costul Big Mac-ului în fiecare țară depinde de volumul de producție, prețurile de închiriere, materiile prime, forța de muncă și alți factori. Această metodă permite să vedem discrepanța dintre valoarea monedelor naționale din diverse țări cu nivelurile similare de venit. O asemenea analiză este binevenită, mai ales în timpul unei crize, când o monedă scumpă este deosebit de neprofitabilă. În iulie 2023 cel mai scump Big Mac a fost în Elveția – 7,73 USD, Norvegia - 6,92 USD, Uruguay - 6,86 USD, UE - 5,82 USD. În Moldova costul Big Macului a constituit 3,57 USD (Statista, 2024).

Costul "borșului" este, într-un fel, un indicator al evoluției prețurilor la produsele alimentare aplicat în Ucraina. Indicele borșului este un analog al indicelui Big Mac. Indicele ucrainean reflectă evoluția prețurilor la produsele de bază utilizate în pregătirea borșului. Ingredientele borșului fac parte din lista produselor de bază incluse în coșul alimentar de consum al fiecărei familii. Acest indicator se calculează pe baza costului unei cratițe sau al unei porții de borș, conform unei rețete tradiționale recunoscute de toți locuitorii țării.

Nu toate țările își permit să calculeze *costul vieții*. În Republica Moldova nici statistica oficială, nici instituțiile de cercetare, nici organizațiile non-guvernamentale nu calculează un asemenea indicator util în promovarea politicilor veniturilor și de salarizare. Totodată, sunt o serie de agenții internaționale (calculatoare ale costului vieții) care se preocupă de calcularea costului vieții în diverse țări, oferind o informație comparativă privind acest indicator din diverse țări.

Pentru comparații mai puțin costisitoare, dar mai puțin precise sunt utilizate, de regulă aceste site-uri: *Expatistan, Numbeo, Departamentul de Stat al SUA*. De exemplu site-ul *Numbeo* poate oferi o comparație bună a costurilor relative ale vieții, inclusiv din Republica Moldova. Astfel, potrivit datelor *Numbeo*, *costul vieții* pentru o familie din Republica Moldova compusă din patru persoane (doi adulți și doi copii) este estimat la *35.223,2 lei fără chirie*. Costurile lunare estimate pentru o singură persoană sunt de *10.666,4 lei fără chirie*. Costul vieții din Republica Moldova este, în medie, cu 52,6% mai mic decât în Statele Unite. Chiria în Republica Moldova este, în medie, cu 79,1% mai mică decât în Statele Unite (Numbeo, 2023). Aceste date sunt destul de utile în analizele comparative ale costului vieții din diferite țări și pot reprezenta drept un argument puternic în negocierile tripartite ale *salariului minim*.

Aprecierea costului vieții în Republica Moldova pentru stabilirea salariului minim pe țară. În Republica Moldova pentru estimarea costului vieții se utilizează minimul de existență. Minimul de existență reprezintă un indicator care măsoară mărimea valorică a volumului minim de consum al bunurilor

materiale și a serviciilor pentru satisfacerea necesităților principale, menținerea sănătătii si pentru sustinerea viabilitătii omului.

Ca atare, menirea minimului de existență a fost de a evalua nivelului de trai al populației la general și era utilizat în politicile sociale orientate spre protecția socială a grupurilor vulnerabile și combaterea sărăciei. Totodată, minimul de existență a devenit un indicator universal care era preconizat și pentru argumentarea necesității de modificare a mărimilor salariului minim și pensiei minime pentru limită de vârstă, a venitului lunar minim garantat al familiei, a mărimilor burselor, indemnizațiilor și compensațiilor.

Utilizarea minimului de existență în scopurile expuse este reglementată prin actele normative corespunzătoare, reieșind din posibilitățile financiare ale statului. Calcularea mărimii minimului de existență se efectuează în conformitate cu Regulamentul cu privire la modul de calculare a mărimii minimului de existență, aprobat prin Hotărârea Guvernului nr. 285 din 2013 (HG285/2013).

Conform datelor BNS, minimul de existență în primul semestru al anului 2023 a constituit 2867,4 de lei pe lună, inclusiv pentru populația aptă de muncă – 3056,4 lei, pentru pensionari – 2418,2 lei, pentru copii – 2821,6 lei.

Trebuie menționat faptul că, la moment, valoarea salariului minim, atât în sectorul real al economiei, cât și în sectorul bugetar depășește valoarea minimului de existență atât pentru populația totală, cât și pentru populația aptă de muncă. Cu toate acestea, trebuie menționat faptul că valoarea minimului de existență nici pe departe nu poate acoperi toate nevoile pentru asigurarea unui minim de trai decent. Utilizarea lui în calitate de reper în stabilirea salariului minim pe țară ar conduce la faptul că circa o cincime din populația ocupată ar intra în sărăciei (OIM, 2023). Potrivit noii metodologii de calculare a pragului sărăciei în 2022, pragul sărăciei absolute a constituit 2942 lei, care este mai mare decât minimul de existență din aceeași perioadă (Tabelul 4).

Tabelul 4. Evoluția pragului sărăciei în Republica Moldova, 2014-2022, lei

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Pragul	1550 6	1700.9	1010.2	1020.2	1009.4	2005 1	2174 1	2205.2	2042.0
sărăciei absolute	1558,0	1709,8	1819,2	1939,3	1998,4	2095,1	21/4,1	2285,2	2942,0

Sursa: BNS

Datele statistice arată că în ultimul an rata sărăciei absolute din Republica Moldova (2022) a crescut până la 31,1%, ceea ce conduce la presupunerea că sărăcia din Republica Moldova se referă și la persoane ocupate (Tabelul 5).

Tabelul 5. Rata sărăciei absolute pe Medii și Ani. %

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total pe ţară	29,5	25,4	26,4	27,7	23,0	25,2	26,8	24,5	31,1
Urban	15,6	11,2	11,6	11,8	10,6	11,2	14,0	11,9	17,1
Rural	39,5	35,6	37,1	38,8	31,6	34,5	35,3	32,8	40,3

Sursa: BNS

O asemenea situație este inadmisibilă. Pe lângă faptul că valoarea salariului minim care, fiind aproape de pragul sărăciei, conduce la răspândirea riscului sărăciei în rândul populației ocupate, această situație, ar conduce și la o reducere puternică a indicatorilor ocupaționali, respectiv, la o înrăutățire a situației legate de securitatea socială, la o intensificare și mai mare a migrației internaționale de muncă cu toate consecințele legate de ea (înrăutățirea situației demografice, îmbătrânirea accelerată a populației etc.), precum și la compromiterea funcționalității economiei naționale și la o frânare a ritmului de dezvoltare.

Prin urmare, creșterea salariului minim ar conduce la creșterea nivelului de trai al populației, ar reduce inegalitățile salariale, ar crește motivarea lucrătorilor, ar reduce sărăcia și cheltuielile statului pentru protecția socială, ar diminua excluziunea socială și ocuparea informală.

Pe de altă parte, o creștere nejustificată a salariului minim, respectiv, a salariilor, care nu corelează cu nivelul productivității muncii sau cu posibilitățile bugetare ale statului, pot conduce la situații imprevizibile ce țin de situația economică din țară: creșteri inflaționiste, creșterea costurilor în crearea noilor locuri de muncă, șomaj, în special, în rândul tinerilor etc.

Începând cu anul 2018, Confederația Națională a Sindicatelor din Moldova, anual, a insistat asupra modificării Regulamentului de calculare a minimului de existență sau găsirea unui nou reper în stabilirea salariului minim pe economie care ar reflecta realmente minimul necesar pentru un trai decent.

Stabilirea unui nivel al salariului minim care ar corela cu argumentele forte ce țin, pe de o parte, de mărimea costului vieții, iar pe de altă parte, de posibilitățile economiei naționale, ar conduce și la creșterea nivelului de trai al populației, și la asigurarea unei justiții sociale care ar crește funcționalitatea pieței muncii și a economiei naționale în ansamblu.

Concluzii și recomandări. Salariul minim pe țară reprezintă un element cu valențe economice și sociale la nivel societal. Fiecare țară determină criteriile de fixare a salariului minim pe țară în funcție de mai multe criterii, dar și de capacitatea de plată a acesteia. În Republica Moldova, semnificația salariului minim s-a erodat în timp, întrucât, pe parcursul mai multor ani, s-a operat cu mai multe noțiuni și cu mai multe valori ale acestuia. Doar în anul 2022, a avut loc o unificare, stabilindu-se salariul minim pe țară, valabil pentru toate categoriile de salariati.

Pe lângă faptul că salariul minim pe țară reprezintă o categorie economică folosită la calcularea salariilor tuturor categoriilor de salariați, acesta are și o conotație socială destul de semnificativă, deoarece contribuie la protejarea salariaților cu salarii mici, aflați sub pragul sărăciei.

În condițiile Republicii Moldova, salariul minim pe țară ar avea efecte benefice asupra diminuării procesului de emigrare a forței de muncă, în cazul creșterii acestuia până la un anumit nivel ce ar reduce din tentația resurselor umane autohtone de a pleca peste hotare.

În vederea asigurării unei bune funcționalități a salariului minim pe țară în Republica Moldova, se impun mai multe acțiuni și măsuri în acest scop.

- 1. Ajustarea cadrului legal al salariului minim prin revizuirea Legii privind modul de stabilire și reexaminare a salariului minim prin luarea în considerație a criteriilor de fixare a salariului minim pe țară, pornind de la costul vieții calculat și nivelul de dezvoltare economică a țării.
- 2. Creșterea graduală a salariului minim pe economie până la nivelul a 50% din salariul mediu brut pe economie, reprezentând un indicator orientativ al Uniunii Europene.

În anul 2022, ponderea salariului minim pe țară în salariul mediu brut pe economie a fost de aproximativ 33% în Republica Moldova, fapt ce determină ca o bună parte a forței de muncă să se afle sun nivelul pragului de sărăcie. În afară de aceasta, creșterea graduală a salariului minim pe țară până la nivelul de 50% din salariul mediu brut pe țară. Aceasta ar putea avea implicații asupra reducerii migrației forței de muncă, precum și asupra diminuării ocupării informale.

Notă: Articolul a fost elaborat în cadrul Subprogramului 030101 "Fortificarea rezilienței, competitivității și durabilității economiei Republicii Moldova în contextul procesului de aderare la Uniunea Europeană", finanțare instituțională.

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## WELL-BEING IN ITALIAN SCHOOL CONTEXTS: SOME EVIDENCE FROM AN ONGOING EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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**Abstract.** Current Events. In recent years, students' psychological well-being has become a topic of growing relevance in Italy due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated levels of anxiety and stress among young people. This context makes it urgent to understand and address the factors influencing students' school well-being. Research methods. The research uses a quantitative approach by administering structured questionnaires integrating specific components of the AMOS (Anxiety and Resilience) tests. The sample comprises secondary school students from an Italian region, selected through stratified sampling to ensure representative data. Results. Preliminary results indicate a significant correlation between high levels of anxiety and low levels of academic performance, while resilience seems to play a protective role, attenuating the negative impact of anxiety on the overall well-being of students. Further analyses are exploring gender and age differences and the influence of socioeconomic and environmental factors. Implications. The survey results provide helpful evidence for developing interventions to improve students' psychological well-being in Italian schools. Schools can use these data to implement psychological support programs and resilience strategies, creating a healthier school environment conducive to learning. Instruments. The main research instrument used is a questionnaire developed specifically for this type of investigation, part of the more complex AMOS tests relating to anxiety and resilience. We validated this instrument to ensure its reliability. The ongoing investigation represents a significant step towards understanding the dynamics of psychological well-being in Italian schools, offering valuable insights for policymakers, educators and school psychologists.

Keywords: inclusion, education, standardized testing

**JEL:** 121, 129, 131 **UDC:** 37.015.324(450)

Introduction. Psychological and Social Well-being in School Environments. Well-being in school contexts is of growing interest due to its significant impact on students' socio-emotional and academic development. School is not only a place of learning but an environment in which interpersonal relationships and emotions play a significant role, influencing individual well-being and academic success and contributing to the formation of complete individuals ready to face life's challenges. Cyrulnik (2005, p. 21) states that

resilience does not follow linear patterns but operates systemically and dynamically. The constant interactions between the individual and his or her environment must be considered, with particular attention paid to the people around him or her. The collaboration between educational psychology and neuroscience has highlighted how brain development occurs through the opportunities offered by the environment and life contexts through rich socialemotional experiences and meaningful interactions (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019a). This evidence confirms, at both biological and phylogenetic levels, the principles supported by socio-constructivist theories, as proposed by scholars like Vygotsky (1978; 1986) and Bruner (1960; 1966). Specifically, it highlights social contexts and interpersonal relationships' fundamental role in learning construction (Bianco & Castelli, 2022). In recent years, the psychological well-being of students has also assumed increasing relevance in Italy due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased levels of anxiety and stress among young people (Fegert et al., 2020). This context makes it even more urgent to understand and address the factors influencing student well-being in schools.

Effects of the Pandemic and Distance Learning. The pandemic has exacerbated many existing challenges and introduced new ones, creating an environment of uncertainty and isolation that has negatively impacted students' mental health. Social distancing measures and school closures have deprived many young people of support networks, making it even more difficult to maintain meaningful social relationships. Recent studies have shown a significant increase in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress among students during the pandemic (Fegert et al., 2020; Loades et al., 2020). The lack of face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers has reduced opportunities for social-emotional learning, which is critical for developing interpersonal skills and managing emotions.

Furthermore, distance learning has imposed a series of technical and logistical problems, exacerbating existing disparities among students (Bonal & González, 2020). Those with inadequate access to technological resources or a home environment conducive to learning have been particularly affected, increasing the risk of dropping out of school and poor academic results (Di Pietro et al., 2020). Since each individual in his or her dynamic plasticity is a world system (Mannese, 2023), this period has highlighted the importance of a holistic approach to school well-being, which considers not only academic aspects but also emotional and social ones to create an inclusive and supportive school environment, promoting students' resilience and psychological well-being through targeted programs and the involvement of the entire school community, including teachers, families and health workers (Schonert-Reichl, 2019a, b).

Anxiety, Resilience and Academic Success. The importance of exploring and analyzing students' psychological well-being in Italian school contexts is increasingly recognized, especially regarding anxiety and resilience, two determining factors that profoundly influence students' school experience and academic performance.

School anxiety is a widespread phenomenon and can manifest itself through physical, emotional and behavioural symptoms, ranging from difficulty concentrating to actual panic attacks (Huberty, 2012). The consequences of anxiety on academic performance are well documented: anxious students tend to avoid situations perceived as threatening, compromising active engagement in learning and reducing growth opportunities (Putwain & Daly, 2014a, b, c). Furthermore, anxiety negatively affects working memory, hindering the processing and retrieval of information (Owens et al., 2012). Resilience, on the contrary, represents the ability of students to face and overcome adversity, maintaining a positive level of psychological and social functioning despite the difficulties (Masten & Reed, 2002). Although the nature of resilience is a matter of debate, its protective role in mitigating the adverse effects of anxiety and promoting well-being is widely recognized. Resilience is not static but develops through environmental interaction and social support. In the school context, teachers and peers play a fundamental role in promoting resilience, offering emotional support, recognition and opportunities to develop socio-emotional skills (Masten & Reed, 2002).

Critical Issues of Psychological Well-being in the Italian School Context. Teachers' psychological well-being is crucial for educational success, as their emotional state directly impacts the learning environment and the ability to support students (Schonert-Reichl, 2019a, b, c). However, many Italian schools face structural and organizational challenges that limit the effectiveness of emotional support for teachers and students. Although studies have shown that social-emotional education (SEL) programs reduce anxiety and increase student resilience (Elias & Zins, 2007; Payton et al., 2000; Durlak et al., 2011), schools implement them unevenly. This inhomogeneity is due to limited resources, lack of specific staff training, and intrinsic pressures of the school system.

The Italian school context presents several critical issues that affect students' psychological well-being, such as academic pressure, group dynamics and family expectations. In addition to these difficulties, there are problems in managing peer relationships sometimes. Despite the numerous initiatives to improve emotional well-being, their variable application causes heterogeneous school results (Pellitteri et al., 2015a). The lack of adequate structural support and a systemic approach to managing emotions keeps many of the daily problems that affect students and teachers unsolved, thus preventing a genuinely supportive and inclusive school environment.

In light of these critical issues, fundamental questions emerge to understand better the internal dynamics of Italian schools: how do anxiety and resilience influence students' school experience and academic performance? What structural barriers prevent the effective implementation of programs to improve psychological well-being? How can the Italian school system evolve to promote a more positive and supportive environment that fosters students' emotional well-being and academic success? These questions represent the cornerstones of this contribution, highlighting the need for critical reflection and targeted interventions on a larger scale.

Research methodology. To explore these research questions, we surveyed the "Regina Margherita" State High School in Salerno<sup>2</sup>, involving ten classes: five from the Human Sciences track (Section A) and five from the Linguistics track (Section L), spanning from the first to the fifth year. The total sample consisted of 224 students, 12 of whom had special educational needs (SEN). The study focuses on a specific case, highlighting the transferability of the results rather than their statistical generalization. Case studies have, in fact, targeted objectives and integrate qualitative and quantitative data, although they are subject to limitations such as subjectivity and the difficulty of generalizing, requiring significant resources and time for a detailed analysis (Biancone & Cisi, 2017; Trinchero, w.d).

The instrument used was the Anxiety and Resilience Questionnaire (QAR) by C. Cornoldi et al. (2023), part of the more extensive set of Amos (Ability, Motivation, Study Orientation) tests. This collection of tests, complete and usable independently, offers a global and in-depth view of the student's profile, with particular attention to study skills, strategies used, learning styles and motivational beliefs. These tests have been validated and standardized (Cornoldi et al., 2023) to assess behaviours and activities associated with academic success, fostering self-awareness and personal insight. The authors explicitly developed the QAR to examine critical dimensions of the subjective experience of anxiety within learning environments. Beyond anxiety, the authors also explored resilience, conceptualized as adapting and responding effectively to challenges and adversity. The questionnaire, which includes both dimensions, is composed of 14 items: 7 related to anxiety (items 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14) and 7 to resilience (items 1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11,13). Below are the questions in the questionnaire (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Anxiety and Resilience Questionnaire

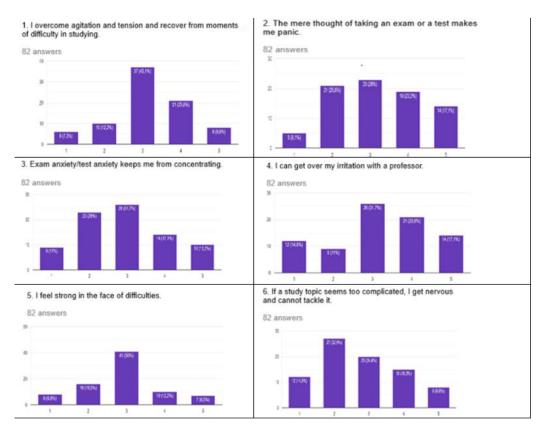
	Table 1. Anxiety and Resilience Questionnaire
	Item
1.	I overcome agitation and tension and recover from moments of difficulty in studying.
2.	The mere thought of taking an exam or a test makes me panic.
3.	Exam anxiety/test anxiety keeps me from concentrating.
4.	I can get over my irritation with a professor.
5.	I feel strong in the face of difficulties.
6.	If a study topic seems too complicated, I get nervous and cannot tackle it.
7.	My everyday life at school/university is a whole of things that interest me.
8.	I get anxious when faced with complex topics to understand.
9.	The closer the date of the exam/class test gets, the more anxiety I get.
10.	I can get over my irritation with a friend.
11.	My interactions at university/school are mostly pleasant.
12.	Just thinking about exam situations/a class assignment makes me anxious.
13.	I can overcome my disappointment over a school/university failure.
14.	There are some study subjects that just the thought of makes me anxious.

Source: Cornoldi et al., 2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> We would like to thank the Headmistress of the Liceo Statale 'Regina Margherita', Prof. Angela Nappi, for having encouraged this research and, more generally, educational and didactic innovation in a constructive and serene environment that enhances the potential of students and teachers.

In June 2024, researchers administered the questionnaire online via Google Forms during extracurricular hours, asking participants to respond using a 5-point Likert scale, where one represented "not at all" and five represented "completely." No time limit was imposed. Each subscale's theoretical minimum and maximum are 7 and 35, respectively. Of the 224 students invited to participate, 82 responded voluntarily, variously distributed by school address, age and gender.

The following graphs show the students' responses and relative percentages



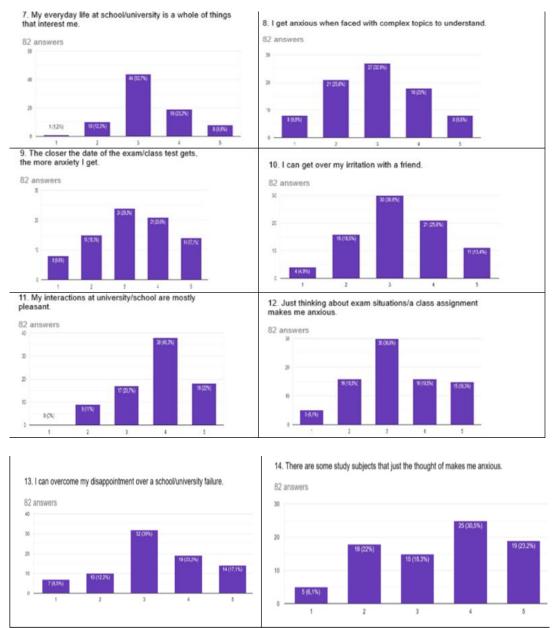


Figure 1. **Questions and Answers** *Source: Our elaboration.* 

Main results. The analysis of the scores reported by students on the different statements offers a clear picture of their emotional experiences in the school environment, with particular reference to the management of anxiety and difficulties. The data reveal a complex interaction between the ability to deal with stress and vulnerability in the face of situations that generate anxiety, especially about exams and more challenging study topics.

The analysis indicated an average reference value of 246 for the "Total" column (*Table 2*), with scores ranging from a minimum of 85 to a maximum of 410.

Table 2. **Sum of scores. Summary view** 

	Item	Total
1.	I overcome agitation and tension and recover from moments of difficulty in studying.	261
2.	The mere thought of taking an exam or a test makes me panic.	262
3.	Exam anxiety/test anxiety keeps me from concentrating	239
4.	I can get over my irritation with a professor	262
5.	I feel strong in the face of difficulties	238
6.	If a study topic seems too complicated, I get nervous and cannot tackle it.	226
7.	My everyday life at school/university is a whole of things that interest me	269
8.	I get anxious when faced with complex topics to understand.	243
9.	The closer the date of the exam/class test gets, the more anxiety I get.	264
10.	I can get over my irritation with a friend	265
11.	My interactions at university/school are mostly pleasant.	311
12.	Just thinking about exam situations/or a class assignment makes me anxious	266
13.	I can overcome my disappointment over a school/university failure	269
14.	There are some study subjects that just the thought of makes me anxious	281

Source: Cornoldi et al., 2023

The analysis of the Anxiety and Resilience questionnaire administered to students at the "Regina Margherita" State High School in Salerno highlights a complex relationship between anxiety, resilience, and the school experience. Key findings indicate that while anxiety, particularly exam-related, is a recurring concern, students generally demonstrate good emotional resilience, especially in interpersonal relationships and overcoming academic disappointments.

Anxiety levels fluctuate, with exam-related panic scoring above average, suggesting that the anticipation of tests is a significant stressor. However, anxiety about concentration during exams and complex subjects, while present, is not debilitating for most students. Notably, anxiety about studying complicated topics is more pronounced, with students feeling overwhelmed.

Resilience, on the other hand, is a protective factor. Students can recover from difficulties, with high scores in managing tensions with peers and teachers. Positive social interactions within the school environment act as a buffer against academic stress, highlighting the critical role of relationships as a support system.

The research aligns with existing literature, which suggests that anxiety impairs concentration and academic performance, while resilience fosters recovery and emotional management (Putwain & Daly, 2014; Masten & Reed, 2002). The positive perception of school life, supported by enriching social interactions, suggests that a supportive environment helps mitigate the adverse effects of anxiety.

The results underline the importance of implementing social-emotional learning (SEL) programs to enhance emotional self-regulation and stress management, not just for students but also involving teachers, families, and health professionals. These programs aim to create a cohesive school community that addresses anxiety and promotes psychological well-being, supporting academic success and personal development (Durlak et al., 2011; Schonert-Reichl, 2019a, b).

Conclusions and perspectives. The article highlighted the importance of social-emotional skills, particularly concerning anxiety and resilience factors in students and their impact on academic performance and psychological well-being. The analysis of pre-existing studies demonstrated that interventions to develop these skills can significantly improve students' ability to manage anxiety and increase resilience, contributing to a more inclusive school environment and enhancing academic performance. It was clear that an educational approach that integrates the development of social-emotional skills with cognitive ones can promote the integral growth of students.

Despite the results obtained, the research used a limited sample size, which constitutes a significant methodological limitation. The small size and homogeneity of the sample may compromise the generalizability of the results to broader and more diversified contexts, thus requiring further confirmatory studies. The QAR, the instrument used, represents a further limitation. We used the questionnaire as a preliminary approach and interpreted the results flexibly based on the average scores for each item, ranging from a minimum of 82 to a maximum of 410, with an average reference value of 246.

Prospects suggest the need to expand research regarding sample size and sociocultural diversification. It is essential to conduct studies on a more representative and diverse sample, including students from different cultural, social and economic backgrounds, to confirm the validity and effectiveness of the proposed strategies. We should promote interdisciplinary collaboration between educators, psychologists, and sociologists to develop more personalized intervention programs adaptable to different school settings. This would allow us to address not only issues related to anxiety and resilience but also other emotional components that can negatively affect learning, such as depression, burnout and performance stress.

Future research should explore creating and implementing long-term evaluation tools that can measure the effectiveness of socio-emotional interventions more precisely and sustainably. These tools should be able to evaluate not only the immediate effects of socio-emotional skills on academic performance but also the impact that these can have in adult life on a personal and professional level. The skills acquired during school could be fundamental to face the challenges of work, social and family life, promoting a more stable general well-being and a greater capacity for adaptation.

Therefore, although the study has highlighted essential correlations between socio-emotional skills and school well-being, it requires further investigation to confirm its conclusions and validate interventions on a broader and more varied scale. Therefore, the future of this area of research seems oriented towards a more inclusive and multidisciplinary approach to create an educational system capable of training individuals who are not only cognitively competent but also equipped with the emotional skills necessary to face the challenges of the contemporary world successfully.

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#### WELLBEING ȘI PRESIUNE LA LOCUL DE MUNCĂ ÎN SISTEMUL PENITENCIAR

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Abstract. Penitentiaries are considered workplaces where risk and aggression are omnipresent and where we often face improper material conditions. At the same time, they represent a special type of organization: a closed and "total" system, with a high level of professional isolation, maintained by strict routines and a hierarchy of regimes, an environment similar to that of mental hospitals (Goffman, 2020). Although there are many studies related to prison systems which addresses prison conditions and their impact on the condition of prisoners, little attention is paid to the wellbeing of prison staff, despite the important role they play in the reintegration process and in maintaining the health of prisoners. In the absence of critical reflection by the prison administrations, the trade union organizations took steps to address this subject. In this paper we present the results of the research carried out by the trade union organizations in Great Britain, Denmark, Norway and Romania in the period 2019 until now and we propose an explanatory model of the correlation between working conditions and the wellbeing of prison staff. Our approach can be a point of interest for the factors responsible for the development of policies in the correctional field in Romania and the Republic of Moldova, especially in the conditions of an accentuated dynamics of the penitentiary staff.

**Keywords**: prison, prison staff, working condition, job strain, stress, burnout, health and safety

**JEL**: 130, 131, J22, J23, J28, J29, J50, J59

**UDC**: 343.83

**Introducere.** La nivel european, există un număr de aproximativ 500.000 de polițiști de penitenciare (exclusiv Rusia) care sunt responsabili pentru custodierea a peste 1 milion de persoane private de libertate. Raportul angajați-deținuți variază de la 1-1 în țările nordice până la 1-4,5 în Turcia, aducând cu sine provocări diferite dar care, prezintă și similarități (Aebi & Cocco, 2024).

Polițiștii de penitenciare au o ocupație extrem de solicitantă luând în considerare riscurile psihologice cauzate de cerințele duale ale expunerii regulate atât la factori de stres operaționali (adesea traumatizanți), cât și la un sistem organizațional cu grad ridicat de birocratizare (Brough & Biggs, 2010, p. 714).

Munca le afectează sănătatea și funcționarea, și îi expune pe perioade lungi la incidente majore precum moartea, violența, hărțuirea sau atacurile personale. Factorii de stres de la locul de muncă, precum conflictele interpersonale cu colegii și superiorii, salariul necorespunzător, instruirea sau avansarea în carieră, lipsa echipamentelor sau utilizarea unora defecte, birocrația, au fost asociați cu rezultate ale stresului (Brough & Biggs, 2010, p. 708). În România, speranța de viață pentru angajații sistemului penitenciar este mai scăzută cu 6 ani față de speranța de viață pentru populația generală (Tudorache, 2019).

Studiile referitoare la calitatea locurilor de muncă au avut drept punct de plecare necesitatea de a cunoaște factorii care pot avea impact asupra sănătății angajaților. Astfel, în încercările de a determina factorii care pot determina bolile cardiovasculare (Schnall et al., 1994) (Landsbergis et al., 1995) s-au dezvoltat abordări cu privire la presiunea la locul de muncă, ca factor explicativ al hipertensiunii și afecțiunilor coronariene (Schnall et al., 1994).

Studiile din domeniul sănătății în muncă au investigat mecanismele prin care organizarea muncii și relațiile de la locul de muncă pot afecta bunăstarea lucrătorilor. Modelul "Cerințe ale locurilor de muncă-resurse" (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011) a fost utilizat în studierea *burn-out*-ului și a angajamentului în muncă. Modelul a fost ulterior preluat în 2014 și a fost utilizat pentru studierea Calității locurilor de muncă în țările OECD (Cazes, Hijzen & Saint-Martin, 2015).

Fiecare post din sistemul organizațional presupune cerințe specifice, care necesită eforturi susținute, fizice și mentale. Pentru realizarea acestora, fiecare angajat dispune de resurse fizice, organizaționale sau sociale (autonomia la locul de muncă, oportunități de învățare, suportul colegilor sau al angajatorilor). Aceste resurse ale locului de muncă susțin demersul lucrătorilor de a gestiona cerințele dificile sau de a-și atinge obiectivele organizaționale sau personale.

Cerințele locului de muncă nu sunt în mod necesar negative, dar ele se pot transforma în factori de stres sau pot determina patologii, atunci când lucrătorii / salariații nu au suficiente resurse pentru a le putea executa. Cerințele excesive combinate cu resursele insuficiente sau incomplet adaptate, creează dimensiunea de "presiune / stres la locul de muncă" (*job strain*). Presiunea la locul de muncă este un factor mare de risc pentru starea de bunăstare fizică și mentală a lucrătorilor. Pentru a măsura cât mai corect presiunea la locul de muncă, atât cerințele, dar și resursele disponibile la locul de muncă trebuie luate în considerare simultan.

A avea un loc de muncă de calitate nu înseamnă doar o salarizare bună sau perspective de promovare, ci și șansa dezvoltării personale, sentimentul de utilitate și stima de sine. Cerințele locurilor de muncă pot fi caracterizate prin trei dimensiuni:

 Presiunea timpului în care angajații încercă să execute cerințele principale ale postului. Această dimensiunea sintetizează factorii care pot afecta capacitatea personală de a combina cerințele locului de muncă cu viața de familie și viața personală cum ar fi: timpul mare petrecut la muncă, munca în ture, lipsa aranjamentelor de muncă flexibile, munca intensivă fizic sau mintal / psihic.

- Condițiile efective de muncă care pot afecta sănătatea fizică sau / şi
  mentală cum ar fi: expunerea frecventă şi prelungită la riscuri ergonomice
  (poziții obositoare şi dureroase, transportul sau deplasarea unor sarcini
  grele) sau riscuri de mediu (zgomot ridicat, temperaturi extreme, risc de
  accidente).
- Forme de intimidare la locul de muncă, cum ar fi agresiunea verbală sau fizică, comportamente umilitoare, realizate fie de colegi/superiori fie de alte persoane cu care intră în contact și care pot influența sănătatea mentală individuală.

Resursele de muncă acoperă de asemenea trei dimensiuni care pot contribui la realizarea cerințelor postului: măsura în care salariații pot avea capacitatea de ași controla propria muncă și de a-și dezvolta competențele prin oportunități de învățare formale și informale; practicile unui management bun, care ar trebui să includă: o organizare bună a muncii, sarcini de muncă bine definite și feedback al managementului cu privire la munca realizată de salariați; relațiile sociale de la locul de muncă, descrise prin existența unei atmosfere deschise, prietenoase sau de încredere.

Aceste cerințe și resurse sunt prezente, în proporții variabile la nivelul oricărui loc de muncă. Presiunea la locul de muncă implică cerințe excesive combinate cu resurse insuficiente pentru a se putea realiza sarcinile din fișa postului. Acumularea cerințelor la locul de muncă are un puternic impact negativ asupra sănătății lucrătorilor, în timp ce nivelul resurselor totale de la locul de muncă pot diminua impactul cerințelor asupra sănătății indivizilor.

Într-un studiu realizat de Sindicatul Național al Polițiștilor de Penitenciare (SNPP), în anul 2018 a reieșit că jumătate dintre locurile de muncă din sistemul penitenciar din România sunt caracterizate de presiune la locul de muncă, respectiv de cerințe excesive ori cerințe excesive în raport cu resursele existente. Cele mai afectate sunt locurile de muncă din sectoarele siguranța deținerii și regim penitenciar, respectiv asistență medicală (Proiect DialLogos, 2018).

Presiunea timpului este o caracteristică care se regăsește în majoritatea sistemelor corecționale, care se confruntă cu provocări reale în ceea ce privește numărul de angajați — *understaffing*. Este de menționat că nu există standarde europene de personal privind sistemele penitenciare, majoritatea actelor normative oferind recomandări de tipul "*ar trebui să existe personal suficient.*"

Din perspectiva presiunii timpului de lucru cea mai pregnantă caracteristică a contextelor de muncă din sistemul penitenciar este reprezentată de activitatea foarte frecventă în schimburi, fapt care se întâlnește, în principal, în sectorul siguranța deținerii și sistem penitenciar, dar și la asistență medicală. Alte caracteristici importante sunt lucrul cu termene stricte și ritmul alert de muncă, aspecte care afectează mai mult sectorul asistenței medicale. Orele suplimentare foarte frecvente afectează în mare măsură sectorul siguranța deținerii, dar și pe cel al asistenței medicale. Nu în ultimul rând, volumul sarcinilor alocate care depășesc capacitatea postului, foarte des se regăsește în mare măsură la nivelul tuturor sectoarelor.

Instituțiile penitenciare trebuie să îndeplinească toate cerințele impuse de actele normative cu personalul aflat la dispoziție, apelând la ore suplimentare, rigidizare program sau acumulare de zile de concediu neefectuate. Deși foarte clar definit, din perspectiva activităților care trebuie desfășurate, având caracter repetitiv, conținutul programului de lucru poate fi diferit în funcție de evenimentele care apar în activitate.

"Mi se cere adesea să acopăr absențe și astfel să muncesc suplimentar. Acest lucru mă epuizează mental și fizic.

De-a lungul anilor deținuții au devenit mai solicitanți, personalul s-a redus și încărcătura de sarcini a crescut. Nu este un mediu sigur sau sănătos de lucru pentru nimeni.'' (Kinman & Clements, 2020).

Mediul fizic de muncă specific ocupațiilor cheie din sistemul penitenciar este caracterizat de **expunere la boli și infecții, munca în picioare, precum și lucrul în spații închise de dimensiuni mici**. Ocupațiile din sectorul de asistență medicală sunt expuse riscului de contactare a bolilor și infecțiilor, iar ocupațiile din sectorul de reintegrare socială se confruntă cu lucru în spații închise. Ocupațiile din siguranța deținerii și regim penitenciar sunt marcate de munca în picioare, lucru în spații închise și lucru în aer liber, expus condițiilor meteo.

În ceea ce privește condițiile efective de muncă, acestea sunt corelate cu alocările bugetare de care beneficiază sistemele penitenciare și mai ales cu imposibilitatea unui control extern al respectării prevederilor privind condițiile de muncă. Spre exemplu, in România, instituțiile din sistemul de apărare și securitate națională își pot organiza propriul sistem de inspecția muncii ceea ce, de fapt lasă acest sector fără pârghii de control eficiente.

Ultimul factor de presiune al modelului cerințe-resurse este dat de prezența actelor de violență sau intimidare la locul de muncă. Sistemele penitenciare se caracterizează prin existența unui grad înalt de violență simbolică, fizică sau verbală care pot avea consecințe fizice - direct observabile - (răniri, decese) sau psihice (burnout, nivel crescut de stres, depresii, PTSD, etc).

Studiile efectuate în Danemarca, Norvegia și Statele Unite, relevă un grad ridicat de agresivitate cu urmări foarte grave asupra stării de sănătate a personalului. Conform unui sondaj aplicat de SNPP în februarie 2024 în sistemul penitenciar din România și Republica Moldova cu 460 de respondenți în România și 439 în Republica Moldova, peste jumătate din personalul respondent a fost implicat sau cunoaște persoane care au fost implicate într-un eveniment traumatic de-a lungul carierei - 57,6% în Ro și 69,7% în Md.

Din punctul de vedere al resurselor existente, controlul asupra propriei munci corelează cu nivelul funcției exercitate. Cu cât nivelul funcției este mai ridicat, cu atât posibilitatea de control este mai mare (stabilirea ordinii sarcinilor, stabilirea modului de realizare a sarcinilor) și evident depinde de locul de muncă. Posibilitățile de formare profesională sunt definite diferit, dar de cele mai multe ori fie sunt insuficiente, fie sunt considerate neadaptate. Calitatea managementului este măsurată din perspectiva clarității definirii rolului în organizație, a existenței posibilității de consultare și feedback. În ceea ce privește relațiile sociale de la locul

de muncă, descrise prin existența unei atmosfere deschise, prietenoase sau de încredere, trebuie avut în vedere că sistemul penitenciar se caracterizează printr-o suspiciune generală.

"Fiecare angajat poate fi acuzat oricând de neglijență și poate fi sancționat cu blam, avertisment, retrogradare, declasare, mutare disciplinară, suspendare, destituire sau chiar condamnare. Spaima pedepselor, dublată de un puternic complex de inferioritate, accentuat de slaba valorizare a lor în fața opiniei publice, anturajului și chiar și în fața arestaților, creează o stare de tensiune ce se răsfrânge și asupra populației încarcerate. Ea se concretizează deseori în exces de zel (...) și o atmosferă de suspiciune." (Bruno, 2006, p. 173)

"Schimburile mai lungi, mai puține pauze, obiective mai mari de atins, constrângerile mă stresează în mod constant, deoarece pot face doar jumătate din treaba mea eficient. Nu pot lucra așa. Îmi place să finalizez o treabă cât pot de bine, dar acum nu am control asupra acestui lucru din cauza reducerilor de personal și a eliminării activităților care au ajutat personalul să fie coeziv în trecut." (Kinman, Clements & Hart, 2014)

Literatura de specialitate (Shannon & Page, 2014) tinde să se concentreze mai mult pe percepțiile personalului asupra locului de muncă și asupra impactului pe care acesta l-ar putea avea asupra atitudinii personalului față de deținuți. Alte studii se concentrează asupra impactului factorilor legați de locul de muncă și asupra nivelului de stres și percepția de satisfacție cu privire la locul de muncă a lucrătorilor din penitenciare (EPSU, 2016). Nu numai atitudinile și comportamentul personalului au efecte semnificative asupra penitenciarelor, ci și mediile de muncă au un impact asupra atitudinilor și comportamentului angajaților. Spre exemplu, unul din ofițerii de penitenciare din Danemarca intervievați, vorbește despre redefinirea sarcinilor, din cauza constrângerilor privind numărul personalului:

Îmi amintesc că atunci când eram la începutul carierei, socializam mai mult cu deținuții. Te duceai la sală și jucai fotbal cu ei și toate aceste lucruri. Se forma o relație cu ei care, la urma urmei, face mai greu să-l agresezi pe cel cu care ai petrecut timp împreună. Dar în ultimii ani, se vorbește aproape doar despre securitate și control. Timpul pe care îl avem la dispoziție este pentru a-i percheziționa, să-i închidem și să-i blocăm. Adică, securitatea dinamică a deținuților a dispărut mai mult sau mai puțin în multe locuri. Suntem acolo doar ca forțe de securitate și suntem acolo pentru a găsi telefoane, hash, tot felul de lucruri. Și asta îi face pe deținuți din ce în ce mai frustrați și nu au prea mult contact cu noi, așa că le vine mai ușor să ne atace.

În anul 2024, în România, nu există nicio o abordare privind impactul PTSD în ceea ce privește sistemul penitenciar. Nu există o consemnare statistică sau un cadru legal de recunoaștere a acestui tip de fenomen în țara noastră. Totuși, sunt de menționat, ca abordări structurate la nivelul sistemelor penitenciare, cele realizate

în SUA de către asociația sindicală One Voice United (Dawe et al., 2021) și de către Sindicatul Polițiștilor de Penitenciare din Danemarca (Larsen, 2020).

În articolul *Stress in the Norwegian police service* (2005) autorii consideră că cele mai multe studii au folosit liste de factori de stres care nu acoperă în mod corespunzător cerințele specifice muncii de poliție și că valoarea acestor studii este limitată (Berg et al., 2005, p. 113). Rezultatele studiului arată că femeile ofițeri de poliție percep și experimentează toți factorii de stres într-o măsură mai mare decât colegii lor bărbați. Rezultatele arată totuși că sarcinile operaționale serioase au fost cotate ca fiind considerabil mai frecvente decât accidentele la locul de muncă. Acest factor se presupune că acoperă provocările zilnice. Rezultatele sugerează de asemenea, că femeile sunt mai îngrijorate cu privire la diverse situații decât colegii lor bărbați, deși par să fie expuse la incidente severe mai puțin frecvent decât polițiștii bărbați (Berg et al., 2005, p. 121).

Suprapopularea în penitenciare, împreună cu conflictele interculturale, violența și criminalitatea organizată, problemele de limbaj, folosirea drogurilor, clădirile învechite în stare proastă și, în mod frecvent, nivelul scăzut de personal angajat cu instruire precară, necesită atenție urgentă care ar trebui acordată presiunii asupra personalului (Fraser, 2014). Anumite îngrijorări au fost ridicate de faptul că, pentru a gestiona stresul la locul de muncă, personalul din penitenciare folosește în general intervenții de nivel individual secundar sau terțiar, de obicei sprijinul colegilor sau al unor profesioniști, dar acest lucru este ineficient în ceea ce privește efectele pe termen lung (Brough & Biggs, 2010, p. 712).

În multe cazuri, personalul din penitenciare trebuie să rezolve situații care trec de calificarea lor prezentă, inclusiv să acorde sprijin persoanelor dependente, în episoadele de crize de sănătate mintală și suicid, având nevoie de formare pentru a putea acorda îngrijirea corespunzătoare. O astfel de responsabilitate vine cu un stres suplimentar, care trebuie rezolvat cu consiliere psihologică adecvată și programe de formare inexistente sau aflate într-un stadiu incipient.

În concluzie, pe baza ariilor deficitare și a problemelor identificate, se pot desprinde câteva direcții de acțiune pentru ameliorarea acestora:

- 1. Asigurarea resurselor materiale (buget) necesare astfel încât să se asigure condiții de muncă adecvate (spațiu, temperatură, dotări etc).
- 2. Asigurarea unui număr de personal suficient care să permită derularea în condiții de siguranță a activităților și de asemenea acoperirea tuturor posturilor precum și respectarea și sporirea timpului de repaus și de odihnă. Este de evitat folosirea orelor suplimentare care, deși atrăgătoare pentru personal prin salarizare suplimentară (deși uneori nu este utilizată) are un efect negativ asupra stării de sănătate și de asemenea trebuie acordat timpul necesar refacerii (evitarea acumulării zilelor de concediu restante).
- 3. Implementarea principiului securității dinamice, în sensul creării posibilității și încurajării personalului să desfășoare activități în comun cu deținuții care să faciliteze procesul de cunoaștere al acestora. În acest sens modelul norvegian constituie o referință în domeniu.

- 4. Adecvarea politicilor de recrutare a personalului astfel încât să se asigure accesul în sistemul penitenciar al celor care dispun de abilități și competențe și de asemenea asigurarea posibilităților de formare profesională adecvate. Un accent deosebit trebuie pus pe dezvoltarea managerilor sub aspectul dezvoltării competențelor ce vizează relaționarea, coordonarea și oferirea de suport necesar celor din subordine.
- 5. Investiția în activități / acțiuni care să ducă la creșterea gradului de coeziune a grupului, în special în sistemele penitenciare similare României, unde în ultimii ani s-a petrecut o schimbare generațională majoră.
- 6. Consolidarea serviciilor medicale (în primul rând pentru acțiunile de prevenție) precum și dezvoltarea unor proceduri clare și obligatorii privind suportul psihologic pentru lucrătorii din mediul penitenciar. Consilierea psihologică pentru cei implicați în situații traumatice ar trebui să fie obligatorie, la fel ca și implementarea recomandărilor făcute de specialiști.

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## SOCIAL REPORTING IN ITALIAN HEALTHCARE ENTERPRISES: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract. Social reporting is an integral part of the broader topic of corporate economic and financial reporting and is responsible for complying with the principle of transparency, which citizens increasingly demand. This is especially important in health care, in that, every citizen must be informed which health care facility they are entrusting their care to. Social reporting represents the most comprehensive and effective form of representation of overall corporate performance (Marcuccio, 2002). In the health sector, disseminating social reporting attempts to respond to growing information needs and support the complex system of institutional and environmental relations in which the healthcare company is embedded. Social reporting, therefore, represents a more comprehensive and effective form of performance representation in public companies (Marcuccio, 2002). Therefore, social reporting in healthcare, when combined with other local governance tools, through the enhancement of ethics, fosters increased sharing of knowledge, resources and responsibilities with a view to strategic alternatives in responding to health needs (Apuzzo, 2018).

Keywords: sustainability, social reporting, healthcare, Italy

JEL: 111, 118, M10, M14

**UDC:** 614.2(450)

Introduction/Literature review. Social reporting is one of the most important challenges for innovation in Italian public health companies. Social reporting aims to respond to the needs of citizens, businesses, associations, and public and private enterprises and assess the effects produced on the reference environment. In recent years, especially in the public sector, the use of information and management tools traced back to a desire to respond to social needs is becoming more widespread (Gigli, 2007). The balance sheet alone fails to demonstrate all the activities of Italian healthcare companies; therefore, the need arises for tools to support and integrate healthcare companies' planning and control systems (Sorano, 2008). In public companies, management is oriented toward satisfying an economic asset and financial balance, which is only a constraint and a necessary condition for the achievement of institutional goals (Borgonovi, 2004). Social reporting, therefore, represents a more comprehensive and effective form of performance representation in public companies (Marcuccio, 2002). The European Commission defines Social Reporting as "the voluntary integration of companies' social and ecological concerns into their business operations and their

relationships with stakeholders" (COMUNICAZIONE, 2011). Since the 1970s, many authors, have recognized that an organization's activities have an impact on the external and social environment, suggesting, that accounting should have an additional role, namely that of an organization's impact in environmental and social terms (Ciconte, 2022). In recent years, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become dominant in corporate social reporting. Every company has a CSR matter and produces a detailed report on its activities annually. The reporting tools used by public enterprises are the mission statement, sustainability report, environmental report, gender report, and social report. The social budget is the most widely used form of reporting by the government. It is a reporting tool aimed at stakeholders that integrates information provided by general accounting with ethical and social aspects (Borgonzoli, 2005). Administrative action should not be limited to justifying the decisions made and employed but should illustrate the effectiveness of actions and the benefits generated (D'Alesio, 2004). The social balance sheet represents a management and communication tool aimed at improving the corporate image towards the external environment; on the other hand, the special balance sheet is a tool inserted within the corporate planning, control, and reporting cycle allowing support and improve corporate strategies to achieve greater accountability and sustainability (Carrol, 2010). The total value created by companies includes not only economic value but also considers social and environmental dimensions (Van Marrewijk, 2003). Already since the 1990s, many private companies have been employing sustainability reporting tools. Model standards used to create sustainability reports include the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Group for the Study of Social Reporting (GBS), Accountability 1000, and Social Accounting 8000 (Massa, 2014). GBS is an association that assists public and private companies in the evolutionary processes of social and sustainability reporting (GBS, 2024). The Accountability 1000 standard assesses the performance of companies in the area of ethics and social and sustainable development (Beckett, 2002). The Social Accounting 8000 (SA 8000) standard enables the organization to properly manage and monitor all activities and processes on workers' conditions. The SA 8000 standard meets the needs of organizations that want to stand out for their social commitment and in sustainable development (Turzo, 2024). The GRI standard, on the other hand, was devised in 1997 and advocates the term sustainability to describe comprehensive information on environmental, social, and economic aspects (Brown, 2009). The GRI standards, over the years, have given rise to several social reporting tools: sustainability reports, integrated budget and social report. The phenomenon of social reporting and its tools, in Italy, is widespread in various types of public companies (Guthrie, 2017). In the healthcare sector, social reporting is a critical area of interest because, through social reporting, healthcare facilities present their activities, results and value created based on the healthcare services they provide (Macuda, 2020). Social reporting in health care, dun- therefore, when placed alongside other local governance tools, through the enhancement of ethics, takes on the task of fostering the increase in the sharing of knowledge, resources and responsibilities with a view to strategic alternatives in responding to health needs (Apuzzo, 2018). The use of

information and management tools widespread in the business world has now extended to social reporting tools as well, especially in the healthcare sector, where many companies, both public and private, have decided to adopt reporting tools (Alesani, 2006). The regulatory evolution of the Public Health Service and the adoption of information and management tools adopted by the business world have led individual public health companies to adopt social reporting tools. The phenomenon is very recent and at the same time rapidly developing, which testifies to the growing interest in these types of tools (Tieghi, 2007). The use of social reporting in health care companies can be associated as a reporting document of the company's activity understandable to various stakeholders and is linked to social sensitivity towards the public work of which health care companies are part of (Trinchero, 2005). The introduction of a system of social reporting in healthcare companies makes clear the desire to make explicit the guidelines of governance implementation consistent with its institutional mission (Siboni, 2004). The development of the social budgeting process is part of a communication plan that combines strictly accountability functions with the ordinary economic/financial ones known through traditional public reporting tools (Marcuccio, 2005). The special financial statement takes the form of a tool through which the company communicates the public value of its activities and how it was created. Traditional accounting documents alone fail to provide an additional indication of the entity's capabilities, and in this case, social budgets can be a useful tool to overcome the traditional limitations of the annual report. The social budget, therefore, can come to constitute a report of institutional policy value, in which the social outcomes that the company has achieved are shown (Luoni, 2009). The added value of the social budget consists precisely in the ability to make assessments of the activity that are shared with the various stakeholders the communicative purpose of the social budget contributes to improving the quality of life of the community (Paletta, 2007). Social budgets, moreover, is not mandatory documents but is the result of a choice by the entity represented by the awareness of communicating responsibility to the community; choosing to direct a social budget allows the citizen to know relevant information to administrative action (Perrone, 2004). Healthcare facilities, however, in 2003, albeit at a very slow pace, began publishing social reporting reports (Del Vecchio, 2011). The phenomenon has involved both public and private healthcare companies. Although there are still few studies on the topic of social reporting in healthcare, there are few Italian studies that go into analyzing the methods and criticalities of writing sustainability reports in healthcare. The study inquires, precisely, in assessing and analyzing how and how many Italian ASLs make use of social reporting systems. The study is organized as follows: the next section describes the number, method, and criteria of analysis, section 3 reports the results of the research consistent with the objectives described in section 2, and finally, the conclusions on the current information value of social reporting reports of Italian ASL.

**Methodology.** In the face of these premises, the research question is to identify which and how many local health agencies prepare social reports and what

are the criteria for their preparation. Thus, the following research questions will be answered:

- RQ1: How many and which Health Authorities in Italy prepare social balance sheets?
- RQ2: What are the drafting criteria used? What is the difference in the drafting of the social report among the various health companies?

The research methodology used is based on the qualitative-quantitative analysis of the main social balance sheets prepared by Italian Health Companies, analyzing the peculiarities of drafting of all the health companies present on the Italian territory, identifying the methods of drafting and comparing them with each other. The research methodology of the paper was to analyze the various national documents used for the study area and on the collection of geolocated information and data. It was possible to analyze data on the social reporting of Italian Aziende Saniterie with the help of documents and databases provided by institutional websites. The documents were identified based on two lines of research: a first line concerns visiting the "Transparent Administration" section present within the institutional websites of the Italian ASLs, the second step was to use the search bar present within the institutional websites with the aim of finding any institutional document concerning social reporting policies. Since it is a tool that is used voluntarily, one can have Local Health Authorities that have published one in past years, and therefore, the most recent one is analyzed, and Local Health Authorities that have abandoned report writing and, therefore, the latest version of the document available is taken.

The corporate sustainability reports of each ASL are analyzed and compared with each other based on a series of parameters, to identify similarity, criticality, and success factors. The parameters identified are shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Sustainability report parameters

#### **1.** Disclosure contents

- a. Document articulation:
- **b.** Wealth of data.
- 2. Communication aspects
  - **c.** Readability and graphical quality;
  - **d.** Web-based usability;
  - e. Communication and dissemination.

Source: Personal processing

**Results.** Health care is one of the first sectors in which the main competencies are entrusted to the regions. This process has been in place since the early 1970s, although regionalization of the service and international has occurred gradually over the past 15 years. This is the most important commitment for the governing body of intermediate levels, as, from the financial point of view are allocated more than 80% of the resources allocated in regional budgets (Neri, 2008). According to the business economics doctrine, the institutional structure of

companies can be seen as the set of forms and rules that define the modes of representation and interests that converge on companies (Airoldi, 1994). In public health companies, the stakeholders are the target community and the providers. Through the process of regionalization of the national health care system, they are mainly identified in the regional governing bodies and representatives of the population (Gugiatti, 2022). Italian regions in establishing the structure of their health care system have adopted very different choices creating heterogeneity among regions in terms of the number and size of ASLs and AOs; the number of hospital garrisons left to the management of ASLs; and the presence of institutions other than ASLs and AOs in the regional public health system. Currently, the system is divided into Lombardy ASSTs, Lombardy Region ATSs, public IRCCSs, and integrated hospital-university corporations in addition to territorial and hospital corporations (Guerra, 2023). In addition, Italian regions are organized through different administrative apparatuses in terms of planning and analysis activities by often establishing Regional Health Agencies (RHAs). In Italy, there are currently six regions with an ASR: Tuscany, Marche, Abruzzo, Puglia, Sardinia and Lombardy. Other regions, however, such as Campania, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Piedmont, Umbria, Veneto, Lazio, and Liguria have decided to transfer its functions to the relevant Regional Directorates (Del Vecchio, 2017). After introducing the current structure of the Italian Health System, this study focuses only on analyzing the reporting processes of Italian ASLs. ASLs play a key role in public health management, offering a wide range of services, including primary, specialty, hospital and preventive care. The structure and organization of these companies may vary slightly from region to region, but they all follow national guidelines to ensure uniform quality standards throughout Italy. The number of ASLs in Italy (Figure 1) varies and can change over time due to regional reorganizations and mergers. Currently, there are 110 ASLs distributed in the different regions of Italy.

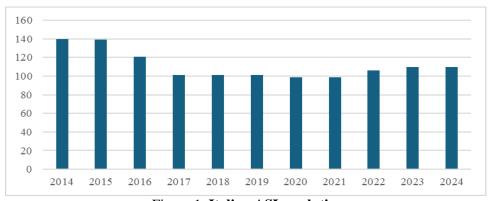


Figure 1. **Italian ASL evolution** *Source: salute.gov.it* 

From all analyzed websites, it appears that only the following ASLs have published at least one social reporting report over the years (Table 2).

Table 2. Italian ASLs with published social reporting reports by region

ASL
ASL TO5
ASL BI
ASL CN1
ASL CN2
Asl 4 Chiavarese
Ulss 3 Serenissima
Ulss 8 Berica
Azienda Provinciale Servizi Sanitari
Usl Parma
Usl Modena
Usl Reggio Emilia
Usl Imola
Umbria 2
Ausl Chieti Lanciano Vasto
Ausl Teramo
Roma 3
Asl Brindisi
Potenza
Matera
Trapani
Assl Nuoro
Aosta

A total of 21 reports have been published, so about 20% of the Local Health Authorities have published a social reporting report in the last decade. From the Figure 2, it is possible to see the geographical distribution of regions in terms of publishing sustainability reports. As can be seen from Figure 2, only 12 regions use social reporting tools and they are mostly used in Northern Italy, and in Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont.

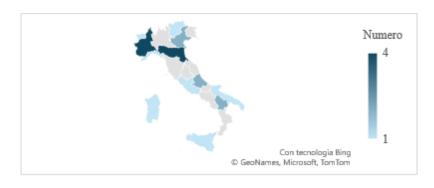


Figure 2. Diffusion of social health reporting in Italy

Source: Personal processing

To understand the development of sustainability reports in the Local Health Authorities, the number of reports that have been published in the last ten years is analyzed. Figure 3 shows an increasing trend over the years, especially from the year 2015 onwards, the peak being reached in 2022 when five Local Health Authorities published a sustainability report.

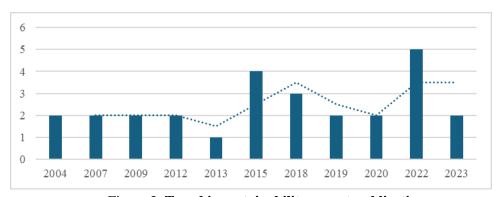


Figure 3. Trend in sustainability report publication

Source: Personal processing

The first section analyzed is the "Contents of the report" and the dimension under analysis concerns the articulation of the document and the distinction that is made concerns the presence of the methodology note within the sustainability report. The presence of the methodological note (Figure 4) is very important, as it describes the report's drafting process and indicates its standard of reference. As can be seen from Figure 4, 67% of sustainability reports have a methodology note section. In addition, all reports present a description of corporate identity, all have a section dedicated to articulated content for the various stakeholder categories.

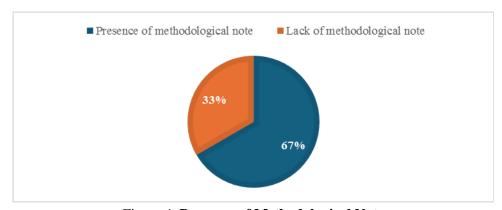


Figure 4. Presence of Methodological Note

Source: Personal processing

Concerning the second dimension 'Richness of data', only 51% of the reports present economic and asset balance sheets with analytical data on cost management, debt management, revenue analysis, and debt analysis. In the sustainability reports, moreover, only 45% present within them an analysis of the economic balance sheet indices and indicators. The empirical analysis also shows that the reporting standards used among the various LGAs are also different. From the analysis carried out and summarized in Figure 5, it can be seen that 18% use a standard defined on a regional basis, 14% follow the lines used by the Ministry of Public Administration, 9% use GBS standards, 4% use AA1000 standards, while, 55% draw up sustainability reports based on models derived from internal working groups and models not explicitly declared.

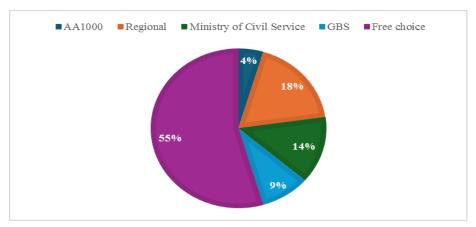


Figure 5. **Reporting Standards Used** 

Source: Personal processing

The third analyzed section concerns 'Communication aspects'. The first dimension analyzed focuses on readability and graphical quality, where all reports present an initial numbered index, and 71% of the reports present synthetic highlights where several social indices and indicators are compared. The analysis of the second dimension "Web usability" shows that all reports are accessible via the web, but only in 62% of the reports is it possible to download data. The third dimension analyzed 'Communication and Dissemination' states that all LEAs are proactive in disseminating their sustainability reports.

Conclusion. This work aimed to evaluate social reporting initiatives in Italian local health authorities. Social reporting, in general, has concerned the health sector since 2004. In detail, 27 sustainability reports were published from 2004 to 2023, with the peak only occurring in 2022 with the publication of five documents. The low number of publications could be explained by the fact that, to date, there is no obligation to prepare sustainability reports and that there is no unambiguous publication standard. The results show the scarcity of the publication of sustainability reports, resulting in an unsatisfactory result in terms of continuity. Regarding the characteristics of the documents, the results show a lack of homogeneity both in terms of general structure and in terms of data content; this

result is due to the lack of specific guidelines. To date, there are various standards for drafting a social reporting document, but most of the Italian Local Health Authorities use a free drafting criterion or one derived from internal working groups; this is due to a lack of compulsory publication and the absence of univocal guidelines for all the local health authorities, at the same time constituting an obstacle to improving the quality of the documents.

**Limitations and future implications.** The study has several limitations, first of all, dictated by the fact that the focus of the Italian Local Health Authorities does not allow a complete update of the state of the art on the issues of social reporting of healthcare facilities; furthermore, a further limitation consists in the analysis of only official documents published on institutional websites, thus excluding documents that are currently being published and have not yet been published but were presented during institutional conventions or press conferences. The difference in the standards used also does not allow for a consistent comparison, as each local health authority uses the standard it considers most appropriate. Obtaining a single standard in the future is of fundamental importance, as it would allow an effective and immediate comparison between the various Local Health Authorities, thus making it possible to spread knowledge about the management of Italian Local Health Authorities. A further limitation is the internal dissimilarity of social reporting documents social reporting reports must be consistent with all the internal sections and documents produced by the ASLs. The work carried out adds to the research in the field of social reporting in the health sector but, a further indepth study is desirable especially in terms of continuity of drafting by going, over time, to check how many Italian Local Health Authorities continue to draft a social reporting document and check the adoption of standards, both in qualitative and quantitative terms. Moreover, the work focuses only on the Italian ASLs and one of its developments could be to extend the work to the entire Italian health sector.

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# RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY AS THE IDEA OF JUSTICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES: THE MISSING GAZE

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Abstract. This paper intends to analyze critical issues and prospects after adoption of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The actual picture that emerges is certainly not reassuring. The medical model of disability is still prevalent. In most cases, path aimed at an independent living isn't considered. People with disabilities and their family members, family caregiver, siblings aren't adequately involved in decisions that affect them and they often are isolated. Adults with intellectual disabilities are considered as a separate topic. There are many abuses in support administrations that become cobwebs for beneficiaries themselves and their families. The paper purpose is highlighting the importance of human dignity. It is important to implement a cultural resolution to say enough to structures where people with disabilities are relegated. It is fundamental to break down barriers of all kinds: sensorial, architectural and, in particular, all mental barriers! The used research methods concern an analysis of reality, giving voice to experiences of people with disabilities and their family members, siblings, family caregivers and a comparative analysis with connection to disability studies. The results will highlight how important it is, and at the basis of every authentic cultural revolution to give voices to stories, to the person in all his dignity and how it is necessary to overcome fragmentation to authentically reconfigure social policies. The approach to disability must be based on human rights. The challenge of inclusion concerns entire human race and not a small minority. "Nothing about us without us!".

**Keywords:** human rights, persons with disabilities, siblings, family caregivers, dignity of the person, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), inclusion, disability studies

**JEL:** 131, K36, K38 **UDC:** 341.231.14+349.3

**Introduction and actuality.** Giving the law a soul: this should have been, according to judge Livatino, killed by the mafia on the morning of 21 September

1990, the judge's primary task. The protection of the person and respect for human dignity are among the objectives of the "Let's give to the law a soul" Let's take action! Soul and courage! movement, Human Rights, law and disability studies Forum – study center "rEVOLution". A society cannot be called civil if it does not take care of the most fragile people, of fragility which is power in itself. The movement, Forum - study center are the promoters the appeal "Stop segregating residences!", "Stop institutionalization!" (Miccio, 2007, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2019).

This paper - in memory of the judge Livatino and of all the victims of every form of injustice, persons with disabilities and their families - intends to highlight the importance of human dignity, synonymous with human value. It should not be measured by any individual value. Recognition of the dignity of a person presupposes active respect for human rights (Nussbaum, 2002; Nussbaum, 2006; Barton & Armstrong, 1999; Lawson, 2005).

The paper highlights the critical issues and perspectives years after the adoption of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and the enactment of other laws. The analysis of reality presents a picture that is certainly not reassuring. Most services are still based on the medical model of disability. Paths aimed at independent living are not considered. Adults with intellectual disabilities as well as children are considered as a separate topic or they are not considered. People with disabilities and their families are not adequately involved in decisions that affect them. Families, family caregivers, siblings must not be isolated! They must be included in tables where people talk about them. They can contribute to authentically improving society! What future for human dignity? Disability is a human condition that, during life, involves every individual. What future for all of us? It is fundamental break down barriers of all kinds: architectural, sensorial and above all mental barriers! It is important to give voice to stories, experiences, to the person, to human dignity. It is important to break down the dogma of hospitalization in facilities (Miccio, 2007, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021; Parker & Clements, 2008).

It is important to say enough to a reality where the dignity of people with disabilities and their families is destroyed. It is important to act not in isolated sections. This paper intends to highlight how support administrations often become cobwebs for the beneficiaries themselves and also their families. Segregating logics disguised as virtuous examples must be unmasked. The approach to disability must be based on human rights. The new model of justice is based on social inclusion. Nothing about us without us! (Miccio, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2019).

Being the brother or sister of a person with a disability is a decisive experience, a gift that will accompany us during our lives (it is often forgotten that, in addition to our parents, there are also us siblings, the brothers and sisters of people with disabilities). It is difficult to describe the importance of this gift to those who do not experience it. Since we were very young, we siblings have known the difficulties and prejudices linked to the world of disability. It may seem strange but often we too, like our brothers and sisters, are the object of ridicule and prejudice. More than anyone else, we know about disability, above all, the joys and what it means to be a gift. Disability is then a stage of life that sooner or later

affects everyone and concerns everyone, without exception. We are all fragile creatures and fragility is inherent in each of us (Miccio, archive: "Let's give to the law a soul", from 2007 to today).

**Research methodology.** It is very important to give voice to humble and hidden heroics, to everyday heroes. Giving voice to those who are now tired, giving voice to stories, experiences of immense value and great example, destroyed by injustice. We need to start from the stories to rebuild! Who are we to draw a separation between people considered "normal" and not, between people considered healthy and people considered sick, frails? Frailty belongs to each of us - no exceptions! (Miccio, 2007, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2019).

The human person is the bearer of intrinsic, permanent and unconditional dignity. Dignity is not a principle that can be defined univocally. It must be thought of as a process rather than a definitive result. This leads to framing dignity in a relational perspective. Respecting human rights means protecting the dignity of the person. Disability is a human rights issue! It is necessary to move - thanks also to the contribution of Disability Studies (DS) (in general, for an introduction to DS should be consulted: Barnes & Mercer, 2004; Barnes, 2007; Charlton, 2000; Morris, 2000; Coleridge, 1993; Ingstad & Reynolds, 1995; Oliver, 1996; Priestley, 2003; Shakespeare & Watson, 2002; Shakespeare, 1994, 2002) - from the medical / individualistic approach where the focus is on the individual's impairment and the person is seen as the problem and treatments as the adequate response - to the social / contextual model of disability where the focus on the social and environmental context discrimination/exclusion as the problem and the removal of barriers as the answer and then some rigidities must be overcome. In reality, the social model does not set aside the individual and pathological condition of the person and does not deny suffering and the need for medical care but it chooses to place emphasis shared aspects (discrimination and the condition of social on oppression).

It is necessary to implement emancipatory research work which is taking Disability first steps. is a human rights issue. It's not guaranteeing or maintaining privileges but it's about equality of opportunity, removing existing barriers/preventing discrimination. The United Nations Convention is not "special" but universal. At the basis of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities there is a new model of justice (Sen, 2009). Disability Studies are interdisciplinary, internal and external to the academic world. They are for (and with) people and not about people. The approach in disability studies is new. Disability Studies have provided the knowledge that informs the international legal framework for protecting the human rights of people with disabilities. Disability Studies provide jurists with a deeper understanding of the fact on which the legal rule is based. This new understanding requires an increase in awareness, a cultural change. It is a continuous process, it calls into question the already existing paradigms, it makes a different and more updated interpretation of existing laws necessary, it believes that the institutionalized discrimination that

emerges from the regulatory provisions oriented towards antiquated conceptions must be removed. Legal research and practice can benefit from Disability Studies to achieve the effective inclusion of people with disabilities. The focus "is no longer the physical impairment, but rather the lack of autonomy to which the jurist must find an adequate response. It is necessary to pay attention to one aspect. The limits of an anti-discrimination law also seem to emerge given the inevitability of "identifying the subjects deserving of protection, distinguishing them from those who are not subject to such protection. By establishing asymmetric protection, the law requires the adoption of a particular approach, which consequently creates, in fact, a specific right, different from the "common" one. A paradox emerges that is difficult to resolve and which seems to highlight the intrinsic difficulties of jurisprudence regarding disability. On the one hand the legal norm must inevitably "discriminate" in order to apply the legislative rules to protect a part of the population, on the other this protection itself becomes an instrument of "differentiation" and therefore partly of discrimination between those who are people with disabilities and who isn't, even if with the best intentions.

**Terminological clarifications and analysis**. "Person with a disability" has no synonyms. This is one of the fundamental indications that come from the "International Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities", made in New York on 13 December 2006 and which entered into force in Italy by law no. 18 of 3 March 2009.

It is today the most correct and shared definition and should not be replaced by others still in use such as "handicapped" or simply "the disabled" nor with the term "differently abled" or "diversable", loaded terms of ambivalences (and also, of a certain dose of do-goodism, of political correctness).

Law 227/21 carries a delegation to the Government for the reorganization of the current provisions on disability. It is one of the reforms envisaged by the PNRR (National Resilience Recovery Plan) in Mission 5, Component 2, a reform consisting of the creation of a Disability Framework Law with the aim of fully implementing the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The enabling law seems to be epochal given that it is the first time that recognition of the condition of disability has been introduced in a European country based on the definition of the Convention itself. The new legislative decree definitively approved on 15 April 2024 revises the terminology and evaluation procedures for Law 104 and civil disability, the decree modifies the definition of "disability condition". This definition replaces the concept of "handicapped person", now considered obsolete under international law.

The word "handicap" is everywhere replaced by the words "condition of disability", while the words "handicapped person", "person affected by disability", "disabled" and "differently able", wherever they occur, are replaced by the following: "person with a disability".

Will there really be a positive change after this law? Years after the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the enactment of other laws, the picture that emerges is certainly not reassuring (Miccio, 2013,

2014, 2015, 2019). During the pandemic, criticism of the current welfare system has emerged both internationally and nationally. But did we need a pandemic to understand this? Did it take a pandemic to understand that people should not be placed into categories and there is no division between those who believe they are normal, healthy and those who are labeled as sick, as waste? During the pandemic, tragedies and problems that already existed and were deliberately not considered emerged. Just think of the many deaths that have occurred in places of segregation of the elderly and people with disabilities, of the most frail, fragile people. Based on the data made available by Istat on excess deaths (mortality statistics in Italy), it is clear that during the pandemic mortality in nursing homes and other facilities was truly high. A silent and hidden massacre. Research by the UK House of Commons based on the National Institute of Statistics survey found that 59% of residents with disabilities died in residential facilities/homes in England and Wales.

During the pandemic, the certainly not reassuring picture emerged in all its strength, what was not considered could no longer be hidden. Everything was evident without the need for words, everything that had been tried to hide had exploded in all its drama. People with disabilities, caregivers, elderly people were left even more alone. The great absentees: institutions, municipalities, schools, social workers, day centres too many times that they turn into "parking" centers where there is no real tendency towards independent living etc (Miccio, 2020, 2021).

Main results, considerations, discussion and conclusions. From a welfare system based on social protection that doesn't even function, it will be necessary to get to a welfare system based on social inclusion!

The logic of care that is not oriented towards inclusion is applied. Individual projects must overcome this logic to define individualized projects based on empowerment, on a community perspective, on rehabilitation and enabling in all fields, through the direct participation of interested parties. The definition of projects is poor and is often reduced to the definition of the resources to be deployed, losing sight of the person, the well-being of the person and their family members who come altogether abandoned. The relationship must involve all stakeholders in the field. Excessive fragmentation, the lack of coordination and continuity of services aimed at the most frail people and their families, caregivers.

Services often contain operators in every area who are unprepared and without any empathy. Zero careful checks and monitoring, lack of data, skills that are unrelated to each other. Suffice it to say that to date, for example, the Second Report (updated to December 2018) on the state of implementation of the law on "After of us", Law n.112/2016 ("Provisions regarding assistance in favor of people with serious disabilities without of family support") constitutes the latest "official" representation of the interventions pursuant to law 112/2016 that are concretely current at a territorial level. However, these are limited and incomplete data. In general, complete and constant monitoring is lacking.

What future if not built during us? There are many sore points in this law as in many others, for example that 6/2004 on support administration. As established

by the UN Convention of 13 December 2006, a person with a disability has the right to choose where, with whom and how to live (Parker & Clements, 2008; Koch, 2009; Flynn, 2011).

Empathy, preparation and training of operators etc. in every place regarding people with greater frailty and them family members are absent. Think for example also about the hospital. There is often a lack of connection between the hospital and the territory. Specific cards are needed where the rights of the most fragile people and their caregivers in certain cases are put down in black and white places? Or should it be the basis that operators in every area are trained especially towards people with greater frailty and their families?

Cards upon Cards, laws upon laws, tables, creations of figures upon figures for example of Guarantors, Specific ministries often produce even more fragmentation and acting in compartments without coordination where everyone wants to be the protagonist etc. Is the figure of the Guarantor really useful, for example at municipal level? Often people and especially people with disabilities and their families do not even know of the existence of such figures who remain inert, unknown, with the title only on paper (perhaps it only serves to enrich their curriculum vitae) and there is no authentic fight to see the rights of people with disabilities and their families affirmed (Miccio, 2019, 2020, 2021).

There is too much lack of information, incorrect or non-existent information, the unpreparedness of operators in every field, social workers, etc. regarding the rights of people with disabilities and their families. There is often non-existence, discontinuity, incompetence, poor coordination in services where everyone delegates responsibility to the other especially when the caregiver, the sibling, family member asks for explanations and in the end the caregiver, sibling becomes the guide, the mediator between these poorly managed services. Home care is full of gaps where services are only on paper and there is no serious control and monitoring.

Evaluation of activities in services is non-existent. The mediation between rights and the possibility of asserting them is often carried out by unprepared and indifferent operators, cooperatives with limited and frequent interventions segregating. Many lack knowledge and real training. Tense routes to independent living are not taken into consideration. There is a lack of controls. Home care is abandoned to itself where the caregiver is not considered or is isolated when she/he asks for seriousness in services and the caregiver, sibling is often forced to fight even more against walls of indifference, concealment, practices empty ones that are certainly not in the interest of the most fragile people and their families, their caregiver while the opposite is often shown by local health company, institutions, operators etc. to hide lack of real attention and non-compliance. Services are often wrapped in self-referential visions with operators at the centre. For example, home care for a very few hours will not allow interventions aimed at the full autonomy of the person with greater frailty. There are no serious long-term and truly calibrated evaluations for each person but the evaluation units plan similar interventions for everyone and sometimes in meetings the family member, caregiver is not involved (and they have to fight to assert the rights of their family member with disabilities) and more frail people who don't have family members? Who fights for their rights and them? Who controls? This is really sad and serious. Often there is no coordination between the various parties, local health company, doctors, service managers, institutions. The caregiver ends up feeling even more abandoned, ignored and has to fight against walls of indifference, superficiality, etc. and very often he/she is even considered "responsible" for having questioned the dogma - which dies hard - of hospitalization in structures and "parking" centers for loved ones (Miccio, 2007, 2014, 2015, 2019).

The interventions each remain relegated to their own area without interconnection between them. It is necessary to overcome the scales used by the Regions which identify which services to direct people to.

It is important not to act in isolated compartments, each for himself in order to show hypocritical primacy and useless protagonism and underlying interests. Coordination. interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, competence, authentic experiences, monitoring, data, a common action aimed at implementing change first and foremost cultural and social aimed at a new concept of justice. Enough of the invasiveness of the structures, acronyms of various forms of residence, abuses in support administrations (Law 6/2004) which turn into cobwebs to the detriment of the beneficiaries themselves and their families, no more centres "parking places" which are wrapped up in self-referential visions with the operators at the centre, segregating logics and disguised as examples virtuous. In Italy the recognition of the family caregiver has not yet occurred. There is no national law yet. Siblings are not considered with the right attention. They can authentically bring about that much desired cultural change! (Miccio, 2007, 2014, 2015, 2019).

The caregiver is exposed to the so-called. Burden, which is a state of chronic stress. In 2009 in Stockholm to Elizabeth Blackburn was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine for her studies on the involvement of telomeres and telomerase in premature aging and reduced ageing life expectancy and poor health of family caregivers. The chronic stress to which the family caregiver is subject wears out telomeres, favoring the onset of very serious diseases. Chronic stress reduces the ability of cells to feed themselves. The more stressful situations continue over time, the more the length of telomeres and the activity of telomerase are reduced. It is clinically proven that family caregivers have an activity reduced by 50% and that the shortness of their telomeres causes an early death, ranging from 9 to 17 years compared to the normal population. Family caregivers live from 9 to 17 years less than everyone else! (Blackburn, 2004).

It is necessary - for a correct approach to disability and to create a new concept of disability - to move from the logic of help as a favor to the logic of help as a right of the person with disability for real inclusion in society and for an independent life (Parker & Clements, 2008). It is necessary to move on to the new concept of disability. I believe it is essential to build a global project. All universities should promote a new approach to the disability (Miccio, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2019).

The new model of disability that the Convention has produced must be made effective (Parker & Clements, 2008; Koch, 2009; Flynn, 2011). This model allows us to move from a welfare based on social protection to a welfare based on social inclusion!

It is necessary to highlight the effects and results obtained on a practical level from the laws currently in force, and their mechanisms of operation. To achieve this result, it is necessary to gather information about the type of anti- discrimination law, the criteria, practices and other obstacles that people with disabilities and their families continue to face in their daily lives. The more evidence there is that existing laws are incapable of offering adequate protection against discrimination, the easier it will be to persuade legislators to introduce reforms that are not an end in themselves and important will need to be seriously monitored.

Secondly, it is necessary to identify priorities. Finally, it is necessary to establish connections with other disadvantaged groups (that are not intended as separate categories. It is important to keep in mind that disability is a stage in life and affects everyone!) since the experience gained in those contexts can also be useful in reference to the disability. The establishment of common policies can be advantageous, given that all these policies tend to avoid exclusion and are easier for a broader base to reach a critical mass sufficient to justify specific legislative action not empty and an end in itself.

There would be so much more to say. I conclude with some thoughts taken from the testimony of a friend of mine who is physically blind but not mentally blind. "It would be enough to lend an ear, lend a hand, say a word, a smile, without implying any pietistic intent. This would be the real revolution capable of breaking down every barrier, cultural even before sensorial or architectural. In conclusion, although the events of recent years do not leave much room for hope, I still want to put my trust in others (...) Yes, I want to be confident and believe that, even if I have burned the sun, the dawn will come for me too" (Reale, 2017).

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## AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL AND LABOR MARKET INDICATORS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE PERIOD 2006-2022

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Abstract. Topic importance is revealed in the framework of extremely strong and outright regional games such as the outbreak of war in Ukraine in the spring of 2022. Thus, understanding the regional assets, but also the shortcomings, can make the difference between regional winners and losers. The social and labor market indicators can describe the social framework for the manifestation of these pressures and can reveal the strong, but also less positive points of the Republic of Moldova. The analysis of some social and labor market indicators from the Republic of Moldova in relation to the average of other countries in the European Neighborhood Policy-East (ENP-E), but also, where it can be, compared to the EU average, represents the purpose of this study. The methodology reflects the comparative analysis of several social and labor market indicators, based on statistical data, for the 2006-2022 period of Eurostat, channeling mainly the ENP-E regional statistical data. The results outline the additional efforts that must be made for a better integration of the Republic of Moldova into the social framework of the European Union with 27 states.

Keywords: employment, education, inequality, ENP-E

**JEL:** F16, I24, I25, J21 **UDC:** 316+331.5](478)

**Introduction**. In the context of the war in Ukraine and the persistent need to protect the left flank of the European Union, the discussion about cooperation beyond the current borders of the EU, through the analysis of the labour market in the countries analyzed within the European Neighbourhood Policy-East (ENP-E). Although the results follow in particular the course of the Republic of Moldova in the period 2006-2022 regarding the labour market, the analysis will reflect comparisons and comments in relation to the ENP-E average and the EU27 average.

**Literature review**. The literature abounds in studies of the labour market, but few studies focus on regional developments and especially on ENE-P countries (Eurostat, 2020). The labour markets of the Eastern European bloc from the initial historical perspective are characterized in particular by the communist past, by the decrease in participation rates, by the lack of open unemployment, by the decrease in production, by high levels of unionization, but also by a low degree of protection

against unemployment, and the subsequent restructurings created problems in absorbing the workers laid off from the state, imposing a gradual approach to reforms in order to keep unemployment under control (especially long-term and among young people) (Boeri, 1999; Knogler, 2001; Rutkowski, 2006; Ferragina and Pastore, 2008; Lehmann & Muravyev, 2010).

In order to obtain high employment rates, proactive policies of the labor market, a low degree of institutional rigidity, but good legislation for the protection of the labour force, flexible regulations for the bridge market, but also an efficient and intelligent distribution of unemployment benefits are important, the solutions being particularized with each specific labour market and often requiring EU27 community funds (Elhorst and Zeilstra, 2007; Lippert, 2007; Rovelli and Bruno, 2008; Savić & Zubović, 2014).

**Research methodology**. The analysis is based on a comparative study of the data for the Republic of Moldova, the average of the European Neighbourhood Policy-East (ENP-E) countries and the EU27 average to highlight the current developments, the data focuses on the period 2006-2022. ENP-E countries are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The monitored indicators are the labour market, education and general social indicators, such as: Employment employment 20-64 old and rates years by [enpe\_lfsa\_ergan\_\_custom\_11786192], Employment growth (domestic concept) [enpe\_nama\_10\_pe\_\_custom\_11612986], Unemployment rate by sex and age [enpe\_lfsa\_urgan\_\_custom\_12878733], Labour productivity in GDP (constant prices ) per person employed [enpe\_nama\_10\_lp\_\_custom\_11613179], Consumer price index [enpe\_cpi\_\_custom\_11785445], Average nominal monthly wages and salaries [enpe\_wg\_m\_\_custom\_11786321], Income quintile share ratio - S80/S20 [enpe ilc di11 custom 11786417]. after social transfers, income per month [enpe\_ilc\_li01\_\_custom\_11786532] and Early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 by sex [enpe\_edat\_lfse\_14\_\_custom\_11786000]. Presented in a regional context, the article wants to highlight the elements of the gap between the current results for the Republic of Moldova and the ENP-E and EU27 average. At the same time, where possible, comparative comments will also be made in relation to Romania, in order to see the positive or negative gap in relation to the two countries. It should be noted that the data between ENP-E countries and the EU27 average are not perfectly comparable and should be viewed with caution because they are obtained from distinct indicators with different methodological adaptations. The indicators also reflect the possibilities of achieving sustainable development objectives beyond the social sphere and the possible implications of the analyzed indicators on the general economic, social and political perspective of the Republic of Moldova.

Main results. The COVID-19 pandemic has somewhat desynchronized the labour market parameters at the European Union level from the established targets. Thus, the EU2020 target for the employment rate of 75% is not reached in 2022 even for the EU average, and countries or regions that have constantly had problems regarding formal integration into the labour market have also experienced slight falls in the indicator in 2020 and returns difficult at the level of 2022.

Thus, if we look at the employment rate indicator for the population aged 20-64 for the Republic of Moldova, we notice that it is behind the ENP-E average and far behind the EU27 average over the entire analysis period (2006-2022), being behind all ENP-E states individually (see Figure 1). It should be noted that countries such as Belarus (with an average employment rate over the period of 76.8% of the total population), Azerbaijan (with an average employment rate over the period of 74.1% of the total population), and Ukraine (with a average employment rate for the period of 66.1% of the total population) are at the top of the employment rates, being countries with considerable natural resources and with considerable industrialization (especially in Belarus and Ukraine) as a result of the communist past. At the same time, almost all ENP-E countries have an extremely developed agricultural field (especially in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova) and services in which self-employment works very well, although with a tempering of the trend of the self-employment rate during the analysis period. Thus, for example in 2019 the share of self-employment and family work was 66.7% of the total workforce in Azerbaijan, 49.7% in Georgia, 33.5% in Armenia, and in the Republic of Moldova 22.2%, with rates lower however in Ukraine (16.5%) and Belarus (4.3%), compared to an EU average of only 13.2% (Eurostat website, article on ENP-E, see bibliographic notes). Also, there are some differences regarding the participation of men and women in the labor market, gender differences being observed especially for the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with a particular impact on women's work compared to the EU average where the increase in activity rates was much higher for women than for men during the analysis period (Eurostat website, article on ENP-E, see bibliographic notes).

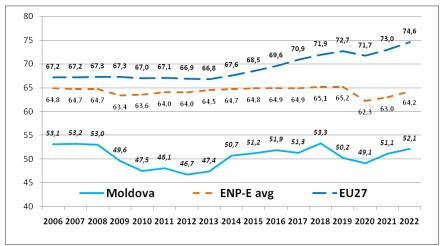


Figure 1. Employment and employment rates 20-64 years old by sex for Republic of Moldova, ENP-E average, and EU27 average (% of total population)

Source: Eurostat, author processing

In Figure 2, if we look at the increase in employment, we notice that, although the Republic of Moldova presents an indicator close to the ENP-E

average, nevertheless it is almost constantly below this average and with substantial collapses in 2009, 2014, 2019 against the background of various global and regional but also specific internal crises (e.g. 2014 - the crisis due to bank fraud). Thus, the recommendation that may come is the imposition of some measures to stabilize employment over time and a better resilience of the active and passive social protection policies of the population.

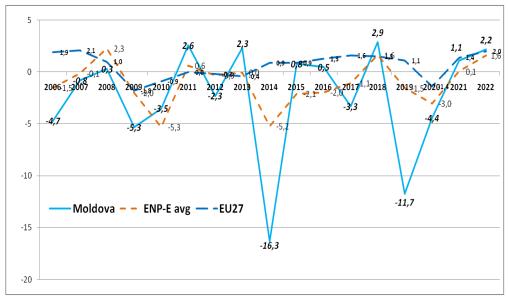


Figure 2. Employment growth for Republic of Moldova, ENP-E average, and EU27 average (%)

Source: Eurostat, author processing

Over the analysis period 2006-2022, unemployment rates in ENP-E countries are generally high compared to the EU27 average (8.9%), especially Armenia (37.7%) and Georgia (36.2%) show the highest high unemployment rates. The Republic of Moldova presents a downward trend of the indicator throughout the analysis period, with relatively more substantial reductions even before global, regional or national crisis moments. Also, Republic of Moldova is registering long-term unemployment (1.4% on average per period), both for men as well as for women, substantially lower (along with Belarus, by 0.4%), compared to the rest of the analyzed ENP-E countries, situation similar for youth unemployment rate (From 15 to 24 years). Cyclical economic changes seem to affect especially the long-term and youth unemployment rates than the general unemployment rate, this proves that there is a significant underlying resilience regarding the unemployment rate in the Republic of Moldova compared to the results of the ENP-E countries.

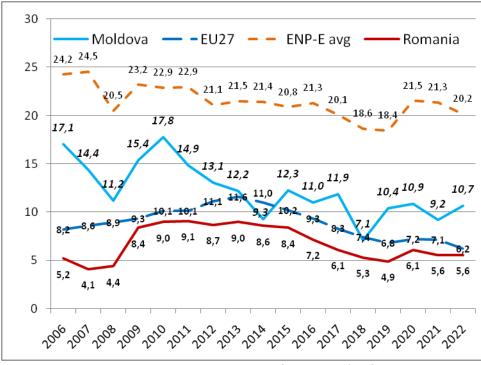


Figure 3. Unemployment rate by sex and age for Republic of Moldova, ENP-E average, and EU27 average (rate)

Source: Eurostat, author processing

During the analysis period 2006-2022, labour productivity in the Republic of Moldova is almost constant above the ENP-E average and the EU27 average, except for the moments of crisis (2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2020, 2022), emphasizing, however, that the resilience of the indicator is low in extremely difficult economic times (see *Figure 4*). This situation can also be explained on the basis of a substantial inflation, generally above the EU27 average but below the ENP-E average, inflation that affects both companies' profits and personal incomes, reducing the inclination to work (see *Figure 5*).

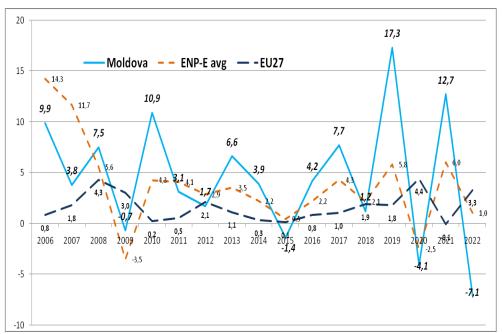


Figure 4. Labor productivity in GDP (constant prices) per person employed for Republic of Moldova, ENP-E average, and EU27 average

Source: Eurostat, author processing

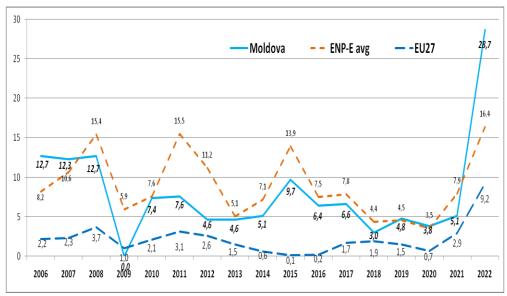


Figure 5. Consumer price index for Republic of Moldova, ENP-E average, and EU27 average

Source: Eurostat, author processing

Average nominal monthly wages and salaries is an acute indicator showing the extremely low level of nominal net wages in the Republic of Moldova, being until 2020 constantly below the ENP-E average and incomparably below the EU27 average (calculated on the basis of the Annual net earnings - One-earner indicator couple with two children earning 100% of the average earnings).

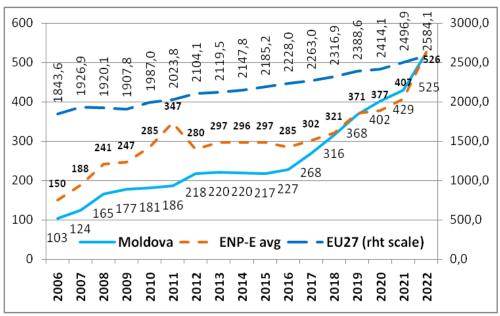


Figure 6. Average nominal monthly wages and salaries in euro for Moldova, ENP-E average, and EU27 average

Source: Eurostat, author processing

The salary indicator can be accompanied by an indicator that shows the inequality of income distribution - income quintile share ratio or the S80/S20 ratio. Thus, we see that although it is similar to the ENP-E average and, to a lesser extent, the EU27 average, the indicator income quintile share ratio or the S80/S20 ratio for the Republic of Moldova clearly shows some disconnection from the regional trend for the period 2013-2019, emphasizing that regional crises (the abusive takeover of Crimea in 2014 by Russia) and especially national crises (the internal banking crisis of 2014) can seriously affect the reduction of social inequality and especially income inequality for the population of the Republic of Moldova (see *Figure 7*).

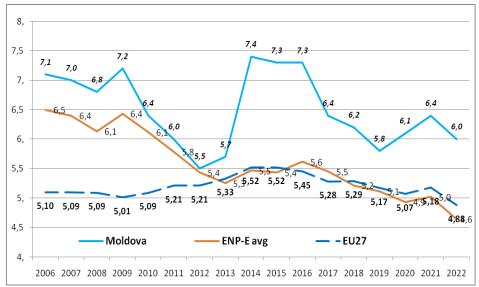


Figure 7. Income quintile share ratio - S80/S20 for Moldova, ENP-E average, and EU27 average

Source: Eurostat, author processing

The decoupling from the regional trend can also be seen for the indicator relative poverty threshold after social transfers, income per month (in euro) for Moldova, which for the period 2012-2018 was constantly below the ENP-E average, although with a slight recovery in period 2019-2022.

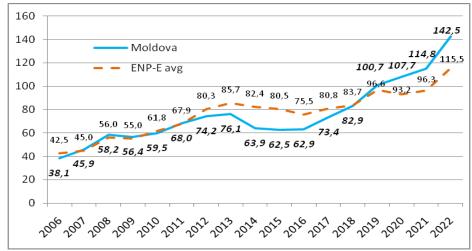


Figure 8. Relative poverty threshold after social transfers, income per month for Moldova and ENP-E average (euro)

Source: Eurostat, author processing

Thus, social and labour market policies insufficiently correctly projected on the needs of citizens are doubled by unsatisfactory policies regarding the education and training of young people. Thus, the Early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 indicator for the Republic of Moldova (as well as Romania) shows the lack of interest in attracting young people to school, and subsequently to the workforce.

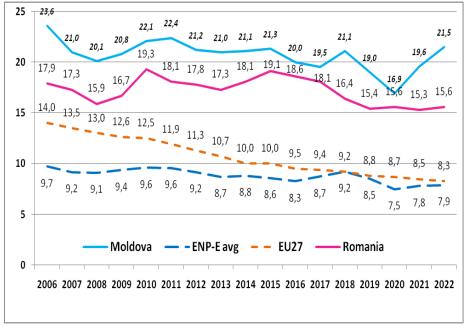


Figure 9. Early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 by sex Source: Eurostat, author processing

**Discussion and conclusions**. The regional context is very rarely followed by studies, although there is a rich literature on the subject. Thus, the article emphasizes that for successful integration in the EU27 it is important to combine the existing data at the level of the European Neighborhood Policy-East (ENP-E) states with those at the European level of EU27. In this sense, the article aims at the comparative analysis of the labour market situation and some social and other contextual indicators in the Republic of Moldova with the ENP-E average and the EU27. The results point to substantial gaps regarding: employment, wages, income inequality, the poverty threshold and school dropout - between the Republic of Moldova and the ENP-E average and that of the EU27.

In times of crisis, it is crucial for the labour market to maintain attachment to work and to strengthen jobs, to protect and save the employee during the crisis and not necessarily to save the job, as well as to constantly adjust the skills of employees to match the rapid changes and labour market shocks.

Although, in particular, within a well-consolidated labour market such as in the EU27 (or more specifically in the euro area), efforts are being made to find ways to make work more flexible, however, atypical work is not always what can solve the problem.

Atypical work, while increasing the versatility and flexibility of the labour market, generates a sharing or segmentation of the labour market and sometimes masks an increase in precarious, low-paid work for certain groups of workers without contracts, part-time contracts, self-employed or contract workers temporary. In times of crisis, atypical work can provide temporary solutions for employees, but it can expose them to substantial risks of poverty, limited access to social protection and long-term insecurity from work, especially for already disadvantaged categories (women, single people, disabled people, people with other people in care). Thus, in this context, knowing that generally women bear these family burdens, atypical work can generate an even greater gap between women and men (Eurofound, 2024).

Education also plays an important role for a strong resistance of the labor market in difficult times. A good training offers greater chances of keeping or finding a job than in the case of employees with primary or secondary education, the impact on employment at the level of these types of employees being more pronounced in periods of crisis, a fact also attested by Eurostat data and studies Eurofound.

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## STRENGTHENING POST-WAR SOLIDARITY OF UKRAINIANS THROUGH THE SOCIAL CONTRACT UPDATING

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Abstract. The Summit of the Future 2024 and the World Social Summit 2025, which will be held under the UN auspices, show that the social contracts renewal is among the global agenda priorities. This issue is of great importance for postconflict and war-torn societies, similar to Ukrainian society. Even in pre-war times, a significant deficit of social justice and the entrenchment of destructive institutions such as strong corruption, the shadow economy, precarization, etc., were observed in Ukraine. This led to the social contract erosion, which in the post-war period can accelerate and slow down reconstructive recovery. The relevance of the study is dictated by the need to preserve the high level of Ukrainians solidarity, which was revealed during the Russian-Ukrainian war, and to direct the potential of solidarity to post-war reconstruction. The research purpose is to clarify the framework and instruments of Ukraine's post-war renewal of the social contract and its potential for strengthening the solidarity of society, which should heal the social traumas of the war. Our research involves the use of an interdisciplinary approach, as well as institutional and comparative methodology. The key research results are related, firstly, the reveal the role of society-wide solidarity as a factor of Ukraine's societal resilience during the warfare and its effective post-war reconstruction recovery. Secondly, the substantiation of the main principles for the post-war renewal of the Ukrainian social contract, which is the foundation for strengthening the solidarity of the country's citizens after the end of the war. The article presents the results of the research carried out within the Project "Socio-Economic Challenges and Prospects for Reproducing the Potential for Solidarity of Ukrainian Society during and Postwar Development of Ukraine" the (state No. 0124U003262).

**Keywords:** Ukraine's recovery, societal challenges, postwar cohesion, well-being, public agreement.

**JEL**: A13, H56, P47 **UDC**: 316.4(477)

**Introduction**. The solidarity of Ukrainian society is a guarantee that the country will be able to withstand a protracted full-scale war and effectively recover

in the post-war period. This is precisely what was emphasized by the participants of the high-level Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC2024), which took place on 11–12 June 2024 in Berlin and at which 110 international agreements worth 16 billion euros were concluded. In a societal context, it is especially significant that one of the four key directions of the URC2024 is defined by the Ukrainian Government as "Human Dimension – Social Recovery and Human Capital for the Future of Ukraine" and stated that the human dimension is key to recovery, it includes the mobilisation of human capital for reconstruction as well as issues of citizens' solidarity, social cohesion and inclusiveness (URC2024, June 2024).

At the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022, there was a rapid rise in the Ukrainians solidarity, but nowadays domestic sociologists observe diverging positions of representatives of different age groups regarding the ways of development of post-war processes. Considering this, as well as the tasks of Ukraine' reconstruction after the end of the war, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) is currently implementing a targeted interdisciplinary project "Socioeconomic challenges and prospects for reproducing the potential for solidarity of Ukrainian society during the war and postwar development of Ukraine", which is aimed at researching the phenomenon of Ukrainians solidarity in one of the most critical moments of Ukrainian history – the period of the Russian-Ukrainian war, as well as the identification of potential dividing line capable of disrupting societal unity (NASU, 2024). If we consider the problem at the societal level, it is quite obvious that the most important instrument for strengthening solidarity in the country is the post-war renewal of the social contract. At the same time, the identified issues of internal society-wide solidarity and renewal of the social contract are extremely relevant for Ukraine, as a candidate country for joining the EU, in the context of building a more social, inclusive and mobile Europe.

Based on the above, the aim of the study is to clarify the framework and instruments for post-war renewal of the social contract in Ukraine and its potential for strengthening the solidarity of Ukrainian society, which should heal its social traumas of the war. The current scale of these social traumas can be partially assessed based on relevant information from authoritative international institutions regarding the monitoring of the consequences of large-scale hostilities in Ukraine.

Thus, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, since the beginning of the war and as of the beginning of July 2024, only officially recorded victims of the full-scale military conflict in Ukraine have become 33,878 civilians, including 11,284 dead, among which 622 children. At the same time, as a result of hostilities in the country, 66 healthcare institutions and 280 educational institutions were destroyed, and 453 healthcare institutions and 958 educational institutions were damaged (UNU, July 2024).

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that a total of 14.6 million Ukrainians will need humanitarian support in 2024. During the first half of this year, humanitarian organizations provided at least one type of aid to 5.6 million people in Ukraine. At the same time, more than 500 humanitarian organizations provided assistance, more than 380 of which were Ukrainian non-governmental organizations (OCHA, July 2024).

Following the updated international consolidated assessment, as of the beginning of 2024, the total cost of reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine over the next decade is \$486 billion, including almost \$162 billion for its social sector (United Nations, February 2024).

**Literature review**. In Miller's (2017) article, the phenomenon of solidarity, including its sources, is examined through the prism of associational theory, identity theory, and institutional theory. The foundations and features inherent in classical and modern approaches to the solidarity study are systematically presented in the scientific works by Goffman (2015), as well as Sorokin and Popova (2021). The evolution of scientific ideas, the issue's conceptualization and the key factors in the formation of the social contract, - including the principles of social and institutional order organization of society, people's value orientation, etc., – are comprehensively investigated in meaningful articles by Horodnytskyi (2017) and Toschenko (2023a). Also very significant is the study of the social contract as a noumenon ("intelligible essence"), as well as the process of the emergence in social knowledge of the social contract ideas, first put forward and substantiated by the Enlightenment thinkers (Toschenko, 2023b). Bussolo et al. (2019) substantiate the path to a new social contract in the countries of Europe and Central Asia through overcoming distributional tensions by increasing the efficiency of national social security systems. The study by Golovenko (2010) shows the process of building civil society in Ukraine with regard to such an important factor as the interaction of authorities and public associations. For a deeper understanding of the formation and changes of the social contract in transit societies, the results of the study of the political order in the crisis discourse are great useful (Mayboroda, 2022). Tasks and problems of modernization of the social contract in Ukraine in the context of European integration are thoroughly considered in the article by Koroliuk and Chashchyna (2017). Researchers Zelenko et al. (2024) substantiated and systematized the main tools of legitimization of power during the period of martial law regime in Ukraine. The scientific (re)interpretation of the Ukrainian social contract in the trials of war provides an understanding of the principles, tools and potential consequences of its renewal in the post-war period (Rechytskyi, 2023).

Research methodology. Our research involves the use of an interdisciplinary approach, as well as institutional and comparative methodology. Assessments of the dynamics of social cohesion in Ukraine in the pre-war period and during the war with the Russian Federation were made using sociological methods. At the same time, the applying the statistical techniques made it possible to quantitatively characterize the war impact on the Ukrainian economy and society. Institutional approaches are the basis for determining and evaluating the tools necessary for the post-war renewal of the country's social contract as a factor in maintaining the current high level of Ukrainian citizens solidarity.

Main results. A clear sign of the final formation of Ukrainian civil society in the face of an unprecedented military threat was a significant surge of social solidarity, simply put, unity and solidarity in opposition to the military invasion of the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022. In particular, the solidarity of Ukrainian society is demonstrated by the data of the nationwide sociological monitoring of the Institute of Sociology of the NAS of Ukraine. According to these data, already at the end of 2022, in the conditions of a full-scale Russian invasion, the greatest decrease in the level of anomie demoralization of Ukrainians was recorded for all time, and simultaneously in all regions of the country. The strengthening of national solidarity is also evidenced by the fact that civic self-identification – the share of those who self-identify themselves primarily as a citizen of Ukraine – increased by 17 percentage points during 2023 and reached almost 80%. In addition, sociologists are considering the decrease in perception of social (un)justice to be a sign of the solidarity of Ukrainians in their readiness to bear the burden of war. Thus, in February 2023, after a year of war, Ukrainian society is perceived by citizens less pessimistically than in 2019: the share of those who consider it unjust decreased from 51.8% to 35.5%, and those who characterize it as fair, increased from 10.7% to 17.3% (Golovakha & Makeev, 2023).

It is very significant and revealing that many domestic and foreign experts are united in the opinion that it is the solidarity of Ukrainians in their readiness to defend the country (by fighting or helping the defenders and their families), to endure a decrease in the standard of living and material well-being, and to refrain from criticizing state economic and social policy, that has become one of the most effective factors of Ukraine's societal resilience during a full-scale war.

Bearing in mind the institutional significance of society-wide solidarity, as well as the macroeconomic and social dynamics of Ukraine in recent years, the solidarity of the Ukrainian population appears to be a highly effective factor in the processes that determine:

- 1. Ukraine's societal resilience in wartime;
- 2. Its reconstructive socio-economic recovery in the post-war period;
- 3. In the perspective of full-fledged integration of Ukraine into the EU as a candidate country, with which official accession negotiations will begin at the end of June 2024.

In turn, the above determines the particular importance of scientific research devoted to the substantiation of central tools of influence on the solidarity of Ukrainian society. According to our convictions, the post-war renewal of the social contract in Ukraine should be considered the most important tool and, moreover, the objectively necessary foundation for strengthening the solidarity of Ukrainians after the end of the war. The semantic essence of a social contract is considered as a unity of the participants' goals, aimed at maintaining mutual trust, coordinating interests, and constantly using feedback. The main characteristics of a social contract include: a mutually acceptable community of development ideas; the existence of a mechanism for interaction between the people and the state; how and in what way the main aspirations, value orientations, and interests of people are coordinated with the policy of state power, what is their consent based on; whether a balance of power and a balance

of interests is ensured, whether there is feedback that shows how much the government not only listens to, but also hears the people. (Toschenko, 2023a; 2023b).

In this regard, it is important to note that today "we are living in an age of insecurity" and in post-crisis times, renewing the social contract is essential to restore a sense of security and maintain political support for open economies and open societies (Shafik, 2018). In the institutional dimension, a very important structural part of the social contract is the sphere of economy and social and labor relations. The movement towards balancing the forces, interests and responsibilities of various economic actors determines the state's capabilities to strengthen the potential and stability of the national socio-economic system. With this in mind, the strategic report "Towards a Renewed Social Contract" presented by the Director-General of the International Labour Organization in May 2024 rightly states that "... Through these contracts, societies strive to strike a balance between individual and collective responsibilities. Achieving this objective is not without its challenges. Power imbalances and divergent interests can complicate efforts to balance the elements that make up the social contract." (ILO, May 2024). The report also emphasizes that in these times of crisis, a renewal of the social contract is necessary, as it will help to meet the growing demand for social justice in almost all societies.

In response to the global trends of increasing geopolitical confrontation, economic fragmentation, multidimensional inequality and society's demand for social justice, in recent years the renewal of the social contract is on the global agenda, particularly at the level of UN institutions. Moreover, the Summit of the Future 2024 (which will be held on September 22–23, 2024 under the motto "Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow") and the World Social Summit 2025, which will be held under the UN auspices, show that the social contracts renewal is among the global agenda priorities. At the same time, it is expected that the renewal of the social contract will provide new incentives, resources and new capabilities for states to become more socially just, resilient, economically competitive, environmentally responsible as well as to advance on the path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for the period up to 2030.

The topic of the post-war renewal of the social contract in Ukraine is currently being actively discussed in expert, scientific, and political circles. Perhaps the most important main issue of such discussions is the question of substantiating the key principles on which the new social contract of Ukrainians will be formed. Taking into account the relevant research outcomes, as well as the initiatives and strategic approaches of the institutions of the global management architecture, it seems appropriate to single out the following principles that specifically relate to the social development of the country:

• the principle of societal resilience, which means society's ability to withstand shocks, which involves the combination of three components: the ability to overcome difficulties, the adaptive ability to learn from adversity for the future, and the transformative ability to create institutions and implement social security measures to build society's resilience to future shocks. According to the rationale of Ukrainian academic researchers, ensuring Ukraine's societal resilience is crucial both in wartime and in the postwar period, for the preservation of the Ukrainian nation under

- the modern global hybrid "peace-war" system (Heyets et al., 2023).
- the principle of social justice in its multifaceted interpretation according to the ILO. Even in pre-war times, a significant deficit of social justice and consolidation of destructive institutions, such as strong corruption, shadow economy, precarization, etc., was observed in Ukraine. This led to the erosion of the social contract, which in the post-war period can slow down or even inhibit its reconstructive recovery. Therefore, it is extremely important for Ukraine to move towards strengthening social justice in society, first of all, in line with the strategies and initiatives of the ILO. Clearly, the quest for social justice, at the heart of the ILO's constitutional mandate, goes beyond the world of work and requires the involvement of the entire multilateral system.
- In this context, the official establishment of the Global Coalition for Social Justice was announced at the 111th Session of the International Labor Conference in June 2023. The Global Coalition for Social Justice is the ILO ground-breaking multi-stakeholder Initiative aimed at intensifying collective efforts to urgently address social justice deficits and to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Decent Work Agenda. The ultimate goal is to achieve a greater balance amongst the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, to significantly reduce inequalities and poverty, and to meet essential needs and opportunities worldwide (ILO, December 2023).
- the principle of social dialogue, which, according to the ILO, is a cornerstone in the formation of social partnership and an effective mechanism for solving current economic and social problems, overcoming crises, encouraging good governance and stimulating socio-economic progress.
- the principle of social quality of life as a component of the scientific social quality concept used to improve the social parameters of the development of the European Union. The experts argued that the introduction into the public governance of post-war Ukraine of the social quality concept, adapted to domestic conditions, should contribute to the social contract on the gradual finding of a reasonable balance between two priorities: the simultaneous increase of efforts to systematically eliminate the threats of external aggression and the accelerated reconstructive recovery of the national socio-economic space based on the principles sustainable inclusive development (Burlay et al., 2022).

**Discussion and conclusions**. As we indicated above, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine considers the substantiation of potential dividing lines in Ukrainian society to be an important research mission and to develop practical recommendations for national public governance, the implementation of which will strengthen society-wide solidarity in the (post)war period. (NASU, 2024). One of such "fault lines" of Ukrainians of social solidarity is due to the institutional failure to build an effective and efficient national system of social dialogue, which, within the

framework of the tripartism model, regulates the interaction in the field of social and labor relations of three parties – trade unions, employers and the state. The imbalance of the interests of the social dialogue parties in Ukraine characterizes insufficient protection and the lack of guarantees of decent work for workers, on the one hand, and dissatisfaction with the needs of Ukrainian business for a qualified and highly productive workforce, on the other. (Kostrytsia et al., 2024). It is clear that there are still a number of dividing lines in Ukrainian society, especially under the influence of deeprooted destructive institutions such as high corruption, significant shadow economy and employment, precarization, etc. This determines the need for research on such dividing lines and the development of strategies and mechanisms for overcoming them.

Summarizing all of the above, we can come to the following conclusions:

- the strengthening of society-wide solidarity plays a primary role in order for Ukraine to withstand the war with the Russian Federation and to be able to effectively reconstruct itself in the post-war period;
- renewal of the social contract, as well as the principles of its formation, are of fundamental importance for strengthening national unity in Ukraine;
- among others, the following key principles necessary for the renewal of the social contract in Ukraine appear to be: societal resilience; social justice, social dialogue and social quality of life;
- in the context of the post-war development of Ukraine and its full integration into the EU, the relevance of the scientific substantiation of the most serious dividing lines in Ukrainian society and the creation of strategies and mechanisms for their gradual overcoming is increasing.

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# PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENCY CONTROL SYSTEM IN THE INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL ECONOMY MARKET

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**Abstract.** The relevance of research topic lies in complexity of creating an interconnected, coordinated unified system of currency regulation and currency control due to complex nature of relations under consideration. Especially in the era of digital economy, a systematic approach to state regulation of currency relations in the field of import-export relations plays a significant role in connection with foreign investments. The experience of foreign countries in the field of currency regulation and control in the era of digital economy shows that development of foreign exchange relations and domestic foreign exchange market occurs only with participation of state as an active regulator and presence of effective control over the currency. The effectiveness of the system of currency regulation and foreign exchange control is one of the most important factors in ensuring the stability of national currency, the stability of financial and credit system and the financial market, the formation of investment environment in the country, as well as the development of international economic integration. **Research method** - during the study, general theoretical methods were used, such as analysis and synthesis, summarizing scientific literature, theoretical modeling, and comparison methods. This article discusses the advantages and economic benefits of export-import operations, taking into account exchange control in the international market of the digital economy. The scientific results obtained in solving this problem include the study of the conceptual foundations of foreign economic activity in the era of the digital economy, which is emerging both at the global level and in the national economy.

**Keywords:** currency control, currency regulation, balance of payments, digital economy, export-import operations, investments

JEL: G15, H25, H54, M31, O33, Q10, R10

UDC: 657.6:336.74

**Introduction**. In the context of large volumes of foreign trade activities of domestic enterprises, one of the main functions of the country in terms of ensuring economic security is to ensure security in the field of foreign exchange relations. At the same time, the key vector of protecting state interests in the field of foreign exchange relations remains foreign exchange control over residents' compliance with the law in the process of fulfilling obligations under foreign trade contracts.

The complexity of creating an interconnected, coordinated unified system of currency regulation and currency control is due to the complex nature of the relations under consideration. Especially in the era of the digital economy, the lack of a systematic approach to state regulation of currency relations in the sphere of import-export relations plays a significant role in the emergence of certain problematic situations related to foreign investment.

The experience of foreign countries in the field of currency regulation and control in the era of the digital economy shows that the development of currency relations and the domestic currency market occurs only with the participation of the state as an active regulator and the presence of effective control over the currency. actions of authorized bodies. The effectiveness of the currency regulation and currency control system is one of the most important factors in ensuring the stability of the national currency, the stability of the financial and credit system and the financial market, the formation of the investment environment in the country, as well as the development of international economic integration. In addition, in the modern era, when waves of global and regional financial crises are often repeated, the issue of improving control over important instruments of economic regulation, currency transactions, especially import-export transactions, digital currencies has become relevant. and improving its mechanisms. In such a situation, the relevance of research devoted to the problems of improving currency control over currency transactions increases significantly.

Literature review. The issues related to the definition and implementation of the digital money sphere are particularly relevant in the territory of Azerbaijan. The phenomenon of digital money has been on the agenda in countries around the world before, and despite the fact that it has become an important object of trade, in the last few years this issue has become relevant in Azerbaijan. Even central banks of many countries have begun to implement legislation related to the regulation of digital money. In Azerbaijan, digital money trading is still being discussed at the level of believe it or not. In such conditions, it is very important to conduct research on this topic. There are many studies on digital money in foreign literature. Li and Wang (2017) conducted a theoretical empirical study to determine the exchange rate (against the US dollar) of digital currencies, taking into account both technological and economic factors. Within the framework of the topic, research works of foreign and domestic scientists were systematically studied and a number of conceptual provisions contained in these works were used.

**Research methodology**. The purpose of the article is to develop proposals and recommendations for improving the system of currency regulation and

mechanisms for its implementation based on a comprehensive study of the theoretical and practical aspects of the formation and development of currency control in the context of the development of the digital economy. The theoretical and methodological basis is the fundamental and applied concepts of the research topic presented in the scientific works of scientists of the republic and the world, relevant decrees, resolutions and orders adopted by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Cabinet of Ministers, ministers in this area and other regulatory economic and legal acts. The article used such methods as synthesis, comparative analysis, statistical analysis and grouping, induction, deduction, system-situational approach, etc.

**Main results**. The direction and form of the currency policy implemented by the Central Bank depend on the domestic economic situation of Azerbaijan and its place in the world market. The Central Bank usually applies two main forms of monetary policy: accounting and exchange rate. Accounting policy is conducted not only to change the terms of refinancing of local commercial banks, but is also aimed at regulating the exchange rate and balance of payments. The Central Bank, when buying or selling foreign currencies (exchange rate), influences the change in the exchange rate of the national currency in a certain direction (exchange rate policy). Such operations are called "currency intervention". Receiving state currency at the expense of official gold and foreign exchange reserves, it increases demand, and ultimately the exchange rate. The intensive development of the banking system in the republic, and especially the introduction of progressive payment systems, the development of electronic interbank transactions, the increase in the use of plastic cards, the establishment of POS terminals played the role of an additional incentive to increase the ability of the banking system to create money. In the last decade, the world has been rapidly changing under the influence of digital technologies. Monetary relations were no exception. Units are one of the main economic categories, so the digital economy has a direct impact on them.

Technical changes are the reality of today. The most famous of them are: acceleration of financial transactions; availability of financial services for the general population through mobile and Internet technologies; emergence of non-bank payment systems.

We can expect further improvement of existing services and new ones on an ongoing basis. New services make financial more accessible; increase the number of subscribers and gradually form a new quality. Digital technologies also cause controversial phenomena, such as a reduction in employment in many sectors of the economy (including the financial sector), cryptocurrencies, vulnerability of payment systems and banking functions to cybercrime. Fundamental changes in the monetary system are manifested gradually, and their impact on economic processes requires detailed study. In the near future, the decisive issue of the theory of money will be determining the impact on monetary relations of those global changes that are now observed in the economy. These are changes caused by the formation of the economy of the new century - the digital economy. Firstly, this is the appearance of digital money. The vast majority of monetary theories proceed from

the fact that money is issued centrally, and its circulation is regulated by the state and central banks. In this regard, all digital currencies are fundamentally different from any fiat money. They have no external or internal administrator. This makes it impossible to influence the money circulation or confiscate it by tax authorities, judicial authorities, other government agencies and traditional banks. Digital currency makes it possible to form completely anonymous transactions. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Money owners always strive for greater confidentiality, but such confidentiality can be used both to evade taxes and to finance criminal activities, including terrorism. Cryptocurrencies are often called "quasi-money" due to their unusual format and limited functions.

In our opinion, the confrontation between fiat money and digital currencies has just begun. The currency system is a set of currency and credit relations that have developed on the basis of the internationalization of economic life and the development of the world market, reflected in international treaties and state and legal norms. This objective reality is understood and reflected in legal norms and international treaties. Thus, the currency system can be defined as a set of economic relations related to the activities of the currency and the forms of its organization. As the internationalization of economic relations increases, national, regional and global currency systems are formed. Initially, the national currency system was created. This is a form of organization of the country's currency relations, which has developed historically and is reflected in national legislation.

The national currency system is determined by the currency legislation of the country. But at the same time, the national currency system is relatively independent and goes beyond national boundaries. Its main features are determined by the level of development, the state of the country's economy and foreign economic relations. The national currency system is inextricably linked with the world currency system. Within the country, the national currency acts as the currency of that country. When, for various reasons (foreign trade, capital export, etc.), the national currency goes beyond the country, it acquires a new quality - it acts as a currency.

According to their status, currencies are divided into the following types: national (a monetary unit determined by the legislation of the country, legal tender in the territory of the country where it is issued); foreign (banknotes, coins and claims denominated in the currencies of other countries, having legal tender in the territory of other countries); international convention (ICC); regional (euro).

Foreign currency circulates on currency markets, is used in international settlements, is kept in bank accounts, but is not legal tender in the territory of the specified state (except for periods of strong inflation). The category "Currency" ensures interaction between the national and global economies. Countries keep their liquid assets in reserve currency and use these assets to cover the negative deficit of the balance of payments. Currently, the currencies of only a number of industrially developed countries have complete freedom of circulation; most other countries have some restrictive measures on foreign exchange transactions. According to the method of convertibility, that is, depending on how freely a

particular currency can be exchanged for the currencies of different countries, the following types of currencies are distinguished:

- 1) Freely floating currencies (FFC). These currencies have unlimited internal and external circulation and can be used to form foreign exchange reserves. According to the new version of the IMF Charter (1978), this concept was replaced by the concept of "freely usable currency". According to IMF recommendations, such currencies include the US dollar, euro, British pound sterling, Swiss franc and Japanese yen. In essence, freely floating currencies include the currencies of those countries that are mainly industrialized and do not have currency restrictions on current balance of payments transactions.
- 2) **Relatively convertible currencies.** These currencies are subject to currency restrictions and are not exchangeable for all foreign currencies.
- 3) Closed (non-revolving) currencies. These currencies are valid only within one country and are not exchanged for other currencies on the world currency market. The exchange rate is the price of a unit of currency of a certain country, expressed in a unit of currency of another country or in units of the currency of international settlements. The basis of the exchange rate (especially in the enhanced mode) is the exchange rate parity. One of the important issues of the functioning of the currency system is the exchange rate regime. There are two opposite exchange rate regimes, on the basis of which it is possible to form an exchange rate regime in different options: a fixed exchange rate regime and a floating exchange rate regime. In the fixed rate regime, the exchange rate of the national currency of the country is determined by law, and in general very minor deviations are allowed (within a certain corridor). The fixed exchange rate regime means maintaining an unchanged national currency of the country in relation to a freely floating foreign currency. That is, the peculiarity of the fixed exchange rate is that it remains stable for a long period of time (months or years). To maintain a stable exchange rate, the Central Bank balances supply and demand in the foreign exchange market through active purchase and sale operations. When using the "floating" rate regime, the exchange rate is formed on the basis of the influence of supply and demand on the currency and changes daily and frequently.

According to the calculation method, exchange rates are actual and parity (determined based on the PPP of the currencies of the compared countries). Parity exchange rates in practice often do not coincide with the actual calculation, and differ from it in one direction or another. Taking into account inflation, it is necessary to distinguish between nominal (NM) and real (RM) exchange rates. In addition, a distinction is made between the nominal effective exchange rate and the real effective exchange rate. The real effective exchange rate is the nominal exchange rate calculated taking into account price changes.

The foreign exchange market is a general term for the worldwide institutions that exist to exchange or trade currencies of different countries. It is conventionally divided into two levels: the retail level and the wholesale level. The retail level is where small agents buy and sell foreign exchange. The wholesale level is an informal, geographically dispersed network of about 2,000 banks and foreign

exchange brokerage firms that deal with each other and with large corporations. The foreign exchange market is open 24 hours a day across three time zones. Foreign exchange trading begins each day in Sydney and moves around the world as the business day begins in each financial center, first in Tokyo, London, and New York. Exchange rates are constantly displayed on computer screens around the world. A trader enters a price for the US dollar to Swiss franc exchange rate on his computer, and can then receive messages from anywhere in the world from people willing to match that price. He doesn't care whether the counterparties are sitting in London, Singapore, or, for that matter, Buenos Aires. The foreign exchange markets are the largest of all the financial markets in the world. A typical transaction in US dollars is about 10 million (a "ten bucks" in dealer jargon). The latest triennial survey by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in April 2022 estimated that average daily trading volume in the foreign exchange market — spot, forward and swap — was approaching \$7.5 trillion, up 13% from April 2019.

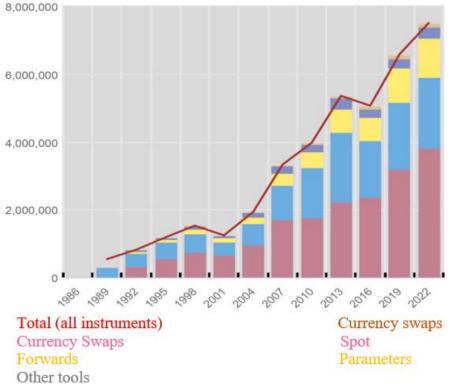


Figure 1. Foreign exchange market growth (1986-2022)

Source: <a href="https://bcs-express.ru/">https://bcs-express.ru/</a>

In April 2022, the main markets were London with 38% of daily volume, New York (19%), Singapore (9%), Hong Kong (7%) and Tokyo (4%). Zurich, Frankfurt, Paris and Amsterdam are smaller players. The main currency traded was the US dollar, which accounted for 88% of transactions, followed by the euro (31%) and the yen (17%). USD/EUR was the most traded currency pair in 2019 and captured 23% of global turnover, followed by USD/JPY with 18% and

USD/GBP with 9%. In 2022, local currency trading in emerging markets accounted for about 18% of foreign exchange transactions.

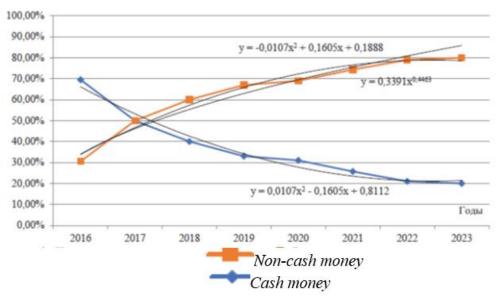


Figure 2. Dynamics of changes in the share of non-cash payments in the trade balance of Azerbaijan, in %

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data from The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan

It should be noted that as the share of non-cash money increases, the Bank's influence on the process of money creation and circulation decreases significantly. In this regard, the introduction of central bank digital currencies (CBDC), including the digital manat, increases the Bank's involvement in the process of money issuance and circulation. Since 2021, a requirement has been introduced for commercial banks to provide information to the Central Bank on transfers between individuals (Lagarde, 2017). Thus, the state is strengthening control over the financial system with the help of new technologies.

Given the international nature of the market, the majority (62%) of all foreign exchange transactions involve cross-border counterparties. This highlights one of the main issues in the foreign exchange market: counterparty risk. At the wholesale level, no real money changes hands. There are no messengers flying around the world with bags full of cash. All transactions are conducted electronically using an international clearing system. SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) operates the primary clearing system for international transactions. SWIFT is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. SWIFT has global routing computers located in Brussels, Amsterdam, and Culpeper, Virginia, USA. The electronic transfer system works very simply. Two banks involved in a foreign exchange transaction will simply transfer the bank deposits through SWIFT to settle the transaction. Players in the currency markets include speculators, corporations, commercial banks, currency brokers, and central banks. Corporations

enter the market primarily as hedgers; however, corporations can also speculate. Central banks are usually speculators, meaning they enter the market without closing their positions. Commercial banks and currency brokers primarily act as intermediaries, but at various times they may also be speculators, arbitrageurs, and hedgers. All parties in the currency market communicate through traders or dealers.

Commercial banks account for the largest share of total trading volume. In 2019, the BIS reported that more than 90% of all foreign exchange transactions were conducted either in the interbank market (39%) or with other financial institutions, including hedge funds, mutual funds, investment houses, and securities firms (53%). Only 9% of trades were between banks and non-financial clients, such as large corporations. The large volume of interbank trading is partly due to the geographically dispersed nature of the market and the price discovery process. The objectives of these national and international institutions are to support a crisisfree, safe regime for the development of international monetary, credit, and financial relations and to restructure it.

**Discussion and conclusions**. The digital economy affects all components of socio-economic life. Monetary relations are also changing rapidly due to the introduction of digital technologies. There are many reasons for these changes. They are different in different countries - they are influenced by both the internal environment of the country and the processes of globalization. The digital economy needs changes in the monetary system, and a person generates these changes himself.

In particular, as a result of the author's work, the following main results were obtained:

- 1. digital currencies of central banks are not an alternative to cryptocurrencies or non-cash money, the issue is carried out by central banks centrally;
- 2. the main difference between digital currency and cryptocurrency is the ability to perform all the functions of money;
- 3. digital currency (digital ruble) is a fiat currency determined and guaranteed by the state represented by the Central Bank;
- 4. the only property that unites digital currency and cryptocurrency is the use of distributed ledger technologies blockchain networks;
- 5. the difference between CBDC and electronic money is in the mechanisms of movement and storage location.

Despite the lack of an established regulatory framework and potential difficulties in the process of building a CBDC system, it can be concluded that the socio-economic effect of using a digital currency can outweigh the risks associated with it, and this is obvious. Creating opportunities for developing cross-border trade with the SCO and Southeast Asian countries.

In the course of work, the main provisions on the need for the development and digital transformation of financial institutions through the issuance of a state digital currency of the central bank as a basis for stabilizing the national economy in the digital environment, as well as the processes of establishing digital customs in the context of the development of a "smart" economy.

Conclusions regarding state control over digital currencies: Digital currencies will be deeply integrated into the legal reality; requirements for investor qualifications, compliance requirements, taxation, combating money laundering, insider trading and market manipulation will be explained in detail; Judicial practice will continue to develop actively. Perhaps, as an experiment, the Central Bank will allow traditional financial institutions to use virtual currencies (at the moment, there is a positive international legal position on this issue, including recommended risk ratios).

Key findings from this study: Why are digital currencies becoming more popular? In the case of the traditional financial system, the system fails if the currency is manipulated. The money will have no real value and investors will not get a return on their investment, which is naturally demotivating. In times of constant inflation, cryptocurrency (such as Bitcoin) can be considered a hedge. In the pre-COVID scenario, high inflation affected the stability of fiat currency. After COVID-19, the adoption of blockchain technology has increased significantly. In a hyperinflationary state, people are looking for a larger safety net to protect the impact of wealth and purchasing power. Since March 2020, digital currency has grown eightfold. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted economies around the world, forcing them to impose strict lockdowns for a significant period of time. It also had devastating effects on the global economy, causing asset prices to fall significantly. Growing concerns have created an extreme environment for cryptocurrency adoption.

How are countries reacting to digital currencies? The overall reaction from central banks around the world is lukewarm. While some countries are very supportive of digital currencies, other central banks are cautious due to the extreme level of volatility. Capital controls and tax issues have raised concerns and responses. However, many major banks are looking forward to the development of CBDC to match the modernized financial system and speed up payments. At the recent Federal Open Market Committee meeting held on September 22, 2021, the Chairman said that the Fed is evaluating whether it should become part of the mainstream society and create a central bank digital currency (CBDC). In September 2021, the PBOC (People's Bank of China) declared all cryptocurrencyrelated transactions illegal. Therefore, financial institutions cannot deal with cryptocurrencies. It has taken an aggressive stance against cryptocurrencies. The ECB (European Central Bank) aims to complement the existing financial system with digital currency, not replace it. Next, the Italian payment giant is said to be making a contribution to the ECB for the expected CBDC. Thus, it has taken a defensive stance.

How can digital currencies benefit the economic world? No middleman is required to exchange digital currencies. This leads to increased transaction speeds. The absence of middlemen reduces transaction costs. Lower transaction costs mean exchange efficiency and increased transaction volumes. There is less need for a

physical structure where people will come and transact. Fixed costs are lower because there are no salaries, rent, or utility bills required. There are even traders without a minimum deposit criterion. Also, there are no geographical barriers for digital currencies. So, there is no centralized authority to control transactions. This facilitates easy and fast trading for corporations. One Bitcoin is selling for \$59,150 as of November 2021. Most people will not be able to buy even one Bitcoin! Therefore, you can buy fractions of the cryptocurrency, which further increases the volume and feasibility of transactions. Digital currencies can become common currencies between economies, facilitating the expansion of trade.

Digital Currencies for Global Financial Inclusion:

- 1. Especially in developing countries, digital currencies help to buy resources and provide financial services due to their quick access. This thus accelerates the economic and social development of the global economy.
- 2. The system is decentralized, i.e., it is not under the control of a single person or body. Therefore, neither corporations nor individuals can exploit it, unlike the traditional financial system. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood of fraud.
- 3. Digital currencies are very useful for developing economies as they can enhance their economic and social status.

The digital economy has already changed and continues to change all spheres of socio-economic life. However, it is almost impossible to predict further developments due to the multifactorial nature, lack of systematicity of changes and their non-linearity. But today, having access to large volumes of information, it is possible to assess the opportunities and risks of the digital economy, including in the sphere of monetary relations.

The Central Bank conducts analyses in the following areas in relation to the Digital Currencies of the Central Bank:

- Indication of the policy, goal and objectives of the application of the digital currency;
- Involvement of stakeholders in the process;
- Analysis of the legislative framework;
- Potential for using new generation technologies;
- Level of market readiness.

A framework for cooperation with other central banks and international think tanks was also created to study the possibilities and prerequisites for the application of central bank digital currencies. A special working group was created in the Central Bank to effectively coordinate research work related to central bank digital currencies.

The digital payment infrastructure has been developed in Azerbaijan, the range and range of electronic payment services provided by banks has been expanded. On the other hand, the coronavirus pandemic and self-isolation measures have increased interest in remote banking services and e-commerce, which has led to a significant increase in digital payments.

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### ROMANIA CASE STUDY: A SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE ROMANIAN LABOUR MARKET

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Abstract. The Recovery and Resilience Plans of the Member States will focus on the development of green energies, digitization, robotization, and artificial intelligence. It will determine the reform of the labour market and constructive the change of the employment structure. It will not be neglected that any process of industrial restructuring and modernization of the economy is accompanied by social costs such as layoffs or increased inflation, which will require the development of social policies for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. The most important challenge regarding the labour markets in Romania and other states from Central and Eastern Europe is the labour market deficits. The labour force shortage affects the efficiency and business opportunities in Romania. The main target, assumed by the Romanian government through the Strategy for Employment for 2022-2024, is to achieve an employment rate of the population aged between 20-64 of 75%. This paper's research objective is the analysis of the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats of the Romanian labour market. A SWOT matrix is designed as a useful instrument in socio-economic impact qualitative analysis and employment strategy development. The results focus on the best measures for increasing better-paid jobs, educating a qualified and flexible labour force, reducing the social exclusion of disadvantaged groups (youth, women, minorities, or migrants), and reducing territorial economic disparities (between the urban and the rural area).

**Keywords:** Romania, labour market, SWOT, challenges, opportunities, vulnerable groups

**JEL**: J21, J24, J48, Q20, Q52

**UDC**: 331.5(498)

**Introduction**. The estimated total costs of the Romania Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR - Planul Național de Redresare și Reziliență) are EUR 28,5<sup>3</sup> billion. Romania requested non-refundable financial support for EUR 13,6 billion and loans totalize EUR 14,9 billion under the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism. Together, they represented 13.09% of the GDP of 2019. The plan contains 171

measures (64 reforms and 107 investments), comprising six pillars and fifteen components. The transformative impact of the PNRR results from a combination of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The plan is entirely financed by RRF grants and loans and REPowerEU Grants.

reforms and investments that address the country-specific challenges (European Commission, 2021a). According to the European Commission (2021b), to address weaknesses and older structural deficiencies, the PNRR is expected to contribute to economic and social recovery and long-term development. Measures to support private investment, particularly for SMEs, have the potential to attract investment and promote job creation and a better business environment.

The PNRR educational reforms and the promotion of green and digital skills will improve Romania's long-term growth potential and stimulate favourable growth inclusion by reducing disparities, with potential spillover effects on the labour market work. The investments for the digitalisation of education (EUR 1.16 billion) aim at improving digital pedagogical skills, educational content, and equipment and resources for all levels of education, including universities. The reforms from the PNRR will increase equal opportunities and contribute to ensuring a better correlation between labour market demand and skills supply. These measures can improve Romania's long-term growth potential and promote growth favourable to inclusion by reducing disparities, and stimulating potential spillover effects in the labour market, especially in terms of skills related to digitization. In addition, the increased provision of active labour market measures and the digitization of public employment services should support better access to the labour market for some vulnerable groups, such as young people (15-24 years).

In the context of cohesion policy, the specific challenges of the European Union (EU) are the strengthening of economic, social, and territorial cohesion based on the political priorities of the Union as the green and digital transition (European Commission, 2021c). Increasing employment and added value in the environmental economy are essential to achieving the green transition in the European Union. The opportunities from the perspective of the development of the green economy are closely related to ensuring the necessary labour force by establishing the balance between the demand and the supply of skills specific to the green transition. According to the forecasts of the European Commission (2018), EU employment will increase by almost 0.3% (around 650,000 – 700,000 jobs) by 2030, because of additional labour demand in the waste management and recycling sectors.

The National Strategy for Green Jobs (2018-2025) sets out the policy analysis framework for the effects of the green transition on the labour market, including the demand for new skills. Thus, it is estimated that more than 32,000 jobs will be lost due to the impact of the green transition and just transformation in the six counties with the most carbon-intensive industries. Workers in the affected regions will need active support to acquire new qualifications (Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, 2018).

**Literature review.** Kenton (2024) underlines that the labour market should be viewed at macroeconomic and microeconomic levels because each offers valuable insight into employment and the economy. He opines that labour supply

and demand are influenced by domestic and international market dynamics at the macroeconomic level, as well as by factors such as *immigration*, the age of the population, and education levels.

Bîrcă (2022) analyses the increasing labour force employment through active labour market policies. *Implementing active measures can generate a more effective match between job vacancies and registered unemployed by adjusting the skill mix of job seekers or improving job search efficiency* (Bîrcă, 2022, Estevão, 2007). The active labour market policies also contribute to increasing labour productivity due to vocational training programs or direct subsidies for job creation, which would change the demand for labour and increase employment and wages (Bîrcă, 2022, Estevão, 2007).

To assess the *impact of digitization on the labour market*, the European Commission (2022) analyses the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), which is a composite index summarizing relevant indicators of Europe's digital performance and tracking the evolution of EU Member States in terms of digital competitiveness. To highlight equal opportunities and access to the labour market, the Women in Digital (WiD <sup>4</sup>) Scoreboard is used, one of the actions implemented to assess the inclusion of women in digital jobs, careers, and entrepreneurship. The WiD Scoreboard assesses the performance of Member States in the area of internet usage, internet user skills as well as specialist skills and employment based on 12 indicators. Women are the most digital in Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, and the Netherlands. All these countries perform very well in DESI, too. Women in Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, and Italy score lowest on female participation in the digital economy and society.

According to Eurofound (2023), relatively little is known about the potential impact of digitization technologies on employment. Consequently, further research and the establishment of specific tools to monitor developments related to digitization in the labour market would be useful for informed policymaking. Given the virtual nature of digitization and thus its potential for cross-border applications and impacts, such a mechanism might be most effective at the supranational level.

Strategies to combat climate change, seen as a transformative process, will lead to *new green jobs creation and the greening of existing occupations*. In the broadest sense, green jobs can be defined as those that have a positive impact on the environment. Specifically, but not exclusively, these include (1) jobs that help protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity; (2) reducing the consumption of energy, raw materials, and water through high- efficiency strategies; (3) decarbonization of the economy; (4) minimizing the generation of all forms of waste or reducing air pollution (UNEP, 2008, Czako, 2020).

According to Anderson & Poeschel & Ruhs (2021), *labour* or *skills 'shortages'* have no universally accepted definition and no 'optimal' policy response. In the context of employer demands for immigrant workers, "labour shortages" usually refer to labour demand exceeding supply at prevailing wages

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Women in Digital Scoreboard shows a significant gender gap remains in specialist digital skills, though the gap is closing in internet user skills.

and conditions of employment. Some employers may be reluctant or unable to respond by offering higher salaries, reflecting the centrality of wages offered, employment conditions, and structural constraints. Such considerations probably also apply in the context of essential services; for example, employment conditions can simultaneously create flexibility for employers (which could contribute to resilience) and precariousness for workers (which could undermine resilience).

Numerous authors have appreciated the potential of the European Pillar of Social Rights for solving complex social issues in the EU space. It should be highlighted that on November 17, 2017, during the Social Summit in Gothenburg, EU leaders adopted the Proclamation on the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), in order to promote the creation of new jobs and stimulate inclusive economic growth. Schutter (2018) believes that EPSR could contribute to balancing the economic and social dimensions in the EU architecture, being able to provide an adequate framework for evaluating the impact of the Convergence and Stability Programs or the implementation of the recommendations adopted within the European Semester, addressed to all EU Member States. The author also highlights that the EPSR could increase the visibility of the European Social Charter in the economic and social governance of the EU, thus facilitating social convergence in the EU.

The European Pillar of Social Rights is meant to provide new and more effective rights for citizens. The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) is an initiative launched by the European Commission with very ambitious aims; to bring back the social dimension of the EU, rebalance economic policies with social considerations. It is based on 20 essential principles, structured in three major areas of action: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and social inclusion. Of the 20 EPSR principles, 4 of them are centred on equal opportunities and access to the labour market (EU Council, 2017).

According to Karlson and Wennerberg (2018), "many of the principles and rights regulated under the social EPSR have not yet materialized as binding rules at the EU level." The authors point out that the impact of the social pillar will be minimal in the short term, but the effects will be positive in the long term because when the EU proclaimed the EPSR, it established unitary social objectives for the Member States and clear principles to be implemented. On this basis, an opportunity has been created for the EU to create new legislation in the field of labour market policies. Rather than "supporting and complementing" Member States' social and labour market policies, the EU can now with the help of EPSR replace these national policies with the Union's "best goals" to implement fully the 20 unique principles (Karlson and Wennerberg, 2018).

**Research Methodology**. The research uses a multidisciplinary approach that involves a systemic analysis of empirical economic processes and qualitative research of the National Institute of Statistics (INS) data. Both types of analyses are based on consulting specialized literature, studies, and articles published by

established authors in a consensual-inductive system and on the analysis of official employment strategies documents.

What adds value to the research is the analysis of Romania in the context of the PNRR reforms, to identify the challenges and opportunities specific to the labour markets and to investigate how the specific objectives were fulfilled.

Main results. Romanian government Strategy for Employment for 2021-2027. According to ANOFM (2021), "the specific objectives, and most of the measures included in the action plans, have a high level of coherence and relevance to adequately respond to the *specific needs and requirements of the Romanian labour market*".

- I. The first strategic objective aims to increase access to the labour market by providing viable options for the integration of groups of people at the two extremes of the career path, namely the young and the elderly, to maintain the status of employed persons until standard retirement age.
- II. The second specific objective aims to improve the occupational structure and increase participation in the labour market among several categories of disadvantaged people (Table 1).

Table 1. Measures to increase the employment of vulnerable categories

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Categories of persons	Active labour market integration measures
The rural population	<ul> <li>Measures to prepare the transition of workers from subsistence agriculture to productive activities, for instance: information actions, orientation, counselling, and professional training;</li> <li>Measures to increase competitiveness in agriculture sectors, by improving the level of skills;</li> </ul>
	- Measures to stimulate entrepreneurship and professional training in complementary non-agricultural fields;
	- Integrated packages that include occupational and geographic mobility actions necessary to transfer the population from subsistence agriculture to other jobs generating higher and constant incomes.
Women	- Measures aimed at supporting participation in the labour market and reconciling employment with the activities and care needs of dependent persons in the family/household;
	- Measures to improve the infrastructure serving care services for preschool children;
	- Awareness/education measures among pupils/students and in the private environment regarding equal opportunities between women and men, including the training of those who are responsible for applying the legal framework in force;
	- Actions to encourage the integration of women from vulnerable categories into the labour market by concluding partnerships with non-governmental organizations or other interested entities in order to access non-reimbursable funds.

Highly vulnerable
persons
(from the social
assistance
system/disabled
persons)

- Measures involving social support for vulnerable people;
- Direct measures for people from vulnerable groups, but also incentives given to employers for offering employment opportunities to these people;
- Measures dedicated to the "social economy, to support disadvantaged communities in developing social enterprises";
- Measures for *minorities* aimed at granting benefits and social services according to the specific needs of the person and services to stimulate participation in education, training, and employment programs.

*Source: Table developed by the authors based on ANOFM (2021)* 

III. The third specific objective is consistent with the general objective of the Strategy for Employment and refers to the development of human resources with a high level of qualification and skills, adapted to the requirements of the labour market, by supporting the adaptability and permanent development of the workforce. These are linked to the *structural changes in the labour market and improving the skills level of the unemployed and inactive persons able to work, to facilitate their reintegration into the labour market.* 

The target assumed by the Romanian government is the increase of "quality employment", under sustainability conditions, so that, by the end of 2027, the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 will be 75%. Achieving the overall objective will be achieved through the implementation of measures to increase the quality of employment, the promotion of a competent, skilled, and adaptable workforce, considering the fight against social exclusion, and the promotion of social dialogue to increase convergence and improve resilience, but and to reduce disparities at the territorial level.

The Romanian Labour Market analysis. The labour market is facing an imbalance between the needs of the labour market and the available skills, in the context of a major shortage of domestic labour in several fields of activity. Although in 2016-2020, the employment rate increased from 61.6% to 65.6%, the working-age population (15-64 years). These trends can diminish the labour force's contribution to GDP growth, with businesses having difficulty filling vacancies and finding relevant skills. According to the European Commission (2021a), the competencies of vocational education graduates and higher are not sufficiently aligned with the labour market, which also contributes to the high percentage of young people who are not professionally employed and follow any educational or training program (NEET) remains among those higher in the EU (16.6% in 2020, comparative cu 14.7% in 2019).

In 2023, the *youth employment rate* (15-24 years) was only 18.7% and registered a higher value for men (23.4%) than for women (13.7%). According to the same source, the young employed persons worked mainly as employees (77.6%) and as contributing family workers (11.6%), and 10.6% as self-employed

workers. Young people represented only 4.8% of employment, having a higher percentage in rural areas (64.5%) (INS, 2023).

Young people represented 22.8% of the total unemployment in rural area and 23.0% in urban area in 2023. Among young unemployed 63.4% were men, and 70.6% lived in rural areas. The incidence of long-term unemployment among young people (weight of unemployed aged 15-24 years for 6 months and over, in total unemployed in the same age group) was of 51.0%. Higher values of this indicator were recorded for men (52.8%) and for people in rural area (53.3%) (INS,2023).

The *employment rate* of population aged 20-64 years was 68.7%<sup>5</sup> in 2023, registering higher values for men (78.2% as compared to only 59.1% for women). By residence area, the employment rate in urban area was 74.7% compared to 62.3% in rural area (INS, 2023).

The *unemployment rate* (ratio of unemployed in active population) was, at the national level, 5.6% in 2023. In July 2024, the unemployment rate was, in seasonally adjusted form, 5.4%, decreasing by 0.2 percentage points compared to the one recorded in July 2023 (Figure 1). The unemployment rate for men was 0.6 percentage points higher than for women (the values respectively being 5.7% for males and 5.1% for females) (INS, 2024).

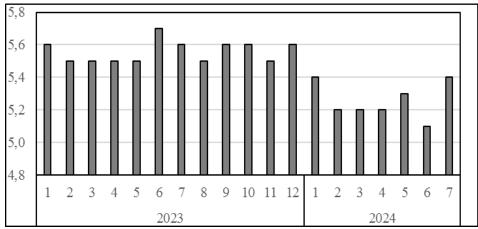


Figure 1. The unemployment aged 15-74 years rate between January 2023-July 2024

Source: INS data (July 2024)

**Discussion and conclusions.** Based on the methodology of systemic analysis, which is applied in the research of Romanian labour reforms impact, a SWOT matrix has been developed as an instrument of strategic objectives planning and risk management. (Box 1).

Box 1. A SWOT matrix on the labour market resilience in Romania

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Strategy for Employment for 2022-2024 target is to achieve an employment rate of the population aged between 20-64 of 75%.

- Romania's Recovery and Resilience Plan
  provides for the development of professional
  skills necessary for a just green transition as
  renewable energy sectors and the energy
  efficiency of buildings and digital
  competitiveness.
- The National Strategy for Employment for 2021-2027.
- The National Strategy for Green Jobs (2018-2025).
- Human Capital Operational Program 2021 –
   2027 to support the integration of disadvantaged categories into the labour market, addressed mainly to young people.
- The accentuation of disparities at the territorial level, the accentuation of development differences between regions, between urban and rural, coupled with a reduced labour force mobility at the national level.
- In Romania, during the pandemic, the lack of qualified and highly qualified personnel in the medical field, engineering, information, and communication technology, as well as unqualified or qualified workers in the agricultural sector, increased.
- A high level of bureaucracy, together with a low level of digitization.
- According to a comparative study by the World Bank carried out in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania and Serbia, the recovery of the gap caused by the non-occupation of Roma could bring almost 9.9 billion euros annually to the economies of these four countries through increased production and 3.5 billion euros annually in tax benefits (World Bank, 2014).

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Anticipatory development of education systems in order to ensure human resources with a high level of qualification and skills adapted to the demands of the labour market, both present and future, specific to digitization and the green economy.
- The existence of unique indicators at the EU level for monitoring the progress made within the EPSR constitutes a decrease in the subsidiarity of social policies and an increase in the role of the EU in creating much more integrated and unitary social policies, which have an essential role in increasing social cohesion and the level of living and quality of life in all Member States. This implies the establishment of a European process for the coordination of social policies in general and employment policies in particular, which will periodically assess and monitor the progress made in the implementation of the 20 basic principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Social Scoreboard indicators.
- EPSR tries to give a unique and coordinated response to the main challenges facing the EU: inequalities, poverty, unemployment, social

#### THREATS:

- There are some *financial risks* regarding the attraction of allocated EU funds, which are linked with the inadequate administrative capacity and the ineffective management of the *National Recovery and Resilience Plan*.
- The most recent challenge is the refugee crisis in Ukraine and implicitly the way of managing the integration processes of children in the education systems and of adults in the labour market in Romania.
- The perpetuation of the phenomenon of mass emigration ("brain drain") of qualified and highly qualified labour force from Romania.
- The increase in unemployment and social expenses if the integration of the beneficiaries on the labour market is not effective.
- Increasing the number of people exposed to the risk of poverty and social exclusion if the EU recommendations regarding the state

exclusion, economic-social and territorial disparities, and how its principles will be put into practice in all Member States depends the very future of the EU, as a space of European values, in which the social rights of all citizens are respected to the same extent.

- of implementation of the EPSR are not put into practice in the Member States.
- Marginalization and expansion of the difficulties of integration into society of the unemployed from disadvantaged categories (young people, women, minorities, migrants).

Source: Author's representation based on literature review and European Union legislation

In the short and medium term, the main weakness of the labour market in Romania is that *employers have difficulties finding new employees with the necessary skills*. Many fastest-growing occupations, such as engineering, software development, or healthcare, require highly skilled labour.

According to Eurostat, in 2021, only 23% of Romanians aged between 30 and 34 had a university degree (tertiary education), well below the EU average of 41%. It represents the lowest share among EU member states. By comparison, almost half of the EU Member States have already reached the target for this indicator of 45% for 2030: Luxembourg, Ireland, Cyprus, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Slovenia, Portugal, and Latvia (Eurostat, 2022).

Additionally, the main threat in terms of maintaining salary differences between Member States and the free movement of labour will be the maintenance of a high level of emigration from Romania for economic reasons (as is also the case in other states in Central and Eastern Europe), too much more developed countries. In overcoming the health crisis, reducing the differences between the demand and the supply of labour force qualifications remains the main challenge, which can be answered by developing continuous education and training programs at the level of the present and future requirements of the labour market in Romania.

Also, Romania must consider "a zero priority" the development of national strategies regarding the *integration of young people into the labour market* by granting financial incentives to companies, such as wage subsidies, payment of bonuses, exemption from paying social insurance contributions or tax exemption, through programs for the creation of new jobs in the public sector intended for young people and through the development of entrepreneurship and start-up companies among them.

The transition process to a green economy is complex. It includes technological components and measures of education and professional training, active employment labour market measures, and social and regional protection. These tools are essential to help local economies innovate, overcome potential labour market imbalances, and manage job losses (downsizing, restructuring) and job creation. Labor market policies accompanying the green just transition can help to generate decent green jobs.

In conclusion, the PNRR reforms of the labour market are based on two pillars (green economy and digitalization), it offers significant opportunities for the

new job creation and it is accompanied by different challenges, especially in some economic sectors and for some categories of workers. The main challenges for labour market restructuring are the mismatch between skills supply and demand and difficulties in anticipating and establishing appropriate skills policies to support workers in coping with structural change.

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### INTERACȚIUNI FAMILIALE ȘI ATITUDINI ÎN POSTMODERNISM

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**Abstract.** In the contemporary context, the traditional family is no longer defining for the society we live in (Popescu, 2009). The paper aims to present resulting from the metamorphosis of the traditional family type in the context of the dissolution of the traditional marriage and the creation of new forms of marital interrelationship, respectively non-marital. Although at first glance the subject is rated more as a social phenomenon, in recent years, has been gaining more and more acclaim, the debate aims to capture the issue from a scientific perspective as well. The research aims to focus both on the new types of interactions between/among the social actors involved in the process and the impact of these new types of alternatives on the reconstruction of the members' interrelationships and, above all, on the resilience generated by this new calibration of social interactions results. The project's goal is to capture the dynamics of the redefinition of interactions between children-adults-society (parents/extended family). In conclusion, by the topic addressed in the paper actively contribute to new debates related to this topic and focus on constant set up of adapted new programs and specific public social policies.

**Keywords:** family, social network, marriage dissolution, socio-emotional integration, social recalibration, interrelational families alternatives

JEL: C30, C31, D71, D91, J12

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Introducere. Lucrarea de față reprezintă o prezintare a unei problematici extrem de complexe în contextul socio-familial contemporan. Fără a avea pretenția că datele prezentate epuizează informațiile de specialitate din domeniu, lucrarea de față poate fi apreciată drept un punct de plecare bine structurat atât în cadrul unor dezbateri academice ulterioare, cât și în discuțiile dintre decidenții politici relevanți. Deopotrivă, trebuie reținut în mod deosebit că toate informațiile expuse în prezenta lucrare au caracter preliminar, tocmai datorită faptului că tematica abordată este în proces de aprofundare științifică. Documentul este împărțit în patru secțiuni. În prima secțiune, sunt descrise date legate de contextul dinamicii sistemului familial, în diferite etape de dezvoltare ale umanității (evoluții tehnologice, conflicte armate, industrializarea, dezvoltarea tehnicii informaționale) (Popescu, 2009). Pornim de la faptul că, în contextul contemporan, se desprinde ideea potrivit căreia familia tradițională începe să nu mai reprezinte o accepțiune definitorie pentru societatea în

care ființăm (idem). Astfel, prezenta lucrare își propune să prezinte dinamica rezultată ca urmare a metamorfozei tipului de familie tradițională în contextul desfacerii mariajului tradițional și crearea de forme alternative de interrelaționare maritală, respectiv non-maritală. Cercetarea de față își concentrează atenția atât asupra noilor tipuri de interacțiuni dintre / între actorii sociali implicați în această dinamică psiho-socială, cât și impactul acestor noi tipuri de alternative în ceea ce privește reconstituirea interrelaționării actorilor sociali. O atenție specială este acordată și rezilienței comportamentelor generate de această nouă calibrare socială a interacțiunilor rezultate.

În secțiunea a doua, metodologia de cercetare, sunt descrise dimensiunile abordate. Aceasta se va structura pe două paliere diferite, astfel:

- La nivel macro-social (nivel de societate): culegerea datelor (analiza documentelor oficiale/politici, studii, analiza literaturii științifice, statistici oficiale);
- La nivel micro-social (nivel individual): identificarea motivelor psihosociale și valorice care au condus la destrămarea familiei, inclusiv creionarea noilor scenarii de adaptare socială a membrilor familiei.

În secțiunea a treia sunt descrise rezultatele scontate din perspectiva aplicării tehnicilor de cercetare specifice sociologice (etapa empirică). De asemenea, în acest context reiterez aspectul potrivit căruia rezultatele scontate au un caracter preliminar, dat fiind faptul că cercetarea este în curs de implementare.

În secțiunea de concluzii, am rezumat ideile principale ce au fost expuse, precum și potențiale ipoteze supuse viitoarei etape de cercetare. Dat fiind faptul că cercetarea este în stadiul de analiză a literaturii de specialitate, aspectele empirice urmând a fi aplicate, informațiile vor avea un caracter provizoriu. Acestea urmează a fi întregite odată cu interpretarea datelor colectate, respectiv centralizate și interpretate.

Trecere în revistă a literaturii de specialitate. Viziunea lucrării este prezentarea dinamicii rezultate ca urmare a metamorfozei tipului de familie tradițională în contextul dezinstituționalizătii mariajului tradițional și crearea de forme (alternative) de interrelaționare între actorii sociali, în noul context. Accentul se dorește a fi concentrat asupra dinamicii procesării noilor recalibrări psihosocietale a rolurilor copiilor și părinților, familiei largite, grupul de prieteni, în contextul separării oficiale a celor doi soți. Cercetarea științifică își propune să se concentreze atenția atât asupra dinamicii noilor tipuri de interacțiuni dintre / între aceștia, cât și asupra impactului acestor alternative maritale asupra reconstituirii interrelaționărilor membrilor. Am acordat o atentie deosebită rezilienței comportamentelor generate de noua reconceptualizare a interacțiunilor rezultate în urma procesului post-divort, atît în cadrul comunității din care fac parte, cât și în societate, în general. Calitatea vieții de familie, precum și dinamica dezvoltării rețelelor sociale alternative reprezintă o preocupare constantă la nivel european și la nivelul fiecărui stat preocupat de acest aspect. Fără îndoială este faptul că, pentru construcția durabilă, social funcțională a unei epoci este esențială cunoașterea istoriei, "pentru că ziua de astăzi se trage din cea de ieri, iar ziua de mâine este

rodul trecutului" (Goody, 2003). Tocmai pornind de la această afirmatie, în contextul cunoașterii parcursului sistemului familial, în Europa, în cazul de față, se evidențiză faptul că, în ceea ce privește structura de funcționare a sistemului ", familie", trecutul a participat în mod evident la constituirea formei sale actuale. La o privire atentă însă se pot observa, uneori mai fine, alteori mai accentuate, inserții ale altor subiecte specifice altor domenii sociale, economice și juridice. Este și firesc să fie astfel. Familia este, în esență, nucleul societății. Ca și observație generală se desprinde în mod evident ideea conform căreia familia tradițională / familia celui de al Doilea Val începe să nu mai fie definitorie pentru societatea contemporană, însă nu în sensul clasic, ea dezvoltând, totusi, varii modele alternative. În contextul industrializării și în contextul continuu de modificare a structurilor societale, a migratiei, a oportunitătilor multiple de angajare pe piața forței de muncă, a apariției unui feminism dezvoltat în mod dramatic (ca și consecință, printre altele, a industrializării), alternativele familiei tradiționale se dezvoltă constant, rezultând multiple modele care, în mod surprinzător prioritizează împlinirea personală, și nu confortul economic/financiar. Este, dacă doriți, ceea ce noile generații numesc "slowlife" (Ionită, 2024)<sup>6</sup>. Actorii sociali pun un accent mai mare pe îndeplinirea nevoilor personale, intime. În acest cadru social, perseverența generațiilor anterioare pentru realizarea și împlinirea economico-materiale pierde din teren.

Însă, pe parcursul succesiunii evenimentelor istorice, apariția și dispariția unor epoci, ale unor societăți și cutume ale acestora, ale conflictelor armate, familia, în ciuda problemelor legate de schimbare și, implicit, de continuitate, a rezistat. Aceasta s-a metamorfozat în dimensiuni alternative de funcționare, interelaționare socio-juridică. Cu toate acestea, familia este în esență, una dintre cele mai trainice / funcționale construcții sociale. Fără niciun dubiu, întreaga organizare administrativă și instituțională a societăților este construită în jurul acestei forme sociale de organizare. Studiul legat de sociologia familiei, chestiunile legate de dinamica progresului / evoluției acestui construct social trebuie să demareze, în primul rând, de la noțiunea de bază: ce reprezintă *familia*, ce se înțelege prin dinamica familiei? Răspunsul este, pe cât de simplu (aparent), pe atât de complex, căci, la rândul ei, întrebarea dă naștere unor altor întrebări adiacente. Dinamica socială din această perspectivă a fost și este surprinzătoare, deși în mod evident este una durabilă și adaptativă epocii la care facem referire.

Pentru a dezvolta și înțelege comportamentul social al familiei, modalitățile de relaționare socială, economică, afectivă, este imperios să ne întrebăm, înainte de toate, dacă modificarea dinamicii tradiționale reprezință sau nu o problemă socială, un nou construct social care pune în pericol echitatea și liniștea socială a oamenilor, a structurilor sociale funcționale, per ansamblu. Deși am fi tentați, la prima vedere să susținem că "da, este o problemă socială", la o privire mai minuțioasă, deducem

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Actorii sociali pun un accent mai mare pe realizarea nevoilor personale, împlinirea nevoilor individuale. În acest cadru de dezvoltare socială, perseverența generațiilor anterioare pentru realizarea materială pierde teren, fiind înlocuită cu o reconceptualizare a abordării relațiilor personale, romantice, familiale.

că modificarea dinamicii nucleului familial, înainte de toate, poate răspunde, mai abitir, la o serie de întrebări mult mai bine țintite:

- Care este contextul istoric/social care a determinat/determină dezvoltarea alternativelor familiale?
- Care sunt cauzele şi efectele modificării comportamentului familial?
- În ce măsură şi în ce mod sunt afectate structurile sociale de noile configurații ale celulei familiei tradiționale – model după care societatea a funcționat, uneori chiar şi din inerția contextuală?
- Care sunt consecințele sociale/comportamentale ale noilor modele alternative familiei?

Atitudini față de căsătorie și divort. În contextul postmodern, grupurile, indivizii sociali, în mod constant, își redefinesc percepțiile asupra necesităților vieții, ale personalității. Nici în cazul de față, abordarea privind căsătoria/divorțul nu face excepție de la această regulă. Fără îndoială, familia, de a lungul timplui, a fost/este supusă unui profund proces de redefinire, adaptat la condițiile sociale ale vremurilor. Dacă în structura familiei tradiționale fuziunea celor doi parteneri aveau la bază alte valori de funcționare în comun (în special criterii economice și de statut social), în momentul actual, acestea au fost redefinite. În mod evident și clar nevoia de satisfacere a dorintelor personale, necesitătile personalității a înlocuit nevoia de siguranță economică ce putea fi obținută numai în sânul familiei, unde capul familiei (sotul) asigura nevoile materiale. În societatea actuală, putem vorbi inclusiv de un individualism versus reciprocitate (Popescu, 2009: 82). Putem deduce, astfel că, atitudinea față de căsătorie a suportat o repoziționare fundamentală. De altfel, însăși atitudinea tinerilor față de această instituție este constantă. În urma unui studiu, Steven L. Nock (1998) își rezumă, la câteva aserțiuni/afirmații, percepția generală asupra căsătoriei, astfel: "a) oamenii vor să se căsătorească; b) pentru a se căsători, trebuie să atingă un anumit nivel de maturitate; c) căsătoria este monogamă; d) căsătoria este heterosexuală; e) sotul este capul familiei; f) în cadrul cuplului, rolurile de gen sunt distincte; g) a avea copii este o componentă indispensabilă a căsătoriei" (Popescu, 2009: 81).

Perspective conexe subiectului abordat sunt, desigur, subiectele legate de abordarea economică, culturală și de gen. Concret, în termenii perspectivei economice, prin diviziunea specializată a muncii, creșterea independenței economice a femeilor este apreciat de către cercetători a fi principală cauză a remodelării statusului marital. Totodată, tot din acest punct de vedere, Valerie Oppenheimer (1994) înaintează o perspectivă complementară: prin creșterea independenței pe piața forței de muncă a femeilor, indirect, bărbații au suferit o scădere a nivelului venitului economic. Pe cale de consecință, dacă în familia tradițională una dintre principalele considerente de întemeiere era siguranța oferită de către bărbat, în contextul actual, prin emanciparea femeilor, deci și prin creșterea independenței financiare a acestora față de bărbat, această nevoie a trecut pe plan secund, ca și importanță în stabilirea/oficializarea unei relații. Nevoiți să amâne oficializarea unei relații (prin căsătorie) uniunea consensuală devine, fără

doar și poate, dezirabilă. Ea poate fi percepută cu ușurință ca și variantă de compromis/alternativă la căsnicie, cu costuri mult mai mici/reduse.

Din perspectiva culturală: urmare a schimbărilor tendințelor economice, s-a dezvoltat și o remodelare a normelor sociale. Acum, individul, persoana este în centrul vieții sociale (putem, inclusiv, să discutăm despre o individualizare accentuată la nivelul societății per ansamblu). Individualizarea produce indivizi mult mai deschiși și flexibili din punctul de vedere al trărilor și îndeplinirii nevoilor individuale versus respectarea unor norme sociale/exterioare impuse. În momentul actual acestea încep a fi considerate depășite în societate, fiind apreciate drept neconforme cu realitățile cotidiene.

Din perspectiva de gen, odată ce rolul femeii în cadrul familial a fost modificat în epoca postmodernistă (comparativ cu tradiționalismul), indirect toată referința față de cadrul organizational a necesitat, de asemenea, o readaptare a stilului de viață. Armonizarea implicării femeilor în rolul social și viața de familie a condus către mari schimbări de abordare a ceea ce înseamnă relațiile familiale (*Tabelul 1*).

Ca și observație specifică, în România nu există o plajă eterogenă în ceea ce privește regulile și valorile de coabitare – comparativ cu cei care aleg ca și formă de conviețuire căsătoria. Deși persoanele care conviețuiesc împreună în România sunt relativ tinere (neavând un capital uman și material valid), în țara noastră această formă de coabitare este percepută ca fiind mai mult tranzitorie, premergătoare căsătoriei și nu o alternativă pe o perioadă nedeterminată. Cu siguranță, în România, modelul clasic de familie se regăsește, ca și preferință, în topul alegerilor.

Metodologia de cercetare. Pornind de la afirmația că valoarea unei științe este dată și de epoca istorică în care aceasta se dezvoltă (Popescu, 2009, p. 81), apreciez că, pentru obținerea unor rezultate cât mai apropiate de realitate, este necesară concentrarea eforturilor, în primul rând, pe aspectele calitative, fără însă a minimaliza importanța datelor cu caracter cantitativ.

În contextul în care, din perspectivă științifică, sunt puncte de vedere și teorii pro și contra abordării stilului calitativ (acesta fiind considerat un stil prea flexibil, centrat mai mult pe semnificații culturale, cercetătorul fiind implicat în construirea realității) versus stilul cantitativ (acesta fiind considerat un stil în care cercetătorul este detașat, iar datele statistice sunt cele care probează ipoteza cercetării), apreciez că o intercorelare a celor 2 metode de cercetare determină extragerea celor mai echilibrate concluzii. Practic, structura metodologiei va urma calea unui "calitativ mai riguros, interferat cu un cantitativ mai flexibil" (Chelcea 1997:7).

Concret, metodologia de cercetare se va structura pe două aspecte prioritare: la nivel macro-social (nivel de societate): culegerea datelor (analiza documentelor oficiale/politici; studii, analiza literaturii științifice, analize de date secundare, statistici oficiale); la nivel micro-social (la nivel individual): identificarea motivelor psiho-socio-economice care au condus la generarea situației de destrămare a căsniciei, inclusiv realizarea proiecțiilor și generarea noilor scenarii de viață socială adaptative post-divorţ. Metodele selectate: analiză calitativă: interviul (individual).

Ca parte importantă în procesul de culegere a datelor, această metodă permite un grad mai ridicat de flexibilitate, cercetătorul având libertatea de a analiza și descrie în detaliu punctul de vedere al actorului social intervievat. Flexibilitatea evaluării și interpretării conferă metodei un caracter mult natural, firesc (spre deosebire de metoda cantitativă care se bazează mai mult pe instrumente/date exacte/precise).

Rezultate principale. În contextul prezentei abordări a lucrării, este preconizat că rezultatele finale vor conduce către: colectarea informațiilor, în structura unei baze de date, privind identificarea nevoilor individuale în contextul desfacerii căsniciei; identificarea elementelor ce generează un tipar psiho-social nou de conviețuire; recalibrarea modelelor sociale de conviețuire ale actorilor sociali; regândirea și adaptarea la noile circumstanțe economice, culturale, tradiționale și demografice.

În contextul etapei prezentei cercetări, datele furnizate legate de numărul de căsătorii, respectiv numărul de divorțuri, sunt date primare, respectiv analize secundare de date.

Tabel. 1. Mișcarea naturală a populației în România

on it is a gent en interior in popularies in					
Anul Luna	Căsătorii <sup>2)</sup>	Divorţuri <sup>2)</sup>			
A	4	5			
2024 <sup>3)</sup>					
Ianuarie	3700	589			
Februarie	4371	1785			
Martie	5484	1980			
Aprilie	4765	1735			
Mai	9697	1571			
Iunie	11769	1546			
Iulie	13124	1540			

Sursa: INS, Mişcarea naturală a populației în România, <u>www.insse.ro</u> Notă: <sup>2)</sup>Date definitive (repartizate după data producerii evenimentului demografic).

<sup>3)</sup>Date provizorii (repartizate după data înregistrării evenimentului demografic).

Nupțialitate și divorțialitate (INS, 2024). Cele mai recente date furnizate de către INS, în luna iulie 2024, la oficiile de stare civilă: s-au înregistrat 13124 căsătorii, în creștere cu 1355 (+11,5%) față de luna iunie 2024. Numărul divorțurilor pronunțate prin hotărâri judecătorești definitive și prin acordul soților (pe cale administrativă sau prin procedură notarială) a fost de 1540 în luna iulie 2024, în scădere cu 6 (-0,4%) față de luna iunie 2024. În perioada ianuarie 2023 – iulie 2024, cel mai mare număr de căsătorii s-a înregistrat în luna august 2023 (17414), iar cel mai mic în luna ianuarie 2024 (3700).

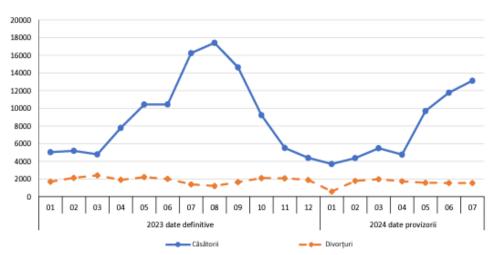


Figura 1. Evoluția numărului de căsătorii și divorțuri, în perioada ianuarie 2023-iulie 2024

Sursa: Mișcarea naturală a populației în luna iulie 2024, <u>www.insse.ro</u>.

Concomitent cu datele secundare prezentate mai sus, unul dintre factorii cei mai relevanți care au condus la reorganizarea socială a structurii familiale este independența femeii în societate. Familia tradițională versus familia egalitară are la bază emanciparea femeilor. Dimensiuni majore care au condus la această stare de fapt: educația, accesul pe piața forței de muncă, mobilitatea locurilor de muncă. Implicarea femeii din ce în ce mai mult în sfera socială a condus, iremediabil și la reorganizarea legăturilor și raporturilor intrafamiliale (tradiționalism versus egalitarism).

Tabelul 2. Tendinte: Rolul femeji în familie și ne piata muncii

1 abelul 2. <b>Tendințe: Rolui femeii în familie și pe piața mu</b> n	icii
A avea o slujbă e un lucru bun, dar ce își doresc cu adevărat femeile este să	74%
aibă familie și copii.	
O soție care nu lucrează este tot atât de realizată ca și una care are o slujbă plătită.	39,5%
Un copil preșcolar probabil va suferi dacă mama sa lucrează (are serviciu).	42%
Viața de familie are de suferit atunci când femeia are o slujbă cu normă întreagă.	34,1%
Ambii soți trebuie să câștige bani pentru întreținerea familiei.	93,2%
O mamă care lucrează poate fi la fel de grijulie față de copii ca și una care nu lucrează.	81,5%
Cea mai bună modalitate ca o femeie să fie independentă este să aibă o slujbă.	85%

Sursa: Popescu, 2009

Mergând mai departe cu această ipoteză, la nivelul societății este resimțită inclusiv nevoia de reorganizare a politicilor familiale, respectiv adaptarea acestora la contextul actual. Însă intervenția statului în a dezvolta politici sociale familiale

sunt diferite de la o entitate națională la alta. Deși părerile referitoare la alternativele familiale sunt congruente, în general, la nivel european, dezvoltarea unor politici familiale ține însă de cultura, geografia și economia unei țâri. Politicile de succes animate de anumite obiective într-un anumit stat pot avea efecte dezastroase într-un alt stat. Însă dincolo de orice considerente în ceea ce privește contextul național, politicile elaborate, atât pe orizontală cât și pe verticală, trebuie să fie congruente cu interesele și nevoile actorilor săi sociali.

Discuţii şi concluzii. Lucrarea și-a concentrat atenţia, încă din faza iniţială, asupra studiului impactului membrilor familiilor care au traversat/traversează o etapă sensibilă de metamorfozare, datorată desfacerii căsătoriei oficiale. Pornind de la analiza calitativă a transformării interacţiunilor din cadrul unei familii tradiţionale și continuând cu schimbările generate în mod natural de fenomenul divorţului, atât la nivel micro, cât și la nivel macro, apreciez că datele rezultate vor putea fi un sprijin real în ceea ce priveşte elaborarea unor politici publice, în special în domeniul social. Dinamica în continuă schimbare rezultată din această nouă perspectivă trebuie avută în vedere în contextul elaborării unor noi viziuni strategice la nivelul administraţiei publice centrale, adaptate la situaţia actuală. În contextul multiplicării alternativelor la cuplul familial și, implicit dezvoltarea conceptelor legate de coabitare, structura familială a devenit din ce în ce mai fragilă. Pe cale de consecinţă, a fost generată necesitatea unui suport social mult mai consistent din partea statului, ca şi abordare a dezvoltării unor politici sociale/familiale.

Deşi contextul naţional, respectiv cel european, este în plină schimbare din perspectiva abordării relaţiilor familiale, în România tendinţa pentru familia nucleu/familia tradiţională este constantă. Într-adevăr, caracterul economic, mobilitatea forţei de muncă a femeilor (în mod special), oportunităţile educaţionale sunt, în epoca postmaterialistă, foarte ofertante şi variate. În România reiese clar faptul că, spre deosebire de celelalte ţări ale UE, se preferă, în continuare, modelul familial/marital. Cu toate că există apetit pentru egalitate şi egalizare a sarcinilor gospodăreşti în funcţionalitatea unui cuplu, în special în rândul celor care preferă coabitarea, "valorile familiale ale românilor, deşi în schimbare, nu indică o tendinţă clară către postmodernitate. Modelul familiei clasice e în continuare puternic valorizat, chiar de către cei care trăiesc în modele alternative de familie" (Popescu 2009:181).

Însă tematica prezentă este departe de a fi epuizată, discuţiile legate de preferințele viitoare ale actorilor sociali care nu mai sunt într-o formă oficializată de interrelaționare social-afectivă sunt și vor fi, cu siguranță, într-o permanentă dinamică. Ca sociologi nu ne rămâne decât să observăm și să colectăm date științifice cât mai recente, astfel încât să putem previziona comportamente care, în timp, își vor contura forme durabile, acceptate de către cetățeni. Iar pe baza lor să putem creiona noi politici sociale, economice, juridice adaptate contextului actual.

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### POLITICILE ÎN DOMENIUL SALARIILOR ȘI PENSIILOR ȘI IMPACTUL LOR ASUPRA CREȘTERII POLARIZĂRII VENITURILOR ȘI INECHITĂȚII SOCIALE

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**Abstract.** The work I propose is part of a broader research approach, which aims to identify and describe the mechanisms and factors that generate and multiply social polarization in post-transition Romania (Mihnea Preotesi, individual project: "From inequality, to social polarization in nowadays Romania – mechanisms, factors, public policies, social and institutional actors"- within a RIOL project, 2024, coord. Iulian Stănescu). I intend to analyze in depth the public policies with an impact on the unfair distribution and redistribution of wealthpolicies in the field of pensions and salaries, minimum wage, fiscal policies. Periods of high inflation, such as the one of the last years, accentuate these discrepancies - the inflation affects those with low incomes more strongly. Indexing with equal percentages of sharply (and unfairly) differentiated incomes widens the gap and excessively protects those with high incomes from inflation and insufficiently, those with low incomes. The method of analysis involves the triangulation of statistical data and a secondary analysis of data collected in projects in which we have participated in recent years, projects carried out mainly from the perspective of community development. Another important source of data is the legislation in the field of pensions, salaries of state employees and the minimum wage, as well as legislation in the field of taxation.

**Keywords**: social inequity, social polarisation, minimum wage, poverty, in work poverty

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**Introducere.** Tranziția postcomunistă a pornit de la un nivel relativ scăzut al inegalității sociale. În sistemul de salarizare din România socialistă raportul salariu minim-salariu maxim era de 1:5,5 (cf. Zamfir, coord., 1999, p. 37). Pornind de la premisa că acest raport *strâns* nu permitea o apreciere adecvată a diferențierii complexității și importanței muncii diverselor categorii de bugetari, apare ca legitimă, în principiu, creșterea ecartului dintre salariul minim și cel maxim, după 1990. Inechitatea socială resimțită de o parte a populației, la momentul ianuarie 1990, viza tocmai această diferențiere slabă a recompensei în funcție de *merit*.

După primii ani ai tranziției populația va începe, însă, să resimtă ca inechitabil modul și nivelul în care s-a desfășurat, cât și nivelul la care ajunsese acest proces de diferențiere socială. Dacă înainte de 1990, în afară de cei ocupați în

agricultură - în mare parte, integrați în așa numitele CAP-uri și IAS-uri - forma de ocupare cvasiuniversală era cea de salariat "la Stat", sau în companii de stat, după 1990, odată cu apariția firmelor private, apare, pe lângă diferențierile din interiorul categoriei celor angajați "la Stat", o diferențiere importantă între aceștia și cei angajați "la privat".

Acest proces de diferențiere este, dincolo de criteriul venitului, un proces de restructurare și stratificare socială. Percepția populației asupra rezultatelor acestui proces socio-economic este aceea că modul în care s-a desfășurat nu a fost unul meritocratic. Inegalitatea socială, în general, precum și diferențele de venituri, în particular, depășiseră deja, la jumătatea anilor 2000, limita acceptabilității, aceste diferențe fiind considerate ca fiind prea mari (cf. Barometrului de Opinie Publică din 2007, 52% din populație consideră că diferențele dintre venituri sunt prea mari și ar trebui să scadă).

Standardul de viață a crescut constant de atunci, însă această percepție a inechității sociale s-a accentuat, odată cu creșterea inegalității sociale. În primii ani ai tranziției standardul de viață al populației s-a prăbușit, concomitent cu prăbușirea PIB-ului. În timp ce PIB-ul a revenit, în anul 2000, la nivelul de dinainte de debutul tranziției, impactul social a fost unul mai greu reversibil - atât din perspectiva scăderii standardului de viață al populației și a creșterii accelerate a sărăciei, cât și din perspectiva creșterii inegalității sociale, percepută de populație și ca o creștere a inechității sociale. Creșterea economică semnificativă și continuă din perioada 2000-2008 a fost însoțită și de o creștere accentuată a inegalității sociale.

Intervalul 2000-2008 a fost caracterizat de o creștere moderată a veniturilor, dar și de schimbări importante în structura veniturilor. După 2006, pensiile (rămase mult în urma salariilor) cresc, în mod justificat, într-un ritm mai mare decât creșterea PIB-ului, a salariilor și, în general, a tuturor celorlalte venituri. De asemenea, crește, moderat, salariul minim și cresc și alocațiile pentru copii.

Deși pensiile rămân, în pofida nivelului lor scăzut, transferul social cu impactul cel mai semnificativ în reducerea sărăciei, majoritatea pensiilor rămân, în pofida acestor creșteri semnificative, la niveluri foarte joase, ce asigură un nivel de trai la limita supraviețuirii.

În sistemul bugetar, raportul salariu minim-salariu maxim depășea deja, după 20 de ani de tranziție, raportul de 1:30, în timp ce raportul dintre pensia minimă și pensia maximă era unul și mai mare. Pe de altă parte, majoritatea bugetarilor din categoria specialiștilor cu educație superioară, se aflau, din punct de vedere al veniturilor salariale, sub valoarea centrală a intervalului coeficienților de multiplicare a veniturilor din perioada comunistă, fiind plătiți cu un salariu ce nu depășea 2 salarii minime pe economie, în timp ce alți bugetari cu nivel de educație comparabil, aveau salarii în jurul valorii maximale amintite mai sus (Preotesi, 2020).

În același timp, însă, anumite tipuri de venituri cresc într-un mod accelerat în toată această perioadă.

- o parte consistentă din salariile din unele regii autonome și companii de stat, în prima perioadă postcomunistă, mai târziu, cele din agenții guvernamentale și autorități de reglementare;

- pensiile speciale – o parte dintre acestea ajung, datorită legilor care le reglementează, la niveluri ce pot fi considerate deja excesiv de ridicate<sup>7</sup>, chiar și pentru unele dintre țările cele mai dezvoltate ale UE.

Criza economică, resimțită puternic și în România începând cu anul 2009, a reprezentat momentul declanșării unei prime încercări de a pune ordine în sistemul de salarizare al bugetarilor și în sistemul de pensii publice, după o perioadă de 20 de ani de schimbări legislative permanente, reactive și discontinue, care au generat inechități importante în cele două sisteme de distribuire a veniturilor (Preotesi, 2020). O temă importantă adresată în acest context a fost cea a discrepanțelor în domeniul salarizării bugetarilor, respectiv, a pensiilor așa numite speciale versus pensiile bazate exclusiv pe contributivitate. Au fost identificate anumite categorii susceptibile a fi privilegiate, categorii precum cele ale aviatorilor și magistraților fiind considerate exemplare în acest sens. De asemenea, au fost identificate și alte categorii de angajați privilegiați, din instituții, precum Autorități de reglementare, anumite Regii autonome și Companii de stat.

Pe de altă parte, schimbările succesive din legea pensiilor au generat inechități şi în sistemul de pensii bazat pe contributivitate, materializate în beneficii diferite, pentru condiții foarte asemănătoare de muncă și de contributivitate. Cele 3 legi ale pensiilor (19/2000, 263/2010, 153/2017, respectiv, legea nr. 127/2019) și-au propus reducerea acestor discrepanțe și inechități. Legea 360/2023 privind sistemul public de *pensii*, intrată în vigoare la 1 septembrie 2024, care își propune, în mod explicit, tocmai reducerea acestor inechități din sistemul de pensii, pornește de la premisa implicită că toate aceste legi anterioare ale pensiilor nu au avut drept efect îndeplinirea acestui deziderat, iar aceste inechități au continuat să crească, în toată această perioadă - în condițiile în care perioada postcriză - 2011-2020 - s-a produs, în condiții de creștere economică semnificativă, o "relaxare" a criteriului moral amintit mai sus și la adâncirea tuturor acestor discrepanțe și inechități (Preotesi, 2020).

Veniturile încasate de către persoane numite în Autorități de reglementare și în Consilii de administrație au crescut, fără legătură cu performanța lor sau a instituțiilor respective, pensiile mari au devenit și mai mari, în timp ce majoritatea salariilor și pensiilor au rămas la niveluri modeste.

Discrepanțele între pensiile bazate pe contributivitate și cele "speciale" au crescut semnificativ, în mod artificial, ca urmare a schimbării modului de calcul al taxării muncii<sup>8</sup>.

Perioadele cu inflație ridicată, precum ce a ultimilor doi ani accentuează aceste discrepanțe, în condițiile în care, pe de o parte, inflația afectează mai puternic pe cei cu venituri mici, pe de altă parte, indexarea cu procente egale a unor venituri accentuat (și inechitabil) diferențiate - mărește ecartul și protejează excesiv la inflație pe cei cu venituri mari și insuficient, pe cei cu venituri mici.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Există diferențe mari și între aceste pensii speciale și între categoriile de pensionari cu pensii speciale.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Un exemplu elocvent: o pensie specială de 36.000 lei (!!!) crește, ca urmare a acestor măsuri, la 74.000 lei brut, adică 68.800 lei net). (salariul minim pe economie crește și el, cu 300 lei brut, sub 200 lei net)

Modul haotic în care s-a realizat această diferențiere a salariilor și pensiilor, prin adoptarea succesivă a unor legi de salarizare și a unor legi ce reglementează domeniul pensiilor, a dus la discrepanțe și inechități flagrante în sistemul de salarizare a bugetarilor, precum și în sistemul de pensii, situație față de care, guvernanții au reacționat destul de târziu. În domeniul salarizării bugetarilor, după 20 de ani, prin elaborarea unei prime legi a salarizării unitare a personalului plătit din fonduri publice, după aproape 35 de ani, în domeniul pensiilor, prin această lege din 2023 care își propune scăderea inechității din sistemul de pensii.

În timp ce legea salarizării unitare nu a fost încă aplicată, în nici una dintre cele 3 variante adoptate din 2010 încoace, legea pensiilor, intrată în vigoare la 1 septembrie 2014, a generat deja reacții diferențiate ale celor avantajați, respectiv ale celor dezavantajați de acest demers de reducere a inechității din sistemul de pensii.

Ipoteza de la care pornește analiza celor două sisteme de reglementare a veniturilor este aceea că inechitățile nu pot fi reduse atâta timp cât persistă un raport de putere în care privilegiații acestor sisteme își impun interesele de grup în fața intereselor legitime ale altor categorii, dar nesusținute prin capacitate de presiune a celor din prima categorie.

Acest raport de putere nu se manifestă doar în cazul unor categorii de bugetari, comparativ cu altele, sau în cazul pensionarilor, pensionarii "speciali", versus pensionarii "nespeciali". Analiza pe care o propun aici decupează dintr-un demers de cercetare mai larg această problematică focalizată pe aceste categorii.

**Metodologia cercetării**. Metodologia cercetării presupune analiza secundară de date, din următoarele surse de date: date statistice macroeconomice și sectoriale privind evoluția salariilor și pensiilor în România; legile salarizării unitare: legea 330/2009, legea 285/2010, legea 153/2017; variantele succesive ale legii pensiilor: legea 19/2000, legea 263/2010, respectiv, legea 153/2017; legea nr. 127/2019; legea 360/2023 privind sistemul public de pensii.

Cadrul teoretic și conceptual și literatura de specialitate. Ideea de dreptate este una dintre ideile filozofice importante, încă din antichitate. De la Republica lui Platon, până la analizele inechității sociale ale filozofiei sociale din perioada modernă au fost elaborate teorii ale dreptății, ce au în centrul lor o anume perspectivă ce definește ideea de dreptate. B. Barry identifică drept chestiune centrală a oricărei teorii a dreptății, "în vremea lui Platon, ca și în a noastră (...) capacitatea de a argumenta în favoarea relațiilor inegale dintre oameni" (Barry, 1989, p.3). Autorul citat definește astfel cele două mari abordări ale ideii de dreptate:

- dreptatea ca avantaj;
- dreptatea ca imparțialitate.

Dreptatea ca avantaj, reprezintă perspectiva orientată de paradigma utilitaristă, de la clasicii utilitarismului - Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, până la ideologii neoliberali ai zilelor noastre (Miroiu, 1996).

Cea de-a doua accepțiune, pornește de la viziunea idealistă kantiană asupra dreptății, integrată în viziunea modernă în teoria justiției sociale propusă de filosoful liberal John Rawls. Autorul, considerat a fi cel mai mare filozof social al

secolului XX propune în cartea sa, intitulată chiar A Theory of Justice (1971), o teorie modernă a dreptății, ce are la bază trei principii: principiul libertății; principiul egalității; principiul recompensării corecte pentru serviciile care contribuie la binele public. Rawls propune două idei care stau la baza ideii de dreptate ca echitate, din perspectiva dreptății ca imparțialitate: poziția originară și vălul de ignoranță. Aceasta presupune ignorarea propriei poziții sociale, propriilor abilități și oportunități sociale din perspectiva evaluării cadrului de referință al configurării dreptății sociale. Rawls consideră dreptatea, în accepțiunea ei de dreptate socială, drept unul dintre fundamentele funcționării societății și a tuturor subsistemelor sociale - "Dreptatea este cea mai importantă virtute a instituțiilor sociale, așa cum adevărul este cea mai importantă virtute a sistemelor de gândire" (Rawls, 1971, p.3).

Perspectiva lui Rawls, poate fi considerată una funcționalistă, în condițiile în care el consideră că instituțiile nu sunt percepute ca fiind legitime (condiție importantă pentru a fi funcționale - n.m.) decât dacă sunt percepute drept morale și echitabile.

În timp ce, în abordarea liberală a lui Rawls, identificarea și recompensarea adecvată a meritelor duce la înfăptuirea dreptății sociale, în abordarea neomarxistă a lui Thomas Piketty tocmai acest discurs ce postulează infailibilitatea unui astfel de mecanism de diferențiere socială, poate sta la baza nedreptății sociale.

În cartea sa, devenită imediat "best seller", "Capitalul în secolul XXI", carte apărută în 2013, Thomas Piketty, propune o analiză a inegalității sociale în societatea occidentală contemporană, pornind de la premise că "fiecare societate inventează un discurs ideologic, pentru a justifica inegalitățile sociale". Piketty (2019), consideră că inegalitatea din așa numita societate occidentală modernă este, mai degrabă, una de natură ideologică și politică, decât o inegalitate de natură economică sau tehnologică. Cu alte cuvinte, Piketty consideră că inegalitățile nu sunt naturale, bazate pe merite, ci, mai degrabă, constructe artificiale susținute prin abordări ideologice ce își propun menținerea statu-quo-ului celor privilegiați, prin asocierea recompenselor importante cu merite corelative la fel de importante.

Un punct comun, al teoriilor clasice, cât și al celor moderne asupra ideii de dreptate socială este raportarea la conceptul de *merit*. În timp ce, abordarea liberală asociază **meritul**, ideii de **dreptate**, postulând sistemul meritocratic ca find cel ce asigură echitatea socială, abordarea "de stânga" pune în discuție tocmai exacerbarea ideii de merit în construirea unui discurs de justificare a inegalității sociale (Preotesi, 2020).

Fără îndoială că există diferențe în definirea meritelor, una dintre diferențele importante fiind în corelație cu scopul funcționării unei instituții. Dacă instituția este una privată, meritul este asociat cu binele firmei, operaționalizat, în mod preponderent, în profit, deci meritoriu este cel care aduce bani în firmă, direct, sau indirect, de exemplu, prin contribuția la construirea unei imagini pozitive a firmei. Dacă organizația este un ONG, meritul este evaluat în raport cu contribuția la atingerea obiectivelor organizației.

În domeniul bugetar, deși există criterii de performanță care sunt evaluate și recompensate drept merite, perspectiva este una mai complexă. O componentă

importantă a meritelor și recompenselor corelative preexistă activității propriu-zise și evaluării acesteia. Importanța socială a instituției și poziția în instituție sunt cele recompensate, iar la nivel individual, teoretic, această importanță corelează cu nivelul educațional și profesional al salariaților.

În acest context am considerat utilă accepțiunea ideii de meritocrație, așa cum apare în Dicționarul de sociologie coordonat de Raymond Boudon, în 1996. Conform sursei bibliografice amintite, meritocrația reprezintă "o stare socială în care ierarhia pozițiilor o imită exact pe cea a calităților individuale (talente și merite), (...) o stare socială în care domnește egalitatea șanselor (...). Școala îndeplinește această sarcină, iar ierarhia socială se confundă, deci, cu cea a diplomelor" (Boudon, ș.a., coord., 1996, p. 164).

Din această perspectivă, meritele din perioada activă ar trebui să se regăsească și în recompensele acordate după ieșierea la pensie, ceea ce se întâmplă, după cum voi arăta mai jos, cu asupra de măsură, doar pentru unele dintre merite și doar pentru anumite categorii de "merituoși".

Abordarea pe care o propun în această analiză integrează cele două perspective filozofice amintite asupra justiției sociale. Pe de o parte, consider *meritul*, ca fiind unul dintre principiile structurante de bază ale diferențierii sociale, pe de altă parte, îmi propun să chestionez modul în care se reflectă în politicile publice relația dintre merite și recompense din perspectiva relațiilor de putere ce exacerbează anumite merite în dauna altora și privilegiază excesiv și permanent anumite categorii de "merituoși"...

Deși nici una dintre variantele de legi ale salarizării unitare în domeniul bugetar nu s-a aplicat ca atare, ideea unei astfel de legi este, în sine, una corectă, prin încercarea de a introduce câteva principii structurante, menite a stabili o anumită ordine în sistemul haotic al salarizării publice.

În fapt, toate cele 3 variante ale acestei legi, în pofida unor declarații de bune intenții din perspectiva amintită mai sus, în fapt, legitimează perpetuarea unei situații carecterizate de distribuția dezechilibrată a nivelului de salarizare pentru anumite categorii de salariați, cu privilegierea evidentă a unora dintre aceștia și dezavantajarea clară a majorității lor.

În condițiile în care, pentru majoritatea funcțiilor, inclusiv pentru specialiștii cu studii superioare, coeficienții de ierarhizare se aglomerează în zona de jos a ierarhiei lor, în partea superioară a tabloului acestei distribuții se regăsesc doar câteva categorii, pentru care coeficienții de multiplicare, pe lângă faptul că pornesc de la valori sensibil mai mari decât ale celorlalți specialiști cu studii superioare, se distribuie după un model cu amplitudine sensibil mai mare a diferențierii în sus.

Premisa aceastei analize este acea că utilizarea criteriului meritocratic în diferențierea veniturilor nu poate fi considerată drept justificare a cumulării unor privilegii exacerbate și asociate doar anumitor categorii de merite și categorii "merituoase" (Preotesi, 2020). Din această prespectivă, chiar și atunci când avantajele acordate anumitor categorii sunt legitime din perspectiva meritelor pe care le recompensează, nivelul acestor diferențieri trebuie să fie unul "rezonabil", adaptat contextului socioeconomic național.

În cele ce urmează voi analiza cele trei variante ale legii salarizării personalului din domeniul bugetar: legea 330/2009, legea 285/2010 și legea 53/2017. Prezentarea va fi una sintetică și va porni de la analiza coeficienților arondați anumitor categorii de bugetari și a evoluței acestora, de la o variantă la alta a legii. În acord cu definiția meritocrației, prezentată nai sus, am selectat pentru comparație categorii de bugetari cu nivel educational și importanță socială a muncii comparabile.

Rezultatele cercetării. Analiza variantelor legii de salarizare unitară a angajaților din domeniul bugetar. În cele ce urmează voi prezenta evoluția coeficienților de multiplicare pentru câteva grupe de bugetari pe care le-am considerat comparabile din perspectiva importanței sociale a muncii, respectiv, a nivelului mediu de educație al domeniului. Sursa datelor: prelucrări ale autorului după legea 330/2009; legea 285/2010; legea 153/2017. Din analiza datelor prezentate mai sus rezultă câteva concluzii ce validează ipotezele acestei analize.

O primă concluzie este aceea că, în toate cele 3 variante există o categorie ocupatională care este poziționată semnificativ mai sus decât toate celelalte. Această categorie este cea a magistraților. Este interesant de remarcat faptul că, în toate cele 3 variante ale legii, coeficienții aferenți acestei categorii ocupaționale pornesc de la un nivel care este semnificativ mai ridicat decât cel aferent oricăreia dintre celelalte categorii selectate. Un exemplu relevant: unui auditor la Institutul Superior al magistraturii (o poziție ce poate fi echivalată, cel mult cu cea a unui doctorand!) îi este arondat un coeficient de multiplicare cu 50% mai mare decât unui debutant în învățământul universitar - poziție ce presupune, de altfel, atingerea unui nivel educational superior. Discrepantele se accentuează cu fiecare nouă variantă a legii - în cea de a doua variantă a legii raportul amintit creste, de la 1:1,5, la aproape 1:2! Diferențele cresc, în același sens, pe treptele profesionale superioare, unde raportul dintre coeficienții arondați magistraților sunt semnificativ mai mari. Ceea ce mi se pare cel mai relevant, este faptul că în cea de a treia variantă a legii, toți coeficienții scad semnificativ pentru categoriile amintite, în timp ce coeficientii de multiplicare aferenți magistratilor continuă să crească, mărind în mod semnificativ - în conditiile unei valori de referintă semnificativ mai mari față de variantele anterioare ale legii - ecartul dintre această categorie profesională și toate celelalte având importanță socială și nivel educațional comparabil. Am ales aceasta comparație pentru a accentua modul în care raporturile de putere din societate pot influenta politicile publice, cu pretul cresterii inechitătii sociale...

Atât mecanismul, cât și rezultatele se reproduc într-o variantă extinsă în politicile ce privesc pensiile, politici având aceeași privilegiați și o majoritate dezavantajată net - incluzând categorii având importanță social și nivel educațional comparabil cu al celor considerați "ultrameritorii" și recompensați în consecință...

Evoluția comparativă a pensiilor bazate pe contributivitate versus pensiii ale categoriilor ocupaționale beneficiare de legi speciale. În ceea ce privește pensiile și raportul dintre "pensiile speciale" și cele bazate (doar) pe contributivitate, prezentate sintetic în tabelul de mai jos sunt relevante, în sine...

Tabel 1. Evoluția pensiilor bazate pe contributivitate și a celor ale beneficiarilor de legi speciale 2018/2022

Categorie de pensionari	Nivel mediu pensie		Nivel mediu pensie din bugetul ASS		Contribuție de la bugetul de stat	
	2018	2022 (dec)	2018	2022 (dec)	2018	2022 (dec)
Pensionari limită de vârstă	1 349	1 779	1 349	1 779	0	0
Magistrați	18 150	21 404	2 760	4 758	16 302	19 945
Membri ai corpului diplomatic și consular	5 480	5 799	2 457	3 883	3 321	2 552
Aviatori-aviație civilă	10 698	11 484	3 265	5 495	7 531	7 539

*Sursa datelor: (CNPAS, 2018, 2022)* 

Datele din tabelul de mai sus prezintă sintetic evoluția valorii medii a pensiilor în perioada 2018-2022. În cazul pensiilor bazate doar parțial pe contributivitate am individualizat partea contributivă, respectiv, cea necontributivă a mediei acestor pensii - Sursa datelor: CNPAS, 2010. 2018.

Din analiza datelor reiese că, pornind de la un raport minim de 1:5 între media pensiilor bazate pe contributivitate și "cei mai puțin speciali dintre speciali" (categoria membri ai corpului diplomatic și consular), după 8 ani acest raport scade la 1:4. Însă, comparativ cu cei mai speciali dintre speciali (magistrații), raportul pornește de la 1:10 și ajunge, după acești 8 ani, la aproape 1:14! Asta, în condițiile în care raportul dintre media pensiilor bazate pe contributivitate și cea a părții contributive a pensiilor magistraților este în jur de 1:2. Chiar dacă acest raport scade ușor în anii următori, în valoare absolută diferențele sunt unele greu de explicat, în condițiile în care partea necontributivă a acestor pensii de serviciu este de peste 11 ori mai mare decât pensia medie bazată pe contributivitate și de peste 4 ori mai mare decât partea contributivă a acestor pensii.

Concluzii. Pornind de la premisa că datele selectate și prezentate mai sus pot fi considerate ca fiind relevante în sine, în analiza prezentată aici relevanța lor trebuie înțeleasă în contextul în care această analiză și-a propus să decupeze o parte dintr-o analiză mai largă ce vizează mecanismele și factorii prin care politicile publice pot avea un impact semnificativ în creșterea inechității sociale, în situația aparent paradoxală în care echitatea socială reprezintă, la nivel declarativ unul dintre obiectivele acestor politici.

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# PLATFORM EMPLOYMENT AND HYBRID MODELS OF LABOUR RELATIONS AS A RESPONSE TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DANGERS OF MILITARY SHOCKS

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**Abstract.** The relevance of the work is due to the challenges faced by the Ukrainian labour market in the context of critical instability. Ukraine is losing human capital as a result of deaths or disability of people in the areas of military operations, as well as due to the displacement of millions of people from the areas of military operations to safer regions of Ukraine or to other countries. The purpose of the article is to identify a promising response to the economic and social dangers of military shocks in the context of preserving human capital in Ukraine during the war and restoring the labour market in the post-war period. Research methods. The study was conducted using system analysis, structural and functional analysis, and expert assessments. The analytical assessment was based on data from international organizations and opinion polls. Results of the study. The author proposes ways to improve regulatory policy in the field of employment by modifying traditional models of labour relations. The author identifies nonstandard forms of employment that can most effectively harmonise the situation in the Ukrainian labour market. The article considers the use of such non-standard forms of employment as hybrid models of labour relations and work on digital platforms. The author outlines the prospects of their use for persons returning to civilian life after discharge from military service for health reasons, for internally displaced persons, migrants and persons who have left Ukraine.

**Keywords:** platform employment, hybrid models of labour relations, human capital, strategic management of human resources, dangers of military shocks.

**JEL:** J18, J24, J41, J50, J63

**UDC:** 331.5

**Introduction**. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to dramatic social changes, economic turmoil and massive population displacement. Ukraine's labour market has undergone irreversible transformations caused by the loss of labour, firstly, as a result of the mobilisation of a part of the population into the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and secondly, due to the displacement of millions of people from the war zone to safer regions of Ukraine or other more prosperous countries.

In the context of critical instability, Ukraine's strategic challenge is to preserve human capital. This can be achieved by modifying traditional models of

labour relations and using non-standard forms of employment, including platform employment and hybrid models of labour relations. The purpose of these transformations is to increase motivation to work in Ukraine during the war and create prospects for the recovery and development of the labour market in the postwar period. For this purpose, it is important to attract to the labour market the domestic workforce, people living outside the country, and migrants whose labour activity can balance the labour market and strengthen human capital that suffers losses from the economic and social dangers of military shocks.

Literature review. Platform employment is still a relatively uncommon model of labour relations, but digital changes in the world of work have been the subject of many studies (Dustmann et al., 2003; Urzì Brancati et al., 2020; Piasna et al., 2022). The lack of representative statistical information on the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of digital platform workers is compensated to some extent by sociological surveys and scattered academic studies. In the studies of most scholars, the employment of platform workers is covered in the context of low-skilled work that involves the direct presence of a worker at a particular location, such as taxi, delivery, cleaning, or personal services (Arnoldi, 2021; Kaboth, 2023; Low, 2024). Some scholars argue that platform work is mostly for migrants (van Doorn and Vijay, 2021; Piasna et al., 2022; Kowalik et al., 2023). A smaller body of research has focused on platform work that is performed remotely and involves the provision of high-skilled services (Bandeira et al., 2019; Idowu et al., 2022).

This article looks at several different types of platform work, both on-site and remote, and thus significantly extends the focus of previous research.

**Research methodology**. In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to focus on the study of two poles of employment on digital platforms. Firstly, it is low-skilled employment, and secondly, works and services requiring specialised knowledge and a high professional qualification level. Information on employment on digital platforms is not provided by official state statistical services, so the article uses the results of reports of international organisations and sociological studies. To solve the tasks set, the author also used the methods of systemic and comparative analysis, structural and functional analysis, statistical grouping method, hierarchical analysis, expert assessments, etc.

Main results. Non-standard forms of employment may be a promising response to the economic and social dangers of military shocks (Huk, 2014). Non-standard forms of employment are a general term for various forms of employment that differ from standard employment, which is characterised by full-time work at the employer's premises under a formal employment contract for an unlimited period. Non-standard employment can be determined by various criteria (Huk, 2016):

by the formalisation of employment - informal employment

- by the nature of working hours part-time and overtime employment (forced or voluntary)
- by the term of the contract non-permanent employment under an agreement (contract) for a fixed term or for the duration of the performance of certain work
- by the form of workplace organisation remote employment (home-based work, ICT-based mobile employment, hybrid models of labour relations, platform work);
- by the method of hiring employment under a civil law contract, in particular, possibly with the involvement of a third party - a business entity providing employment agency services; employment without a written contract by oral agreement.

Recently, special attention has been drawn to non-standard forms of employment, which are developing due to the digitalisation of the economy and the proliferation of information and communication devices with Internet access, which operate on the basis of cloud technologies. Examples of such non-standard forms of employment include hybrid models of labour relations and work on digital platforms.

Hybrid models of labour relations have become widely used during the restrictive measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have made it possible to organise remote work during the quarantine, helped to preserve the health of employees, and demonstrated that this development path has a strong potential to optimise the operations of enterprises in critical situations.

Work on digital platforms is a product of technological progress and allows more workers to integrate into the labour market. The quality of employment on digital platforms depends on the professional qualification level of employees, their skills in using interactive technologies (e.g., social media applications and platforms in the Internet environment using information and communication devices), and personal characteristics (adaptability, flexibility, ability to learn and improve professional skills, etc.). In this context, employment on digital platforms accumulates workers with both low and high qualifications.

At one pole of employment on digital platforms are low-skilled jobs and services that require the direct presence of the worker at a particular location, such as taxi drivers, delivery, and cleaning services. The pole of low-skilled employment on the platform often accumulates workers from among internally displaced persons and migrants who, although they may have higher qualifications, are forced to perform work offered by the platform because they have not adapted to the language environment of the host country. As a result, work on digital platforms is often seen as an unstable, precarious model of employment for unskilled labour.

At the other pole of digital platform employment are jobs and services performed remotely and requiring specialised knowledge and high qualifications. The pole of highly skilled workers on digital platforms is represented by specialists who perform work remotely and provide interactive, highly skilled services. The activities of highly skilled digital platform workers are related to education and

culture, science, technology and innovation, design, marketing, etc. The work of this category of digital platform workers is based on the implementation of individual projects, so it is also unstable, but can be in high demand and highly paid.

Consider the low-skilled employment pole on digital platforms. Digital platforms can be the first step for internally displaced persons and migrants to enter the labour market immediately upon arrival, as formal requirements for workers to perform work on the platform are lower than in the formal economy. The platforms offer a wide range of low-skilled jobs, and individuals, lacking alternatives, often accept such work for their livelihoods immediately upon arrival. Low-skilled workers are engaged to perform localised service-oriented tasks such as deliveries, transporting goods and passengers, running errands or cleaning.

Further integration of displaced persons and migrants into the labour market can take place in two ways. First, in the optimistic scenario, platform employment serves as a springboard to higher quality employment that matches the professional qualifications of workers, their experience and existing skills, with correspondingly better conditions and pay. Secondly, in a negative scenario, low-skilled employment on the platform becomes a long-term precarious employment trap that absorbs the labour force and acts as a barrier to the most effective integration into the labour market.

Low-skill local tasks may be more attractive to labour migrants given the generally lower skill profile of these jobs and lower language requirements.

The displacement of millions of people from the areas of hostilities to safer regions of Ukraine has resulted in the emergence of a persistent socially vulnerable group of internally displaced persons whose positions in the labour market have become vulnerable and whose employment is becoming precarious. The movement of labour within the country poses certain challenges to the labour market:

- insufficient supply of labour in regions affected by active hostilities;
- insufficient demand in the western regions of the country for labour formed by displaced persons
- mismatch of available jobs with the qualifications and skills of job seekers;
- inability to preserve livelihoods (loss of employment and, consequently, wages as a result of displacement or problems with access to social protection);
- insufficient wages to maintain a decent standard of living.

There is an estimated International Organization for Migration (IOM) 4,734,000 returnees in Ukraine. The main oblasts of return are Kyiv City (where 22% of returnees reside), Kyivska, and Kharkivska Oblasts (about 15% each), with most returnees having returned more than a year ago (60%). People in Kyiv as well as the west, north and centre of Ukraine on average returned longer ago, while more recent returns were comparatively more concentrated in the East and South. Almost half of all returnees (48%) returned from displacement in another oblast in Ukraine. Twenty-eight per cent of all returnees stated that they had spent at least 14 days abroad since February 2022 because of the full-scale war. Five per cent of

returnees (eqv. 228,000 individuals) were considering re-displacement (highest in Odeska Oblast, 9% of returnees). The share of those crossing back into Ukraine from abroad intending to stay for more than one month (prospective returnees) decreased from 38 per cent in Q1 2023 to 25 per cent in Q1 2024. Proximity to family and friends was the most commonly reported reason for returning to the place of origin (29%). This was followed by the availability of housing (20%), perceptions of employment opportunities (18%) and an improved security situation (16%). Irrespective of rank, returnees reported food among their three main material and assistance needs (25%) with cash as the preferred modality for assistance (38%) or creation of employment opportunities (34%) so that respondents can meet this need sustainably. Coping strategies, such as the spending of savings (57%) switching to cheaper food and NFIs (55%), alongside reducing utility expenditure (50%) continue to be used among high proportions of returnees. (IOM, 2024).

The pole of highly skilled digital platform workers. Interactive remote work on a platform can also be attractive for migrants, as it opens up a much wider labour market, meaning that language and cultural barriers with the host country are more likely to be levelled. For highly skilled migrant and displaced workers, the opportunity to perform professional work through remote digital labour platforms may be more relevant, especially if various discriminatory barriers make it difficult to perceive their qualifications. For highly skilled workers who have acquired specialised knowledge and perform projects and provide services remotely, working on digital platforms becomes a convenient way to be active and fully realise their potential.

Based on the results of a sociological survey conducted on the Freelancehunt platform, a portrait of Ukrainian freelancers who provide highly skilled services through a digital platform was created (Bondarenko, 2024). It is estimated that the largest share of freelancers in 2024 is aged 24-29 (23.5%), which is almost unchanged from 2023 (23.7%). The age groups of 30-35 and 36-41 increased by 1.8% and 2.2% respectively. This may indicate that more professionals at the peak of their careers are moving to digital platforms as self-employed.

Young people (18-23 years old) are most represented in categories related to audio and video, translation, and programming. In most categories, there is a high percentage of freelancers in the 24-29 and 30-35 age groups, which indicates that they are actively involved in the development of the labour market. Older freelancers (48+ years old) are more represented in areas requiring more experience, such as architecture and engineering.

More than 70% of freelancers have a university degree or higher education. The ratio of men and women is almost equal, although there are slightly more men - 53.4% vs. 46.6%. This may indicate the general attractiveness of freelancing for both sexes, meaning that both men and women find interesting areas for themselves and earn money.

The largest share of freelancers lives in Kyiv region (19.9%). This may be due to the concentration of business centres, higher education institutions, and a more developed economy in the region. Many freelancers also live in

Dnipropetrovska (10.3%), Kharkiv (9.3%), Odesa (8%), and Lviv (7.8%) regions. These regions are economically active and have large cities with appropriate infrastructure.

More than half of freelancers (56.8%) do not consider freelancing as their only source of income, which confirms the thesis that for many it is a part-time job. However, a significant percentage of professionals (43.2%) prefer freelancing as their main job. According to the statistics on prices for freelance services of the digital platform Freelancehunt, the average earnings of freelancers as of August 2024 were UAH 25280 per month, which was equal to USD 617 and exceeded the minimum wage in Ukraine (UAH 8000) by more than 3 times, and the average wage (UAH 18903) by almost 30 percent.

Among translators and copywriters, the largest share of those earning less than \$500 is 64.7%. This is due to the fact that customers delegate some tasks to AI. The huge demand for the services of these specialists, as it was at the beginning of the war with the adoption of the law on Ukrainianisation, has somewhat subsided. This category is also quite easy for beginners. 46.1% of designers earn more than \$500 on average. Those who have knowledge in narrow specialisations can earn more for their work. The highest income for work on digital platforms is in the mobile apps and programming category, where most freelancers earn more than \$1000.

The biggest challenge for 77.2% of freelancers is finding clients. It takes a lot of time and can be very tiring, especially for beginners. Unstable income is a significant problem for 66.1%, as freelancers cannot always predict their income. This is more true for those who see freelancing as a part-time job. Discipline and effective planning are critical for success, but 20.2% of professionals find it difficult. Freelancing is not only about freedom and flexibility, but also about the many challenges faced by those who choose this path. The war has made its own adjustments to the lives of professionals, forcing many to adapt to new conditions.

**Discussion and conclusions.** First of all, when improving regulatory policy in the field of employment, attention should be focused on displaced persons who have changed their region within Ukraine or moved outside the country. They should have a chance to continue working, performing their functional duties remotely, if the production process allows for such a model of labour relations. This step will preserve jobs and the opportunity to earn income, and thus create the preconditions for the return of those who have left the dangerous areas where hostilities are taking place. In addition, freelancing continues to develop as a flexible and effective employment model that allows professionals to combine work and personal life, improve their skills and adapt to the new challenges of the modern world. Interactive technologies, including digital employment platforms, can play an important role in achieving this goal.

Digital employment platforms include both web-based platforms that connect employers and clients with workers, and outsource work through an open request for specific tasks to workers from different regions and countries, and geolocation-based applications that distribute work to individuals in a specific geographic area.

Highly skilled workers in the fields of culture, media, IT, education and science, publishing, design, marketing, etc. can be involved in remote tasks and projects. Low-skilled workers are usually involved in local tasks, such as taxi drivers, delivery, and cleaning.

Thus, the development of digital platforms should be an important step in improving regulatory policy in the field of employment. Such platforms can be used by internally displaced persons, migrants and persons residing outside the country to obtain jobs that require both low-skilled and specialised knowledge, professional skills and high qualifications.

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### THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNET AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AS PREDICTED BY ROMANIANS IN 2030

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The paper is based on the October 2021 responses of people in Romania aimed at forecasting the evolution of the internet and digital technologies for 2030. We specify that one of the six priorities for the period 2020-2024 of the European Union is to adapt the economy to the needs of European citizens. This trend is also true for the Internet and for the multiple digital applications. Referring to the mentioned European priority, we will seek to answer several questions:Q1. The importance of digital tools and the internet in the life of the individual until 2030;Q2. If you think that in 2030 the use of digital tools and the internet will bring you more advantages or disadvantages; Q3. What worries you most about the increased role of digital tools and the internet in our society. The processing of the selected data was based on the application of several statistical models specific to ordinal categorical variables. The current study revealed the importance of the age of the interviewee in positioning himself in relation to the Q1-Q3 objectives mentioned above.

Keywords: Internet and digital technologies, Eurobarometer, EU future,

Romanians perception

JEL: C12, C43, C53, C83, O33

**UDC:** 33:004

**Introduction.** The current research is based on data from a Eurobarometer designed in October 2021 (data file Sample1, 2022). We are interested in analyzing Romanians' opinions on the possible evolution in 2030 of several aspects related to the internet and also to the digital tools used. These aspects will be detailed in the following sections, taking into account six age categories from the Romanian population (*Age* variable). More specifically, the following age groups were operated: 15-24 years old, 25-34 years old, 35-44 years old, 45-54 years old, 55-64 years old, over 65 years old (group 65+). In this paper we will highlight the fact that Romanians' forecasts on the issue of digital tools and the internet in 2030 are significantly influenced by the age of the respondent to the questionnaire.

The European Union's strategy for 2020-2024 focuses in particular on promoting the digital age and developing green activities. Six fundamental principles are listed (<a href="https://commission.europa.eu/">https://commission.europa.eu/</a>). We mention that one of these six priorities for the future of the European Union is to adapt the economy to the needs of European citizens. This trend is also true for the Internet and for the

multiple digital applications. The EU strategy brings several clarifications regarding the digital age: a European digital decade oriented towards a new generation of technologies, data mining, the development of science infrastructure, the acceleration of the innovation process, the advanced processing of knowledge. The ultimate goal pursued by the European Union is to ensure sustainable development in Europe (https://commission.europa.eu/).

Referring to the European digital issue, we will analyze Romanians' answers to several questions from the Eurobarometer questionnaire. We specify in this regard the subjects:

- Romanians' prediction for 2030 regarding the importance of digital tools and the internet.
- Romanians' opinions on the advantages of the internet and digital tools in 2030.
- The importance versus advantages of the digital transformations forecast for 2030.
- The concern induced in society by the future expansion of digital transformations.

The results obtained through the statistical analysis of the Sample1 file indirectly confirm previous research on the future of digital transformations in the world and in particular in Romania.

**Literature review.** The influence of digital transformations on the evolution of the economy and changes in the life of society is interconnected and complex. Any area of society is influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the development of digital tools or the Internet. We mention just a few of the important current issues regarding the future promotion of digital issues.

- Accelerating digital transformations, especially in technology, trade and proposing new social policies (Chen et al., 2023; United Nations Development Programme, 2022).
- Perspectives and future orientation of research in digital issues (Paul et al., 2024).
- Potential, characteristics, strategies, initiatives, investments related to the promotion of digital transformations in Europe (McKinsey, 2020; Negreiro & Madiega, 2019).
- Social changes generated by digital transformations (Büchner, Hergesell & Kallinikos, 2022).
- Cybersecurity and the protection of the personal data online, end of roaming charges, open internet, free-flow of non-personal data (Negreiro & Madiega, 2019).
- Perspectives for the future through the use of digital approach, advantages and the impact produced for the society (Bakhmat et al., 2020; Report ACCA, 2023; Olorunyomi et al., 2024; Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023).

**Research methodology.** The initial file Sample1 was weighted taking into account maintaining the real proportions of the Romanian population of the main socio-demographic characteristics present at the end of 2021. The new resulting sample has 1015 records. The statistical processing methods aim to analyze the responses of the Romanian population to three questions from a common questionnaire. The questions are aimed at Romanians' prediction for 2030 regarding the importance, advantages and problems that the use of the internet and digital tools can bring. The results will be analyzed separately by six age groups, namely: 15-24 years (126), 25-34 years (150), 35-44 years (197), 45-54 years (172), 55-64 years (141), over 64 years (65+ category includes 229 people). The number of people interviewed in the respective age category was listed in parentheses. The variables used in this paper are, as a rule, categorical ones which have an ordinal type (Agresti, 2010). We mention here the fact that the models proposed for statistical processing took always into account the type of used variables. The concrete meaning of the variables involved will be specified in the section presenting the results obtained.

The distributions of two ordinal categorical variables X, Y will be compared using the stochastic ordering relation "<" of the distributions (Anderson, 2019). In the case of the existence of inequality X < Y between the distributions of groups X and Y, we can say that the population's answers to question Q given by group X are more "unfavorable" than the answers of group Y. We also mention the existence of the situation X # Y when the distributions X and Y cannot be compared from the point of view of the stochastic order relation "<".

We have effectively solved the situation of incompatibility X # Y between the distributions X and Y in relation to the stochastic ordering "<" by proposing the TREND indicator for ordinal variables. The construction of the TREND index was based on the methodology proposed by Stefanescu (2015).

More precisely, for any categorical ordinal variable Z we have  $0 \le \text{TREND}(Z) \le 1$ . The value TREND(Z) = 0 when the distribution of the ordinal variable Z is concentrated in its most unfavorable ordinal class. On the other hand, TREND(Z) = 1 if all the values actually taken by the categorical variable Z are distributed only in the ordinal class considered to be the most "evolved". The essential property of the TREND coefficient is the compatibility of this index with respect to the stochastic order relationship "<". So, for any two ordinal categorical variables X and Y, if X < Y then we have compulsory TREND(X) < TREND(Y).

The value of the indicator gk(X,Y) characterizes the strength of the Goodman-Kruskal association relationship between the ordinal categorical variables X and Y (Everitt, 1977). We have  $-1 \le gk(X,Y) \le 1$ . It should be noted that the association index gk(X,Y) has properties comparable to those of the classical Pearson correlation coefficient Cor(U,V) which is defined for any cardinal variables U, V (Everitt 1977; Kotz et al., 2006).

We will apply a chi-square statistical homogeneity test to verify the veracity of the null hypothesis H0(X,Y) (Papoulis, 1990). For the categorical variables X and Y, the hypothesis H0(X,Y) signifies the homogeneity of the distribution of the

variable X for all categories defined by the variable Y. For example, the hypothesis H0(X,Age) specifies the homogeneity of the distribution X regardless of the age groups. In the case of the chi-square statistical test, the following entities are defined (Alkarkhi, 2021; Papoulis, 1990):  $\alpha$  (significance level of the test), ndf (number of degree of freedom), rej (the threshold to reject the null H0 hypothesis; the rej value depends on the chosen probability  $\alpha$ ), chi2 (the statistic of the chosen test), pv (p-value; probability of rejecting the null hypothesis H0 if this hypothesis is considered to be true).

Basically, we will verify the homogeneous hypothesis H0(X,Y) operating with the significance level  $\alpha=0.05$  for the chi-square statistical test. We will accept the null hypothesis H0(X,Y) if chi2 < rej or if the assumed risk of rejecting the hypothesis H0 is relatively high (for example pv > 0.1).

All the algorithms for implementing statistical models were programmed by the author in Matlab computer language.

**Main results.** The current research is based on data extracted from a Eurobarometer designed in October 2021 (Sample1, 2022). We are interested in analyzing Romanians' opinions on the possible evolution in 2030 of several aspects related to the internet and digital tools. These aspects will be detailed in the following sections, taking into account six age categories of the Romanian population. More precisely, the ordinal categorical variable *Age* is defined by six age groups: 15-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, 55-64 years, over 65 years (65+). We aim to verify whether Romanians' opinions on the issue of digital tools and the internet in 2030 are significantly influenced by the age of the respondent to the questionnaire.

1. Romanians' prediction for 2030 regarding the importance of digital tools and the internet. We will analyze Romanians' responses regarding the importance given to the internet and digital tools in the future, as a forecast for 2030. We will refer to the *Import* variable which has the following formulation in the questionnaire applied to the interviewees: "How important do you think digital tools and the internet will be in your life by 2030?".

The possible answers to the *Import* question are: very important (I1); fairly important (I2); not very important (I3); not at all important (I4); don't know (DK).

DK non-responses are 4.2% on the entire sample. However, the proportion of the DK answer variant differs in relation to the age of the respondent to the questionnaire: less than 0.5% for people under 54 years of age and 5.4% for people in the 55-64 age category. However, most non-answers to the *Import* question concern the 65+ group (11.2%).

On the entire sample, the percentage of cumulative positive answers to the *Import* question, that is "very important" plus "fairly important" (I1+I2), is the majority (64.1%). However, this percentage fluctuates in relation to the age category of the interviewee, such as: 74.6% (15-24 years old), 80% (25-34 years old), 77.2% (35-44 years old), 71% (45-54 years old), 60.3% (55-64 years old), 33.7% (over 64 years old). Therefore, the 25-34 age group predicts to the greatest

extent the importance of digital tools and the internet in the future (80% by 2030). At the opposite pole is the group of elderly people (65+) with a percentage *Import* of about 34%.

Figure 1. graphically represents, for all six age groups C, the distributions of the population's answers to the *Import* question. We will note by Imp(C) the distribution of the answers to the question *Import* given by persons in age category C. The categorical variable Age is characterized by six ordinal classes.

The distributions Imp(15-24), Imp(25-34), Imp(35-44) are relatively similar (Figure 1). However, the Imp distribution (65+) is markedly different from the *Import* distributions of respondents belonging to the other Age groups (Figure 1). The closest resemblance to the Imp(65+) distribution is the Imp(55-64) distribution (Figure 1).

Taken as a whole, depending on the age category C of the interviewee, the Imp(C) distributions are not very similar (Figure 1). This observation could be confirmed by applying a statistical homogeneity test.

The interpretation of the two-dimensional distribution (Import, Age) suggests a possible dependence of the ordinal categorical variable Import on the Age categories. We will delve into this idea later.

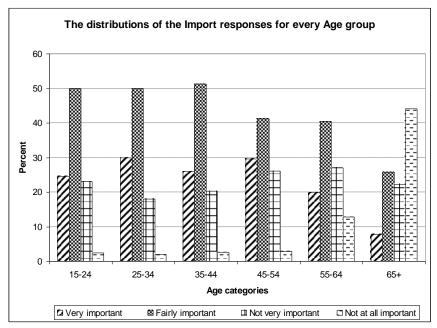


Figure 1. The distributions of the *Import* variable by age groups. *Source: Author's computations.* 

First of all, we ask ourselves whether the distribution of the ordinal variable *Import* is kept for all age categories Age. A chi-squared homogeneity test will solve this dilemma. We will operate with the hypothesis H0 (*Import*, Age) of homogeneity of the distributions of the ordinal categorical variable *Import* in relation to all the six age groups Age. Following the application of the chi-square

statistical test, the hypothesis H0(Import,Age) was obviously rejected ( $\alpha = 0.05$ , ndf = 15, rej = 25, chi2 = 278.7, pv = 0).

However, we notice a major linear dependence between people's answers to the *Import* question and the *Age* categories. More precisely, the value of the Goodman-Kruskal coefficient gk of association between the ordinal variables *Import* and *Age* is 0.366.

We deduce the stochastic subordination relationship Imp(65+) < Imp(C) for any age group C other than 65+. These previous five inequalities underline the fact that the importance given by older people (group 65+) to the future evolution of digital tools and the internet is more unfavourable than the assessment forecasted by younger people.

The estimation of prognosis differences by age categories will be effectively made by comparing the TREND values in *Figure 2*.

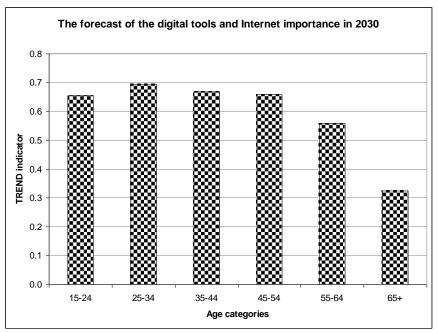


Figure 2. Trends of the answers to the question *Import* in relation to the *Age* categories.

Source: Author's computations.

Regarding the future importance of the Internet and the expansion of digital tools, *Figure* 2 shows an assessment of the 65+ category that is about twice as low as the rest of the population.

By Imp(C) we designate the distribution of the answers given to the question Import by persons in age class C (Age variable). Using the TREND(Imp(C)) values, we obtain the following ranking suggested by Romanians regarding the importance given to the evolution of digital tools (Figure 2):

Imp(65+) < Imp(55-64) < Imp(15-24) < Imp(45-54) < Imp(35-44) < < Imp(25-34)

However, it is necessary to determine whether the importance forecasted by Romanians for 2030 regarding the internet and digital transformations has a positive or negative effect on Romanian society.

2. Romanians' opinions on the advantages of the internet and digital tools in 2030. The Advant variable summarizes Romanians' opinions on the future advantages of internet development and digital transformations. Specifically, *Advant*'s question is formulated: "When you imagine your life in 2030, do you think the use of digital tools and the internet will bring you more advantages or disadvantages?". We consider four possible types of answer to this question, namely: more advantages than disadvantages (A1); as many advantages as disadvantages (A2); more disadvantages than advantages (A3); don't know (DK).

DK's answer to the *Advant* question is high, 7.7% on the entire sample. This is partly explainable, as a significant proportion of the population does not have enough information to anticipate possible future benefits of digital transformations and the internet. As with the *Import* variable, the DK non-answers to the Advant question differ depending on the age of the interviewee. Thus, we have non-responses below 0.8% for people up to 64 years of age. In contrast to this situation, we note the very high proportion of *Advant* non-responses for the 65+ age category (26.5%). In fact, the special behavior of the elderly was also highlighted in the case of the *Import* question, but in a significantly lower proportion (of 11.2% for the DK situation in the *Import* question).

Figure 3 graphically shows the distributions of the population's answers to the Advant question for each Age category. We will designate by Adv(C) the distribution of the answers given to the Advant question by persons in the age category C.

The distributions of Adv(C) in *Figure 3* are quite different, which can be confirmed by applying statistical tests. The most confident in the future advantages of the Internet and in the development of digital tools are people in the age categories 25-34 years old (see the distribution of Adv(25-34) in *Figure 3*). At the opposite pole are the elderly (distribution of Adv(65+) in *Figure 3*).

On the entire sample, people in the 25-34 age group are the most optimistic in anticipating the future advantages of the internet and digital procedures. Thus, only 8.1% of Romanians aged 25-34 have forecasted "more disadvantages than advantages" in terms of digital evolution. On the other hand, the option of the elderly for this type of response is much higher, at 29.1%. A confirmation of these results is also given by *Figure 3*.

As in the case of the *Import* variable, the distribution of the answers to the *Advant* question depends to a large extent on the age category of the interviewees. We do not have a homogeneity of the *Advant* distributions in relation to the ordinal variable *Age*. Indeed, by applying a chi-square statistical test, the H0(Advant,Age) hypothesis of homogeneity is rejected ( $\alpha = 0.05$ , ndf = 10, rej = 18.3, chi2 = 55.4, pv = 2.7\*10 -8).

We specify that, by introducing additional statistical hypotheses, we have revealed the distinct behavior in the *Advant* issue of the group of elderly people (65+).

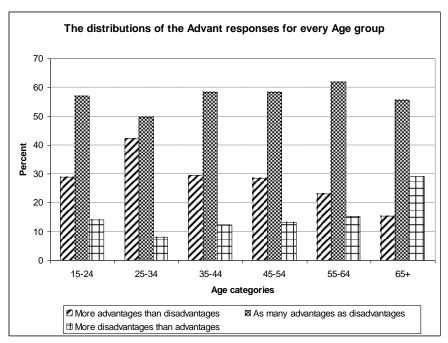


Figure 3. The distributions of the *Advant* variable by *Age* groups. *Source: Author's computations.* 

The *Advant* distributions are dependent according to the age categories (variable *Age*). More precisely, the value of the Goodman-Kruskal coefficient gk of association between the ordinal variables *Advant* and *Age* is 0.224.

Using the relation "<", of stochastic ordering of the distributions Adv(C), we obtain the inequalities:

These inequalities reveal the small future advantages of the digital transformations predicted by the elderly category. The biggest advantages in 2030 regarding the development of the internet and digital tools are noticed by the 25-34 age group.

However, a more precise ranking of the Adv(C) distributions is achieved by using the values of the TREND(Adv(C)) index of trend for the Adv(C) distributions (*Figure 4*). We thus deduce the following hierarchy

The ordering of the distributions Adv(C) using the values of the trend coefficients of these distributions has the advantage of eliminating the incompatibility situation Adv(15-24) # Adv(45-54) from the similar hierarchy built on the basis of the stochastic order relationship "<".

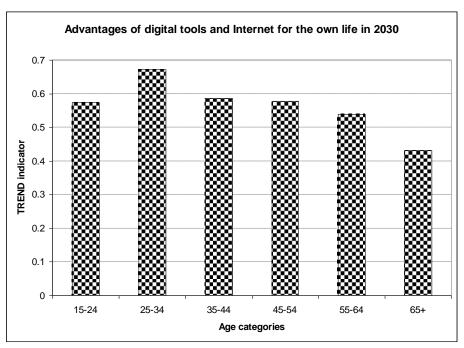


Figure 4. TREND(Adv(C)) values for distributions of category C answers to the *Advant* question.

Source: Author's computations.

3. The importance versus advantages of the digital transformations predicted in 2030. The Romanian population foresees for 2030 a special importance of the evolution of digital transformations. Taking into account the entire dataset (Sample1), the estimated trend of "importance in 2030" is high, exceeding the equilibrium threshold of 0.5, that is TREND(Import) = 0.576. With the exception of category C = 65+, the previous statement is also confirmed by  $Figure\ 2$  where the partial trends Import(C)) are represented for all categories C of the Age variable.

However, we do not know whether assessing the importance of digital transformations in the future has a positive or negative effect on Romanian society. The advantage perceived by Romanians regarding the development of digital tools and the internet was summarized in *Figure 4*. The graphs in *Figure 2* and *Figure 4* both have a descending allure in relation to the *Age* variable, which would suggest a possible dependence between the *Import* and *Advant* variables.

Concretely, the dependence between the ordinal variables *Import* and *Advant* is intuitively confirmed by the two-dimensional distribution (*Import*, *Advant*) from Table 1. In Table 1. we observe a concentration of the population's responses on the main diagonal of the respective matrix. This indicates the presence of a positive dependency between the *Import* and *Advant* variables. More precisely, the Goodman-Kruskal association index gk between the ordinal categorical variables *Import* and *Advant* has an extremely high positive value, that is gk(*Import*, *Advant*) = 0.745.

In conclusion, the importance given by the population to the development of the internet and digital transformations is appreciated by Romanians as being beneficial for entire society in the future.

Table 1. Two-dimensional distribution (Import, Advant) for Sample1.

Percent	Advant_A1	Advant_A2	Advant_A3
Import_I1	14.9	8.1	0.4
Import_I2	11.2	29.2	3.5
Import_I3	0.9	15.5	7.0
Import_I4	0.3	4.2	4.8

Source: Author's computations.

Going through successively in *Table* 1, the types of answer I1-I4 to the question *Import*, we do not visually highlight a homogeneity of the distribution of the *Advant* distributions. Basically, by applying a chi-square test, the hypothesis H0(Advant,Import) of homogeneity of the *Advant* distribution for categories I1-I4 of the *Import* variable is categorically rejected ( $\alpha = 0.05$ , ndf = 6, rej = 12.6, chi2 = 349.5, pv = 0).

- **4.** The concern induced in society by the future development of digital transformations. The development of digital tools and the internet raises concerns about many aspects of the Romanian society (the variable *Society*). We will analyze the priorities of Romanians taking into account only seven of the actual challenges, namely:
- 1. (PData). Use of personal <u>data</u> and information by companies or public administrations;
- 2. (CAttack). Cyber-attacks and cybercrime such as theft or abuse of personal data, ransomware (malicious software) or phishing;
- 3. (DSkills). The difficulty of learning new <u>digital skills</u> in order to take an active part in society (e.g. working or studying online, online voting);
  - 4. (SChild). The safety and well-being of children;
- 5. (AOnline). The difficulty some people have <u>accessing</u> the <u>online</u> world (e.g. persons with disabilities, elderly people, those living in areas with little or no internet access);
- 6. (Balance). The difficulty of disconnecting and finding a good online/offline life balance;
  - 7. (Environ). The environmental impact of digital products and services.

Each person surveyed opted for a maximum of three *Society* challenges, out of a total of seven, challenges considered to be the most important for the interviewee. *Figure* 6 graphs the percentage values predicted by the population for these seven *Society* challenges.

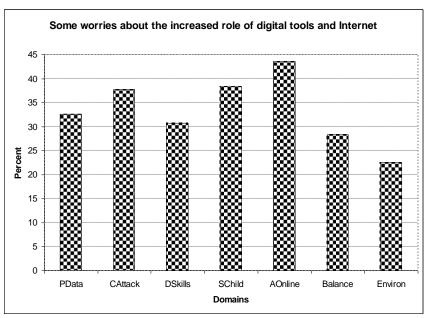


Figure 5. Concerns caused by the growing role of digital transformations in society.

Source: Author's computations.

Interpreting the values of the percentages of the *Society* components graphically represented in *Figure 6* we deduce:

- In Romanians' opinion, the biggest problem seems to be online access for the elderly, people with disabilities or for individuals living in areas that do not have internet access facilities (AOnline).
- At the same time, Romanians are concerned about children's restrictive access to the internet (SChild) as well as about curbing cyber attacks (CAttack).
- Quite important concerns of Romanians regard the security of personal and company data (PData), the improvement of digital knowledge and skills (DSkills) or the achievement of a balance between real and virtual life (Balance).
- The least important concern of the population seems to be at this moment the application of digital technologies to environmental management, which includes also the field of services (Environ).

The priorities in *Figure 6* are majorly influenced by the age category of the interviewee. Thus, the problem of online access (AOnline) is reported by over 45% of people who are 64 years old or less. In contrast, less than 35% of older people (65+) are concerned about online access (AOnline).

The using of digital applications for the constructive and efficient solution of environmental problems (Environ) is found in people under 65 years of age in a proportion of over 22% and only 13.6% in the elderly (65+ category).

For each of the seven *Society* concerns, we will mention in parentheses the age category *Age* for which the respective problem has a minimum or a maximum percentage in relation to all other *Society* problems. So, we have:

- Minimum percentage: PData (65+), CAttack (65+), DSkill (65+), SChild (15-24), AOnline (65+), Balance (65+), Environ (65+).
- Maximum percentage: PData (45-54), CAttack (35-44), DSkill (55-64), SChild (45-54), AOnline (55-64 & 35-44), Balance (15-24), Environ 35-44).

Therefore, with the exception of the 15-24 age group, the 65+ age category is the least worried about the undesirable effects of digital transformations in society. For each *Society* problem, the greatest concern is specific to a certain age group. Thus, especially for young people (15-24 years old) it becomes a priority to achieve a balance between offline and online life (the Balance challenge).

**Discussions and conclusions.** The current research was based on statistical modelling of a dataset from a Eurobarometer. The Eurobarometer projected in October 2021 contains the answers given by the Romanian population regarding the future of digital tools and the internet in 2030. Four topics are addressed, namely: the importance of digital tools and the internet perceived by Romanians (*Import*); the possible advantages of the internet and digital tools in 2030 (*Advant*); the correlation between the importance and advantages of future digital transformations; the concern induced in society by the evolution of digital technology in 2030 (*Society*),

The processing of the selected data was based on the application of several statistical models specific to the ordinal categorical variables: the stochastic ordering relation "<"; setting a trend (TREND indicator); the Goodman-Kruskal association index gk between two ordinal variables; a chi-square statistical test of homogeneity for two distributions. The results obtained by using all these statistical models are comparable.

This study was detailed taking into account the age of the interviewee. Six age categories (variable Age) were considered.

In general, the age group 65+ and often people aged 55-64 give answers that are not in line with the opinions of Romanians who do not exceed the age of 54. This is also evident in the case of non-responses (DKs), which are much more present for individuals over 55 years old. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that older people are less informed and cannot perceive as well as the rest of the population the importance and future advantages of digital applications.

The current study revealed the decisive characteristic of the interviewee's age in positioning the individual in relation to the aforementioned objectives. As a rule, the hypothesis of homogeneity H0 of the distributions of the answers regarding a certain objective in relation to the six age categories of the respondents (variable Age) is rejected. This is the case of the objectives: Import, Advant, Advant versus Import.

Also, at the level of the entire sample, by applying the chi-square statistical test, the hypothesis H0 of a homogeneity for the distributions of the answers to the *Import* and *Advant* questions in relation to the *Age* categories is not validated.

A majority of respondents (64%) predict the positive importance of the Internet and digital tools (variable *Import*). People in the 25-34 age group are the most optimistic in anticipating the future benefits of digital transformations (29%).

We notice a major linear dependence between people's answers to the *Import* question and the *Age* categories. More precisely, the value of the Goodman-Kruskal coefficient gk of association between the ordinal variables *Import* and *Age* is 0.366.

The TREND values for the *Import* and *Advant* variables in relation to the *Age* categories are graphically represented in *Figures 2,4*. Compared to the 25-34 age group, which is particularly optimistic in the *Import* and *Advant* issues, we note the most pessimistic behavior promoted by the 65+ group (*Figures 2,4*). The specific daily habits, the ways of informing, the health and financial problems of the elderly justify the reported behavior.

The importance given by the population to digital transformations is viewed by Romanians in a positive sense (interpret the two-dimensional *Import/Advant* distribution in Table 1). Moreover, the value of the Goodman-Kruskal association coefficient gk between the answers to the *Import* and *Advant* questions has a very high positive value of 0.745.

The expansion of digital tools and the internet raises concerns about many aspects that can affect society. From the point of view of the impact induced by the future evolution of digital transformations, the *Society* variable is characterized by the components: PData, CAttack, DSkills, SChild, AOnline, Balance or Environ. *Figure 6* shows the comparative percentages of these seven components of the *Society*. In that section, it was discussed which of these components is of most (slight) concern to a certain age group. The 65+ group plays a special role.

In general, the Romanian people appreciates positively the impact for the society of the future digital transformations.

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## AI AND THE REDUCTION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract.** Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to both exacerbate and alleviate social inequalities. In this paper, we investigate AI's impact from a linguistic perspective, focusing on economic disparities, resource allocation, and ethical considerations. Actuality: We examine the current state of AI adoption and its implications for social equity. Recent developments, trends, and challenges related to AI's influence on linguistic and social disparities are highlighted. Purpose: Our research aims to investigate how AI can contribute to reducing inequalities. Specifically, we consider linguistic aspects, such as language bias in AI algorithms, alongside broader societal implications. Research Methods:Our methodology involves a comprehensive literature review. We analyse existing studies, case examples, and empirical evidence related to AI's impact on social inequalities. Results: Preliminary findings suggest that responsible AI design can bridge gaps and dismantle biases. By prioritizing fairness, transparency, and ethical development, we can harness AI's power to create a more equitable society across linguistic boundaries. In summary, this paper advocates for vigilance and empathy in embracing transformative AI technologies to address social disparities. Keywords: artificial intelligence, multilingual interpretation, machine translation system, AI, language inclusivity, social inequalities, biased data, nuanced

language, equal access JEL: C88, I14, J15, J61, L14, L86, O30, O33, Z13, Z18

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**Introduction**. Artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly evolved into a transformative force, reshaping numerous facets of society, from healthcare to education. As AI technologies become more prevalent, they promise to

revolutionize the way we live and work. Yet, the dual nature of AI presents both profound opportunities and significant challenges, particularly in relation to social inequalities. While AI holds the potential to reduce disparities by expanding access to essential services and creating new opportunities, it can also amplify existing biases and introduce new forms of discrimination if not developed and applied responsibly. This paper delves into the intricate relationship between AI and social inequalities, with a specific emphasis on linguistic AI. Technologies that process and interpret human language play a pivotal role in shaping social interactions and access to information. However, biases inherent in AI language algorithms pose a serious concern, as they can perpetuate societal prejudices and further marginalize minority communities. The literature review synthesizes insights from a range of academic sources to offer a thorough examination of AI's current adoption, its implications for social equity, and the role linguistic AI plays in addressing - or exacerbating - social disparities. By analyzing both the potential benefits and risks associated with AI, this paper underscores the need for ethical considerations and inclusive growth in AI development and deployment. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to the broader conversation on how AI can be leveraged to foster a more equitable society across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

**Literature review**. Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative technology with the potential to significantly impact various aspects of society, including social inequalities. The dual nature of AI, where it can both exacerbate and alleviate inequalities, has been a focal point of recent research. This literature review explores the current state of AI adoption, its implications for social equity, and the role of linguistic AI in addressing social disparities.

AI and Social Inequalities. Several studies have highlighted the potential of AI to exacerbate social inequalities. Eubanks (2018) argues that AI systems, when not designed with fairness in mind, can perpetuate existing biases and create new forms of discrimination. This is particularly evident in areas such as hiring practices, where AI algorithms may favor certain demographic groups over others (Raghavan et al., 2020). Similarly, Noble (2018) discusses how search engine algorithms can reinforce racial and gender biases, leading to unequal access to information and opportunities.

On the other hand, AI also holds promise for reducing social inequalities. According to West et al. (2019), AI can be leveraged to improve access to education, healthcare, and other essential services for marginalized communities. For instance, AI-driven educational tools can provide personalized learning experiences, helping to bridge the gap between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Luckin et al., 2016). In healthcare, AI can assist in diagnosing diseases and recommending treatments, thereby improving health outcomes for underserved populations (Esteva et al., 2017).

Linguistic AI and Language Bias. Linguistic AI, which involves the use of AI technologies to process and understand human language, plays a crucial role in addressing social inequalities. However, language bias in AI algorithms remains a significant challenge. Studies by Blodgett et al. (2020) and Bender et al. (2021)

have shown that AI language models often exhibit biases that reflect societal prejudices. These biases can manifest in various ways, such as favouring dominant languages and cultural norms, which can marginalize minority groups and non-native speakers.

Efforts to mitigate language bias in AI have been explored in recent research. Sun et al. (2019) propose techniques for debiasing word embeddings, which are fundamental components of many AI language models. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2018) suggest methods for reducing gender bias in machine translation systems. These approaches highlight the importance of ethical considerations in the development and deployment of linguistic AI.

Ethical Considerations and Inclusive Growth. The ethical implications of AI are a critical area of study, particularly in the context of social inequalities. Researchers emphasize the need for responsible AI design that prioritizes fairness, transparency, and accountability. Floridi et al. (2018) argue that ethical AI practices are essential to ensure that the benefits of AI are equitably distributed and that potential harms are minimized. This includes addressing biases in AI systems and ensuring that AI technologies are accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status or linguistic background.

Inclusive growth, which aims to create opportunities for all segments of society, is another key consideration in the deployment of AI. According to the World Economic Forum (2020), AI can contribute to inclusive growth by enabling new forms of economic participation and reducing barriers to entry for marginalized communities. This requires a concerted effort from policymakers, businesses, and researchers to develop AI solutions that are inclusive and equitable.

In summary, the literature highlights the transformative potential of AI in both exacerbating and alleviating social inequalities. Linguistic AI, in particular, plays a crucial role in this dynamic, with language bias and ethical considerations being central to its impact. By prioritizing fairness, transparency, and ethical development, AI can be harnessed to create a more equitable society across linguistic boundaries. Future research should continue to explore the ways in which AI can be designed and deployed to address social disparities, with a focus on inclusive growth and responsible innovation.

**Research methodology**. Our methodology involved conducting a comprehensive literature review to analyze existing studies, case examples, and empirical evidence related to AI's impact on social inequalities. We identified and selected relevant academic journals, conference papers, books, and reputable online sources using key databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, and JSTOR. Inclusion criteria focused on studies addressing AI's impact on social inequalities, while exclusion criteria filtered out non-empirical or non-peer-reviewed sources.

Data was systematically extracted from the selected sources, focusing on themes such as bias in AI systems, the digital divide, and ethical implications. We analyzed specific case examples that illustrate AI's impact on social inequalities, providing concrete evidence of both mitigation and exacerbation of social disparities. Empirical evidence was gathered from studies providing quantitative and qualitative data on AI's effects on different social groups.

A critical analysis of the findings was conducted to draw conclusions about the current state of AI adoption and its implications for social equity. Ethical guidelines for AI development, including those established by the European Union and the World Economic Forum, informed our analysis and recommendations.

This methodology provided a comprehensive and insightful analysis of AI's impact on social inequalities, contributing to the broader discourse on ethical AI development.

Main results. The dominance of high-resource languages in AI refers to the overwhelming focus and development of AI technologies in languages that have abundant data and resources, such as English, Chinese, and Spanish. This dominance creates a significant disparity, as AI models trained primarily on these languages tend to perform better in them, while underperforming in low-resource languages that lack extensive datasets and computational resources. Consequently, speakers of low-resource languages face challenges in accessing and benefiting from AI advancements, which can exacerbate existing inequalities and limit the global reach and inclusivity of AI technologies. Addressing this issue requires concerted efforts to collect and curate data for low-resource languages, as well as developing AI models that are more inclusive and equitable. Low-resource languages are those that have limited digital resources, such as text corpora, linguistic databases, and computational tools. Here are a few examples:

Hausa - Spoken in West Africa, primarily in Nigeria and Niger.

Quechua - An indigenous language spoken in the Andean region of South America.

Amharic - The official language of Ethiopia.

*Maori* - The language of the indigenous people of New Zealand.

*Inuktitut* - Spoken by the Inuit people in Canada.

Wolof - Widely spoken in Senegal and The Gambia.

*Bengali* - While it has a large number of speakers, it is still considered low-resource in terms of digital and computational resources compared to languages like English.

These languages often lack extensive datasets and computational tools, making it challenging to develop AI technologies that perform well in them. Efforts to support these languages in AI development are crucial for promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity.

The article "No Language Left Behind: How to Bridge the Rapidly Evolving AI Language Gap" by Alena Gorbacheva, published on the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Eurasia Innovation website, explores the challenges and opportunities associated with AI language representation. It highlights the dominance of high-resource languages in AI technologies, which limits accessibility for speakers of low-resource languages such as Kazakh. This lack of linguistic resources results in poor performance or non-functionality of AI tools for these languages. The article also delves into the struggles faced by speakers of low-

resource languages in the digital world, emphasizing the need for more inclusive AI development. It suggests that bridging the AI language gap requires collective efforts from researchers, governments, educational institutions, and private companies through joint development of technologies, educational programs, and pilot projects.

**Improving AI Research for Low-Resource Languages**. Improving AI research for low-resource languages is essential for promoting linguistic diversity and inclusivity. Here are some strategies to achieve this:

- Data Collection and Annotation: gather and curate large datasets for low-resource languages. This can involve collaborating with native speakers, linguists, and local communities to collect text, speech, and other linguistic data. Annotation efforts should also be prioritized to create high-quality labeled datasets.
- Transfer Learning: utilize transfer learning techniques to leverage knowledge from high-resource languages. Pre-trained models on high-resource languages can be fine-tuned on low-resource language data to improve performance.
- Multilingual Models: develop and train multilingual models that can handle multiple languages simultaneously. These models can share knowledge across languages, benefiting low-resource languages through cross-lingual transfer.
- Community Involvement: engage local communities and native speakers in the development process. Their insights and expertise are invaluable for creating culturally and linguistically appropriate AI solutions.
- Open-Source Initiatives: Support and contribute to open-source projects focused on low-resource languages. Open-source tools and resources can accelerate research and development efforts by providing a collaborative platform for researchers and developers.
- Funding and Support: secure funding and institutional support for research on low-resource languages. Governments, NGOs, and private organizations can play a crucial role in providing the necessary resources and infrastructure.
- Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: foster collaboration between linguists, computer scientists, and AI researchers. Interdisciplinary approaches can lead to innovative solutions and a deeper understanding of the linguistic challenges involved.

By implementing these strategies, we can make significant progress in improving AI research for low-resource languages and ensure that AI technologies are accessible and beneficial to all linguistic communities.

The implications of improving AI research for low-resource languages are profound for global linguistic diversity:

*Preservation of Languages*: enhanced AI research can help document and preserve endangered languages by creating digital records, speech recognition systems, and translation tools. This is crucial for maintaining cultural heritage and linguistic diversity.

*Increased Accessibility*: AI technologies that support low-resource languages can make information and services more accessible to speakers of these languages. This includes educational resources, healthcare information, and government services, thereby promoting inclusivity.

Cultural Representation: by incorporating low-resource languages into AI systems, we ensure that diverse cultures and perspectives are represented in the digital world. This can lead to more culturally sensitive and relevant AI applications.

*Economic Opportunities*: supporting low-resource languages in AI can open up new economic opportunities for communities. It can enable local businesses to reach a broader audience and participate in the global digital economy.

Equitable AI Development: addressing the dominance of high-resource languages in AI research promotes equity in technological development. It ensures that the benefits of AI are distributed more evenly across different linguistic communities.

Enhanced Communication: AI-powered translation and communication tools can bridge language barriers, fostering better understanding and collaboration between different linguistic groups.

Overall, improving AI research for low-resource languages is essential for promoting linguistic diversity, cultural preservation, and global inclusivity. It ensures that AI technologies serve the needs of all linguistic communities, not just those with abundant resources. There have been several successful examples of AI research in low-resource languages. Here are a few notable ones:

Meta's No Language Left Behind (NLLB) Project: Meta developed the NLLB-200 model, which can translate between 204 languages, including many low-resource languages. This project aims to improve translation quality for underrepresented languages and make AI more inclusive (Adelani, 2024). NLLB is a pioneering AI project focused on Multilingual Language Models (MLLMs). The project has released open-source models capable of delivering high-quality translations across 200 languages, improving translations for low-resource languages on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. The NLLB-200 model, integrated into the Wikimedia Foundation's Content Translation tool, helps Wikipedia editors translate content into their preferred languages, enriching Wikipedia's language diversity. The open-source nature of the NLLB-200 model also empowers the research community and Wikipedia editor groups to build upon their findings.

adaptMLLM: this project focuses on fine-tuning multilingual language models for low-resource languages. For example, it has shown significant improvements in translation performance for language pairs like English to Irish (EN  $\leftrightarrow$  GA) and English to Marathi (EN  $\leftrightarrow$  MR). As an open-source application, adaptMLLM is freely available for the research community and practitioners in the field of MT (machine translation). This encourages further development and collaboration (Lankford, Afli, & Way, 2023).

AfriBERTa: this multilingual language model covers 11 African languages, including the first language model for four of these languages. It demonstrates that

competitive multilingual language models can be trained on less than 1 GB of text (Ogueji, Zhu, & Lin, 2021).

ASR Models for Tujia Language: researchers from the University of Beijing developed a speech recognition model for the Tujia language, a Sino-Tibetan language spoken by the Tujia people in Hunan Province, China. This model helps preserve the language, which is at risk of extinction (Bogdanoski, Mishev, Simjanoska, & Trajanov, 2023). Tujia is a Sino-Tibetan language spoken by the Tujia people in Hunan Province, China.

ASR (Automatic Speech Recognition) models are crucial for preserving endangered languages like Tujia by creating digital records and facilitating language learning. One approach to improving ASR for Tujia involves integrating visual information, such as lip movements, with audio data. This fusion enhances the model's ability to recognize speech accurately, even with limited data (Yu, Yu, Qian, & Tan, 2023).

These models combine LSTM (Long Short-Term Memory) networks with Transformer architectures to improve the accuracy of speech recognition. The AVSR (Audiovisual Speech Recognition) approach has shown a significant reduction in character error rate compared to traditional models.

These examples highlight the potential of AI research to support and preserve low-resource languages, making technology more accessible and inclusive for diverse linguistic communities.

**Discussion and conclusions**. The ethical implications of AI, especially in the context of social inequalities, are a crucial area of study. Here are some key points to consider:

*Bias and Discrimination.* AI systems can inadvertently replicate and even amplify existing biases related to race, gender, and other social factors. This can lead to discriminatory outcomes in areas such as hiring, lending, and law enforcement.

Accessibility and Inclusivity. The digital divide, or disparities in access to technology, can exacerbate existing inequalities. Ensuring that AI technologies are accessible and inclusive is essential to prevent further marginalization of disadvantaged groups.

Psychological and psychosocial impacts. It is crucial to incorporate ethical considerations into the design and development of AI systems to prevent harm and ensure fairness of AI technologies and to develop ethical guidelines to mitigate potential risks. AI algorithms used by social media platforms to recommend content, for example, can create echo chambers and contribute to the spread of misinformation. This can impact users' mental health by reinforcing negative beliefs and increasing anxiety.

Data Privacy and Security. AI systems often rely on vast amounts of data, raising concerns about data privacy and security. Ensuring that data is collected and used ethically is critical to protect individuals' rights and prevent misuse.

Accountability and Transparency. There is a need for clear accountability and transparency in AI systems. This includes understanding how decisions are

made by AI and ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to address any harmful outcomes.

Potential for Positive Impact. Despite these challenges, AI also holds the potential to reduce unfairness and promote social justice if developed and deployed responsibly. For example, AI can be used to identify and mitigate biases in decision-making processes. Addressing these ethical implications requires a collaborative effort from researchers, policymakers, and communities to ensure that AI benefits all members of society equitably.

*Importance in AI Research*. Ethics committees are essential for ensuring that AI research is conducted responsibly and ethically, protecting both participants and society at large.

The European Union has established guidelines to ensure that AI development is ethical and trustworthy, emphasizing a human-centric approach (*Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI*). These guidelines include supporting human autonomy and decision-making, ensuring technical robustness and safety, protecting data privacy, maintaining transparency, promoting diversity and fairness, contributing positively to society, and ensuring accountability. Organizations can follow practical steps to build ethical AI, such as leveraging existing ethical frameworks, creating tailored risk frameworks, learning from healthcare practices, providing ethical guidelines for product managers, promoting organizational awareness, incentivizing ethical behavior, and continuously monitoring impacts while engaging stakeholders.

The World Economic Forum outlines general ethical AI principles that are applicable across various cultural and geographical contexts, including ensuring accountability, protecting data privacy, and supporting human decision-making and autonomy. These guidelines and principles help ensure that AI development is conducted responsibly and ethically, minimizing potential risks and maximizing benefits for society.

Our findings underscore the importance of addressing linguistic and social disparities in AI development. Ensuring greater linguistic representation in AI training data, developing ethical AI frameworks, and engaging with diverse communities are essential steps toward creating a more equitable digital ecosystem. AI linguistic technologies hold significant potential to promote multilingualism and preserve endangered languages. By leveraging advanced natural language processing (NLP) techniques, AI can facilitate the development of translation tools, language learning applications, and digital resources that support a wide range of languages, including those with limited resources (Santorelli & Catullo, 2023). For instance, AI-powered translation systems can bridge communication gaps between speakers of different languages, fostering greater linguistic diversity and cultural exchange. Additionally, AI can assist in documenting and revitalizing endangered languages by creating digital archives, generating educational content, and providing real-time translation and transcription services. These efforts not only help preserve linguistic heritage but also empower communities to maintain and celebrate their unique cultural identities. As AI continues to evolve, its role in promoting multilingualism and safeguarding endangered languages will become increasingly vital, contributing to a more inclusive and diverse global society. By prioritizing ethical considerations and promoting inclusive practices, we can ensure that AI technologies contribute positively to society and help bridge the gap in social inequalities.

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# EMPOWERING UNACCOMPANIED MINORS IN RURAL ITALY: THE ROLE OF LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION

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Abstract. Unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs) face unique challenges when arriving in Italy. To foster their integration, especially in rural contexts, a holistic approach is essential. This abstract explores the role of linguistic integration in supporting UFMs. This study represents a second phase building upon a prior research project. The initial investigation focused on a case study in a rural area in Southern Italy, providing valuable insights. Our current research extends and refines those findings, examining linguistic integration strategies for unaccompanied minors in similar rural contexts. Actuality: Unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs) arriving in Italy face unique challenges. Initial research provided insights from a rural case study in Southern Italy. Purpose: Our current study extends and refines these findings. We focus on linguistic integration strategies for UFMs in similar rural contexts. Specifically, we investigate the role of language teaching and Language Assessment and Certificate. Our aim is to contribute practical solutions for enhancing integration. Research Methods: We combined a literature review on language certification requirements and programs with fieldwork involving interviews with UFMs, educators, and local community members. Results: Language proficiency is crucial for legal status. Community support mechanisms play a vital role in guiding UFMs through certification. However, inclusive policies and collaboration among stakeholders are essential.

Keywords: integration, minorities, linguistic integration, Italy, refugees, education,

JEL: F22, I21, J15, J60, Z13

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**Introduction**. The integration of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UFMs) into rural Italian communities presents unique challenges and opportunities. Unlike urban areas, rural regions often lack the infrastructure and resources necessary to support the diverse needs of UFMs. However, these communities also offer a close-knit environment that can foster a sense of belonging and support. This paper explores the linguistic integration strategies tailored for UFMs in rural Italy, with a

particular focus on the role of language teaching, assessment, and certification. Language teaching is a cornerstone of linguistic integration, providing UFMs with the essential skills to communicate effectively, succeed academically, and build social connections. In rural areas, tailored language courses that consider the specific needs of UFMs, along with supportive learning environments, are crucial. The use of technology and digital tools can also play a significant role in enhancing language learning, especially in areas where access to traditional educational resources may be limited. Language assessment and certification further support the integration process by offering formal recognition of language proficiency. These assessments ensure that UFMs receive appropriate language support and provide motivation for continued learning. Certificates, such as CELI and CILS, are not only symbols of achievement but also essential tools for accessing further education, employment, and residency opportunities.

By examining the linguistic integration strategies for UFMs in rural Italy, this paper aims to highlight the importance of language teaching and certification in fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for these vulnerable individuals. Through a comprehensive analysis, we seek to understand how these strategies can be optimized to better serve the needs of UFMs and facilitate their successful integration into rural Italian communities.

**Literature review**. The integration of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UFMs) into host communities is a multifaceted process that involves various social, educational, and psychological dimensions. Linguistic integration, in particular, is crucial as it enables UFMs to communicate effectively, access education, and build social connections. Research has shown that language proficiency is a key determinant of successful integration and overall well-being for migrants (Esser, 2006; Chiswick & Miller, 2001).

Language Teaching Strategies. Language teaching is a fundamental component of linguistic integration. Tailored language courses that address the specific needs of UFMs are essential. These courses should consider the learners' backgrounds, previous education, and trauma experiences (Bigelow & Tarone, 2004). In rural areas, where traditional educational resources may be limited, innovative approaches such as blended learning and the use of digital tools can enhance language acquisition (Godwin-Jones, 2011). Studies have highlighted the effectiveness of technology-enhanced language learning in providing flexible and accessible education for migrants (Stockwell, 2007; Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

Language Assessment and Certification. Language assessment and certification play a critical role in the integration process by providing formal recognition of language proficiency. Certificates such as CELI (Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana) and CILS (Certificazione di Italiano come Lingua Straniera) are widely recognized and can open doors to further education, employment, and residency opportunities (Council of Europe, 2001). Research indicates that standardized language assessments can motivate learners to continue their studies and achieve higher levels of proficiency (Alderson, 2005; Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Role of Technology in Language Learning and Migrant Integration. The use of technology in language learning has gained significant attention in recent years. Digital tools and online platforms can provide interactive and engaging learning experiences, which are particularly beneficial for UFMs who may have disrupted educational backgrounds (Blake, 2013). Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) have been shown to improve language skills and learner motivation (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Chapelle, 2001). Additionally, technology can facilitate personalized learning, allowing UFMs to progress at their own pace and according to their individual needs (Reinders & White, 2010).

Digitalization plays a pivotal role in facilitating the integration of migrants by providing innovative tools and resources that address their unique needs. The integration process is multifaceted, involving social, educational, and economic dimensions. Digital tools can enhance these aspects by offering personalized support, improving access to information, and fostering social connections.

Liao, Welsch, and Moutray (2008) highlight the importance of resources for successful integration, drawing parallels to entrepreneurial success. Just as entrepreneurs require resources to thrive, migrants need access to educational, social, and economic resources to integrate effectively. Digital tools can provide these resources in a flexible and accessible manner, ensuring that migrants have the support they need to succeed in their new environments.

Ntioudis et al. (2020) present the IMMERSE system, which emphasizes personalized support for migrant integration. The IMMERSE system leverages digital technology to create tailored solutions that address the specific needs of migrants. By providing personalized learning experiences and support services, the IMMERSE system helps migrants overcome barriers to integration, such as language proficiency and access to employment opportunities.

Zhang (2010) discusses the factors influencing migrant integration into urban life, stressing the importance of social and economic support systems. Digital tools can facilitate access to these support systems by connecting migrants with social services, community organizations, and employment opportunities. Online platforms and mobile applications can provide migrants with the information and resources they need to navigate urban environments and build social networks.

Simonsen and Viberg (2022) explore the use of SKANDIBOT, a chatbot designed to support second language learners. Chatbots and other digital tools can enhance language learning by providing interactive and personalized learning experiences. These tools can simulate real-life conversations, offer instant feedback, and adapt to the learner's pace and proficiency level. By improving language skills, chatbots help migrants communicate more effectively and integrate into their new communities.

Bates et al. (2014) examine the application of gamification in non-formal educational contexts, highlighting its potential in engaging and motivating Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UFMs). Gamified learning experiences can make education more enjoyable and interactive, encouraging migrants to participate actively in their learning process. Serious games and gamified applications can

teach language skills, cultural norms, and vocational skills, making them valuable tools for migrant integration.

Digitalization offers numerous benefits for migrant integration by providing personalized support, enhancing language learning, and facilitating access to social and economic resources. By leveraging digital tools, we can create more inclusive and supportive environments for migrants, helping them overcome barriers and succeed in their new communities.

Challenges and Opportunities in Rural Area. Rural areas present unique challenges and opportunities for the integration of UFMs. While these regions may lack the infrastructure and resources found in urban centers, they often offer a close-knit community environment that can foster a sense of belonging and support (Hugo, 2008). Studies have shown that community involvement and support are crucial for the successful integration of migrants (Putnam, 2007). Tailored language programs that leverage local resources and community networks can enhance the integration process in rural areas (Simich, Beiser, & Mawani, 2003).

The literature highlights the importance of language teaching, assessment, and certification in the linguistic integration of UFMs. Tailored language courses, supported by technology and digital tools, can address the specific needs of UFMs in rural areas. Formal language assessments and certifications provide motivation and recognition, facilitating access to further opportunities. By understanding and addressing the unique challenges and opportunities in rural communities, we can develop effective strategies to support the integration of UFMs and foster a more inclusive society.

**Research methodology**. The study employs an exploratory approach based on relevant literature and pertinent legislation. It critically highlights the pathways for protecting and integrating unaccompanied migrant minors. Key areas include language teaching strategies, the role of technology, and language assessment and certification. Sources include academic journals, books, conference papers, policy documents, government reports, and official guidelines. A case study at the CPIA of Benevento was conducted using qualitative methods such as interviews and observations. The focus was on language assessment processes and inclusive practices.

**Main results**. The integration of unaccompanied minors in rural Italy is a multifaceted challenge.

Presence and Demographic Characteristics of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UFM) in Italy. Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UFM) in Italy are notably present in regions like Sicily, Lombardy, and Emilia-Romagna, coming from countries such as Egypt, Ukraine, Tunisia, Gambia, and Guinea (*Figure 1*).

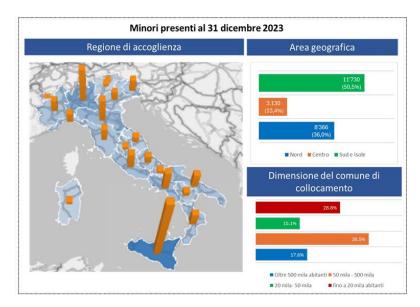


Figure 1. Distribution of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (MSNA) present as of 31.12.2023 by geographical area, Regions, and Municipality of reception Source: https://integrazionemigranti.gov.it/AnteprimaPDF.aspx?id=6065

By the end of 2023, over half of these minors were in southern regions and islands, 36% in the north, and 13% in the center. They are hosted in 1,836 municipalities, with 28.8% in large municipalities (over 500,000 inhabitants), 15% in mid-sized municipalities (50,000-500,000 inhabitants), 38.5% in smaller municipalities (20,000-50,000 inhabitants), and 18% in the smallest municipalities with under 20.000 inhabitants.

Over 73% of unaccompanied minors in Italy are over 16 years old, with 46% being 17 and 27.3% being 16. Minors aged 7-14 make up 13.7%, 15-year-olds account for 11%, and those up to 6 years old represent 1.8%. The age distribution differs by gender: male minors are mostly over 16, while female minors are predominantly aged 7-14 (43.7%) and up to 6 years old (over 7%). Older female minors (16-17) make up less than 36%. The presence of minors from Ukraine significantly influences the age distribution of female minors. The Italian government supports their integration through various policies and projects, including the PUOI Project (Protection United with Integration Objective), an initiative aimed at promoting the socio-economic integration of vulnerable migrants in Italy.

**Linguistic Integration.** Linguistic integration is crucial for the social and educational inclusion of UFMs. Proficiency in the Italian language enables minors to access education, interact with peers, and participate in community activities. Studies have shown that language barriers can hinder the integration process and limit opportunities for UFMs. Here are some key strategies:

- 1. Language Courses: providing Italian language courses tailored to the needs of UFMs. These courses often focus on practical language skills that are essential for daily life and education.
- 2. Cultural Orientation: offering cultural orientation programs that help UFMs understand Italian customs, traditions, and societal norms. This helps them feel more comfortable and integrated into their new environment.
- 3. Educational Support: ensuring that UFMs have access to education, including support for language learning within the school system. This can include additional tutoring and language support classes.
- 4. Community Engagement: encouraging UFMs to participate in community activities and programs. This helps them build social connections and practice their language skills in real-life situations.
- 5. Legal and Social Support: Providing legal and social support to help UFMs navigate the complexities of their new environment. This includes assistance with residency permits, healthcare, and other essential services.
- 6. Collaboration with NGOs: working with non-governmental organizations that specialize in supporting migrants and refugees. These organizations often provide valuable resources and support for linguistic integration.

Language Certification Requirements. Language certification for immigrants is an essential tool for their integration into the host society. In Italy, language certification policies for immigrants are designed to ensure that foreign nationals have a sufficient knowledge of the Italian language, which is essential for their integration into society. To obtain an EC residence permit for long-term residents, immigrants must demonstrate knowledge of the Italian language at a minimum level of A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). For those applying for Italian citizenship, a higher level of language proficiency (B1) is required.

The language proficiency can be certified by one of the four recognized authorities:

- University for Foreigners of Perugia (CELI Certification)
- University for Foreigners of Siena (CILS Certification)
- University of Roma Tre (IT Certification)
- Società Dante Alighieri (PLIDA Certification).

Immigrants can also prove their language proficiency through an education degree obtained in Italy (e.g., Junior High School, High School, Graduation), enrollment in an Italian university course, PhD, or university master course or completion of an Italian language course at a CPIA - Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti (Provincial Centers for Adult Education).

The *CELI i* (Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana per Immigrati) is specifically designed for immigrants. Issued by the University for Foreigners of Perugia, this certification aims to facilitate the integration of adult immigrants into Italian society. The CELI i exams are available at three levels:

- CELI Impatto i (A1 level)
- CELI 1 i (A2 level)

### • CELI 2 i cittadinanza (B1 level)

These certificates assess Italian language competence and are recognized for various purposes, including residency and citizenship applications.

Moreover, achieving certification can motivate immigrants to continue their language learning journey and strive for higher proficiency levels. Finally, language certification helps immigrants integrate into the host society by improving their communication skills and understanding of cultural norms.

Challenges and Considerations for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors Enrolling in Italian Courses. Immigrants can find local language schools that offer Italian language preparation courses through several resources:

- 1. CPIA (Centers for Adult Education): these public centers provide educational activities for adults, including free Italian language courses. Each main province in Italy has its own CPIA, and you can find the nearest one by searching "CPIA + [city]" on Google (e.g., CPIA Milano).
- 2. Local Organizations: various local organizations offer free or low-cost Italian language courses. For example, in Bologna, you can find courses at *ApriMONDO Centro Poggeschi* and *Scuola d'Italiano* by Piedi Marina Gherardi.
- 3. Online Platforms: websites like Refugee.info provide comprehensive lists of language learning options, including both online and in-person courses. They also offer information on Italian language certifications and levels required for permits of stay and citizenship.
- 4. Italian Language Schools: the ASILS (Association of Schools of Italian as a Second Language) website provides a map of accredited Italian language schools across Italy. These schools offer various courses, including preparation for language certifications.
- 5. University and Cultural Centers: many universities and cultural centers offer Italian language courses. For example, the Accademia di Italiano in Milan offers long-term courses that prepare students for CILS and CELI exams.

Unaccompanied foreign minors in Italy have the right to education, including language courses, as part of their integration process. This is supported by national legislation and international agreements.

Various organizations and institutions provide support to unaccompanied minors, helping them access educational opportunities. This includes assistance with enrollment procedures and providing necessary documentation.

**Discussion and conclusions**. The analysis of human mobility processes, particularly focusing on Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UFMs) and the relevant EU and Italian policies, offers a valuable opportunity to explore broader reflections on linguistic integration. The EU is focusing on integration and rural development, encouraging rural areas to play a key role in welcoming and integrating refugees and migrants.

## **Case Study: The Role of CPIA in Benevento in Migrant Integration**

Overview of Benevento's Economy. The economy of Benevento shares common traits with many internal areas of Southern Italy, characterized by modest industrial development, a significant tertiary sector, and a still relevant primary sector. Over half of the local workforce is employed in unskilled tertiary activities (small trade and public administration), while about 20% work in agriculture. Agriculture is fragmented and low-tech, focusing on cereals, fruits, vegetables, and tobacco, with notable wine and olive oil production. Rural activities also include livestock farming and forestry. The local industry is mainly in traditional sectors like food, textiles, construction materials, building, metallurgy, and wood. Natural beauty, thermal stations, and historical, archaeological, and religious sites (such as Padre Pio's places in Pietrelcina) promote tourism, though the hospitality infrastructure is still lacking. As of January 1, 2021, there were 9,432 foreign residents in the province of Benevento, making up 3.5% of the population.

*CPIA education courses*. Adult education courses at CPIA, including those held in prison or IPM, juvenile detention center, are organized into the following pathways:

- Literacy and Italian language learning courses
- First-level education courses
- Second-level education courses (Technical Institute, Professional Institute, and Artistic High School)

First-level education courses and literacy and Italian language learning courses are provided by CPIA, while second-level education courses are provided by technical, professional, and artistic educational institutions.

The First Level Education courses are divided into two teaching periods. The first period consists of 400 hours and aims to achieve the final certificate of the first cycle of education. If the primary school certificate is missing, the total hours can be increased by up to 200 hours, which can also be used for literacy and Italian language learning. The second period consists of 70% of the total hours of the first biennium of technical or professional institutes and aims to certify the acquisition of basic skills required by DM 139/2007.

The Second Level Education Courses aim to obtain diplomas in technical, professional, and artistic education. They are divided into three teaching periods:

The first period focuses on acquiring certification for admission to the second biennium of technical or professional institutes.

The second period focuses on acquiring certification for admission to the final year of technical or professional institutes.

The third period focuses on obtaining a diploma in technical or professional education.

These second-level courses have a total duration of 70% of the corresponding first biennium courses in technical, professional, or artistic high schools. Completing the first teaching period allows young adults (16-18 years) to fulfill their education obligations.

CPIA "Piero Angela" of Benevento: Structure and Role. The CPIA (Provincial Center for Adult Education) of Benevento consists of 15 school

complexes distributed throughout the province, including a prison and a juvenile detention center. The CPIA plays a pivotal role in the integration of migrants, particularly unaccompanied minors, by providing educational opportunities and fostering language acquisition.

Educational Programs and Achievements. Thanks to the collaboration of the staff of the CPIA of Benevento, it was possible to analyze the following data for the 2022/2023 school year for the First Level Courses:

The CPIA "Piero Angela" of Benevento consisted of 14 classes for the first period and 14 classes for the second period.

The average number of students per class was 25-30.

There were 450 foreign students enrolled, of which 106 were minors. Among the enrolled minors, 50 were unaccompanied minors.

The school schedule is distributed over 5 days a week for 3 hours a day, and the attendance of foreign minors was consistent.

The entry level of students is generally A1, and the mediation languages used by educators are French or English.

At the end of the 2023/2024 school year, 361 students obtained the A2 literacy certificate, while 183 students achieved first-level qualification, equivalent to the final exam of the first cycle of education. At this level, students achieve a B1 literacy certificate.

The A2 level certification is one of the requirements to obtain the EU long-term residence permit, also known as the 'residence card', while a B1 level certification is required for Italian citizenship for marriage or residence reasons.

Priority Educational Objectives. In the social reporting document for the 2019/2022 three-year period, the CPIA of Benevento established the following among its priority educational objectives: literacy and improvement of Italian as a second language through courses and workshops for students of non-Italian citizenship or language, organized in collaboration with local authorities and the third sector, with contributions from communities of origin, families, and cultural mediators. The Key Projects were:

- FAMI Project "SO.F.I. SOCIALIZATION TRAINING INTEGRATION";
- Project "RACCONTAMI";
- Theater Project.

Future Perspectives and Employment Opportunities. The complex structure of the CPIA requires feedback from the territory to promote the occupational integration of foreigners, who could provide added value in terms of repopulation. The hoped-for future perspective is the implementation of a stability plan for foreigners to learn the Italian language, aiming for better work and occupational integration.

By addressing the educational needs of migrants, particularly unaccompanied minors, the CPIA of Benevento not only facilitates their integration into the local community but also enhances their future employment opportunities. Given the demographic and economic context of Benevento, these efforts are crucial for fostering a more inclusive and prosperous society.

The case study of CPIA Benevento highlights the essential role of educational institutions in fostering the linguistic integration of unaccompanied foreign minors (UFM). In rural areas, migrant integration offers a valuable opportunity to enhance the local economy. A holistic approach, supported by technology, is crucial for promoting inclusivity and removing barriers.

Integration and the future development of rural territories are at the heart of several major EU policy initiatives launched in 2020-21, such as the *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027*, the long-term *Vision for the EU's Rural Areas* and the *Territorial Agenda 2030*, which emphasize the importance of local communities and place-based, multi-stakeholder approaches.

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# MODERN TRENDS IN THE FORMATION OF TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS OF RURAL REGIONAL ENOGASTRONOMIC DESTINATIONS

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Abstract. The development of rural areas due to tourism and recreational activities, especially in the conditions of growing urbanization, encourages the creation of new thematic routes in this direction. The World Tourism Organization UNWTO defines rural tourism as a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is linked to a wide range of products, usually related to nature, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, fishing and sightseeing. The development of tourist activities in rural areas can contribute to the improvement of the economy of rural areas, the attraction of new resources and the improvement of the quality of life of the local population, which requires the formation of a new offer of a tourist product based on alternative types of tourism in rural areas.

**Keywords:** rural areas, tourist attractiveness, tourism, enogastronomic destinations, wine tourism

JEL: L83, Z30, Z32, Z39 UDC: 338.48-6:641/642

**Introduction**. In modern conditions, tourism plays an important role in the economic development of regions, acting as a powerful tool for supplementing local budgets and a powerful driving force for the development of rural areas that have attractive tourist resources. This, in turn, increases the requirements both for

the ecological state of the territories and for the development of the infrastructure of the regions. The development of rural areas due to tourism has numerous positive effects on various spheres of society:

- new opportunities for rural development and restoration of rural infrastructure and cultural heritage;
- it is a powerful tool for sustainable development and improving the quality of life of both the local population and tourists visiting rural areas;
- new opportunities for employment and development of entrepreneurship in rural communities;
- contributes to the enrichment of cultural diversity;
- encourages physical activity and enjoyment of natural landscapes, contributing to the improvement of health;
- building positive relations between local residents and tourists, opportunities for sharing experiences and ideas.

Rural tourism has a high potential to stimulate local economic growth and social change due to its complementarity with other economic activities, its contribution to GDP and job creation, as well as its ability to contribute to the distribution of demand over time (combating seasonality) and more broadly territory.

These trends are due to the growing commitment of society to a healthy lifestyle, attention to environmental and social problems, the inconsistency of a person's living environment with their physiological and psychological needs, this is especially relevant during the period of martial law, when stress and depression in one way or another directly accompany the Ukrainian people.

**Literature review**. The United Nations Tourism Unit defines rural tourism as "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor experience is linked to a wide range of products that are generally related to nature, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, fishing and sightseeing. Activities in the field of rural tourism are carried out in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics:

- 1) low population density;
- 2) the landscape and land use are dominated by agriculture and forestry;
- 3) traditional social structure and way of life.

Aiming to make tourism a positive force for transformation, rural development and community well-being, UN Tourism has launched the UN Tourism Best Tourist Villages initiative. Thus, in 2023, the best villages were named: Andorra - Ordino, Austria - Shladming, Chile - Barrancas, Chile - Pisco Elqui, China - Huangiing, China - Xiajiang, China - Zhujiawan, Colombia - Zapatoca, Ecuador - Oyacachi, Egypt - Dahshour, Egypt - Siwa, Hungary - Tokaj, Italy - Lerici, Japan - Hakuba, Jordan - Al Seia and others (World Tourism Organization, 2024).

In the scientific literature, considerable attention is paid to the study of the functioning and development of tourist activity, the use of tourist potential and the formation of tourist attractiveness. In particular, scientific-theoretical and applied

research was reflected in the publications of Ukrainian scientists O.O. Beydyk, D.I. Basyuk, A.I. Gaponenko, V.G. Gerasimenka, V.F. Kyfyak, S.P. Kuzyk, O.O. Lyubitseva, M.P. Malska, V.P. Rudenko, V.V. Hudo, N.V. Fomenko, L.M. Cherchyk, E.V. Shchepanskyi and many others. However, comprehensive studies on the formation of mechanisms for managing the tourist attractiveness of regional rural food and wine destinations remain few in number.

Research methodology. To achieve the set goal and solve the outlined tasks, a number of general and special research methods were used in the work: logical generalization and scientific abstraction - to clarify the conceptual apparatus of the research; systematic analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction - to identify regularities, features of the formation, use and development of the tourist attraction of food and wine destinations; method of analogies and comparisons – for researching trends in the functioning of tourist destinations; comprehensive analysis - to reveal the peculiarities of the formation of tourist attractiveness of regional rural food and wine destinations; economic and statistical - for processing statistical data during the analysis of the current state of functioning of tourist activities and destinations.

Main results. When considering a tourist destination, scientists focus their attention on a number of aspects. Most often, the basic criterion for choosing a destination is its territorial isolation. So, M. Leiper gives the following concise definition: a destination is a geographical area that is attractive to tourists (Leiper, 2004). A logical addition to the "resource" interpretation of the destination is its study from the standpoint of the product offered to the tourist: the territory that offers a certain set of services must meet the needs of the tourist and satisfy his demand for transportation, accommodation, food, and entertainment (Boyne & Hall, 2003). An enogastronomic destination is a defined territory with available attractive enogastronomic and natural, historical-cultural, tourist-recreational resources, the necessary infrastructure, delivered to consumers in the form of a ready-made tourist product. Gastronomic destinations form an innovative tourist product, contribute to the comprehensive development of territories, thanks to the support of product manufacturers, the preservation of historical and cultural heritage, the integrated development of the agro-production sphere and tourism, and lead to the diversification of production activities in rural areas. In the course of the development of enogastronomic destinations, achieving positive results is possible in the case of ensuring the effectiveness of the use of tourism and recreation, production, innovation, investment potential, developed infrastructure, balanced use of available resources, coordination in the work of business entities, authorities, public institutions and the local population. The main factor in the development of enogastronomic destinations is their tourist attraction and the factors that shape it. Attractiveness can be defined as the ability to arouse admiration and attract people due to one's special characteristics and unique features. In the scientific literature, attractiveness is the main and key indicator in the analysis of tourist flows.

In our opinion, the territory is attractive if it has a complex of tourist resources, such as natural (environmentally clean), historical-cultural and socio-economic resources, as well as an appropriate level of material and technical base, developed infrastructure and convenient transport interchange. In order to increase or form the level of tourist attractiveness, several important factors must be taken into account: favorable natural and climatic conditions, the safety of the region, the efficiency of the use of resources and the presence of a brand. Tourist attractiveness is the basis for analyzing the development potential of the tourism industry in a specific destination (Gearing, Swart & Var, 1974). Based on the above, we developed factors of tourist attractiveness of the territory (Fig. 1).

The tourist attraction of an enogastronomic destination depends on a number of factors:

- The availability of resources that have a key attraction and form tourist enogastronomic interest, which is the main motivation of the trip, while tourist attraction is closely related to tourist expectations;
- Natural factors, geographical position of the destination, favorable climatic conditions and ecological condition of the territory and other characteristics of the destination;
- The degree of development of the tourist infrastructure of the destination, which ensures the organization of enogastronomic tourism;
- Transport accessibility of the destination;
- Loyalty and interest of the local population (subjects of business activity) in relation to tourists and the promotion of food and wine products.

The key characteristics of the tourist attraction of an enogastronomic destination are:

- by the field of attractiveness (natural, climatic, historical and cultural, ethnic features, etc.);
- according to the duration of existence (permanent, which exist for an unlimited time and temporary, which occur at certain times, for example, the grape harvest period);
- by nature of existence (unique ones that exist in this destination, and reproducible ones that can be artificially created in another destination);
- according to the level of management (they are formed purposefully or arise spontaneously).

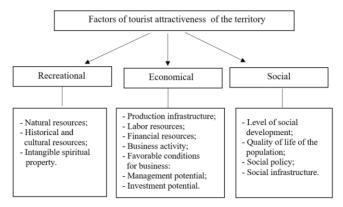


Figure 1. **Factors of tourist attractiveness** *Source: Developed by the authors* 

Characterizing the tourist attractiveness of food and wine destinations, it is necessary to also consider the location of the most popular producers of grape and wine products. For the tourism industry, wine plays an important role as a key factor in the attraction of travel, a motive for special trips, as well as an element of food, treatment and entertainment. For wineries, wine tourism is an effective way to attract attention to their brand, gain long-term loyalty from customers who have familiarized themselves with their wine products, and increase sales through direct contact with customers in tasting rooms and wine cellars. In particular, Ukraine ranks 28th in the world in terms of wine production. At the beginning of 2022, the volume of wine production was 660 thousand hectoliters, which was 0.26% of the total world wine market. Italy was the leader in production volumes with 49.843 million hectoliters (19.3%), France with 45.59 million (17.65%), and Spain with 35.7 million (13.83%). The area of vineyards at the fruit-bearing age until 2019 was 45.1 thousand hectares, of which 32.2 thousand hectares were occupied in 106 agricultural enterprises, which was 71.4% of the total area. In particular, the main areas of vineyards are concentrated in Odesa, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Zakarpattia regions (Fig. 2.).

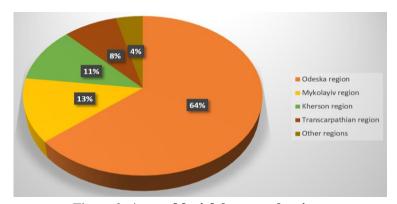


Figure 2. **Area of fruitful grape plantings**Source: Elaborated by authors based on (Ukrstat, 2024)

About 89% of grape plantings consist of technical varieties, while table varieties occupy less than 11% of the area. The largest area of vineyards in the fruitful region is grown in the Odessa region, which accounts for 27.4 thousand hectares (64%). The current image of the Odessa region is represented by significant areas of vineyards and vineyards in Bessarabia. This region has become a strategic center of viticulture and wine production in Ukraine. The largest number of vineyards is in the Bolgrad region, where they harvest an average of 78 thousand. t grapes. In the Bilgorod-Dnistrovsky district - 76 thousand. t. In the Odessa region - 27 thousand. t. Also significant is the planting of vineyards near Mykolayivska - 5.5 thousand. ha (13%), Kherson - 4.5 thousand. ha (11%) and Transcarpathian - 3.4 thousand. ha (8%) regions. In general, 96% of all grape plantings have been recorded in 64%, 13%, 11%, 8%, 4% Odeska region, Mykolayiv region, Kherson region, Transcarpathian region, Other regions in 107 four regions of the country. Based on official statistics, grape production in 2021 amounted to 89.9 thousand (Fig. 3).

Odessa region has significant potential for the development enogastronomic tourism. Before the start of the war, various wine festivals were held in these regions, such as the Amateur Wine Festival "Live Wine of Ukraine", Holy Bessarabian Wine, Young Wine Festival, Regional Festival of Traditional Home Wine Making, Bolgrad Wine Fest, Wine Fest - all these activities from visits, which are available in the region. Also, on the territory of the region, under the initiative of the European Union, the project "Roads of Wine and Taste of Ukrainian Bessarabia" has been implemented, which aims promote enogastronomic tourist and recreational routes.

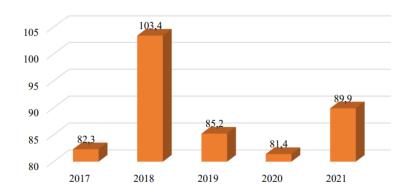


Figure 3. Obligations of grape production in the dynamics of displays 2017-2021, thousand tons

Source: Elaborated by authors based on (Ukrstat, 2024)

The development of enogastronomic tourism as an independent type of tourism in Nina is becoming an increasingly relevant process in the structure of the tourism and recreational system of the region in which there is a clear increase in minds for its development. The activation of these processes has recently begun,

despite the tradition of tasting various cuisines and the influence of the government's domestic tourism in Ukraine, based on the geographical and ethnographic features of the territory of our region (Basyuk & Badeshchenkova, 2014). Today we can talk about those that gastronomic and enogastronomic routes are gradually being transformed from weekend tours and additional excursion and recreational services to more troubling independent destinations. The target audience for these types of tourism is becoming wider, the availability of such tours is advancing and growing. In this way, it is possible to strengthen the enogastronomic warehouse of the internal regional tourism and recreational system. Local enogastronomic routes are united in the form of a comprehensive enogastronomic tourism proposal of the destination, organized according to international awareness of the development of enogastronomic tourism, gastronomic routes are divided into "Roads of Wine", "Roads of Taste" and "Roads of Wine and Taste", as through the gastronomic traditions of local thoroughly demonstrate the historical, cultural and natural tourist and recreational resources of the territory (Novak, 2017). Ukraine has begun the creation and development of the national enogastronomic tourism route "Roads of Wine and Taste of Ukraine" in support of the European Commission Project "Supporting the development of the system of geographical destinations in Ukraine." It is based on the principles of clusterization, which became the development of the European Green Deal (The road of wine and taste of Ukrainian Bessarabia, 2024). The main goal of the creation of related projects is to balance the development of rural areas, promote small and medium-sized enterprises, improve the quality of wine producers, traditional products and drinks with potential There are no geographical implications. Gastronomic tourism can be an effective tool for attracting both external and internal tourist flows.

In support of the project in Ukraine, the creation of the first enogastronomic cluster under the name "The Road of Wine and Taste of Ukrainian Bessarabia" was initiated. This cluster of discussions by experts includes a wide range of activities. It organizes tastings of local wines and herbs, wineries and cheese factories, as well as knowledge of local and authentic cuisine of Ukrainian Bessarabia. This route is intended to promote and develop the wine and gastronomic culture of the region, as well as to attract tourists and increase interest in this unique tourist destination. Participants of the Road will inform tourists about the cultural, historical and gastronomic decline of Ukrainian Bessarabia (Fig. 4).



Figure 4. Roads of wine and relish of Ukrainian Bessarabia

Source: (Novak, 2017) (The road of wine and taste of Ukrainian Bessarabia, 2024)

The length of the entire route is 900 km. The route passes through the rainy side of the Odessa region and is surrounded by something directly: and the agroecological-recreational cluster "Frumushika-Nova" reveals 111 the richness of the wine world of this region. Along with wines, the route also encourages tourists to try other local products, such as lamb, peas, craft milks and other products.

The organizers of the "Roads of Wine and Taste" project are actively conducting seminars and B2B conferences, which attract travel companies by creating a special web portal with a list of all tour operators presented on the new site to promote tours from different locations This "Dorig", the fragments of this project are not only individual tourists. This information resource will be processed by the National Tourist Organization of Ukraine (NTOU) and transmitted to become the key source of information about the National System "Roads of Wine and Taste" of Ukraine. At the same time, "The Road of Wine and Taste of Ukrainian Bessarabia" serves as a tool for the development of rural areas, bringing together the wider enogastronomic culture of Ukraine both within the region and beyond. This project represents increased awareness, the significance of the wine-growing and culinary decline of the destination, the improvement of the economic status of communities, and the development of infrastructure. The main principle of this project is to ensure a safe, comfortable, tasty and satisfying gastronomic experience (Melikh, 2018).

Also in Ukraine, three areas were covered by the project of the Implementation Operational Program for the Black Sea Basin for 2014-2020, adopted by the European Commission Black Sea Basin 1034: Driving to the Black Sea Region as a destination for wine tourism - Sea of Wine (project) for the period of the project with "29" Chervenya 2020 rock according to "20" veresnya 2022 rock. Thematic wine routes have been developed to popularize local wine flavors in

the Black Sea region of Ukraine in order to develop domestic and international tourism. As a result of the project, there is an interactive platform in the form of a route designer (SeaofWine, 2024).

However, there are obviously few problems that complicate the popularization of many tourist attractions. The lack of transport infrastructure, which is widespread in rich areas, and the lack of access in particularly important places, is an important factor in the decline in the popularization of rich destinations. Another negative factor is the high rate of transport costs. There are a lot of unique monuments that could become centers for attracting tourists, completely unknown on the scale of the region. These destinations do not store information from websites, available routes, navigation or other tourist infrastructure; it is clear that the objects are specific and not intended for a wide audience, due to the presence of minimal comfortable minds that attract potential tourists, after which the place becomes unnecessary.

**Discussion and conclusions**. For a tourist site that is already popular or has potential for the development of tourist attraction, it is the responsibility of the regional and local authorities. It is necessary to look at savings, modernization, development of tourism infrastructure, install barriers for mass circulation, create information drives, organize separate visits, drain objects t at the regional and national levels, actively use the Internet and attract tourists in every possible way. These are the key factors that the government must take into account for the effective development and formation of the tourist attraction of the destination in the region. The current state of tourism and, in addition to the enogastronomic direction of tours, does not meet the changing needs and methods of providing information to current tourists. With the increase in internal tourist flows, the development of tourism, branded enogastronomic routes would attract a larger number of tourists, investors, which would give the opportunity to create a clear tourist industry infrastructure, creation of new jobs and development of rural areas. Destinations that develop tourism can promote enogastronomic tourism as a means of promoting tourism in the domestic tourism market.

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## MECHANISM OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND ECONOMIC ENSURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY OF AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

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Abstract. The sphere of agricultural production does not belong to the stable spheres of business. Along with this situation, the pressure on agribusiness is increasing when it comes to finding new, more stable sources of income. One of the possible solutions is the use of a diversification strategy for the development of agrarian enterprises, or rather, the use of diversification opportunities. To ensure an effective diversification strategy, an important role is assigned to marketing activity and its tools, covering all stages of the campaign: studying demand in new markets, forecasting demand, developing assortment policy and production plans, including sales organization and development of communication promotion policy.

**Keywords**: diversification, agrarian enterprises, innovative and technological possibilities, assortment policy, products

JEL: 013, 032, Q10, Q13

UDC: 338.439.5

**Introduction**. In the conditions of globalization of the economic environment and dynamic changes in the external environment, including climatic and geopolitical changes, as well as technological innovations, agricultural enterprises must adapt to these challenges by developing strategies aimed at ensuring sustainable development. With the help of strategic management, agricultural enterprises are able to determine their place in the market environment, taking into account economic, socio-cultural and environmental factors, thereby ensuring the food security of the state, managing risks associated with the conduct of financial and production activities, as well as the sustainable development of

agricultural technologies. Diversification of activities in the agricultural sector has significant potential in achieving the above-mentioned goals.

The trend of modernity has become the movement in the vector of the implementation of the paradigm of sustainable development. Diversification of the activities of agricultural enterprises, which is based on the concepts of the closed cycle economy and bioeconomy, gives an impetus to the transformation of the relationships of the subjects of economic activity in the system of economic, social and ecological dimensions at all levels of abstraction. Expanding the range of goods and services provided by agricultural formations increases the efficiency of resource use, in particular, promotes the application of optimal land use models, allows preserving biodiversity, reduces the negative impact on water resources, and reduces energy dependence. Diversification is the answer to the issue of comprehensive development of rural areas, because it helps to create additional jobs and improve the quality of life of the population.

The search for strategic directions for the acquisition of long-term factors for the formation and preservation of the stability of agrarian enterprises on the basis of expanding the horizons of activity in new product segments is of particular relevance in view of the specific nature of external risks associated with the large-scale invasion of Russia, which transforms the possible spectrum of strategic decision-making, supplementing the set limitations due to wartime factors.

**Literature review.** The study of the theoretical aspects of determining the essence of diversification through the prism of a strategic view on the development of economic entities has received considerable attention in the works of such economists as: I. Ansoff, K. Bury, M. Porter, A. Thompson, A. Strickland, V. Bolotova, Kh. M. Sorotiaga, O. Taran, I. Chukina, O. Shutnyk. The issue of strategic management of the activities of agricultural enterprises is gaining more and more popularity in the scientific community, it is included in the circle of interests of a number of researchers, in particular Zheludenko K., Sviridova S., Tolstova S., Tkachenko A., Postola A., Mulyar T., Pysarenko S., Ivanka M., Hrytsaenka M., Berezivskoho P., Horbachova I. The marketing strategy of diversification is studied in the works of Negrei M., Taranenko A., Kostenko I., Petryga O., Grynchutskoho V., Sabetska T., Divnych O., V. Yakubiva, N. Romanyuka, etc. The problems of reengineering business processes in the agricultural sector with the transfer of the center of gravity to the transformation of inter-company relations in the face of global challenges (including taking into account the vector of activity diversification) became the subject of research by foreign and domestic scientists, among them: Christopher M., Vachon S., Klassen R., Sygyda N., Dubovik S., Spesyviy Y., Gavrilchenko O., Ilchenko N., Kochubev D., Samoilenko A., Zavadska O., Misyukevich V., Sysoev V., Moklyak M., Haustova E., Kulyk V., Marchuk V., Garmash O., Zakharchuk A., Hradiskyi Yu., Zavadska O., Misyukevich V., Sysoev V.

Despite the significant number of publications on certain areas of the system of strategic management of the activities of agrarian enterprises to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the diversification strategy in the segment of

rural production, the problem of further deepening the existing theoretical and scientific-methodical toolkit, taking into account the current challenges of the global and regional levels, is urgent.

Research methodology. The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was the work of domestic and foreign scientists in the field of strategic management, the development of the agrarian sector, and the paradigm of sustainable development. The article used the following general scientific methods of cognition, such as: monographic (when studying the evidence of strategic management of the activities of European enterprises); scientific abstraction (in the aspect of delineating the subject area of research); analysis and synthesis (in particular, morphological decomposition when determining the essence of the key concepts that made up the subject of the study; systematic analysis for solving the problems of multidimensional interaction of elements of the socio-economic system within the framework of the formation of adequate diversification strategies as a direction of transformation of business processes of agrarian enterprises); induction and deduction; comparative; a combination of historical and logical.

Main results. Agricultural enterprises must consider a variety of strategies for effective functioning and sustainability, among which the diversification strategy occupies a special place. The diversification strategy for enterprises operating in the agricultural market can be considered as expanding their business not only through participation in various segments of the agricultural sector, but also in other sectors of the economy. The main goal of such a strategy is to reduce risks and increase profitability by allocating investments to different areas of activity. It should be noted that in order to implement such a strategy of diversification of an agricultural enterprise, it is necessary to conduct a financial analysis in order to assess the value of assets, profitability and risks associated with new areas of activity.

Financial aspects of diversification of agricultural enterprises include a wide range of financial solutions and tools aimed at achieving long-term goals and ensuring the financial stability of enterprises. In the management of production and economic activities, diversification in the broadest sense is considered a key strategy of enterprise management. This strategy can be identified with the help of such process results as: ensuring innovation and competitiveness; cost optimization and ensuring the financial stability of the enterprise; expanding influence on other industries and markets; balancing of income and expenses in management; expanding the range of products and services provided by the enterprise on the markets, etc. The main idea of diversification is the diversity of the enterprise's production and economic activities in order to increase its overall competitiveness, taking into account economic and social aspects (Shaleva & Sereda, 2023).

We agree with the opinion of Mikhalina I. that the diversification of agricultural production can be considered as a phenomenon that has a multi-vector orientation in economic activity. It envisages the activation of agricultural sector entities in various geographic markets. Agro-industrial diversification has its own

characteristics related to the specificity of agricultural production, and includes the combination of the main production of agricultural products with other types of activities, such as processing, trade, service, as well as the creation of new products, services and markets. The conditions of market competition stimulate entrepreneurs to improve production by expanding the range of products that meet the needs of consumers. Increasing the variety of activities in the economy contributes to a higher level of diversification, reducing the overall risk of losses and damages from production and commercial activity in general (Mozhevenko & Kamneva, 2020).

Seasonality of production is an important component of agricultural sector enterprises. The seasonality factor must be taken into account when developing and implementing a financial strategy, where one of the strategic priorities of financial decisions should be the equalization of cash flows over time. Their reproductive function, which is characterized by the solvency, liquidity and financial stability of the enterprise, depends on the amount of cash flows in the formation of structural sources of financial resources. Therefore, the financial strategy of an agrarian enterprise is a functional strategy of its general strategy with a sequence of actions regarding the formation and distribution of financial resources within the framework of a single informational and legal field when achieving defined goals, and by its structure can be presented in the form of a simulation model that describes the modern concept of implementing financial strategy given in (Onisko & Rubai, 2012).

Taking into account the arguments "for" and "against" diversification, each enterprise should determine how appropriate it is to expand its production base. This decision should take into account the state of the external environment, such as the stability of the economy, the situation on the market, the capacity of consumers, etc., as well as the size and financial condition of the enterprise. Obviously, large enterprises have more opportunities to expand their activities. They can develop new areas with a rational concentration of resources and thus avoid problems related to the contradiction between diversification and specialization, which allows to achieve better results in management. Such enterprises have more financial opportunities to launch new projects, which reduces their need for loan capital and, accordingly, reduces financing costs. On the contrary, it may be more difficult for small enterprises with a low level of production concentration to develop several directions at the same time, so they are more often directed to specialized activities. Diversification, as a form of production organization, can provide certain advantages to the enterprise. In the table 1 advantages and disadvantages of diversification of agricultural sector enterprises are given.

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of diversification in the agricultural sector of the economy

Advantages	Disadvantages		
- diversification enables enterprises to use their own material resources in the most perfect way	diversification does not always make it possible to use the advantages of specialized production		
the right choice of diversification strategy makes it possible to increase the competitiveness of products and enterprises, to increase the sale of products of the agricultural sector thanks to the satisfaction of consumer needs	- if the diversification strategy is unsuccessfully chosen, it can lead to economic losses of the enterprise		
- diversification contributes to effective provision of economic and food security of the state	- possible effect of loss of production motive		
- integration of processing of agro-industrial complex enterprises increases their workload	<ul> <li>managing diversified production is much more difficult than non-diversified production</li> </ul>		
the full use of natural resources and economic potential depends on the depth of diversification and the level of cooperation	it is impractical to apply diversification at enterprises with a low level of production concept		
- diversification of agricultural enterprises will make it possible to obtain a synergistic effect	in the case of unsuccessful placement of the product range produced by individual companies and combined diversification of the enterprise may lead to bankruptcy		
- when diversifying enterprises of the agricultural sector, the degree of entrepreneurial risk will decrease due to the elimination of dependence on a single type of product	- merging two enterprises that produce different types of products - as a means of expanding the enterprise's development prospects can lead to an increase in economic risks		

Source: Developed by the authors

In addition, the implementation of the diversification strategy requires significant financial investments, so agricultural enterprises must consider the optimal distribution of resources, balancing risks and costs for new areas of activity. Under these conditions, investment attraction and rational use of credit resources become key aspects of financial support for diversification. It is extremely difficult for agricultural enterprises to obtain such funds due to the low investment attractiveness of agricultural enterprises and the agrarian sector of the economy as a whole (Pisarenko, Ivanko & Hrytsaenko, 2019). It is also necessary to take into account that the unique aspects of finance in agro-industrial production are related to the peculiarities of the functioning of enterprises in this industry, including:

- dependence on climatic and weather conditions increases risks in agriculture;
- significantly limits production related to biological processes within a certain period;

- unevenness of the processes of formation of working capital, income and fluctuation of prices for agricultural products is caused by pronounced seasonality of production;
- funds are advanced for a long time, sometimes measured in years;
- the uneven distribution in the production process and the constant accumulation of advanced funds until the end of the capital cycle lead to different durations of their consolidation in the circulation;
- as a rule, in the third and fourth quarters of the year, advance funds are released.

Therefore, in our opinion, financial support for the diversification of the activities of agricultural enterprises is a key aspect of the sustainable development of the agricultural sector, as it allows enterprises to reduce the risks associated with changes in market conditions and climatic conditions, to expand their activities, to introduce new crops and production methods, which also contributes increasing competitiveness. As already mentioned, financial support for diversification includes investments in new types of agricultural products, modernization of equipment and introduction of the latest technologies, which requires the development of an effective business plan and the attraction of financial support from the government, banks and other investors. Agricultural enterprises can receive this support through loans, grants or subsidies. It is also important to develop partnerships with agribusiness companies that can provide not only financial assistance, but also expert support for the implementation of innovations.

In fig. 1. the main categories of financial resources and sources for agricultural enterprises are presented when implementing a diversification strategy in order to ensure financial stability and reduce risks.

For the further development of agricultural enterprises, income and depreciation deductions are significant sources of financing, but the possibility of using these monetary resources for extensive reproduction is quite low. Often, such funds are directed to cover the basic costs of an agribusiness, leaving few opportunities for upgrading equipment or purchasing new fixed assets. In addition, taking into account the seasonality of agribusiness, there is a risk of receiving low profits or even receiving losses as a result of activities, to cover which it is also necessary to attract additional financial resources through various channels of the financial market (Razina, 2011).

The introduction of diversity helps to stabilize activities and makes agricultural enterprises less vulnerable to crisis situations. This allows diversified enterprises to be more sustainable and competitive compared to those specializing in a limited range of products. Such enterprises can redistribute capital in directions that bring the greatest profit. The implementation of diversification in agriculture is a key factor in ensuring its competitiveness. This process has a positive impact, as it stimulates integration with local processing enterprises, which increases their capacity and competitiveness in the markets, as well as contributes to the economic and food security of the country. Thus, diversification is an important organizational and economic factor for increasing production efficiency and competitiveness (Kuzyoma, 2023).

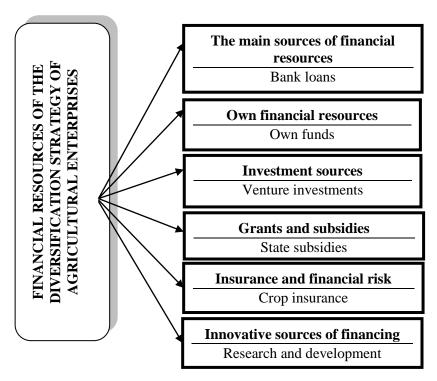


Figure 1. Financial resources of the strategy of diversification of agricultural enterprises

Source: Developed by the authors

When implementing the strategy of diversification of agricultural enterprises, it is necessary, in our opinion, to take into account the following main aspects:

First, it is the development of a business plan for new areas of activity that are planned to be included in the diversification strategy. The business plan should include projected financial indicators, such as income, expenses, profit, investment and return of credit resources. Taking into account these indicators, the agricultural enterprise will be able to evaluate the financial prospects of new areas of activity and their impact on the financial state of the enterprise.

Secondly, the choice of effective financing for the implementation of the diversification strategy. For this, various sources of financing can be used, such as bank loans, investments, state support instruments, etc. An important aspect when choosing sources of financing is the assessment of costs and risks associated with each financing option, as well as the assessment of the investment payback period.

Thirdly, it is the control of financial activities during the implementation of the diversification strategy. For this, it is necessary to implement an effective system of financial management and control, which will ensure monitoring of financial processes in real time. All this allows you to quickly identify and adjust any deviations in the results of the company's financial activities and ensure the effective implementation of the diversification strategy.

In addition, an additional aspect in the financial implementation of the diversification strategy is the development of a risk management plan, since

diversification can increase the level of risk in connection with the expansion of activities in new directions by an agricultural enterprise. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully analyze and assess the risks associated with each new direction and develop strategies to reduce the impact of risks on the company's performance.

The economic validity of the diversification of production activity is determined by its impact on the financial position of the enterprise and the risks associated with it. Obtaining synergistic effects and reducing risk are key results of diversification, especially in the financial sphere, as it provides an opportunity to efficiently move funds between different areas of activity that are developing dynamically. The success of diversification largely depends on the direction chosen by the enterprise (vertical integration, diversification based on existing types of activities, creation of conglomerates).

The relationship between diversification and efficiency is complex. Often, after the introduction of diversification, efficiency initially increases due to the rational distribution of resources, but over time it can decrease due to the complication of management processes and the emergence of contradictions in the adoption of management decisions in different departments of the enterprise (Sviridova & Tolstova, 2017).

In this classification, special attention is paid to the functional sphere of influence, which allows dividing economic diversification into the following types:

- financial and investment the process of distributing investments and other financial resources between different areas of activity;
- sectoral aimed at the development of various lines of activity and industries, while the focus is on the expansion and development of various sectors of the economy to stimulate growth and sustainability.
- organizational development of a system of various functional structured areas of activity that create conditions for effective development.

Each of these types of economic diversification can be considered more broadly, dividing them into subtypes (Fig. 2).

The problems of providing agricultural enterprises with financial resources and increasing the efficiency of their use are deep, large-scale and complex. The socio-economic nature of financial resources and their categorical essence lead to high mobility and constant limitations at the micro- and macroeconomic levels. The impact of modern globalization processes is complicated by the instability of the financial support of agricultural enterprises. Difficult conditions for adapting farmers' finances to modern standards of functioning within the framework of national and global financial systems create an outflow of foreign investments, instability of world currency rates and limited international credit resources.

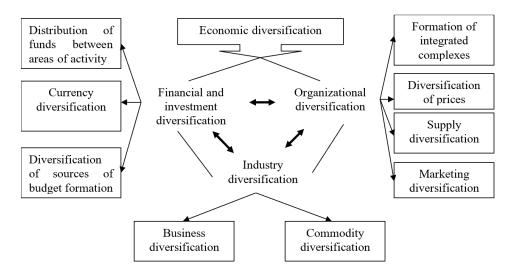


Figure 2. **Types of economic diversification by functional sphere of influence**Source: Developed by the authors

There is a close relationship with the unique features of agricultural enterprises, which affect the organization of these processes, the structure of sources, directions of use, volumes and stability of the receipt of financial resources with the formation and use of financial resources in agriculture. Among the key factors of influence, it is worth highlighting such objective signs of the circulation of financial resources in agriculture, as seasonal changes in costs and income, a long production cycle, the presence of land-property lease relationships, high operational risk and subjective features of managerial influence on financial support of these business entities, such as the lack of an effective mechanism for the extended reproduction of fixed assets, a prolonged crisis of non-payments, an increase in receivables and payables, as well as unfavorable tax legislation (Abramova, Vilenchuk & Dema, 2015).

Analyzing the structure of providing subsidies separately for crop production (in particular, improvement of land use and development of seed production) and livestock production (for example, for breeding and commodity livestock) requires the development of financial diversification in production. In agriculture, with the expansion of activities by enterprises, which will allow producers to reduce the impact of seasonality on production and partially avoid the negative consequences associated with it, diversification of production is associated. Studies show that in most cases, diversification of the main activity of agricultural enterprises by expanding new industries along with existing ones allows more efficient use of the resource base of producers, which, in turn, leads to an increase in the volume of agricultural production, a reduction in resource costs and an increase in the economic efficiency of the overall activity (Pivovar, 2012).

Effective use of financial resources ensures financial stability and competitiveness of agricultural enterprises and includes cost optimization, implementation of modern technologies and management solutions. The key

aspects are the planning and control of costs, as well as the investment strategy enterprises must rationally allocate financial resources, taking into account the peculiarities of the agricultural sector, in particular, the seasonality of work and the risks of weather conditions. Also, to improve production efficiency, it is important to improve technological processes and implement innovative solutions. It is this approach to the formation and use of financial resources that will contribute to increasing the profitability and sustainability of agricultural sector enterprises in the conditions of an unstable market environment.

In order to increase the profitability of agricultural enterprises, it is necessary to emphasize the following areas of further development: ensuring competitiveness, quality and safety of products; maximum satisfaction of consumer demand; achieving stable positions in competition; making a profit and reducing financial losses. As an indicator of supply and demand - price - is defined as a key factor for enterprises in the process of choosing product sales channels. For the successful implementation of financial and economic activities, it is important to have a high level of financial potential, which is formed both at the expense of one's own resources and at the expense of borrowed funds.

Due to low attractiveness for credit institutions and investors, limited possibilities of attracting financial resources arise in case of insufficient financial results of agricultural enterprises. With the exception of large agricultural enterprises, which have a potentially high level of profitability of own capital (due to the possibilities of attracting capital and its quick use, high financial risks do not encourage financial institutions and investors to cooperate with agricultural enterprises) (Vlasova et al., 2012).

The functioning of agricultural enterprises is constantly accompanied by changes in the volume and structure of capital, which is reflected in the liquidity, solvency and general financial condition of the enterprise. Assets should generate income sufficient to meet current obligations and strategic goals of the company's development.

**Discussion and conclusions**. Diversification is an element of strategic management and a component of the strategy for the provision and sustainable development of agricultural enterprises, and the financial aspect of the implementation of this strategy is the efficiency and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. Diversification of sources of financing for various areas of strategic development of agricultural production also contributes to increasing the sustainability of enterprises. One of the aspects of financial diversification is the expansion of the range of agricultural products - this allows to reduce the risk of financial losses due to the instability of the price policy on the markets of agricultural products. An additional strategy of financial diversification is the introduction of modern technologies and innovations in the agro-industrial sphere in order to increase the efficiency of production.

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# ECO-FARMS - A NEW FORMAT OF TOURIST LOCATIONS IN THE HOSPITALITY SYSTEM

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Abstract. Agrotourism is a promising direction of rural tourism development, which combines agriculture with tourism, giving tourists the opportunity to immerse themselves in authentic rural life. It contributes not only to the economic growth of rural areas, but also to the preservation of cultural and natural resources. One of the new and innovative formats of tourist locations in agritourism is eco-farms, which combine agricultural activities with the principles of sustainable development and environmental safety to create unique and in-depth experiences for travelers. In recent years, many eco-farms have appeared in Ukraine, which are aimed at the production of natural products with a high-quality standard, which limits the use of chemicals. On such farms, you can not only enjoy organic food, but also have a good rest with the whole family. Eco-farms tend to operate in an environmentally friendly manner, focusing on organic farming methods, renewable energy sources and responsible water use. This is consistent

with the principles of sustainable development, attracting tourists looking for ecofriendly destinations and activities. If earlier visiting eco-farms was initially limited to the purchase of already harvested agricultural products, now with the growing interest in consuming quality food, tourists are offered not only excursion programs, but also master classes on harvesting, seminars and interactive events that teach tourists about sustainable agriculture economy, wildlife conservation and ecological principles.

**Keywords:** rural tourism, eco-farms, agritourism, tourist locations, sustainable development, destinations

JEL: L83, Z30, Z32, Z39 UDC: 338.48-6:641/642

**Introduction**. Rural tourism is indeed becoming an important alternative to traditional city vacations, especially in the context of changed priorities after the COVID-19 pandemic. Millennials and representatives of generation Z strive for authenticity and closeness to nature, which makes the countryside more attractive for recreation. Such destinations often offer more opportunities for active recreation than just lying on the beach. Hiking in the mountains, cycling tours, participating in agricultural work on farms, tasting local cuisine - all this helps not only to relax, but also to feel part of the community and learn more about the culture of the region. Countries that actively develop rural tourism rely on the wellbeing of local communities, because the development of infrastructure (roads, hotels, services) brings economic benefits and also creates new jobs. This, in turn, supports the preservation of traditions and culture, as local residents become active participants in the tourism process. The demand for rural tourism also highlights the importance of eco-tourism as many people become more aware of the impact of their travels on the environment. In this context, rural tourism can become an important tool for supporting the sustainable development of regions (Global rural tourism market, 2024).

Although much of today's tourism takes place in natural areas or near small villages and towns, not all tourism in rural areas is automatically considered "rural" tourism. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) definition, rural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, angling and sightseeing. According to another well-accepted definition, by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), rural tourism is:

- located in rural areas;
- functionally rural;
- rural in scale;
- traditional in character;
- sustainable;
- of many different kinds, representing the complex pattern of rural environment, economy, and history (European Parliament, 2023).

However, it is not always easy to know where to draw a line, mainly because it is difficult to define what is 'rural'. The OECD notes that few areas will have all these characteristics and that rural tourism exists on a continuum – and that often it will also display some urban characteristics. Based on these definitions, it is nevertheless considered that rural tourism is typically built on experiences that are specific to the countryside, such as open spaces, and contact with nature and with local people. It often includes physical activities connected with nature, such as walking, hiking and cycling. It is usually small in scale and takes place in smaller villages and towns (the OECD study mentions settlements under 10 000 inhabitants) and involves a large number of private, often family-owned, microenterprises that are frequently run as part-time or side jobs. Rural tourism destinations are most often not created in a planned manner, but grow slowly and organically. This means that services are not standardized and that the quality can greatly vary, but also that numerous products evolve continuously. This has resulted in different niche types of rural tourism, such as wellness tourism, activity tourism (including adventure and sports tourism – cycling, walking, climbing, skiing) and cultural and heritage tourism (including food and wine tourism). Rural tourism is also often described as closely aligned with the concept of sustainable tourism, given that it is inherently linked to environmentally-friendly forms of tourism (European Parliament, 2023) (OECD, 2024).

The experience of many countries, in particular Greece, Spain and Italy, demonstrates the positive impact of rural tourism on the economic development of rural regions (Mylonopoulos & Moira, 2017) (Dionysopoulou, 2020) (Belliggiano et al., 2020). Agro-gastronomic farms become an important mechanism for increasing the attractiveness of these territories. Growing interest in rural vacation spots is driving demand for agro-homesteads, as today's urban-dwelling tourists seek opportunities to relax and rejuvenate in an environmentally friendly environment. In addition, tourists seek to gain cultural experiences through tasting local foods and drinks, as well as participating in events that reflect the history of the countryside. These can be festivals, farmers' markets, fairs, petting zoos, ecofarms, camping, glamping, exhibitions of agricultural machinery, corn or wine mazes and quest games.

Literature review. In the scientific literature, considerable attention is paid to the study of the impact of rural tourism on the economy of the country as a whole. Thus, Panagiota Dionysopoulou (2020) believes that agritourism belongs to alternative forms of tourism that are rapidly developing and is one of the most competitive and high-quality sectors of the Greek economy (Dionysopoulou, 2020). Angelo Belliggiano, Marilena Labianca, Eugenio Cejudo, Francisco Antonio Navarro, Stefano De Rubertis (2020) investigated the level of diversification of agriculture through tourism (Belliggiano et al., 2020). Nikolina Sain and Finer Karin (2023) emphasized in their report that the European Parliament supports rural tourism, as a large share of tourism takes place in rural areas, which contributes to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of rural areas, in particular, makes a positive contribution to the protection of small

and diverse farms, overcoming social inequality and creating employment opportunities for women. Internet sources and statistical data emphasize the importance of the development of rural areas (European Parliament, 2023) (Future Market Insights, 2024) (WorldPackers, 2024).

**Research methodology**. The methods used in this study - logical generalization and scientific abstraction - to clarify the conceptual apparatus of the study; system analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction; the method of analogies and comparisons — for researching trends in the development of ecofarms; economic and statistical - for processing statistical data during the analysis of the impact of the development of rural tourism on the economy of countries.

Main results. Rural tourism is particularly actively developing in developing countries. In these regions, due to the growth of the local population, the fragmentation of agricultural land continues, which creates an economic imbalance. At the same time, rural tourism is becoming an effective means of ensuring a decent income for low-income segments of the population. In developed economies, rural tourism is more about rest and relaxation than getting to know the local culture. According to Future Market Insights (FMI), the coming years will be fruitful for the rural tourism market. Between 2023 and 2033, a steady CAGR of 6.8% should support market acceleration. The global rural tourism market will reach up to 198.3 billion US dollars in 2033 (Future Market Insights, 2024).

In 2021, rural areas accounted for 43.8% of beds in tourism accommodation in the EU (the remaining 33.8% of beds were in towns and suburbs and 21.4% in cities). Rural areas also saw 37% of all nights spent at tourist accommodation, compared to towns and suburbs, which accounted for the remaining 35% and cities for 28% (European Parliament, 2023). One of the varieties of rural tourism is agrotourism, which involves the organization of tourist activities on the basis of agricultural enterprises or farms. It offers tourists the opportunity to get to know the rural way of life, traditions, culture and production, including participation in agricultural work, tasting local products, staying on a farm or in an agrohomestead.

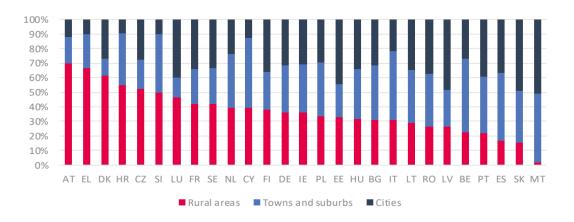


Figure 1. **Share of nights spent at tourist accommodation in 2021**Source: (European Parliament, 2023)

Among such European countries as Greece, Italy, Spain, agrotourism has gained the greatest development. Greece meets the conditions for the development of several Agritourism Forms for Local Development, due to the many and varied natural and anthropogenic comparative advantages, such as: the large residential dispersion of "traditional" mountainous and semimountainous settlements, which have important architectical, historical and cultural interest. Thus, there is agritourism: Inmountain villages, traditional settlements, settlements in areas of special natural beauty, fishing villages, villages and farms (Delitheou & Karagianni, 2020).

Agritourism in Italy has become a dynamic sector that goes beyond traditional farming methods. It includes a variety of activities such as farm stays, vineyard tours, olive oil tastings and hands-on experience in artisanal food production. Agritourism makes a significant contribution to the Italian economy, diversifying farmers' incomes and contributing to rural development. Although agritourism is widespread throughout Italy, some regions have become hotspots for enthusiasts. Tuscany, Umbria and Sicily continue to lead the way, offering picturesque landscapes, historic farms and renowned culinary experiences. In addition, lesser-known regions such as Apulia, Piedmont and Emilia-Romagna are gaining popularity, offering visitors unique and unusual experiences (ILF, 2024).

Spain's official tourism site offers agritourism holidays in country houses, country apartments, country hotels, hostels, holiday villas, countryside campsites and educational farms for children. The spectrum of entertainment during a vacation in the Spanish countryside is quite wide, from feeding animals and harvesting crops to visiting themed festivals. The most common regions of agritourism in Spain: Navarra, Malaga, Asturias, the Basque Country, Galicia (Spain's official tourism website, 2024).

Agritourism in Spain contributes to the spread of economic activity throughout the year, as the seasonal structure of rural tourism does not coincide with agricultural production, as can be seen in the diagram. lower. Although agritourism is highly seasonal, with 43.8% of its spending concentrated between

June and September and a peak of 16% in August, the fact that it is relatively stronger in the winter months makes it less seasonal than seaside tourism (Fig. 2, Fig. 3) (Caixa Bank, 2024).

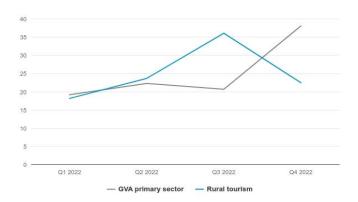


Figure 2. The seasonality of rural tourism and GVA of the primary sector (% of tourism expenditure and GVA in each quarter)

Source: (Caixa Bank, 2024)

The above indicators testify to the demand among tourists for recreation in rural areas. But the portrait of a modern tourist characterizes him as inquisitive and demanding, even while resting in an ecologically clean and comfortable environment. Therefore, today the spectrum of tourist entertainment in rural areas is constantly expanding. It is increasingly possible to observe the emergence of such locations as eco-farms. Despite the crisis phenomena that are now negatively affecting the development of the economy in Ukraine, most Ukrainians express their desire to restore their psycho-emotional state precisely through tourist trips to rural areas. The demand for recreation in eco-farms is growing. The most popular regions for recreation on eco-farms in Ukraine are: Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kyiv, Lviv and Zakarpattia regions.

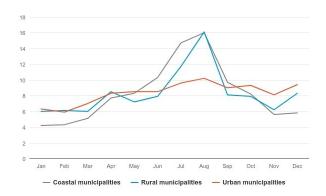


Figure 3. The seasonality of tourism expenditure: urban, rural and coastal (% of tourism expenditure in each month)

Source: (Caixa Bank, 2024)

An eco-farm (or ecological farm) is an agricultural enterprise that operates in accordance with the principles of sustainability and environmental responsibility. The main features of which are organic production. Many farmers, in addition to the usual agricultural activities, actively implement agritourism in their territories, which serves as an additional source of income and helps to expand opportunities. As the experience of European countries has shown, eco-farms are actively used in the development of agritourism, which has numerous advantages - the creation of jobs, business development, the growth of the economic potential of rural areas, the development of certification programs, the preservation of the rural lifestyle and cultural heritage of the territory, the promotion of sustainable development programs and preservation of landscapes and the environment. Emphasis on local products, which are grown on eco-farms due to their organicity and environmental friendliness, increases the interest of the population in visiting such locations, especially at the present time. When the rapid pace of urbanization motivates tourists to rest in the countryside to improve not only their emotional but also their physical condition. Now, during the period of martial law, the issues of environmental friendliness and organicity, as well as a healthy lifestyle, are very relevant for the Ukrainian population.

Eco-farms tend to operate in an environmentally friendly manner, focusing on organic farming methods, renewable energy sources and responsible water use. This is in line with the principles of sustainable tourism, attracting tourists looking for eco-friendly destinations and activities.

If earlier visiting eco-farms was initially limited to the purchase of already harvested agricultural products, now with the growing interest in consuming quality food, tourists are offered not only excursion programs, but also master classes on harvesting, seminars and interactive events that teach tourists about sustainable agriculture economy, wildlife conservation and ecological principles.

With the expansion of the range of services at eco-farms and the growth of tourist flows, there is a need for qualified personnel - guides, leisure organizers, tourism specialists, who will be able to organize rest and visits to the eco-farm with unforgettable positive memories. This can lead to increased employment opportunities and economic growth in the region.

For example, in the Odesa region before the start of the military invasion, the eco-farm "Goats and Sailors" was actively popularized, on the territory of which you could visit an excursion, receive a session of "goat therapy" and harvest vegetables for home. Also, eco-farms often offer farm-to-table meals, allowing tourists to enjoy fresh, local and organic produce. These experiences are popular among food lovers and contribute to the popularization of regional cuisine.

Typically, eco-farms are located in scenic countryside or nature, providing opportunities for outdoor activities such as hiking, bird and wildlife watching, and quad biking. Horseback riding. These activities appeal to nature lovers and adventure seekers, enhancing the overall tourism experience. Many eco-farms offer tourists the opportunity to interact with local producers during tours of local products, learn about traditional farming methods and participate in cultural events.

This cultural exchange can foster a deeper connection between visitors and the host community.

Eco-farms often prioritize biodiversity conservation and habitat restoration. Tourists can have the chance to support these efforts through volunteer programs or donations, helping to protect local ecosystems. For those looking for an opportunity to disconnect from technology and reconnect with nature, as well as digital detox and a more authentic, rural experience, eco-farms offer a disconnection or limitation in the means of modern information and communication technologies and social networks.

Sports and health tours, which are very relevant in European countries, are now being actively popularized: yoga, meditation master classes and spa services in peaceful natural conditions. These retreats give tourists the opportunity to rest and rejuvenate during eco-farm tours. For lovers of live music, festivals and concert events, eco-farms also offer a wide range of opportunities, for example, eco-farm, eco-glamping park Hyggevalley, Pan Bilan farm, Lavandia eco-farm, Oysterville oyster farm that are located in Odesa region. All the above-mentioned activities are accompanied by various photo sessions to remind tourists of a pleasant time.

There is also an interesting tourist location in the Kyiv region - the Maxi Snail farm. Its owner, Anton Avramenko, was a programmer in the past and engaged in the cultivation of an unusual product for Ukrainian cuisine - molluscs. This direction is not only interesting, but also profitable. After mastering the technology in Spain, he decided to open a farm. Yes, the programmer became a farmer, and as it turned out, a successful one. In addition to the direct cultivation of snails, the farm conducts tours for those interested, because this is also a profit. The Maxi Snail farm focuses on exports, in particular, Spain, and plans to expand the product sales market. Agrotourism is a promising direction, but all parties should be interested in it: tourists, farmers, tour guides. If farmers plan to host guests, they need to create conditions for them.

In the Lviv Region, in the village of Tukhlya, an eco-farm "Goat Farm of Two Kateryns" was organized, where not only goats are raised, cheese is produced, but also guests are invited to visit the farm (Agravery, 2021).

On the basis, the structure of an eco-farm was proposed, which reflects the positive economic consequences of its creation in rural areas (Fig. 4).

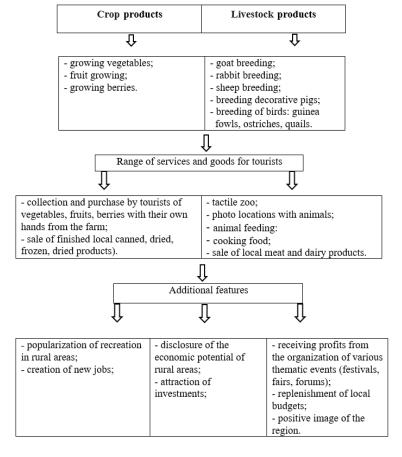


Figure 4. The structure of an eco-farm Source: (Shepeleva & Sarkisyan, 2021)

**Discussion and conclusions**. Thus, the development of rural tourism opens up new opportunities for:

- promotion of local products and support of agricultural products enterprises;
- improvement of the infrastructure of rural areas;
- increasing the level of employment due to the creation of new jobs;
- increase in tax revenues to local budgets due to the growth of population incomes;
- preserving the cultural and historical heritage of rural communities.

Eco-farms play a multifaceted role in the development of tourism, combining sustainability, education and recreation. They attract tourists looking for a meaningful, environmentally conscious experience while contributing to local economic development and environmental preservation, which aligns with the growing trend of sustainable tourism. This is a new and exciting format of tourist locations in the hospitality system. They offer unique tourism experiences that combine environmental awareness, agriculture and natural beauty.

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# THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL VULNERABILITY OF THE POPULATION

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Abstract. Social vulnerability, influenced by a myriad of factors such as physical, social, economic, and environmental conditions, is a critical aspect in understanding and mitigating the impacts of natural hazards. As challenges emerge, the concept of social vulnerability evolves, necessitating updated definitions and frameworks to enhance resilience and disaster management strategies. Paper aims to review and compare various definitions and models of social vulnerability, highlighting their advantages and disadvantages. By analyzing different approaches, we seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of social vulnerability and offer insights into effective strategies for reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience. Paper employs a comparative analysis of definitions and models of social vulnerability from multiple sources. It reviews the Pressure and Release (PAR) model, Hazards-of-Place model, and indexes like the Socio-Economic Vulnerability Index (SeVI) and Built Environmental Index (BEVI). Additionally, it examines main approaches to assessing social vulnerability: demographic, taxonomic, situational, and contextual-proactive. Findings highlight the complexity and multifaceted nature of social vulnerability. Models and approaches collectively emphasize the need for interdisciplinary and communitybased strategies to address social vulnerability effectively. Integrating local knowledge, empowering vulnerable populations, and addressing social inequalities are crucial for enhancing resilience and improving disaster management. The paper was elaborated within the framework of the "Young researchers 2024-2025" 24.80012.0807.09TC competition project "Strengthening scientific methodological support for reducing social vulnerability by increasing the level of financial inclusion of low-income groups" (2024-2025).

Keywords: vulnerability, social, resilience, approach, definition, model

**JEL:** 130, 131, O18, Q54, R58

**UDC:** 304.2

**Introduction.** Understanding and addressing social vulnerability is paramount in contemporary disaster management and policy-making. Social vulnerability encompasses the susceptibility of individuals or groups to harm from exposure to hazards, shaped by various physical, social, economic, and environmental factors. The increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters,

coupled with socio-economic inequalities, necessitate a deeper exploration of this concept.

In the paper we provide a review of vulnerability definitions, models, and approaches. By examining a wide array of perspectives - from environmental and social aspects to affective and creative dimensions - we try highlights the multidimensionality of social vulnerability. Furthermore, we address the challenge of balancing breadth and specificity in definitions and emphasize the importance of adaptive capacity and resilience.

**Defining vulnerability.** In the *Table 1*. is presented a wide array of perspectives on vulnerability, from environmental and social aspects to affective and creative dimensions. This diversity reflects the multifaceted nature of vulnerability, showing that it can be understood and approached from various angles depending on the context and purpose.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of vulnerability definitions and their advantages and disadvantages

A41- aa	,	Considered consets		Diag duam to ac
Authors	Definition	<b>Considered aspects</b>	Advantages	Disadvantage
Adger (2006)	"the state of susceptibility to harm from exposure to stresses associated with environmental and social change and from the absence of capacity to adapt."	Environ-mental change, social change, adaptive capacity	Comprehensive as it considers both environmental and social factors; highlights the importance of adaptive capacity	Too broad, encom-passing too many aspects
Wolf et al. (2013)	"a possibility of future harm."	Future risk	Simple and clear; easy to understand and apply in various contexts	Lacks detail; does not specify types of harm or factors involved
Havrilla (2017)	"the condition of being exposed or unprotected with inherent components of risk and resilience."	Expo-sure, pro- tection, risk, resi- lience	Emphasizes both risk and resilience; acknow-ledges the role of protection	Overly focused on the binary of protection versus exposure
Thekdi and Aven (2021)	"the combination of consequences and uncertainties given the occurrence of a threat or set of threats."	Con-sequences, uncer-tainties, threats	Highlights the role of uncertainty; considers multiple threats	Too focused on theoretical aspects rather than practical implications
Rozmarin (2021)	"the affective pattern that stems from affective encounters	Power for- mations, affective res-ponses,	Unique perspective considering	Complex and abstract; difficult to

	with power formations, which limit and hinder life.", "an affective response that marks the micro vital connections of bodies as they allow transformation and creativity to surpass the limits of stable subject positions"	transfor-mation, creativity	affective and creative dimensions; highlights transformative potential	apply practically
Fernandes Da Silva	"the susceptibility of being placed in a	Eco-nomic, social, eco-	Inclusive; recognizes	Dilutes the focus on
Ranchordas	position of economic,	logical, legal	vulnera-bility	specific
and Beck	social, ecological	aspects, univer-	as a potential	vulnerable
(2024)	or legal disadvantage with potential harm as result.", "a state that every individual can experience, rather than a status or label that is given to underprivileged groups"	sality	state for all individuals; multifaceted.	groups; broadness hinders targeted interventions

Source: Elaborated by the author

One of the key challenges highlighted is balancing the breadth and specificity of vulnerability definitions. Broader definitions, like those by Adger (2006) and Fernandes Da Silva Ranchordas and Beck (2024), offer comprehensive views that encompass multiple factors, but are too general for targeted applications. On the other hand, simpler definitions, such as Wolf et al. (2013), provide clarity and ease of application, but lack the depth needed for nuanced analysis.

Several definitions emphasize the role of adaptive capacity and resilience (e.g., Adger (2006), Havrila (2017)). These aspects are crucial in understanding how individuals and communities can respond to and recover from vulnerabilities. Highlighting adaptive capacity and resilience brings a dynamic component to the concept, focusing not just on the state of being vulnerable but also on the potential for overcoming it. Definitions like those by Rozmarin (2021) introduce complex and abstract concepts such as power formations and affective responses. While these provide a deeper theoretical understanding, they pose challenges for practical application, especially in policy-making and intervention design. Practicality is crucial for definitions intended for use in real-world contexts, such as disaster management or social policy. The varying definitions underscore the importance of context in understanding and applying the concept of vulnerability. Different situations may require different definitions. For instance, environmental policies might benefit from Adger's comprehensive approach, while social interventions might find Wolf et al.'s simplicity more effective. The definition by Fernandes Da Silva Ranchordas et al. (2024) can be noted for its inclusivity, recognizing vulnerability as a state that anyone can experience. This universality can foster a more empathetic and comprehensive approach to addressing vulnerabilities, but can also dilute focus from specific groups that need targeted support. The definitions show the interdisciplinary relevance of vulnerability. They incorporate elements from environmental science, social science, psychology, and more disciplines. This interdisciplinary approach is beneficial for developing holistic strategies to address vulnerability but also requires collaboration across fields. The inclusion of recent definitions (e.g., Thekdi and Aven (2021); Rozmarin (2021); Fernandes Da Silva Ranchordas et al. (2024)) indicates that the concept of vulnerability is evolving. As new challenges and understandings emerge, definitions are adapted to better capture the nuances of vulnerability in contemporary contexts.

Vulnerability is a multifaceted concept that encompasses multiple elements. One element of vulnerability is the context-specificity, because tailoring vulnerability and resilience measures to the specific cultural, political, social, and environmental contexts (*Figure 1*). The cultural context pertains to understanding local customs, beliefs, and practices that influence vulnerability. Political context covers the assessing the influence of local governance, policies, and political stability. The social context refers to evaluating social structures, community networks, and social capital. Environmental context appertains to considering the specific environmental conditions and natural hazards of the area.

Another element that affects vulnerability is the role of infrastructure, because of the impact of critical infrastructure on reducing or increasing vulnerability. Critical infrastructure includes telecommunication, transportation networks, buildings, bridges, and utilities (water, gas, electricity). There is the need to assess how susceptible is infrastructure vulnerability to damage from hazards. The implementation of hazard-proofing or reinforcement of critical infrastructure is necessary as mitigation measure. The population depends on infrastructure, so it is required to understand how communities rely on infrastructure for resilience.

The third element of vulnerability is adaptation and adaptive capacity - the ability of individuals, households, and communities to adjust to potential hazards, mitigate impacts, and recover. Adaptation can be of short-term and include immediate actions taken to respond to hazards (e.g., building dams, emergency planning) or long-term, which incorporates adaptation into the cultural and societal norms (e.g., urban planning, sustainable practices). Adaptive capacity represents the availability and access to resources such as financial capital, technology, information, and social networks. There are also constraints that limit adaptation (e.g., lack of resources, political barriers).

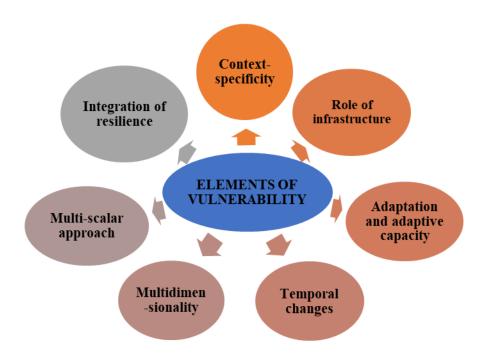


Figure 1. **Elements of vulnerability** 

Source: Adapted by the author on the basis of Hufschmidt (2011)

Another element of vulnerability are temporal changes, the dynamic nature of vulnerability and resilience over time. Vulnerability can change, it evolves due to factors like population growth, urbanization, and climate change. The temporal phases can be classified into: pre-impact (preparedness), impact (response), and post-impact (recovery and adaptation). Adaptive strategies over time can incorporate learning from past experiences and anticipate future hazards.

Multidimensionality is a characteristic of vulnerability, the inclusion of various dimensions such as social, economic, environmental, and political factors. Social dimension includes community cohesion, social networks, demographics (age, gender). Economic dimension cover income levels, economic activities, employment rates. Environmental dimension refers to ecosystem health, natural resource management. Political dimension includes governance structures, policy frameworks, institutional capacity.

Vulnerability can be addressed across different spatial scales (local, regional, national, and global levels of analysis) and temporal scales (short-term, mediumterm, and long-term perspectives). There are also scale interdependencies, because actions at one scale impact other scales (e.g., local actions influencing regional outcomes).

Resilience can be integrated as a core component of vulnerability assessments. The factors. Self-organization, diversity, flexibility, and redundancy in systems are factors that influence resilience. In order to build resilience are developed strategies to enhance the ability to absorb shocks and maintain

functionality. Recovery speed and social capital strength are indicators that can measure resilience.

The concept of social vulnerability is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors such as physical, social, economic, and environmental conditions and refers to the characteristics and situations of individuals or groups that affect their ability to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of natural hazards, is being heightened by elements like poverty, occupation, ethnicity, exclusion, marginalization, and inequities in material consumption (Singh, Eghdami and Singh, 2014). Vulnerable groups often include ethnic minorities, disempowered classes, religious groups, or those in certain occupations who live or work in disaster-prone areas. These groups tend to have limited access to resources such as information, technology, political power, and social networks, which further exacerbates their vulnerability. Integration of local knowledge and community input into disaster management can empower local populations and enhancement of their capacity can help withstand future emergencies (Singh, Eghdami and Singh, 2014). The concept of social vulnerability also includes the impact of social inequalities and historic patterns of social relations, which create deeply embedded barriers resistant to change.

Approaches to vulnerability analysis. The vulnerability analysis framework emphasizes the need to understand both the physical impact of disasters and the social conditions leading to differential outcomes. It involves examining: individual within household (personal attributes affecting vulnerability); community level (interaction with the surrounding community); geographical level (proximity to services), institutional level (disaster funding and mitigation studies).

There are several models to understanding and assessing social vulnerability: Pressure and Release (PAR) Model, Hazards-of-Place Model, Socio-Economic Vulnerability Index (SeVI) and Built Environmental Index (BEVI).

The Pressure and Release (PAR) model, proposed by Blaikie et al. (2014), describes patterns of social vulnerability by linking socio-economic, political, and institutional forces to unsafe physical and social conditions. The model conceptualizes disaster as a complex interaction between two opposing forces: natural hazards and a vulnerable society. It outlines a progression that connects the impact of a hazard on people through levels of social factors that generate vulnerability. The main components include: economic, demographic, and political root causes affecting resource distribution; dynamic pressures of lack of local institutions, of skills and training, of investment in infrastructure, of rapid population growth, and of urbanization; unsafe conditions experienced by people in hazardous locations, including fragile physical environments, fragile local economies, vulnerable societies, and public actions or inactions.

The Hazards-of-Place Model by Cutter et al. (2003) integrates biophysical vulnerability with social vulnerability to assess the overall risk in a specific location. It identifies vulnerability as a combination of risk from hazardous events and the social conditions that affect susceptibility and resilience. Key factors affecting social vulnerability include: lack of access to resources such as

information, knowledge, and technology; limited access to political power and representation; social capital, including social networks and connections; beliefs and customs; building stock and age; frail and physically limited individuals; type and density of infrastructure and lifelines.

In a study of Norway by Holand et al. (2011), social vulnerability is divided into two indexes: Socio-Economic Vulnerability Index (SeVI) that includes socio-economic status, education levels, employment status, demographic and ethnic composition, gender equality, political activity, and housing and Built Environmental Index (BEVI) that is based on factors like distance to the nearest hospital, population and housing density, age of building stocks, average age of sewers and water pipelines, length of municipal roads, and number of exit routes per 1000 inhabitants.

There are 4 approaches to assessing social vulnerability: demographic, taxonomic, situational, contextual-proactive. The demographic approach follows the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) definition of vulnerability as the potential for danger or loss and considers human beings as elements at risk, alongside structural vulnerabilities like buildings and healthcare systems. The taxonomic approach focuses on the vulnerability of social groups, breaking down vulnerability into different elements (social, economic, environmental, informational, etc.) and identifies components like initial wellbeing, livelihood resilience, self-protection, societal protection, and social capital. The situational approach analyzes the actual situations of individuals or families rather than their group memberships and recognizes the variability of social vulnerability based on daily, seasonal, and yearly changes in access to resources and power. The contextual-proactive approach encourages communities to use the concept of vulnerability to understand their own exposure and risks and involves thorough analysis with residents to discuss strengths, capabilities, weaknesses, and needs.

The demographic approach is systematic, but often overlooks the nuanced social dynamics of different groups. The taxonomic approach provides in-depth insights, but can be complex and data-intensive. The situational approach captures the dynamic nature of vulnerability and is context-specific, but its qualitative nature may lack broad applicability. The contextual-proactive approach is empowering, but it can be resource-intensive and dependent on active community participation.

These models and approaches collectively highlight the complexity of social vulnerability, emphasizing the need to consider a wide range of factors, including socio-economic conditions, political and institutional structures, and physical environments. They stress the importance of interdisciplinary and community-based strategies to mitigate the impact of disasters and reduce social vulnerability. By integrating local knowledge, empowering vulnerable populations, and addressing underlying social inequalities, these frameworks aim to enhance resilience and improve disaster management.

**Conclusions.** The concept of social vulnerability is inherently complex and multifaceted, influenced by various interlinked factors. This paper has

demonstrated that broader definitions, while comprehensive, may be too general for targeted interventions. Conversely, simpler definitions, though clear, might lack the depth required for nuanced analysis. Models like the Pressure and Release (PAR) model and the Hazards-of-Place model, along with indexes such as SeVI and BEVI, provide valuable frameworks for understanding vulnerability. Each model and approach has its strengths and limitations, highlighting the need for a tailored application based on specific contexts and objectives. Approaches to assessing social vulnerability—demographic, taxonomic, situational, and contextualproactive—each offer unique insights. However, the effectiveness of these approaches depends on their application context and the specific vulnerabilities being addressed. To effectively reduce social vulnerability and enhance resilience, it is essential to integrate local knowledge, empower vulnerable populations, and address underlying social inequalities. Interdisciplinary and community-based strategies are crucial for developing holistic disaster management plans. As the concept of social vulnerability continues to evolve, ongoing research and adaptive strategies will be vital in mitigating the impacts of natural hazards and improving the resilience of communities worldwide.

Note: The article was developed within the framework of the "Young researchers 2024-2025" competition project 24.80012.0807.09TC "Strengthening scientific and methodological support for reducing social vulnerability by increasing the level of financial inclusion of low-income groups" (2024-2025). / Notă: Articolul a fost elaborat în cadrul Proiectului din cadrul concursului "Tineri cercetători 2024-2025" 24.80012.0807.09TC "Fortificarea suportului științific și metodologic pentru reducerea vulnerabilității sociale prin creșterea nivelului incluziunii financiare a grupurilor cu venituri mici" (2024-2025).

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## SISTEMUL PROTECȚIEI SOCIALE A PERSOANELOR CU DIZABILITĂȚI ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA: EVALUARE ȘI RECOMANDĂRI

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**Abstract.** The social protection system for people with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova plays an essential role in ensuring a dignified life and facilitating the social integration of this vulnerable category. Although reforms have been implemented and continuous efforts are being made, economic and social challenges remain a reality, profoundly affecting the living standards of people with disabilities. At the beginning of 2023, 162.3 thousand people with disabilities were registered in the country, of which 10.9 thousand were children. This study aims to analyze the statistical data and available information to assess the impact of social protection on this population category, highlighting the significant discrepancies between disability pension levels and the established minimum subsistence level. The results show that the majority of people with disabilities live in rural areas, where access to basic services such as healthcare and education is limited, and living conditions are often precarious. Furthermore, recommendations are proposed to improve social protection, including adjusting pensions to meet the minimum subsistence level, facilitating access to services in rural areas, providing support to families caring for individuals with severe disabilities, and developing vocational training programs adapted for people with disabilities.

**Keywords:** persons with disabilities, social protection, poverty, quality of life, Republic of Moldova

JEL: 131, 138, J14, Z13 UDC: 364-787.32(478)

**Introducere.** Sistemul de protecție socială destinat persoanelor cu dizabilități din Republica Moldova reprezintă un pilon fundamental în garantarea unei vieți decente și în promovarea integrării sociale a acestui grup vulnerabil. Cu toate că au fost implementate multiple reforme și autoritățile au întreprins măsuri

semnificative, persistă obstacole economice și sociale complexe, care limitează îmbunătățirea calității vieții pentru persoanele cu dizabilități și familiile acestora.

Conform datelor oficiale, la începutul anului 2023, în Republica Moldova erau înregistrate 162.300 de persoane cu dizabilități, dintre care 10.900 erau copii. Acest segment reprezintă 6,5% din totalul populației, iar copiii cu dizabilități constituie aproximativ 2% din numărul total al copiilor din țară.

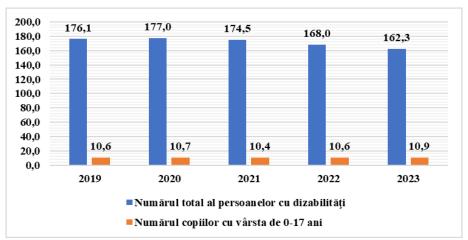


Figura 1. Numărul persoanelor cu dizabilități în Republica Moldova, mii de persoane Sursa: Elaborat de autori în baza sursei (BNS, 2022)

Legislația națională, prin diverse acte normative și politici, urmărește să garanteze drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități și să sprijine integrarea acestora în societate. Printre acestea se numără Legea privind incluziunea socială a persoanelor cu dizabilități, adoptată în 2012, care stabilește măsuri concrete de protecție socială și acces la servicii de baza, precum asistența medical, educația. Cu toate acestea, punerea în aplicare a acestor măsuri întâmpină dificultăți, cauzate în mare parte de resursele financiare insuficiente și de lipsa de coordonare eficientă între instituțiile responsabile. Astfel, provocările persistente arată necesitatea unor îmbunătățiri și adaptări urgente pentru a asigura o protecție adecvată și sustenabilă pentru această categorie de cetățeni.

Metode și materiale. Pentru realizarea acestei cercetări, au fost utilizate metode precum analiza literaturii de specialitate, metoda comparativă și abstracția științifică. Metoda inductivă a fost aplicată pentru a generaliza faptele concrete, care ulterior au fost supuse unei analize și sinteze detaliate, servind drept bază solidă pentru formularea concluziilor privind problematica abordată. Suportul informațional al cercetării a inclus publicațiile științifice naționale și internaționale, datele statistice furnizate de Biroul Național de Statistică al Republicii Moldova (BNS), precum și informațiile provenite de la Eurostat, Organizația pentru Cooperare și Dezvoltare Economică (OCDE) și alte surse relevante.

Rezultate obținute și discuții. Analiza structurii demografice a persoanelor cu dizabilități din Republica Moldova relevă că bărbații constituie 52,8% din totalul acestui grup, iar o proporție semnificativă, de 63%, este concentrată în mediul rural. În plus, ponderea bărbaților cu dizabilități în totalul populației masculine constituie 7,2% și este mai ridicată cu 1,4 p.p. comparativ cu ponderea femeilor cu dizabilități în cadrul populației feminine. Această situație evidențiază o problemă majoră, având în vedere că zonele rurale oferă oportunități limitate de angajare, un acces restrâns la servicii esențiale de sănătate și educație, precum și o infrastructură insuficient adaptată pentru a răspunde nevoilor specifice ale persoanelor cu dizabilități. Lipsa accesibilității în aceste domenii amplifică excluderea socială și economică a acestui grup vulnerabil.

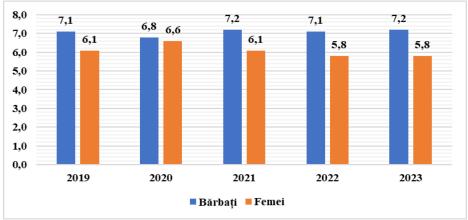


Figura 2. **Ponderea persoanelor cu dizabilități pe sexe, în %** *Sursa: Elaborat de autor în baza sursei (BNS, 2022)* 

Distribuția pe vârste arată că 37,9% dintre persoanele cu dizabilități au vârste cuprinse între 30 și 54 de ani, în timp ce 32,4% se află în grupa de vârstă 55-64 de ani. Persoanele aflate în vârsta de muncă reprezintă 77,3% din total, subliniind astfel importanța critică a integrării acestora pe piața muncii. Integrarea eficientă a persoanelor cu dizabilități în câmpul muncii nu doar că ar reduce semnificativ riscul de sărăcie, dar ar contribui și la îmbunătățirea calității vieții lor, oferindu-le independență economică și un sentiment de apartenență socială.

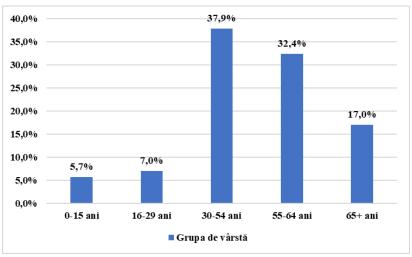


Figura 3. **Persoane cu dizabilități pe grupe de vârstă, în %**Sursa: Elaborat de autor în baza sursei (BNS, 2022)

Distribuția persoanelor cu dizabilități pe regiuni scoate în evidență o realitate importantă: municipiul Chișinău are cea mai mare proporție de persoane cu dizabilități severe, atingând 18,5%. Totuși, regiunea Sud, deși înregistrează un procent mai mic (15,5%), se confruntă cu provocări semnificative, în special din cauza nivelului ridicat de sărăcie, care afectează profund calitatea vieții acestor persoane. Este esențial de subliniat că, deși în mediul rural trăiesc 57% dintre copiii cu dizabilități primare, cazurile de dizabilități severe sunt mai frecvente în mediul urban (50,8%) decât în cel rural (36,8%). Această distribuție reflectă nu doar diferențele geografice, ci și inegalitățile economice și sociale, evidențiind necesitatea unor politici de intervenție adaptate fiecărei regiuni pentru a sprijini integrarea și bunăstarea persoanelor cu dizabilități.

Cercetarea Bugetelor Gospodăriilor Casnice (CBGC) din 2022 aduce în atenție efectele considerabile pe care dizabilitățile le au asupra calității vieții gospodăriilor din Republica Moldova. Conform acestei analize, 13% dintre gospodării au în componență cel puțin o persoană cu dizabilități, ceea ce influențează semnificativ bunăstarea acestora. Un aspect alarmant este că 31% dintre gospodăriile care includ persoane cu dizabilități raportează un nivel de trai scăzut, comparativ cu 22,9% dintre gospodăriile fără membri cu dizabilități (BNS, 2022). Acest decalaj evidențiază dificultățile economice și sociale suplimentare pe care le întâmpină aceste familii, fiind un semnal important pentru politicile de intervenție. Gospodăriile care au în componență persoane cu dizabilități sunt adesea nevoite să redistribuie resursele interne, ceea ce afectează negativ ceilalți membri ai familiei. Resursele financiare sunt redirecționate de la nevoi esențiale, precum educația copiilor, alimentația sau îmbunătățirea condițiilor de locuit (Colesnicova & Ciobanu, 2022). Această realitate subliniază presiunea constantă pe care dizabilitatea o exercită asupra echilibrului financiar al gospodăriilor.

Accesul limitat la piața muncii pentru persoanele cu dizabilități, precum și pentru membrii familiilor care îi îngrijesc, amplifică dificultățile economice.

Această situatie nu doar că reduce veniturile gospodăriilor, dar contribuie si la perpetuarea ciclului sărăciei, având un impact negativ asupra perspectivelor pe termen lung ale acestor familii (Balan, 2021). Persoanele cu dizabilități care au acumulat stagiul de cotizare necesar au dreptul la pensii de dizabilitate sau la alte tipuri de pensii, cum ar fi pensia pentru limită de vârstă, pensia specială sau pensia de urmas. Conform legislației, fiecare persoană poate opta pentru un singur tip de pensie, în funcție de preferintele si nevoile personale. Pentru cei care nu au acumulat stagiul necesar de muncă, există opțiunea alocației sociale de dizabilitate sau a altor forme de sprijin, cum ar fi alocația pentru pierderea întreținătorului sau alocatia pentru persoanele vârstnice. Ca si în cazul pensiilor, legislatia permite alegerea unei singure forme de alocație. Pentru persoanele cu dizabilități severe din copilărie și pentru persoanele nevăzătoare, există alocații speciale pentru îngrijire, însoțire și supraveghere. Aceste alocații sunt disponibile și pentru familiile care îngrijesc la domiciliu un copil cu dizabilităti severe, având scopul de a sprijini aceste familii în efortul lor zilnic. Conform datelor Casei Naționale de Asigurări Sociale, la data de 1 ianuarie 2023, mărimea medie a pensiei de dizabilitate era de 2104,3 lei, cu mult sub mărimea medie a pensiei totale pentru toti pensionarii, care era de 3156,4 lei. Această diferență scoate la iveală o inechitate semnificativă în sistemul de pensii, unde persoanele cu dizabilităti beneficiază de sume considerabil mai mici, în ciuda nevoilor financiare crescute.

Valoarea pensiilor variază în funcție de gradul de dizabilitate: persoanele cu dizabilitate medie primesc, în medie, 1572,2 lei, cele cu dizabilitate accentuată primesc 2260,4 lei, iar persoanele cu dizabilitate severă beneficiază de 2557,6 lei. Deși aceste diferențieri sunt menite să reflecte gravitatea dizabilității, sumele oferite rămân insuficiente pentru a acoperi costurile complexe asociate cu dizabilitățile.

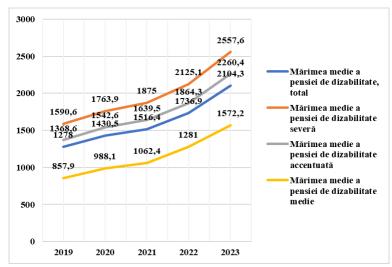


Figura 4. Mărimea medie a pensiei de dizabilitate, pe categorii de pensii, la 1 ianuarie Sursa: Elaborat de autor în baza sursei (BNS, 2022)

Este esențial de remarcat că, în 2022, minimul de existență în Republica

Moldova a fost stabilit la 2628,4 lei lunar per persoană. Această cifră servește drept reper pentru a evalua nevoile financiare minime necesare unui trai decent. Comparând acest prag cu mărimea medie a pensiei de dizabilitate, care a fost de 2104,3 lei, devine evident că persoanele cu dizabilităti se confruntă cu dificultăti financiare semnificative. Pensia medie este cu mult sub nivelul minimului de existență, ceea ce expune aceste persoane la riscuri crescute de sărăcie și excluziune socială. Pentru persoanele cu dizabilitate medie, situatia este chiar mai alarmantă: pensia medie, de doar 1572,2 lei, este cu peste 1000 de lei mai mică decât minimul necesar pentru un trai decent. Chiar și persoanele cu dizabilitate accentuată sau severă, cu pensii medii de 2260,4 lei și, respectiv, 2557,6 lei, se confruntă cu venituri insuficiente pentru a acoperi cheltuielile de bază. Aceste discrepanțe accentuează vulnerabilitatea economică extremă a persoanelor cu dizabilități din Republica Moldova, subliniind necesitatea unor ajustări ale sistemului de protectie socială. Sărăcia continuă să fie o realitate îngrijorătoare pentru gospodăriile din Republica Moldova, iar impactul este accentuat în cazul celor care includ copii sau persoane cu dizabilităti. În 2023, pragul sărăciei absolute a fost stabilit la 3336,8 lei pe lună per persoană, iar pragul sărăciei extreme la 2691,2 lei. Aproximativ un sfert din populația țării trăiește în sărăcie absolută, iar una din nouă persoane se confruntă cu sărăcia extremă. Distribuția sărăciei este, de asemenea, profund inegală la nivel regional. În Regiunea Sud, 49,3% din populație trăieste în sărăcie, urmată de Regiunea Centru, cu 39,3%, si Regiunea Nord, cu 32,2%. În contrast, Municipiul Chișinău înregistrează cea mai mică rată a sărăciei, de doar 10,9%. Aceste date subliniază necesitatea unor intervenții regionale specifice, adaptate nevoilor diverse ale persoanelor cu dizabilități din diferite zone ale țării.

Conform Cercetării Bugetelor Gospodăriilor Casnice (CBGC) din 2023, rata sărăciei absolute în rândul persoanelor cu dizabilități a ajuns la 42%, cu 11,5 p.p. mai mare decât în cazul populației fără dizabilități. Această rată a crescut cu 8,1 puncte procentuale față de 2019, ilustrând vulnerabilitatea tot mai mare a acestor persoane în fața dificultăților economice.

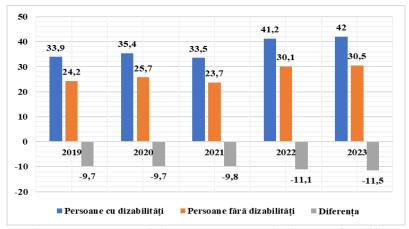


Figura 5. Rata sărăciei absolute după criteriul de dizabilitate, % Sursa: Elaborat de autor în baza sursei (BNS, 2022)

Deși Biroul Național de Statistică, stabilește anual minimul de existență pentru anumite categorii ale populației, nu există un minim specific pentru persoanele cu dizabilități, care au nevoi speciale și necesită o protecție suplimentară. În special, persoanele cu dizabilități severe din copilărie beneficiază de alocații sociale care nu depășesc, în multe cazuri, nici pragul sărăciei extreme, cu atât mai puțin cel al sărăciei absolute. Această situație relevă o lacună majoră în sistemul de protecție socială, care nu reușește să acopere suficient nevoile reale și diverse ale persoanelor cu dizabilități.

Conform articolului 51 din Constituția Republicii Moldova, "Persoanele handicapate beneficiază de o protecție specială din partea întregii societăți. Statul asigură pentru ele condiții normale de tratament, de readaptare, de învățământ, de instruire și de integrare socială." (Constituția Republicii Moldova, 2016) Cu toate acestea, în practică, multe familii se văd nevoite să sacrifice surse importante de venit, deoarece unul dintre membrii familiei trebuie să renunțe la locul de muncă pentru a îngriji persoana cu dizabilități. Această situație creează un dublu risc economic, atât pentru persoana cu dizabilități, cât și pentru îngrijitorul său, accentuând și mai mult precaritatea gospodăriilor respective.

Considerăm că pentru a îmbunătăți situația persoanelor cu dizabilități în Republica Moldova, sunt necesare următoarele măsuri esențiale:

- Stabilirea unui minim de existență adaptat nevoilor persoanelor cu dizabilități, astfel încât alocațiile sociale să fie suficiente pentru a acoperi costurile esențiale pentru un trai decent. Aceasta ar implica o evaluare periodică a costurilor de trai și ajustarea corespunzătoare a alocațiilor, ținând cont de inflație și de dinamica economică. Studiile internaționale au demonstrat că un minim de existență bine definit poate reduce semnificativ riscul de sărăcie în rândul categoriilor vulnerabile.
- Ajustarea pensiilor de dizabilitate la minimul de existență național, contribuind astfel la reducerea sărăciei în rândul persoanelor cu dizabilități și al familiilor acestora. Aceasta ar presupune o revizuire a criteriilor de eligibilitate și un mecanism transparent de calcul al pensiilor, pentru a elimina discrepanțele și inechitățile actuale.
- Dezvoltarea infrastructurii și serviciilor esențiale în zonele rurale, pentru a reduce diferențele dintre mediul rural și cel urban. Investițiile în infrastructura accesibilă, inclusiv centre de sănătate și școli adaptate, ar îmbunătăți accesul persoanelor cu dizabilități la serviciile necesare. Programele de mobilitate și transport adaptat ar facilita participarea acestora la viața socială și economică, oferindu-le oportunități egale de educație și angajare.
- Implementarea unor programe de suport pentru familiile care îngrijesc persoane cu dizabilități severe, oferind nu doar asistență financiară, dar și consiliere psihologică și resurse educaționale pentru îngrijitori (Gutium, 2023). Aceste programe ar trebui să vizeze creșterea capacității îngrijitorilor de a face față provocărilor și să includă inițiative de sprijin comunitar pentru a încuraja schimbul de experiențe și resurse între familii.

Aplicarea acestor recomandări ar putea îmbunătăți considerabil calitatea vieții persoanelor cu dizabilități, reducând riscul de sărăcie și excluziune socială în Republica Moldova.

Concluzii. Articolul scoate în evidență situația dificilă a persoanelor cu dizabilități din Republica Moldova, subliniind limitările sistemului de protecție socială în a le asigura un trai decent. Deși statul a implementat măsuri de sprijin pentru această categorie vulnerabilă, discrepanțele dintre pensiile de dizabilitate și minimul de existență reflectă o realitate alarmantă: majoritatea persoanelor cu dizabilități trăiesc în condiții financiare precare. Accesul limitat la servicii esențiale, în special în mediul rural, agravează această situație, perpetuând sărăcia și excluziunea socială. Gospodăriile care includ persoane cu dizabilități se confruntă cu dificultăți economice semnificative, iar dependența de un singur venit afectează întreaga familie. Disparitățile regionale în rata sărăciei subliniază necesitatea unor intervenții țintite, adaptate nevoilor fiecărei comunități. În acest context, autoritățile ar trebui să reevalueze și să ajusteze sistemul de pensii de dizabilitate, asigurânduse că alocațiile sociale acoperă costurile reale ale vieții și că sprijinul este distribuit echitabil.

Pentru a îmbunătăți calitatea vieții persoanelor cu dizabilități, este imperios necesară dezvoltarea unor strategii cuprinzătoare, care să includă ajustarea pensiilor, îmbunătățirea accesului la servicii esențiale și sprijinul direct pentru familiile îngrijitoare. Aceste măsuri ar contribui la reducerea sărăciei și la o mai bună integrare socială a persoanelor cu dizabilități în comunitățile lor.

**Notă:** Articolul a fost elaborat în cadrul Subprogramului 030101 "Fortificarea rezilienței, competitivității și durabilității economiei Republicii Moldova în contextul procesului de aderare la Uniunea Europeană", finanțare instituțională.

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### PERSOANELE CU DIZABILITĂȚI ÎN CADRUL ALEGERILOR DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA: DREPTURI SI OBLIGATII

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Abstract. In the context of social evolution and the ever-increasing awareness of individual rights, including those of people with disabilities, the subject of their participation in the electoral process becomes increasingly pertinent and crucial. The Republic of Moldova, like other states, faces challenges and responsibilities in ensuring the democratic and fair participation of all citizens, including those with various forms of disabilities. In this context, it is vital to explore the rights and obligations of people with disabilities in the elections of the Republic of Moldova.

Keywords: legal framework, rights, obligations, responsibilities, legal institutions,

public organizations **JEL:** J14, K10, K16

**UDC:** 342.843+341.231.14](478)

Introducere. Republica Moldova, la fel ca multe alte țări, se confruntă cu provocări în garantarea participării democratice și echitabile a tuturor cetățenilor, inclusiv a persoanelor cu dizabilități. În acest sens, este esențial să analizăm atât drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități în cadrul alegerilor, cât și obligațiile statului și ale organizatorilor de a asigura condiții accesibile și incluzive pentru aceștia. Prin urmare, ne propunem să analizăm și să oferim o perspectivă asupra modului în care persoanele cu dizabilități sunt implicate în procesul electoral din Republica Moldova. Vom explora atât drepturile acestora, garantate de legislația națională și internațională, cât și obligațiile autorităților și a celor implicați în organizarea alegerilor, pentru a asigura o participare efectivă și inclusivă a tuturor cetățenilor. Totodată, vom examina și eventualele bariere sau provocări cu care se confruntă persoanele cu dizabilități în exercitarea dreptului lor fundamental de a vota și de a fi votate în cadrul procesului electoral moldovenesc.

Prin această investigație, ne propunem să evidențiem importanța promovării unei societăți mai incluzive și accesibile pentru toți, indiferent de abilități sau dizabilități, și să identificăm posibilele soluții și îmbunătățiri care ar putea fi implementate pentru a consolida participarea activă a persoanelor cu dizabilități în viața democratică a Republicii Moldova.

Gradul de investigare a problemei și scopul cercetării. La momentul actual, importanța și scopul de elaborare a prezentului demers științific, apare din

intenția autorului de a releva în prim-plan rolul și locul persoanelor cu dizabilități în cadrul alegerilor din Republica Moldova. Totodată este și necesitatea stringentă de efectuare a unei analize ample, referitor la esența subiectului cercetării.

Materiale utilizate și metodele aplicate. În procesul elaborării articolului științific ne-am ghidat de mai multe și diverse metode de cercetare științifică care au făcut posibilă investigarea corespunzătoare a subiectului titulativ, dintre care putem enumera: metoda analizei, metoda sintezei, metoda deducției, metoda sistemică, metoda istorică, precum și metoda comparativă. Baza teoretico-juridică a demersului științific cuprinde materialul definitoriu precum ar fi legislația electorală națională și internațională, rapoartele de activitate ale instituțiilor cheie cu atribuții în domeniul electoral, precum și sursele web din mediul online – care direct sau indirect, abordează esența și conținutul subiectului supus cercetării.

Rezultatele obținute în baza analizelor științifice efectuate. Actele naționale și internaționale care apără drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități și la care Republica Moldova este parte sunt următoarele:

- Convenția ONU privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități Convenția ONU privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități a fost ratificată de Republica Moldova în anul 2010 și reprezintă un document fundamental care promovează și asigură exercitarea deplină și în condiții de egalitate a tuturor drepturilor și libertăților fundamentale ale omului de către toate persoanele cu dizabilități;
  - Convenția privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități;
- Legea nr.60 din 30.03.2012 privind incluziunea socială a persoanelor cu dizabilități;
- Codul electoral al Republicii Moldova nr.325 din 08.12.2022 // Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova nr.426-427 din 23.12.2022, în vigoare conform ultimelor modificări și ajustări din 25.01.2024 (Legea nr.1 din 18.01.2024).

Republica Moldova depune eforturi pentru a integra persoanele cu dizabilități în diverse sectoare de activitate, organizații de sprijin, asociații și chiar în domeniul electoral. Persoanele cu dizabilități beneficiază de drepturi egale cu cele ale persoanelor fără dizabilități și se află pe o poziție juridică similară, cu anumite excepții. În ultimii ani, statul a semnat diverse convenții și tratate internaționale care promovează integrarea persoanelor cu dizabilități atât pe piața muncii, cât și în procesele electorale locale, parlamentare și prezidențiale. Acestea având următoarele drepturi electorale:

- 1. *Dreptul la vot*. Persoanele cu dizabilități au dreptul deplin de a participa la procesul electoral, inclusiv de a vota și de a fi votate, conform Constituției Republicii Moldova și altor acte normative relevante. Acest drept fundamental trebuie să fie asigurat fără niciun fel de discriminare sau obstacole;
- 2. Accesibilitate. Legislația autohtonă prevede că procesul electoral trebuie să fie accesibil pentru toți cetățenii, inclusiv pentru cei cu dizabilități. Aceasta implică furnizarea de facilități și adapări necesare pentru a asigura că persoanele cu dizabilități pot participa în mod efectiv la votare, cum ar fi facilități de transport,

- cabine de vot accesibile, buletine de vot în format "Braille" pentru persoanele cu deficiențe de vedere, precum și alte măsuri de adaptare;
- 3. Asistență la vot. Persoanele cu dizabilități pot solicita asistență la vot în cazul în care au nevoie de ajutor pentru a exercita dreptul lor de votare. Această asistență poate fi acordată de către un membru al familiei sau de către un asistent acreditat în baza legislației electorale;
- 4. *Informare și conștientizare*. Autoritățile electorale și organizațiile relevante sunt responsabile pentru informarea și educarea persoanelor cu dizabilități cu privire la procesul electoral, drepturile lor și modalitățile de participare. Aceasta include furnizarea de informații în format accesibil, cum ar fi materialele în limbaj simplificat sau în limbaj de semne, pentru a asigura o înțelegere completă și echitabilă a procedurilor electorale. către toate persoanele cu dizabilități.

Având drepturi egale, persoanele cu dizabilități au și obligații, statul Republica Moldova conferă acestor grupuri de persoane drepuri și obligații egale cu celelalte persoane, cu excepția unor obligații sau a unor drepturi ce sunt caracteristice acestor grupuri de persoane. De exemplu cele mai principale obligaații ale acestora care sunt prevazute de "Convenția ONU privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități" în articolul, 6 sau în "Codul electoral al Republicii Moldova", iar printre cele mai remarcabile putem enumera următoarele obligații:

- **1.** *Informare și înregistrare*. Una dintre principalele obligații ale persoanelor cu dizabilități este să fie informate cu privire la procesul electoral și să se înregistreze în timp util pentru a putea vota. Aceasta implică asigurarea că sunt conștiente de datele alegerilor, de procedurile de înregistrare și de locațiile și modalitătile de votare;
- **2.** Participare activă. Persoanele cu dizabilități au responsabilitatea de a participa activ la procesul electoral și de a-și exercita dreptul de votare. Aceasta poate implica familiarizarea cu candidații și platformele politice, evaluarea opțiunilor disponibile și luarea unei decizii informate în ceea ce privește votul lor;
- **3.** Respectarea regulilor electorale. Pe lângă drepturile lor, persoanele cu dizabilități au și obligația de a respecta regulile și procedurile stabilite de autoritățile electorale. Aceasta include respectarea termenelor limită pentru înregistrare și vot, precum și respectarea ordinii și disciplinei în secțiile de votare;
- **4.** Cooperare și comunicare. Pentru a asigura un proces electoral eficient și ordonat, persoanele cu dizabilități ar trebui să coopereze cu autoritățile electorale și cu personalul de la secțiile de votare. Acest lucru poate implica comunicarea deschisă a nevoilor și a cerințelor specifice pentru a asigura că li se acordă asistența și sprijinul necesar în timpul votării.
- **5.** Raportarea problemelor și feedback-ul. Dacă întâmpină dificultăți sau întâmpină obstacole în timpul procesului electoral, persoanele cu dizabilități ar trebui să raporteze imediat aceste probleme autorităților relevante sau organizațiilor de monitorizare a alegerilor. De asemenea, ele ar trebui să ofere feedback cu privire la experiența lor în cadrul alegerilor, astfel încât autoritățile să poată identifica și remedia deficiențele în viitor.

Consecvent cu cele menționate mai sus, există o categorie de persoane cu dizabilităti ce nu au dreptul de vot. Acest fapt se datorează următoarelor elemente:

- a) *interdicția legală*. Persoanele aflate sub interdicție judecătorească și care au fost lipsite de drepturile lor civile și depline, inclusiv dreptul de vot, nu pot participa la procesul electoral;
- b) capacitatea mentală redusă. În anumite cazuri, persoanele cu dizabilități mintale severe sau cu o capacitate mentală redusă pot fi considerate necompetente pentru a-și exercita drepturile civile, inclusiv dreptul de vot. În astfel de situații, un curator legal sau un tutore poate fi numit pentru a reprezenta interesele lor legale, inclusiv decizia de a vota sau nu;
- c) decizia personală. În unele cazuri, persoanele cu dizabilități pot decide voluntar să nu participe la procesul electoral din diverse motive personale sau de convingere. Aceasta poate fi o alegere individuală și nu este impusă de lege.

În continuare, ilustrăm unele date statistice relevante subiectului supus cercetării:



Figura 1. Numărul persoanelor recunoscute cu dizabilități² în Republica Moldova, la 1 ianuarie

Figura 1. Numărul persoanelor recunoscute cu dizabilități în Republica Moldova, la 1 ianuarie 2023

*Sursa*: https://statistica.gov.md/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9460 60822.html

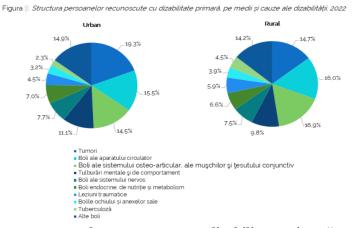


Figura 2. Structura persoanelor recunoscute cu dizabilitate primară, pe medii și cauze ale dizabilității, în anul 2022

*Sursa*: <a href="https://statistica.gov.md/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9460">https://statistica.gov.md/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9460</a> 60822.html

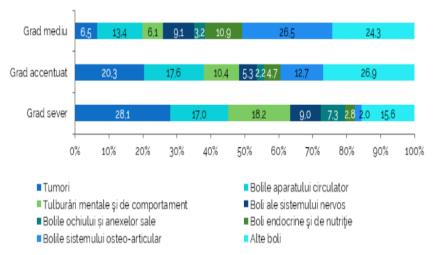


Figura 3. Structura persoanelor recunoscute cu dizabilitate primară, pe grade și cauze ale dizabilității, în anul 2022

*Sursa*: <a href="https://statistica.gov.md/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9460">https://statistica.gov.md/ro/persoanele-cu-dizabilitati-in-republica-moldova-in-anul-2022-9460</a> 60822.html

Concluzii. În final, este important de menționat faptul că, analiza drepturilor și obligațiilor persoanelor cu dizabilități în cadrul alegerilor din Republica Moldova relevă importanța fundamentală a asigurării unei participări democratice și incluzive pentru toți cetățenii. Drepturile precum accesul la vot, asistența la vot, și informarea adecvată sunt fundamentale pentru a asigura că persoanele cu dizabilități își pot exercita în mod efectiv drepturile politice. În același timp, obligațiile de informare, cooperare și respectare a regulilor electorale contribuie la buna desfășurare a procesului electoral și la întărirea încrederii în sistemul democratic. Cu toate acestea, este important să recunoaștem că mai există provocări și bariere de depășit pentru a asigura o participare egală și completă a persoanelor cu dizabilități în procesul electoral. Este nevoie de eforturi continue din partea autorităților, organizațiilor relevante și a societății în ansamblu pentru a elimina aceste obstacole și pentru a promova o societate mai incluzivă și accesibilă.

Consolidarea drepturilor și respectarea obligațiilor persoanelor cu dizabilități în cadrul alegerilor din Republica Moldova nu este doar un imperativ moral, ci și o condiție fundamentală pentru consolidarea democrației și a statului de drept. Prin asigurarea participării active a tuturor cetățenilor, inclusiv a celor cu dizabilități, Republica Moldova poate promova valorile democratice și poate construi un sistem politic mai reprezentativ și mai echitabil pentru toți.

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### ROLUL SERVICIILOR MEDICALE ÎN ASIGURAREA ECHITĂTII SOCIALE

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Abstract. In the modern world, health problems are becoming increasingly acute and multifaceted. Population growth, increasing life expectancy, epidemics of infectious and chronic diseases and changes in people's lifestyles are permanent challenges for the improvement of existing health systems and objectives of European integration. The development of the health system envisages the diversification of health services and their homogenization in the EU Accession Strategy 2030. At the same time, the social and economic aspects of health care are becoming increasingly important, as the health of the nation directly affects social stability and economic development. From the research conducted, the authors realized that the role of health services in ensuring social equity is very important, considering that not every health system can realize complex health services, covering relatively all the population of the country. Data from the surveys conducted by the NBS show that in the Republic of Moldova there is a stable pattern of cooperation with the health services sector, practically unchanged in all socio-demographic categories, with deviations between services provided in urban and rural areas. The aim of the paper is to determine the factors, which reflect the structure and disharmony of health services provision, according to a number of socio-demographic characteristics (age, type of locality, level of education and income, region of residence) in the Republic of Moldova, and to argue ways to reduce these divergences. We recognize the fact that in the research attention was paid to older people in both urban and rural areas. In general, the authors are of the opinion, that the majority of people living in rural areas are less likely to seek medical care than those living in cities, especially the elderly population. Material and methods. Statistical data of WHO, NBS, annual reports of the Ministry of Health and CNAM, (2021-2023), Quality of Life Index by Country Numbeo Report, 2023, Quality of Life Index by Country Numbeo Report, 2023 were used in the context of the research. In analyzing the research we used the method of clustering, comparison, analysis of empirical information at the national level and

concomitantly scientific literature, which allowed us to determine the social differences in the provision of health services. The subject of the research are the users of medical services in urban and rural areas. Results. In the field of public health at present, it has been proved that the health status of the population is directly dependent on the methods of medical service provision, speed, correctness of decision making and professionalism of medical professionals, early detection of serious diseases, compliance with vaccination protocols, etc. The system of public health financing plays a primordial role in the medical social equity of the population, well-being, health level and increase in life expectancy. The population's income is directly proportional to the number of services provided, both by the CNAM and co-payments.

**Keywords:** public health, health services, life expectancy, urban area, rural area, social equity in health services

JEL: H53, I13, I14

**UDC:** 338.46:614+364.32](478)

Introducere. Dimensiunile economice ale asistentei din domeniul sănătătii nu au ca obiect reducerea cheltuielilor pentru asistența medicală. Nu ar trebui să fie o modalitate de a reduce costurile, ci de a găsi modalitățile și metode de valorificare cât mai eficientă a acestora în scopul protejării sănătătii populației. Politica Departamentului European al Organizației Mondiale a Sănătății, pentru următorii 20 de ani, în vederea asigurării condițiilor necesare tuturor oamenilor de a obține și menține cel mai înalt nivel posibil de sănătate, adoptată în mai 1998, "Sănătate pentru toți în secolul 21" are ca scop atingerea potențialului maxim de sănătate pentru toți europenii (OMS, 2024a). La nivel mondial s-a acumulat o importantă serie de experiente în dezvoltarea si perfectionarea unor metode de finantare si organizare a serviciilor de sănătate. De exemplu, statele lider au depus eforturi în mod constant în vederea extinderii nivelului de acoperire a populației cu servicii medicale gratuite, a eficientizării resurselor de finantare și a distributiei fondurilor, a gestionării sistemului de sănătate în vederea sporirii performanței sistemului și a eradicării dublei utilizări a costurilor. În cele din urmă, în ciuda faptului că niciunul dintre sistemele de servicii medicale în vigoare în prezent nu se pot considera universalizate, pentru a asigura optimizarea actualului model de asistență medicală din Republica Moldova, este necesară o analiză a beneficiilor și limitelor acestora, precum și generalizarea experienței anumitor țări cu același model Bismark. Relatia dintre nivelul de satisfactie cu serviciile medicale și statutul socio-economic, socio-cultural au o corelare destul de strânsă. OMS extinde politicile și strategiile nationale de îmbunătătire a calității serviciilor medicale, oferă o puternică fundație pentru ameliorarea calității în cadrul sistemului de sănătate și ar urma să fie în strânsă legătură cu strategia și cu planificarea națională mai extinsă în domeniul sănătății (OMS, 2024a). "Plecând de la nevoia de sănătate a populației definim echitatea în sănătate ca un concept bazat pe dreptatea distributivă ce poate fi văzută ca o reflectare a principiilor drepturilor omului, concept menit să asigure o reglementare a relațiilor sociomedicale prin instituirea unor reguli speciale." (Coroamă, 2015, p.3). Rolul sectorului de sănătate în reducerea inechităților de sănătate este de a asigura accesibilitatea și eficientizarea serviciilor de sănătate pentru grupurile sociale defavorizate și cooperarea cu alte instituții cu scopul de a crea un mediu fizic, social și economic mai sănătos pentru aceste categorii sociale. Îmbunătățirea serviciilor de sănătate are rolul de a atenua impactul lipsurilor financiare care afectează sănătatea grupurilor sociale defavorizate (Coroamă, 2015, p.3).

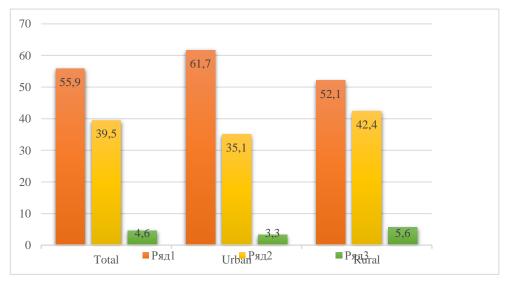


Figura 1. Structura populației după percepția stării de sănătate, pe medii de reședință în R.Moldova, 2021

Sursa: (BNS, 2022)

Studiul "Accesul populației la serviciile de sănătate" (a.2022) (BNS, 2022), efectuat de BNS, în 2021, a demonstrat lacunele inechității serviciilor medicale. Cercetarea a fost realizată pe un eșantion de 964 gospodării, inclusiv 2205 respondenți, din care 417 copii. Rezultatele cercetării sunt reprezentative la nivel național, pentru mediul rural și urban, și regiuni statistice (Nord, Centru, Sud, mun. Chișinău) (BNS, 2022, p.1). Viziunea autorilor relevă faptul, că diferența de prestare a serviciilor medicale între zonele urbane și rurale au consecințe negative în contextul sănătătii (mortalitătii crescute si sperantei de viată reduse).

Datele studiului relevă că, 61,7% din populația urbană și-a apreciat starea de sănătate ca fiind una bună sau foarte bună, comparativ cu cea din mediul rural – 52,1%. Totodată, 5,6% din populația rurală și-a apreciat starea de sănătate ca fiind rea sau foarte rea, pe când în mediul urban 3,0% din locuitori își percep starea de sănătate ca fiind nesatisfăcătoare. Unul din factorii care a influențat percepția stării de sănătate ca fiind nesatisfăcătoare este predominarea populației vârstnice în mediul rural și respectiv, creșterea riscului de incidență a anumitor maladii cronice (CNAM, 2023, p.7).

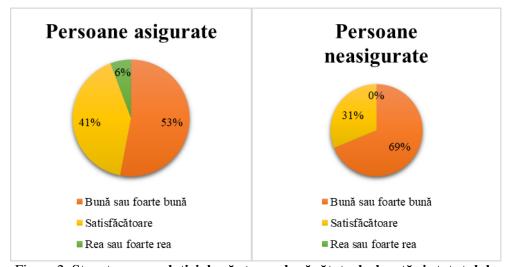


Figura 2. Structura populației după starea de sănătate declarată și statutul de asigurat, 2021

Sursa: (BNS, 2022)

Cheltuielile de sănătate reprezintă valoarea definitivă a consumului de bunuri și servicii de sănătate (adică cheltuielile cu serviciile curente de sănătate), inclusiv, asistența medicală personală (cum ar fi îngrijirea curativă, reabilitarea, îngrijirea pe termen lung, serviciile auxiliare și bunurile medicale) și serviciile colective (prevenirea și serviciile de sănătate publică, precum și administrarea sănătății), dar excluzând cheltuielile pentru investiții. Asistența medicală este finanțată printr-o combinare de măsuri de finanțare, inclusiv, cheltuieli guvernamentale și asigurări de sănătate obligatorii ("guvernamentale/obligatorii"), precum și de asigurările de sănătate voluntare și fondurile private, cum ar fi plățile din buzunar ale gospodăriilor, ONG-uri și societăți private ("voluntare"). Indicatorul este măsurat ca procent din PIB, ca procent din cheltuielile totale de sănătate și în USD pe cap de locuitor (utilizând Paritatea Puterii de Cumpărare (PPC) la nivelul întregii economii). Persoanele din mediul urban apelează mai des la servicii medicale comparativ cu persoanele din mediul rural, precum disponibilitatea asigurării obligatorii de asistență medicală asigură un acces mai mare la servicii de asistență medicală primară (CNAM, 2023, p.12). Disponibilitatea asigurării medicale obligatorii este unul din factorii care determină accesul populației la serviciile medicale pentru toate categoriile de populație. Reieșind din aceasta, se constată că persoanele asigurate au beneficiat într-o proporție mai mare de servicii medicale în ultimele 4 săptămîni, comparativ cu cele neasigurate, cu o diferență de 18,6 puncte procentuale a acestui indicator. "Persoanele cu asigurare medicală, din mediul urban au înregistrat un acces mai ridicat la servicii de asistență medicală primară decât din mediul rural, respectiv (30,8% față de 25,0%)" (BNS, 2022, pp.12-13).

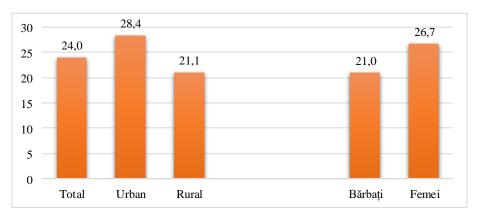


Figura 3. Ponderea persoanelor din R.Moldova care s-au adresat pentru servicii medicale în ultimele săptămâni, pe medii de reședință și sexe, 2021

Sursa: (BNS, 2022)

Conceptele de echitate și inegalitate în sănătate sunt inseparabile în implementarea practică a conceptului de echitate în sănătate urmărindu-se minimalizarea inechităților în sănătate. Aceasta presupune influențarea factorilor sociali, dar și a determinanților medicali ai sănătății considerați de mulți autori ca factori determinanți ai inegalităților în sănătate. Pentru cunoașterea cât mai exactă a situației reale privind inegalitățile și diferențele existente în societate se pune tot mai imperios problema măsurării acestor inegalități folosindu-se parametrii, cum ar fi ratele de mortalitate și sănătate, însă rezultatele obținute până în prezent nu furnizează date exacte realizându-se doar o imagine relativă asupra inegalității în sănătate (Coroamă, 2015, p.3).

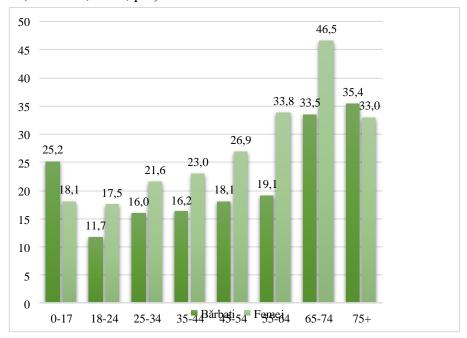


Figura 4. Ponderea persoanelor care s-au adresat pentru servicii medicale în ultimele 4 săptămâni, pe sexe și grupe de vârstă, 2021. Sursa: (BNS, 2022)

Rezultatele Studiului "Accesul populatiei la serviciile de sănătate" (a.2022) (BNS, 2022), efectuat de BNS, denotă faptul că, percepția pozitivă a stării de sănătate a populației se reduce odată cu înaintarea în vârstă: femeile s-au dovedit a fi mai critice față de perceperea stării sale de sănătate comparativ cu bărbații: 51,0% din bărbați consideră că starea de sănătate este bună sau foarte bună, față de 40,7% în cazul femeilor. Circa 53 la sută din persoanele în vârstă de 16 ani și peste, din mediul urban își apreciază starea de sănătate ca fiind bună sau foarte bună, comparativ cu 33 la sută din persoanele de aceeasi vârstă din mediul rural. Autorii menționează, asigurările de sănătate constituie un mecanism de relații cu caracter economic care, vizează sănătatea populației, ce cuprinde structura interacțiunii între toate categoriile de subjecti ai asigurărilor de sănătate pe principiul autofinantării, al autoreglementării, al auto-suficienței și controlului în cadrul sistemului, constituirea de fonduri de asigurări medicale și utilizarea acestora pentru acoperirea prejudiciilor de sănătate a cetățenilor. "Studiul sociologic privind evaluarea satisfacției beneficiarilor de sistemul AOAM, nivelul de așteptări și impact ca rezultat al acțiunilor îndreptate spre creșterea satisfacției beneficiarilor sistemului AOAM, a fost implementat în cadrul proiectului "Echitate în sănătate prin responsabilizare socială", finanțat de Guvernul Elveției, care a avut ca scop să consolideze echitatea în sănătate, transparența și responsabilizarea socială" (CNAM, 2023, p.7). În perioada 2020-2021, Republica Moldova a cheltuit în mediu aproximativ 12% din PIB-ul său pe sănătate (aproximativ 5,6% din sursele publice), ceea ce a fost mai mult ca media pentru regiunea Europeană OMS (8,3%). Iar în perioada 2021-2022 a cheltuit în mediu aproximativ 12,5% din PIB-ul său pe sănătate, 2022-2023 a cheltuit 11,8% din PIB. Pe parcursul timpului, cheltuielile pentru sănătate în dolari SUA pe cap de locuitor la PPP au fluctuat. Autorii sunt de părerea că echitatea medicală, trebuie analizată în baza Sperantei Medii de Viată la nastere (SMV). Cu cât mai mult învestim în sănătatea publică, cu atât serviciile medicale devin mai performante, în contextul dezvoltării Progresului Tehnico-Stiintific. Prelevările din PIB joacă un rol primordial, în calitatea serviciilor medicale, si nu în ultimul rând echitatea medicală. Statul este necesar presteze servicii medicale gratis unor pături a populației vulnerabile.

Tabelul 1. Investițiile din PIB ale unor țări din UE-27 în sănătatea publică (inclusiv și țărilor la etapa preaderării - Ucraina, Moldova, Muntenegru), 2022

	Ratingul țărilor după		Invest	SMV	
	valoa	rea PIB, \$	sănătatea		la naștere
Ţara			publică		
	Total	PIB per	PIB,	% din	Ani
	PIB,	capita,	mld. \$	PIB	
	mld. \$	mii \$			
1. Italia	2010,0	32,9	180,9	9,0	82,59
2. Polonia	688,0	16,7	46,91	6,7	78,76
3. România	301,3	12,2	19,58	6,5	75,76
4. Cehia	291,0	20,5	26,48	9,1	79,73

5. Portugalia	252,0	22,2	21.42	8,5	81,49
6. Grecia	219,0	20,7	18,83	8,6	81,3
7. Ungaria	179,0	16,3	11,99	6,7	77,20
8. Ucraina	160,0	2,3	11,11	6,9	68,56
9. Bulgaria	89,0	9,5	7,12	8,0	75,57
10. Croația	71,1	16,5	4,9	6,9	77,22
11. Lituania	70,3	18,4	5,28	6,9	75,91
12. Serbia	63,5	7,4	4.45	7,0	74,17
13. Letonia	41,2	16,9	3,62	7,5	75,75
14. Estonia	38,1	21,2	2,63	6,9	75,57
15. Albania	18,9	51,5	1,68	8,9	79,47
16. R. Moldova	14,4	3,5	1, 17	8,8	72,44
17. Muntenegru	6,1	7,9	0,39	6,4	77,22

Sursă: elaborat în baza (Trading Economics, 2024) (Country Economy, 2024) (World Population Review, 2024)

În baza datelor reflectate, autorii menționează că cu cât prelevările din PIB sunt mai ridicate, cu atât speranța medie de viață la naștere este mai lungă. Cele mai joase valori (până la 6,9%) au semnat: Republica Moldova, Croația, Polonia, România, Lituania, Muntenegru, Estonia, Ucraina, etc.

Echitatea acordării serviciilor medicale constă, în primul rând, în atitudinea medicului față de pacient, precum este menționat în Jurământul lui Hipocrates (300 și ceva ani p.e.n.), care a menționat că medicul duce lupta cu boala pacientului utilizând toate posibilele instrumente și metode de tratament, indiferent de statut, vârstă, sex, etnie, și alți factori ai bolnavilor.

Alte componente ale echității acordării serviciilor sunt: transparența și discuțiile sincere cu pacientul pe marginea posibilelor metode de tratament, așteptările și posibilele consecințe. Echitatea în acordarea de servicii medicale poate fi exprimată și în modalitatea de prestare a serviciilor farmaceutice. De exemplu: preparatul Concor, are un preț mai ridicat comparativ cu preparatele analoge cardiace, care poate fi cumpărat de pacienții cu un venit mai înalt; pentru persoanele cu venituri medii se propun medicamente analoge mai ieftine: Bisoprolol, Niperten, Bisagama, etc. (la diferiți producători prețurile sunt diferite). Politica de prestări farmaceutice dictează propunerea de vânzare a celui mai scump preparat în primul rând, apoi se propun cele mai ieftine preparate, argumentând că nu prea sunt de calitate, ceea ce nu întotdeauna corespunde realității. De aici și provine dilema echității, farmacistul vine cu propunerea medicamentelor la dorința pacientului, fiecărui după buzunar, însă calitatea lasă de dorit. Sunt și cazuri, când pacientul selectează preparate mai ieftine din cauza insuficienței financiare și, astfel, el singur își asigura echitatea serviciului acordat.

În contextul Proiectului "Echitate în sănătate prin responsabilizare socială" este implementat de Crucea Roșie din Elveția în parteneriat cu AO HOMECARE și AO CASMED și a fost finanțat de Agenția Elvețiană pentru Dezvoltare și

Cooperare. Proiectul a fost componentă a proiectului Băncii Mondiale "Modernizarea sectorului sănătății în Republica Moldova" și care a fost implementat în perioada Mai 2019-Aprilie 2023 (World Population Review, 2024).

Obiectivul 3 prevedea: Populația Republicii Moldova este protejată în mod eficient împotriva sărăciei condiționate de cheltuielile pentru sănătate (World Population Review, 2024). Autorii sunt de opinia că acest obiectiv a fost implementat la circa 75%, mai ales după 1.04.24, când a fost întrodus mecanismul de E-rețetă, situația a fost ameliorată, creând noi dificultăți. Populația de vârsta a treia nu a fost gata să facă față noilor elemente a prestării digitalizate a serviciilor medicale. La ziua de astăzi se cere ridicarea culturii digitale la populația de vârsta a treia, ea este cea mai defavorizată în acest sens, atât din zona urbană, cat și cea rurală.

Studiul sociologic efectuat în fiecare an, privind evaluarea satisfacției beneficiarilor de sistemul AOAM, nivelul de așteptări și satisfacției persoanelor, efectuat de CNAM, relevă următoarele date din Tabelul 2. Dinamica satisfacției asiguraților de accesul la serviciile de sănătate este în permanentă creștere în mediu cu 1,3%, însă nu a trecut pragul de valoarea medie. Autorii menționează că la acest capitol mai este de lucrat, pentru reziliența adecvată. La capitolul Satisfactia respondentilor asigurați de accesul la serviciile de sănătate, pragul de 51% a fost ajustat, mărindu-se cu 3,2% în mediu, reflectând o creștere de calitate.

Tabelul 2. Reflectarea ponderii satisfacției persoanelor asigurate cu AOAM, %, 2015-2022

,									
Indicatori	Baza	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Satisfacția									
respondenților	35,4	36,4	37,4	38,4	39,4	40,5	40,1	41,4	
asigurați de									
accesul la									
serviciile de									
sănătate									
Satisfacția									
respondenților	56,0	57,1	58,3	59,1	60,0	59,0	58,3	58,1	
asigurați de									
calitatea									
serviciilor de									
sănătate									
Nu răspund	8,6	6,5	4,3	2,5	0,6	0,5	1,6	0,5	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

Sursa: (CNAM, 2023).

În funcție de sexul respondenților, nu s-au înregistrat diferențe semnificative. Ponderea bărbaților care au apelat la serviciile medicului de familie a constituit 65,3% față de 63,2% la femei. Totodată, la serviciile medicului specialist au apelat 22,6% femei față de 20,3% bărbați. Ponderea persoanelor care apelează la serviciile medicului specialist se majorează odată cu creșterea bunăstării gospodăriei. Mai

mult de jumătate din persoanele care au apelat pentru servicii medicale au beneficiat de acestea la Centrul de sănătate, iar 39 la sută - în cadrul oficiului medicului de familie (BNS, 2022, pp.14 -16).

La contextul macroeconomic, la general rămâne una din constrângerile principale ale țării de a atrage (mai) multe resurse în sănătate. Mai este nevoie de asistentă continuă prin fonduri externe, în special pentru noile investiții capitale. Investițiile în capacitatea de implementare și consolidarea instituțională trebuie să devină un aspect critic al dezvoltării politicii de sănătate. Resursele umane calificate, instituțiile medicale eficiente și funcționale, politicile, legile și strategiile de sustinere formează baza pentru planificarea, implementarea si revizuirea politicii naționale și Strategiei naționale în domeniul sănătății. Investițiile în capacitatea de implementare presupune nu numai instruirea persoanelor, dar o și mai frecventă implicare a instituțiilor și societății. Asistența în domeniul sănătății reprezintă una dintre sferele principale de activitate ale oricărui stat care își propune să asigure sănătatea populației și să ofere asistență medicală coerentă. Cu toate acestea, evaluarea eficacității asistenței medicale ar trebui să acopere nu doar caracteristicile specifice ale asistentei medicale, ci si factorii sociali si economici care contribuie la bunăstarea socială globală. Autorii menționează, că aceasta înseamnă că un sistem de sănătate eficient nu poate fi judecat doar pe baza tratamentelor și interventiilor medicale, ci trebuie să fie evaluat și în contextul impactului său asupra:

- ➤ Inegalităților sociale. Asistența medicală trebuie să contribuie la reducerea disparităților sociale, asigurând acces egal pentru toate grupurile demografice și economice.
- Dezvoltării economice. Un sistem de sănătate robust poate contribui la o forță de muncă mai sănătoasă și mai productivă, ceea ce, la rândul său, susține creșterea economică și dezvoltarea sustenabilă.
- ➤ Calității vieții. Evaluarea trebuie să includă și modul în care asistența medicală influențează bunăstarea generală a indivizilor, inclusiv aspecte legate de sănătatea mentală, satisfacția față de viață și incluziunea socială.
- ➤ Sustenabilității și rezilienței sistemului de sănătate. Este esențial ca sistemul de sănătate să fie capabil să facă față crizelor și provocărilor viitoare, menținând în același timp un nivel ridicat de calitate a serviciilor oferite.

Integrarea acestor factori în evaluarea eficacității asistenței medicale permite o înțelegere mai cuprinzătoare a modului în care sistemul de sănătate contribuie la bunăstarea socială și economică a populației. Autorii menționează că eficacitatea serviciilor de sănătate din punct de vedere social, implică asigurarea, că sistemul poate răspunde nevoilor și aspirațiilor diferitelor categorii sociale. Acest obiectiv presupune:

- Disponibilitatea serviciilor de sănătate. Toate segmentele populației după vârsta trebuie să aibă acces la serviciile de sănătate necesare, indiferent de locație, statut socio-economic sau alte bariere posibile.
- Repartizarea echitabilă a resurselor. Resursele sistemului de sănătate (financiare, umane, materiale) trebuie să fie distribuite într-un mod care să

- asigure accesul echitabil pentru toți cetățenii, evitând inechitățile și discriminările.
- Considerarea aspectelor culturale și sociale. Serviciile de sănătate trebuie să
  fie adaptate la diversitatea culturală și socială a consumatorilor, respectând
  valorile, credințele și practicile acestora. Acest lucru este esențial pentru a
  asigura că intervențiile medicale sunt acceptate și utilizate eficient de toate
  grupurile din societate.

Aceste componente sunt esențiale pentru a crea un sistem de sănătate nu prin tratarea bolilor, ci si promovarea bunăstarii si echitătii sociale. Eficiența din punct de vedere medical, social și economic a asistenței medicale este interconectată și este importantă, inclusiv, pentru sănătatea populației și dezvoltarea durabilă a societății. O provocare esențială pentru sistemul de sănătate în contemporaneitate o constituie stabilirea unui echilibru între aceste elemente. În tările contemporane, aspectele legate de sănătate devin din ce în ce mai acute și mai multiple. Creșterea demografică, sporirea speranței de viață, răspândirea epidemiilor de boli infecțioase și cronice și schimbările în modul de viată al cetătenilor, constituie o adevărată provocare pentru actualele sisteme de sănătate. În paralel, dimensiunile sociale și economice ale serviciilor medicale devin din ce în ce mai relevante, întrucât sănătatea unei natiuni are un impact direct în stabilitatea socială și dezvoltarea pe plan economic. Extinderea resurselor financiare pentru sănătate prin atragerea de resurse extrabugetare reprezintă o strategie importantă pentru îmbunătățirea sistemului de sănătate. Acest lucru poate include atragerea de investiții private în infrastructura medicală, parteneriate public-private pentru furnizarea de servicii de sănătate, sau alte inițiative care să sporească finanțarea și sustenabilitatea sectorului sănătății. Autorii menționează că descentralizarea gestionării activității curative și de profilaxie prin transferul de responsabilități către unitățile teritoriale poate contribui la o mai bună gestionare a resurselor și la adaptarea serviciilor de sănătate la nevoile locale. Această abordare poate îmbunătăți accesul la servicii medicale și poate spori eficienta sistemului de sănătate.

Majorarea eficacității utilizării obiectivelor segmentului socio-medical, implică optimizarea utilizării resurselor disponibile în sistemul de sănătate. Aceasta poate include modernizarea infrastructurii medicale, utilizarea tehnologiilor medicale avansate și îmbunătățirea proceselor de gestionare a stocurilor și a resurselor umane.

Crearea premiselor pentru trecerea la piața serviciilor medicale, în timp ce se asigură accesul gratuit pentru păturile vulnerabile ale societății, reprezintă un echilibru important între eficiența sistemului de sănătate și asigurarea dreptului la sănătate pentru toți cetățenii în contextul echității. Acest lucru poate fi realizat prin implementarea unor mecanisme de asigurare medicală obligatorie, precum și prin stabilirea unor standarde și reglementări care să garanteze accesul egal la serviciile de sănătate. Intensificarea cerințelor față de responsabilitatea personalului din instituțiile medicale pentru rezultatele activității din punct de vedere social și economic este crucială pentru asigurarea calității și eficienței serviciilor de sănătate. Aceasta poate implica implementarea unor sisteme de evaluare a performanței și a unor mecanisme de responsabilizare a personalului medical,

precum și dezvoltarea unor programe de formare și dezvoltare profesională continuă.

Concluzii și recomandări: Rolul serviciilor medicale, constă în acțiunea de ajutorare la o sănătate mai bună, ca rezultantă a sustenabilității, prin mărirea SMV și CV.

Cumulând elementele cercetării, se poate conchide, că cel mai mare nivel de satisfacție cu privire la serviciile medicale este observat în cadrul populație de vârstă tânără și medie. Nivelul cel mai crescut de satisfacție cu serviciile medicale este remarcat în cadrul populației de vârstă tânără și mijlocie, iar în rândul femeilor acest indicator este mult mai mare decât al bărbaților.

Recunoscând natura complexă a sănătății si reieșind din definiția autorilor, în care individul este tratat ca sistem complex fizic, mental și social-economic, este logic să argumentăm că fizicul este baza stării mentale a individului, iar bunăstarea socială caracterizează rezultanta ambilor factori.

În conceptul nou de sănătate publică ca categorie economică, un element esențial este natura interacțiunii dintre individ și comunitatea locală. Adesea, întrun astfel de context, un indicator al sănătății publice intră oportunitățile pe care le oferă în realizarea umană funcțiile lor biopsihosociale, iar sănătatea publică le oferă condiții optime, adecvate ale mediului social, definind dezvoltarea armonioasă a individului în contextul nevoilor umane.

Profilul socio-demografic și epidemiologic la schimbare din Republica Moldova, implică o reconfigurare a serviciilor spitalicești. Sunt necesare noi cerințe pentru a asista populația în vârstă și pacienții ce suferă de boli cronice, privind echitatatea socială. Mai există și necesitatea vizibilă de diferențiere dintre tratamentul acut și pe termen lung în contextul conexiunii.

Accesul la serviciile medicale prevede dezmembrarea inechității sociale, creșterea sustenabilității privind speranța de viață sănătoasă, accesibilitatea la o forță de muncă capabilă spre performanțe în sistemul de sănătate.

Diferențele în evaluările făcute de reprezentanții grupelor socio-demografice cu privire la acoperirea serviciilor medicale au dovedit, că informarea populației, monitorizarea și auditul prestărilor în permanență, aduc la o sustenabilitate a stării de sănătate în țară, asigurând echitatea social medicală și creșterea speranței de viață. Digitalizarea este un element-cheie în procesul de reducere a lacunelor în efectuarea managementului serviciilor medicale. Grație Aderării la UE, sunt planificate diverse modificări în Acțiunile și Strategiile de dezvoltare a țării prin readucerea legislației la obiectivele trasate și creșterea operativității și fezabilității ocrotirii sănătății. Serviciile medicale de calitate influențează SMV, care este un rezultat al eforturilor depuse de societate și cetățean, iar în baza SMV se poate de determinat valorile relevante ai indicatorilor mortalității la diferite vârste ale cetățenilor.

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# CORELAȚIA DINTRE OFERTA EDUCAȚIONALĂ ȘI CEREREA DE COMPETENȚE PE DOMENIUL TEHNOLOGIILOR INFORMAȚIEI ȘI COMUNICAȚIEI

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Abstract. The rapid development of digital technologies has increased the demand for workforce with advanced ICT skills. The Republic of Moldova aspires to join the European Union and align with the trends of digitalization, which will expand the opportunities for the free movement of human capital. In this context, increasing the educational offer in ICT is one of the priorities of the authorities. On the other hand, six out of ten employers in Moldova are facing a shortage of qualified staff, and the ICT sector is in the greatest need of workforce, with plans to create 775 new jobs in this field. The purpose of this study was to determine the correlation between the educational offer and the demand for ICT skills in the Republic of Moldova. The research used the method of dynamic analysis of statistical indicators on education, but also the analysis of programs, studies and forecasts on skills, developed by the responsible authorities in the country. The empirical analysis carried out was based on the data of the National Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova, as well as on the reports of international organizations. As a result, it was established that in the labor market of our country there is a shortage of specialists in the field of ICT, the demand exceeding the supply of skills in this field. The main problems that make it difficult to align skills to the demands of the labor market in our country are related to the educational system that does not meet the demand on the labor market and the weak strategic collaboration between the key actors involved in the process.

Keywords: labor market, educational offer, skills, ICT

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Introducere. Dezvoltarea vertiginoasă a tehnologiilor digitale din ultimii ani contribuie la sporirea cererii de forță de muncă cu competențe aprofundate în domeniul tehnologiilor informației și comunicației (TIC) care să poată gestiona aceste procese in evoluție. Republica Moldova tinde să adere la Uniunea Europeană și să se alinieze tendințelor de dezvoltare durabilă, ceea ce presupune o orientare vădită spre digitalizare. Iar odată cu aderarea se vor lărgi și oportunitățile de circulație liberă a capitalului uman. În acest sens, dezvoltarea competențelor pe domeniul TIC în țara noastră este foarte importantă.

Relația dintre educație și forța de muncă a fost și este studiată atât la nivel internațional, cât și la nivelul Republicii Moldova. Conform Strategiei Naționale de Dezvoltare "Moldova Europeană 2030" (SND, 2024), ponderea tinerilor care nu sunt încadrați în educație, angajare sau formare profesională (NEET) constituie 26,4%, ceea ce depășește media europeană de 2 ori. Unul din factorii principali care conduc la acest fenomen este abandonul școlar în mediul rural. În consecință, ponderea mare a tinerilor NEET, inevitabil, influențează negativ oferta forței de muncă. Situația este și mai complicată în domeniul educației adulților prin cursuri de dezvoltare profesională și personală. Studiile în arii precum tehnologiile informației și comunicației nu sunt accesibile financiar sau geografic. În plus, sistemul de acreditare pe astfel de programe de formare continuă este anevoios și inaccesibil furnizorilor de servicii din regiunile rurale (SND, 2024).

Conform ultimelor date șase din zece angajatori din Republica Moldova se confruntă cu un deficit de forță de muncă. Principalele cauze a deficitului forței de muncă invocate de angajatori sunt: insuficiența personalului calificat cu experiență, numărul redus de solicitanți și imposibilitatea de a oferi un salariu adecvat. Același studiu demonstrează că în domeniul TIC este cea mai mare solicitare de forță de muncă. Angajatorii din Republica Moldova au planificat investiții în crearea a cca 775 locurilor noi de muncă în domeniul TIC, semnificativ mai mult decât în alte domenii (ANOFM, 2023).

Recenzia literaturii. Cererea ridicată de competențe în domeniu TIC a provocat interesul de cercetare a ofertei educaționale pe aceste specializări. Legătura dintre aceste două dimensiuni este incontestabil sustinută nu doar de angajatori pe piața muncii, dar și în numeroase studii în literatura științifică. Sara Flisi și colegii săi (Flisi et al. 2017) consideră că dificultatea de a găși pe piata muncii persoane potrivite pentru locurile de muncă vacante este cauzată de factori macroeconomici. Printre aceștia autorii menționează schimbările socio-economice, cum ar fi concurenta globală sporită, ajustările tehnologice bazate pe competente, un nivel crescut de educație al forței de muncă și îmbătrânirea populației. Situația de pe piața muncii generează fenomenul de nepotrivire ocupațională, caracterizat prin discrepanta dintre aptitudinile si competentele lucrătorilor si cerintele posturilor disponibile. Deși unele teorii indică faptul că nepotrivirea ocupațională este un fenomen temporar sau individual, dovezile empirice arată că nepotrivirea ocupațională în Europa este omniprezentă (Cedefop, 2010), larg răspândită și persistentă. Această idee este sustinută și în raportul Comisiei Europene (Comisia Europeană, 2016). În literatura științifică se regăsesc studii care cercetează consecintele neadecvării cererii cu oferta de muncă. Astfel, este mentionat efectul negativ al acestui fenomen dat de schimbarea locului de muncă într-un domeniu necorespunzător celui de studii. În consecință scade productivitatea muncii (Béduwé & Giret, 2011) și salariile, iar odată cu aceasta se reduce satisfacția profesională (Kupets, 2015). Din studiile analizate deducem că o corelare mai eficientă între abilitătile lucrătorilor si cerintele locurilor de muncă este foarte importantă nu doar pentru reducerea șomajului și creșterea competitivității economiilor, dar și implicit pentru sporirea bunăstării personale și creșterea productivității, toate acestea contribuind la dezvoltarea economică.

Metodologia cercetării. Aria de cercetare, în prezentul articol, cuprinde cazul Republicii Moldova. Pentru stabilirea divergențelor dintre nivelul de competentă și ocupare a fortei de muncă a fost folosită analiza sistemului educational din Republica Moldova în concordantă cu Cadrul European al Calificărilor. Iar pentru analiza cererii de forță de muncă în domeniul TIC au fost utilizate rapoartele Agenției Naționale pentru Ocuparea Forței de Muncă. Cercetarea s-a bazat pe metode de analiză în dinamică a indicatorilor statistici privind învățământul, dar și pe analiza programelor, studiilor și prognozelor privind competențele, elaborate de autoritățile responsabile din țară. Totodată, au fost analizate articole stiințifice și rapoarte ale organizațiilor internaționale privind corelatia dintre oferta si cererea de competente pe piata muncii, ceea ce a permis consecintelor si a soluțiilor pentru diminuarea neconcordantei dintre aceste două dimensiuni economice. Analiza empirică efectuată s-a bazat pe datele Biroului National de Statistică și a Ministerului Educației și Cercetării din Republica Moldova. Totodată, pentru comparație au fost folosite date din România lansate prin studiile Ministerului Muncii și Justiției Sociale.

**Rezultate principale**. În cadrul prezentei lucrări a fost efectuată o *analiză a sistemului educațional* din Republica Moldova, care a arătat că învățământul este organizat pe niveluri și cicluri, în conformitate cu Clasificarea Internațională Standard a Educației (ISCED-2011):

- a) nivelul 0 educația timpurie:
  - educația antepreșcolară;
  - învățământul preșcolar;
- b) nivelul 1 învățământul primar;
- c) nivelul 2- învățământul secundar, ciclul I: învățământul gimnazial;
- d) nivelul 3:
  - învățământul secundar, ciclul II: învățământul liceal;
  - învățământul profesional tehnic secundar;
- e) nivelul 4 învățământul profesional tehnic postsecundar;
- f) nivelul 5 învățământul profesional tehnic postsecundar nonterțiar;
- g) nivelul 6 învățământul superior, ciclul I: învățământ superior de licență;
- h) nivelul 7 învățământul superior, ciclul II: învățământ superior de master;
- i) nivelul 8 învățământul superior, ciclul III: învățământ superior de doctorat.

Învățământul obligatoriu începe cu grupa pregătitoare din învățământul preșcolar și se finalizează cu învățământul gimnazial. Sistemul unificat care clasifică calificările din Republica Moldova pe niveluri, în baza rezultatelor învățării, se numește Cadrul Național al Calificărilor (CNCRM) și el corespunde Cadrului European al Calificărilor (EQF).

La etapa actuală, în Republica Moldova există trei tipuri principale de furnizori de educație și formare profesională, care includ un total de 109 de instituții de învățământ (Tabelul 1). În anul 2023, rețeaua instituțiilor de învățământ profesional tehnic a fost alcătuită din 88 de instituții, dintre care: 13 centre de excelență; 37 de colegii și 38 de școli profesionale. Numărul total de elevi din aceste instituții constituie 46,1 mii de persoane, dintre care 27,1 mii – cu finanțare de la buetul de stat. Procesul educațional fiind asigurat de 3,6 mii cadre didactice (MEC, 2023).

Tabelul 1. Indicatori statistici privind învățământul profesional în Republica Moldova

	Anii de studii							
	20	21/22	202	22/23	2023/24			
Tipul instituțiilor	total	inclusiv private	total	inclusiv private	total	inclusiv private		
Instituții de învățământ								
profesional tehnic secundar	44	1	43	-	40	-		
Instituții de învățământ								
profesional tehnic post								
secundar	47	7	47	7	48	8		
Instituții de învățământ								
superior	24	8	21	8	21	8		
Total	115	15	111	15	109	16		

Sursa: elaborat de autor în baza datelor Biroului Național de Statistică, statistica.gov.md

În prezent, instituțiile de educație și formare profesională din Moldova, în special centrele de excelență, au un potențial bun și sunt mai orientate spre diseminarea tehnologiei decât universitățile. Școlile profesionale și centrele de excelență sunt mai orientate pe învățarea prin practică și au un accent educațional mai progresiv, fiind într-o cooperare cu IMM-urile și potențialii angajatori. Cu toate acestea, sistemul de învățământ, în special cel profesional tehnic, nu are impuls pentru inovare, creștere și competitivitate. Ca urmare, acesta este limitat doar la furnizarea de programe de educație formală și nu este considerat a fi la egalitate cu învățământul superior în sistemele regionale de inovare.

În ceea ce privește domeniul ales de interes științific, și anume *oferta educațională în domeniul TIC*, menționăm următoarele aspecte. Educația și formarea profesională în domeniul tehnologiilor informaționale și al comunicaților este asigurată în Republica Moldova de universități, colegii, școli profesionale și centre de excelență.

**Învățământ superior.** Actualmente, în Republica Moldova există 13 institutii publice de învătământ superior și 8 private.

Conform Planului de admitere pe domenii generale de studiu, cu finanțare de la bugetul de stat, la studii superioare de licență (ciclul I) și studii superioare integrate pentru anul de studii 2024-2025 (Guvernul RM, 2024), pentru domeniul

TIC au fost oferite 734 de locuri din 5307. Din analiza Planului menționat observăm că domeniul TIC este pe locul II în lista priorităților statului privind formarea cadrelor de înaltă calificare, pe locul I fiind științele educației (1280 locuri), urmate de inginerie și activități inginerești (692 locuri).

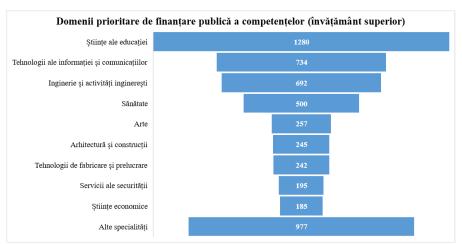


Figura 1. Domenii prioritare de finanțare publică a competențelor pentru anul de studii 2024-2025 (învățământ superior)

Sursa: elaborat de autor în baza Hotărârii Guvernului RM nr.439/2024

Învățământ profesional tehnic. Distribuția locurilor la programe de formare profesională tehnică postsecundară și postsecundară nonterțiară (centre de excelență și colegii publice subordonate Ministerului Educației și Cercetării, precum și cele private) pentru anul de studii 2024-2025 este reglementată de MEC (2024).

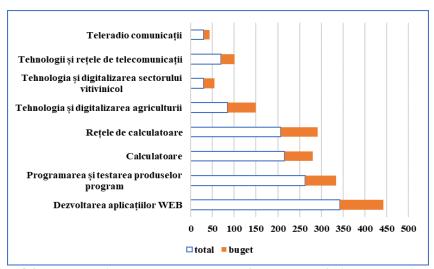


Figura 2. Oferta educațională la programe de formare profesională tehnică pentru anul de studii 2024-2025

Sursa: elaborat de autor în baza datelor Ministerului Educației al Republicii Moldova

Admiterea la studii se face în II tururi, astfel încât locurile nesuplinite din I tur pot fi accesate de studenți în turul II. Din analiza datelor Ministerului Educației și Cercetării, observăm că chiar și specialitățile din domeniul TIC rămân nesolicitate după I tur de admitere.

În ultimii ani, în domeniul TIC, numărul absolvenților învățământului profesional tehnic postsecundar este în creștere. Astfel, în perioada 2017-2022, numărul specialiștilor formați în cadrul școlilor profesionale, a colegiilor și a centrelor de excelență a crescut cu cca 30%. În cadrul instituțiilor de învățământ superior sunt pregătiți în jur de 700 specialiști în domeniul TIC anual (Tabelul 2).

Tabelul 2. Numărul absolvenților în domeniul TIC

Domeniul	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Învățământ profesional tehnic	503	538	579	577	604	749	706
postsecundar	303	336	319	311	004	749	700
Învățământ superior,							
Ciclul I	525	604	566	608	575	614	720
Ciclul II	198	124	206	206	178	226	165

Sursa: elaborat de autor în baza datelor Biroului Național de Statistică

Există și alte forme de instruire în domeniul TIC, care sunt oferite de angajatori sau unele organizații comerciale, care oferă cursuri de formare profesională contra plată. Absolvirea acestor cursuri, cu durată de câteva luni, este suficientă pentru a obține un post de muncă în domeniul tehnologiilor informaționale. Nu există informații cuprinzătoare și detaliate cu privire la amploarea și numărul ofertelor în acest domeniu, fiind cunoscute doar câteva instituții (școli) care oferă asemenea servicii în țară. Acest tip de instruire a apărut drept urmare a cererii angajatorilor. Candidații care aplicau la posturi vacante în domeniul TIC nu aveau cunoștințe și abilități suficiente dobândite în timpul studiilor pentru a fi încadrați în echipe de lucru. Astfel, a apărut necesitatea de a instrui potențialii angajați în cadrul unor școli și centre educaționale private, create nemijlocit pe domenii de interes a angajatorilor.

De menționat că Agenția Națională pentru Ocuparea Forței de Muncă a Republicii Moldova elaborează anual Prognoza pieței muncii (ANOFM, 2023) pe termen scurt, și are ca scop anticiparea cerințelor pieței forței de muncă și reducerea decalajului dintre pregătirea oferită de instituțiile de învățământ și necesitățile agenților economici.

Pentru a realiza obiectivele stabilite în cadrul prezentei cercetări a fost analizată cererea de competențe pe piața muncii din Republica Moldova. Astfel, a fost stabilit că potențialii solicitanți ai competențelor sunt întreprinderile care în proporție de 98,4% sunt reprezentate de IMM. Pe domenii de activitate, angajatorii sunt repartizați în felul următor (Tabelul 3):

Tabelul 3. Structura cererii de angajare, pentru anul 2022

Activități economice	Numărul de ÎMM, mii unități	Nr. mediu de personal, mii persoane
Total ÎMM	59,4	314,9
Agricultura, silvicultura și pescuit	5,0	34,6
Industria prelucrătoare	4,8	43,1
Producția și furnizarea de energie electrică și termică, gaze, apă caldă și aer condiționat	0,2	0,6
Distribuția apei; salubritate, gestionarea deșeurilor, activități de decontaminare	0,5	5,6
Construcții	3,7	23,0
Comerț cu ridicata și cu amănuntul; întreținerea și repararea autvehiculelor și a motocicletelor	20,7	78,3
Transport și depozitare	3,2	23,5
Activități de cazare și alimentație publică	2,2	12,5
Informații și comunicații	2,9	15,3
Tranzacții imobiliare	4,0	13,2
Activități profesionale, științifice și tehnice	5,3	13,4
Alte activități	7,0	51,8

Sursa: elaborat de autor în baza datelor Biroului Național de Statistică

Din datele statistice prezentate, observăm că în domeniul TIC există 2900 întreprinderi mici și mijlocii, cu un număr de 15300 de angajați. Aceasta demonstrează că pe piața muncii din Republica Moldova există o cerere semnificativă de specialiști cu competențe în domeniul informației și comunicațiilor ceea ce amplifică necesitatea sporirii calității ofertei educaționale în acest domeniu.

Concluzii. Oferta forței de muncă este afectată în prezent de dificultatea în anticiparea competentelor necesare pe piata muncii. Într-un context în care piata muncii evoluează rapid, influențată de schimbările tehnologice și economice, este importantă previzionarea competentelor care trebuie cultivate. În același timp, relevanța limitată a competențelor oferite de sistemele de educatie și formare profesională este amplificată de implicarea redusă a partenerilor sociali în procesul de elaborare a politicilor. Prin urmare, cercetările efectuate în cadrul prezentei lucrări denotă că principalele probleme care fac dificilă alinierea competențelor la cerințele pieței muncii în țara noastră țin de sistemul educațional care nu răspunde la cererea pe piața muncii și colaborarea strategică slabă între actorii cheie. Există un decalaj mare între necesitătile pietei muncii și competentele produse de sistemul educațional. Printre cauzele acestui decalaj se numără programele educaționale învechite și specialiștii insuficient pregătiți, care nu dispun de cunostinte actualizate în domeniile relevante. Pe de altă parte, companiile colaborează insuficient cu instituțiile de învățământ în vederea identificării lacunelor de competente și facilitarea procesului educațional.

În concluzie, putem afirma că oferta educațională și cererea de competențe pe domeniul tehnologiilor informației și comunicației în Republica Moldova sunt slab corelate. Cauzele și soluțiile necesare pentru sporirea acestei corelații reprezintă un domeniu de interes stiintific pentru cercetările ulterioare.

**Notă.** Articolul a fost elaborat în cadrul Proiectului 23.70105.0807.10T pentru Tineri Cercetători "Elaborarea modelelor de muncă noi în contextul efectelor post-pandemice și consolidarea competențelor pe profesii și domenii de specializare inteligentă în Republica Moldova".

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### REFLECTAREA STATISTICĂ A INFRACȚIUNILOR ELECTORALE ÎN PERIOADA 2013-2023: REPUBLICA MOLDOVA VERSUS ROMÂNIA

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Abstract. Statistical reflection of electoral crimes is essential for understanding and improving the electoral process in a democracy. In the Republic of Moldova, the monitoring and analysis of electoral crimes in the period 2013-2023 provides a clear picture of the integrity of the elections and the effectiveness of measures to prevent and combat electoral fraud. Also, in the Republic of Moldova, monitoring and reporting these crimes helps to improve the electoral system and prevent fraud. In this scientific endeavor we will analyze the types of electoral crimes, the ways of collecting and analyzing statistical data, and the impact of these crimes on the democratic process. Starting in 2013, the Republic of Moldova witnessed critical parliamentary and presidential elections, each of which had a considerable impact on the political direction of the country. In this context, the transparency and fairness of the electoral process were under the close scrutiny of the international community and local observers. Electoral fraud continued to be a constant concern, manifesting itself in multiple forms such as multiple voting, falsification of results and the use of fake ballots. In every election cycle, there have been reported cases of vote manipulation, both urban and rural, with these practices undermining citizens' confidence in the democratic process.

**Keywords:** rule of law, transparency, fairness, electoral process, analytical information, electoral fraud, multiple voting

**JEL:** K10, K16

*UDC:343.3/.4(478:498)* 

Introducere. Începând cu anul 2013, Republica Moldova a continuat să se confrunte cu diverse provocări în organizarea alegerilor libere și corecte. Frauda electorală a fost una dintre cele mai frecvente infracțiuni, manifestându-se prin vot multiplu, falsificarea buletinelor de vot și manipularea rezultatelor electorale. De asemenea, cumpărarea de voturi a rămas o problemă persistentă, mulți alegători fiind tentați de ofertele materiale sau financiare pentru a-și schimba opțiunea de vot. Intimidarea alegătorilor, o altă infracțiune comună, a implicat presiuni și amenințări, afectând astfel libertatea de exprimare a cetățenilor. Colectarea datelor privind infracțiunile electorale în această perioadă a fost realizată prin intermediul mai multor instituții și organizații. Comisia Electorală Centrală a jucat un rol important în documentarea și raportarea acestor infracțiuni. Ministerul Afacerilor Interne a contribuit prin investigarea și sancționarea infracțiunilor raportate. De

asemenea, organizațiile non-guvernamentale, cum ar fi Promo-LEX, au monitorizat alegerile și au oferit rapoarte detaliate despre neregulile observate. În perioada 2013-2023, autoritățile din Republica Moldova au implementat diverse reforme legislative pentru a îmbunătăți integritatea procesului electoral. Aceste reforme au vizat înăsprirea sancțiunilor pentru infracțiunile electorale și clarificarea procedurilor de raportare și investigare. În plus, campaniile de educație civică au fost intensificate pentru a informa cetățenii despre importanța unui vot corect și legal. În școlile din țară se pot întâlni acum foarte multe discipline legate de procesul electoral și educație civică.

Gradul de investigare a problemei la momentul actual, scopul cercetării. La momentul actual, importanța și scopul de elaborare a prezentului demers științific, apare din intenția autorului de a releva în prim-plan unele repere doctrinare și legislative în domeniul reflectării statistice a infracțiunilor electorale în perioada 2013-2023, în Republica Moldova și în România. Totodată, este și necesitatea stringentă de efectuare a unei analize ample referitor la esența subiectului cercetării.

Materiale utilizate și metode aplicate. În procesul elaborării articolului științific ne-am ghidat de mai multe și diverse metode de cercetare științifică care au făcut posibilă investigarea corespunzătoare a subiectului titulativ, dintre care putem enumera: metoda analizei, metoda sintezei, metoda deducției, metoda sistemică, metoda istorică, precum și metoda comparativă.

Baza teoretico-juridică a demersului științific cuprinde materialul definitoriu, precum ar fi rapoartele de activitate ale instituțiilor cheie cu atribuții în domeniul electoral, precum și sursele web – care direct sau indirect, abordează esența și conținutul subiectului supus cercetării.

Rezultatele obținute în baza analizelor științifice efectuate. Cumpărarea de voturi a rămas una dintre cele mai des întâlnite infracțiuni electorale în Republica Moldova. Aceste practici au implicat oferirea de bani, alimente sau alte beneficii materiale alegătorilor în schimbul voturilor lor. Acest fenomen a fost raportat în mod regulat de către organizațiile de monitorizare a alegerilor, cum ar fi Promo-LEX, care au documentat numeroase cazuri în care partidele politice sau candidații individuali au încercat să influențeze rezultatele alegerilor prin astfel de mijloace. În ciuda eforturilor autorităților de a combate aceste practici, cumpărarea de voturi a rămas o problemă persistentă, afectând în mod disproporționat comunitătile vulnerabile din punct de vedere economic. Intimidarea alegătorilor a fost, de asemenea, o infractiune frecvent raportată. Presiuni si amenintări au fost exercitate asupra alegătorilor pentru a-i determina să voteze într-un anumit mod sau să se abțină de la vot. Aceste acte de intimidare au avut loc adesea în zonele rurale, unde controlul social este mai puternic și unde cetățenii pot fi mai ușor influențați de liderii locali. Astfel de tactici au fost utilizate pentru a crea un mediu de frică și subminând astfel integritatea procesului electoral și dreptul fundamental al cetățenilor de a vota liber.

Abuzul de resurse administrative se referă la utilizarea fondurilor publice pentru a susține anumiți candidați sau partide politice, o problemă semnificativă în contextul politic. Aceasta a inclus utilizarea vehiculelor oficiale, clădirilor publice și personalului administrativ în campanii electorale. Astfel de practici au distorsionat competiția electorală și au oferit un avantaj nedrept celor aflați la putere.

Monitorizarea independentă a alegerilor a fost esențială pentru asigurarea transparenței. ONG-urile și observatorii internaționali au jucat un rol important în documentarea și raportarea neregulilor. Sprijinul acordat acestor organizații a contribuit la o monitorizare mai eficientă și la o mai bună reflectare a realităților din teren. Rapoartele acestor observatori au fost utilizate pentru a identifica și adresa problemele sistematice, oferind recomandări pentru îmbunătățirea procesului electoral. Metodologia de colectare a datelor a inclus raportările oficiale, plângerile depuse de cetățeni și monitorizarea directă a procesului electoral de către observatori independenți. Datele colectate au fost analizate pentru a determina incidența infracțiunilor, distribuția lor geografică și profilul infractorilor. Analiza statistică a acestor date a dezvăluit zonele cu cele mai mari probleme și a permis identificarea tipurilor de infracțiuni cele mai frecvente. Această analiză a fost esențială pentru a înțelege dinamica infracțiunilor electorale și pentru a dezvolta strategii eficiente de prevenire și combatere.

Evoluția infracțiunilor electorale (2013-2023). În perioada analizată, datele statistice arată o fluctuație a numărului de infracțiuni electorale. Din datele pe care le-am găsit, pot spune ferm că am avut o creștere din păcate a infracțiunilor electorale și asta ar trebui să ne îngrijoreze, însă am încredere în autorități și mai ales în asociația "PROMO-LEX" că vor avea grijă ca alegerile să fie cât mai corecte (Raportul nr.4 al Asociației "Promo-LEX", 2023).

Astfel, putem enunța o mini-statistică:

- În perioada 2013-2015, s-a atestat un număr relativ stabil de infracțiuni electorale, cu o ușoară scădere în 2015;
- În perioada 2016-2018, numărul infracțiunilor a început să crească, atingând un vârf în 2018, pe fondul alegerilor parlamentare și locale;
- În perioada 2019-2021, o creștere semnificativă a fost observată în această perioadă, coincizând cu alegerile prezidențiale și parlamentare;
- În perioada 2022-2023, am fost marcați de continuarea creșterii numărului de infracțiuni electorale, cu un vârf în 2023.

În Republica Moldova, perioada 2013-2023 a fost marcată de numeroase evenimente electorale, inclusiv alegeri parlamentare, prezidențiale și locale. Infracțiunile electorale în această perioadă au variat în complexitate și frecvență. Printre cele mai frecvente infracțiuni se numără frauda electorală, coruperea alegătorilor, intimidarea alegătorilor și utilizarea resurselor administrative în scopuri electorale (Alegeri și democrație în Republica Moldova: Analiza infracțiunilor electorale, 2021). Frauda electorală a implicat manipularea voturilor și falsificarea rezultatelor, coruperea alegătorilor s-a manifestat prin oferirea de

bani sau alte avantaje materiale pentru influențarea votului, iar utilizarea resurselor administrative a implicat folosirea resurselor publice pentru a sprijini anumite partide sau candidați. Statistica infracțiunilor electorale în Republica Moldova arată o evoluție fluctuantă în perioada analizată. În intervalul anilor 2013-2015, s-a înregistrat o intensificare a infracțiunilor, în special, a coruperii alegătorilor și a utilizării resurselor administrative, pe fondul unor alegeri contestate și a unei instabilități politice crescute. Anul 2016 a marcat un vârf al infracțiunilor electorale, corelat cu alegerile prezidențiale, unde au fost raportate numeroase cazuri de fraudă și corupere a alegătorilor (Final Report: Presidential Election in the Republic of Moldova, 2017). În perioada anilor 2018-2020, s-a observat o ușoară scădere a numărului de infracțiuni, datorată unor reforme legislative și eforturilor sporite de monitorizare a alegerilor. Totuși, perioada anilor 2021-2023 a arătat o stabilizare a numărului de infracțiuni, cu o continuare a eforturilor de prevenire și combatere a acestora (Raportul anual privind alegerile pentru anul 2023, 2023).

Compararea cu alt stat. România a întâmpinat provocări similare în perioada 2013-2023. Infracțiunile electorale din România au inclus frauda electorală, coruperea alegătorilor, utilizarea resurselor administrative si intimidarea alegătorilor. Frauda electorală a fost reprezentată prin votul multiplu și falsificarea buletinelor de vot, în timp ce coruperea alegătorilor a implicat oferirea de bani sau alte beneficii materiale (Raportul anual de activitate pentru anul 2021, 2021). Utilizarea resurselor administrative a fost o practică frecventă, implicând folosirea resurselor publice pentru campanii electorale, iar intimidarea alegătorilor a fost marcată prin amenințări și presiuni asupra votanților. Evoluția infracțiunilor electorale în România în perioada 2013-2023 a urmat un traseu similar cu cel din Republica Moldova. În intervalul 2013-2014, România a înregistrat o creștere a infracțiunilor electorale, în special în contextul alegerilor prezidențiale din 2014. Anii 2015-2016 au marcat o usoară scădere a infractiunilor datorită măsurilor stricte de monitorizare și aplicare a legii. Totuși, în perioada 2017-2019, numărul de cazuri de corupere a alegătorilor a crescut din nou, mai ales în timpul alegerilor parlamentare si europarlamentare. Alegerile locale si parlamentare din 2020-2021 au fost caracterizate de un nou vârf al infracțiunilor electorale. Perioada 2022-2023 a arătat o tendință de stabilizare, cu un accent pe prevenire și educație electorală.

Compararea datelor statistice din Republica Moldova și România arată că ambele state se confruntă cu tipuri similare de infracțiuni electorale, iar evoluția temporală a acestor infracțiuni este influențată de contextul politic și de măsurile legislative adoptate. În ambele țări, perioadele de vârf ale infracțiunilor electorale coincid cu alegerile majore, reflectând tensiunile politice și competiția acerbă dintre partide. În ceea ce privește măsurile de combatere, atât Republica Moldova, cât și România au implementat reforme legislative și instituționale pentru a reduce infracțiunile electorale. În Republica Moldova, Comisia Electorală Centrală, Procuratura Generală și Ministerul Afacerilor Interne joacă un rol crucial în investigarea și prevenirea infracțiunilor electorale. În România, Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, Direcția Națională Anticorupție și Ministerul Afacerilor

Interne sunt principalele instituții responsabile de asigurarea corectitudinii procesului electoral. Ambele state au intensificat monitorizarea alegerilor și au promovat educația civică pentru a reduce vulnerabilitatea alegătorilor la corupție și intimidare.

Iar la finalul comparație acestor două state, este important de menționat faptul că, reflectarea statistică a infracțiunilor electorale în Republica Moldova și România în perioada 2013-2023 denotă provocări similare și eforturi constante de a asigura integritatea procesului electoral. Deși ambele state au făcut progrese semnificative în reducerea infracțiunilor electorale, continuarea eforturilor de consolidare a cadrului legal, monitorizarea riguroasă și educația civică rămân esențiale pentru a asigura alegeri corecte și transparente în viitor.

Concluzii și recomandări. Alegerile reprezintă un pilon fundamental al democrației. În Republica Moldova, ca și în alte tări, integritatea procesului electoral este importanta pentru mentinerea încrederii publice în instituțiile democratice. Infractiunile electorale, care pot varia de la cumpărarea de voturi până la manipularea rezultatelor, afectează direct legitimitatea procesului electoral. De aceea, monitorizarea și raportarea acestor infracțiuni sunt vitale pentru îmbunătățirea sistemului electoral și pentru asigurarea unor alegeri corecte și transparente. Pentru a analiza reflectarea statistică a infractiunilor electorale în perioada 2013-2023 în Republica Moldova, se vor utiliza date colectate de la Comisia Electorală Centrală (CEC), Poliția Națională și alte instituții relevante. Analiza include tendintele anuale ale infractiunilor, tipurile de infractiuni raportate si eficienta măsurilor adoptate pentru prevenirea si combaterea acestora. Reflectarea statistică a infracțiunilor electorale în Republica Moldova în perioada 2013-2023 indică o evolutie complexă, influentată de factori politici, economici si sociali. Combaterea eficientă a acestor infractiuni necesită eforturi sustinute din partea instituțiilor de stat și a societății civile, precum și colaborare internațională pentru schimbul de bune practici. În ciuda progreselor realizate, Republica Moldova trebuie să continue să îmbunătățească cadrul legal și să întărească mecanismele de supraveghere pentru a asigura alegeri corecte si transparente în viitor. Reflectarea statistică a infractiunilor electorale în Republica Moldova între 2013 și 2023 indică o necesitate continuă de consolidare a măsurilor de prevenire și combatere a acestor infracțiuni. Prin analiza unor surse am identificat și o serie de recomandări, de exemplu:

- Îmbunătățirea legislației electorale (actualizarea și clarificarea legilor pentru a acoperi toate formele de infracțiuni electorale);
- Educația civică (un bun exemplu ar fi implementarea programelor de educație pentru a informa cetățenii despre importanța unui proces electoral integru si consecintele infractiunilor electorale);
- Creșterea transparenței (asigurarea transparenței în toate etapele procesului electoral pentru a reduce posibilitățile de fraudă);
- Colaborarea între instituții (asta ar însemnând întărirea colaborării între CEC, poliție, procuratură și instanțele judecătorești pentru o aplicare eficientă a legii).

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## ASPECTE SOCIALE PRIVIND FORMAREA UNUI ECOSISTEM DE INOVARE PENTRU DEZVOLTAREA DURABILĂ A SATELOR INTELIGENTE ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

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**Abstract.** Establishing local development priorities for sustainable growth to unlock the entrepreneurial potential of rural settlements, as well as the development and adaptation of software products in smart infrastructure sectors based on technological requirements, requires interdisciplinary research and training activities based on knowledge gained from the interaction of specialists from the fields of social, humanistic, and engineering sciences. The purpose of this paper is to encourage employees of local public organizations and NGOs to initiate innovative public-private partnerships to open new opportunities in the social development of smart villages and technological applications in agricultural production associated with the Internet of Things (IoT). Leveraging the potential of the local innovation system includes entrepreneurs, universities, research centers, and "Living Labs" innovation ecosystems, represents tools for developing products, services, and physical and virtual networks based on the economic and virtual environment, as well as the social needs of households. The Digital Twin concept is analyzed as a methodology for adapting international best practices for digital innovation in human settlements. The implementation of the European Village program will contribute to reducing population outflow and will stimulate the sustainable development of rural infrastructure and the improvement of the quality of life for its residents. These issues can be addressed more efficiently by applying

the concept of the digital economy and smart rural areas. The Smart Village Design, coordinated with local administration, non-profit organizations, farmers, and households will enable data and knowledge sharing across administrative boundaries in a rural lab and lay the foundation for an IoT village. Digital transformation, smart education, virtual mobility, and an innovative ecosystem for sustainable development are effective levers in achieving economic growth and improving rural well-being.

Keywords: smart villages, Internet of Things, living labs, digital twin

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Introducere. În lucrările (Babin et al., 2021) și (Babin, Tutunaru & Covalenco, 2021) au fost analizate abordările metodologice pentru localizarea infrastructurii inteligente în așezările rurale și urbane. Scopul și motivația principală a studiului a fost prezentarea abordărilor internaționale ale conceptelor de sat inteligent către administrațiile publice locale, organizațiile de inovare, asociațiile de afaceri și asociațiile de fermieri. Un scop important al publicației este realizarea, printr-o adaptare a conceptelor selectate, a sinergiilor între programele naționale ale fondului de dezvoltare regională și programul de cercetare și inovare pentru 2020-2023.

Proiectarea soluțiilor interoperabile pentru sate inteligente. În 2022, Guvernul Republicii Moldova a lansat programul Satul European (Satul European, 2024) în cadrul măsurilor de sprijinire a dezvoltării locale pentru autoritățile locale de nivel I responsabile cu planificarea dezvoltării așezărilor rurale. În prima fază a concursului programului (2022), au fost depuse 723 de proiecte de infrastructură (a se vedea Tabelul 1 și Tabelul 2).

Tabelul 1. Distribuția proiectelor pe regiuni de dezvoltare

No	Regiuni de dezvoltare	Proiecte selectate
1	ADR Centru	315
2	ADR Nord	203
3	ADR Sud	156
4	ADR UTAG	28
5	ADR Chişinău	21

Sursa: (Satul European, 2024)

Tabelul 2. Distribuirea finanțării proiectelor în funcție de prioritățile programului

№	Prioritățile de finanțare ale componentei	Suma totală (MDL)
1	Modernizarea sistemelor de alimentare cu apă, tratare a apei și canalizare	1,2 miliarde
2	Eficiența și reabilitarea clădirilor publice	685 milioane
3	Săli de sport, centre de îngrijire pentru grupuri cu nevoi speciale	432 milioane
4	Restaurarea monumentelor istorice și a arhitecturii rurale tradiționale	230 milioane
5	Iluminat public	98 milioane
6	Elaborarea planurilor urbanistice generale	34,9 milioane
7	Sisteme de producere și furnizare a energiei regenerabile	32 milioane
8	Proiecte de infrastructură cu finanțare externă	10 milioane

Sursa: (Satul European, 2024)

Există o problemă, precum cea a lipsei de cunoștințe operaționale pentru a formula propuneri și solicitări tehnologice, atât din partea întreprinderilor mici și mijlocii, cât și din partea autorităților locale. O altă problemă este lipsa abilităților de comunicare internațională, prin mobilitatea virtuală la nivel interregional, necesare interacțiunii cu consultanții externi - dezvoltatori direcți de produse software - caracterizat prin stabilirea de formate pentru extinderea celor mai bune practici (organizații de inovare). Definirea priorităților locale de dezvoltare durabilă reprezintă o etapă esențială pentru procesul de descoperire antreprenorială a localităților. Aceasta presupune identificarea nevoilor specifice ale comunităților și alinierea acestora la soluțiile tehnologice ce pot contribui la modernizarea infrastructurii inteligente. Solicitarea tehnologică impune desfășurarea unor cercetări și procese de învățare multidisciplinare, bazate pe cunoștințele obținute prin colaborarea dintre experți social-umaniști și profesioniști în inginerie.



Figura 1. **Sectoarele infrastructurii satelor inteligente** Sursa: (Degada, Thapliyal, & Mohanty, 2021)

În consecință, proiectarea infrastructurii inteligente inovatoare pentru satele inteligente necesită și colaborarea la nivel de echipă multidisciplinară. Conceptul de sat inteligent utilizează tehnologia pentru a crea servicii viabile care atenuează greutățile comunităților rurale, sprijină ecosistemul social și promovează creșterea economică. Practica internațională arată că Internetul obiectelor (IoT) a devenit unul dintre conceptele centrale ale Industry 4.0 AgriCulture 4.0 și transformarea digitală a industriei, agriculturii și societății, ceea ce ajută la trecerea de la managementul static la modelele dinamice.

Pentru a pregăti adaptarea conceptelor de sate inteligente, este necesar un model de competențe pentru a răspunde întrebărilor grupurilor de acțiune locală cu privire la necesitatea schimbării, pentru a identifica provocările actuale în etapele digitalizării, pentru a justifica utilizarea IoT ca tehnologie necesară și pentru a explica beneficiile și posibilele pericole ale acesteia.

Accelerarea implementării Internetului obiectelor (IoT) va asigura suficiența, siguranța alimentară și alimentația sănătoasă, consolidând competitivitatea întreprinderilor mici și mijlocii și a fermelor, creând aprovizionarea lanțurilor alimentare în regiunile europene. Parteneriatele inovatoare public-privat întăresc poziția de lider a regiunilor europene în industria globală IoT prin dezvoltarea unui ecosistem simbiotic de fermieri, industria alimentară, furnizori de tehnologie și institute de cercetare.

Provocarea proiectării unui sat inteligent este foarte dispersată și implică adesea multe structuri neierarhice. În plus, resursele din sate sunt adesea împărtășite și este necesară o abordare holistică pentru a asigura durabilitatea. Ciclul de proiectare a satului inteligent, așa cum se arată în Figura 2, constă din patru etape, care sunt: identificarea și cartografierea, luarea deciziilor, prototiparea, evaluarea și extinderea la scară.



Figura 2. Ciclul de proiectare a satului inteligent Sursa: (Degada, Thapliyal, & Mohanty, 2021)

Un ecosistem de economie digitală este caracterizat prin colectare eficientă de date, comunicare și luare a deciziilor inteligente, bazate pe platforme descentralizate. Fundamentul satului inteligent depinde de selectarea senzorilor potriviți, a platformei de calcul, a mecanismului de economisire a energiei, a rețelei de comunicații și a procesării eficiente a informațiilor. IoT este integrarea de senzori, actuatoare și dispozitive de calcul mici pentru a automatiza sistemul prin Internet.

Transformarea digitală a satului este construită, așa cum se arată în Figura 3, în principal în jurul blocurilor IoT și al tehnologiilor cu valoare adăugată.



Figura 3. **Transformarea digitală către un sat inteligent** Sursa: (Degada, Thapliyal, & Mohanty, 2021)

Tehnologiile care contribuie direct la transformarea digitală sunt enumerate mai jos:

- Unități de rezoluție IoT- protocoale de comunicare și tehnologie de interfețe de la mașină la mașină (M2M). Acesta include senzori, microcontrolere, mecanism de colectare a energiei, tehnologie de poziționare (de exemplu, GPS), identificare prin radiofrecvență (RFID), Bluetooth de putere redusă (BLE), Zig-Bee, Z-wave, rețele globale cu putere redusă (LPWAN) și câmp apropiat comunicare (NFC).
- Tehnologii cu valoare adăugată aceste tehnologii adaugă valoare, ajută la luarea deciziilor și îmbunătățesc securitatea serviciilor în general. Lista include cloud computing, big data analytics, machine learning, inteligență artificială, realitate virtuală și blockchain. În plus, utilizarea dronelor și a roboticii ar putea intra și în această categorie. Această categorie include conectivitatea fără fir pentru implementarea unei rețele de situri pilot "ferme inteligente" care utilizează drone și robotică. Astfel, nicio tehnologie de comunicare nu poate servi tuturor a unităților IoT în curs de desfășurare. Tehnologia de comunicare trebuie să suporte o gamă largă, un consum redus de energie, să poată comunica în diferite climate și să fie instalată rapid. Exemple de tehnologii de comunicații fără fir analizate în literatură includ RFID, Bluetooth de putere redusă, Wi-Fi, NFC, LPWAN și comunicații celulare (a se vedea Tabelul 3 pentru mai multe detalii). Fiecare verticală de sat inteligent are un set unic de cerințe, în ceea ce privește costul, raza de acțiune, consumul de energie, managementul rețelei și securitatea.

Tabelul 3. Cartografierea verticală a satelor inteligente pentru tehnologia de comunicare IoT

Smart village	RFI	ZigBee	Z-	Bluetoo	Wi-Fi	LPWA	Cellul
verticals	D		Wave	th BLE	Halow	N	ar
Climat monitoring in smart Farming	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Irrigation	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Livestock monitoring	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Dairy	✓	✓	-	-	_	✓	-
Health - care	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓
Energy harvesting and management	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Smart lighting	-	ı	-	-	-	✓	-

Smart village		./	./	./	./		./
home / hut	_	•	•	•		-	•
Surveillance	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	-
Asset monitoring and tracking	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Water and waste management	<b>✓</b>	-	-	✓	✓	<b>✓</b>	-

Sursa: (Degada, Thapliyal, & Mohanty, 2021)

Platformele de management integrat descentralizat, sunt larg răspândite în practica europeană, demonstrând clar avantajele utilizării lor în managementul economic regional inovator la nivel transfrontalier, transnațional și interregional în Uniunea Europeană. Majoritatea satelor verticale inteligente nu necesită viteză mare și lățime de bandă mare. Tehnologia Low Power Wide Area Network (LPWAN) a devenit tehnologia wireless preferată pentru comunicațiile M2M, oferind soluții rentabile și eficiente din punct de vedere energetic.

Economia digitală se bazează pe active necorporale (Masucci, 2021) protejate prin drepturi de proprietate intelectuală au devenit parte a oricărei strategii de afaceri de succes a întreprinderilor mici și mijlocii, fermelor și gospodăriilor din zonele rurale. Drepturile de proprietate intelectuală joacă un rol important pentru potențialele sate europene inteligente, organizațiile inovatoare, deoarece își protejează valoarea ideilor și oferă o rentabilitate a investițiilor riscante. Aplicarea tehnologiilor de mai sus contribuie la identificarea unică globală a produselor agricole, care este unul dintre principiile cheie necesare pentru managementul informației în lanțul agroalimentar (UN, 2015). Orice produs alimentar comercializat la nivel global necesită o identificare unică pentru a putea urmări istoricul lor, procesele si procedurile aplicate acestora si pentru a evita orice risc/pericol (de exemplu, cele legate de contaminarea încrucișată). Identificările locale ale produselor, unitățile urmăribile (cum ar fi instanțe de produs), unitățile logistice, site-urile comerciale etc., nu sunt unice la nivel global si, în general, nu sunt acceptate dacă produsul identificat poate părăsi incinta unității alimentare. În special, sunt necesari identificatori unici la nivel global pentru companii, locații, tipuri de produse, instante de produs (unităti comerciale), unităti logistice (cutii, paleti, containere). Alti identificatori sunt utilizati pentru a identifica, de exemplu, active returnabile sau active fixe, relații de afaceri etc. Cu toate acestea, pentru gestionarea informatiilor în lantul agroalimentar, identificatorii de mai sus sunt cei mai importanți. Proiectarea satelor inteligente, ține cont de dezvoltarea și adaptarea soluțiilor în sectorul Smart Farming, care ține cont de localizarea serviciilor epublice, comertul electronic. În timp ce funcțiile unui sistem de management al informatiilor din lantul agroalimentar pot fi foarte diverse, în functie de caracteristicile producției agricole, acestea pot fi rezumate după cum urmează (Figura 4):

- sisteme de reglementare (siguranță alimentară, vamă, ePermit și sisteme similare);
- sisteme de conformitate cu standardele (GAP, GHP, HACCP, organic, sustenabil etc.);

• sisteme de îmbunătățire a competitivității anumitor produse alimentare (durabilitate, transparență, producție regională, indicații geografice, bunăstare a animalelor etc.).



Figura 4. Tipuri funcționale de sisteme informatice de gestionare a lanțului agroalimentar cu câteva exemple

Sursa: (Masucci, 2021)

Managementul informațional al lanțului agroalimentar are multe avantaje atât pentru sectorul privat, cât și pentru cel public. Avantaje pentru sectorul privat. Sectorul privat poate beneficia de următoarele avantaje oferite de managementul informațional al lanțului agroalimentar (Figura 5):

- Respectarea standardelor, reglementărilor și regulilor.
- Menținerea piețelor existente și pătrunderea de noi piețe.
- Eficiența operațiunilor de afaceri și astfel reducerea costurilor de tranzacționare.



Figura 5. **Gestionarea informațiilor privind lanțul agroalimentar** *Sursa: (UN, 2015)* 

Pentru sectorul public, implementarea viziunii Smart Food poate duce la următoarele beneficii:

- Statistici industriale.
- Reducerea sărăciei prin asigurarea accesului actorilor mici.
- Reducerea problemelor legate de siguranța alimentelor (îmbunătățirea sănătății publice, mai puține aruncări de la export, mai bune retrageri de produse.

- Asistență în îndeplinirea mandatului, cum ar fi asigurarea siguranței alimentelor.
  - Siguranța alimentară și legalitatea producției sale.
  - Creșterea securității comerciale

Crearea unui ecosistem pentru economia digitală a satelor inteligente bazat pe platforma Living Lab. Un alt mecanism institutional valoros pentru a stimula inovația este modelul Living Labs, care permite experimente în viața reală în care utilizatorii și cercetătorii pot crea împreună inovații. Ca metodologie pentru adaptarea celor mai bune practici internationale pentru inovarea digitală în asezările umane, conceptul de "Digital Twin" este adecvat. Termenul "Digital Twin", ca și termenii "Industrie 4.0" și "Industrie inteligentă", este un termen colectiv. Acest concept face parte din cea de-a patra revoluție industrială și este conceput pentru a ajuta companiile să descopere mai rapid problemele fizice, să prezică rezultatele lor mai precis și să producă produse mai bune. În mod fundamental, geamănul digital poate fi definit ca un profil digital în continuă schimbare, care conține date istorice si cele mai relevante despre un obiect fizic sau un proces, permitând performanta de afaceri optimizată. Se bazează pe cantitatea mare de date acumulate obtinute prin măsurători ale unei game de metrici ale obiectelor din lumea reală. Analiza datelor acumulate oferă informatii precise despre performanta sistemului si, de asemenea, conduce la concluzii despre necesitatea schimbărilor atât în produs, cât și în procesul de producție în sine (Parrott & Warshaw, 2017).

Experții Comisiei Europene definesc "Local Digital Twins" (LDT) (LDT, 2024) ca reprezentări virtuale ale activelor fizice, proceselor și sistemelor așezărilor umane, legate de toate datele legate de acestea și de mediu. Ei folosesc algoritmi de inteligență artificială, analiza datelor și învățarea automată pentru a crea modele digitale de simulare care pot fi actualizate și modificate pe măsură ce omologii lor fizici se schimbă. Datele istorice și în timp aproape real pot fi utilizate în diferite combinații pentru a oferi capabilitățile necesare pentru analiza datelor (descriptive, prescriptive, predictive), modelare și scenarii "ce se întâmplă dacă". La conferința INSPIRE 2021 "Către un spațiu european comun de date verzi" (Raes, 2021) Lieven Raes de la Digital Vlaanderen, coordonatorul consorțiului H2020 DUET și CompAir a susținut o prezentare despre modul în care Local Digital Duals aduc gândirea antreprenorială, procesele agile și inovația deschisă în luarea deciziilor administrative.

Este evident că, în viitorul apropiat, transformarea digitală a ecosistemelor teritoriale va contribui la creșterea economică și va deveni un factor cheie de ocupare a forței de muncă în regiunile Moldovei. Pentru a ajuta administrațiile și companiile de tehnologii inovatoare să transforme împreună ecosistemele regionale pentru a sprijini digitalizarea, explorăm cele mai bune practici europene, bazândune pe tehnologii digitale avansate și exploatând o serie de oportunități care deschid tehnologii precum internetul lucrurilor, datele mari, producția avansată, robotică, imprimare 3D, blockchain tehnologii și inteligență artificială. Formarea foilor de parcurs, pentru a sprijini mai bine întreprinderile în abordarea transformării digitale

a localităților inteligente le va permite să profite din plin de tehnologii avansate și modele de afaceri inovatoare.

În prezentarea "Smart from Local to Global", DG CONNECT, C3 Technologies for Smart Communities, viziunea Comisiei Europene pentru construirea capacității digitale a ecosistemului comunitar este prezentată în Figura 6 (Raes, 2021).

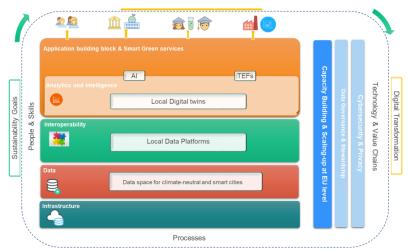


Figura 6. Un ecosistem comunitar inteligent și rezilient

Sursa: (Raes, 2021)

"Comunitățile inteligente și sustenabile" este într-adevăr o expresie cheie în lumea IoT de astăzi, dar pentru a sincroniza nevoile acestei tehnologii cu potențialele sate inteligente este necesar să se adapteze un model de competență care se bazează pe cunoașterea tipologiei regiunilor descrise în cadrul Rețelei UE de Observator al Amenajării Teritoriului (ESDP, 2024), care descrie angajamentul regiunilor față de Politica Europeană de Dezvoltare a Teritoriului (EPSD).

Programul de lucru "Instrument pentru investiții în inovare interregională" (I3) (I3 instrument, 2024) urmărește promovarea inovației prin "specializarea inteligentă" și cooperarea interregională. Acesta și alte programe UE pot inspira grupurile de inițiativă locală și administrațiile regionale din Republica Moldova să adapteze cele mai bune practici în planificarea spațială interregională, cum ar fi proiectul "Smart Village", prin transferul modelelor Smart City prin intermediul platformei web 3D de dezvoltare pentru așezările umane" (Smart Villages, 2024) a statului BadenWürttemberg HFT Stuttgart.

Proiectele "Acțiuni pregătitoare pentru zonele rurale inteligente în secolul 21" prezintă cele mai bune practici ale parteneriatului inovator public-privat Stans im Mürztal, provincia Styria din Austria, pentru a crea un mediu dinamic al ecosistemelor de inovare rurală pentru soluții inteligente la nivel local și regional în cadrul abordarea LEADER (LEADER, 2024) De asemenea, putem vedea cele mai bune practici în crearea de prototipuri regionale de rețele de inovare, spații dinamice de lucru și de locuit în zonele rurale, care este una dintre provocările abordate de proiectul maghiar UPPONY - Smart Village (Uppony, 2024) ca exemplu la nivelul regional.

Dezvoltarea tehnologiei așezărilor umane inteligente poate fi facilitată de noi instituții, cum ar fi centrele de inovare. Centrele de inovare și laboratoarele pot fi platforme pentru prezentarea de idei și concepte noi. Scopul laboratoarelor de așezări umane vii este de a testa soluții și inovații de planificare, de a învăța din ele și de a le îmbunătăți în timp real (UNECE, 2021). Rețeaua de "laboratoare vii" în creștere rapidă în care orașele reunesc cetățeni, "grupuri de inițiativă locală" de sate, universități și întreprinderi, ferme promovează dezvoltarea rapidă a antreprenoriatului social.

Proiectul european LIVE RUR (LIVE RUR project, 2024), oferă o interactiune diferită între oraș și sat sub formă de Living Labs fată de metodologiile anterioare. Open Lab, ca instrument și metodologie de dezvoltare a produselor, serviciilor, rețelelor fizice și virtuale, se bazează pe nevoile economice și sociale ale gospodăriilor. Manifestul de la Helsinki (noiembrie 2006, președinția finlandeză a UE) a mentionat mai întâi la Living Labs ca prim pas către "un nou sistem european de cercetare și dezvoltare și inovare, care implică o schimbare majoră de paradigmă pentru întregul proces de inovare" (EnoLL, 2024). Mai precis, Rural Living Lab urmărește dezvoltarea inovării deschise tehnice și sociale integrate și, în același timp, promovarea condițiilor de dezvoltare durabilă în context rural. Ajută la obținerea celei mai înalte eficiențe a resurselor, modele de afaceri orientate spre utilizator, atractive si adaptabile, managementul cu patru elice etc. Această abordare permite dezvoltarea și testarea tehnologiilor durabile, îmbunătățind inovația rurală la nivel local, regional și transfrontalier, punând utilizatorii precum gospodăriile, fermierii în centrul lumii reale. RAIN "Platforma Regională Circular Living Lab" (RAIN, 2024), este un instrument practic, orientat spre afaceri, propus și bazat pe activități de proiect interregionale și simetrice. Platforma vizează antreprenorii, potentialii antreprenori si administratia publică, precum și sprijinirea întreprinderilor, proiectelor și inițiativelor în dezvoltarea modelelor de afaceri inovatoare în zonele rurale, cu un accent puternic pe economia circulară, inovarea deschisă și tehnologia informației și comunicațiilor.

Educație inteligentă și mobilitate virtuală rurală. O mare parte din munca implicată în construirea și întreținerea infrastructurii inteligente necesită un nivel bun de pregătire în știință, tehnologie, inginerie și matematică. Prin urmare, dezvoltarea programelor inteligente de dezvoltare comunitară poate oferi motive suplimentare pentru îmbunătățirea și popularizarea formării în profesiile de mai sus. Calificările resurselor umane includ planificarea și proiectarea, cetățenia digitală, alfabetizarea informațională, utilizarea și gestionarea datelor. De o importanță cheie este problema investițiilor în resursele umane intelectuale, nu doar în tehnologia intelectuală.

În consecință, este recomandabil ca grupurile de inițiativă locală din comunitățile locale să înceapă prin a-și efectua propria analiză a nevoilor de resurse umane și cuantificarea deficitului de competențe, în cooperare cu universitățile locale. Acest lucru va face, de asemenea, posibilă introducerea studenților în aplicații reale ale conceptelor științifice pentru satele inteligente și implicarea mai multor elevi de la o vârstă fragedă în specificul unui sat inteligent.

De interes deosebit este tehnologia Smart Education (Desmet & Rajagopal, 2019). Implementarea sa, așa cum se arată în *Figura 7*, sugerează că ar trebui să fie fie hardware, fie software, sau ambele, susținând munca profesorului și utilizarea analizei datelor.



Figura 7. **Structura tehnologiei educaționale inteligente** *Sursa: (Desmet & Rajagopal, 2019)* 

Această tehnologie ar trebui să influențeze următoarele niveluri: învățare individuală, interacțiune și colaborare, monitorizare și evaluare. În consecință, o infrastructură digitală inteligentă bazată pe educație inteligentă poate ajuta la creșterea înțelegerii și controlului asupra operațiuni și optimizarea utilizării resurselor limitate într-o anumită localitate rurală, un grup de sate. Una dintre cele mai valoroase aplicații TIC într-un sat inteligent este capacitatea de a primi și de a partaja informații în timp util. Dacă aceste informații sunt primite în timp real și sunt corecte, comunitățile rurale au, în principiu, posibilitatea de a lua măsuri înainte ca o problemă să escaladeze. Un posibil tip de învățare bazată pe probleme și aplicarea unei infrastructuri digitale de educație inteligentă sunt diferitele "straturi digitale" (UN, 2016) de sprijin, cum ar fi:

- Medii rurale: acest nivel combină infrastructura fizică și digitală; exemplele includ clădiri inteligente, mobilitate inteligentă, sănătate inteligentă etc.
- Senzori: acest strat include dispozitive inteligente care măsoară și monitorizează diferiți parametri privind mediul rural și mediul înconjurător. Funcționarea lor necesită și programe de instruire.
- Rețea: acest nivel se referă la transferul de date și informații de la senzori la depozite de date și agregate pentru analize ulterioare.
- Analiza datelor: acest strat este implicat în analiza datelor colectate de diferitele sisteme de infrastructură inteligentă pentru a facilita predicția anumitor evenimente.
- Automatizare: un strat digital pentru a permite interoperabilitatea, permițând automatizarea și scalabilitatea unui număr mare de dispozitive pe mai multe domenii și lanțuri verticale.

Prin termenul "Digital Layers" în formare, ne referim la tehnologii care susțin învățarea informală la locul de muncă. În primul rând, aici se pune accentul pe formarea personalului fermelor, al întreprinderilor mici și mijlocii (IMM-uri) și al autorităților locale, ca parte a inițiativelor de inovare.

Această tehnologie de învățare non-formală este aplicabilă organizării interacțiunii în exemplul Conceptului de model de afaceri "Regional Circular

Living Lab" (RAIN), unde douăzeci și două tematice elementele de învățare nonformală orientată către probleme combină cele trei straturi analitice identificate de consorțiul proiectului: elemente de bază ale platformei; principii și parametri din viața reală. Combinându-le, putem selecta un set de metode de învățare interdisciplinare pentru profesioniști, de diferite niveluri de calificare, pentru a se adapta la condițiile reale de viață din mediul rural. Învățarea interdisciplinară este o metodă sau set de metode utilizate pentru a preda peste discipline sau pentru a reuni discipline individuale în jurul unor teme, probleme sau probleme comune.

Rolul universității în Living Lab (Verhoef & Bossert, 2019) este de a crea și coordona strategic o serie de proiecte aplicate pentru care pot fi dezvoltate diverse cursuri. Astfel, principalele funcții ale universităților, *Figura* 8, educație și cercetare, pot fi legate de activitățile tematice ale campusului de inițiere a Living Lab și selectarea așezărilor potențiale care solicită statutul European Smart Village.

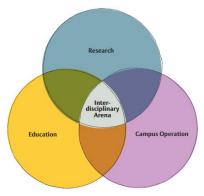


Figura 8. Campusul ca laborator viu al sistemului de învățare Sursa: (Verhoef & Bossert, 2019)

Mediul de mobilitate virtuală (VME) acoperă toate tipurile de activităti de învățare (formale, non-formale, informale), instrumente și metode utilizate pentru a furniza programe si activităti de mobilitate virtuală. Împreună cu progresele tehnologice, mobilitatea virtuală are un mare potential ca un canal major de acces la o ofertă educațională largă, experiențe de învățare unice și internaționale, acces la experți, medii virtuale de învățare pentru colaborare și cursuri, acces ușor la cercetări și date, indiferent de timp și spațiu, și chiar pentru a depăși diferitele bariere de limbi si culturi. În faza pregătitoare a managementului laboratorului, toti participanții trebuie să își asume un angajament formal de sprijin. La sfârșitul acestei faze trebuie îndeplinite următoarele conditii: model de management si plan de afaceri stabilit; numiti experimentatori si manageri Living Lab; activităti de formare descrise (formale și informale); comunicare internă, feedback, dezvoltare continuă și revizuire periodică; comunicare externă (activităti virtuale cu extern mediu) întretinute și implementate. Proiectantii proiectelor conduc fazele de implementare a sarcinilor de laborator, împreună cu experții juridici și financiari ai diferitelor părti interesate și grupuri de utilizatori. Aspectele importante sunt: locația clar definită; context (abordare reală), plan detaliat de lucru al procesului, împărțirea echipamentelor necesare; furnizarea de resurse

angajamentul managementului; întocmirea și aprobarea documentelor legale și de risc (plan de siguranță); rezervarea finanțelor pentru timpul cercetării, instrumentelor de sprijin și reflecție.

Unele componente sunt prezentate ca parte a acestui mediu: învățământ la distanță, blended learning, medii virtuale de învățare, procese de comunicare, comunități virtuale și dezvoltare de cursuri, curricula.

Concluzii. În ultimii ani, din ce în ce mai multă atenție s-a acordat dezvoltării zonelor rurale din Republica Moldova. O demonstrează Programul Național "Satul European" anunțat recent de Președintele Republicii Moldova și finanțat din Fondul Național de Dezvoltare Regională și Locală, care conturează pași concreti pentru modernizarea așezărilor la standarde europene.

Implementarea programului "Satul European" va contribui la reducerea ieșirii populației din Republica Moldova și va avea ca rezultat o dezvoltare durabilă a infrastructură zonelor rurale și o îmbunătățire a calității vieții locuitorilor săi. Aceste provocări pot fi rezolvate mai eficient prin aplicarea conceptului de economie digitală și zone rurale inteligente. "Proiectarea inteligentă a satului", coordonată cu administrația locală, organizațiile non-profit, fermierii și gospodăriile, va permite împărtășirea și schimbul de date și cunoștințe peste granițele administrative într-un laborator rural și va pune bazele unui IoT sat. Transformarea digitală, educația inteligentă, mobilitatea virtuală și ecosistemul de inovare al dezvoltării durabile sunt factori eficienți pentru realizarea creșterii economice și îmbunătățirea bunăstării satului și deblocarea potențialului antreprenorial.

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## TRANSFORMĂRI DIGITALE ȘI DEZVOLTAREA COMERȚULUI ELECTRONIC ÎN MOLDOVA

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**Abstract.** The digital transformations of recent years have revolutionized the global economy, contributing to the emergence of a new economy - the digital economy. As a result, new directions for doing business have emerged, but existing directions have also changed dramatically. The emergence of global communication networks, and in particular the Internet, has led to a revolution in the organization and implementation of e-commerce activities. The development of e-commerce offers great opportunities for our country. The paper presents theoretical approaches to e-commerce. The article describes the advantages and disadvantages of the development of this important sector of the digital economy. The article notes the importance and challenges of e-commerce, the growing relevance of e-commerce and the level of development of e-commerce in the Moldovan economy. Digital transformation will enable the creation of a digital society in Moldova, where electronic services are accessible to all citizens. This means not only providing online services, but also ensuring a secure and inclusive digital environment where personal data is protected and cybersecurity is a priority.

Keywords: digital transformations, digital economy, e-commerce

**JEL:** H21, L 81, M10, M13, M15 **UDC:** 339.138:004.738.5(478)

**Introducere.** Dezvoltarea și răspândirea tehnologiei informației a impulsionat puternic utilizarea resurselor digitale în vederea desfășurarii afacerilor si a devenit un factor important în dezvoltarea economiei digitale. Transformările digitale în Moldova reprezintă un pas crucial spre un viitor mai prosper și mai competitiv, având potențialul de a transforma radical modul în care trăim și lucrăm.

Unul dintre obiectivele principale ale transformării digitale în Moldova este crearea unei societăți digitale prielnice cetățenilor țării, în care serviciile electronice și afacerile online, să fie accesibile tuturor cetățenilor într-un mediu digital sigur și protejate din punct de vedere a securiății cibernetice.

Scopul acestei lucrări constă atât în determinarea instrumentariului teoretic ale unei economii digitale, precum și analiza unei societăți ce dezvoltă afacerile electronice.

Revizuirea literaturii. Comerțul electronic, sau e-commerce, a devenit un domeniu important de cercetare datorită dezvoltării sale rapide și influenței semnificative asupra economiei globale. În această revizuire, vor fi analizate principalele cercetări și lucrări științifice ale autorilor internaționali care au adus contribuții semnificative în înțelegerea și dezvoltarea comerțului electronic. Kenneth Laudon și Carol Traver sunt autorii mai multor manuale și articole științifice influente despre comerțul electronic și sistemele de informații. Lucrarea lor "E-commerce: Business, Technology, Society" (Laudon & Traver, 2021) este unul dintre cele mai citate manuale din acest domeniu, oferind o privire de ansamblu cuprinzătoare asupra tehnologiilor, modelelor de afaceri și aspectelor sociale ale comerțului electronic. Ei subliniază importanța integrării soluțiilor tehnologice și a strategiilor de afaceri pentru dezvoltarea de succes a comerțului electronic, precum și influența factorilor sociali și juridici asupra dezvoltării acestuia.

John Hagel III și Arthur G. Armstrong Cartea "Net Gain: Expanding Markets through Virtual Communities" (Hagel & Armstrong, 1997) analizează utilizarea strategică a comunităților virtuale pentru crearea de noi oportunități de piață și creșterea profitului. Autorii propun conceptul de creare a valorii prin construirea și gestionarea comunităților online, ceea ce contribuie la întărirea legăturilor cu clienții și la creșterea loialității. Ei arată clar că, pentru a concura în economia online, trebuie să stabiliți o abordare complet nouă a dezvoltării produselor, marketingului, serviciului clienții și distribuției și să regândiți relațiile companiei dvs. cu clienții, furnizorii și concurenții.

Hossein Bidgoli în lucrarea "Electronic Commerce: Principles and Practice" (2001) (Bidgoli, 2001), prezintă principiile și practicile de bază utilizate în comerțul electronic, acoperind teme precum securitatea tranzacțiilor, aspectele juridice și dezvoltarea afacerilor pe Internet. Cercetarea se concentrează pe importanța creării unei infrastructuri de securitate fiabile și a protecției datelor pentru funcționarea cu succes a magazinelor online și a altor platforme de comerț electronic.

Erik Brynjolfsson şi Andrew McAfee În cărțile lor "The Second Machine Age" (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014) şi "Machine, Platform, Crowd" (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017), ei explorează impactul tehnologiilor digitale asupra economiei şi afacerilor, inclusiv comerțul electronic. În The Second Machine Age, Andrew McAfee şi Erik Brynjolfsson au prezis unele dintre efectele de anvergură ale tehnologiilor digitale asupra vieților și afacerilor noastre. Au scris un ghid pentru a ajuta cititorii să profite la maximum de viitorul nostru colectiv. Autorii analizează modul în care inteligența artificială, automatizarea și modelele de afaceri pe platforme transformă comerțul electronic, creând noi oportunități pentru inovație și creștere.

Dave Chaffey "E-Business and E-Commerce Management" (Chaffey, 2019) cu coautori a editat deja a 7 ediție a manualului (prima ediție a cărții a apărut în 2002). Este nu numai un manual, dar și este un ghid cuprinzător pentru gestionarea afacerilor electronice și comerțului electronic. Chaffey subliniază importanța planificării strategice și a gestionării modelelor de afaceri digitale pentru a obține un avantaj competitiv pe piața globală de comerț electronic.

Ideile și cercetările științifice ale autorilor internaționali oferă o înțelegere profundă a comerțului electronic, a oportunităților și provocărilor sale. Lucrările autorilor precum Laudon, Hagel, Biederman, Brynjolfsson și Chaffey sunt fundamentale pentru dezvoltarea continuă a acestui domeniu. Aceste cercetări subliniază importanța inovațiilor tehnologice, gestionării strategice și asigurării securității pentru dezvoltarea de succes a comerțului electronic la nivel global.

Comerțul electronic a devenit un subiect important de studiu și în Republica Moldova, datorită dezvoltării rapide a internetului și a tehnologiilor digitale. În acest context, mai mulți autori români și moldoveni au contribuit la înțelegerea și dezvoltarea acestui domeniu prin cercetări și lucrări semnificative.

Domeniile e-business și e-commerce foarte vast au fost reflectate de la începutul mileniului III în lucrările savanților români Traian Surcel, Radu Marsanu (Surcel, Marsanu, Pocatilu, Reveiu, Alecu, & Bologa, 2005), Ion Gh. Roșca și mulți alții. Manualul "Comerțul electronic. Concepte, tehnologii și aplicații" (2000) elaborat sub redacția Ion Gh. Roșca, Cristina-Mihaela Bucur, Carmen Timofte-Stanciu, Octavian Palu, Mirela Visean este o lucrare utilă pentru înțelegerea profundă a procesului digitalizării și comerțului electronic și oferă perspective valoroase pentru viitor (Roșca, Bucur, Timofte-Stanciu, Palu, & Visean, 2000). Este un ghid complet care îmbină teoria cu practica, oferind cititorilor atât cunoștințe conceptuale, cât și abilități practice.

Cercetarea publicată de un grup de autori Valentin-Andrei Mănescu, Gheorghe Militaru, Andreea Barbu, Ramona-Alexandra Neghină, Dragoș-Georgian Ilie "E-commerce adoption in Romanian SMEs" (Mănescu, Militaru, Barbu, Neghină, & Ilie, 2020) explorează adoptarea comerțului electronic de către IMMurile din România, subliniază faptul că principalul factor de adoptare a e-commerce este legat de competitivitatea pe piață și de nevoia de inovare. Printre barierele identificate se numără costurile inițiale și lipsa competențelor digitale.

Cercetările realizate de savanții din Republica Moldova Stratan A., Belostecinic G., Şavga L. (Şavga L., Şavga G., & Surugiu, 2013), Ciobanu Gh. (Ciobanu, 2017), Bădărău E. (Bădărău, 2010) ș.a. oferă o perspectivă profundă asupra digitalizării economiei, precum și stării actuale și potențialului comerțului electronic în Republica Moldova.

Cercetările publicate sunt esențiale pentru înțelegerea modului în care digitalizarea și comerțul electronic pot fi utilizate pentru a stimula dezvoltarea economică și a spori competitivitatea întreprinderilor locale. Autori au contribuit semnificativ la înțelegerea provocărilor și oportunităților comerțului electronic, evidențiind necesitatea unei infrastructuri digitale solide și a unor politici favorabile pentru a stimula creșterea și inovarea în acest domeniu.

Transformări Digitale și comerțul electronic - aspecte teoretice. Transformarea digitală este procesul de adoptare și implementare a tehnologiei digitale pentru îmbunătățirea, modernizarea și crearea de noi produse și procese. Oferind beneficii incredibile în mediului actual de afaceri, transformarea digitală a devenit din ce în ce mai importantă pentru organizațiile care doresc să prospere si sa evoluează rapid. Pe măsură ce se adoptă din ce în ce mai mult soluțiile digitale, crește avantajul competitiv și succesul pe termen lung, deoarece prin valorificarea tehnologiei și a informațiilor bazate pe date, organizațiile pot optimiza procesele, îmbunătăți procesul decizional și spori productivitatea generală. Importanța transformării digitale constă în capacitatea rapidă de stimulare a inovării, eficientizării operațiunilor și satisfacerii nevoilor în continuă evoluție ale clienților într-o lume digitală.

Transformarile digitale care pornesc de la schimbul electronic de date (EDI) și dezvoltarea sistemelor de mesagerie electronice la sfârșitul anilor 1960, au pus baza unei noi economii -economii digitale. Însă, cu toate acestea, doar ascensiunea Internetului în anii 1990, a permis o dezvoltare de glorie a transformarii economiei și aparitiei comertului electronic, care a devenit un boom în afacerile moderne. Mai mult decât atât, implementarea tehnologiilor avansate disponibile în societate, a dezvoltat pe larg noțiunea de Economie Digitală (vezi **Figura 1.**)

Utilizarea noilor tehnologii disponibile în societate a dus la dezvoltarea Economiei Digitale și apariției de concepte noi: e-government (guvernare electronică), e-business (afacere electronică), e-commerce (comerț electronic), e-marketing (marketing electronic) etc., în care comerțul electronic i-a revenit o un rol esențial.

În acest context, comerțul electronic fiind o activitate de desfășurare a unei afaceri prin intermediul rețelei Internet, de vânzare de bunuri și servicii având loc off-line sau on-line, nu doar că stimulează creșterea economică, dar contribuie și la dezvoltarea digitalizării societății și la crearea de oportunități inovative de afaceri, schimbând fundamental modul în care companiile și consumatorii interacționează.

O definiție în accepțiune "tradițională", a ceea ce înseamnă comerțul online este cea dată de Robin Mansell: "Comerțul online înseamnă, utilizarea în rețele cu valoare adăugată a unor aplicații de tipul transferului electronic de documente, a comunicaților fax, codurilor de bare, transferului de fișiere și a poștei electronice. Extraordinara dezvoltare a interconectivității calculatoarelor în Internet, în toate segmentele societății, a condus la o tendință tot mai evidentă a companiilor de a folosi aceste rețele în aria unui nou tip de comerț, comerțul online în Internet, care să apeleze - pe lângă vechile servicii amintite – și altele noi." (Golovaci, 2021).

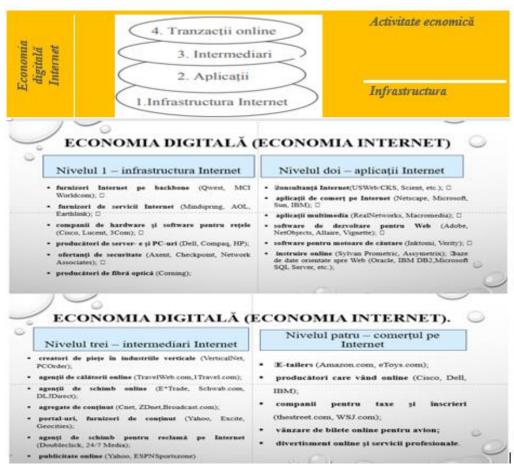


Figura 1. Nivelurile Structurii Economiei digitale

În conformitate cu definiția OCDE stabilită în 2001 și revizuită în 2009 (OCDE, 2011) a *Comerțului electronic* este: "O tranzacție de comerț electronic este vânzarea sau cumpărarea de bunuri sau servicii, efectuată prin intermediul rețelelor de calculatoare prin metode special concepute în scopul primirii sau plasării de comenzi. Bunurile sau serviciile sunt comandate prin aceste metode, dar plata și livrarea finală a bunurilor sau serviciilor nu trebuie neapărat să fie efectuate online. O tranzacție de comerț electronic poate fi efectuată între întreprinderi, gospodării, persoane fizice, guverne și alte organizații publice sau private. Sunt incluse comenzile efectuate prin intermediul internetului, extranetului sau schimbului electronic de date. Tipul este definit de metoda de plasare a comenzii. Sunt excluse comenzile efectuate prin apel telefonic, fax sau e-mail scris manual." (OECD, 2019).

Trebuie de menționat că, calificarea unei tranzacții comerciale drept comerț electronic este determinată de metoda de comandă și nu de caracteristicile produsului achiziționat, părțile implicate, modalitatea de plată sau canalul de livrare.

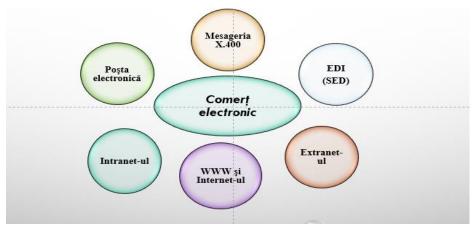


Figura 2. Componentele comerțului electronic

Sursa: elaborat de autori în baza (Şavga L., Şavga G. & Surugiu, 2013)

Comerțul electronic reprezintă, în esență, procesul de cumpărare și vânzare de bunuri și servicii și desfășurarea de activități comerciale prin intermediul unei "rețele electronice" si include include telemarketingul, publicitatea online, cumpărăturile online, promovarea afacerilor prin intermediul social media și multe altele.

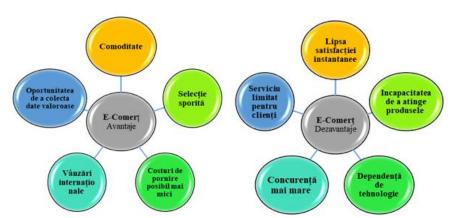


Figura 3. Avantajele și dezavantajele Comerțului electronic

Sursa: elaborat de autori în baza (Golovaci, 2021) (Şavga L., Şavga G. & Surugiu, 2013)

Fiind un model de marketing foarte efficient, E-Comerțul câștigă rapid terenul ca paradigmă de afaceri, deoarece tot mai mult și mai mult antreprenorii realizează tranzacții comerciale prin internet, site-uri web, ce oferă funcționalități rapide. Lumea afacerilor pe internet este imensă și, odată cu progresul tehnologic, perspectivele comerțului electronic sunt, de asemenea, în continuă creștere.

Impactul pozitiv enorm asupra al Comerțul electronic pe Internet reiese din două avantaje principale: \*Dispariția limitelor geografice de vânzare; \*Economii la vânzarea/cumpărarea produsului.

Cele mai principale avantaje și dezavantaje ale comerțului electronic (E-Comerț) sunt prezentate în **Figura 3.** 

Principalele inițiative și strategii guvernamentale privind Transformarea Digitală în Republica Moldova. Transformările digitale reprezintă un proces esențial pentru modernizarea și eficientizarea diferitelor sectoare economice și sociale, contribuind astfel la creșterea competitivității și la îmbunătățirea calității vieții cetățenilor. Transformarea digitală în R. Moldova este în creștere rapidă, fiind influențată de o industrie TIC puternic dezvoltată și de angajamentul guvernului. Această transformare este importantă pentru dezvoltarea comerțului electronic, în special în rândul entităților mici și mijlocii (ÎMM). Utilizarea tehnologiilor digitale, astăzi sunt o necesitate pentru afacerile care doresc să devină competitive într-o economie digitală.

Moldova a făcut pași semnificativi în dezvoltarea infrastructurii sale digitale, beneficiind de una dintre cele mai rapide conexiuni la internet din Europa de Est, ceea ce oferă o bază solidă pentru digitalizarea afacerilor, permițând ÎMM-urilor să acceseze noi piețe, să-și optimizeze operațiunile și să reducă costurile prin adoptarea soluțiilor digitale. Viziunea Guvernului asupra procesului de digitalizare este prezentată în **Strategia de transformare digitală a Republicii Moldova pentru 2023-2030**.

Obiectivele cheie ale strategiei sunt orientate pe dezvoltarea durabilă a Moldovei și sunt prezentate schematic în figura 4.

Digitalizarea în Moldova implică adoptarea pe scară largă a tehnologiilor moderne de către instituții publice, companii private și populație, în scopul de a simplifica procesele administrative, de a spori transparența și de a stimula inovația. Acest proces include dezvoltarea și implementarea serviciilor electronice, investiții semnificative în sectorul tehnologiei informației și comunicațiilor (TIC), și consolidarea infrastructurii digitale. Pentru realizarea acestora sunt preconizate o serie de acțiuni (repartizate în 11 blocuri).

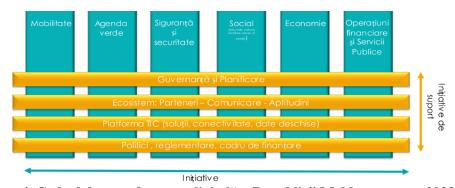


Figura 4. Cadrul de transformare digitală a Republicii Moldova pentru 2023-2030. Sursa: Republica Moldova – Strategia de transformare digitală 2023–2030

Principiile de reglementare a comerțului electronic, condițiile de furnizare a serviciilor societății informaționale, răspunderea furnizorilor de servicii și a intermediarilor, precum și principiile de susținere a cooperării între Republica Moldova și alte state în procesul de furnizare a serviciilor societății informaționale

sunt stabilite prin Legea nr. 284-XV din 22.07.2004 (Legea 284/22-07-2004). Legea privind comerțul electronic a fost modificată în martie 2023 și redenumită în "Lege privind serviciile societății informaționale", care intră în vigoare de la 1 iulie 2023. Astfel, legislația a fost ajustată în conformitate cu Acordul de Asociere cu UE/Zona de Liber Schimb Aprofundată și Cuprinzătoare a Republicii Moldova (AA/DCFTA), cu accent pe protecția datelor cu caracter personal.

Prezenta lege definește comerțul electronic — "ca activitatea de comerț a persoanelor fizice și juridice de vânzare a bunurilor, executare a lucrărilor sau prestare a serviciilor, desfășurată prin intermediul mijloacelor electronice, mijloacelor de comunicare la distanță, contractelor la distanță;" (Legea 284/22-07-2004).

De asemenea, legea prevede că dreptul de a efectua comerț electronic se obține din momentul înregistrării la ASP a persoanei juridice sau a întreprinzătorului individual în condițiile Legii nr.220/2007 privind înregistrarea de stat a persoanelor juridice și a întreprinzătorilor individuali.

În calitate de *subiecți ai comerțului electronic* pot fi persoanele fizice și juridice, inclusiv străine, indiferent de tipul de proprietate și forma de organizare juridică. *Obiecte ale comerțului electronic sunt*: 1. bunurile ce pot fi înstrăinate conform prevederilor legale; 2. lucrările; 3. serviciile.

Analiza evoluției comerțului electronic în Republica Moldova. Comerțul electronic reprezntă astăzi un element principal al dezvoltării economiei digitale, și oferă noi oportunități de creștere atât pe plan intern cât și pe plan internațional. În Republica Moldova comerțul electronic a început să se dezvolte la sfârșitul anilor 1990, odată cu creșterea numărului de utilizatori Internet, iar primele magazine online au apărut la începutul anilor 2000. Sectorul comerțului electronic din Moldova s-a extins pe măsură ce accesul la internet devine din ce în ce mai disponibil. Pandemia de COVID-19 a subliniat necesitatea dezvoltării plăților online și a sistemelor bancare online.

Conform Ministerul Dezvoltării Economice și Digitalizării din numărul total al plăților fără numerar efectuate de către cetățenii Republicii Moldova în anul 2021-2022, în special cele prin intermediul platformelor de comerț electronic (129,5 mil. operațiuni), 15 mil. dintre acestea sau 11,5% au fost efectuate fără prezența fizică a cardului, pe platforme de comerț electronic, cu cardurile de plată emise în RM (MDED, 2022). Dintre acestea, 3,3 milioane operațiuni, în valoare de 1,6 mld. lei, au fost efectuate pe platforme de e-comerț în Republica Moldova și 11,7 milioane operațiuni, în valoare de 5,0 md. lei, efectuate pe platforme de e-comerț peste hotare. Atât numărul cât și valoarea plăților au înregistrat creșteri de 36,3 la sută și, respectiv 37,5 la sută, față de anul 2020 (MDED, 2022).

În cazul plăților online pe e-shop-urile din Moldova, în primele trei luni din 2024, valoarea medie a tranzacției de comerț electronic a fost de aproximativ 32,3 euro (fără TVA) (AmCham, 2024).

Conform Raportului a pieței comerțului electronic al Republicii Moldova (AmCham, 2024) în structura vânzărilor de bunuri prin E-comerț pondera majoră 50% o dețin Electrocasnicele și piesele auto. Cele mai populare puncte de vânzare

electronice identificate care vând produse tangibile în Moldova sunt e-shop-rile și e-stores (vezi Fig. 5).

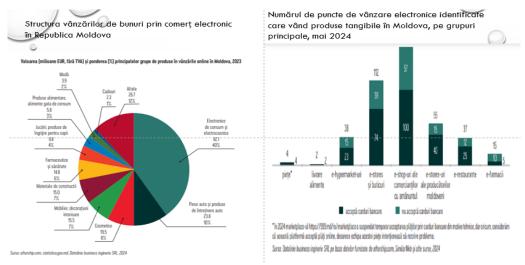


Figura 5. Structura vânzărilor de bunuri prin comerț electronic în Republica Moldova și Numărul de puncte de vânzare electronice identificate care vând produse tangibile în Moldova, pe grupuri principale, mai 2024

Din numărul total de platforme de comerț electronic în Republica Moldova jumătate vând produse tangibile și jumătate oferă servicii comerciale, însă aproximativ 20% de platforme moldovenești de comerț electronic nu acceptă plăți cu cardul bancar.

Evoluția platformelor de comerț electronic în Republica Moldova este în creștere de la 764 la 1199 la sfârșitul anului 2023 cu o creștere de 435 față de anul precedent, iar față de anul 2020 numărul platformelor s-a dublat (AmCham, 2024).

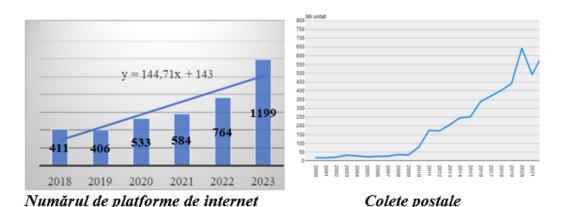


Figura 6. Numărul de platforme de internet ce acceptă plăți cu cardul bancar în Moldova și Expedieri poștale.

Sursa: (BNM, 2024)

Creșterea rapidă a fost impulsionată de două probleme grave: Pandemia Covid în anul 2020 și războiul din Ucraina în 2022. Conform unui studiu efectuat arată că în anul 2022, când cererea pentru relocare a profesioniștilor IT din regiune și nu doar era foarte înaltă, și Moldova a avut o șansă mare de a impulsiona un boom în afacerile electronice, nu a pregătit o ofertă de țară, ce a fost un rateu. Acest fapt, ar spori atractivitatea RM în calitate de destinație țintă pentru IT profesioniștinumiți și nomazii digitali. Conform studiului (Legea pentru modificarea unor acte normative (dezvoltarea economiei digitale) Proiect), la un număr estimat de cel puțin 1000 de nomazi digitali, impactul pozitiv asupra bugetului va fi prin taxe directe și indirecte de min. 100 mln. lei.

Din numărul total al plăților fără numerar (129,5 milioane operațiuni), 15 milioane de operațiuni au fost efectuate fără prezența fizică a cardului, pe platforme de comerț electronic, cu cardurile de plată emise în Republica Moldova, ceea ce constituie 11,5%. un studiu realizat de Camera de Comerț Americană din Moldova constată ca locuitorii de la sate nu prea fac cumpărături online, 80% din populația în vârstă nu utilizează serviciile oferite de magazinele online (Republica Moldova – Strategia de transformare digitală 2023–2030).

Concluzii. Transformările digitale și dezvoltarea continua a comerțului electronic în Moldova reprezintă un pas crucial spre un viitor mai prosper și mai competitiv, având potențialul de a transforma radical modul în care trăim și lucrăm. Investițiile continue în digitalizarea societății, prin tehnologii și infrastructură, precum și educația digitală, vor juca un rol esențial în atingerea acestor obiective ambițioase. În ultimii ani, Republica Moldova a înregistrat progrese semnificative în direcția digitalizării, reflectând o tranziție importantă spre o economie bazată pe tehnologie. Transformările digitale reprezintă un proces esențial pentru modernizarea și eficientizarea diferitelor sectoare economice și sociale, contribuind astfel la creșterea competitivității și la îmbunătățirea calității vieții cetățenilor.

Reieșind din cercetarea efectuată considerăm că, în următorii trei ani, dezvoltarea pieței de comerț electronic din Moldova va depinde de creșterea veniturilor disponibile ale populației, precum și de eforturile principalilor retaileri online de a-și extinde și diferenția portofoliile de produse, de a îmbunătăți experiența de cumpărare pe internet a clienților și de a oferi prețuri mai mici decât în comerțul cu amănuntul offline. Un beneficiu pentru populația Moldovei este lansarea, la începutul anului 2024, sistemului de plăți instantanee **MIA** care poate reduce costul tranzacțiilor de comerț electronic în țară și preconizăm că va contribui la dezvoltarea pieței (AmCham, 2024).

Se așteaptă ca impactul factorilor de creștere a pieței anteriori analizați, inclusiv lansarea de noi platforme de comerț electronic și extinderea operatorilor de livrare pe "ultimul kilometru" în Moldova, să se epuizeze deja în acest an.

Nu ne așteptăm ca în 2024-2025 în Moldova să fie lansate proiecte revoluționare de comerț electronic, precum și un număr mare de noi magazine electronice pentru a stimula vânzările pe internet, dacă nu vom avansa în procesul de integrare europeană. Transformării digitale vor permite crearea unei societăți digitale în Moldova, în care serviciile electronice să fie accesibile tuturor

cetățenilor. Acest lucru presupune nu doar furnizarea de servicii online, ci și asigurarea unui mediu digital sigur și incluziv, în care datele personale sunt protejate și securitatea cibernetică este prioritară.

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# ASSESSING AND ENHANCING CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING IN MOLDOVA: A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK ALIGNED WITH EU STANDARDS

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**Abstract.** Assessing children's well-being is a multifaceted process involving evaluation of various dimensions of child's life, including health, education, social relationships, and economic resources. The paper explores key methodological approaches to assessing children's well-being, with a focus on harmonizing Moldova's indicators with European Union (EU) standards. The study reviews 8 approaches, including multidimensional indicators, child rights-based measures, quality of life assessments, economic resources evaluations, health and development metrics, and the participatory approach. In addition, it outlines the necessary steps for aligning Moldova's child-related statistics with EU frameworks, such as the European Statistical System (ESS) and the Child Well-being Index (CWI). The paper concludes with analysis of Moldova's recent trends, highlighting increase in children with disabilities and changes in vaccination rates, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive policies and specialized services. By adopting harmonized methodologies and implementing targeted interventions, Moldova can significantly improve the well-being of child population and align with EU standards. The paper was developed within the framework of Subprogram 030101 "Strengthening the resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability of the economy of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the accession process to the European Union", institutional funding.

**Keywords:** child well-being, health indicators, education, Republic of Moldova, EU

standards, morbidity, vaccination, socioeconomic factors, child protection

JEL: 115, 124, 130, J13 UDC: 364.658-053.2

**Introduction.** Children's well-being is a crucial indicator of a society's overall health and development, encompassing a broad spectrum of factors that influence the quality of life for younger generations. As Moldova seeks to align its child well-being indicators with European Union (EU) standards, it becomes increasingly important to adopt comprehensive and harmonized methodologies for measuring these indicators. Understanding children's well-being involves examining not only the material conditions of their lives, such as economic resources and access to education, but also their social relationships, emotional health, and opportunities for development. This paper explores various methodological approaches to assessing children's well-being, particularly in the context of Moldova's efforts to harmonize with EU standards. By reviewing multidimensional indicators, child rights-based measures, and quality of life approaches, the study aims to provide a robust framework for evaluating children's well-being in Moldova. The paper also discusses the steps for Moldova to adopt EU statistical frameworks and improve children's living conditions, including the vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities and those facing economic hardships. Through a concerted effort by government, NGOs, and communities, Moldova can create a healthier, more supportive environment for its children, ensuring their development aligns with EU standards and best practices.

**Literature review.** Assessing children's well-being is a complex process that involves multiple dimensions of a child's life. This literature review summarizes five key sources that contribute to the methodological understanding of children's well-being. Bethell et al. (2017) focus on assessing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and how these experiences impact both child and family well-being. The study highlights the importance of evaluating children's risk factors for trauma and stress through population-based and clinical research. It emphasizes cumulative risk scoring as a valid approach for identifying children at risk and promoting resilience in families (Bethell et al., 2017). Forrest et al. (2012) introduce the Patient-Reported Outcome Measurement Information System (PROMIS®) for children and youth, a tool designed to measure health outcomes from the child's perspective. Their study emphasizes the growing need for patient-reported outcomes (PROs) in pediatric psychology, and how these can offer new insights into children's physical and psychological health (Forrest et al., 2012). Bevans et al. (2010) expand on child-reported outcomes, focusing on the development of reliable instruments that assess health, illness, and well-being in children aged 8-17. Their work stresses the importance of developmentally sensitive methods to capture accurate self-reports from children, acknowledging the challenges posed by children's cognitive development (Bevans et al., 2010). Brockevelt et al. (2018) present a qualitative study that examines children's subjective well-being within an ecological and relationship-based model. Their findings emphasize the significance of meaningful social connections and engagement in activities for children's well-being, advocating for a broader perspective that includes social and emotional domains (Brockevelt et al., 2018). Lastly, Axford et al. (2005) focus on the evaluation of children's services and interventions, introducing a method based on research evidence and logic modeling. Their work highlights need for experimental and non-experimental methods to assess the effectiveness of child interventions, underscoring the importance of tailoring services based on individual child needs (Axford et al., 2005). The reviewed studies demonstrate a broad range of methodological approaches to assessing children's well-being, from evaluating adverse childhood experiences to integrating subjective well-being within ecological models. These studies underscore the importance of objective and subjective measures and the need for developmentally appropriate tools that account for children's diverse life experiences.

**Methodological approaches to assessing children's well-being.** From the perspective of harmonizing the key indicators of children's living standards in Moldova with EU standards, there are several methodological approaches to assessing children's well-being (*Figure 1*).

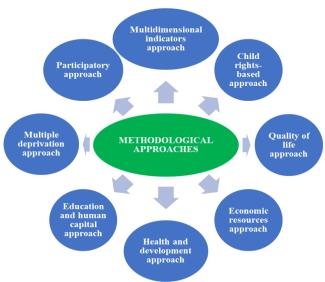


Figure 1. **Methodological approaches to assessing children's well-being**Source: Elaborated by the author

1) The multidimensional indicators approach recognizes that children's well-being cannot be measured by a single indicator or dimension. Instead, multiple aspects of a child's life are considered, such as health, education, housing, household income, safety, social and emotional relationships, and access to cultural and recreational resources. The Child Material and Social Deprivation Index (C-MSDI) is an indicator used by Eurostat that reflects this approach, measuring children's material and social deprivation by assessing their access to essential

goods and social activities important for their development. It is applied through data collection from national or regional surveys, which are then compared to identify differences and assess progress or regress in various dimensions of wellbeing.

- 2) The child rights-based approach relies on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and focuses on assessing the respect for children's fundamental rights, such as the right to education, health, protection against violence and exploitation, and the right to participate in decisions affecting them. The Child Rights Index is an example of an index representing this approach, evaluating how countries respect and implement children's rights. This index may include subindices for education, health, social protection, and participation rights. It is implemented by monitoring children's rights using governmental data and NGO reports, combined with periodic evaluations of legislation and programs dedicated to children.
- 3) The quality-of-life approach focuses on measuring children's overall satisfaction with their lives, considering both objective factors (income, health, education) and subjective factors (life satisfaction, happiness, social relationships). A relevant indicator in this regard is the Child Well-Being Index (CWI), developed by UNICEF, which measures children's overall well-being based on a set of indicators reflecting their quality of life. The data used are taken from opinion surveys among children and parents, combined with statistical data on health, education, and living conditions.
- 4) The economic resources approach focuses on assessing the economic resources available to children and their families. This approach measures children's well-being through household income, access to essential goods and services, and the level of social protection. The Child Poverty Index reflects this approach by measuring the proportion of children living below the poverty line, thus assessing their access to sufficient economic resources. It is applied through the analysis of economic data and household income, evaluating the impact of poverty on children's well-being and identifying vulnerable groups.
- 5) The health and development approach assesses children's well-being by measuring physical and mental health, as well as cognitive and emotional development. A relevant indicator for this approach is the Child Health and Development Index, which includes indicators such as infant mortality, nutrition, access to medical care, psychomotor development, and mental health status. Calculating this indicator requires the collection of health data through national health systems, surveys, and clinical assessments, as well as the evaluation of development through standardized tests and observations in schools and care centers.
- 6) The education and human capital approach focuses on measuring access to education and its quality, as well as long-term educational outcomes, including the skills and abilities acquired by children. The Child Education Index evaluates school enrollment rates, academic performance, graduation rates, and access to educational resources. It is calculated based on data obtained from the analysis of

educational statistics, the evaluation of standardized tests, and the monitoring of educational progress over the years of study.

- 7) The multiple deprivation approach identifies children who face multiple forms of deprivation, such as lack of access to education, health, adequate housing, and food security. The Child Multidimensional Deprivation Index (CMDI) measures children's deprivation across multiple dimensions to identify those children facing the most severe deprivations. Survey and administrative data are used to construct multidimensional deprivation profiles and determine the incidence and severity of deprivation among children.
- 8) The participatory approach directly involves children in the process of assessing their well-being, to better reflect their personal perspectives and experiences. This can include participatory methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and direct consultations with children. An example of this is the Children's Voices Initiative, a participatory evaluation project where children are directly asked about their well-being and the challenges they face in their daily lives. This approach is implemented by organizing consultation sessions with children, facilitating discussions in schools and communities, and integrating their feedback into evaluation reports and educational policies.

There are several steps to allow the harmonization of child-related statistics with EU standards (**Figure 2**):

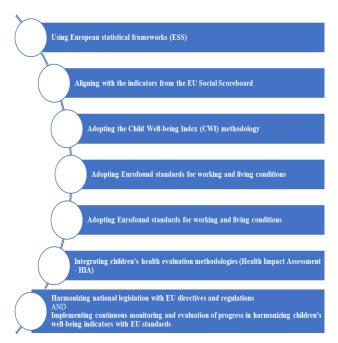


Figure 2. Steps to allow the harmonization of child-related statistics with EU standards

*Source: Elaborated by the author* 

a) Using European statistical frameworks (ESS). The European Statistical System (ESS) is a partnership between Eurostat and national statistical institutes of the EU member states. ESS provides the framework and methodology for

collecting harmonized statistical data at the European level, allowing the comparison of indicators between member states. Moldova must adopt the ESS methodology for data collection and reporting, which involves aligning the definitions and categories used in data collection with those used by the ESS. Statistical specialists need to be trained in the use of ESS tools and methodologies to ensure proper data collection and interpretation. It is necessary to integrate specific ESS surveys, such as EU-SILC, which collects detailed data on living conditions, including income, poverty, and social exclusion, providing a solid basis for analyzing children's well-being compared to EU standards.

- b) Aligning with the indicators from the EU Social Scoreboard. The EU Social Scoreboard monitors member states' performance in terms of social justice, including specific indicators for children's well-being, such as poverty, access to education, and health. Moldova needs to evaluate its existing indicators of children's well-being and identify discrepancies with the Social Scoreboard standards. It is necessary to develop an action plan to align national indicators with those in the EU Social Scoreboard, including legislative changes and specific policies, and to implement a continuous monitoring system to track progress in achieving the set objectives and adjust strategies based on developments.
- c) Adopting the Child Well-being Index (CWI) methodology. The Child Well-being Index (CWI) is a tool for measuring children's well-being, assessing multiple dimensions such as health, education, housing, and social relationships. The CWI allows a comprehensive assessment of children's well-being and its comparison at the international level. It is necessary to establish specific dimensions of children's well-being to be measured in accordance with the CWI methodology and to implement a robust data collection system for each CWI dimension, ensuring that the data is relevant and comparable at the European level.
- d) Adopting Eurofound standards for working and living conditions. Eurofound is an EU agency that provides research and information on working and living conditions in Europe. Eurofound standards are used to assess the quality of life, including the working conditions of parents and their impact on children. It is necessary to evaluate the existing Eurofound standards and identify those relevant to assessing children's well-being in Moldova, integrating them into national policies by adapting national policies to meet these standards, including regulations on work-life balance for parents, and implementing these standards and monitoring their effects on children's well-being, with necessary adjustments along the way.
- e) Integrating children's health evaluation methodologies (Health Impact Assessment HIA). Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a methodology used to evaluate the potential impact of policies, programs, and projects on the health of the population, including children. Integrating HIA methodologies can ensure that health and education policies in Moldova are aligned with EU standards. It is necessary to train evaluation teams by preparing expert teams to use the HIA methodology to assess the impact of policies on children's health and to apply HIA in the policy-making process, ensuring that all legislative initiatives and projects are evaluated from the perspective of their impact on children's health.

- f) Harmonizing national legislation with EU directives and regulations is essential to ensure the compatibility of child protection, education, and health policies with European standards. It is necessary to identify differences between national legislation and EU directives in the field of child protection and education and to develop and adopt the necessary changes in national legislation to align it with EU requirements and standards, and to monitor the implementation of new regulations and evaluate their impact on children's well-being.
- g) Implementing continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress in harmonizing children's well-being indicators with EU standards is essential to ensure an efficient and sustainable process. This requires the development of a national monitoring framework that includes key performance indicators for children's well-being, the establishment of a system for periodic data collection and analysis to evaluate progress in harmonizing indicators, the publication of monitoring reports, and the use of these reports to adjust policies and strategies based on the results obtained.

Identifying the factors that impact the well-being of children in the Republic of Moldova is essential for developing policies and interventions that can improve the living conditions of this vulnerable population. In this context, children's wellbeing is a complex concept, influenced by a wide range of economic, social, educational, and health factors. The level of family income influences children's access to essential resources such as food, clothing, education, and medical services. Families with low incomes may struggle to provide children with an adequate standard of living. The stability and security of parental employment contribute to the economic stability of the family, which has a direct impact on children's well-being. Access to quality education is a crucial factor for children's intellectual and social development. Lack of access to education or poor-quality education can limit children's future opportunities. Participation in cultural, sports, and extracurricular educational activities contributes to children's social and intellectual development. Access to adequate medical care, including preventive services, influences children's overall health. Factors such as the availability of pediatricians and vaccination coverage are important indicators. Access to a balanced and healthy diet is essential for the optimal growth and development of children. Malnutrition can have long-term negative effects on both physical and mental health. Living conditions, including safety, available space, and access to essential utilities, play an important role in children's well-being. A healthy living environment, including access to green spaces and a safe community, contributes to children's physical and mental well-being. Stable and harmonious family relationships provide children with a sense of security and emotional support, which is essential for their development. Social protection programs, including child allowances and assistance for vulnerable families, can compensate for economic deficiencies and ensure access to essential resources. Budget allocations for education, health, and social protection directly influence children's access to essential services and, consequently, their well-being. The implementation and enforcement of child rights protection legislation are fundamental for ensuring a safe and fair environment for children's development. Community support,

including access to community services and support networks, contributes to children's well-being by providing them with opportunities for socialization and development. A safe community environment, free from violence or other risks, is essential for children's physical and mental health. Parental migration for work can affect children's emotional stability, but remittances can improve the family's economic situation and, therefore, the child's well-being. The integration of migrant children into the educational system and the community is crucial to ensure equal opportunities and access to resources. Identifying and analyzing these factors enables the development of specific policies and programs aimed at improving the level of children's well-being in the Republic of Moldova, aligning it with European standards. A concerted effort by the government, non-governmental organizations, and the community can contribute to creating a safer, healthier, and more equitable environment for all children in the country.

Recent trends in the situation of children's well-being in the Republic of Moldova. Between 2020 and 2022, the Republic of Moldova recorded a significant increase in the number of children with disabilities, a problem that directly affects the well-being of the most vulnerable members of society. According to official data, the number of children with disabilities increased from 1,243 in 2020 to 1,583 in 2022, representing an increase of approximately 27.4%. This rise highlights a growing need for specialized services and integration programs to ensure these children have access to education, healthcare, and social activities adapted to their needs. Among the categories of disabilities, mental and behavioral disorders saw the largest increase, with a 75.2% rise, from 237 cases in 2020 to 415 cases in 2022. These data are alarming and indicate an urgent need for interventions in the area of children's mental health. Congenital malformations, deformities, and chromosomal abnormalities also increased significantly, from 312 cases in 2020 to 377 in 2022, representing a 20.8% rise. These figures underscore the necessity for more effective preventive interventions and prenatal and postnatal monitoring programs. Regarding childhood vaccination, coverage in the Republic of Moldova remained high, although some notable declines were recorded in 2022. For example, coverage for the tuberculosis vaccine (BCG) dropped from 98% in 2020 to 96% in 2022. Similarly, coverage for the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) decreased from 97% in 2020 to 94% in 2022. An analysis of child morbidity shows a significant increase in cases of infections with Salmonella, Escherichia coli, and enteritis, with increases of up to 78.7% for Escherichia coli infections and 71.5% for enteritis. Additionally, the incidence of respiratory tuberculosis increased by 145.5%, signaling an urgent need for intervention in this area. On the other hand, certain infectious diseases saw significant decreases, such as COVID-19 (-97.9%) and influenza (-96.5%), reflecting the effects of vaccination campaigns and preventive measures implemented during the pandemic. These changes may have serious long-term consequences, contributing to the emergence of outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. In the area of education and cultural activities for children, the Republic of Moldova experienced both increases and decreases. For example, the number of extracurricular educational institutions, such as creativity centers, increased from 82 in 2020 to 87 in 2022, reflecting greater interest in educational and recreational activities. However, the number of libraries for children decreased from 35 in 2020 to 32 in 2022, and the number of youth tourist centers dropped from 15 in 2020 to 13 in 2022. In terms of children's participation in cultural activities, the data shows an increase in the number of children attending libraries, from 28,500 in 2020 to 31,200 in 2022, representing a 9.5% increase. Conversely, the number of children participating in activities organized by youth tourist centers decreased from 8,200 in 2020 to 7,600 in 2022, indicating a 7.3% decline.

Conclusions. The analysis of children's well-being in the Republic of Moldova between 2020 and 2022 reveals a mix of progress and challenges. A significant increase in the number of children with disabilities, particularly in mental and behavioral disorders, highlights the urgent need for specialized health and social services. While overall vaccination coverage remains high, slight declines in immunization rates for key vaccines such as BCG and MMR are concerning, particularly in the context of rising infections like respiratory tuberculosis. Education and cultural activities for children have shown both improvements, with an increase in extracurricular institutions, and declines, such as the reduction in the number of libraries and youth tourist centers. These trends underscore the importance of ensuring continued investment in educational and cultural infrastructure, especially in rural areas. The economic and social factors influencing children's well-being, such as family income, access to quality education, healthcare, and a safe living environment, remain crucial areas for policy development. The increase in poverty-related illnesses and the rising number of children facing multiple deprivations point to the need for targeted interventions aimed at reducing inequalities and ensuring that all children have access to essential services.

Given the increase in children with disabilities, particularly those with mental and behavioral disorders, it is essential to expand specialized services, including mental health support, rehabilitation programs, and inclusive education. Strengthening partnerships between government, NGOs, and local communities will be key to achieving this. The rise in congenital malformations and infectious diseases, coupled with slight declines in vaccination coverage, calls for stronger preventive healthcare measures. This includes reinforcing prenatal and postnatal care, improving vaccination campaigns, and expanding public health awareness to address emerging health challenges like respiratory tuberculosis. To prevent vaccine-preventable diseases, Moldova should strengthen its vaccination programs, ensuring that coverage does not continue to decline. Continuous monitoring and campaigns to raise awareness among parents about the importance of childhood immunization are necessary. To ensure equitable access to educational and cultural resources, the government should prioritize investment in maintaining and expanding libraries, youth centers, and extracurricular activities, especially in rural areas. This investment is crucial for children's intellectual and social development. Social protection measures should be expanded to support vulnerable families,

particularly those with children at risk of multiple deprivations. The government should enhance financial assistance programs, provide subsidies for healthcare and education, and ensure that all children have access to basic living standards. To better understand and address the challenges facing children in Moldova, continuous monitoring and evaluation systems need to be developed. Adopting harmonized methodologies, such as the European Statistical System (ESS) and Child Well-being Index (CWI), will ensure that Moldova's data collection aligns with EU standards, allowing for more effective policy formulation. Address the specific needs of children from migrant families by developing integration programs that focus on their emotional well-being, educational support, and social inclusion. Support services should also be extended to families relying on remittances, ensuring their economic stability and children's well-being. Engage communities in the support and development of child-centered programs, such as safe living environments, access to cultural and recreational activities, and social networks. Encouraging community participation will help create more inclusive and supportive environments for children's growth. By addressing these recommendations, the Republic of Moldova can improve the well-being of its children, reduce disparities, and ensure that its child population thrives in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment.

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### ROMÂNIA LA GRANIȚA DINTRE ECHITATE ȘI INECHITATE SOCIALĂ A PERSOANELOR CU DIZABILITĂTI

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**Abstract.** Disability remains quite a controversial concept for modern society both through its dynamics and through the challenges of legislative, social, and economic nature. Although it has been present since ancient times in human communities, disability has undergone a series of transformations that currently require us to integrate it into a multidisciplinary context with multiple implications of both a medical and socio-economic nature. Although there is an attempt to create a universally valid approach to disability at the European level, we still witness its reduction to a purely medical indicator, ignoring elements such as: social integration, economic security for persons with disabilities or active participation in the life of the community. The current article highlights the actual challenges of disability in Romania. Methodologically, the phenomenon of disability will be approached using existing data at the national and European level in direct relation to the legislation in the field. It is known that at the European level there is a desire for progress regarding the social inclusion of persons with disabilities through specially created programs in this regard. Although, officially, Romania offer support to disabled people, according to Law 448 from 2006, social and professional inclusion is often achieved with difficulty and the only forms of support for disabled people are the social benefits and a series of tax exemptions according to the legislation in force. Currently, there are approximately 900,000 persons with disabilities in Romania, according to data from the National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. On the long term, this will imply high costs for the Romanian state authorities.

**Keywords:** inequity, equity, social inclusion, disability, legislation, discrimination, poverty

**JEL:** 114, 118, 138, J14, K38

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Introducere. De-a lungul istoriei dizabilitatea a avut ca și punct de plecare atât persoana afectată de boală, cât și perspectiva expertului care interacționează cu persoana cu handicap (Bredberg, 1999, p.190). Pentru Statele Unite și Europa de Vest studiul dizabilității este relativ tânăr și ar putea fi interpretat într-un mod eronat cum că dizabilitatea ar putea crea ideea unei ierarhi în societatea modernă (Disability History, 2003). Instituționalizarea persoanelor cu deficiențe în

societățile moderne occidentale a avut un efect semnificativ asupra imaginii de sine a persoanelor afectate, precum și asupra modului în care ceilalți le-au perceput. Există o teorie conform căreia instituționalizarea persoanelor cu dizabilități în societatea occidentală s-a produs începând cu secolul al XIX-lea, iar prezența nesegregată a persoanelor cu deficiențe în comunitățile lor de origine, adesea în societățile mici, nu a condus la formarea unei "identități cu handicap" pentru individ (Metzler, 2005, p.7). Spre deosebire de perspectiva instituțională care uneori este neutră și depersonalizată, perspectiva socială poate reprezenta un răspuns cu privire la persoanele cu dizabilități în cadrul societății și implică interacțiunea directă chiar dacă de multe ori răspunsul nu este unul favorabil pentru persoanele încadrate în grad de handicap (Bredberg, 1999, p.194).

Rolul de "bolnav" nu de puține ori a plasat persoanele cu dizabilități într-un rol pasiv, care nu le permite să controleze aspectele esențiale ale serviciilor de care au nevoie sau chiar alegerile pe care trebuie să le facă în propria lor viață. Mișcarile pentru drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități s-au născut din dorința acestor persoane de a-și redefini propria viața și de a prelua controlul asupra propriilor lor destine (Hirsch, 1995, p.5). Deși sociologii folosesc diferite definiții ale mișcărilor sociale, mișcarea pentru drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități îndeplinește majoritatea criteriilor care susțin schimbarea socială. Turner și Killian, definesc o mișcare socială ca "o colectivitate care acționează împreună pentru a promova sau a opune rezistență la schimbarea socială în grupul de apartenență". În astfel de colectivități, schimbarea calității de membru sau a conducerii grupului este determinată în mare parte de răspunsul informal al membrilor. Mai mult, mișcările sociale constau, în general, într-o unitate inter-relaționată și co-activă a persoanelor și obiectivelor, care necesită o activitate susținută, strategică, de leadership și identitate de grup (Scotch, 1998, p.381).

Literatura de specialitate, delimitări conceptuale. Dizabilitatea rămâne unul dintre cele mai discutate concepte de către specialisti. Indiferent că ne pozitionăm în apanajul stiintelor sociale sau a celor medicale invaliditatea rămâne un subiect de interes comun. Dincolo de aspectele pur biologice, invaliditatea ajunge să fie integrată socio-cultural. Integrarea socială are la bază ideea socializării în cadrul unor tipare culturale specifice care ajung să definească ceea ce este normal sau atipic, precum și clasificarea lucrurilor sau a persoanelor ca fiind diferite (Barnes & Mercer, p.516). Atunci când cultura este privită ca un set de cunostinte necesare pentru convietuirea în societate, nu putem să nu observăm diferențele cognitiv culturale dintre oameni, precum și gradul de implicare într-o cultură în detrimentul alteia. De asemenea, unii pot beneficia de o mai mare adaptabilitate culturală, în timp ce altii pot fi mai putin capabili datorită incapacității temporare sau permanente (McDermott & Varenne, p.326). Există tendinta de a considera că absenta vizibilă a unui handicap fizic ar putea diminua impactul negativ al dizabilității, deoarece ar permite unei persoane să evite stigmatizarea asociată cu un handicap vizibil (Davis, 2005, p.154). În anii 1930 și începutul anilor 1940, sociologi precum Michael M. Davis și Bernard J. Stern, au fost preocupați de sănătate, boală, dar și de sisteme medicale în ansamblu.

Anumite programe economice dezvoltate de tipul *new deal* care aveau scopul de a estompa starea de sărăcie și sănătatea precară, puneau accentul pe bunăstarea social, cu ajutorul specialiștilor din mai multe domenii. Astfel, este consolidat Institutului Național de Sănătate la sfârșitul anilor 1940 în America și înființarea Institutului Național de Sănătate Mintală, care a reunit cercetători din științele biologice și sociale, iar academicieni din domenii diferite ajung să lucreze împreună (Hollingshead, 1973). Atunci când folosim conceptele de sine și identitate pentru a descrie realitatea fizică și socială a bolii, evidențiem modul în care boala cronică transformă percepția de sine și a celorlalți, schimbări care afectează felul în care suntem văzuți și definiți în cadrul social (Kelly, 1996).

Percepția socială a persoanelor cu dizabilități este mult influențată de abordarea acestor persoane în mass-media. Pentru perioada anilor 1990, absența termenilor alternativi pentru persoanele cu handicap a fost remarcabilă. Mai mult decât atât, termenul de dizabilitate nu a fost folosit în presa scrisă românească, până în anul 1992. Au fost ani de zile când, deși au existat, la nivelul societății românești, persoane cu deficiențe intelectuale sau de auz, acestea nu au fost prezentate de către presă, deoarece sunt dizabilități mai puțin vizibile, iar impactul emoțional pentru cititori este mult diminuat (Ciot & Van, 2010, p.530).

Metodologia cercetării. Luând în considerare contextul politic și socioeconomic al dizabilității în România, metoda utilizată pentru acest studiu a fost preponderent bazată pe analiza de conținut, prin utilizarea datelor oficiale statistice și a legislației specifice diu domeniu. Ținând cont de expansiunea fenomenului este aproape imposibil să conturăm o imagine 100% reală a cazurilor raportate către autorități, multe dintre persoanele eligibile pentru a fi încadrate în grad de handicap aflându-se în proces ce evaluare medico-socială în prezent.

Analiza și interpretarea datelor. Conform datelor recente, aproximativ 27% dintre cetățenii Uniunii Europene cu vârsta de peste 16 ani suferă de o formă de handicap. Aceasta înseamnă aproximativ 101 milioane de persoane, sau un adult din patru. Estimările Eurostat arată că dizabilitățile includ o gamă variată de limitări fizice, mentale și senzoriale, cu impact semnificativ asupra accesului la servicii și resurse. În strategia Comisiei Europene, privind persoanele cu handicap este implementat programul prin care în perioada 2021-2030, orice persoană cu dizabilități din zona UE, poate solicita cardul european pentru dizabilitate. Prin intermediul acestuia se va urmări recunoașterea reciprocă între state, permițând persoanelor cu dizabilități să beneficieze de dreptul la liberă circulație, incluziune socială și non-discriminare, prin accesul egal la educație, integrarea în muncă, cultură, justiție, sport sau turism (Comisia Europeană, 2021).

Conceptul despre dizabilitate a fost conturat în jurul a două modele principale, unul medical și altul social. Modelul medical, evaluează starea de sănătate a unei persoane și cauzele directe de boală care pot genera dizabilitate. Modelul social se concentrează pe barierele create de societate. Aceste bariere pot fi de natură fizică sau pot consta în restricții sociale care împiedică dezvoltarea sau utilizarea abilităților individului, fie ele abilități fizice, sociale sau profesionale

(Lecerf, 2022, p.2). În anul 1975, Declarația Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Handicap a definit termenul de persoană handicapată ca fiind o persoană care nu își poate asigura în mod complet sau parțial necesitățile unei vieți normale, individuale sau sociale, din cauza unei deficiente, fie congenitale sau dobândite, care afectează capacitățile sale fizice sau mentale. Noțiunea de handicap, poate fi analizată sub trei aspecte: infirmitatea, incapacitatea și handicapul. Infirmitatea sau deficiența este, în principal, caracterizată printr-o disfuncție a unei structuri sau funcții anatomice, fiziologice sau psihice la nivelul organismului. Pe de altă parte, incapacitatea se referă la limitarea functională în activitățile unei persoane, cauzată de o deficientă. Aceasta distinctie este esentială pentru a întelege modul în care dizabilitățile afectează viața individului și interacțiunile acestuia cu mediul înconjurător, având implicații semnificative în domeniul sănătății, educației și integrării sociale. Handicapul este cel mai adesea definit ca fiind situația în care o anumită persoană se confruntă cu un dezavantaj cauzat de o deficientă sau o dizabilitate, care ridică bariere în îndeplinirea sarcinilor cotidiene (Neagoe, 2014, pp.8-9). Adoptarea unor etichete mai ales în abordarea medicală a dizabilității a generat unele conotatii negative, în legătură cu dizabilitatea, ignorând perspectiva ideii de persoană cu dizabilități. În strânsă legătură cu acest model, intervențiile nu au alt scop decât să adapteze și să ajusteze persoanele cu deficiențe, încercând să le apropie cât mai mult de ceea ce este considerat normal (Manea, 2006, p.41).

În România, dizabilitatea este reglementată încă din anii 70 când, prin intermediul codului muncii, se facea referire la calificarea și plasarea în câmpul muncii a persoanelor handicapate (Codul muncii 1972, art.148). Desigur istoria nea aratat o altă față a comunismului, în raport cu persoanele cu dizabilități. Potrivit rapoartelor UNICEF, în cele peste 700 de orfelinate existente în timpul regimului communist, existau peste 100.000 de copii institutionalizati ascunsi de ochii societătii. După caderea comunismului, au apărut tot mai multe informatii în spatiul public, în special prin intermediul presei străine, care au publicat mai multe reportaje despre conditiile precare din orfelinatele Romaniei. Aceste reportaje au scos la iveală o realitate tristă, 60% dintre copiii cu handicap abandonați în maternități și internați în aceste locuri insalubre, ajungeau să moară în decurs de maxim 3-4 ani. Malnutritia, conditiile mizere si lipsa medicamentelor sau a interesului cadrelor medicale erau principalele cauze ale mortalității infantile (Arun, 2020). Mult mai târziu, începând cu anul 2006 dizabilitatea este reglementată prin legea nr.448/2006. Modificările ulterioare ale legii au adus noi beneficii sau facilități pentru persoanele în cauză. Ultima modificare în această direcție s-a realizat prin legea 96 din anul 2023 (Legea 96/2023).

În contextul riscului tot mai mare de excluziune socială, se face trimitere către teoria socială a dizabilității, care ajunge să fie tot mai relevantă explicând impactul dizabilității asupra procesului de incluziune socială. De exemplu, angajatorii pot fi mai puțin interesați de integrarea în muncă a persoanelor cu dizabilități, iar oferta de muncă poate fi redusă dacă persoana cu handicap are o capacitate de exercițiu mai scăzută, ca a rezultat al dizabilității. Deși persoanele cu dizabilități pot fi la vârsta în care dezvoltarea carierei ar putea fi posibilă, acest lucru devine adesea nerealizabil. În consecință, aceste personae ajung să aibă

niveluri mai scăzute ale veniturilor și sunt mult mai expuse riscului de sărăcie (Gannon, 2007). Multe persoane cu dizabilități din Europa, nu au aceleași șanse la o viață socială și profesională, comparativ cu celelalte persoane din societate. Școlile sau locurile de muncă, infrastructura, produsele, serviciile și accesul la informații de multe ori ajung să nu fie accesibile pentru această categorie de persoane. Nu de puține ori persoanele cu handicap experimentează într-un context de vunerabilitate discriminarea, stigmatizarea și marginalizarea socială (Comisia Europeană). Ținând cont de aceste aspect, dezvoltarea politicilor sociale și furnizarea de servicii pentru promovarea incluziunii sociale a persoanelor cu dizabilități fizice sau mintale sunt pași esențiali în realizarea unei societăți mai incluzive (Grammenos, 2003).



Figura 1. **Numărul persoanelor cu dizabilități la 31 martie 2024**Sursa: Autoritatea națională pentru protecția persoanelor cu dizabilități din România <a href="https://anpd.gov.ro/web/transparenta/statistici/">https://anpd.gov.ro/web/transparenta/statistici/</a>

Conform datelor oferite de Autoritatea națională pentru protecția persoanelor cu dizabilităti din România, la 31 martie 2024 existau în evidentele statului român 931.839 persoane încadrate în grade cu handicap. Dintre acestea, 98,31 % respectiv 916.107 persoane fie se aflau în îngrijirea familiilor, fie trăiau în mod independent neinstituționalizat. Într-o proporție de 1,69 %, respectiv 15.732 persoane se află în prezent în instituțiile publice rezidențiale de asistență socială pentru persoanele adulte cu dizabilități sub tutela a Ministerului Muncii și Solidarității Sociale prin Autoritatea Națională pentru Protectia Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilități. Prin comparatie cu alte state membre ale Uniunii Europene, România nu se descurcă atât de bine în urmărirea obiectivelor Strategiei Europene pentru Dizabilități (EDS) 2010-2020 privind asigurarea de sanse egale pentru persoanele cu dizabilităti. Din punct de vedere al cazurilor raportate întâmpinăm o piedică în a prezenta situația reală a persoanelor cu dizabilităti atât din punct de vedere social cât si profesional, deoarece, cifrele pe care le deținem sunt cele raportate de către Direcțiile Generale Județene de Asistență Socială și Protecția Copilului și care sunt centralizate la nivel national de Ministerul Muncii, dar care se referă exclusiv la persoanele cu handicap pentru care a fost eliberat certificat de handicap și care reprezintă doar o parte din numărul total de persoane (Baciu, Lazăr, 2017, pp.6-7). Stragegia Europeană pentru Dizabilitate pentru perioada 2010-2020 recomanda cel putin 8 directii de acțiune în raport cu persoanele cu dizabilități prin: Accesibilitate, Participare, Egalitate, Angajare, Educatie si Formare, Protectie Socială, Sănătate si Actiune Externă și a avut ca scop crearea unei Europe fără bariere (International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hidrocephalus).

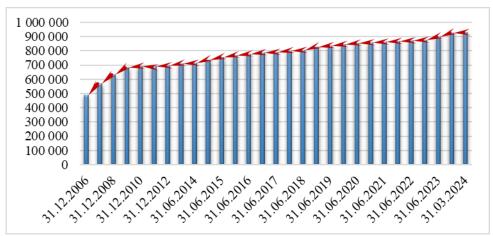


Figura 2. Evoluția numărului persoanelor cu dizabilități, decembrie 2006 – martie 2024

Sursa: Autoritatea națională pentru protecția persoanelor cu dizabilități din România <a href="https://anpd.gov.ro/web/transparenta/statistici/">https://anpd.gov.ro/web/transparenta/statistici/</a>

Așa cum putem observa în figura nr.2, asistăm la o pantă ascendentă a persoanelor încadrate în grad de handicap, în perioada 2006-2024. În ultimii 18 ani, avem conturată tendinta de a diagnostica și încadra în grad de handicap o multitudine de afecțiuni care în urmă cu 25-30 nu era posibil. Acest lucru este posibil în principal, datorită progresului din domeniul medical privind diagnosticul si tratamentul unor afectiuni care în trecut ajungeau să fie greu sau aproape imposibil de diagnosticat. Evoluția numerică a persoanelor cu handicap din țara noastră este influentată și de extiderea criteriilor sau a afectiunilor medicale ce pot fi încadrate în grad de handicap. În present, mult mai multe afectiuni medicale pot fi evaluate de către comisiile de evaluare a persoanelor cu handicap, fiind încadrabile într-un grad de handicap. Coform articolului 86 din legea 448 din 2006, tipurile de handicap sunt: fizic, vizual, auditiv, surdocecitate, somatic, mintal, psihic, HIV/SIDA, asociat, boli rare (Legea 448/2006, art.86). Conform legislatiei din România persoanele cu dizabilități beneficiare de o formă de protecție socială respectiv care au emis un certificat de încadrare în grad de handicap prezintă o serie de patologii complexe.

Trebuie să înțelegem că integrarea persoanelor cu handicap vizează în toate aspectele vieții: social economic, cultural și educațional fără nicio formă de discriminare. Scopul integrării este de a asigura că toate persoanele, indiferent de dizabilitățile lor, au acces egal la oportunități și resurse, precum și posibilitatea de a-și trăi viața într-un mod cât mai independent și satisfăcător. În țara noastră, legea nr. 448 / 2006 cu toate modificările ulterioare reglementează protecția persoanelor cu handicap. Accesul la educație a persoanelor cu handicap, conform Legii 448/2006, vizează crearea premiselor necesare pentru o educație de calitate care să favorizeze incluziunea socială. Acest lucru implică furnizarea de servicii de

educație incluzivă, care să permită participarea copiilor cu dizabilități la școli și instituții de învățământ alături de ceilalți elevi. Alături de educație, dreptul la muncă al persoanelor cu dizabilități este reglementat în România prin Legea 448/2006. Conform acestei legi, orice persoană cu handicap ar trebui să poată beneficia de un loc de muncă adaptat nevoilor sale, ceea ce înseamnă că angajatorii trebuie să asigure condiții de muncă care să permită integrarea efectivă a acestor persoane. De asemenea, se prevede integrarea în cadrul unităților protejate, special concepute pentru a oferi oportunități de muncă persoanelor cu dizabilități, într-un mediu care le sprijină dezvoltarea profesională și personală. Aceste măsuri au scopul de a combate discriminarea și de a promova incluziunea socială, contribuind astfel la îmbunătățirea calității vieții persoanelor cu dizabilități.

Deși s-au identificat atitudini pozitive față de principiul integrării persoanelor cu dizabilități pe piața muncii, angajatorii devin reticenți, în ceea ce privește angajarea reală acestor persoane. Motivele invocate de angajatorii din România, includ îngrijorarea cu privire la productivitatea mai scăzută (Angela, 2015). Interacțiunea dintre persoanele cu dizabilități și companii este stipulată și reglementată de cadre legislative, bine definite, atât de Legea nr.448/2006 cât și de directivele U.E. Din perspectiva legislative, orice persoană cu dizabilități, dar care este aptă ar trebui inclusă pe piața muncii din România prin adaptarea locului de muncă (Anghelescu, 2016). În ciuda tuturor acestor eforturi și a ultimelor decenii de creștere economică și dezvoltare, ocuparea persoanelor cu dizabilități nu a fost îmbunătățită la fel de mult. Nu de puține ori clădirile de utilitate publică nu dețin rampe de acces special create pentru persoanele cu dizabilități, iar mijloacele de transport în comun sunt adaptate pentru dizabilitate într-o proporție foarte mică. Aceste aspecte limitează și mai mult participarea persoanelor cu handicap la o viață socio-profesională, justă în raport cu dizablititea. Astfel că participarea la viata profesională a persoanelor cu dizabilități se află în scădere comparativ cu alte grupuri sociale prezente pe piața muncii. Principala formă de sprijin material pentru multe persoane cu handicap din România, rămâne cea a prestatiilor sociale în bani, oferite de către statul român sub forma indemnziațiilor de handicap sau a celor de însoțitor, în cazul handicapului grav.

Concluzii. Dizabilitatea trebuie văzută dincolo de diagnostic, punînd accent pe încurajarea persoanei afectate să participle active în societate. Indiferent de natura dizabilității, aceasta poate fi prezentă din naștere sau poate apărea în cursul vieții ca urmare a unor accidente, boli sau a alți factori independenți de voința persoanei. Această abordare subliniază importanța unei perspective inclusivă și sprijinitoare, care să promoveze autonomia și participarea persoanelor cu dizabilități în toate aspectele vieții sociale, economice și culturale. Prin acest demers, se poate contribui la eliminarea prejudecăților și stereotipurilor legate de dizabilitate, favorizând astfel integrarea și acceptarea în comunitate.

România se confruntă cu o tendință crescătoare a cazurilor de handicap, cu aproape 900.000 de persoane beneficiare de certificat de handicap, dintre care aproximativ 77.000 sunt copii. Aceasta reprezintă aproximativ 5% din populație, evidențiind nevoia urgentă de a aborda inclusivitatea socială și economică a

persoanelor cu dizabilități. Deși progresele sunt vizibile în anumite domenii, drepturile fundamentale ale acestor persoane nu sunt încă pe deplin realizate.

În ciuda prevederilor legale și a măsurilor de protecție socială, integrarea persoanelor cu dizabilități în mediul educațional și profesional în România rămâne deficitară. Țara nu este suficient pregătită din punct de vedere logistic, legislativ și uman pentru a oferi o educație incluzivă în învățământul de masă, precum și oportunități pe piața muncii. În plus, numărul personalului calificat în munca cu persoanele cu handicap este adesea insuficient în aceste domenii, afectând astfel calitatea integrării.

Pe termen mediu și lung, aceste probleme contribuie la adâncirea inechității sociale pentru persoanele cu dizabilități, subliniind necesitatea de a găsi soluții rapide și eficiente. Este esențial ca autoritățile și societatea civilă să colaboreze pentru a dezvolta măsuri concrete care să îmbunătățească integrarea acestor persoane în educație și pe piața muncii, astfel încât să se asigure egalitatea de șanse și un trai demn.

Se impun măsuri urgente pentru a asigura accesibilitatea persoanelor în scaun rulant la clădirile de utilitate publică, în transportul public, în asistența medicosocială și în activitățile de petrecere a timpului liber. Lipsa unor măsuri active care să favorizeze incluziunea socio-profesională a persoanelor cu handicap va conduce în timp la o dependență tot mai mare, față de prestațiile sociale în bani sub forma indemnizațiilor de handicap sau de însoțitor, fapt ce va pune în viitor, și mai mare presiune asupra bugetelor pentru asigurările sociale din România. Sancționarea tuturor formelor de discriminare împotriva persoanelor cu dizabilități ar putea contribui la reducerea fenomenului discriminării, care este frecvent întâlnit în contextul actual al țării noastre.

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# NEW MODEL SCHOOLS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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Abstract. The Republic of Moldova has initiated an ambitious national project to create a Network of Model Schools aimed at improving educational quality and equity across the country. This paper examines the current status of the initiative, focusing on the renovation and modernization of 35 general education institutions, with a special emphasis on rural and underserved areas. The project seeks to bridge the gap between rural and urban educational outcomes by providing state-of-the-art infrastructure, modernized curricula, and enhanced digital learning tools. The study highlights the role of international partnerships, such as those with the World Bank, UNICEF, and USAID, in supporting the initiative through financial and technical assistance. A comprehensive analysis of the distances between settlements within Chisinau municipality and a Model School demonstrates challenges related to accessibility for rural students. The findings emphasize the importance of sustained investment, teacher training, and community engagement in ensuring the long-term success of the Model Schools initiative. The project holds significant potential to improve educational outcomes and reduce disparities, aligning Moldova's education system with European Union standards. The article was developed within the framework of Subprogram 030101 "Strengthening the resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability of the economy of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the accession process to the European Union", institutional funding.

**Keywords:** Model Schools, educational equity, rural-urban disparity, educational infrastructure, Moldova

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Introduction. In the pursuit of improving educational equity and quality, the Ministry of Education and Research in the Republic of Moldova has launched a national initiative to create a Network of Model Schools. This ambitious project aims to renovate and fully equip 35 general education institutions across the country, with a special focus on increasing access to quality education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly in rural areas. The initiative seeks to address disparities in educational performance between rural and urban students by developing these schools into educational hubs that will attract students from smaller, less-resourced institutions. The comprehensive upgrades planned for the Model Schools include infrastructure improvements, state-of-the-art digital equipment, modernized curricula, and enhanced teaching materials, all aimed at delivering education that meets the highest standards.

The Model Schools initiative aligns with Moldova's broader goals of advancing its education system in line with European Union standards, as the country moves toward EU integration. By fostering partnerships with international organizations like the World Bank, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and USAID, Moldova aims to implement systemic educational reforms that will strengthen the resilience and quality of its education sector. This project also addresses significant gaps in educational outcomes, highlighted by results from international assessments such as PISA, where rural students in Moldova have shown lower performance compared to their urban counterparts.

With a substantial investment of 70 million Euros, the Model Schools initiative is not only a step towards improving educational infrastructure but also an opportunity to foster a more inclusive and high-quality learning environment that can support Moldova's future generations. This paper examines the current state of the Model Schools project, the challenges faced in its implementation, and the potential long-term impact on Moldova's education system.

Literature review. The concept of Model Schools as a means to bridge the gap in educational equity has been explored in various contexts globally, including in developing nations. Several studies emphasize the importance of infrastructure, teacher quality, and curriculum modernization in achieving educational improvements, particularly in disadvantaged or rural areas. This literature review highlights key findings from existing research related to educational infrastructure improvements, disparities in educational outcomes between rural and urban areas, and the role of international partnerships in education reform. Investments in school infrastructure have been widely recognized as crucial for improving the quality of education. Research indicates that physical facilities—such as well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, and digital learning environments—are closely linked to student engagement and academic performance. Inadequate school facilities can lead to lower academic achievement, and improving these facilities is essential to ensuring that students have an environment conducive to learning.

Additionally, the provision of modern equipment, such as digital technologies and updated teaching materials, has been shown to improve teaching efficacy and learning outcomes. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, the planned comprehensive upgrades to the 35 Model Schools are aligned with this global research, indicating the potential for significant improvements in educational outcomes once the schools are renovated and fully equipped with modern learning technologies. A critical focus of the Model Schools initiative is addressing the disparity in educational outcomes between rural and urban students. Internationally, rural schools often struggle with resource allocation, teacher shortages, and lower student performance. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results have consistently shown a performance gap between rural and urban students, with rural students generally underperforming in key areas such as literacy, mathematics, and science (OECD, 2016). In Moldova, similar patterns are evident. According to PISA data, 64% of 15-year-old students in rural schools score lower in science and reading compared to the national average of 46%. Studies in other contexts, such as Brazil and India, have found that interventions targeted at rural schools—such as improving teacher training, providing better educational resources, and modernizing curricula—can reduce the rural-urban performance gap (World Bank, 2019; Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2011). Moldova's focus on creating Model Schools in rural regions to serve as educational hubs for students from smaller, resource-constrained institutions is consistent with global best practices for addressing these disparities. The role of international organizations in supporting educational reform has been welldocumented in various settings, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Partnerships with institutions such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and USAID have proven instrumental in improving educational outcomes through financial investment, technical assistance, and policy guidance. For instance, the World Bank's education projects in Africa and Asia have shown significant positive effects on educational access, equity, and quality, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas (Evans & Popova, 2016). Moldova's Model Schools project benefits from similar international support. The World Bank's involvement in providing financial and technical assistance for the initiative mirrors its successful educational interventions in other countries. UNICEF's emphasis on child-centered approaches and equitable education aligns with the project's goal of reducing performance disparities and improving access to quality education. Studies indicate that such partnerships not only provide the necessary resources but also bring expertise in implementing systemic changes in education policy and infrastructure (McGivney & Winthrop, 2016). The digitalization of education has become a critical aspect of modern educational reform, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored the need for resilient education systems capable of withstanding disruptions. Research by OECD (2020) highlights how the integration of digital tools in education can enhance learning outcomes and make education systems more adaptable to future challenges. Moldova's Model Schools project, which includes the incorporation of state-of-the-art digital equipment and learning tools, aligns with global trends in promoting the digitalization of education to improve its quality and resilience. The literature underscores the importance of infrastructure improvements, targeted interventions in rural schools, and international partnerships in addressing educational disparities and enhancing the quality of education. Moldova's Model Schools initiative is consistent with global best practices and has the potential to significantly improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged students. By drawing on lessons from international experiences and incorporating modern digital tools, the project represents a forward-looking approach to creating a more equitable and resilient education system in Moldova.

Materials and Methods. The primary data for this study was sourced from the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova and included GPS-based measurements of distances from various settlements within Chisinau municipality to the Public Institution Republican High School with Sports Profile in Chisinau. This data was compiled to form *Table 2*, which lists the specific distances between the settlements and the school. Additional information regarding the list of schools in the Model School Network was obtained from official government publications, as outlined in *Table 1*. The study focused on the Chisinau municipality, the capital of Moldova.

This area was selected due to its administrative importance, high population density, and significant educational infrastructure. Chisinau serves as a central hub for various national activities, making it an ideal location for analyzing the accessibility of educational institutions.

The analysis involved several key steps:

- 1) distance calculation using the provided GPS data, the distances from each settlement within the Chisinau municipality to the target school were calculated and tabulated.
- 2) average distance calculation the average distance to the school was computed to provide an overview of the accessibility for students across the municipality.
- 3) spatial analysis geographical information systems (GIS) tools were employed to map the locations of the settlements and the school to visualize the spatial distribution of distances and identify any geographical patterns or disparities.
- 4) descriptive statistics basic statistical measures such as mean, median, and range were used to describe the data on distances, providing insights into the variability and central tendencies of the school's accessibility.

The study acknowledges several limitations. The accuracy of the GPS data and the subsequent distance measurements could affect the findings. The study does not account for dynamic factors such as traffic conditions and public transportation availability, which could influence actual travel times. The focus on Chisinau municipality might not fully represent the situation in other regions of Moldova. This methodology provides a comprehensive framework for assessing the impact of the Model Schools initiative on educational accessibility within the Chisinau municipality, contributing to broader discussions on educational equity and infrastructure development.

Current situation of model schools. At the beginning of 2024 an order was issued by the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) of the Republic of Moldova. It concerns the approval of a list of model schools and the concept of a model school. The order is based on the decision of a committee tasked with selecting educational institutions to benefit from investments from the World Bank and the European Union. The document outlines the approval of the list of educational institutions approved as model schools benefiting from World Bank and EU investments (*Table 1*), approval of the model school concept, developed by a working group established by MER. The General Directorate of Education Policies is tasked with informing the selected institutions about this order and coordinating the investment process from the World Bank and the EU. This document formalizes the steps for enhancing educational infrastructure and practices in selected institutions through international financial support.

Table 1. The list of schools from Model School Network

	Table 1. The list of schools from Model School Network					
No.	District	Locality	Name of institution			
1	SOROCA	SOROCA	PITHS "Petru Rares"			
2	ANENII NOI	ANENII NOI	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"			
3	SINGEREI	SINGEREI	PITHS "Olimp"			
4	REZINA	REZINA	PITHS "Alexandru cel Bun"			
5	UNGHENI	UNGHENI	PITHS "A. Puskin"			
6	STRASENI	STRASENI	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"			
7	CHISINAU	CHISINAU	Public Institution Republican High School with Sports Profile			
8	CAUSENI	CAUSENI	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"			
9	CALARASI	CALARASI	PITHS "Mihail Sadoveanu"			
10	CAHUL	CAHUL	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"			
11	EDINET	EDINET	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"			
12	LEOVA	LEOVA	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"			
13	DUBASARI	COSNITA	PITHS "Ion Creanga"			
14	NISPORENI	NISPORENI	PITHS "Mircea Eliade"			
15	HINCESTI	HINCESTI	PITHS "Mihail Sadoveanu"			
16	CRIULENI	CRIULENI	PITHS "Boris Dinga"			
17	ORHEI	ORHEI	PITHS "Onisifor Ghibu"			
18	BALTI	BALTI	PITHS "B. P. Hasdeu"			
19	OCNITA	OCNITA	PITHS "Mihail Sadoveanu"			
20	BRICENI	BRICENI	PITHS "Grigore Vieru"			
21	RASCANI	RASCANI	PITHS "Liviu Damian"			
22	DROCHIA	DROCHIA	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"			
23	GLODENI	GLODENI	PITHS "Vasile Coroban"			
24	SOLDANESTI	SOLDANESTI	PITHS "Alexei Mateevici"			

25	ATU GAGAUZIA	CEADIR-LUNGA	PITHS "Mihail Ceachir"
26	BASARABEASCA	village ABACLIA	PITHS "Constantin Stere"
27	CANTEMIR	town CANTEMIR	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"
28	CIMISLIA	CIMISLIA	PITHS "Mihai Eminescu"
29	DONDUSENI	DONDUSENI	PITHS "Alexei Mateevici"
30	FALESTI	FALESTI	PITHS "Ion Creanga"
31	FLORESTI	FLORESTI	PITHS "M. Costin"
32	IALOVENI	RAZENI	PITHS "Ion Pelivan"
33	STEFAN VODA	STEFAN VODA	PITHS "Stefan Voda"
34	TARACLIA	TARACLIA	PITHS "Ivan Vazov"
35	TELENESTI	TELENESTI	Public Institution Gymnasium "Mihai Eminescu"

*Source*: <a href="https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/ministerul-educatiei-si-cercetarii-anuntat-lista-institutiilor-care-vor-face-parte-din">https://mec.gov.md/ro/content/ministerul-educatiei-si-cercetarii-anuntat-lista-institutiilor-care-vor-face-parte-din</a>

Note: PITHS - Public Institution Theoretical High School

The document of Model School Concept outlines the strategic framework and operational guidelines for the establishment of model schools in Moldova. Half of the students in Moldova do not meet minimum competencies in reading, math, or science. There are disparities in student performance between larger urban schools and smaller rural schools, often lacking sufficient teaching staff and resources, highlighting the need for model schools. The model schools aim to bridge educational disparities and provide high-quality education that prepares students for a global and interconnected economy. They are envisioned to serve as exemplars in educational practices, fostering critical and creative thinking, and holistic development. The concept is built around principles that reflect contemporary educational philosophies and pedagogical practices, responding to the evolving needs of students. These include leadership development, educational equity, digital inclusion, and student-centered learning approaches. Pedagogical strategies emphasize collaborative learning, emotional and social skills, personalized learning paths, interdisciplinary approaches, and active learning strategies to engage students fully in their educational journey. The model schools prioritize the development of critical thinking and real-world problem-solving skills, connecting theoretical knowledge with practical applications. They aim to ensure an open and inclusive environment where students, teachers, and parents can actively participate in decision-making processes relevant to school life. The curriculum and teaching methods are designed to foster adaptability and lifelong learning, integrating continuous learning and resilience into the educational experience. A strong emphasis is placed on integrating technology into the educational process, ensuring digital literacy among students and teachers and using digital tools to enhance learning outcomes. It also emphasizes environmental awareness and sustainability by incorporating environmental education and sustainability into the curriculum, promoting eco-friendly practices within the school community and a global perspective by encouraging cultural exchange programs and the study of foreign languages to enhance global understanding and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds. The document extensively covers the redesign of educational institutions to meet these objectives, transforming organizational culture, structure, and pedagogy to improve educational quality and equity. The multitude of principles of the Model School concept shows the multiple area of focus and the breadth of the concept (*Figure 1*).



Figure 1. **Word cloud map of the Model School concept principles** *Source: Developed by the authors in the (Free Cloud Generator, 2024)* 

The encouragement of Ministry of Education of Research towards schoolchildren of neighbour settlements to move to nearby model schools motivates us to analyze the situation, by choosing the Chisinau municipality as the area of focus for the analysis, which is driven by several key reasons: administrative importance, population density, diverse settlement structure, centralized access to resources, sports and educational hub, transportation network, socio-economic impact (CONCEPT "Scoala Model", 2024). Chisinau is the capital of Moldova and the largest municipality, making it a central hub for political, administrative, educational, and cultural activities. It houses important national institutions, including public schools, sports institutions, and higher education establishments. Chisinau has the highest population density in Moldova, meaning a large portion of the country's population lives or commutes within this area. Therefore, educational institutions like the Republican High School with Sports Profile in Chisinau have a broader reach and impact. The varied settlement types within Chisinau municipality, ranging from urban to suburban and rural, allow for a comprehensive analysis of accessibility. The different distances from these areas provide insight into how location and proximity affect educational opportunities. As the capital, Chisinau is more developed in terms of infrastructure, including transportation, public services, and educational resources. Analyzing how accessible these resources are to surrounding settlements can help identify gaps in regional development. Chisinau hosts specialized institutions like the Republican High School with Sports Profile, making it an essential focus for studies on

education and extracurricular opportunities. These institutions serve not just the city but also surrounding settlements, making a geographical analysis relevant. The city has the most developed transportation network in the country, allowing students from neighboring settlements to commute. Examining the distances helps in understanding the reach of this network and its efficiency in connecting students to specialized schools. The economic importance of Chisinau and the varying socio-economic conditions of its surrounding areas make it an ideal case for studying the effect of accessibility to educational institutions on social mobility, education, and sports development. These factors make Chisinau a representative and critical case for understanding educational access in Moldova, especially regarding sports-oriented institutions like the Republican High School with Sports Profile.

The *Table 2* shows the distance from various settlements within the Chisinau municipality to the Public Institution Republican High School with Sports Profile in Chisinau. Chisinau itself is listed with a distance of 0 km, indicating that the school is located within the city proper.

Table 2. The distance from settlements of Chisinau municipality to Public Institution Republican High School with Sports Profile in Chisinau, km

CHISINAU				
Public Institution Republication Sports Prof			School with	
Bacioi	12.0	Durlesti	11.6	
Bic	3.5	Fauresti	22.5	
Braila	12.0	Frumusica	13.3	
Bubuieci	10.1	Ghidighici	16.2	
Budesti	17.2	Goian	21.1	
Buneti	15.4	Goianul Nou	19.6	
Ceroborta	19.5	Gratiesti	14.4	
Cheltuitori	12.2	Hulboaca	18.0	
Chisinau	-	Humulesti	14.4	
Ciorescu	19.5	Revaca	16.3	
Codru	6.4	Stauceni	13.9	
Colonita	13.2	Straisteni	10.7	
Condrita	30.4	Singera	13.9	
Cricova	18.3	Tohatin	13.2	
Cruzesti	16.6	Truseni	17.4	
Dobrogea	Dobrogea 19.9		23.6	
Dl	12.4	Vatra	14.4	
Dumbrava		Vaduleni	27.6	

Source: Calculated by authors based on GPS data

Several nearby settlements, such as Bic (3.5 km), Codru (6.4 km), and Durlesti (11.6 km), are close to the school. These areas may have quicker and easier access to the school. The most distant settlements are Condrita (30.4 km), Vaduleni (27.6 km), and Vadul lui Voda (23.6 km). Schoolchildren from these areas may have longer commutes. The distances between these settlements and the school can indicate potential challenges related to transportation for schoolchildren from these areas. Most settlements fall in the 10-20 km range, with distances such as Revaca (16.3 km), Gratiesti (14.4 km), and Singera (13.9 km). While not extremely far, these distances might still present logistical challenges for schoolchildren. The average distance across all settlements can be calculated to assess the general accessibility of the school from different parts of the municipality. The average distance from the settlements in Chisinau municipality to the Public Institution Republican High School with Sports Profile is approximately 15.45 km. This suggests that, on average, schoolchildren from various settlements need to travel about 15 km to reach the school. The variance in distances highlights potential disparities in accessibility, with some settlements being much closer while others are farther away, possibly impacting schoolchildren's ease of commute.

**Prospects of model schools.** The prospects of the Model Schools initiative in Moldova are promising, particularly as the country continues to strive for enhancements in educational standards and equity. This initiative not only aims to refurbish and equip schools with modern facilities but also to address longstanding disparities in educational access and quality between urban and rural areas. Model Schools are envisioned to set a high standard for educational quality through improved infrastructure, state-of-the-art technology, and modernized curricula. This can lead to enhanced learning environments that foster better academic performance and student engagement. By focusing on rural and underserved areas, the initiative is likely to reduce the gap between urban and rural education systems. This can contribute to more equitable educational outcomes across the country, ensuring that students from all backgrounds have access to quality education. The improvements in facilities and teaching methods could make public schools more attractive to students and parents, potentially increasing enrollment rates and reducing dropout rates. This shift can also alleviate some of the pressures on urban schools by redistributing the student population more evenly across the country. Education is a critical factor in economic development and social mobility. Model Schools can serve as catalysts for local development, providing young people with the skills needed to contribute effectively to the economy. This could lead to broader economic benefits, including increased innovation and a more skilled workforce. The involvement of international partners such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and USAID offers opportunities to integrate global best practices in education within the Moldovan context. This collaboration can also lead to further funding and support for scaling the initiative. Model Schools emphasize not only academic learning but also the development of social and emotional skills, preparing students for the complexities of the modern world. This holistic approach can enhance students' overall well-being and their ability to navigate future challenges. The initiative's focus on sustainability, including the incorporation of environmental education and the use of green technologies, positions Model Schools as forward-thinking institutions that can adapt to future educational needs and challenges. While the prospects are favorable, the success of the Model Schools initiative depends on several factors. Sustained financial investment is crucial to maintain the high standards set by the Model Schools. Equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to effectively use new technologies and pedagogical strategies is essential. Involving parents, local communities, and other stakeholders is key to ensuring the initiative's relevance and sustainability. Regular assessment of the initiative's impact will be necessary to make adjustments and ensure it meets its educational goals. The Model Schools initiative holds significant potential to transform the educational landscape in Moldova, offering a pathway towards an inclusive, high-quality, and sustainable education system.

**Conclusions.** This study aimed to analyze the accessibility of the Public Institution Republican High School with Sports Profile within the Chisinau municipality, providing insights into the reach and impact of Moldova's Model Schools initiative. Several conclusions can be drawn from the research. The distances from the settlements to the school range significantly, from as close as 3.5 km to as far as 30.4 km. This variance indicates that while some students have relatively easy access to the school, others face substantial barriers due to distance, potentially impacting their daily commute and overall educational experience. The findings underscore the existing disparity between urban and rural access to specialized educational facilities. Urban areas, particularly those closer to the city center, enjoy better proximity to such institutions compared to rural settlements, which are often significantly farther away. The strategic location of the school within the capital and the improvement of its infrastructure are likely to enhance educational outcomes for students. However, for maximum effectiveness, these upgrades need to be complemented by improved transportation links that can mitigate the challenge of distance for rural students. The Model Schools initiative is a pivotal step towards modernizing education in Moldova, especially in terms of infrastructure, curriculum, and pedagogical approaches. This project not only aims to elevate educational standards but also strives to equalize opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds, particularly those from underprivileged rural areas. Based on the analysis, it is recommended that future educational initiatives consider incorporating more comprehensive transportation solutions to facilitate easier access to Model Schools. Additionally, there should be a continued focus on developing educational hubs in rural areas to reduce travel burdens and ensure equitable access to quality education. The long-term success of the Model Schools initiative could serve as a blueprint for other regions within Moldova and similar contexts globally. By addressing both the infrastructural and accessibility issues, Moldova can significantly enhance its educational landscape, making it more inclusive and aligned with European Union standards. The involvement of international organizations such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and the UNDP has

been crucial in providing the necessary financial and technical support for this initiative. Continued collaboration with these entities will be essential to sustain and expand the impact of the Model Schools initiative. In conclusion, while the Model Schools initiative has made significant strides in enhancing the quality of education in Chisinau, addressing the challenges of accessibility and equitable distribution of educational resources remains crucial. The study highlights the need for ongoing efforts to bridge the urban-rural educational divide and ensure that all students, regardless of their geographical location, have access to high-quality educational opportunities.

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# PARTICULARITĂȚILE NIVELULUI DE TRAI AL PENSIONARILOR DIN MEDIUL RURAL DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

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**Abstract.** The relevance of the topic is due to the fact that the problem of improving the standard of living of pensioners occupies an important place in the implementation of social policy in the Republic of Moldova. This problem is of particular importance for rural pensioners, whose standard of living and living conditions are significantly worse than those of urban pensioners. The purpose of the study is to determine the features of the formation of the standard of living of rural pensioners and to carry out a comparative analysis of their main indicators. The following research methods were used: analysis and synthesis, monographic, statistical, comparison, analogs, etc. The information base of the study is the results of a survey of household budgets conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics, as well as data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. Research results: the main characteristics of the way of life and living conditions of rural pensioners, which affect the formation of the features of their standard of living, were determined; a comparative assessment of the level and structure of disposable income and consumer spending of rural pensioners in relation to the entire rural population, as well as to urban pensioners, was carried out. For rural pensioners, the need for their orientation to feasible employment in the labor market and receiving additional income on this basis is very urgent.

**Keywords:** standard of living, rural pensioners, urban pensioners, disposable income, consumer spending, living comfort

JEL: H50, I31, J14

**UDC:** 316.334.3-053.9(478-22)

Introducere. Formarea nivelului de trai al oamenilor este influențată de o serie de factori, printre care un rol important îl joacă specificul modului și condițiilor vieții cotidiene. Acest lucru este valabil și pentru grupul socioeconomic al pensionarilor, al căror număr are o tendință de creștere în contextul îmbătrânirii populației din Republica Moldova, în special pentru cei din mediul rural, al căror

mod de viață este determinat în mare măsură de contextul rural în care trăiesc. Acest fapt ridică necesitatea obiectivă de a determina principalele caracteristici ale modului și condițiilor de viață ale pensionarilor din mediul rural, caracteristice nivelului lor de trai. La evaluarea nivelului de trai al pensionarilor din mediul rural, principala sursă de informație sunt datele cercetării bugetelor gospodăriilor casnice. Ele indică dominanta rurală în distribuția gospodăriilor casnice după medii. În mediul rural, gospodăriile cu pensionari reprezintă 38,7% din total, comparativ cu 26,4% în mediul urban. De asemenea, persoanele de 60 de ani și peste constituie 23,6% din populația rurală, în timp ce, în mediul urban, acestea reprezintă 21,1% (Biroul Național de Statistică al Republicii Moldova, 2023). Datele menționate ne permit să analizăm particularitățile formării nivelului de trai al pensionarilor din mediul rural și să realizăm o evaluare comparativă a indicatorilor de bază ai acestora în raport cu întreaga populație rurală, precum și cu pensionarii din mediul urban. În aceste scopuri se utilizează principalii indicatori care caracterizează nivelul de trai – veniturile disponibile și cheltuielile de consum.

Continutul principal. Tranziția persoanei la statutul de "pensionar" influențează serios schimbarea stilului și modului său de viață, atitudinile și obiceiurile sale anterioare, precum și particularitățile activității sale vitale care au fost stabilite de-a lungul multor ani, devin irelevante. Procesele de izolare socială se intensifică, iar situatia financiară a unei persoane care s-a pensionat se înrăutățește brusc. În mediul urban, dacă un pensionar nu continuă activitatea de muncă la locul anterior, oportunitățile sale de angajare sunt extrem de limitate și, prin urmare, principala sa sursă de venit este pensia. Pentru rezidentii din mediul rural, pensionarea este, de asemenea, asociată cu o schimbare a modului lor de viată, dar aceasta nu are consecinte negative atât de semnificative ca pentru locuitorii din mediul urban. Aceasta se datorează faptului că munca pe terenurile gospodărești ocupă un loc important în bugetul de timp al locuitorilor din mediul rural, inclusiv al celor vârstnici, dar apți de muncă. Prin urmare, la pensionare, un locuitor din mediul rural nu își schimbă radical modul de viață deja stabilit. Totodată, el își petrece mult mai mult timp prelucrând terenul său agricol, asigurându-și astfel familia cu produse alimentare din producția proprie. În condiții favorabile, această activitate îi permite să obțină produse în volume suficiente, nu doar pentru satisfacerea nevoilor alimentare ale familiei, ci și pentru comercializarea acestora pe piață, ceea ce oferă pensionarilor din mediul rural posibilitatea să obtină un venit suplimentar la pensie din vânzarea produselor agricole cultivate. Aceasta reprezintă particularitatea formării veniturilor pensionarilor rurali, în structura cărora pensiile și veniturile din activitatea individuală agricolă ocupă pozitiile de frunte. În mediul urban, veniturile pensionarilor ocupați se formează în principal din pensii și salarii, însă numărul covârșitor al pensionarilor inactivi trăiește exclusiv din pensii.

Particularitățile formării cheltuielilor de consum ale pensionarilor se datorează faptului că volumul nevoilor acestora este mult mai mic decât cel al persoanelor în vârstă aptă de muncă. Structura acestor nevoi este de asemenea diferită. Pensionarii aproape că nu au nevoie de haine și încălțăminte noi, bunuri de

folosință îndelungată, servicii educaționale și alte servicii. Pensionarii din mediul rural au nevoie, într-o măsură mult mai mare decât cei din mediul urban, de reparații și întreținere a locuințelor. Spre deosebire de pensionarii din orașe, aceștia au o nevoie semnificativă de semințe, îngrășăminte, erbicide și unelte agricole pentru a-și prelucra terenurile. O particularitate a comportamentului de consum al pensionarilor este că aceștia nu consideră necesar să cheltuie bani pentru vacanțe și călătorii, construirea de noi locuințe, achiziționarea autovehiculului și a bunurilor de lux. Acest comportament se explică nu numai prin nivelul scăzut al veniturilor, ci și prin mentalitatea lor. Pentru pensionari, casa, copiii, nepoții, lucrurile vechi cu care se asociază diverse evenimente din viața anterioară sunt prioritare decât călătoriile în străinătate sau hainele și încălțămintea nouă. Pentru pensionarii din mediul rural, un obicei durabil este agricultura și îngrijirea nepoților. De o importanță deosebită este grija pensionarilor din mediul rural pentru nepoții ai căror părinți au plecat la muncă în străinătate. Acest lucru se datorează faptului că migrația forței de muncă la scară largă este caracteristică zonelor rurale.

Veniturile disponibile. Se constată o creștere semnificativă a veniturilor medii ale pensionarilor, care în ritmul său a depășit creșterea veniturilor întregii populații. În anul 2023, veniturile medii per un pensionar au constituit 4174,4 lei pe lună (Figura 1), adică cu 70,8% mai mult decât în anul 2019 (la o creștere a veniturilor a întregii populații cu 70,6%). Veniturile medii ale pensionarilor urbani au crescut în mod deosebit de semnificativ. În perioada 2019-2023, acestea au crescut de la 2718,6 lei la 4959,6 lei (cu 82,4%), în timp ce pentru pensionari rurali – de la 2308,8 lei la 3705,4 lei (cu 64,4%). Această creștere a depășit ritmul de creștere a veniturilor medii ale locuitorilor din mediul urban (76,8%) și a celor din mediul rural (59,9%).

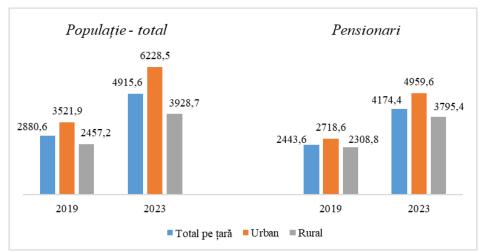


Figura 1. Veniturile disponibile medii ale populației Republicii Moldova (lei pe lună), 2019-2023

Sursa: elaborată de autori în baza datelor BNS

În pofida ratelor mai mari de crestere a veniturilor medii ale pensionarilor, valoarea acestora a fost semnificativ mai mică decât veniturile medii ale întregii populații. În 2023, veniturile medii ale pensionarilor au fost cu 741,2 lei (sau 15.1%) mai mici decât media pentru întreaga populație. În mediul urban acest "decalaj" a fost de 1268,9 lei, sau 20,4%, iar în mediul rural – 133,3 lei, sau 3,5%. Totodată, comparativ cu anul 2019, "decalajul" dintre veniturile disponibile medii ale pensionarilor si nivelul mediu (în termeni procentuali) practic nu s-a modificat în profilul ,,total pe țară" (15,1%) și a scăzut de la 22,8% la 20,4% (în mediul urban) și de la 6,0% la 3,5% (în mediul rural). Această situație se datorează faptului că în 2019-2023 ritmul de crestere a veniturilor medii ale pensionarilor (70,8%) a fost comparabil cu creșterea veniturilor medii ale întregii populații (70,6%). În acelasi timp, veniturile medii ale pensionarilor din mediul urban au crescut cu 82,4%, iar cele ale pensionarilor din mediul rural – cu 64,4%, iar acestia au crescut într-un ritm mai rapid decât veniturile medii ale locuitorilor din mediul urban și din mediul rural (76,8% și 59,9, respectiv). Astfel, a existat o tendință pozitivă de reducere a "decalajului" dintre veniturile pensionarilor si veniturile populatiei totale.

Pensionarii din mediul rural se află într-o situație financiară mai dificilă. În anul 2019, veniturile medii ale acestora au constituit 2308,8 lei (cu 409,8 lei, sau cu 15,1% mai puțin decât la pensionari din mediul urban). În 2023, veniturile pensionarilor din mediul rural au ajuns la 3795,4 lei, iar "decalajul" dintre veniturile disponibile medii ale pensionarilor care locuiesc în mediile urban și rural a fost de 1164,2 lei, sau 23,5%. Tendința negativă a pensionarilor din mediul rural de a rămâne în urma pensionarilor din mediul urban în ceea ce privește nivelul veniturilor medii s-a intensificat.

Decalajul dintre pensionarii rurali și pensionarii urbani în multe componente ale veniturilor disponibile atinge valori semnificative. Aceasta se referă, în primul rând, la veniturile din proprietate, pentru care în 2023 diferența dintre pensionarii din mediul rural și cei din mediul urban era de 93,5% (Tabelul 1). Există, în defavoarea pensionarilor din mediul rural, un "decalaj" semnificativ între aceștia și pensionarii din mediul urban în veniturile din activitatea salarială (57,2%), îndemnizații pentru copii (50,0%), pensii (35,6%), prestațiilor sociale în general (31,0%). În același timp, în favoarea pensionarilor din mediul rural, între aceștia și pensionarii urbani s-a creat un "decalaj" în veniturile din activitatea individuală agricolă (de 17,6 ori), în cuantumul ajutorului social (de 2,5 ori), remitențe (23,9%), venituri din activitatea individuale non-agricolă (18,3%). Situația este agravată de faptul că pensionarii din mediul rural rămân în urma pensionarilor din mediul urban în acele componente ale veniturilor disponibile, a căror mărime constituie valoarea semnificativă.

Tabelul 1. Veniturile disponibile medii ale pensionarilor, 2023, lei pe lună

•		_	«Decalaj» între «Rural»	
	Urban	Rural	și «Urban»	
			lei	%
Total	4959,6	3795,4	-1164,2	-23,5
inclusiv				
din activitatea salarială	794,4	340,0	-454,4	-57,2
din activitatea individuală agricolă	25,4	472,1	+446,7	+17,6 ori
din activitatea individuală non-	60,2	71,2	+11,0	+18,3
agricolă				
din proprietate	4,6	0,3	-4,3	-93,5
Prestații sociale	3691,8	2546,3	-1145,3	-31,0
din care pensii	3548,0	2284,7	-1263,3	-35,6
indemnizații pentru copii	22,2	11,1	-11,1	-50,0
ajutor social	2,4	8,3	+5,9	+248,8
Alte venituri	383,2	365,5	-17,7	-4,6
din care remitențe	227,1	281,4	+54,3	+23,9

Sursa: calculat de autor în baza datelor BNS

Structura veniturilor disponibile medii ale pensionarilor, prezintă diferențe semnificative față de structura veniturilor întregii populații. În structura veniturilor disponibile ale pensionarilor care locuiesc atât în mediul urban, cât și în cel rural, primează prestațiile sociale sub formă de pensii. Totodată, în veniturile populației urbane și rurale predomină veniturile din activitatea salarială (Figura 2). A doua poziție în structura veniturilor disponibile ale pensionarilor din mediul urban este ocupată de veniturile din activitatea salarială, iar pentru pensionarii din mediul rural — veniturile din activitatea individuală agricolă, în timp ce în structura veniturilor atât ale populației urbane, cât și ale populației rurale — pensiile. A treia poziție în structura veniturilor disponibile ale pensionarilor din mediul urban este ocupată de remitențe, iar cea a pensionarilor din mediul rural de veniturile din activitatea salarială. În același timp, în structura veniturilor atât a populației urbane, cât și a celei rurale, remitențele ocupă locul trei.

### Populație - total

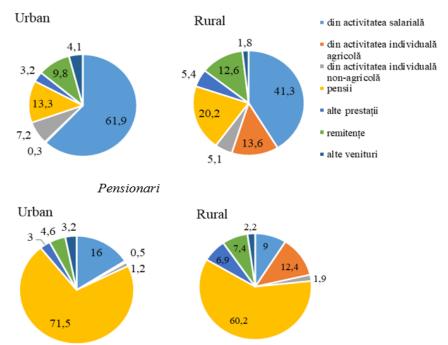


Figura 2. **Structura veniturilor disponibile medii ale populației, 2023, %**Sursa: elaborată de autori în baza datelor BNS

Componentele individuale în formarea veniturilor pensionarilor urbani și pensionarilor rurali au o importanță diferită. Astfel, având în vedere întâietatea pensiilor în structura veniturilor disponibile ale pensionarilor care locuiesc atât în mediul urban, cât și în cel rural, contributia acestora la formarea acestor venituri nu este identică. Ponderea pensiilor în structura veniturilor pensionarilor din mediul urban este de 71,5%, în timp ce cea a pensionarilor din mediul rural este de 60,2% (Figura 2). Aceasta indică faptul că importanta pensiilor în formarea veniturilor pentru pensionarii din mediul urban este mai mare decât pentru pensionarii din mediul rural. O particularitate a formării veniturilor pensionarilor este că locul doi în structura veniturilor disponibile ale locuitorilor urbani îl ocupă veniturile din activitatea salarială (16,0%), în timp ce în rândul locuitorilor din mediul rural ocupă locul trei (9,0%). Importanta veniturilor din activitatea salarială în formarea veniturilor pentru pensionarii din mediul urban este de 1,8 ori mai mare decât pentru pensionarii din mediul rural. Totodată, locul doi în structura veniturilor disponibile ale pensionarilor din mediul rural este ocupat de veniturile din activitatea individuală agricolă (12,4%), în timp ce pentru pensionarii din mediul urban este de doar 0,5%. O trăsătură caracteristică este ponderea mai mare a remitențelor în veniturile disponibile ale pensionarilor din mediul rural (7,4%) decât ale pensionarilor din mediul urban (4,6%). Faptul ce determină importanta lor mai mare (de 1,6 ori) în formarea de venituri pentru pensionarii din mediul rural decât pentru pensionarii din mediul urban.

Cheltuielile de consum. Ritmul de creștere a cheltuielilor medii de consum ale pensionarilor (cu excepția celor din mediul rural) rămâne în urmă față de creșterea cheltuielilor de consum ale întregii populații. În anul 2023, cheltuielile medii de consum ale pensionarilor au constituit 3731,8 lei pe lună (Figura 3), adică cu 52,3% mai mult decât în 2019 (la o creștere a cheltuielilor de consum ale întregii populații cu 52,5%). În rândul pensionarilor din mediul urban, cheltuielile de consum (4229,3 lei pe lună) au crescut cu 50,2%, în timp ce în rândul populației urbane – cu 55,4%. Pentru pensionari din mediul rural s-a observat o situație inversă: cheltuielile medii de consum ale acestora (3491,6 lei pe lună) au crescut mai rapid decât creșteau cheltuielile de consum ale populației rurale (53,8% și 45,1% respectiv).

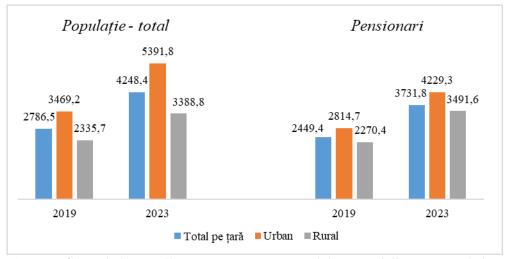


Figura 3. Cheltuielile medii de consum ale populației Republicii Moldova, (lei pe lună), 2019-2023

Sursa: elaborată de autori în baza datelor BNS

Raportul dintre cheltuielile medii de consum ale pensionarilor și cele ale întregii populații variază în funcție de locul de reședință. La nivel național și în mediul urban, se observă un decalaj semnificativ între valorile cheltuielilor de consum ale pensionarilor și nivelul mediu al cheltuielilor de consum ale întregii populații. În 2023, cheltuielile medii de consum ale pensionarilor în profilul "total pe țară", a fost cu 756,8 lei (17,8%) mai mici decât media pentru întreaga populație. În mediul urban, acest "decalaj" a fost mai semnificativ – 1162,5 lei, sau 21,6%. Dimpotrivă, pentru pensionarii din mediul rural, valoarea cheltuielilor de consum a depășit nivelul mediu cu 102,8 lei (2,9%). Ca urmare, comparativ cu anul 2019, "decalajul" dintre cheltuielile de consum ale pensionarilor și nivelul mediu al cheltuielilor de consum ale populației în profil "total pe țară" a crescut de la 12,1% la 17,8%, iar pentru pensionari-urbani acest "decalaj" a crescut de la 18,9% la 21,6%. Următoarea situație este tipică pentru pensionarii din mediul rural: dacă în 2019 valoarea cheltuielilor de consum a acestora a fost cu 2,8% mai mică decât nivelul mediu, atunci în 2023, dimpotrivă, a fost mai mare cu 2,9%. Astfel, există

atât o tendință negativă: "decalajul" între cheltuielile de consum ale pensionarilor și nivelul mediu al cheltuielilor de consum ale populației în profil "total pe țară" și "mediul urban" este în creștere, precum și o tendință pozitivă: în 2023, spre deosebire de 2019, s-a consemnat că valoarea cheltuielilor de consum ale pensionarilor din mediul rural a depășit nivelul mediu al cheltuielilor de consum ale populației în profil "mediul rural".

A existat o tendință pozitivă de reducere a decalajului dintre cheltuielile medii de consum ale pensionarilor rurali și cei urbani. În 2019, cheltuielile medii de consum ale pensionarilor din mediul rural au constituit 2270,4 lei (cu 544,3 lei, sau cu 19,3% mai puțin decât la pensionari din mediul urban). În 2023, cheltuielile de consum ale pensionarilor din mediul rural au crescut până la 3491,6 lei, iar "decalajul" dintre cheltuielile medii de consum ale pensionarilor care locuiesc în mediul urban și rural a constituit 737,7 lei, sau 17,4%. Vom remarca că reducerea decalajului dintre pensionarii rurali și pensionarii urbani în ceea ce privește nivelul lor de cheltuieli de consum s-a produs pe fondul tendinței opuse – decalajul din ce în ce mai mare dintre pensionarii rurali și pensionarii urbani în ceea ce privește nivelul veniturilor lor disponibile.

După multe destinații ale cheltuielilor de consum, nivelul cheltuielilor pensionarilor din mediul rural este semnificativ mai scăzut decât al pensionarilor din mediul urban, în timp ce, în unele dintre ele, dimpotrivă, cheltuielile de consum ale pensionarilor din mediul rural depășesc cheltuielile pensionarilor din mediul urban. Diferența dintre cheltuielile pensionarilor din mediul rural și cei din mediul urban este deosebit de semnificativă în ceea ce priveste sumele alocate pentru "restaurante și hoteluri" și "recreere și cultură", care, în 2023, au reprezentat respectiv 85,4% și 64,8% (Tabelul 2). Există un decalaj semnificativ, în defavoarea pensionarilor din mediul rural, fată de cei urbani în cheltuielile pentru sănătate (45,4%), achizitionarea de băuturi alcoolice și produse din tutun (40,0%), transport (25,0%). Sub nivelul mediu (17,4%), pensionarii din mediul rural continuă să rămână în urma pensionarilor din mediul urban în ceea ce priveste cheltuielile pentru serviciile de telecomunicații (15,7%), produse alimentare (14,5%), întreținerea locuințelor (8,4%) și servicii educaționale (6,1%). În același timp, în favoarea pensionarilor din mediul rural, între acestia si pensionarii din mediul urban s-a dezvoltat un "decalaj" în ceea ce privește cheltuielile pentru achizitionarea îmbrăcămintei și încălțămintei (6,2%), precum și dotarea locuințelor (7,3%). Astfel de diferențe în destinații de cheltuieli ale consumatorilor se datorează în principal specificului și particularitătilor stilului și modului de viată al pensionarilor din mediul urban, pe de o parte, și pensionarii din mediul rural, pe de altă parte.

Tabelul 2. Cheltuielile medii de consum în gospodăriile casnice cu statut socialeconomic "pensionari", 2023, lei pe lună

Conomic 99		, , ,			
			«Decalaj» între «Rural» și		
	Urban	Rural	«Urban»		
			lei	%	
Total	4229,3	3491,6	-737,7	-17,4	
inclusiv					
produse alimentare	1956,9	1673,7	-283,2	-14,5	
băuturi alcoolice și tutun	65,7	39,4	-26,3	-40,0	
îmbrăcăminte și încălțăminte	195,5	207,7	+12,2	+6,2	
întreținerea locuinței	874,5	800,9	-73,6	-8,4	
dotarea locuinței	173,5	186,2	+12,7	+7,3	
sănătate	328,4	179,2	-149,2	-45,4	
transport	138,2	103,7	-34,5	-25,0	
telecomunicație	159,6	134,6	-25,0	-15,7	
recreere și cultură	80,2	28,2	-52,0	-64,8	
educație	3,3	3,1	-0,2	-6,1	
restaurante și hoteluri	85,5	12,5	-73,0	-85,4	

Sursa: calculat de autor în baza datelor BNS

Structura cheltuielilor medii de consum ale pensionarilor este foarte asemănătoare cu structura cheltuielilor de consum ale populației totale. În structura cheltuielilor de consum ale pensionarilor, precum si a populației totale care locuiește atât în mediul urban, cât și în mediul rural, primează cheltuielile pentru produse alimentare (Figura 4). Valoarea acestora include nu numai cheltuielile de cumpărare a produselor alimentare, ci și produsele consumate, evaluate în termeni monetari, cultivate pe terenurile gospodărești. Poziția a doua în structura cheltuielilor de consum, atât pentru pensionari, cât și pentru populația totală, este ocupată de cheltuielile de întretinere a locuinței, incluzând plata serviciilor de alimentare cu apă și canalizare, furnizarea de energie electrică și gaze. Poziția a treia în structura cheltuielilor de consum ale pensionarilor din mediul rural, precum și a populației rurale totale, este ocupată de cheltuielile pentru achizitionarea de îmbrăcăminte și încăltăminte. O situatie diferită este tipică pentru mediul urban: al treilea loc în structura cheltuielilor de consum ale pensionarilor urbani este ocupat de cheltuielile pentru menținerea sănătății, în timp ce la populatia urbană totală este ocupată de cheltuieli pentru alte bunuri și servicii, care includ: în special, cheltuielile pentru educație și vizitarea restaurantelor și cafenelelor, cazarea la hotele, achizitionarea de băuturi alcoolice si produse din tutun.

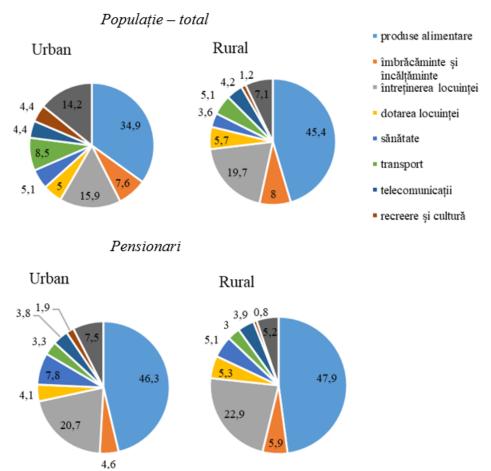


Figura 4. Structura cheltuielilor medii de consum ale populației, 2023, % Sursa: elaborată de autori în baza datelor BNS

Deși principalele destinații ale cheltuielilor de consum pentru pensionarii din mediul urban și cel rural sunt similare, există diferențe semnificative în indicatorii cantitativi ai structurii acestor cheltuieli. Ponderea cheltuielilor pentru produse alimentare în structura cheltuielilor de consum joacă un rol important în evaluarea nivelului de trai al oamenilor. Potrivit legii lui Engel, cu cât este mai mare ponderea cheltuielilor de consum alocată pentru produse alimentare, cu atât nivelul de trai al membrilor gospodăriilor casnice este mai scăzut. Pentru pensionarii din mediul rural, ponderea cheltuielilor pentru produsele alimentare în structura cheltuielilor de consum este de 47,9%, adică cu 1,6 puncte procentuale mai mult decât pentru pensionarii din mediul urban. Astfel, ponderea mai mare a cheltuielilor pentru produsele alimentare ale pensionarilor din mediul rural indică la un nivel de trai mai scăzut al acestora comparativ cu cel al pensionarilor din mediul urban.

Pensionarii din mediul rural au o pondere mai mare a cheltuielilor pentru întreținerea locuințelor decât pensionarii din mediul urban. Ei alocă 22,9% din cheltuielile de consum pentru aceste scopuri, ceea ce este cu 2,2 p.p. mai mult decât

la pensionari din mediul urban (20,7%). O astfel de pondere semnificativă a cheltuielilor de întreținere a locuințelor este legată cu tarifele înalte pentru serviciile locativ-comunale, ceea ce a dus la alocarea a mai mult de 1/5 din toate cheltuielile pensionarilor pentru plata acestora.

Particularitățile stilului și modului de viață sunt reflectate în diferențele semnificative dintre pensionarii urbani și pensionarii rurali în ceea ce privește ponderea cheltuielilor pentru satisfacerea nevoilor de ordin superior. Acestea sunt vizibil mai mici la pensionarii din mediul rural decât la cei din mediul urban. Acestea sunt cheltuieli care contribuie la o creștere a capitalului uman: pentru menținerea sănătății (7,8% pentru pensionari din mediul urban și 5,1% – pentru pensionari din mediul rural), pentru recreere și evenimente culturale (1,9% – pentru pensionari din mediul urban și 0,8% – pentru pensionari rurali). Acestea sunt cheltuielile pentru restaurante și hoteluri care oferă alimentare de înaltă calitate în afara casei și vacanțe confortabile în afara țării (2,0% pentru pensionari urbani și 0,4% – pentru pensionari din mediul rural).

Persoanele vârstnice din mediul rural au condițiile de trai semnificativ mai proaste decât cele din orașe. Doar 73,4% din locuințele gospodăriilor rurale formate doar din persoane vârstnice (60+ ani) erau dotate cu apeduct, în timp ce în mediul urban erau 98% dintre acestea (BNS, Vârstnicii în Republica Moldova în anul 2022). Doar 57,8% din gospodăriile rurale cu persoane vârstnice aveau sisteme de canalizare (în orașe – 94,1%), o baie sau duș în casă – 43,5% și, respectiv, 86,2%. În mediul rural, 90,5% dintre gospodăriile cu persoanele vârstnice foloseau lemne sau cărbune pentru a-și încălzi locuințele pe vreme rece, în timp ce 71,7% dintre gospodăriile de vârstnici din mediul urban aveau încălzire centrală sau autonomă.

Autoevaluarea de către membrii gospodăriilor casnice a nivelului lor de trai depinde de mediul de reședință a gospodăriei. Membrii a 4,6% din gospodăriile rurale formate doar din persoane vârstnice (60+ ani) și-au evaluat nivelul de trai drept "bun și foarte bun" – acesta este de 2,2 ori mai puțin decât în rândul membrilor gospodăriilor urbane de același tip (10,3%). În același timp, în rândul membrilor gospodăriilor rurale formate doar din persoanele vârstnice, membrii a 14,3% din gospodării și-au considerat nivelul de trai rău sau foarte rău, ceea ce este de 1,2 ori mai mic decât în rândul locuitorilor din mediul urban (17,2%). Situația, când ponderea persoanelor vârstnice din mediul rural care își evaluează nivelul de trai drept bun și foarte bun, precum și rău și foarte rău, a fost mai mică decât în rândul locuitorilor urbani, se explică prin faptul că ponderea sătenilor vârstnici care au dat o evaluare satisfăcătoare al nivelului lor de trai (81,1%), a fost mai mare decât a locuitorilor urbani (72,5%).

Astfel, nivelul de trai al pensionarilor din mediul rural este semnificativ inferior atât valorii medii pentru întreaga populație rurală, cât și pentru pensionarii din mediul urban. Pentru a depăși aceste decalaje, este recomandabil de a continua practica de îmbunătățire a situației lor financiare. Republica Moldova are o experiență pozitivă în acest domeniu. În special, o creștere consecventă a pensiei minime pentru limită de vârstă – de la 1143,57 lei în 2020 la 2620,62 lei – în 2023, adică de 2,3 ori. În plus, plăți periodice unice pensionarilor cu pensii mici (în

special, plata în 2022 a 1500 de lei persoanelor a căror pensie lunară era mai mică de 5000 lei). Datorită faptului că printre beneficiarii de pensii mici se numără semnificativ mai mulți locuitori din mediul rural decât cei din mediul urban, aceste măsuri au avut cel mai favorabil impact asupra situației financiare a pensionarilor din mediul rural. Pentru pensionarii din mediul rural, este foarte importantă depășirea izolării sociale, încurajarea participării active la viața societății și a ocupării fezabile pe piața muncii (și primirea veniturilor suplimentare pe această bază). Acesta este scopul *Programului privind îmbătrânirea activă și sănătoasă pentru anii 2023-2027*, care este implementat de Ministerul Muncii si Protecției Sociale al Republicii Moldova cu sprijinul Fondului Națiunilor Unite pentru Populație.

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# GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE GLOBAL LABOR MARKET: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract. Gender inequalities in the global labor market continue to pose a significant challenge, despite progress made in several areas. This systematic literature review examines the factors that perpetuate gender inequalities, with a particular focus on the interaction between welfare policies, labor dynamics, and women's economic participation. Through a rigorous analysis of 20 articles selected from leading academic databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, the study explores various aspects of gender inequalities, including wage inequality, occupational segregation, and limited access to career opportunities. The findings indicate that, in many countries, labor market reforms and economic policies fail to significantly improve women's working conditions, sometimes exacerbating inequalities. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accentuated these issues, highlighting the precariousness of women's work and the growing inequalities caused by neoliberal regimes. Welfare policies, although designed to promote equality, often fail to address gender needs and contribute to unequal economic distribution. The implications of this study highlight the need for policy reforms that address the deep roots of gender inequality and promote a more inclusive and inclusive workplace. We need an integrated approach that considers not only equality, but also the intervention of other areas of social and economic inequality to build a sustainable society.

Keywords: gender diversity, policy, inequalities, welfare

**JEL:** 138, J14, J16, J40, J71, M10

**UDC:** 331.52-055.2

**Introduction**. Gender inequalities are a central and complex issue in the global labor market landscape. Despite progress in many areas, gender inequalities

persist, manifesting themselves in different forms such as wage inequality, occupational segregation, limited access to career opportunities, and work-life balance challenges. Labor market dynamics are closely intertwined with welfare policies, which can act both as tools to mitigate inequalities and, paradoxically, as factors that perpetuate them. In this context, understanding the intersections between public policies, gender dynamics, and economic participation is crucial to design effective strategies to intervene and promote equality.

This systematic literature review (SLR) aims to explore the landscape of gender inequalities in the context of the global labor market, with a special focus on the factors that influence these disparities and the policies that can be implemented to address them. Using a rigorous selection and analysis methodology, 20 articles selected from leading research databases such as Scopus and Web of Science were reviewed. The included studies focus on various aspects of gender inequalities, including wage inequality, occupational segregation, welfare policies, the impact of economic crises, and family and caregiving dynamics.

The results of this SLR highlight how labor market reforms and economic policies in many countries, especially in developing ones, fail to significantly improve women's working conditions, maintaining or even exacerbating gender inequalities. In Europe, despite a reduction in gender inequalities in pensions since 2011, women continue to earn less than men, even when differences in career strategies are considered. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated gender inequalities, highlighting precariousness and the growing inequalities created by neoliberal regimes.

The aim of this review is to provide an overview of current research on gender differences in the labor market and highlight gaps in current policies and ways for future updates. We highlight the need for policies that not only promote equality, but also consider gender relations and more.

Research methodology. To conduct this systematic literature review (SLR) related to gender differences, social well-being and employment policies, we used a rigorous and multidisciplinary approach conducted in important part. The process began with an in-depth search of two major knowledge databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), and concluded with the use of My SLR software to directly compile and analyze the results. Initially, Scopus searches were performed using a selected set of keywords to retrieve relevant studies. We used words such as "gender," "policy," "welfare,", "work" and "inequalities" in the article title, abstract, and keywords. In this section there are two separate sets of questions designed to explore different aspects of gender differences. The first study focused on the relationship between gender differences and welfare policies, while the second broadened the scope to include the interaction between gender and work dynamics. Through this process, 12 relevant articles were identified and selected based on their relevance to the established inclusion criteria.

We have also recently been working on the Web of Science (WoS), another major database of academic articles. Again, we used a range of keywords such as "gender", "welfare", "work" and "inequality", to ensure that the results included

studies that covered the main points of our analysis. The WoS search returned a total of 34 articles selected for their contributions to the fields of business economics, public policy and gender studies. After collecting an initial set of 46 articles from two databases, we used screening criteria to evaluate the relevance and quality of the studies.



Figure 2. Sources Source: mySLR

The screening process was carried out in two stages: the first stage consisted of checking titles and abstracts to quickly identify irrelevant articles; the second stage consisted of screening all remaining research articles. This approach eliminated 19 articles that did not fully meet the inclusion criteria, and a total of 20 articles were selected for the final stage.



Figure 3. Paper selection Source: mySLR

To ensure a systematic and consistent analysis of the results, we used My SLR software. This tool facilitated the preparation of selected articles, which allowed a critical evaluation of the evidence, and methods used in the different studies. Furthermore, mySLR helped generate a "word cloud" showing the most common new topics such as "women", "gender", "work", "politics" and "life" and to explore the meaning of these topics in literature. This methodological approach has allowed us to create a comprehensive and in-depth review of current research on gender differences, which contributes significantly to the understanding of welfare policies and work motivation currently.



Figure 1. Words cloud Source: mySLR

Literature review. The analysis of the selected articles highlights a complex interaction between gender inequalities, welfare policies, labor market participation, and socioeconomic impacts. Family preferences are found to be instrumental in shaping economic decisions and influencing public policies (Lütolf & Stadelmann-Steffen, 2023). The research highlights that preferences expressed by families in the countries studied are crucial for policy decisions related to welfare and resource allocation, showing how they can contribute to perpetuating or reducing existing economic inequalities.

Work environment and gender differences are found to be significant factors influencing long-term sickness absence among professionals in Denmark (Madsen, 2018). In particular, the analysis suggests that a non-inclusive work environment and gender-related barriers may increase professionals' vulnerability to prolonged absences, with negative impacts on productivity and economic well-being.

Despite claims of sustainability, working conditions for women in the global apparel industry continue to suffer (Stevano, Mezzadri, Lombardozzi, & Bargawi, 2021). This demonstrates the link between announced policies and actual practices in the sector and shows the need for stronger policies to improve working conditions and promote gender equality.

Mothers face particular challenges in the Spanish pension system that negatively affect their retirement income (Pérez & Cifre, 2020). This indicates that the current system is unable to compensate for maternity leave and maintains gender differences in pensions. Similarly, work and family reconciliation policies often fail to reduce gender gaps in the labor market in OECD countries (Brady, Blome, & Kmec, 2020), indicating the need for more effective reforms to ensure equal opportunities.

Welfare systems that do not adequately consider gender differences can perpetuate existing inequalities, contributing to ineffective economic redistribution (Budig, Misra, & Boeckmann, 2018). This is further complicated by governments' use of social media to raise awareness of social problems; although they are effective tools to raise public awareness, they may not directly translate into concrete policy actions (Coronil & Gil, 2019).

Gender inequalities in pensions in EU countries are showing a decreasing trend, but still remain significant (Abatemarco, Lagomarsino, & Russolillo, 2019). This indicates that, despite some progress, structural obstacles persist that prevent full pension equity among men and women. Furthermore, greater female

participation in the labor market can lead to greater equality in economic opportunities (Barneveld et al., 2021), suggesting that policies aimed at increasing women's inclusion in the labor market could have positive effects on reducing gender segregation.

Climate change, such as changes in precipitation, can significantly influence migration decisions in Vietnam, such that women are less likely to migrate in response to climate shocks, thus maintaining gender differences (Luong, Nguyen, Truong, & Le, 2021). It shows how climate change affects genetic diversity and highlights current vulnerabilities.

The use of paternity leave by mothers' partners is found to be a positive factor for female entrepreneurship in Sweden (Naldi, Baù, Ahl, & Markowska, 2022), highlighting how family support and leave policies influence women's career choices. In a European context, tax and benefit systems contribute to the reduction of gender income gaps, but differences in career strategies between men and women continue to produce significant wage gaps, even in the early stages of the career (Doorley & Keane, 2017; Gronlund, 2015).

Gender constructions influence retirement investment strategies in the UK, with men tending to adopt riskier strategies than women (James & Agunsoye, 2023), and migrant mothers' experiences are often problematically represented in official Swedish discourses, perpetuating stereotypes and social barriers (de los Reyes, 2022).

Part-time female workers show lower levels of health and well-being than their male colleagues during economic crises (Merino-Llorente & Arechavala, 2020), and single parents, both mothers and fathers, are often disadvantaged compared to parents in couples in terms of socioeconomic conditions and health (Lanza-León & Cantarero-Prieto, 2019). The redistribution of public income in Scandinavian countries shows that in-kind and cash transfers have different but complementary redistributive effects (Arendt & Christensen, 2024).

Finally, analysis shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified and exacerbated the growth of inequality caused by neoliberal policies, highlighting the need for strategies to create just and sustainable societies (Barneveld et al., 2021). Societies characterized by strong masculinity and/or low individualism tend to strengthen the relationship between public spending on child care and women's risk of becoming entrepreneurs (Gimenez-Jimenez, Calabrò, & Urbano, 2020), indicating that informal businesses can reduce gender gaps.

**Main results**. The results of this systematic literature review provide important insights to better understand how gender differences are linked to welfare policies and labor market dynamics. It is clear that there are many areas that need to change to promote greater equality and inclusion.

One of the most evident results is the need to reform welfare policies to better manage gender inequalities. Although many countries, particularly OECD member countries, have implemented work-family policies, these policies are not sufficient to reduce gender gaps in the labor market. This suggests that current policies are too broad or poorly designed and do not take into account the unique aspects of

women's and men's work and family experiences. For example, policies that promote a more equal distribution of care responsibilities between men and women could help balance economic and employment opportunities. Furthermore, it would be useful to develop programs that facilitate women's reintegration into the workforce after periods of absence related to motherhood, thus ensuring that their careers are not irreparably interrupted.

The issue of pensions emerges as another crucial aspect. The findings indicate that mothers face significant challenges in pension systems, such as the Spanish one, where career breaks related to motherhood are not adequately compensated. This not only contributes to perpetuating gender inequalities in pensions, but also highlights a broader problem of how care work, often unpaid, is undervalued or ignored in social policies. It is therefore clear that pension systems need to be reformed to recognize and enhance women's contribution to care and to adequately compensate for these periods of absence from the labor market. These reforms will help achieve greater equality and fairness for all and reduce economic disparities that persist into old age. Working conditions, particularly for women in sectors such as the international garment industry, are another factor to consider. Despite commitments to stability and gender equality, many women continue to work in precarious conditions. This highlights a disconnect between announced policies and actual practice, emphasizing the need for more effective changes. It is crucial that sector-specific policies not only promote good working practices but also implement and monitor them. Organizations and authorities must collaborate to create workplaces where women have the opportunity to advance and are afforded the same status and respect as men.

Furthermore, your research shows that increased participation of women in the labor market reduces the economic gender gap. This is a significant finding because it demonstrates that improving gender equality requires motivating women at all levels of the labor market, including decision-making and leadership roles. Policies supporting female entrepreneurship, such as those observed in Sweden with maternity leave, show positive results in reducing the gender gap. This suggests that governments should consider similar measures to promote work-life balance and foster a culture that supports women's economic empowerment.

Another interesting aspect discussed in this study is the effect of climate change on gender differences. For example, women in Vietnam are less likely to respond to climate shocks, and gender disparities persist. This suggests that climate policies should take into account gender differences in vulnerabilities and response capacities. It is important that climate adaptation strategies also consider the specific needs and constraints of women to avoid reinforcing existing inequalities.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for strategies to build fair and sustainable societies. Gender disparities have worsened during the health crisis, reflecting the weaknesses of existing social and economic systems. This suggests that a more integrated approach is needed to address inequality, one that goes beyond temporary measures and considers long-term structural changes to ensure true equality.

In summary, the prepared work is a collection of important insights and provides concrete directions for future policy and social reforms. The path toward equality requires a sustainable and multifaceted approach capable of addressing the deep-rooted causes of inequality and promoting real and lasting change in society.

**Discussion and conclusions**. The systematic literature review (SLR) conducted in this study reveals several critical insights into the persistent gender inequalities in the global labor market and highlights the multifaceted nature of these disparities. The findings underscore the complex interplay between welfare policies, labor market dynamics, and gender-specific economic participation. Despite numerous policies aimed at promoting gender equality, the results suggest that existing frameworks often fall short of addressing the root causes of inequality. This disconnect between policy intentions and actual outcomes is evident across various sectors, particularly in industries such as global apparel, where women continue to face precarious working conditions despite public commitments to stability and equality.

A key discussion point arising from the SLR is the inadequacy of welfare policies in effectively mitigating gender inequalities. While many countries, particularly within the OECD, have implemented family-friendly policies, these measures often do not sufficiently account for the diverse experiences and needs of women and men in both professional and domestic spheres. For instance, policies that fail to adequately support women's return to the workforce post-maternity or that do not equitably distribute caregiving responsibilities between genders can inadvertently reinforce traditional gender roles and economic disparities. The findings suggest a need for more targeted and nuanced policy interventions that recognize and address the unique challenges faced by women in the labor market.

The impact of economic crises and external shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, further exacerbates these gender disparities. The pandemic has not only highlighted the precariousness of many women's employment situations but also intensified existing inequalities under neoliberal economic frameworks. This calls for a re-evaluation of current economic policies and labor market reforms to better support gender equality, especially in times of crisis. Additionally, the research points to the need for greater inclusion of gender considerations in climate policy. The example of women's lower likelihood of migrating in response to climate shocks in Vietnam illustrates how gender-specific vulnerabilities must be addressed to ensure comprehensive and inclusive climate adaptation strategies.

Moreover, the promotion of female entrepreneurship and leadership roles emerges as a promising avenue to reduce the gender economic gap. Policies like Sweden's maternity leave for fathers demonstrate the potential benefits of shared caregiving responsibilities in fostering women's economic empowerment and reducing gender disparities in the labor market. Such initiatives could serve as models for other countries aiming to balance work and life responsibilities while promoting a more inclusive workforce.

In conclusion, this systematic literature review provides a comprehensive overview of current research on gender inequalities in the global labor market,

highlighting both the progress made and the significant gaps that remain. The study demonstrates that while there have been strides toward gender equality, significant structural barriers continue to perpetuate inequalities. Effective policy reform requires a multifaceted and integrated approach that addresses the deep-rooted causes of gender disparities, including unequal caregiving responsibilities, inadequate support for women's career progression, and insufficient attention to gender-specific vulnerabilities in times of crisis.

To foster real and lasting change, policymakers must move beyond generic and often ineffective measures and develop targeted interventions that account for the complex realities of women's lives. This includes creating supportive environments for women's entrepreneurship, ensuring equitable distribution of caregiving duties, and integrating gender considerations into all aspects of social and economic policy. Additionally, the unique impacts of external shocks, such as economic crises and climate change, on gender inequalities should be a central consideration in future policy development.

Ultimately, achieving gender equality in the labor market requires sustained commitment and innovative approaches that not only address existing disparities but also create opportunities for all individuals to thrive equally. This study lays the groundwork for future research and policy-making efforts aimed at building a more equitable and inclusive society, where gender no longer dictates economic outcomes.

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## ANALYSIS AND PERSPECTIVES OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Abstract. Rural tourism in the Republic of Moldova has gained momentum as a strategy to revitalize rural areas, boost the local economy, and preserve cultural heritage. The sector, with its picturesque landscapes and traditional villages, attracts both domestic and international tourists. However, it faces several challenges, including seasonality, limited infrastructure, and dependence on foreign tourists. This scientific work explores the benefits, challenges, and future perspectives of rural tourism in Moldova, emphasizing the need for sustainable development strategies.

**Keywords:** Rural tourism, Moldova, economic growth, cultural heritage, job creation, infrastructure, eco-tourism, sustainability, agriculture, challenges

**JEL:** L83, O18, Q56, R11 **UDC:** 338.48(478-22)

Introduction. Rural tourism in Moldova began to develop after the country gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. It emerged as a viable strategy to stimulate economic growth in underdeveloped rural regions. Initially, this sector was seen as an alternative source of income for rural populations, helping to diversify local economies that were predominantly dependent on agriculture. Rural tourism offered a way to showcase Moldova's scenic landscapes, vineyards, and traditional villages, attracting visitors interested in experiencing authentic rural life. Over the years, support from international organizations such as the European Union and the World Bank has played a significant role in the expansion of rural tourism.

These efforts have focused on improving tourism infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, and accommodations, while also promoting Moldova's unique cultural heritage. Local authorities, alongside private entrepreneurs, have worked collaboratively to develop guesthouses, eco-tourism sites, wine tours, and cultural festivals, which are now central to the rural tourism experience. The sector not only fosters economic growth but also supports the preservation of Moldova's rich

cultural traditions. It has empowered local communities by providing opportunities for entrepreneurship, job creation, and the development of ancillary services like transportation, catering, and event management. By emphasizing sustainable development practices, rural tourism also aims to minimize environmental impacts while maximizing the benefits for local residents and visitors alike.

**Benefits of Rural Tourism in Moldova.** In the following sections, we explore the specific benefits (*Figure 1*) of rural tourism in Moldova, examining how it supports economic development, cultural preservation, and community empowerment.



Figure 1. **Major economic benefits of rural tourism in Moldova**Source: Elaborated by authors

We also address the obstacles it faces and suggest ways to ensure sustainable growth for the future (*Table 1*).

Table 1. The main directions for ensuring the sustainable growth for the future from rural tourism in Moldova

Directions	Special measures			
Job Creation and	Boosts employment in hospitality, guiding, and crafts,			
Employment	diversifying local income sources and reducing rural poverty.			
Opportunities				
Support for Local	Increases demand for local goods and services, benefiting			
Businesses	family-run, farms, and artisan shops, keeping the economic			
	benefits within the community.			
Preservation of	Encourages the maintenance of traditional architecture, crafts,			
Cultural and	festivals, and folk music, providing financial support for the			
Historical Heritage	conservation of historical sites.			
Empowerment of	Fosters a sense of ownership and social cohesion, promoting			
Local Communities	participation in tourism initiatives and equitable distribution of			
	economic gains.			
Improvement in	Enhances infrastructure such as roads, utilities, healthcare, and			
Quality of Life	education, benefiting both residents and tourists.			
Growth of Ancillary	Expands sectors like transportation, catering, and event			
Services	management, offering additional business and employment			
	opportunities.			
Public and Private	Attracts investments that improve accessibility and living			
Investment in	standards, making tourist areas more appealing and sustainable.			
Infrastructure				
Boosting the	Supports farm-based tourism, increasing demand for local			
Agricultural Sector	produce and enabling income diversification for farmers.			
through Agro-				
Tourism				

Source: elaborated by the authors

Challenges Facing Rural Tourism in Moldova. Despite its numerous benefits, rural tourism in Moldova faces several significant challenges that hinder its sustainable growth and full potential. These challenges include seasonality, dependence on foreign tourists, limited infrastructure, environmental concerns, and over-tourism in popular areas.

The main challenges include:

- > Seasonality and Income Fluctuations
- ➤ Dependence on Foreign Tourists
- ➤ Limited Infrastructure in Remote Areas
- ➤ Environmental Degradation and Over-Tourism
- ➤ Limited Community Involvement and Capacity Building
- ➤ Marketing and Promotion Challenges

The seasonal nature of rural tourism poses one of the biggest challenges for the sector. Many tourism activities, such as grape harvesting, eco-tourism, and cultural festivals, are confined to specific periods of the year, typically spring and autumn. This seasonality leads to income fluctuations for local businesses and workers, making it difficult to maintain consistent employment and revenue streams throughout the year. As a result, many rural tourism operators struggle to attract visitors during off-peak seasons, affecting the overall sustainability of their ventures. Addressing this issue requires innovative marketing strategies, diversified offerings, and the development of year-round attractions.

According to recent data from Moldova's National Bureau of Statistics (*Figure 2*), approximately **70% of rural tourism revenues** are generated during the spring and autumn months, coinciding with peak periods like grape harvest festivals and eco-tourism events. Conversely, the winter and summer months account for just **30% of total annual income**, leading to a significant drop in revenue for many rural businesses. This fluctuation not only impacts income but also affects employment levels, with about **40% of workers in rural tourism reporting reduced working hours or temporary unemployment** during off-peak months.

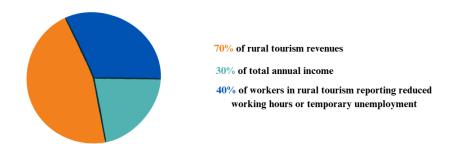


Figure 2. Seasonality of Rural Tourism Revenues and Employment in Moldova Source: Elaborated by authors

Rural tourism in Moldova is currently heavily reliant on international visitors, particularly from countries like Romania, Ukraine, Russia, and other European nations. While this brings much-needed foreign currency and global exposure, it also makes the sector vulnerable to fluctuations in international travel patterns and economic conditions. Factors such as changes in global travel trends, political instability, or economic downturns in key source markets can significantly impact tourist arrivals. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, highlighted the risks of over-reliance on foreign tourists. Promoting domestic tourism and encouraging Moldovan residents to explore rural destinations could help create a more stable foundation and reduce this vulnerability.

Although there have been improvements in infrastructure in some rural areas, many remote villages still lack adequate facilities to support tourism. Poor road conditions, limited access to public transportation, insufficient accommodations, and a lack of healthcare services are common issues that can deter tourists from

visiting lesser-known destinations. Additionally, the absence of modern utilities, such as reliable electricity, water supply, and telecommunications, further limits the development of tourism in these areas. Overcoming these barriers will require sustained public and private investments, focusing on infrastructure upgrades that can benefit both tourists and local residents.

As rural tourism grows, there is a risk of environmental degradation and over-tourism, particularly in popular destinations. Increased tourist traffic can lead to waste generation, depletion of natural resources, and damage to natural landscapes. Over-tourism, or the excessive influx of visitors to certain sites, can strain local ecosystems, disrupt wildlife habitats, and diminish the authenticity of the rural experience for tourists. To prevent these issues, it is crucial to implement eco-friendly tourism practices, enforce strict environmental regulations, and establish effective visitor management systems. Promoting sustainable tourism, educating both tourists and locals on conservation efforts, and encouraging responsible tourism behaviors can mitigate the environmental impact.

Another challenge facing rural tourism in Moldova is the limited involvement of local communities in tourism planning and management. While community-based tourism initiatives have emerged, many communities lack the necessary skills, training, and resources to effectively manage and benefit from tourism activities. This lack of capacity often results in uneven distribution of economic benefits, where only a few individuals or businesses capitalize on the tourism influx. Addressing this requires a focus on capacity building, providing local residents with training in hospitality, entrepreneurship, and tourism management, along with access to financial resources and support.

Despite the growing interest in rural tourism, Moldova's rural destinations suffer from limited international visibility and insufficient marketing efforts. Competing with more established rural destinations in Europe is challenging, particularly due to limited marketing budgets and a lack of strategic promotional campaigns (Reschke, 2024). Strengthening digital marketing efforts, improving online visibility, and participating in international tourism fairs can help raise awareness of Moldova's rural tourism potential.

**Future Perspectives and Recommendations.** To ensure the sustainable development of rural tourism in Moldova, a multi-faceted approach is necessary, focusing on infrastructure, marketing, environmental sustainability, and community engagement. Moldova's potential as a rural tourism destination is vast, but to fully capitalize on it, the following strategies should be prioritized:

- > Infrastructure Investment
- ➤ Promotion of Eco-Friendly Practices
- ➤ Effective Tourist Flow Management
- ➤ Enhanced Marketing Strategies

Continued investment in infrastructure is fundamental to making rural areas more accessible and appealing to tourists. This includes improving roads, telecommunications, water supply, and energy systems in remote villages.

Developing reliable public transportation options will make rural destinations easier to reach for both domestic and international tourists. Additionally, investing in hospitality infrastructure, such as eco-friendly accommodations, can improve the overall tourist experience while minimizing the ecological footprint. Well-designed infrastructure upgrades can also benefit local residents, contributing to long-term regional development. Environmental sustainability should be at the core of rural tourism strategies. Promoting eco-friendly practices, such as waste reduction, water conservation, and sustainable energy use, will help protect Moldova's natural landscapes. Encouraging the adoption of eco-certifications for accommodations and tourism services can raise awareness about the importance of sustainability among both tourists and operators (Ameliavitory, 2024). Moreover, development of agrotourism and organic farming experiences can further integrate sustainable practices into the tourism model, creating a win-win scenario for the environment and local economies. To prevent over-tourism and minimize environmental degradation, it is crucial to manage tourist flows effectively (Digital Tourism Think Tank, 2024). Implementing visitor management systems, such as capacity limits for popular attractions, will help maintain a balance between visitor numbers and site preservation. Developing a diverse range of attractions—such as historical tours, culinary experiences, and nature retreats—can help distribute tourist traffic more evenly across regions and seasons, reducing pressure on the most visited sites. Clear communication and signage can also enhance the visitor experience while guiding tourists towards responsible behavior. Enhancing marketing efforts is essential to boost rural tourism in Moldova. Current marketing initiatives should be expanded to include a stronger emphasis on domestic tourism, which can help reduce dependency on international visitors. Promoting rural tourism experiences through digital platforms, social media campaigns, and collaboration with travel influencers can increase Moldova's visibility as a rural destination. Additionally, participation in international tourism fairs and events can help establish Moldova as an attractive rural tourism destination in the global market. By adopting these strategies (Figure 3), Moldova can unlock the full potential of its rural tourism sector, promoting sustainable development, preserving cultural heritage, and enhancing economic resilience in rural areas.



Figure 3. Marketing Strategies to Enhance Rural Tourism in Moldova Source: Elaborated by authors

There are some effective marketing strategies that can enhance rural tourism in Moldova are presented in Table 2.

Marketing	Description
strategies	
Develop	Use social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
Comprehensive	to create engaging content, showcasing Moldova's rural landscapes,
Digital Campaigns	festivals, and local traditions. Include photo galleries, video tours,
	and testimonials from tourists to captivate potential visitors.
Create a Dedicated	Design a user-friendly, multi-language website that provides
Rural Tourism	detailed information about rural attractions, accommodation
Website	options, booking services, and local guides. The website should
	also feature interactive maps and virtual tours of rural areas to
	entice travelers.
Leverage	Collaborate with travel influencers, bloggers, and vloggers to
Influencer	generate awareness and interest. Invite them to explore rural
Marketing	destinations in Moldova and share their experiences with their
	followers.
Launch Seasonal	Promote specific attractions and events for different seasons, such
Campaigns	as spring festivals, grape harvesting in autumn, and traditional
	Christmas markets in winter. This approach can encourage year-
	round tourism and minimize seasonal fluctuations.
Participate in	howcase Moldova's rural tourism offerings at international fairs,
International	such as the ITB Berlin and World Travel Market in London. Use
Tourism Fairs	these platforms to establish partnerships with global tour operators
	and attract foreign visitors.
Organize Fam	Arrange familiarization (fam) trips for domestic and international
Trips for Travel	travel agencies, allowing them to experience rural destinations
Agencies	firsthand. This can help them better understand the offerings and
	recommend Moldova to their clients.

Source: elaborated by the authors

**Conclusion.** Rural tourism in Moldova presents substantial opportunities for both economic growth and social development, acting as a catalyst for revitalizing rural areas. By leveraging Moldova's picturesque landscapes, rich traditions, and agricultural heritage, this sector not only attracts tourists but also generates diverse income sources for local communities. It plays a critical role in preserving cultural heritage, empowering local populations, and strengthening the resilience of rural economies that have long depended primarily on agriculture.

The benefits of rural tourism extend beyond economic gains. It fosters community pride and involvement, as residents are encouraged to actively participate in tourism-related activities, whether through managing guesthouses, organizing cultural events, or producing traditional crafts. Furthermore, infrastructure improvements driven by tourism development—such as enhanced roads, utilities, and public services—contribute to an overall better quality of life for rural residents, creating a sustainable foundation for long-term regional growth.

However, the sector's full potential can only be realized by addressing several pressing challenges. Issues such as seasonality, limited infrastructure, reliance on foreign tourists, and environmental impacts require targeted interventions. Promoting year-round tourism, improving connectivity in remote areas, and implementing sustainable practices are crucial steps toward achieving a balanced and responsible approach to rural tourism. Equally important is the need for stronger marketing strategies, better community engagement, and enhanced domestic tourism to create a more resilient and stable sector.

Looking ahead, Moldova's rural tourism strategy must be comprehensive and forward-thinking, involving all stakeholders—government bodies, local communities, private investors, and international partners. By investing in capacity building, eco-friendly initiatives, and innovative marketing, Moldova can transform its rural tourism landscape into a sustainable, globally recognized destination. This will not only support economic development but also help preserve Moldova's unique cultural identity and natural beauty for future generations.

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## МОЛДАВСКИЕ МИГРАНТЫ В США: АНАЛИЗ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ

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Abstract. This article analyses the quality of life of Moldovan labour migrants in the United States, as well as the factors influencing their adaptation to new conditions in the country and their well-being. The study examines both the positive aspects of emigration, such as a higher standard of living and opportunities for professional growth for Moldovan citizens, and the challenges faced by Moldovan migrants in the US. Among the problems highlighted in the article are: financial challenges related to the high cost of living in the country and adaptation to the American labour market, legal restrictions related to obtaining legal status and access to social benefits, language barriers and cultural differences that hinder integration into American society, as well as psychological difficulties associated with adapting to a new culture. Overall, the author notes that the standard of living of Moldovan citizens in the US is much higher than in their homeland, and the main reason for emigration to the US is the desire to improve their financial well-being, pursuing the American dream. The author pays attention to the prospects for improving the quality of life of Moldovan labour migrants, noting that it is directly dependent on the migrant's legal status in the country, access to education, and level of integration into American society.

**Keywords:** quality of life, population migration, Republic of Moldova, USA, labour activity, labour market

*JEL:* F22, F24, F66 *UDC:* 331.556.4(73)

Введение. Сегодня США является одной из немногих стран с постоянно растущим населением, и значительную часть этого роста составляют мигранты, которые едут в страну в поисках американской мечты. Эта мечта включает в себя возможность лучшей жизни, улучшенных условий для себя и своей семьи, большие шансы на успех и процветание. Прогнозируется, что к 2050 г. число граждан Америки составить 438 млн. человек, а ежегодно население страны только благодаря иммигрантам будет расти на 1 млн., из которых полмиллиона уже сегодня в год пересекают государственную границу нелегально (ВВС, 2024).

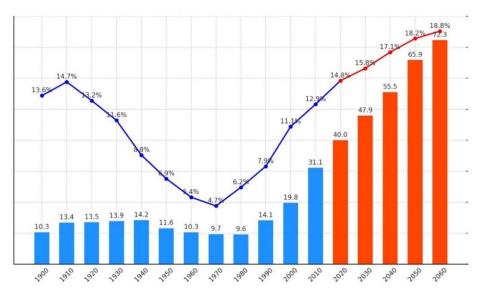


Рис.1. Число и процент иммигрантов в США и прогнозы Бюро переписи населения США до 2060 года

Источник: построено автором на основе данных Национального бюро переписи населения США (United States Census, 2023)

С момента обретения независимости Молдова также стала странойдонором мигрантов в США и данное явление оказывает значительное влияние на экономическое и социальное развитие страны. Сегодня, каждый третий трудоспособный гражданин Молдовы работает за границей, а качество его жизни в стране назначения зачастую зависит от множества факторов: от его профессиональных навыков, уровня заработной платы, условий труда, доступности жилья, способности преодолеть языковой барьер, интеграции в местное общество и наличия социальной поддержки. Ключевыми факторами, которые способствуют эмиграции из страны являются затяжной экономический кризис в стране, характеризующийся спадом, ограниченными экономическим возможностями для карьерного роста, которые вынуждают людей искать более благоприятные условия за границей. Политическая нестабильность, коррупция и отсутствие доверия к властям, а также социальные проблемы, среди которых низкий уровень жизни, отсутствие качественных социальных услуг и неэффективная система здравоохранения подтаскают ежегодно сотни тысяч людей уезжать из страны. Таким образом, актуальность темы подтверждается тем, что население Молдовы продолжает эмигрировать их страны и все больше молдаван выбирают развитые страны, где условия для жизни гораздо выше, чем на родине.

Согласно данным, которые были опубликованы на сайте Посольства Республики Молдовы в США в 2021 году 60 тыс. граждан Молдовы легально находились на территории США, причем самое большое количество проживало в следующих городах: Калифорния (более 8 тыс.), Нью-Йорк (более 5 тыс.), Вашингтон (более 4 тыс.), Флорида (более 4 тыс.), Иллинойс

(более 3 тыс.), Северная Каролина (более 3 тыс.) (МFA, 2024). Недокументированно же на территории США по разным источникам пребывает более 100 тыс. граждан Молдовы.

Цель исследования заключается в анализе жизни молдавских мигрантов в США. В основу методологии исследования заложена совокупность экономико-статистических методов, а также системный и сравнительный методы познания. Источниками исследования послужили статистические данные Национального Бюро статистики Молдовы, данные Управления статистики внутренней безопасности США и Государственного департамента США – Бюро консульских дел.

# Результаты исследования. *Категории эмигрантов из Республики Молдова в США*.

Принято выделять несколько категорий эмигрантов из Молдовы в США:

1. Эмигранты, которые выиграли лотерею Green card – Diversity Immigrant Visa Program или "Green Card lottery". Лотерея является государственной программой, которая была разработана правительством США на основании «Закона об иммиграции 1990 года» для стран с исторически низким уровнем легальной миграции в США. Ежегодно разыгрываются 55 000 видов на жительство в США. Как правило заявку на участие в программе можно отправить один раз в год примерно в течении одного месяца. Участие в конкурсе предполагает соблюдение двух правил: участвующий в лотерее должен родиться в стране, в которой проводится лотерея и иметь оконченное среднее образование или же 2 года подтвержденного рабочего стажа из последних 5 лет. Зарегистрироваться и принять участие в лотерее можно на официальном сайте государственного https://dvprogram.state.gov/. департамента: Проанализировав нижеприведенную таблицу №1, можно отметить, что после 2010 года число граждан Молдовы, получающих зеленые карты растет и в среднем к 2022 более 1000 человек в год имеют возможность легально уехать в США.

Таблица 1. Число жителей Молдовы, которые получили Green Card в США

Год	2010	2015	2016	2017	2022
Число, выданных карт для жителей Молдовы	399	1566	1189	1369	1499

Источник: составлено автором на основе данных статистического журнала Visual Capitalist (Ciorici, 2018) (Lu, 2024)

Примерно 1500 людей в год по данным Управления внутренней безопасности США (табл. №2) получают легальный перманентный статус на территории США и это означает, что они могут жить и работать законно на территории страны.

Таблица 2. **Число граждан Молдовы, которые получили легальный** перманентный статус на территории США 2015 – 2023 гг.

Год	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Число граждан Молдовы с перманентным легальным статусом на территории США	2500	1940	1370	1050	1500	1540

Источник: составлено автором на основе данных Управления статистики внутренней безопасности США (OHSS, 2023)

2. Беженцы из Республики Молдова. Наиболее часто упоминаемая причина в заявках об убежище является дискриминация на основе религии. Обычно, представители данной категории эмигрируют из Молдовы семьями и приезжают в определенные штаты, где уже есть представители религии или родственники. К сожалению, согласно данным Ведомства по туризму США среди граждан Молдовы (табл. 3) очень маленькому числу граждан удается получить разрешение на убежище на территории США, например, в 2023 году – убежище получили лишь 40 человек.

Таблица 3. **Число граждан Молдовы, которые получили убежище на** территории США 2015 – 2023 гг.

		0 0					
Год		2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Число	граждан,	70	80	30	20	30	40
получивших убежище		70	00	30	20	30	40

Источник: составлено автором на основе данных Государственного департамента США — Бюро консульских дел. (Travel State Gov, 2023)

- 3. Трудовые мигранты, которые получили рабочие контракты в США. Основной характеристикой данной категории людей является их высокий уровень образования и квалификации. Например, чаще всего эмигрируют из Молдовы ИТ-специалисты.
- Студенты, которые прибывают США В программе международного обмена Work and Travel. Это программа позволяет студентам получить опыт работы в сфере туризма и гостеприимства США, практику английского языка, а также отправиться в путешествие после окончания трудового договора. Здесь можно выделить еще одну категорию – тех, которые после окончания контракта остаются нелегально на территории США и предпринимают попытки легализировать свой статус либо путем получения убежища, либо брак. Чаще всего причинами подачи документов на получение убежище являются дискриминация по половому, расовому и религиозному принципу, но чаще всего эти причины придуманы гражданами для получения документов.

Стоимость жизни – это сумма средств, необходимых для покрытия основных расходов, таких как жилье, еда, налоги и здравоохранение, в

определенном месте и период времени. Это субъективно варьируется от человека к человеку из-за индивидуального выбора и даже от города к городу. Местоположение играет важную роль при анализе стоимости жизни на человека в США. Основные затраты следующие:

- Проживание стоит примерно 1800 долларов США в месяц.
- Еда стоит примерно 500-700 долларов США в месяц.
- Путешествия и здоровье составляют около 300 долларов в месяц.
- Коммунальные услуги стоят примерно 150 долларов США в месяц.

При иммиграции всей семьей расходы и средняя стоимость жизни поднимаются на сравнительно более высокий уровень. Помимо личных расходов, в бюджет придется добавить семейные расходы, которые могут показаться непосильными. Расчетная средняя стоимость жизни составляет 7 985 долларов США. В таблице №4, подробно описывается стоимость и распределение расходов мигранта в США. Так, больше всего денег уходит на аренду жилья, транспорт и медицинское обслуживание.

Таблица 4. Стоимость жилья в США на семью из 4 человек

Категория расходов	Ежемесячная стоимость	% от затрат
Аренда жилья	\$2,349	34.90%
Транспорт	\$936	16.00%
Медицинское обслуживание	\$623	18.40%
Продукты питания	\$412	18.10%
Развлечения	\$243	4.70%
Рестораны	\$198	3.90%
Образование	\$325	5.80%
Другое	\$76	1.50%
Личная гигиена	\$54	1.10%

Источник: данные исследования журналиста Гауриша Ростогой «Средняя стоимость жизни США для студентов и иммигрантов» (Rastogi, 2024)

Проанализировав данные, которые представлены выше, можно точно сказать, что жизнь в США стоит гораздо дороже, чем в Молдавии. Например, согласно данным Национального бюро статистики в среднем гражданин Молдовы находясь на родине тратит 4248 лей или 242 долларов США, в том случае если он является владельцем жилья (BNS, 2024). Данные свидетельствуют о том, что значительная часть молдавских иммигрантов в США демонстрирует позитивную динамику в сфере материального благополучия и социальной мобильности. По сравнению с условиями жизни Молдове, многие иммигранты ощущают значительное улучшение стабильной характеризуемое работой материального положения, гарантированным доходом, позволяющим обеспечить себя и своих близких. Это подтверждает и опрос общественного мнения «Understanding the U.S. Immigrant Experience. The 2023 KFF/LA Times Survey Immigrants» (Schumacher, Hamel, & Artiga, 2023), который был проведен LA Times среди иммигрантов в США. Согласно опросу, большинство иммигрантов, независимо от страны, откуда они приехали, приехали в США, чтобы получить больше возможностей для себя и своих детей. Более того В целом, большинство иммигрантов говорят, что их финансовое положение (78%), возможности получения образования (79%), ситуация с трудоустройством (75%) и безопасность (65%) улучшились в результате переезда в США.

которыми сталкиваются Вызовы, молдавские проживающие в США. Несмотря на экономические и профессиональные успехи, многие молдаване в США сталкиваются с трудностями, связанными с легальным статусом и доступом к основным услугам. Многие из них приезжают в США с временными визами или, в некоторых случаях, без документов, что ограничивает их доступ к стабильной работе и медицинскому обслуживанию. Процесс получения гражданства США для большинства граждан оказывается длительным и сложным процессом, который требует значительных финансовых затрат и соблюдения строгих требований. Кроме того, интеграция в местные сообщества может быть затруднена из-за языковых и культурных барьеров. Различия в традициях, культуре, образе жизни могут затруднить адаптацию на территории страны. Нельзя не отметить тот факт, что некоторые иммигранты сталкиваются с дискриминацией по национальному признаку из-за нелегального статуса. В то же время многие из этих мигрантов отправляют большую часть своего дохода обратно в Молдову, тем самым внося свой вклад в финансовую устойчивость своих семей, оставшихся на родине, но ограничивая свои возможности в США. Стоит упомянуть и о психологических трудностях, с которыми встречаются некоторые мигранты, в первую очередь это чувство изоляции от родных и близких, из-за дальнего расположения Молдовы от США, что зачастую влияет на психологическое здоровье. Культурный шок и адаптация к новому образу жизни может стать стрессовой и привести к трудностям с интеграцией.

Однако, хотя уровень жизни молдаван в США, как правило, выше, чем в Республике Молдова, существуют также серьезные проблемы. Интеграция на американский рынок труда может быть затруднена, особенно для тех, кто не обладает необходимой квалификацией или сталкивается с языковыми барьерами. Кроме того, высокая стоимость жизни в таких городах, как Нью-Йорк и Сан-Франциско, может значительно снизить финансовые преимущества более высоких зарплат.

Заключение. Соединенные Штаты Америки традиционно воспринимаются как страна возможностей, что привлекает все больше мигрантов, в том числе и из Молдовы. Отсутствие перспектив для профессионального и материального роста на родине заставляет многих молдаван искать лучшей жизни в США. Жизнь молдавских мигрантов в США — это сложный комплекс факторов. С одной стороны, у них есть возможность улучшить свое материальное благополучие, получить доступ к качественным услугам и обеспечить своим детям лучшее будущее. С другой стороны, они сталкиваются с трудностью адаптации, психологическими проблемами, дискриминацией и нестабильностью.

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### UKRAINE'S FOOD SECURITY DURING THE WARTIME PERIOD

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**Abstract.** The article describes the importance of food security for Ukraine before the outbreak of hostilities. It reviews the situation in Ukraine at the outbreak of the conflict and its role on world food markets as one of the largest exporters of grain. The damage to agriculture due to the hostilities is assessed: destruction of infrastructure, damage to farmland, inaccessibility of land for cultivation reduction of production. Because of the problems in Ukraine there is a decrease in the export of Ukrainian agricultural products, especially as a result of the blockade of the Black Sea ports. The aim of the article is to analyze the consequences of military action on food security in Ukraine, to identify the key challenges faced by the country under the conditions of war, and to consider measures taken to ensure food stability in the domestic market and agricultural recovery in the future. The relevance of the article is that the military conflict that is ongoing in Ukraine has profound and far-reaching implications for agriculture and food security both domestically and internationally. In addition, military actions lead to a sharp increase in food prices inside Ukraine, which creates social and economic problems for the population. It is necessary to develop comprehensive measures to reduce the impact of the war on food security and create conditions for the recovery of agriculture after the end of the conflict. The role of international organizations, such as the World Food Programme, in supporting Ukraine and other countries dependent on Ukrainian grain, as well as the impact of sanctions and Russia's international isolation on the global food market, is discussed. This topic has important practical implications for action planning both at the national level and for the international community, and requires timely attention to

minimize economic losses and ensure food security in both war and post-conflict reconstruction. The article describes a situation where military action has caused enormous damage to Ukraine's food security, but despite the difficult conditions, the country is taking active measures to minimize the impact and restore agriculture in the future.

**Keywords:** food security, economic security, military conflicts, economic threat, production blockade, product availability, product exports

**JEL:** H11, O11, R15, Q18

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**Introduction**. Food security is the basis for the stability of any country, and is especially important in times of crisis, when resources and opportunities to provide the population with food become limited. The war that continues on the territory of Ukraine has devastating consequences for its agrarian economy and food system, which jeopardizes food security both domestically and internationally. Ukraine has traditionally held one of the leading positions in the world production and export of cereal crops, especially wheat, corn and barley. However, since the beginning of the conflict, a significant reduction in production volumes, destruction of agricultural infrastructure, loss of farmland and blockade of ports have resulted in serious challenges to food security.

The domestic market has faced soaring food prices, food shortages and disrupted supply chains. These challenges are compounded by the need to provide food to both civilians and the military, which requires considerable effort and resources. Moreover, the global food market is also affected, as Ukraine is an important supplier of agricultural products to the world market and the decline in its exports has an impact on other countries, especially those that depend on Ukrainian supplies.

This article will examine the impact of military action on Ukraine's food security, analyze the challenges and threats facing the country, and suggest ways to ensure food stability during the conflict and its aftermath. Particular attention is paid to the recovery of the agrarian economy and food system, as well as international assistance and cooperation, which play a key role in supporting food security.

Food security is a fundamental aspect of any country's national security, especially in a war crisis. War affects all elements of the food system: from the production of agricultural products to their distribution and consumption. Ukraine, being one of the leading agrarian countries in the world, faced unprecedented challenges in the context of armed conflict. Damage to infrastructure, loss of crops, restricted access to markets and disruption of logistics supply chains jeopardize not only national but also global food security.

The threat to food security becomes even more critical in the context of a war-induced humanitarian disaster. Forced displacement of populations, lack of resources, and disruption of the supply of essential goods and services create conditions under which a food crisis could become a reality for many regions of the country.

The issue of ensuring food security during the war and post-war reconstruction requires a comprehensive approach. It is necessary not only to study the impact of the conflict on the agro-industrial sector, but also to develop effective strategies for the recovery and development of the food system after the end of the conflict. It is also important to consider that the renewal of the agro-industrial sector and ensuring food security will be an important part of Ukraine's post-war economic revival.

**Literature review**, devoted to Ukraine's food security during the wartime period, shows a wide range of approaches to researching this topic, covering both theoretical aspects and practical results obtained in the current conflict. The leading research works focus on the consequences of military actions on the agricultural sector, domestic and international markets, as well as on the assessment of policies aimed at maintaining food security.

In the academic literature, food security is often understood as the provision of quality and affordable food in sufficient quantities to the population, which includes not only production but also access to food and resilience to external shocks. The works of such researchers as Fukuyama (2013), Gallopin (2017) highlight the theoretical foundations of food security and its relationship with crisis resilience. Applied to Ukraine, important are studies on food security in crises and wars, such as the works of Vladimir Babin (2022), which consider not only economic but also social consequences of military conflicts on food security.

The domestic literature has emphasized studies on the impact of military conflicts on Ukrainian agriculture, including works by Yuriy Skiby (2022) and Tatiana Bortnik (2023), which examine the direct and indirect damage to agriculture under conditions of warfare. These papers examine the consequences for the agricultural sector: destruction of agricultural infrastructure, loss of land, reduced production, and problems with logistics and labor.

An important role in the literature is played by studies on external economic and political factors affecting food security in Ukraine. One of such works is the study by Olga Korbut (2021), dedicated to analyzing international food security and the importance of Ukrainian agriculture for global markets. In the context of the war, Ukraine lost some of its export capacity, leading to food shortages in some countries, especially in Africa and Asia, which rely heavily on Ukrainian supplies. Economists such as Kovalchuk (2022) examine the impact of Russian aggression on global food security and the role of international organizations in supporting food supply during the crisis.

Much attention has been paid to research on Ukraine's food security in crisis, focusing on measures of state support for Ukraine's food security in times of war. Works by Nina Shevchenko (2023) and Oleksandr Lisovsky (2023) analyze Ukraine's food security policy during wartime. These studies show how the Ukrainian government adapted its agricultural policy to support farmers, stimulate production, and strengthen food security at the national level.

In the context of war, Ukraine receives international assistance to ensure food security, which has also been reflected in the literature. Works by Svitlana

Tymoshchuk (2022) and Maria Dubrovina (2023) examine the role of international organizations, such as the World Food Programme and the UN, in assisting Ukraine and supporting global food security. These works also raise the importance of international cooperation and the development of sustainable food strategies in the face of instability.

Studies such as those by Oleksandr Gontar (2022) and Larisa Chernova (2023) address Ukraine's long-term post-conflict food security challenges, prospects for recovery, and long-term challenges. These studies offer recommendations for agricultural recovery, adaptation to changing climatic conditions and finding new markets for Ukrainian agricultural products.

Thus, the literature presents a variety of approaches to the study of food security of Ukraine during the war period. The works of domestic and foreign researchers cover various aspects of the problem, ranging from theoretical understanding of the concept of food security to practical recommendations for restoring and maintaining food supply in crisis conditions. Nevertheless, further research is needed to analyze the impact of the war on food security in the long term, as well as to develop comprehensive strategies for the recovery of Ukraine's agrarian economy.

**Research methodology** Analyzing Ukraine's food security during the wartime period requires a comprehensive approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research methods to comprehensively assess the impact of warfare on the agricultural sector and the country's food supply. This study uses several methodological approaches to analyze different aspects of food security, including the impact of the war on production, domestic market and international trade.

The methodology for the study of Ukraine's food security during the wartime period includes a multi-faceted and multi-pronged approach. This combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a comprehensive assessment of the current challenges and suggests solutions to maintain food security in both the short and long term.

**Main results.** Military actions in Ukraine caused significant losses in agricultural production. The war conditions destroyed infrastructure (factories, warehouses, irrigation systems) and damaged agricultural land. For example, the area of agricultural land that could not be used due to fighting or occupation increased significantly. As a result, according to the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, the production volume of key crops (wheat, corn, barley) decreased by 30-40% compared to pre-occupation years.

The increase in food prices indicates the vulnerability of Ukraine's domestic market, which has faced a sharp rise in food prices. Demand for food has increased, especially in the war zone and in the temporarily occupied territories, where food delivery has been difficult. In addition, rising transportation and fuel costs, as well as problems with logistics and access to markets, have led to inflation for basic commodities. According to the UN, food inflation in Ukraine amounted to more than 50% in 2023.

One of the significant factors affecting food security was the blockade of Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea, which made it difficult to export agricultural products. This led to a significant decrease in supplies to the world market and an increase in world prices for food products. Ukraine lost its status as one of the leading grain exporters, which caused shortages in countries dependent on Ukrainian exports, such as Egypt, Turkey, and a number of African countries.

Ukraine's food security under wartime conditions is one of the key issues affecting both domestic stability and international food markets. The war has significantly complicated the production, transportation and export of agricultural products, which puts pressure on all elements of the country's agro-industrial complex.

The main factors affecting the food security of Ukraine during the war are presented in Table.

Table 1. Main factors affecting food security of Ukraine

Factor	Description				
Destruction of infrastructure	Damage to granaries, farms, warehouses and transportation networks due to warfare				
Loss of agricultural land	Occupation of territories, minefields and land contamination by munitions, limiting the use of fertile land				
Disruption of supply chains	Blockade of ports, damage to roads and railroads, resulting in disruption of domestic and export food delivery				
Increased costs of production	Increased prices of fuel, fertilizers and seeds, as well as difficulties in obtaining financial resources for farmers				
Loss of export opportunities	Blockage of traditional maritime routes and decline in exports of crops and sunflower oil, affecting the country's economy and international markets				
Labor shortage	Mobilization of population and migration due to the war led to labor shortages in the agricultural sector				
Impact on the domestic market	Increased domestic food prices and shortages in affected regions				

Source: made by authors

Food security of Ukraine in the conditions of war requires a comprehensive approach and active actions on the part of the state, international organizations and partners. The introduction of effective measures makes it possible to minimize the negative consequences of the war for the agricultural sector and provision of food needs of the population. The main measures aimed at maintaining the country's food security are presented below.

Ukraine, with the support of international partners, is taking a number of measures to minimize the impact of the war on agriculture and food security. International assistance and the UN World Food Programme and other international organizations are helping to support the food needs of the population.

Alternative export routes, where Ukraine is actively seeking alternative ways to export its products, including through neighboring countries. Work is gradually underway to restore destroyed farms, modernize storage facilities and transport logistics (Table 2).

Table 2. Measures to maintain food security

Measure	Description
International humanitarian aid	Delivery of food and humanitarian aid from international organizations to war-affected regions
Development of alternative export routes	Utilization of railroad and Danube routes for exporting grain and other agricultural products across Ukraine's western borders
Infrastructure rehabilitation	Repair and restoration of destroyed granaries, farms and transportation routes, as well as demining of agricultural land
Financial support for farmers	Provision of subsidies, soft loans and insurance for war-affected farms
Stabilization of domestic markets	Regulation of prices of basic foodstuffs, creation of state reserves and ensuring uninterrupted supplies to affected regions
Supporting efficient agriculture	Adoption of digital technologies, automating processes and increasing productivity in the face of labor shortages
International cooperation	Coordination with international partners and organizations to restore exports and supply food to domestic markets

Source: made by authors

Stabilizing food security under war conditions remains a priority task requiring a comprehensive approach and international cooperation.

To ensure the export of its products, Ukraine is actively working on the development of alternative transportation routes. One such solution is the use of rail transport across Ukraine's western borders, as well as transportation of products through ports in neighboring countries such as Poland and Romania.

The Ukrainian government and international partners are making efforts to rebuild destroyed agricultural infrastructure. An important step is to ensure that farmers have access to credit and other financial instruments to sustain production. Work is also underway to demine agricultural land, which will allow it to be put back into circulation.

Table 3. Food losses and export dynamics (before and after the outbreak of war)

Indicator	Before war (2021)	During war (2022-2023)
Grain exports	50 million tons	20-25 million tons
Sunflower oil exports	6 million tons	2-3 million tons
Agricultural land area	IAT million hectares	28-30 million hectares (some land under occupation)

Indicator	Before war (2021)	During war (2022-2023)
	70-80% of domestic demand	50-60% of domestic demand
Increase in food prices	mild	30-50% raise

Source: made by authors

To reduce the burden on rural farms, the State provides subsidies and other forms of support to farmers who suffered as a result of the war. Also, special attention is paid to the development of cooperatives and other forms of collective farming, which contributes to the sustainable development of rural areas.

Under wartime conditions, Ukraine is actively working to improve the efficiency of agricultural production. The use of new technologies, including digital tools for agricultural management, precision farming systems and process automation, helps to optimize resources and increase yields while reducing costs.

The impact of the war on the food security of the Ukrainian population is manifested in several ways, including access to food, changes in food prices, dependence on humanitarian aid and a general deterioration in living conditions.

Table 4. Impact of the war on the food security of the population

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Indicator	Before war	Under war conditions
Access to food	Available throughout the country	Limited in affected regions
Level of food prices	Stable	30-50% increase
Dependence on humanitarian aid	Low	High in frontline regions
Availability of basic foodstuffs	100%	60-80%

*Source: made by authors* 

Under the conditions of war, there is a significant increase in food prices, which affects the availability of basic goods for the population. Inflation and shortages of goods have led to the fact that even in relatively safe regions of Ukraine food prices have increased by 30-50%, and in some cases even higher.

**Discussion and conclusions**. Warfare has caused inflation for food commodities within the country. The increase in the prices of basic food products such as cereals and meat is one of the most visible economic consequences of the war. There has also been an increase in the prices of fuel and transportation services, which exacerbates the problem of food availability for the population, especially in war zones.

The reasons for price increases in different regions of Ukraine are identical, destruction of infrastructure, increased logistics costs, limited supply of agricultural products due to damage to farms and fields and rising fuel and energy costs.

Ukraine, as one of the world's largest producers and exporters of grain crops, has faced port blockages, resulting in lower export volumes and a global food crisis. Countries dependent on Ukrainian exports, such as Egypt and Turkey, were threatened by food shortages, demonstrating the high degree of interdependence of global food markets.

The war has had a devastating impact on Ukraine's food security. Food availability has decreased, especially in the affected regions, leading to higher prices, food shortages and dependence on humanitarian aid. In the long term, ensuring food security will require significant efforts to rebuild agricultural infrastructure, support farmers and strengthen domestic production.

One of the most important measures to ensure Ukraine's food security is international cooperation. Ukraine is actively working with partners such as the European Union, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other countries to coordinate efforts to rebuild the agricultural sector and provide food for both domestic and international markets.

In the long term, Ukraine will face the need for significant investments to rebuild agriculture and food infrastructure. Forecasts show that full recovery is only possible several years after the end of the conflict.

There is also a focus on export security through Black Sea routes under international agreements, which allows for partial recovery of maritime exports, providing food to countries dependent on Ukrainian products.

Ukraine's food security under war conditions remains one of the main tasks for the state. The war has caused serious damage to the country's agro-industrial complex, but thanks to international support and the active actions of the Ukrainian government, measures are being taken to stabilize the situation.

Despite the current challenges, Ukraine has the potential to rebuild its agricultural sector and return to its status as one of the world's leading food producers. However, this requires comprehensive efforts both at the state level and in international cooperation aimed at rebuilding infrastructure and supporting farmers.

The study shows that the war in Ukraine has led to the destruction of food security at both national and international levels. At the same time, rebuilding the agricultural sector and food system requires a comprehensive approach that includes reforms, farmer support and international cooperation to ensure the sustainability of food supply in the future.

To ensure long-term food security, further work is needed to rebuild destroyed infrastructure, support farmers and develop alternative export routes. Strengthening the agro-industrial complex will be an important element of Ukraine's post-war economic recovery and will also contribute to stabilizing the global food system.

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