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**CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE SOCIOECONOMIC TERM
OF CHILD IN DIFFICULTY**

Mihail Ciobanu

PhD student, scientific researcher, NIER, Chisinau, RM

e-mail: ciobanu.mihail.s@gmail.com

orcid id: 0000-0003-1193-6018

Abstract. This article analyzes the conceptual approaches in historical aspect of the children in difficulty. It addresses the attitude towards children in difficulty in different historical periods from

antiquity to the present, taking into account aspects of socio-economic support. The differences in the particularities of the approaches of the children in difficulty are highlighted.

Key words: conceptual aspects, support, children in difficulty.

Children are the population group that is the future potential of a society. Being in the early stages of life, they need the support of parents, guardians, or other responsible adults. But when this support is insufficient, i.e. when these responsible people do not fulfill or cannot sufficiently fulfill their obligations towards children, they are vulnerable and it is necessary to intervene outside the environment in which the children are (family, school, community, institution or other environment) by state authorities, international organizations, non-governmental associations or other entities that may provide support to these children. The existence of vulnerability in some children determines the need to define a specific category of children, generically called "children in difficulty".

The definition of the child must be established before delimiting this vulnerable group of the population. The association itself with certain problems exists even in the etymology of the word "child". The original meaning of the word "copil" ("child" in Romanian language), according to the Romanian Etymological Dictionary [4], is "bastard, natural son, illegitimate". This word has spread to other Balkan languages, retaining its pejorative connotation (for example, κόπελος - "bastard" (neo-Greek), koplil - "bastard" (Slovenian), kópé - "loafer" (Hungarian)). Therefore, from the beginning of this word its meaning referred to a child with problems (like one born out of wedlock). The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language from 2009 [5] defines, although vaguely and generally, the term child as "a boy or girl in the first years of life (until adolescence)". From a biological point of view, a child is a human being until puberty (in a broad sense) or from birth to puberty (in a narrow sense). In some cultures, humans are considered children until they perform a passage rite, which usually takes place at puberty. From a legal point of view, the child is considered a minor up to an age established by law, usually the age of adulthood, which can vary depending on the country from 15 years (or 9 lunar years for girls in Iran (a lunar year has 12 complete monthly cycles, lasting about 354.37 days, the lunar calendar is used in Muslim countries for religious purposes)) to 21 for years. A unified definition is provided by the United Nations in the Convention on the Rights of the Child [12, p. 4] - "a human being under the age of 18, unless in the law applicable to the child is specified that the adult age is reached earlier". There are 196 countries that are parties to the Convention (excluding the United States alone, which has signed, but didn't ratify the document), which shows that the definition given, although probably not used everywhere, is at least widely accepted as a working definition. It is probably the only document signed by all the states in the world. From a legal point of view, the age limit until a person is considered a child is important from the perspective of considering that children cannot make serious decisions and therefore usually have fewer rights and a lower capacity to exercise than adults. He or she must be legally in the care of a responsible adult.

On the one hand, each community where are children has its own specific problems, and on the other hand, national, international and non-governmental or other governmental agents have their own priorities in terms of economic or social policies or measures, legal norms. or as a recommendation or ideology, which leads to the approach of children in difficulty varying according to the historical period, the political formation, the actual difficulties of the child that are identified and other concerned entities and other factors. Because the problems of children in difficulty can be approached in many different ways in a multidisciplinary way, a lot of experts in various fields have contributed to the treatment of various issues: psycho-medical, social, economic or other, which has led to the emergence of many definitions provided by experts, states, NGOs, international organisations and other entities.

In the literature, children with problems are referred to by various terms, from the most general: children in difficulty; children at risk; children in socially dangerous situations; children in difficult

life situations; needy children, up to the most specific ones, depending on the difficulty in which the children are: orphans, abandoned, vagrants, neglected by their parents, with disabilities, etc.

In antiquity, children in difficulty were generally considered orphans, in addition to widows were seen as part of the most vulnerable groups of the population. This name also included single people without a maintenance until marriage. The ancient patriarchal system of economic and social relations determined that the term "orphan" had the meaning of a person "without a father", because the maintainer was usually considered the father of the child, who was the head of the family. Later, during the reign of the Roman emperor Justinian I (around the 6th century AD), this term also acquired the meaning of person "without both parents" [6, p.2]. The special attention given to orphans in antiquity, but even later in the Middle Ages, was determined by their high incidence, which was caused by a number of factors like: inadequate public health, low life expectancy, war deaths, the mother death at birth and major age differences at first marriage for men and women [6, p.31]

In ancient texts of laws or legal recommendations, such as the Indian Treaty of Economic and Political Management Arthashastra (4th century BC), the holy books of religious traditions (Vedas, Bible, Qur'an, Talmud, Tripitaka, Tao Te Ching), the Sumerian law code of Ur-Nammu (c. 2050 BC) or the Babylonian code of Hammurabi (1754 BC) children in difficulty are associated with the term "needy" for those who find themselves in poverty or "orphans" for whom they have only one parent or are without parental care without both parents.

In ancient times, both in the Greco-Roman world and in Asian countries, such as China [10], infanticide was practiced on a vulnerable group of children - unwanted newborns, which was not stigmatized, as these children were usually without protection, without rights and without a safety net. The Christian Church, through its radical social activism, changed the perception of infanticide, which was condemned by law.

In the Middle Ages it is generally considered that the notion of childhood as a special period of human life did not exist, as argued by the medievalist specializing in family history and childhood Philippe Ariès, this term being one of modern origin [1]. During this period, illnesses, poor diet, and exhausting work to support the family reduced the life expectancy of children, many of whom did not even reach adolescence if they survived early childhood. Children, if they survived childhood, sometimes led a life full of trouble and anxiety. Most children have not had the privilege of living the easier lifestyle that many children are experiencing today. Also, many children did not have time to play because they were put to work to help their families.

It is only during the Renaissance, when the paintings of angels in the form of a child appear, that childhood comes to be delimited by maturity as a special stage of human life. Until then, children were seen as miniature adults. In modern times, with the advent of industrialization, another category of children in difficulty has emerged - children exploited in factory work, mines, about whom K. Marx, F. Engels, and other socialist thinkers have written extensively. Some economists, such as Milton Friedman, consider that virtually all children worked in agriculture until the Industrial Revolution, and in fact during this period the number of working children decreased [11].

After the Second World War, with the advent of the UN and the creation of the UNICEF Fund and the emergence of various national and international organizations aimed at protecting human rights and in this case the child, the content of the notion of "child in difficulty" became more widespread. encompassing several categories of children (disabled, African American, abandoned, etc.), policies had to take into account the principle of the best interests of the child. Following the accession to such organizations and the signing of international conventions in the national laws of the states, such a term or similar terms appeared.

In the second half of the twentieth century there is a growing interest in research into childhood and its history. One of the factors that determined this interest was the high popularity of S. Freud's psychoanalysis and J. Piaget's studies on child development. This increases the diversity of aspects of the issue under which children are investigated, which has led to the creation of a multitude of definitions of children in difficulty in various fields. Therefore, the problems of children in difficulty

are part of the object of study or activity of several disciplines: medicine (pediatrics and pediatric subfields in other medical fields, genetic pediatrics, pediatric psychology), law (pediatric bioethics, pediatric ethics, juvenile law, family law), pedagogy (speech therapy, defectology), psychology (child psychology, child psychotherapy), family economics, welfare economics, juvenile criminology, child and family welfare, political science (special education policy, family and child support policies) and others.

Because the problems of children in difficulty can be approached in several dimensions in a multidisciplinary way, a lot of experts from various fields have contributed to the treatment of various aspects: psycho-medical, economic-social or other. The psychomedical aspects of children in difficulty have been systematically addressed since the nineteenth century in the works of several psychologists, doctors, pedagogues, social reformers: L. Witmer (methodology of clinical psychology, creation of hospitals and psychological clinics for children with disabilities); A. Freud (child psychoanalysis); M. Montessori (orthophrenic schools for children with developmental disabilities); E. Erikson (child psychosocial development; identity crisis); J. Piaget (theory of the child's cognitive development); B. Rogoff (parental education programs); E. Thelen (application of chaos theory in the behavioral development of the child); L. Vygotsky (development of concepts in children), A.J. Sameroff (cumulative risk model for children at high risk for mental disorders), R. Steiner (Waldorf schools, homes for children with developmental disabilities, curative education for children with mental disabilities), V. Frankl (speech therapy) and others. Economic and social aspects of children in difficulty have been systematically treated only since the second half of the twentieth century, with some exceptions (T.R. Malthus; K. Marx; F. Engels), by such scholars as: G. Becker, J. Mincer (human capital theory), A. Sen, M. Nussbaum (addressing capabilities), R. Posner (marketing of adoptions).

As previously mentioned, both the content of the term "child in difficulty" and its name vary depending on the state. In Eastern countries, the key word that distinguishes these children with problems is "difficulty", while in Western countries it is "necessity, need".

In Eastern states, terms such as "child in difficulty", "child in difficult circumstances" are frequently used. Chinese Professor J.T. Liu proposed that the term "child in difficulty" include: abandoned children, orphans, children with disabilities, children in poor areas, children of ethnic minorities, adopted children, orphans with AIDS, children with criminal families, children with autism and children forced to work [8]. Another Chinese teacher, Chen, suggested that the definition be expanded to include the groups mentioned by Liu: abandoned babies, unaccompanied children, street children, children who are victims of violence, children with HIV, and children with illnesses. severe or rare [8].

In Western countries, the term "children in need" is usually not defined by a classification, but in more general terms, depending on certain conditions [3]: 1) it is unlikely to obtain, maintain or be able to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the authorities; 2) their health or development is likely to be significantly affected without the provision of services by the authorities; 3) have disabilities.

Comparing these definitions shows that although they are apparently similar, the approach to children is different. In the eastern countries the situation of these children is seen as an exception, a difficulty, while in the western ones it is raised to the rank of necessity, need.

Children with certain difficulties are classified according to various groups of difficulties. In general, difficulty, difficulty situation, difficult life situation or however it may be called indicates the anxiety of a person who is in a position that seriously affects their well-being, safety and life and can not always get out on their own. Children in a critical situation, in an environment of strong conflict, with many reasons, can be considered children in difficult situations. Sitak and Larionova [13] identified the following as determinants of difficult situations: poor material living conditions of the family; loss of family connection to the labor market; family conflicts, dysfunctional psychological atmosphere in the family; alcoholism and drug addiction.

The importance of the economic and social support of children in difficulty is also justified by the theorem of the disobedient child of the American economist Gary Becker, who suggests that in a family with a rich and altruistic parent even selfish children can have a financial incentive to be harmonious and kind to their brothers. Becker believes that there is an inverse interdependence between the quantity and quality of children.

J. Basarab-Horwath considers that the development of the needs of needy children is influenced by a number of factors, such as [2, p.324]: significant details about personal / family history; confusion in personal history; therapeutic needs, other than as a result of crime, e.g. the young man's abuse experiences; health problems; education issues; accommodation; employment; social abilities; activities, hobbies, social interests; comradeships and friendships with others (adults, colleagues and younger children); social inclusion and the individual's desire for social acceptability; the person's goals and plans.

The difficult situation of children in difficulty is also affected by the difficult family environment and challenging social circumstances, fractured and impoverished families, disorders, unhappy and relatively unproductive schooling, unemployment, boredom and poverty and health problems (often related to alcohol and drug abuse) encompass the social landscapes and realities experienced by these children, as stated by B. Goldson [7, p.7].

A distinction between children who are victims of neglect and other children who have protection problems is reported by Mayer and others [9, pp. 728-729]. Thus, the younger the child, the greater the child's risk of being identified as a victim of neglect than in any other form of abuse, however, it should be noted that the literature on abuse often emphasizes the young age of the mother, calculated generally at the time of the birth of the mother's first child, as a risk factor for child abuse and especially neglect. The interpretation of the relationship between mother's age and the risk of neglect generally links the risk presented by the young mother's age to the lower economic and social status of adolescent mothers, their lower level of schooling, isolation, stress and limited knowledge of their children's needs. The relationship between the young age of the child and the risk of neglect on the one hand, highlights the greater vulnerability of infants who are entirely dependent on the care provided by parents. As neglect is essentially defined as an inadequate response to the child's basic needs, it is understandable that younger children will be more likely to suffer from this lack, as they are not able to seem to change their own needs on their own. Therefore, children who are victims of neglect who express their suffering through disruptive behavior in adolescence may often be seen as having behavioral difficulties.

From the above, it could be stated that children in difficulty represent those persons who, being minors within the legal age limit, are in a situation of medical, psychological, economic and / or social difficulty according to certain criteria. established according to the type of difficulties and the physical and mental characteristics corresponding to the children in question, if these difficulties prevent the normal development of the children.

Conclusions

Throughout history, the categories of children who were considered "in difficulty" have varied significantly depending on the historical, political, geographical or other context. With the establishment of children's rights after the creation of UNICEF, the content of this notion or other similar notions has been systematized in international documents, national laws, as well as in organizations for the protection of children's rights and in the literature. At the same time, psycho-medical and socio-economic aspects of these children in difficulty have been studied by many researchers. Although a multitude of definitions of children in difficulty and similar terms have been formulated according to the needs of the definer, there is no single universally accepted definition of this category of children. This observation can be justified by the multidimensionality of this subject, which largely includes economic, social, psychological, medical aspects, not being limited to them. At the same time, the definitions and terms used varied not only depending on the defining entity and its priorities, whether they are economic or social policies or measures, legal norms or as a

recommendation or ideologies or other priorities, but also depending on the historical period, the political formation, the actual difficulties of the child and other factors. The complexity of the problems of these children has led to a wide variety of approaches to the economic and social support of these children: from neglect by state authorities and society in antiquity to targeted policies on several subgroups of children in difficulty in the modern period.

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