

FACILITATION AS A WAY OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND SIMULATION OF VOLUNTARY ACTIONS

NINA MIHAELA MIHALACHE¹

Abstract

The present text proposes a theoretical analysis on the idea of responsibility by following the facilitation model, which has appeared as a necessity in Romanian transition. The theories associated in developing and supporting the individual facilitation model are the theories of imitation (Collier), the theories of rewards based on exchange rules and reciprocity, the recreation of reputation within networks of solidarity, the implicit gift exchange theory, Homans's theories and Anthony Heath's approach regarding *the rationality of human behaviour* through social exchange. These theories state that only powerful aims can strengthen personal motivation that will lead to performance and to creativity by overcoming the critical situations. The hypotheses that sustain this statement by establishing some components of moral would be: individual's identification with the group, aim's motivations, team integration through responsibility, the possibility to advance and merit recognition. The individual facilitation could be defined as *a process of a person's moulding and converting through knowledge and discovery of one's own abilities used for personal development with the purpose of improvement of life's quality*. The individual facilitation built on the individual approach is meant to sustain change, participation, innovation, voluntary actions with the purpose of developing and improving the social capital and the prosperity.

Keywords: *responsibility, community facilitation, individual facilitation, personal motivation, voluntary action.*

Introduction

The voluntary action or voluntarism represents one of the European principles for underlying the civil society. It enlivens humanity's aspirations, solidarity and justice for every person. Also through voluntarism there are sustained values connected to community and to responsibility.

It is proven the fact that, for the present society, the individual motivation is a priority compared to community motivation. From this idea was initiated the model of individual facilitation, but it was also initiated because of the difficulties of implementing the community facilitation. The communist politic system and the many changes during the post communist period determined modifications at the level of human mentalities and behaviours within the social space. All that the

¹“A.I.Cuza” University, Faculty of Philosophy and Socio-Political Sciences, Department of Sociology and Social Work; Bd. Carol I no. 11, 700506, Iași, România; ninamihaela70@yahoo.com
© Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași

transitive evolution of the Romanian society did, was to put asleep the community spirit and to annihilate the will of change of life's quality through work and not only through mending social politics (Voicu,2005). Furthermore, the politic systems in the last decades led to the depreciation of the notion of *work and responsibility*. It is almost like reasoning in a circle and it does not allow breaking out from it. The politic and economic events led to the transformation of the collective mentality into an individual mentality and change resistance so that the personal interests have precedence over the collective ones. (Sandu, 2007, 67).

The community facilitation model

For responsibility, the social sciences have discovered and used a method called community facilitation. This model of intervention was created mainly as a "way of remaking the associative social tissue within the local communities and of eliminating passivity and the dependence syndrome of state's institutions." (Sandu, 2007:57-58)

As far as the history of the facilitation model is concerned, we bring in discussion its origin from the first century in the USA, as a model of practice of community organization. Starting from the 1970s, the model has been assumed and adapted by worldwide institutions at the same time with the discovery of the poor and very poor ones, as a concern regarding the equitable distribution of resources and benefits.

The community facilitation as a process that implies community development appears in Romania through the Law 129/1998, at the same time with the establishment and functioning of the Romanian Federation for Social Development. The spreading of the facilitation models occurred around the 1990, by some foundations, embassies, agencies and the European Union (Ignat, Morariu. 2008:36-38). The fact that the facilitation refers to the implementation of projects at community level, there were some problems caused by the different types of motivation of the community's members.

"Many poor communities are fragmented, being characterised by the lack of trust between people doubled by organization incapacity" (Operational Handbook of FRDS, 1999).

Dumitru Sandu (2007:58-61) describes two approaches of community facilitation:

- a) *facilitation as community organization process*, through which the facilitator's attributions are similar to those of a community organization specialist. In this context, community facilitation is built on the structure of community organization, theories described between 1920-1955 (Bowman, 1930; Pettit, 1931; Wolf, 1949; Orcutt, 1955; Sanders, 1955). In 1999, World Learning describes the purposes of facilitation as similar to those of community

organization. According to Pettit's definition (1931), the community organization is the process through which the individuals of a community are supported in finding recognition and helped to solve some *common interests* by some community organizations:

“In order to overcome the inactivity and the lack of interest, the community members must be challenged to recognize and define their own interests. It is also difficult that afterwards not to be left to “fall asleep” again and not to participate in solving community problems” (Wolf, M. *apud*. Sandu, 2007:60)

- b) *facilitation as a process to support the very poor*, appears at the beginning of the 1970s, when a segregation of the poor population takes place (Ionescu, 2008:19-24). In this way is invented the very poor population, which is supposed to be the population that is incapable to economically redress, and also the apparition of some differentiated power relations within the poor population. The chairman of the World Bank in 1970, R. Mc. Namara was one of the first and one of the most quoted that proposed a modification of the development strategy by a participative type of approach with the purpose to reduce poverty. Since 1991 raises the preoccupation of the World Bank regarding the development and modernization of the poor communities and their integration into the national economy. At the same time a repositioning of the community interests from capital and technology investments to the local labour force takes place. This repositioning modified the methods and techniques used within the community development projects. The emphasis was on identifying particular needs of each community and solving these by maintaining the cultural compatibility.

“The type of projects and programmes financed by the big agencies of development is changing. Although great infrastructure projects continue to be financed, a greater emphasis is on projects that try to reduce poverty, to create jobs, low scale agriculture, the increase in the development capacities of local organizations” (Nollan:2002).

The new type of community facilitation has attracted the use of some techniques subsequently considered problematic. There were used monographic techniques and anthropological methods, which were considered difficult because of the high costs and because of the difficulty of local needs diagnosis as well. Then, the work of creating new projects was too painstaking and it required too much time and also too many intervention alternatives. The methodology concerning the community facilitation has been about the same over time, being structured on several steps: community diagnosis, the identification of leaders, choosing an initiative group, identifying the priority needs, establishing project goals, project implementation, monitoring.

The difficulty of using the community facilitation has appeared due to the implementation of some mechanisms invented or borrowed from other

communities, without a detailed evaluation of the opportunities of the space proposed for projects' implementation. In order to facilitate a community is not enough to explain some economical or monetary concepts for implementing a project, but it would be a priority to ignore suspicion and work with the mentality and motivation of community members' motivation.

'People are less cooperative in the projects that involve major changes in their daily life, especially those which are based on subsistence practices. People are open to change as long as they can maintain what they have. The motivation of the people who take part in a project does not have too much to do with the learning of a better lifestyle, the growth of the social income, the participative development, the generation of some common goods he increasing of efficiency etc, they are rather motivated by immediate purposes such as: to maintain their agricultural production, to create a better situation in life, to ensure educational and health services' (Chelcea, 2006).

In other words, personal motivations are prior to community motivations .The more people find their interest closer, the greater the chances of motivation and participation. *Labour motivation* proves to be particularly important in this respect. It comes as an answer to the question"why should we work? "Schools and socio-psychological trends have attempted to offer a scientific argumentation in order to answer to this question. Alain Birou considers that"a reason is an intellectual element, but at the same time it is composed of feelings, impulses, and predilections in the background temper". (Roman, 1997:134-150).The author sustains that only the strong aims can intensify the personal motivation meant to lead him to performance, but also to creativity by surpassing the critical situations that appear. Motivation is of social nature by its feedback meant to ensure the *assessment* and the *self-assessment* as well-which leads to an increased confidence in social action. There are a few main factors (Roman,1997:42):

The Material and moral incentives.

While the material incentives are known as money, moral incentives tend to increase by the individual's need for recognition and appreciation.

- *Labour content.*

This may refer to the *extrinsic factors*, such as direct benefit, on short term and also to the *intrinsic factors*, on long term which refers to creativity and involvement as a result of the correlation between profession and individual skills.

- *The physical environmental factors*

This type of factors, also known as *ambient factors* are important for work motivation. The more the ambient offers and fulfils more needs of the personnel, the more it can sustain work motivation.

- *Group moral*

It has been defined by the researchers from the Survey Research Centre as the “level of satisfaction” the individual reaches as he belongs to a type of social organization. (Roman,1997:146)

For the volunteering actions, the work motivation is important because it is the base of the personal responsibility. According to D. Katz there are some hypotheses that prove this statement by establishing some components of morality. These would be: individual’s identification with the group, the motivation of the aim, integration through team work responsibility, the possibility to get promoted and to be paid homage to. (Katz, 1949) The existence of positive aims increases the degree of cohesion of the group creating a magnetic pole for individuals’ aspirations. The level of trust which the participants in a group expect is given by the level of fulfilment and the feeling of advancement towards the final purposes.

The inclusion within the European Union brings along the construction and the social development using the slogan *unity and diversity*. The unity refers to respecting some rules considered to be efficient for the functioning of the European space and the diversity regarding the cultural aspects that should be maintained.

The community facilitation experienced over time a series of difficulties related to the identification of the facilitated communities, of those that were about to be facilitated and to the continuation of the projects implemented in several steps as well. Almost all the community evaluations have identified as their main needs the community space infrastructure, the roads, the drinking water and electricity / transportation. The projects were completed, but inoperable, because of the incapacity of utilization and maintenance. The roads have been totally or partly made by occasional firms which disappeared once they collected the money, sometimes leaving their work unfinished. The systems of water that rust because, in order to be used, the people had to pay for everything they consume- while they are facing poverty and consider it an expensive utility that may be easily replaced with natural sources, wells and fountains. Other situations are created by the complicated laws and the bureaucracy that delays the issuing of the necessary documents which also leads to delays in deadlines and to the blocks in projects’ financing.

Not in every community the things are the same and it would not be right to criticise the communities’ implication in carrying out of some projects or their capacity to mobilize for community development. The participative manifestation of the community members into the collective actions is present in the more developed, from more points of view, localities: the connexion to the road – transportation network, advanced technologies, telecommunications, institutions, entrepreneurial activities, private sector etc.

There have been situations when due to natural calamities some communities had to endure because of the destruction of the infrastructure or buildings. The lack of a bridge or of a road can isolate a developed locality that can endure massive

losses until its rebuilding. The over bureaucracy and the institutional incompetence taken to absurdity creates both hilarious situations and dramatic ones.

From the community facilitation to individual facilitation

For the *accountability model* there have been taken into account the difficulties of accomplishing the community facilitation. It is a noble intention that of community support but it has to become a *congruent relation* between the facilitators and the community members. The above analysis proved that there are enough problems connected to collectivity participation to community development, to suspicion of proposed projects' success and finalization. The corruption, trade in of one's influence, political struggle of the chosen leaders based on the population's good faith, have reached a degree of transparency that does not bother the leaders – even gives them power and authority – but perplexes the voters. The demagogy promoted to the voters, brings a bit of effervescence and from time to time there appears a project meant to increase population's interest for the community but moreover for those who will be voted. The facilitation, at this point, could be focalized on *the individual or household*. The community members are puzzled by the lack of models; the only known variants are the rich and the poor model.

Epistemological aspects regarding the facilitation and individual accountability process

According to Collier's theories (1988, 1990), that analyses the social capital's externalities, the individuals that dispose of more information benefit more from valued positions within the society and there is the *imitative tendency* of the poor, with payoff effects regarding both the individual development and the community one (Voicu, 2004:137-157). On the other hand, this imitative action must be encouraged even by the most valued, as there is the tendency to build small networks of the poor in information and skills, and their only model would be limited to neighbourhood relations. (Stan, 2008:8-12). Another externality of the social capital would be given by the *recreation of reputation*, of the prestige and the reducing of opportunism by increasing confidence. (Voicu, www.iccv.ro)

Starting from the externalizations of the social capital there have been formulated a few mechanisms for building the development policies of social capital (Mihalache, 2010:23). These aimed at facilitating the access to information which allows to diminish the incertitude and to develop the relations with others, to invest into the organization capacity of the poor and to promote tolerance and social inclusion.

Another important aspect of capitals' conversion refers to the *solidarity networks*. Simona Nicolae, presents a study on this aspect, in which she argues

some theories connected to formal and informal activities within the community networks. While the formal activities are organized, directed with well established aims and completed with stable retributions, for the informal activities the incomes are irregular and cover only a level of subsistence (Nicolae, Chelcea and Mateescu, 2004:134-136; Nez, 2008:61-62) .

The newer theories highlight the fact that there is the possibility that the incomes obtained through informal ways to be higher than those obtained through formal ways, existing even a certain social stratification at an informal level. Thus, some organize work and the teams, negotiating the labour force and others only execute different jobs, being paid by the degree of difficulty of the job (Smelser, Swedberg eds, Portes, 1994).

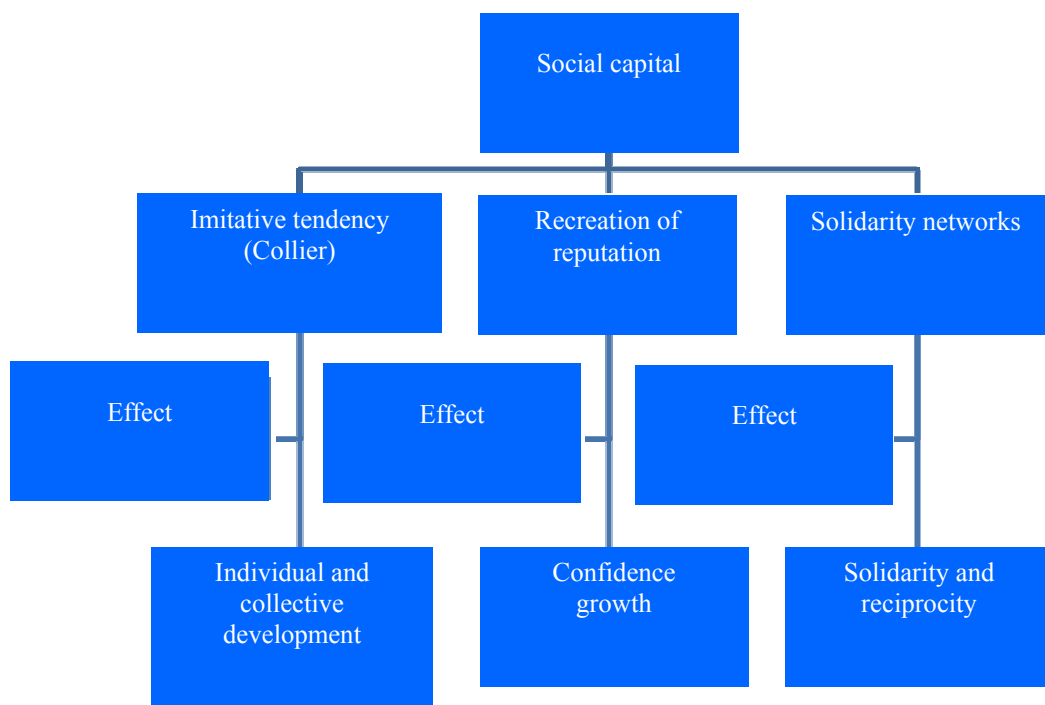


Figure 1: Psycho social actions of the individual facilitation model

The conclusion is that the informal activities wouldn't be maintained without solidarity and reciprocity networks and the more stable these networks are, the more the informal activities tend to develop further. These networks function not only on relations between individuals, but also by networking with community-level institutions. (Lomnitz Adler, 1988: 42-55).

Another theory adequate for supporting the individual facilitation model would be *the exchange theory* and *the theory of gift exchange*.

The fact that individuals can exchange between them the work materialized in *abilities* lead to *gratitude* that defines any exchange relationship, as a change in individuals' behaviour (Simmel, 1996:39). Homans confirms these theories by considering the behaviour as being a Pavlovian type. Thus, he believes that the social exchange is "a conditioned behaviour representing a repeated experience that generates rewards" (Homans apud. Voicu, 1998:142-162).

Homans's theory is resumed to five statements which are considered fundamental:

S1: "While in the past a particular stimulus-response situation offered the occasion in which the individual's activity has been rewarded, then, the more the present stimulus-response situation is closer to the one in the past, the more often he will perform that activity or a similar one",

S2: "The more often, in a certain period of time considered, the activity of an individual rewards another individual's activity, the more the latter will perform that activity",

S3: "The more an individual values the work climate offered by another individual, the more he will perform the activity rewarded",

S4: "The more often an individual received a rewarding activity from another in the recent past, the less valued the received part of activity will be.

S5: "The more often the distributive justice rule will fail in one's disadvantage, the more this individual will show an emotional behaviour called anger".

According to these statements, the exchange is generated by some past rewards which should be in a relation of proportionality to the efforts made. The statements have been disproved; the conditioned behaviour was not accepted as a *norm* of the generator mechanism because there has already been a theory that showed that norms were precursory to behaviours. It is a fact that any exchange relation comes with a change in behaviour by expectation of compensatory reactions.

Besides these theories, we also mention Anthony Heath's approach (1976), related to the *rationality of human body* by social change. Depending on the voluntary or coercive nature of the relationship, the price that the individuals can obtain for their services represents the basis of the exchange (Heat, 1976).

Another theory that can be united with the social change theory would be *the norm of the reciprocity as set up mechanism of the community*. According to this theory Gouldner (1960) demonstrated that *the principle of reciprocity dictates the social relations* (Gouldner apud. Voicu, 1997: 110-132). Taylor defines reciprocity as a combination of short time altruism (will) and long term interest (Taylor, 1982).

The impossibility of finding personal and family resources represents a critical point for Romanian communities. The facilitation process would include a *cognitive* component and an *experiential – participative one*. Otherwise, the classic model of community facilitation has an explanatory component which considers the familiarization with the new terms imposed by the project's implementation.

The proposal for the cognitive component of the individual facilitation process would consider the gradual growth of life quality and in addition to this component would be the experiential participative one, for putting into practice of a personal development model. There are taken into consideration several personal areas:

- latent resources, by activating personal or family abilities – is being stimulated the family cohesion;
- innovation and learning through models and relate – stimulation of relations and of the community;
- sharing knowledge and exchange of abilities – solidarity relations;
- involvement in other actions that elicits one's abilities and knowledge – acquiring a certain statute (associated to personal abilities), obtaining some benefits (other services or payment for the carried out jobs)

As a result of these explanations, we can attempt to define individual facilitation as *a process of modelling and changing of a person, trough knowledge and discovery of one's own abilities used for personal development with the purpose of increasing life quality.*

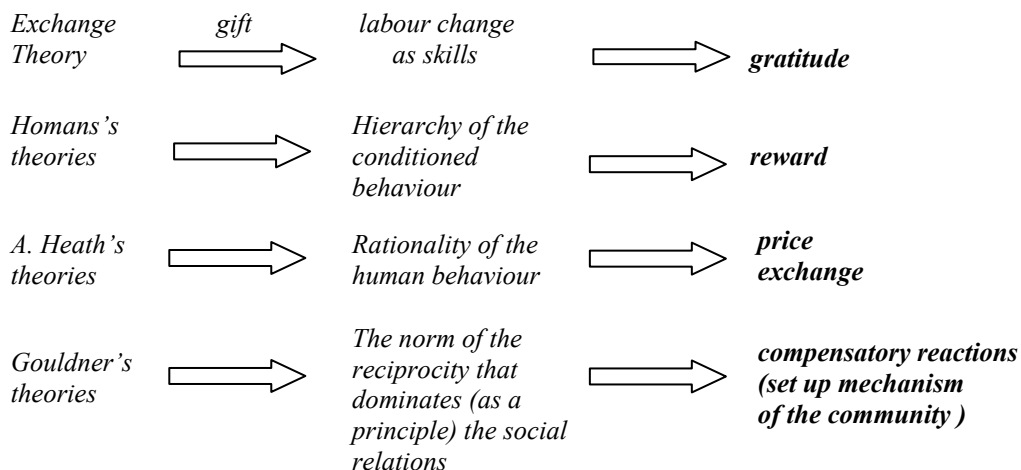


Figure 2: The construction of the converted social capital

In order to carry out a *model of individual responsibility* through *individual facilitation* as suggested above, we need an especial involvement into the chosen community. A simple monograph is not enough. Beside the participative observation that is really useful, the traditional techniques, the interview, fieldwork, focus group and facilitation can be used.

The model of facilitation, either community or individual one, can be included into the action type of research by the components – the suggested stages of work.

Vasile Miftode describes and argues the importance of the researches for the Romanian society at this moment.

The objectives of the model of individual facilitation

As *objectives of the individual facilitation model*, we can refer to the action research:

O1: transforming the mentality through cognitive facilitation, which leads to behaviour's modification. (Soitu, 2008:143-144). Through understanding the situations, the needs and through discovery / activation / acquiring abilities, this aim can be reached;

O2: the co – participation of the beneficiaries to actions through accountability or practise of one's abilities (experiential – participative facilitation);

O3: the use of autonomy (institutional in case of action research) personal (for the model of individual facilitation) – the use for own purposes of personal / family abilities as personal development or growth of life quality;

O4: structural (organizational) change of the family – the association of family members, acquiring new abilities, cultural reproduction within the family;

O5: the objectives' hierarchy as short, medium and long term strategy regarding the growth of life quality through one's own resources.

Thus, we consider that *the suggested model of individual facilitation* can be sustained through the main objectives of the human activity: *knowledge and change*, which, as the author specified, are considered, separated in the traditional sociology. The action research involves a greater inventiveness and adaptability of researches within the context of the national specifics and cultures. Through the model of individual facilitation we take responsibility to the level of house holdings and families.

“Overcoming the crisis, including the moral one, cannot be achieved without a profound knowledge of the social dysfunctions and problems and without an adequate intervention on these, which means without the initiation of some wide action researches within the social space”. (Miftode, 2003:344)

In other words, the action research is more profound as it does not address to a too wide social space.

The model of individual facilitation highlights a social approach that goes from individual to collective, relying on the theories of imitation. The achievements obtained from the use of the model of individual facilitation can cause social change through volunteer actions and the collective manifestation of the individuals within the context of mental change of these as well as of the life conditions and ways.

References

1. Chelcea, S. 2006. Culture and Development: The Perspective of Cultural Anthropology in Zamfir C. Stoica L.(eds). *A New Challenge – Social Development*. Polirom. Iași.
2. Heat, A. 1976. *Rational Choice and Exchange Theory. A critique of Exchange Theory*. Cambridge University Press.London. New York. Melbourne.
3. Ignat, D.–M., Morariu, C.-N. 2008. The Europeanized Regional Policy and Multi-Level Gouvernance after 1988. in *The Scientific Annals of the University „Al .I. Cuza” from Iași, (New Series), Sociology and Social Assistance, Tom I*, Universitatea „Al.I.Cuza” Publishing House Iași.
4. Ionescu, I. 2008. Les defavorises qui ne demandent aide. in *The Scientific Annals of the University „Al .I. Cuza” from Iași, (New Series), Sociology and Social Assistance, Tom I*, Universitatea „Al.I.Cuza” Publishing House Iași.
5. Katz, D. 1949 *Current Trends in Industrial Psychology, Morale and Motivation in Industry*. University of Pittsburgh Press.
6. Lomnitz Adler, Larisa.1988. *Informal Exchange Networks in Formal Systems :A Theoretical Model*, in *American Antropologist*.vol.90.nr.1.42-55
7. Miftode, V. 2003. *Treaty of Sociological Methodology*. Social Assistance Collection. Lumen. Iasi.
8. Mihalache, N. 2010. The Phenomenon of Poverty and the Theories of Stratification and of Social Mobility”, in *The Scientific Annals of the University „Al .I. Cuza” from Iași, (New Series), Sociology and Social Assistance, Tom III*, Universitatea „Al.I.Cuza” Publishing House Iași.
9. Nez, Heloise. 2008. Democratie participative et inclusion sociopolitique en France et au Bresil :Les assises de la Ville a Bobigny et le budget participative a belohorizonte. in *The Scientific Annals of the University „Al .I. Cuza” from Iași, (New Series), Sociology and Social Assistance, Tom I*, Universitatea „Al.I.Cuza” Publishing House Iași.
10. Nicolae, Simona (ed.).Chelcea, L. and Mateescu, Oana. 2004. *The Informal Economy in Romania. Solidarity Networks*. Paideia. 134-136.
11. Nollan, R. 2002. *Development Antropology*. Westwiew Press, Westwiew.
12. Roman, T. 1997. *Introduction to Economic Sociology. Chapter 7. Motivation of Work*. Lucman, București, 134-150.
13. Portes, Al.1994, The Informal Economy and Its Paradoxes, eds. Smelser J. Neil, Swedberg Richard, *The Handbook of Economy Sociology*, Princeton University Press.
14. Sandu, D. 2007. *The Practice of Community Development*. Polirom. Iași.
15. Simmel, G.1996. *Faithfulness and Gratitude*, Aafke E. Komter , 39.
16. Stan, D. 2008. The Processuality of the Sociological Concepts Formation. in *The Scientific Annals of the University „Al .I. Cuza” from Iași, (New Series), Sociology and Social Assistance, Tom I*, Universitatea „Al.I.Cuza” Publishing House Iași.
17. Șoitu, Daniela. 2008. Counsseling and Social Work: Looking for a Better Understanding. in *The Scientific Annals of the University „Al .I. Cuza” from Iași, (New Series), Sociology and Social Assistance, Tom I*, Universitatea „Al.I.Cuza” Publishing House Iași.

18. Taylor, M.1982. *Community Anarchy and Liberty*. Cambridge University Press. NewYork.
19. Voicu, B. 1997. The Gift: Functions, Structure, Behaviours in *The Social Research Magazine* no. 2. 110-132
20. Voicu, B. 1999. Social Capital. *Dictionary of Poverty*. Available online at www.iccv.ro.
21. Voicu, B. 2004. (Life's Quality Magazine). Academia Romana Publishing House XV, Bucuresti, 1-2, 137-157.
22. Voicu, B. 2005. *The pseudo modern penury of the Romanian post communism* vol.1. Social Change of Individuals' Actions. Expert Project Publishing House. Iasi