



Guest Editor's Foreword

The current issue of the *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae – Social Analysis* is dedicated to offer a better understanding of some social processes that used to be characteristic of the transitional period in Central and Eastern Europe. The transition gives a special context to the social processes, as each society carries the burden of the past, leaving its mark on the future as well.

Therefore, independently from the fact that the aspirations of the different segments of the society are either to be convergent or divergent with the Western European values, lifestyles, consumption models, carrier plans, etc., the past experiences forge the common scaffolding for these new aspirations.

One of the major challenges of the transitional period was the limited capacity of the state to offer a strong social security for those who could not participate – for various reasons – in the labour market. As a consequence, a large amount of citizens came to experience a scenario that used to be unimaginable during the socialist times – unemployment, lack or inefficiency of social security revenues, the general disappearance of that semblance of social security particular to all socialist regimes.

The study of Bogdan Voicu and Balázs Telegdy offers a general overview of the past twenty-five years, presenting the main characteristics of the transitional period from the perspective of social change. The analysed four domains are the welfare state attitudes, gender values, civic participation, and attitudes towards democracy, giving a synthetic basis for a better understanding of the analysed period in Romania, and generally in Central and Eastern Europe.

The changes brought by the transition marked a new possibility for the youth in the former communist states: to pursue values and carrier choices which were not given to their parents. In the current number, three studies deal with the youth – two research-based works and one meta-analysis of the literature regarding the situation of the youth. From the research-based paper, written by Irina Gewinner, we can find out the gender-biased stereotypes regarding the labour market, carrier aspirations, and value orientation of the youth in Sankt Petersburg (Russian Federation) in the shadow of the former communist legacy. The author focuses especially on the girls' aspirations answering the question: "Path dependency or transition?"

The paper signed by Erzsébet Takács analyses the situation of youth in Hungary from a late modernist theoretical perspective, giving the reader a synthetic literature review of the researches regarding the situation of youth in Hungary,

embedded in other European researches contextualizing the findings even more, and offering a better understanding of the situation of the youth.

The paper of Eszter Papp and Andrea Rácz focuses on the professionals in the field of social work in one of Hungary's regions (Hajdú-Bihar County). The research brings an interesting view of the professionals who are themselves constrained by the institutional frames and economic possibilities. Their analysis of social workers reveals a particular side of the transitional period: the way how old institutions were reformed during the analysed period, simultaneously offering a better understanding of the social security system and childcare in CEE countries.

The field of Non-Governmental Organizations is another key issue in the analysis of the transitional period in the former socialist states, as these institutions were basically inexistent in these (even if there were some formal civic institutions, these were entirely controlled by the ruling party). As a consequence, volunteering can be perceived as an innovative social role in the former socialist states, and Ágota Silló describes the evolution of volunteering in CEE countries, also seeking to identify those social groups and strata which can be the cradle of this new type of value orientation and social behaviour.

Returning to the youth's situation as a main concern in the former socialist states, the reader can find out from the paper written by Ibolya Czibere and Éva Molnár the differences in the aspirations of the youth in Hungary, mainly concerning the labour market perspectives – analysed by the settlement type, habitation, and previous scholar achievements. What is more, the authors reveal, through their analysis, the most common fears among the Hungarian youth.

The paper of Lilla Szabó, based on a rather anthropological approach, reveals the effects of the transition on the interethnic relations in a well-defined area of Covasna County (Transylvania, Romania), where three nations – Hungarians, Romanians, and Roma – have lived together for a longer period. The author argues that the contextual changes brought on by the transitions – mainly economic and societal – have significantly influenced the interethnic relations among the members of the analysed nations.

Finally, Bakó Rozália Klára presents a research review on the case of digital transition in Romania. By exploring the ways in which young children relate to digital technology and adopt different ways of digital technology use, the author explores the complex issue of this specific form of transition.

As a conclusion, the readers of the current issue of *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae – Social Analysis* can get a synthetic overview of a few social dimensions of the transitional process and its effect in Central and Eastern Europe, which can lead to a better understanding of the current behaviour of the analysed societies.

Bogdan Voicu, Balázs Telegdy