

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY STUDIES AND SOCIAL WORK IN ROMANIA AT BACHELOR'S DEGREE LEVEL. A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

Geta Mitrea¹

Abstract

This paper analyzes the two specializations, „social security (named social work)” and „security studies” that are offered by the universities from Romania for future specialists in these domains. In the actual global context it has been proven the fact that the specialists from the two specializations work very closely to achieve common goals. At a first site, „social security (named social work)” and „security studies” seem completely different, even a little bit in antithesis. But actually, if we take a close look we can easily observe both have a lot of elements in common; the essential one is the human being (the person). Another element, regards the fact that both of them are related to the „security” issue. One is focused at the personal level of human, social security (social work) – the base of the whole society and the second referring to the entire entity of security, local, regional, national, european, transatlantic and global level; this one, also composed by people. And third element, but not the last, is the fact nowadays specialists from different domains have to work in interdisciplinary teams to solve common problems in different parts of the world. Also, in this daily change new specialists in different fields of study need to be prepared in order to answer the unexpected needs that appear in our global world.

Keywords: security studies, social work, professional career, globalization, international organizations

Résumé

Cet article analyse les deux spécialisations, «sécurité sociale (dite assistance sociale)» et «études de sécurité», proposées par les universités roumaines aux futurs spécialistes de ces domaines. Dans le contexte mondial actuel, il a été prouvé que les spécialistes des deux spécialisations travaillent en étroite collaboration pour atteindre des objectifs communs. À première vue, «la sécurité sociale (appelée assistance sociale)» et les «études de sécurité» semblent complètement différentes, même légèrement en contradiction. Mais en fait, si nous y regardons de plus près, nous pouvons facilement voir que les deux ont beaucoup en commun; l'essentiel est l'être humain (personne). Un

¹ PhD Lecturer, Department of Multinational Operations, Strategic and Security Studies - Faculty of Security and Defence, „Carol I” National Defence University, Bucharest, Romania; e-mail: mitrea.geta@gmail.com.

autre élément fait référence au fait que les deux sont liés à la question de la „sécurité”. L'un se concentre sur le niveau personnel de la sécurité humaine, sociale (assistance sociale) - la base de toute la société et le second se réfère à l'ensemble de l'entité de sécurité, au niveau local, régional, national, européen, transatlantique et mondial; il, également composé de personnes. Et le troisième élément, mais pas le dernier, est le fait que de nos jours, des spécialistes de différents domaines doivent travailler en équipes interdisciplinaires pour résoudre des problèmes communs dans différentes parties du monde. De plus, dans ce changement quotidien, de nouveaux spécialistes dans différents domaines d'études doivent être prêts à répondre aux besoins inattendus qui surgissent dans notre monde global.

Mots-clés: études de sécurité, assistance sociale, carrière professionnelle, mondialisation, organisations internationales

Rezumat

Această lucrare analizează cele două specializări, „securitate socială (numită asistență socială)” și „studii de securitate” care sunt oferite de universitățile din România pentru viitorii specialiști în aceste domenii. În contextul global actual, s-a dovedit că specialiștii din cele două specializări lucrează foarte strâns pentru a atinge obiective comune. La prima vedere, „securitatea socială” (numită asistență socială) și „studii de securitate” par complet diferite, chiar ușor în antiteză. Dar, de fapt, dacă aruncăm o privire mai atentă, putem vedea cu ușurință că ambele au multe elemente în comun; elemental esențial esențială este ființa umană (persoana). Un alt element se referă la faptul că ambele sunt legate de problema „securității”. Unul se concentrează pe nivelul personal al securității umane, securitatea socială (asistență socială) - baza întregii societăți și al doilea referindu-se la întreaga entitate de securitate, la nivel local, regional, național, european, transatlantic și global; aceasta fiind compusă la rândul ei din oameni. Iar al treilea element, dar nu ultimul, este faptul că, în zilele noastre, specialiștii din diferite domenii trebuie să lucreze în echipe interdisciplinare pentru a rezolva probleme comune în diferite părți ale lumii. De asemenea, în această sinamică permanentă, noii specialiști din diferite domenii de studiu trebuie să fie pregătiți pentru a răspunde nevoilor neașteptate care apar în lumea noastră globală.

Cuvinte cheie: studii de securitate, asistență socială, carieră profesională, globalizare, organizații internaționale

Introduction

Each sovereign country is led by their own rules and prioritizes the domains which are of real importance for their long stability, security and future development. Since ancient time each country had its own main pillars in different period of time (Bilandžić, 2018). The history shows us that permanent transformation of the world is a solution to evolution (Zala, 2010); new demands appeared and needed to be solved. Automatically that society evolved and transformed in a better itself (Masalimova et al., 2019). For example, in classic époque the social work phenomenon was understood as a „benevolent act” made by a person. This kind of person is defined as the one „that give help and money to people in need” (*Oxford Advanced Learner's*, no date). Over time this type of

helping accumulated different meanings (Wæver, 2010). Such as creating benevolent funds for different types of persons in need (for example: children, disabilities, elderly, orphans etc.). Nowadays, at global level there are many different organizations, also humanitarian ones, that have among their goals the contribution to eradicate poverty all over the world and also maintain „peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet” (United Nations, 1945).

From this need of helping others (Beier, 2015) collaborated with the need of existing specialists in social work domain, this field of study becomes a specialization for many universities all over the world, including Romania. In time, the social work profession started to become better defined and found its direction in the society. For example, if, in the past there was no law that can establish a formal frame of its conditions now in Romania there is the *Law no. 466 of 2004 on the status of the social worker* activity and its beneficiaries. At international level, today social work is directly involved in all activities related to the reduction of poverty over the world, inequalities, humanitarian aid, and social protection of refugees etc.

In the other side, the security studies are also as old as social work is. In the past there also were different forms of security studies (Mikail & Aytekin, 2016) and rudimentary diplomacy. Elementary ones we can say, but necessary to solve the problems occurred in that period of time (Horrigan et al., 2008), with the means that there were available then. Meanwhile, because of the dynamic of the world and the changes that interfered over time, most of all First and the Second World War security studies embraced different forms and proven its decisive role (Kaliber, 2015). Once with the sign of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the creation of United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and other international organizations that have among their main purpose solving common needs, maintain peace and create a better world for all, the security studies gain field and started to become a domain that needs to be studied at university level (Ross, 2005). For example, European Union stipulates on its official website that their citizens have benefited „by working for peace and prosperity ... helps protect our basic political, social and economic rights” (European Union, 1958). In this sense, at international level there are many universities with traditions in security studies and meanwhile also in Romania some universities broke the ice, brought experience exchange from outside and started their own bachelor's degree and master's degree in this new field of study.

In order to easily give a whole image of the two specializations, social work and security studies, in universities from Romania we made this analyze presented in the next lines. We also mention that we also took into consideration the fact that all these specialists are found in the global labor market and answer to the needs existing to permanent change.

Research methodology

The current paper focuses on a *qualitative case study* analyze (Robert, 2005) of the institutions from Romania which offer qualification diploma and Lifelong learning programs for specialists in the field of national security and social security (or the so called social work field). The main focus was on the higher education institutions existing at national level in Romania, who offer bachelor's degree. I also took into consideration the national laws that establish the rules for social workers and the national security specialists in Romania.

As you can see next we focused on the public and private universities from our country which have the possibility to enroll students for bachelor's degree in the two specializations. We also highlighted the differences between the number of students on „social work” and „security studies” that the universities can have according to the national law. And finally, we brought into attention the organizations where these specialists can make themselves a career and find a proper job according to their domain of expertise.

The response to the globalized world - security studies as new specialization for students from Romania

At national level the law that establishes the universities that can organize higher educational programs for students is the *Law of education no. 1*. The same law stipulates that „promotes value-based education, creativity, cognitive abilities, volitional abilities and action abilities, knowledge fundamentals and knowledge, skills and abilities of direct utility, in the profession and in society” (Law of Education no 1, 2011), in Romania. In the addition, in 2020 the Minister of Education has adopted the *Government Decision no. 299/2020 on the approval of the Nomenclature of fields and specializations / university study programs and of the structure of higher education institutions for the academic year 2020 – 2021*. This government decision was published in Official Monitor, Part I no. 375 from 11 May 2020 and in the same day became effective. From this decision we can easily notice that fact that the two main specializations have common roots (“social sciences” – the fundamental field) and the same number of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits, meaning 180, as we can see in the below **figure no. 1**.

We must bring into your attention that there is a particularity to the „social work” specialization, the so named „social work theology”. This special feature is found in the fundamental field „Humanities and Arts”, the branch of science „Theology” and field of undergraduate studies is also „theology”. The total number of credits (ECTS) is also 180 as it is for social work and security studies. And as it is mentioned in the government decision it „refers, as appropriate, to Orthodox Theology, Roman Catholic Theology, Greek Catholic Theology, Reformed Theology, Baptist Theology, Theology Protestant, Pentecostal Theology, Adventist Theology, Christian Gospel Theology” (*Government Decision no. 299/2020 on the*

approval of the Nomenclature of fields and specializations / university study programs and of the structure of higher education institutions for the academic year 2020 - 2021, 2020). In the following, we will present the security studies universities that have enrolled students at this specialization and its particularities in this globalized society.

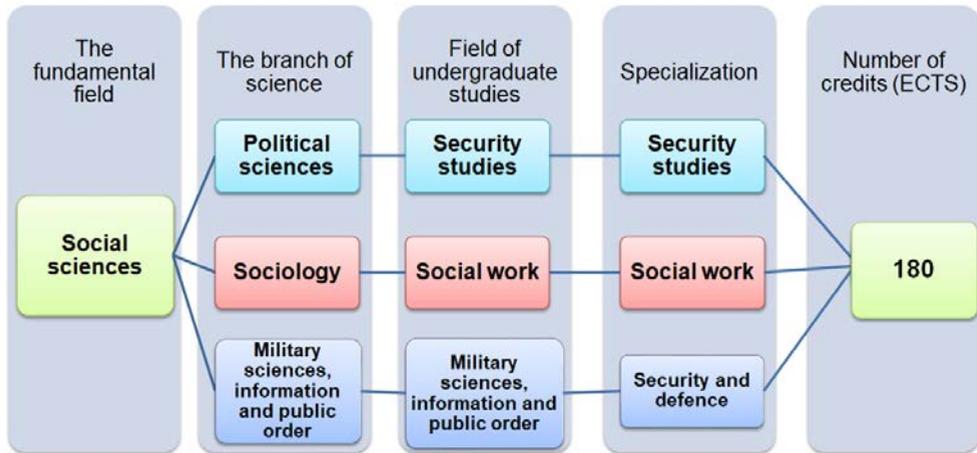


Figure no. 1. Common elements of security studies and social work

The actual international context gave the opportunity to solve problems in an efficient interdisciplinary team (Bilandžić, 2017). Members of the same team can be specialists from different domains such as: sociologists, psychologists, social workers, economists, historians, diplomats, security studies specialists, doctors from different specialties, environmentalists, human rights promoters etc. These new changes also created the opportunity of new possible career directions and jobs on present labor market. And, as each new specialist must be prepared at the highest level, the universities played their role and adapted their curricula for the new professions and included, - even created -, special programs for bachelor's degree in security studies.

As we can easily see in the *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, & Conflict (Second Edition)* that the security studies „as an academic discipline is a subfield of ‘international relations’ concerned with the issue of how nation-states handle threats to their territorial integrity and quality of life” (Horrigan et al., 2008). At global level there are traditional universities which have their main goal to prepare specialists in security studies for international organizations all over the world.

In accordance with the global need, universities from Romania, started to organize courses and enroll students for bachelor's degree at the branch of science „political sciences”. In our country for the university year 2020-2021 there are eight universities that have the possibility to enroll students at bachelor's degree in security studies. Because we still do not have an declared and recognized traditional security studies university in Romania different universities applied for

the accreditation of such a specialization in their home town. For example, „George Emil Palade” University of medicine, pharmacy, science, and technology of Târgu Mureş is among the universities whom can prepare students in security studies, as we can see below, in the **figure no. 2**.

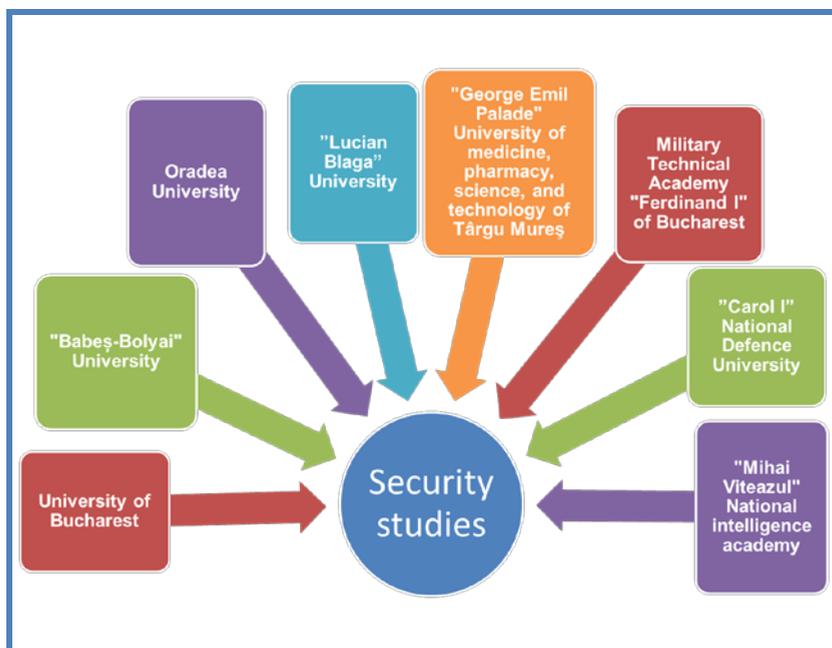


Figure no. 2. *Universities from Romania who conduct bachelor's degree for security studies*

Leaving from the assumption that over time security studies (Rowley & Weldes, 2012) transformed itself. And the teachers that prepare future experts in this field have a lot of experience and critical thinking (Kaliber, 2015). They also gained experience in different positions in the national governmental and/or in international relations in different organizations. Then, they can be the most qualified experts to come and share their experience to undergraduates in security studies. In this instance, we can allow ourselves to ask if it is normal that any university to be able to organize programs for security studies? Or, we should follow the model from the universities outside our country and to leave only the ones with experience to enroll students for security studies, such as Military Technical Academy „Ferdinand I” of Bucharest, „Carol I” National Defence University or „Mihai Viteazul” National Intelligence Academy? Because, from my point of view they are the ones with experience in security studies and defence security. But also, we cannot minimize the importance of the University of Bucharest and „Babeş-Bolyai” University in the field of security studies all over time, with its particularities and the same importance as the military universities mentioned above.

Far away from my point of view that smaller universities must not have the chance to organize such programs for students. Especially, when they are in different places of the country from where students cannot leave their houses. But would that be the same level of teaching for the students from two different universities? We will discuss about this topic in the next chapter, but first we would like to bring to your attention the list of universities and its faculties that have accreditation or provisional operation authorization for „security studies” license field, as we can see bellow in the **figure no. 3**.

University	Faculty	License field	Specialization	A / PA	Form of education	Number of transferable study credits	Maximum number of students that can be enrolled
University of Bucharest	Faculty of Political Sciences	Security studies	Security studies	A	IF	180	100
"Babeş-Bolyai" University	Faculty of History and Philosophy	Security studies	Security studies	A	IF	180	150
				AP	ID	180	50
		Security studies (in english)	Security studies (in english)	AP	IF	180	100
Oradea University	Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Communication Sciences	Security studies	Security studies	A	IF	180	100
"Lucian Blaga" University	Faculty of Social Sciences	Security studies	Security studies	A	IF	180	75
"George Emil Palade" University of medicine, pharmacy, science, and technology of Târgu Mureş	"Petru Maior" Faculty of Science and Letters	Security studies	Security studies	A	IF	180	30
Military Technical Academy "Ferdinand I" of Bucharest	Faculty of Communications and Systems Electronics for Defense and Security	Electronic engineering, telecommunications and technologies information	Defense and security communications	A	IF	240	50
	Faculty of Systems Computer Science and Security Cybernetics	Computers and the technology information	Computers and computer systems for defense and national security	A	IF	240	85
		Systems engineering	Systems engineering and security military informatics		A	IF	240
"Carol I" National Defence University	Faculty of Security and Defence	Military sciences, information and order public	Security and defence	A	IF	180	75
"Mihai Viteazul" National intelligence academy	Faculty of Intelligence Studies	Military sciences, information and order public	Security studies and information	A	IF	180	75

LEGEND: A = Accreditation; AP = Provisional operation authorization; IF = Full-time education; ID = Distance learning

Figure no. 3. Universities from Romania who have accreditation for security studies

You can easily observe from the image above that „Babeş-Bolyai” University has also full-time education and distance learning opportunities for their

students. And, another particularity is the fact that has the possibility to enroll 100 students in security studies in English. This is a major point for their program because their graduates will have an English program diploma, more flexible for the international labor market.

As a common element, all the universities grant 180 ECTS for their program, exception is the Military Technical Academy „Ferdinand I” of Bucharest who has 240 ECTS. This can be explained by the fact that their program has more hours on special notions such as „security communication”, „electronic engineering”, „security military informatics” etc. In addition, two young universities, Oradea University and „Lucian Blaga” University have also initiated programs for their future students in security studies and also in social work, as we can see in the next part of the paper.

Social work studies over time – a way for a better life for everyone

Because social work has its origins back in ancient times, focusing on the charity of the persons in need. During time this domain transformed and took different forms of helping people all over the world in different stages of poverty (Bilgic et al., 2018). Similar with the security studies (Buzan, 2015) „social work” as an academic discipline and also as a bachelor degree program gain field in Romania and started to be one of the most important parts of the actual society (Svedaite-Sakalauske & Gevorgianiene, 2016).

At international level, social work profession is very well legislated for long period of time. Also, in Romania there is the *Law no. 466 of 2004 on the status of the social worker* which stipulates that a professional social worker this the one who „puts into practice the knowledge, norms and values of social assistance in order to intervene and provide assistance to individuals or communities, at their request or whenever the situation requires it” (*Law no. 466 of 2004 on the status of the social worker*, 2004). This profession started to become one of the pillars of our current society in the fight to eradicate poverty at local and international level in the world.

In the proactive spirit of the universities, as the main organism of training social workers in Romania (Șoitu & Johansen, 2017), many institutions have the possibility of enrolling students at the bachelor degree in social work field (Asiminei et al., 2017). From our analyze we identified 22 higher education institutions, both private and public, that can organize programs for social work undergraduates. Among them, we can easily identify some universities that also organize the security studies field, such as: University of Bucharest, Oradea University, „Babeș-Bolyai” University, „Lucian Blaga” University. And also, particular ones, such as: Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Craiova University, Transilvania University of Brașov, Pitești University.

Here we can see that there are also private universities, such as: „Vasile Goldiș” Western University of Arad, „Petre Andrei” University from Iași, „Emanuel” University from Oradea, „Partium” Christian University from Oradea,

„Adventus” University from Cernica. These types of universities have a smaller number of students that can be enrolled. For example, „Adventus” University from Cernica has only 30 students and its particularity is that it not a university as in the real meaning of the law, because is monitored based on the Order of the Minister of National Education no. 3020/01.08.2018; the institution functioned until the appearance of Law no. 227/2017 as an authorized institution under the name „Adventist Theological Institute from Cernica Ilfov”. But all its graduates obtain a „social work” degree at the end. For a clear image of all the 22 institutions that prepare the social work graduates in Romania, please see bellow **figure no. 4**.

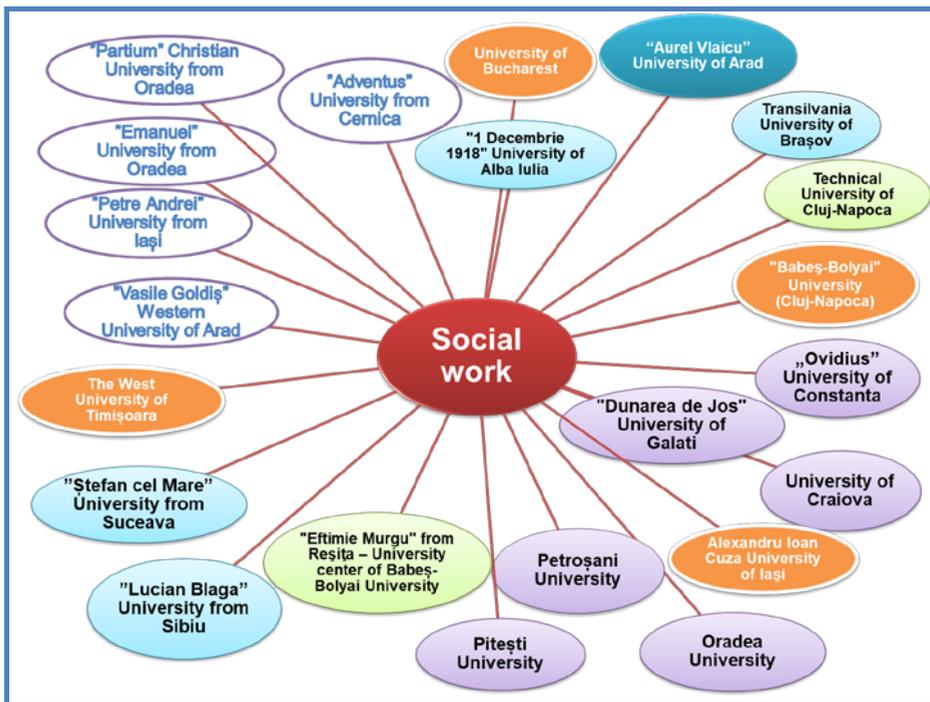


Figure no. 4. Universities from Romania who organize bachelor's degree for social work

We must also see the total number of the students that each university can enroll (including social work theology of different types), as in **figure no. 5**. It is obviously that on the first rank it is University of Bucharest with a number of 485 undergraduates. Also, next positions are taken by two other important universities from Romania, namely Alexandru Ioan Cuza from Iasi and „Babeş-Bolyai” University. It is easy to notice that among the last two universities it lacks only a number of 15 students. This is the only element that establishes this rank between them. But we must take into consideration that „Eftimie Murgu” from Resita is a part of the „Babeş-Bolyai” University and it includes the possibility that another 60 students can be enrolled. In this case, we can stand the fact that „Babeş-Bolyai”

University should rank on first place on the hierarchy with a total number of 510 students.

We notice that one of the private universities, namely „Petre Andrei” University from Iasi ranks on sixth position with a total number of 125 students that can be enrolled. This can help us conclude the fact that our national law is not using discrimination criteria for the distribution of the number among public or private sector. The important element is that from both types of higher universities graduates from social work are very prepared for the national and international labor market, where there is such an acute need of them.

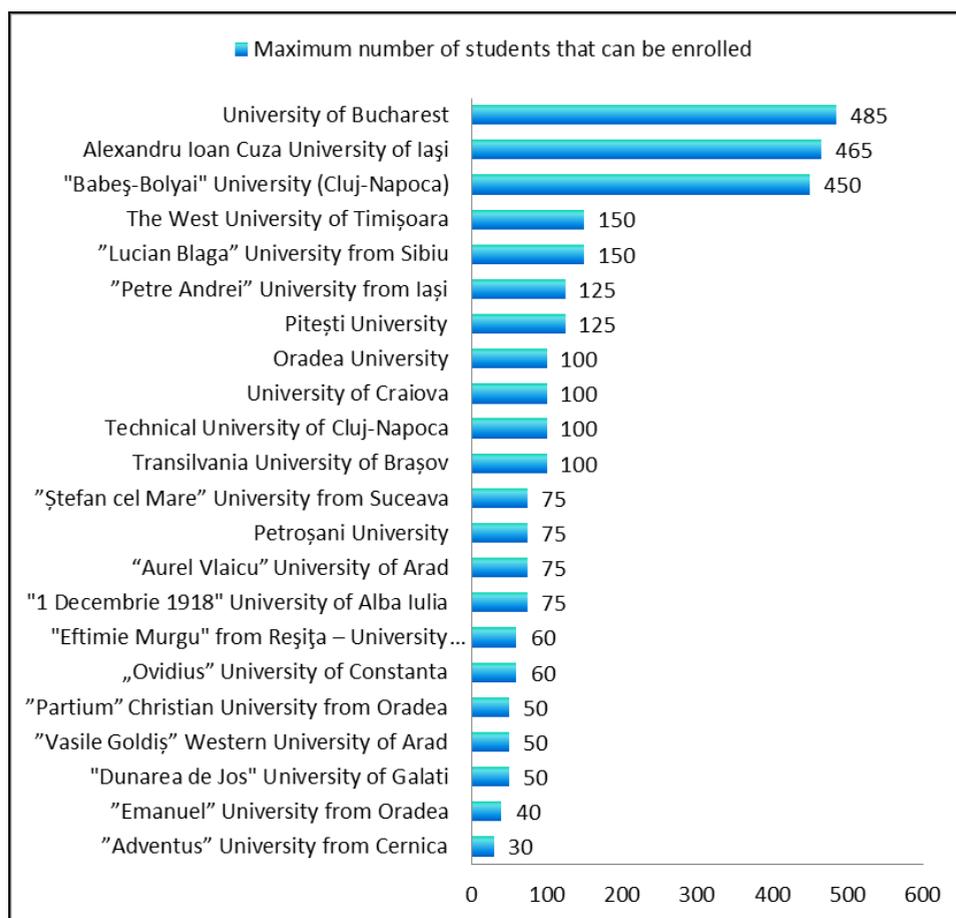


Figure no. 5. *Maximum number of students that can be enrolled for social work studies*

All this being said we feel obliged that we must present the common elements and issues that brought us to the point on why we should do this kind of analyze on the two specializations (Newman, 2010). And also, why there is such an

acute need for the collaboration of interdisciplinary teams in nowadays (Șoitu & Asiminei, 2017).

For a clear image on the geographical distribution of the universities who organize bachelor's degree for social work and security studies in Romania we can see **figure no. 6**. As the capital of the Romania in Bucharest are focused the most of the universities that enroll students for these two specializations. Also, we can see that the North-West, South-West and Center Area have a focused number of universities that are located in those counties. There are counties, as Sibiu, which has one university that organizes bachelor degree for both specializations. It is normal to conclude that that institution wants to develop and to gain an important role on the national level with this opportunities.

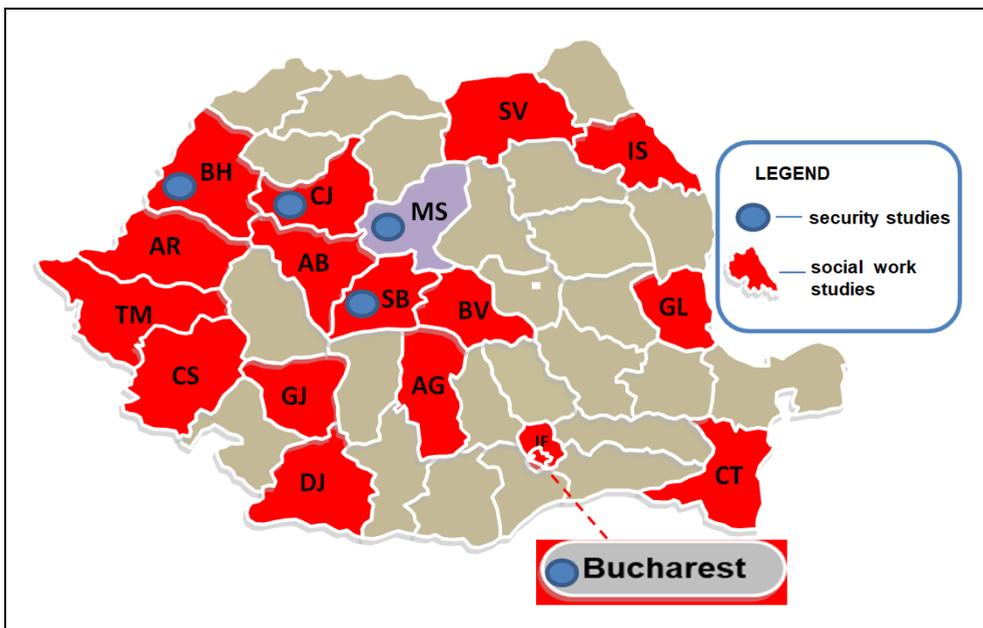


Figure no. 6. Counties where universities have students enrolled at security studies and social work

Meanwhile, at national level there are a total number of 3.910 places where students can enroll to obtain a bachelor degree in social work or in security studies. From this total number, the majority is owned by the social work studies, 76% of the total, as it can be seen in **figure no. 7**. This can be explained by the fact that at local, national and international lever there is a real need of social workers that can contribute to the eradication of poverty in the world, as a target for the international organizations all over the world.

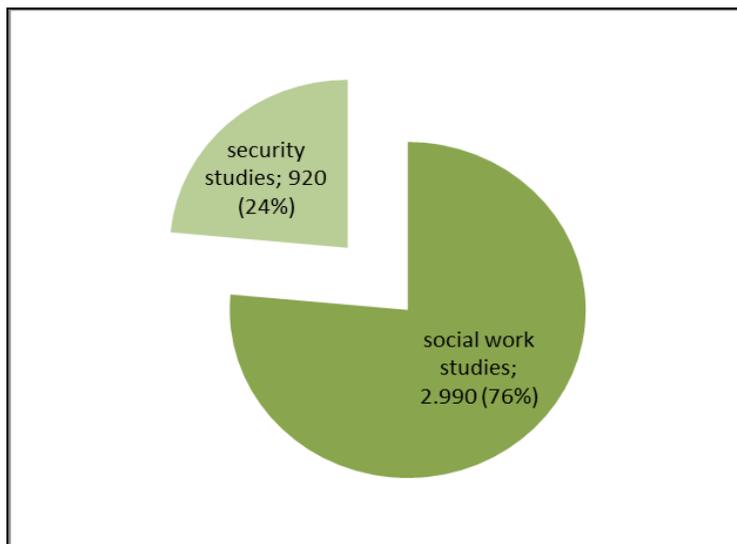


Figure no. 7. *Distribution of the students that can be enrolled at the two studies*

As in every occupation after we prepare the graduates we also need to be sure that they are able to find a proper job and develop their own career according to the abilities and competences that we gave them during the period of initial training. In this instance we need to present in the final part of the paper where did we identify that our graduates from social work and security studies can perform and have a respectable professional career.

Collaboration between interdisciplinary team of professionals from social work and security studies – for a more efficient world

In the last decade we can hear in every organization, local or international, the demand of adapting at the new challenges, create and work in interdisciplinary teams composed from specialists from different domains. Social work and security studies specialists have proven their efficient collaboration on different areas in international organizations. Nowadays, when Romania is a member on EU and it has the opportunity to access free labor market for its citizens we have the possibility to stand out with our professionals and to impress at international level.

On the websites of the universities that we analyzed we were been able to find information about what type of jobs can their graduates obtain, namely in what institutions they can work, as you can see in **figure no. 8**. Among the institutions presented in their flyer we were been able to identify some common institutions, such as European Commission and United Nations; or some particular only for the social work career, such as: Ministry of Labour and Social Protection from Romania and homologues from all over the world.

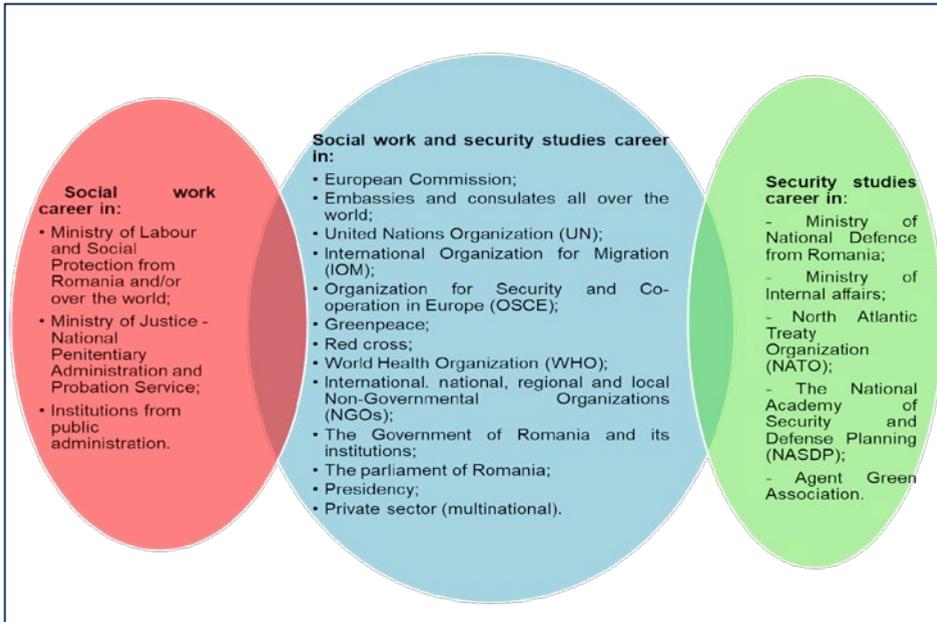


Figure no. 8. Organizations where the social work and security studies specialists can have an job

NATO is the only international organization (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949) that offers possibilities for the graduates of security studies to get a job and develop a professional career at different stages in their life. This is one of its particularity and specificity (Browning & McDonald, 2013). At national level, we want to bring into discussion, for example, NGOs, such as Agent Green Association which has as its main goal the conservation of biodiversity and protection of environmental. It is founded in 2009 and implements its activities at Romania level (Agent Green Association, 2009). In the same direction as Agent Green Association there are also other local or national NGOs formed by specialists and intellectuals where they promote debates and collaboration on different issues of interests for the society.

It is very important to point the fact that as one of this important result analyze is the fact that the two categorize of specialists, - social work and security studies -, have many common institutions where they can work together and can excelate for a better life style in the world (Medeleanu, 2013). Also, this is another reason that proves us the facts that this comparison among them is important and helped us to reveal new real collaboration opportunities that we did not take into consideration in the initial phase. For example, we notice that at international level institutions such as: Embassies and consulates all over the world, United Nations, Green Peace, and Red Cross; and at national level the Government of Romania and its institutions, the Parliament; both specialists can easily find a job opportunity and make a long last career.

Conclusions

The actual free international labor market offers many possibilities for every person, at any stage of its career, to bring its contribution to an efficient world. Every day, we continue to face new challenges and permanently adapt so that we get to the next stage of developing. The main purpose of each person and society is to develop itself and to become a better one. The well-established specialists in different domains of action, - also in social work and security studies -, fight every day to become better professional in their job and to bring novelty to their work place and even to have the possibility to leave a legacy for future generations of specialists. This is proven on the fact that each year when we draw the line we can easily see the progress on the actual society. And in long terms we are able to see the creation of international organizations that nowadays have a solid position on global level. Who thought that at the beginning of their initiative over time they will have such a well-established position?

Each new young bachelor degree graduates from social work and security studies at the beginning of their professional career have enormous goals for the society and for their future, they want to change the world, and mostly they even succeed. The success is obtained with a lot of hard work, efforts, dedication, and sacrifice to the well done thing. And during their university studies they obtained their abilities and competences for a good professional.

In conclusion, we can say that the existing bachelor`s degrees organized by the universities from Romania have an important role for the present labor market in training the future world leaders in social work and security studies for next challenges that will come for our global world where we live and want to make it better for our children.

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