

Strategy for the Preservation and Translation of Religious and Bulgarian Identity in the Village Vladichentsi or the Start of a Scale Interdisciplinary Project

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Abstract: *This study aims to present the reasons and motives for the realization of a large-scale interdisciplinary project with other organization Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" financed by Fund research (Ministry of Education). For the first time in the history of the University and public life in Vidin make such a project. The project started in December 2018 and is entitled "Christian, cultural and historical heritage of Northwestern Bulgaria - Strategies for preserving and translating local identities" (ODA 05/7). The main scientific direction it is theology. The project aims to create a strategy for the preservation of spiritual, cultural and national roots of a village in decline - village Vladichentsi three neighboring villages him and two monasteries. The special moment in it is that the project included researchers from four disciplines (theology, history, archeology and ethnology), but also local government workers from Vidin Holy Dioces, Regional History Museum - c. Vidin, State Archives - city. Vidin Regional library - c. Vidin. Here we try to describe the disturbing picture of life in villages in northwestern Bulgaria and especially in Vidin region and to present the main lines of the strategy for preserving their Christian, cultural and national heritage*

Keywords: Vidin region, Vladichentsi, spirituality, heritage, culture

1. Introduction

In the month of November 2018 ended the project "Transforming village" at Faculty of Philosophy and History in Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". In this project five majors profiles sought changes in the Bulgarian villages in decline over the past 20 years. Team "Theology" track changes in a village in the poorest region of Bulgaria - Northwestern - Vladichentsi village - a village with no more than 50 inhabitants, with uncharted religion, social, cultural and national life. The project was successfully completed with the introduction of the monographic essay "Vladykino village Vladichentsi" documentary dedicated to the hard life in the village. Our efforts, however, did not get far. We continue research related to the poor and damping village Vladichentsi, but develop an interdisciplinary plan - through a project to Fund research (Ministry of Education), designed for 3 years with the title "Christian, cultural and historical heritage of Northwestern Bulgaria - strategies for conservation and translation of local identities".

2. What Happens with Bulgarian Village? Introductory Remarks

The changes taking place in contemporary Bulgarian village covering all branches of his life. As a number of Bulgarian villages in recent years and has experienced our social, cultural, consumer and religious change but reversed - with progressive retrogression. This makes the village Vladichentsi village farewell vanished village. When talking about how to help these villages, most researchers focus primarily on the preservation of social life in the Bulgarian village stiff "not only as an expression of regularities in objective course of demographic processes, but also as a consequence of socio-economic transformation in

transition".¹ For this reason, most studies have focused on the socio-economic living conditions in the Bulgarian village from which "most dependent mobility and choice of residence".²

Over the last twenty years the Bulgarians experienced defeat of different ideologies: agricultural, political, economic. Many are engaged in the work to carry out reforms in the Bulgarian village in order to cardinal solve pressing issues in it. If you peek into political platforms, programs and strategies for the development of Bulgarian village prepared by different political parties, we will notice "extremely modest or even marginal place of the problems associated with the village. Moreover, it "dawn" of supposedly democratic transition is associated with the time in which the flag of power and reckless restitution was made a real rout over village".³ As a result of this gross interference in the lives of Bulgarian village and its inhabitants, it irrevocably collapsed and sank into oblivion and ruthless political strikes continued to fall on the remainder of his life. All this "extending the violent trend draining the last revitalized the villages, which combined with a lack of interest in the development of systematic thought and promising strategy for the development of Bulgarian village".⁴ What led to these reforms, is obvious. Poverty, unemployment and misery in Bulgarian villages today does

¹Mihova Genoveva(2015). The phenomenon of "properties for sale" and demographic transformations in the Bulgarian village. In: Villages for sale. Petkova, D., Picard, D. (Eds), OMDA, p. 18.

²Mihova, G(2013). The demographic policy in Bulgaria. Traditions, social needs, contemporary dimensions. Sofia, Academic Publishing House "Prof. M. Drinov", p. 179-180.

³Mizov, Maxim(2015). A quarter-selling Bulgarian village. In: Villages for sale, p. 57.

⁴Ermenov, Boyan(2015). Bulgarian village - under pressure from the serious and complex problems (just selling you an option)?. In: Villages for sale, p. 78.

not surprise anyone, because they are present in many of the cities in the country. The desperation of the people of Bulgarian villages goes to hopelessness and possible strategies remains only a theory.

1) Why should we store spiritual resources of the Bulgarian village?

On this question is not difficult to answer given several reasons: demographic crisis in the country, loss of national identity, obscure religious paths in the lives of people in poor areas and others. In this context, humanitarian science is obliged to propose solutions to regeneration in religious and spiritual plan. Each Bulgarian village is an invaluable national resource that should be wisely preserved. In this sense it is also a fireplace to keep the religion, traditions, identity and memory. It is necessary to seek individual and common solutions that can ensure the development of the best expressions of spirituality and religion to fill the empty niches in spirit, strength and blood.

The spiritual resources of Bulgarian village are the main guarantee for its storage and use their full guarantees for preserving national and religious heritage. National politics and the Church must also work together to use the best practices for protecting the spiritual and religious development of villages in Bulgaria. We should not hide some findings of specialists for the weak role of the Church among the rural population in the past when "Christianity, though he has played a significant role in the public and cultural life, do not jump into the habits and mentality of the village. It does not bring anything particularly manners because they were more "Christian" than the mores of those who had gospel and burned incense incense ... ". Here it is not the place to speak at length on this issue. But if it is understood by everyone that in a society where coexist wild morals and passions, where life is tormented in their own way and primitive, would hardly sprouted bright and fruitful seed of faith. It is difficult, but not impossible. There are dozens of examples of built good Christian life and a healthy relationship between the institutions in it.

The main direction of thought we leave the tragic fate of our villages where we realize that this disastrous move "radically changing the fate of such villages ... burying historic traditions, memory heritages rips human communities and destroying personal or collective destinies, leaving them in the lurch of situation".⁵ These circumstances created obstacles in our attempts to understand everything about the village Vladichentsi. And though generally they brought us satisfaction in the work of the previous project, very important facts were not able to reflect as you wish.

2) What does the modern Bulgarian village?

At first glance the place very timely question which has not ceased to be relevant. His answer is not unequivocal. As for developing villages in the country, and the small company of men villages as village Vladichentsi not always financial capital is the most important of the safe development. Much more it applies to construction or development of religious life in it. Most current efforts are aimed at doubling the funding in the village and are tied with strategic

implementation of entrepreneurial projects for the improvement of life in it. What happens in practice? In his study "Villages for sale or pattern for storage and care" M. Shishmanova stated several models to preserve life in the Bulgarian village from which you can see the focus on people and institutions involved in these issues in economic and social life in the village, but without any interference in relation to the improvement of religious life. M. Shishmanova gives details of some of the models applied in order to preserve and develop the Bulgarian village: a model for maintaining in good condition the life of an aging population in the villages; IT model villages for sale; model villages young organic farmer; model village for rural and ecotourism; model villages alive.⁶ For those projects under the operational programs and rural development, and appropriate measures are trying to carry out strict control over their implementation after project implementation. However, the expression of care for Bulgarian village of various governmental and non-governmental organizations are not always crowned with success and resources in relation to these programs reach the utmost to the villages and are underutilized. According to experts, there is no adequate "purposeful state policy for development of villages".⁷ Most of the villages remain "insulated from European funds, as various European programs may apply to municipalities as legal entities, not municipalities".⁸ The village remains isolated from the possibility of utilization of the resources of a large part of the operational and European programs and "should consider and implement such a mechanism for allocation of budget and European funds that the villages to reach their due capital funds".⁹ Other experts in this field believe that "success to rescue villages ... lies in adequate evaluation of errors".¹⁰ In fact, over the past twenty (even more) years in different ways and by different means the government tried to compensate for the neglect of this issue but government policy bordered more poorly motivated trial and masked care.

It remains unclear the issue of the development of spiritual life in the Bulgarian village. We are deeply convinced that Christianity is an essential source of spirituality and religion can not be replaced by other alternate spellings. Probably colleagues humanitarians would argue against that finding the wide content you see the term "spirituality". For the Christian theologians, however, it remains closely linked to the Orthodox religion and the Church. When this unit is ignored by strategic plans and intentions of organizations and political parties to restore life in Bulgarian villages, apparently without realizing overlooked core of life. Regarding the placement of the village Vladichentsi in the context of our research, needless to make it clear that this issue has so far not come across in the research scope of any scientific field. This, on the one hand, provides us with a broad base of research on the topic, but on the other hand, narrows our ability, because as theologians we could not offset the need for an already historical, archaeological,

⁶Shishmanova M. (2015). Villages for sale or pattern for storage and care. In: Villages for sale, p. 155.

⁷Petkova, D., Picard, D. (Eds). (2015). Villages for sale, p. 8.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Shishmanova M. (2015). Villages for sale or pattern for storage and care, p. 155.

⁵Mizov, M (2015). A quarter-selling Bulgarian village, p. 56.

ethnological and sociological basis. In practical terms, creating a number of obstacles that could not be overcome.

3) Possible solutions

Given the various changes that occurred in Bulgarian village in the last twenty years, the interest of researchers to it grows and problematic in various scientific sectors. Bulgarian theological science makes great exception. Perhaps we have objective reasons associated with atypical parameter of work outlined by the topics that belong to the sociological, historical, archaeological and ethnological studies rather than theological. Even if we could say that "eye to Bulgarian village is mostly philosophical, sociological and is aimed at explaining the intuitions centered in some vague optimism".¹¹ In this type of reasoning to search for the theoretical foundations of the topic, it has some basis. Many researchers centered their research on the topic with the prior knowledge that the questions are many, but definitive answers are unlikely to be given. Even if this happens, their practical application will remain utopia.

We recognize that a comprehensive study on life in the Bulgarian village suggests group work, with clear objectives and the correct strategy for its implementation. Hardly theologian successful could be extended to the fullest and to put up this type of research. Future projects on which we are focused, is an exception. In theoretical terms, he will try to cover a wide range of fields in many people's lives in the village Vladichentsi in historical, cultural, social, domestic and religious term. The focus, however, remains the religious sphere. Not having the claim that we have discovered the right strategic and methodological approach theoretical deployment of the topic, we will try to make a feeble attempt to outline the overall picture of the past and present life in the village. Life in the village helps us to realize that even though it is modest, quite usual primary, but traditionally unit of people us belongs to that increasingly depopulated community where everyone belongs and thanks to that we managed to build its nationality, religion and identity. In this sense, the main factor for the reconstruction of the religious identity of the people of the village is a Christian, cultural and historical heritage preserved in written documents but preserved in the memory of people. This was the reason that necessarily were provoked to peek behind the curtain of areas that provide us with the opportunity to deploy in deeper plan their searches.

3. Strategy for the Preservation and Translation of Spiritual and Intangible Heritage in the Village Vladichentsi

A look at Bulgarian village in recent years expanded to include a significant number of sectors: agricultural, farming, migration, tourism and others. Bulgarian village turns the unit that the country is not and can not be perceived as obsolete, although modern attitudes backbone of the rhythm of modern life passes through major cities. He takes all his dynamism, there happen and planned and unforeseen

¹¹Nedelcheva, T. (2015). Fundamentally rootedness of the Bulgarian village. In: Villages for sale, p. 38.

circumstances and life in the big city turns out to be the biggest challenge to modern man.

We should not miss the fact that the life of Bulgarians to such an extent is associated with life in the village, that the majority of the changes that affect people in the big cities, first registered as happened in this small social and public units. As for the religious factor in small villages untouched by the dramatic changes in major cities, Christianity practiced distinctive. The relationship between waking national and religious consciousness of the people is alive and active just in the village. It turns still intact place to such an extent by external influences alien to the Orthodox and national culture. On the other hand the terms "timeliness", "storage" and "translation" are related to the changes that took place in the life of the Bulgarian village in the last twenty years and provoke scientific interest from several countries.

Translation and preservation of local identities in life in Bulgarian village in recent years are some of the latest units for the modern researcher in several areas: in life-term social, economic and others. In historical perspective, those terms relative to the village Vladichentsi are marked by several characteristics: political, economic, social, domestic, religious, etc., Based on the aggressive takeover of people's lives, boning the living organic body of the village, but not by might, nor a particular purpose or authority of an institution or political party. Such is the doom of Bulgarian village in recent years: poor fate makes people's lives, thwarting their ability to develop. This process kills hopes, invalidate faith, roughens people and their customs. He is a threat to spirituality and religion, and it is probably much larger than in other periods of the history of Bulgaria. This is because it flows slowly, imperceptibly, forcing people to accept their helplessness and abandonment by God.

1) The object of future research project

As it became clear the subject of future research project is a village Vladichentsi - small, almost disappearing village in one of the poorest regions of the country - in Northwestern Bulgaria.¹² It is located about 40 km from the town of Vidin. Its inhabitants do not number more than 50 people - mostly elderly.¹³

The object of the study is related to the general context in which the historical development takes place in village life Vladichentsi. As belonging to Vidin, it depopulation is an important indicator, however typical of most villages in this region. "Vidin district, where most of the villages which we consider has the least population in the country - less than 98 000 people. At the end of 2013 the population of Vidin

¹²In Northwestern Bulgaria "there are 622 villages with 16 of them have a population of less than 20 people. These are mostly villages in the Vidin region. Perhaps after 10 years will be fully and partially depopulated about 2-3% and 12% of all villages in the region". Petkova, D., Picard, D. (Eds) (2015). In: Villages for sale, p. 12.

¹³In three villages in Vidin district residents are very less in number. In the village Granichak 10 people live in the village Shipikova neighborhood - 5 people and in Oreshets - 10 people. Petkova, Camellia (2015). Depopulation of Bulgarian village close: case. Krushovitsa, Elin Pelin. In: Villages for sale, p. 127.

district was 97,536 people, according to final data of the territorial statistical office. This demographic Vidin region ranks last in population after all other Bulgarian districts¹⁴. According to NSI data, in 2016 the town of Vidin ranks first among cities in the country with the highest negative population growth (-2.6). Reducing the residents in the villages not only in Vidin region, but in general in the country is an indicator of poor economic and social policy in the preservation of Bulgarian villages. This process in the Bulgarian village is developing for more than six decades. NIS studies show that if the process of depopulation in rural areas continue this pace in 2060 in Bulgaria there will be villages¹⁵. Moreover this finding could be attributed to the village Vladichentsi, which during the last dynamic signs of life in him at a distance of more than 70 years from 2018. Over the next thirty years is unlikely to make major leaps in its development, and that means the passage of a century in silence in slow fading and dying of the life and spirituality in it.

2) Analysis of the problem

The preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of Northwest Bulgaria and its translation into a contemporary environment is a current challenge with an increased interest to the scientific community and to the Bulgarian public. It is no secret to anyone that, unlike other areas of the country, Northwestern Bulgaria is facing extremely serious challenges: according to the latest data, it is the region with the lowest regional per capita GDP across the European Union. The preliminary analysis of the state of the villages in Vidin region based on NSI data (2016) indicates that this is the region with the highest mortality rate in the country,¹⁶ with the highest negative natural growth and with the highest share of persons over 65 years of age. The wine region has a pronounced economic downturn, a high demographic collapse and a severe deficiency in spiritual and cultural development. Over 80 villages in the region have less than 200 inhabitants and the rest are ranked first in the row of vanishing bearers of the Christian and cultural identity. We are aware that the dying of life in the villages is an open threat to the Bulgarian spirituality and culture, but at the same time it records an actual problem with extremely high degree of anxiety for the scientific community. Paradoxical, however, is the steady decline in its scientific problem, which is part of the overall stagnation in research in the country according to the National Strategy for the Development of Research (2017-2030).¹⁷ The reasons for

lack of scientific interest in the stated challenge are limited to: 1) insufficient local staff resources; 2) the lack of a large-scale strategy uniting the actions of specialized local institutions and external specialists; 3) sufficient funding.

Based on this fact, the current project proposal is not an end in itself; it broadly corresponds to the vision and objectives of the National Strategy for the Development of Research, whose realization should "have a significant positive effect on a number of areas of public life"¹⁸. Pave the attention of researchers from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" in the field of theology, ethnology, history and archeology. Given these facts, we focus our attention on the societal challenge of regional importance. The main research question is: How to build a strategy for conservation and translation of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage of northwestern Bulgaria? For this purpose we have chosen some typical case of Vidin region who, through theoretical analysis and audio-visual way to document reflexive Christian, cultural and historical fabric.

Answer the question will look looking at these signs of local identities, Christian and cultural projections of objects that lead us to the visible, extensive chatter theoretically them and deploy them practical. In an interdisciplinary plan appear intersections in the challenge of the life, culture, tradition, memory, customs, practices, etc., precipitated in space and material traces of the surveyed sites. For us it is important to reflect not only the forms of transmission of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage but also to seek strategies for survival and translation in today's social conditions. Some of these strategies are associated with leaving theoretical, audio-visual and practical evidence of the surveyed sites through which marked paths for storing Christianity, culture and history, and modern translation of signs of local identities today. These strategies call "strategies for storing and translating Christian, cultural and historical heritage." These strategies are based on the following situations: 1) The current situation in the North region and the pressing need for innovation and human well-planned strategy for the preservation of intangible heritage; 2) The need to strengthen links between science and education, governments and society as a whole in order to preserve relevant parts of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage; 3) The objectives set out in the National Strategy for the Development of Scientific Research (2017-2030).¹⁹ With this in mind, the project proposal defines guidelines and typical approaches for their realization through close interdisciplinary interaction between researchers from the basic organization (Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv) and specialists from the cultural, educational and spiritual institutions on the territory of Vidin Municipality and the Municipality Dimovo (Vidin Holy Dioces, Regional Education Management, Regional Museum of History - Vidin, State Archive - Vidin, Regional Library - Vidin, Library - Dimovo, Community center - Dimovo). 4) Preliminary experience.

¹⁴According to National Statistical Institute (NSI) data "smallest by population is Vidin district in which they live 88 867 people." Population and demographic processes in 2016 NSI. <http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/Population201672-2R06L.pdf>, p. 6 (last. seen in June 2018). Over the last 10 years the population has decreased by 24 percent or nearly 31,000 people, according to the Regional Statistical Office - Vidin. Ibid. 139.

¹⁵Shishmanova, M. (2015). Villages for sale or pattern for storage and care, p. 155.

¹⁶National Strategy for Development Research (2017 - 2030 g.), p.11.

¹⁷Reflected her lack of a coherent government policy (incl. funding) to support research and unsatisfactory implementation of the previous National Strategy for the Development of Research in the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2020) and the commitments made

to the EU proved to be one of leading motives in trying to build a similar strategy.

¹⁸National Strategy, p.23.

¹⁹The strategy takes into account "the main objectives which the State has set the development of scientific research in Bulgaria". National Strategy, p.4.

This project proposal is a continuation of the successfully completed recently general interdisciplinary project at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Philosophy and History called "Transforming Village". One of the research sites in it is the village of Vladichentsi (Vidin region, Municipality of Dimovo), which is a priority area of the sub-team "Religion and philosophy". In the field work,

field studies were carried out, scientific databases with specific theoretical results were processed. In terms of both successive and personnel aspects, the majority of participants in the project are participants in the current project proposal. On the research line it is a continuation of his experience, scientific field and results.

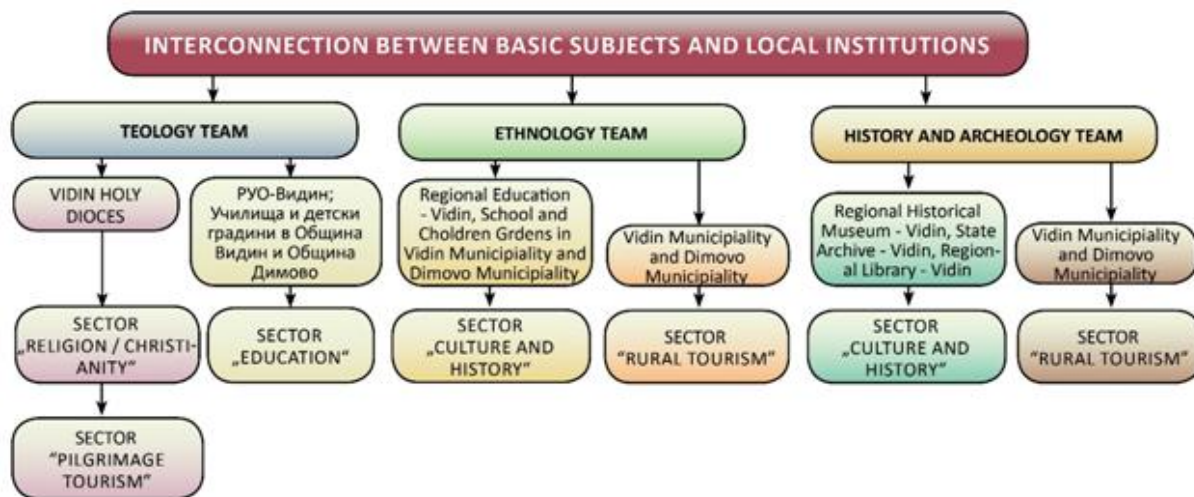


Figure 1: Conditional interaction between underpinning and local institutions

The motives for the completion of the completed project in the present are inspired by: 1) one of the common objects of research (village of Vladichentzi); 2) preliminary experience, achieved results and established working contacts between local state and municipal structures and scientific specialists from the basic organization; 3) the scientific potential of the core organization that extends the field of research in the "Religion and Theology" field at an interdisciplinary level; 4) the possibility of including other objects with similar typological characteristics; 5) building an interdisciplinary network for the implementation of innovative practices at the local level; 6) the opportunity to attract a larger number of local specialists. For the fulfillment of the project objectives, four villages were selected in Vidin region, Dimovo Municipality: Vladichenci village, Mali Drenovets village, Dzharanitsa village and Izvor village and two active Orthodox monasteries in Vidin Diocese - Dobritolski Monastery "Holy Trinity" and Izvor

Monastery "Assumption of Virgin Mary". The selection is based on several indicators of practical and scientific character: similar typological characteristics of villages with dulling features in which the signs of identity, spirituality and culture are pronounced but also threatened; insufficiently explored theological, historical, ethnological and archaeological aspects; preliminary (partial) theoretical and practical-applied experience of the local state and municipal institutions in the selected sites.

The project proposal complements the preliminary experience that provides the opportunity to solve the societal challenge of several countries: 1) in terms of building innovative models for the preservation and translation of Christianity, culture and history; 2) with a view to supporting the specialized work of state-owned local institutions; 3) enriching the interdisciplinary profile of the project.

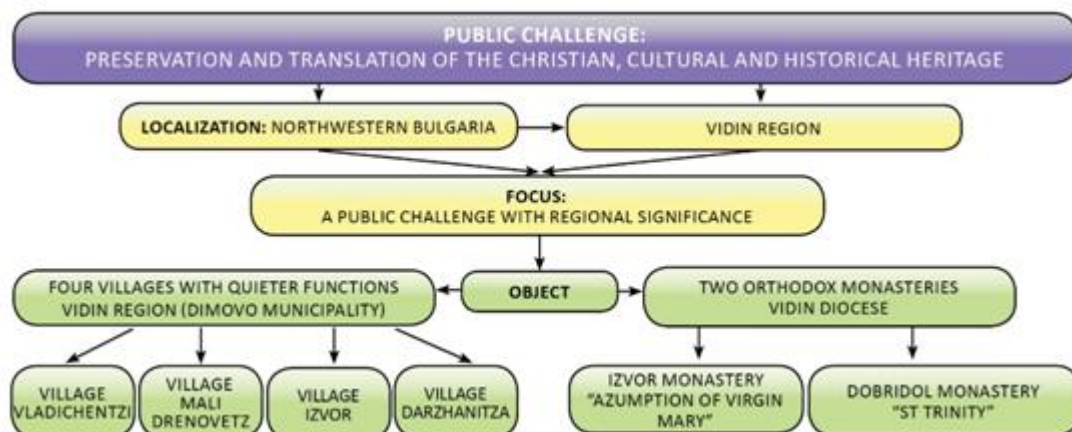


Figure 2: Localization, focus and object of study

3) Timeliness and relevance of scientific problems

The theme of preservation and translation of Christian and national identity of the Bulgarian village is up to date as the theme of life, because today in the age of the dynamics we understand that only the primary nests are called first Bulgarian to protect the integrity of the Bulgarian spirituality, culture and traditions. We are the ones who are called to secure the foundations of create and preserve it for generations. Hence the timeliness of the subject is formed on the basis of constant current present, in which this theme sounds like a vocation and responsibility. Village Vladichentsi is almost dormant from living a poor village, not development, with residents without hope who survived the upheavals of the time, radical changes in the social, cultural, economic and religious life and have witnessed the mentioned transformations and the various, sometimes contradictory reforms additionally motivate our decision to peep behind the threadbare, erased and torn curtain of the past. These people fed the desire of every researcher to understand why and what is lost, what and why is preserved in them, in their world, in their daily lives and to answer the many questions that we, in big cities, do not ask frequently. Here the issue date. Current should call experience handfull forgotten from august to fight to live in a constant dynamics and decay of intangible heritage without someone they reach out without being heard and irrelevant (to them) if someone sets this topic appropriate or not. Where human beings are fighting for their lives excessive force, where life stops before it began, where the bread is often not up to the locals and the water from year to year decline, where belief in God smoldering among care of the day, is the latest theme - the theme of preservation and translation of spiritual wealth and lives not just of the village, but the life of a small community that can be defined as a sample of a wider social picture.

We are aware that village Vladichentsi not the only nor the first Bulgarian village with similar lifestyles. The villages of this type are hundreds in Bulgaria. It would be valuable and useful to follow the way of life in several similar Bulgarian villages and to draw practical conclusions. However, this is a matter of long-term scientific studies.

The literature concerning the small village northwest Vladichentsi is scarce. Information lacking for many events associated with the name, history, life and Construction of the village. Snippets found in some better-known works. It turns out that someone has to initiate the memory of a village that goes slowly to an end. And if the ink and the pen was the only means by which we can fight and help this does not happen, we do it because it is in our power. We believe that one day someone will be aware of our village would get behind the scenes of time and probably will again give him the life he deserves. Where God has placed a handful of people to fight for his life, he is certainly among them, and I provide for everything. The lives of these people, however iztlyava not know the source of life, their pitiful attempts are associated with their own paraphrases of his relationship with God and its peculiar practice.

And just this reason to get down just a village Vladichentsi highlights topicality of the theme: order under the white sheet was born the history of this village, to transform the

past into the present, to be reborn on paper with a new look to the future and in the hope that once again it can start to breathe. At the risk of sounding ambitious would say that as a result of all this we ask ourselves: how the village road will take from now on? Historically this path is clear; he follows the drawn trajectory of decades ago. Scientifically, however we hope our project to some extent to launch the expansion of interest in our village.

Summary: The relevance and importance of scientific problems starting the current situation of increasing recourse to spirituality and culture of Vidin region, which threatens the extinction of the primary signs of Christianity, culture, history and identity. Bringing these findings into account national examinations, inspections and analyzes information from official statistical sources and databases. However, that motivates us to deploy strategy with practical scientific innovation, which will not be dependent on the objective conditions and create employment opportunities in the long term. Given this fact to date and the invitation to offer Strategy 1) in accordance with the specifics of the region and the availability of adequate and working closely with local government sectors in the short and long term²⁰ and 2) that provides up to date and relevant model of the vision of the "State for the development of scientific research in Bulgaria", the priorities of the Innovation Strategy for smart specialization, the National Strategy for Higher Education, and in a broader plan - and the implementation of the Operational program "Science and education for smart growth" and the European Framework program. Our project takes into account the named documents.

²⁰National Strategy, p.26

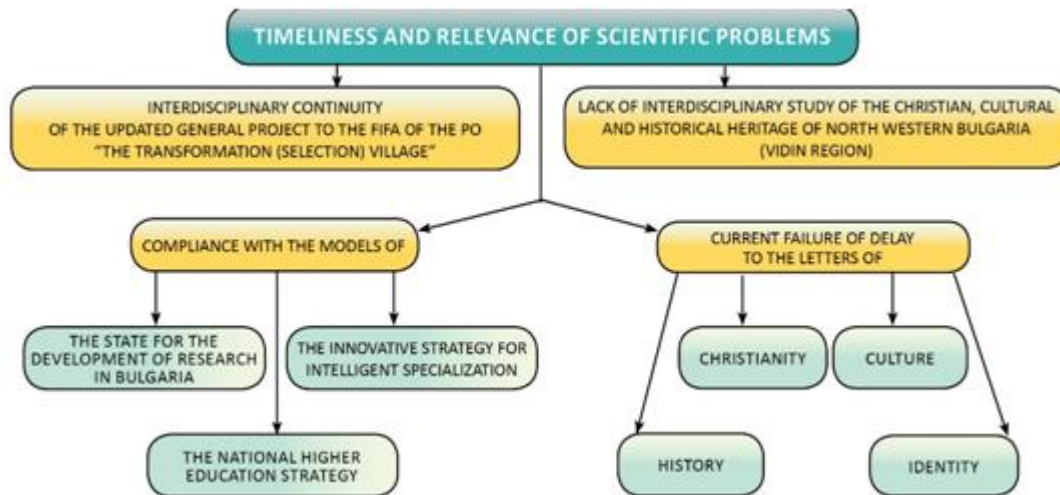


Figure 3: Actuality of the studied problem

The current situation so far revealed retardation of research on the culture and spirituality of villages in Northwestern Bulgaria (Vidin region) in interdisciplinary plan. Research over the past twenty years are fragmented and unsatisfactory, mainly descriptive, and the model for the continued translation of the spiritual and cultural life in a modern environment completely missing. The scientific system as a whole continues to integrate difficult in the region not only because of its remoteness from central Bulgaria, but due to increased migration of local scientific potential. In this context the relevance of the project is reinforced by the grounds that the proposed strategy "will attract and retain young people in the country",²¹ which corresponds to the vision of the innovation strategy for smart specialization. The proposed option is practical deployment process beyond the time limits of the program.

4) Status of research on the problem

According to the Innovation Strategy for smart specialization 2014 - 2020 focus of the scientific potential in the country, the focus of research and innovative development strategies in Vidin region were the subject of discussions and analysis in various scientific and specialized sectors. Unfortunately, the practical results of their development do not report sufficient progress.²² One of the essential problems of science and research is layering with respect to the humanities years as a phenomenon hardly recognizable practical and applied nature. If humanities research and innovation is seen as a social factor responsible for the development of society as a whole, addressing the challenges of low cultural and spiritual expression could become much easier. In the recent past a small amount of

research devoted to the villages in the Vidin region they have been subject to historical, archaeological and ethnographic interest, devoid of any interdisciplinarity. Few villages falling in the research field of closely specialized local professionals. Recognizes and low efficiency of the applications of research and low participation of foreign experts.

5) Focus of the project in accordance with the relevant societal challenge set out in the National Development Strategy Research in Bulgaria

Through the present project proposal, we declare our vision for changing the situation and offer concrete solutions to overcome the societal challenge in the sector of "social development, cultural and historical heritage, national identity and development of the culture of society".²³ The selected areas of this project proposal are encouraged (encouraged): the motivation for the development of the spiritual and cultural life in the selected sites in the Vidin region; the interest of local tourist sectors towards attractive destinations; Strengthening the "integration of Bulgarian science in society"²⁴ through the targeted coverage of these sectors and local institutions, which have a direct impact on the Christian and social culture of the people (Dimovo Municipality and Vidin Municipality - Vidin Holy Diocese, Regional Education Management, Regional Historical Museum /RMH/, State Archive - Vidin, Regional Library - Vidin, Library - Dimovo, Community Center - Dimovo); partnership in solving the societal challenge, which is a "fundamental principle for implementing the strategy";²⁵ the interdisciplinary approach in the study, in response to "requirements for the interdisciplinary research as a precondition for the development of all major scientific areas";²⁶ The resource efficiency of the interaction between the researchers from the grassroots organization and the local government sectors, contributing to the balance of their professional development, in accordance with the vision of the National Strategy: "The Regional Balance of Science contributes to a balance in the development of regions in accordance with the nation's national interests and the EU's

²¹The innovative system for intelligent specialization, p. 11.

²²In innovation strategy for smart specialization 2014 - 2020 we read: "The region includes the districts of Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Lovech and Pleven. According deliberate government policy to support the development of the North region (with the lowest GDP / capita for the whole EU) will be encouraged capacity for smart specialization in three thematic areas of ISIS - "Mechatronics and clean technologies", "Healthy life and biotechnology "and" New technologies in creative and recreational industries".The innovative system for intelligent specialization, p. 33.

²³National Strategy, p. 26.

²⁴Ibid., p.24.

²⁵Ibid., p. 24.

²⁶Ibid., p. 26.

vision";²⁷ The promotion of the local culture of the scientific culture²⁸ (through the practical and applied interactions foreseen in the project proposal, which will provide technological modernization in the host organizations on the territory of Vidin); the development of the research and innovation (electronic) infrastructure of local educational, spiritual and cultural institutions, which is in line with the objective of building an electronic research infrastructure underpinned by the Innovation Strategy for Intelligence Specialization;²⁹ "strengthening the links between science and higher education, education at all levels, public administration and society as a whole"³⁰: attracting leading experts in the relevant scientific fields from the base organization for the practical interaction with local institutions according to the project objectives; the writing of specialized scientific studies related to the preservation of the Christian and cultural heritage, thus stimulating their aging in qualitative terms.

4. Research Tools

4.1 Objectives and tasks of the project

Our project include: primary (general) purpose contributing to solving societal challenges. In a broader sense it focuses on building strategies to keep the Christian, cultural and historical heritage of Northwestern Bulgaria (Vidin Region) and translation of local identities in the contemporary environment. In a narrow sense, we aim to track, analyze and systemize the various manifestations of spirituality, religion, culture, traditions, heritage and their religious, verbal, musical, plastic, dance, ritual and others images. This is an attempt to find the roots of our culture and identity by tracking changes and processes of inheritance and proposing mechanisms for translation into contemporary context. Specific objectives - this includes the so-called "Program objectives": strategic integrated target programs to address societal challenges.

4.1.1 Project goals

Prior to setting forth the objectives of the project will try to make some clarifications on the scope and focus of the study. Work on the project will explore all the preservation and translation of local identities in the village Vladichentsi and their branches in depth, but to the objective of the project to which it belongs will try to propose a strategy for the preservation and translation of spiritual, religious and cultural identity people from the village Vladichentsi (and some neighboring villages), unfolding mostly in tracking changes in some religious customs and practices.

Our research will focus primarily on religious life in the village and came of it socio-cultural changes against the backdrop of its historical development. These aspects will be dealt with on the basis of ideological projections of the villagers. In fact, the absence of any basis in relation to religious life in it (theoretical, practical, empirical, etc.) Will try to learn more about this aspect of life in the village by

²⁷Ibid., p. 25.

²⁸Ibid., p. 23.

²⁹The innovative system for intelligent specialization, p. 25.

³⁰NationalStrategy, p. 29.

the inhabitants themselves in it. The objective is directly dependent on the available theoretical and empirical data that we have, and thus tries to reveal the model and the mechanism by which they are made preservation and translation of intangible heritage village Vladichentsi (and some neighboring villages and monasteries).

The main objective of the project relates directly to the aim of implementing the priorities of the National Strategy for Development Research (2017 - 2030), and having regard to the overall current spiritual, cultural and educational climate in Vidin region, in particular - in selected objects. From the main goal, we have three groups of program objectives:

4.1.2 Practical Programmatic Objectives

Application of traditional and / or innovative models for interaction between local government institutions and a basic organization in order to preserve and translate Christian, cultural and historical heritage and cooperation in the short and long term;

- "Religion / Christianity" sector (with focus group residents of the village of Vladitsche). This program objective builds strategically on the practical results of the previous "Transforming Village" project set out in this project proposal. The thought is related to the construction of an Orthodox temple in the village of Vladitsentsi with the support of the Vidin Holy Dioces and the Directorate of Religious Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria is aimed at practicing the Christian heritage and preserving and translating local religious and cultural practices and traditions.
- "Culture and History" sector (focus group - historians, ethnologists and archaeologists from RMH -Vidin): the program objective is related to the training of the employees of RMH-Vidin for working with free specialized software for 3D visualization of archaeological finds. Through this goal, we provide the development of technological models with an electronic research infrastructure³¹ in the short and long term;
- "Education" sector³² (focus group in pre-school and early stage of secondary education): program objective for building a strategy for religious education in the Municipality of Vidin and Dimovo Municipality in accordance with the specifics of the region, in compliance with the current legal framework, through preliminary agreements with Education Management-Vidin and Vidin Holy Dioces. Recent attempts to introduce the object were made before about 20 years.

4.1.3 Programmatic objectives of a theoretical nature

Building and transferring new knowledge in order to preserve and translate the Christian, cultural and historical heritage and cooperation in the short and long term:

³¹This takes place "access to scientists and specialists to unique or distributed scientific equipment and scientific data, regardless of their type and location in the world." Ibid., p.68.

³²This vision corresponds to the forecasts in the vision of the National Strategy "strengthening the links between science and higher education, education at all levels, public administration and society as a whole". Ibid., p.29.

- 1) Accumulation of a theoretical database in "desk research" research: archival work, recording of narratives, bibliographical references, brochure making,
- etc. for the needs of the project but also for future interdisciplinary research;
- 2) Printing of monographic works and collections with a fundamental character for the purposes of the project.

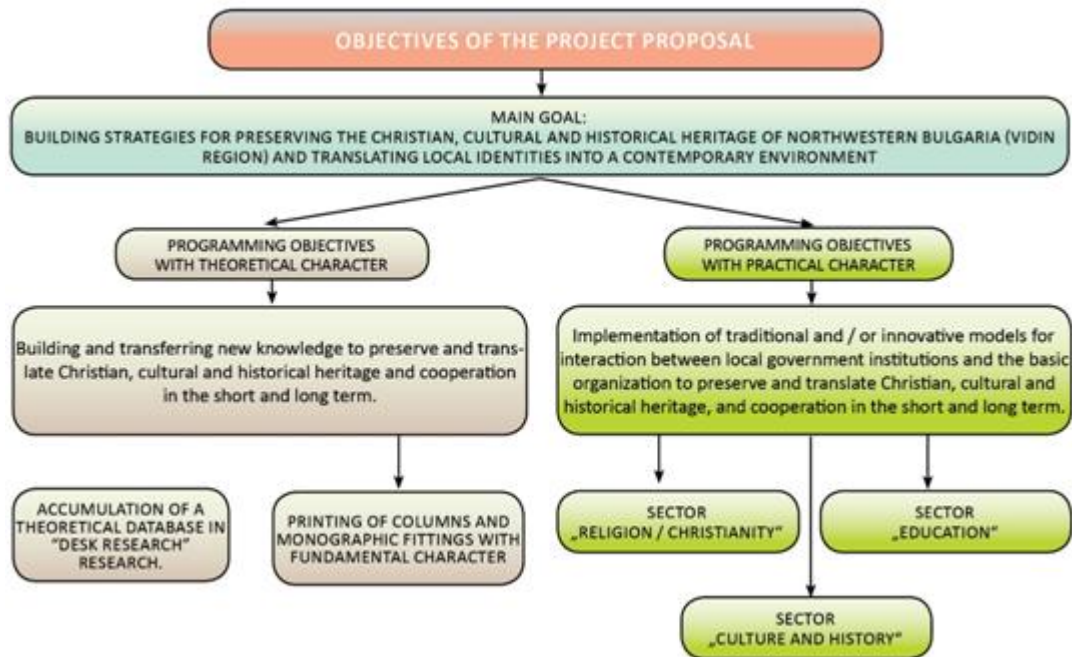


Figure 4: Objectives of the project proposal

4.2 Project Tasks

To achieve that objective has the following (theoretical and practical) problems:

4.2.1. Theoretical tasks

To examine the available literature directly or indirectly connected with the history, the existence of the village and in general the way of life in it; To track the theoretical content and the concept of "preservation" and "translation" in a religious context in direct relation to the multifaceted life in the village Vladichentsi; To analyze and systematize the entire information available in the form of archive units located in State Archive - Vidin; to summarize, and to extract from it important theoretical nests; To analyze and systematize theoretically aspects of the development of life in general in the village, and to propose mechanisms for storing culture, memory, identity.

4.2.2. Practical tasks

To hold meetings with residents of the village and neighboring villages and to systematize and analyze the relevant empirical results; To capture important sites related to the multifaceted life in the village; To hold meetings with residents, mayors, deputy mayors, social workers and others from other neighboring villages in connection with life and past with Vladichentsi.

In more general terms, our task will be related to the inclusion of these structures of village life which directly or indirectly are related to religious life in the process dynamics in the village, and in view of the preservation of national and spiritual wealth in it. No matter whether its citizens realize it or not they are involved in them and

without understanding forth new forms of religiosity, understanding and general lifestyle. All this has an impact on the settlement area as a whole, on the farmhouse, clothing, customs, traditions, holidays and customs. They will join fellow ethnologists, historians, archaeologists.

4.3 Assumptions and approaches to achieving goals

Based on the goals and in conjunction with the National Strategy for the development of research 2017 - 2030,³³ the project is related to mutual cooperation with local cultural, educational and spiritual institutions. From preliminary discussions with their representatives and with local people we found that despite the difficult circumstances in which they live past keep their faith, tradition and memory. Hence we have pulled out the suggestion that any attempt to preserve spirituality and culture would be useful. As outlined objects have not been studied specifically, it is entirely possible in the work process to occur unnoticed hitherto practices and traditions that are an important part of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage. It assumes the premise that his wealth not only requires storage and translation, but also knowledge. Thus effected a return to home spiritual and cultural roots and their uptake in practical scientific (theoretical) look. We realize that hypothetically it is hard to happen, but we are encouraged by the willingness of support from the municipal government and local government institutions. Our mutual cooperation will

³³It states that "Human resources are a key factor for the development of science".Ibid., p. 24.

improve regional smart specialization and would provide technological skills in the long run.³⁴

The main thesis starting projecting the framework of this study is related to the hypothesis that despite the unfavorable times and processes for the development of Orthodox religious identity in the village Vladichentsi, there are mechanisms for its storage. The first is the family memory, this also includes national and collective memory. Bulgarian rural community has preserved well enough internal resources and mechanisms by which to keep the various manifestations of their identity. Based on total trust between residents in the village, based on kinship ties, common goals and values, inner life in the village is not subject to total extinction when there is human resource, store it and protect it. They characterize and ensure nezalichavane interaction between religious processes inside the community, which in no way could be rendered despite the dynamics of the events that accompany them. Mass dynamic transformations in time in which we live are not wiped out life in the village Vladichentsi and in some miraculous way these people find themselves protected from the many dangers threatening just religious and national identity. No matter that they are diverse, multifaceted and organized on the basis of many household items are organized factor in their lives.

The religious principle favorably affect the storage and maintenance of the peculiar rhythm of social life in it, kept by generations and transmitted through oral tradition of the people and of course, empirically. Through these trials do not hope for a magical inner change, but we are convinced that the "change" of religious identity unlocks adaptive behaviors to overcome doctrinal, moral and ecclesiastical deficit: raise substituents (amoral attitudes pagan practices and more) supporting the adaptation of the village have achieved them living conditions. Religious life proves necessary factor for the rebuilding of the social, cultural and household fabric of life in the village.

4.4 Interdisciplinary character of our project

Based on the objectives, approaches for achieving them are deployed in an interdisciplinary term, well-functioning monitoring mechanism and in partnership with all stakeholders: local municipal authorities, state institutions and researchers. The basic approach of the project is theoretical, with pre-visualization (visual approach) available in the region reserved memory, traditions, religious and cultural practices and more. The theoretical approach carried documenting and interpreting the results of visualization of the studied objects and help to "recall" to "archetypes of human behavior" and thus to reconstruct cultural, residential, religious and others practices based on the following precipitated social memory as a way of reminder of spirituality, culture and historicity. Thus, by direct observation of open images and traces in the Christian, cultural and historical heritage, define specific

³⁴In accordance with the innovative system for intelligent specialization, whereby improving the regional distribution of research infrastructures targets "development of regional smart specialization". The innovative system for intelligent specialization, p. 32.

local identities and specify ways to the preservation and translation into modern environment. It appears, and the importance of interdisciplinary reflection of the research team. This approach implies requisites and distribution of the work of researchers in the process of putting the conceptual and instrumental definitions. Interdisciplinary meeting outlines relief strategies for preservation of Christian, cultural and historical heritage. At first glance, the approach is revealed based on the obvious, but placed in an interdisciplinary plan in it are interwoven and complex invisible threads weaving multi-layered network of public challenge.

This approach will be illustrated through visual archive of reproduction by local signs of intangible heritage and local identity (practices, customs, traditions, beliefs, etc.). The dense visual description and interpretation of the various manifestations of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage will be analyzed from the perspective of the stories of the local people, but also from direct observations to discover and recognize the legacy of traditional and imported cultural and religious elements. Right here interdisciplinary project reveals the wholeness of the image problem it, and how to solve it.

4.5 Methods and Techniques

The selection of methods and research techniques are consistent with the strategy to support research determined in the Law for Promotion of Scientific Research. In this project they have in the "create new scientific knowledge; Bulgarian history, culture and national identity; promote technological transfer and development of humanities and social sciences and innovation; solving important issues in education "and partly in local tourism. By applied methods seek solutions to societal challenges and in accordance with the Innovation Strategy for intellectual development 2014 - 2020, the methodology will not be based on exclusion and opportunities of gradual periodization.³⁵

Studies related to the preservation and translation of culture, spirituality, nationality and memory and all the processes taking place in the Bulgarian village from the beginning of last century to today involves the use of various methods it uses theological science. We necessarily have to add others that are used in humanities, history, archeology, ethnology. For this reason, using current methods of ethnology. This use is possible in the field of theology first, because the object of our study is broader and is not fit into the narrow limits of theological research. Using a package of methods that ethnologists work colleagues as possible, because you can still find informants who survived the upheavals of the time. Discussions with them are useful in the search for religious identity of the people. Theologian also uses the interview and questionnaire in an attempt to reach the primary information whose media themselves natives of the village. It will be used method of the situation (case study) and are trying to expand our methodology in the same range with information about the village and the inhabitants of neighboring villages him. In this case for a very specific influence in the knowledge of the residents of neighboring

³⁵The innovative system for intelligent specialization, p. 32.

villages in connection with our knowledge. The symbiosis between residents of neighboring villages, which have taken place in the past and today for obvious reasons has weakened an impact on the information that we learn about rural life Vladichentsi. There will be interviews with people of different age, social, educational and professional status through the biographical method of interviews. It allows easy gradual targeting search problems or keeping his attention through additional issues of interest to the problems.

It will be applied and methods include monitoring, associated with field research in the village Vladichentsi and several other neighboring villages him.

In the process of working with local people will also be used informal conversations, meetings, and free talk centered around the theme of history and religious life in the village and the difference in life compared with current borders and internal dynamics. This difference reveals multiple layers of reflection on the lifestyle of people in the village at the beginning of last century, in comparison with their lives now.

4.6 The research method "Tree of problems (challenges)"

Through this project we provide a mechanism for coordination and functioning of local government and other scientific organization for the implementation of the project objectives "by applying a set of interrelated and complementary policies affecting one or several components of research". [NationalStrategy, p. 24] Important to identify the main problem nests in the deployment of the project is the application of methods "tree of problems (challenges)" and "tree of objectives". In the process of analyzing public challenge seek causes and consequences. For this purpose, we apply the method "tree of problems (challenges)," which

is a ranking of the problems (challenges) in hierarchical order and the causal connection between them.

Situation: Preserving Christian, cultural and historical heritage and its translation in a low threshold social life and high demographic crisis is a serious challenge to the scientific community and to researchers who have no previous experience on the territory of northwestern Bulgaria. At the outset of the programming period it is necessary to fix the problem (challenge) and the reasons leading to it. For this purpose of establishing tree problem (challenge), first determine which is the main problem (challenge). This methodological approach could be developed in approximately the following way: A major problem (challenge) - progressive obliteration of the hallmarks of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage, especially in rural areas in decline, resulting in the deletion of the signs of local identities. There is also a deficit of specialized personnel to resolve the problem (challenge).

After clarifying the basic problem, look for the reasons for it: Causes of the problem (challenge) - the location of the region underlying causes are demographic, social and economic nature, personnel and strategic: there are not enough local professionals and adequate strategy for solving the problem (challenge).

The methods used can be represented as follows: 1) Empirical methods (observation, induction, deduction, evaluation, etc.); 2) Audio-visual methods /audio, photo and video documentation/; 3) general scientific methods: analysis /discourse, analysis of historical objective, spirit and cultural situation, analyzes of behavior and thinking of the people and the like/, Synthesis, systematization, etc. ; 4) Special methods: "mapping" / "time cards" conceptual "maps"/ reflexive observation, narrative methods /interviews, free conversations, dialogues, etc./. The aim is through extensive research instruments to enter as fully as possible in the "world" of selected objects.

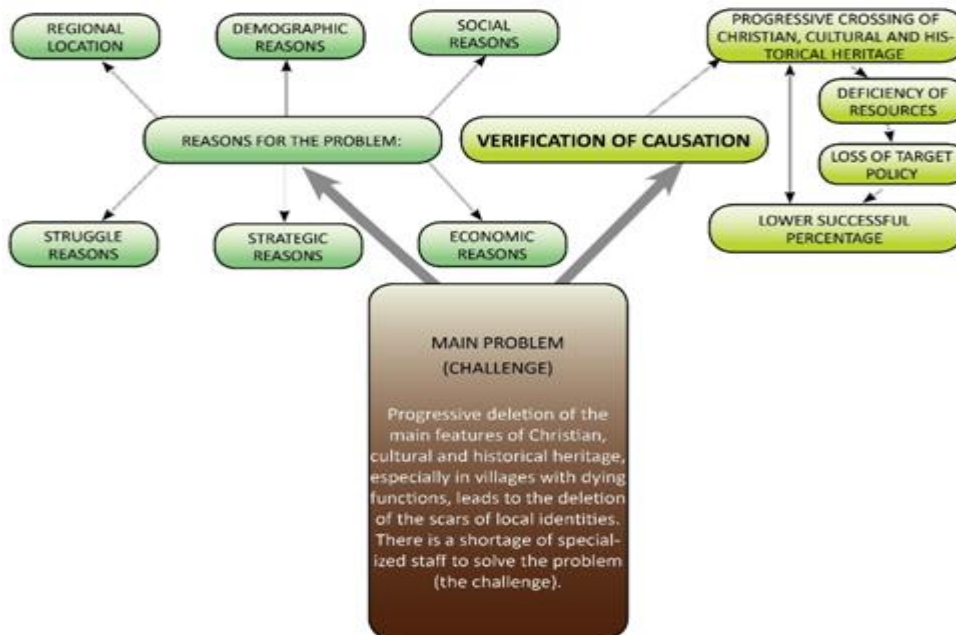


Figure 5: "Tree of the Problem (Challenge)"

After finding the cause of the problem, the verification of a causal relationship between them is optional; depending on her project will start in the right direction: causality unfolds in the direction of progressive run down the signs of Christian, cultural and historical heritage in the selected objects - to the shortage of personnel and financial resources, lack of targeted policies for scientific interaction, leading to the low success rate.

4.7 The research method "Tree of objectives"

The method scheme "tree of objectives" is based on the "tree of problems (challenges)" by paraphrasing the very problems (challenges). Links cause and effect of the "tree of problems (challenges)" is transformed to the connections

means, results. Thus the "tree of objectives" gives us a clear picture of the desired future situation and the means to achieve the expected results. For example, the main problem "progressive obliteration of the hallmarks of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage in Northwestern Bulgaria (Vidin Region), especially in rural areas in decline, resulting in deletion of the signs of local identity" became a common goal of the project, namely "Opening a strategy to keep the marks of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage of the region and translating local identities in the contemporary environment." This general objective can be achieved through the development of several specific program objectives with practical and theoretical nature.

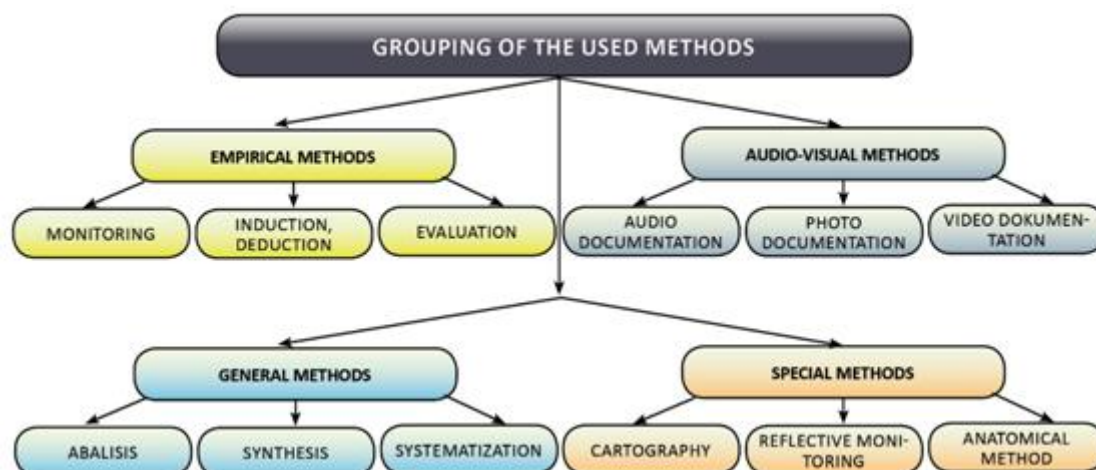


Figure 6: Grouping the methods used

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