

# Primary Observations on Complex Problems Related to the Phenomena of "Scholar Mobility" and "Mobility of Internally Meaningful Relations in a Small Community" in the Context of a Research Project

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**Abstract:** *The report examines aspects of scholar mobility in the context of the modern knowledge society as well as mobility in postmodern society. The study is centered in a specific field of work in a research project at the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", funded by the Ministry of Education and Science. The original intent of the project is to discuss in an interdisciplinary way different aspects of problems related to the preservation and translation of the Christian and cultural heritage of Vidin region and in particular of several villages in it. From this perspective, we are studying structural layers of the phenomena of scholar mobility and mobility of internally meaningful relations in small communities, and the impact they have.*

**Keywords:** knowledge society, mobility, scholar mobility, project, Vladichentsi, tradition

## 1. Understanding the relationship between society and science in the context of work on the project "Christian and cultural heritage of Northwestern Bulgaria – Strategies for preserving and translating local identities" (KP-06-OPR 05/6)

This study is based on my direct experience and my personal observations on the work of the interdisciplinary project team "Christian and cultural heritage of Northwestern Bulgaria – Strategies for preserving and translating local identities" (KP-06-OPR 05/6). As an external expert, and later as a member of the team had the opportunity to participate actively in project activities in field studies and teamwork.

Scientific honesty requires a detailed analysis in favor of the scientific output of the project, which affect primary observations on the complex of issues related to a topical theme – the theme of the phenomenon of scholar mobility in relation of the mobility of the internally meaningful relations occurring in the life of a small community like the village Vladichentsi<sup>1</sup> – the main subject in the study of the interdisciplinary team project.

<sup>1</sup> The object of the study is a village Vladichentsi – small, almost disappearing village in one of the poorest regions of the country – Northwestern Bulgaria (In northwestern Bulgaria "there are 622 villages, 16 of them have a population of less than 20 people. These are mainly villages in Vidin district. Other 76 villages (12,2%) operate with people in them between 20 and 100 people. In this category, besides villages of Vidin that are prevalent, there are those from Montana, Vratsa and Pleven. It concludes that after 10 years in NWR will be fully and partially depopulated approximately 2 – 3% and 12% of all villages in the region." See more in Koleva, D., D. Picard (ed.). villages for sale, p. 12).

Vladichentsi is a village is located around 40 km from the town. Vidin. Its inhabitants do not number more than 50 people – mostly elderly people (The number of residents in the village is not quite startling considering that in three villages in Vidin district residents are very less in number. Census in 2012 revealed that in village Granichak live 10 people in the village Shipikova neighborhood – 5 people and in Oreshets – 10 people. See more in Petkova, Camellia. The depopulation of Bulgarian village close: case Krushovitsa, Elin Pelin. – In: Villages for sale. OMDA, 2015, p. 127. In his study "Villages for sale or pattern for storage and care" M. Shishmanova indicated that in Vidin has a "3 villages without permanent residents." See more in Shishmanova, M. Villages for sale or pattern for storage and care, p. 157).

The object of the study is related to the general context in which occurs the historical development of life in the village Vladichentsi. As belonging to Vidin, its depopulation is an important indicator, typical of most villages in this region. "Vidin district, where most of the villages that we consider has the least population in the country – less than 98,000 people. At the end of 2013 the population of Vidin district was 97,536 people, according to final data of the territorial statistical office. The demographic Vidin region ranks last in population after all other Bulgarian regions "

(According to 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). Vidin region is one of those has the highest depopulation, along with the districts of Gabrovo, Veliko Tarnovo, Vratsa. Over the last 10 years the population in Vidin region decreased by 24%, or nearly 31,000 people, according to the Regional statistical office – Vidin. The majority of rural villages are inhabited Output less than 500 people, this applies primarily to the villages in border communities. In Vidin region live only 23,8% of residents of the Northwest region. With minimal values (around and below 20 g./km<sup>2</sup>) is the geographic population density in municipalities Chuprene, George Damyanovo, Bojnitca, Makresh and others. Only 15% of the population are under 18, while in contrast, 26% are over the age of 65, leading to the conclusion that

### 1.1. Do we have reason to talk about contemporary knowledge society?

In recent decades, the thought of Francis Bacon "Knowledge is power" gained unprecedented deep and comprehensive sense in the direction of transformation and upgrading of the material world, nature; society; individual. As a result, developing a new society in which basic capital factor for the development solder between institutions, science and business knowledge; born in the knowledge society. This new society is also defined as information society, since it is made possible by the rapid development of information and communication technologies. The main features of the information society are: determining role of knowledge, information and technology; prevalence of mental labor and services; lifelong learning; economic, political and social globalization and others.<sup>2</sup> In terms of this project this complex of issues can be placed in a global context: we have reason to talk about the relationship between knowledge, science and society in a closely localized perimeter of research? These are the objects of study in northwestern Bulgaria – villages Vladichentsi, Mali Drenovets, Izvor and Darzhanitsa. When to this object of research add two nearby monasteries – Izvorski and Dobridolski, then the field of study of the links between society, knowledge and science expand and in view of the element "religion." This extremely interesting field acquires breadth of interdisciplinary study. It is a problem of discussion in the present study.

### 1.2. Scientific knowledge in the context of the studied problems of the project

the population in the area will continue to decrease. (Regional Statistical Office – Vidin: [www.vidin.government.bg](http://www.vidin.government.bg)). About the number of residents in Northwestern Bulgaria, particularly in Vidin, see more in Budzheva, Romyana. Dying villages in the northwestern border (parallel between the fate and condition of Border Bulgarian and Serbian villages). – In: Villages for sale. OMDA, 2015, p. 139).

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 for 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 not be villages. Moreover this finding could be attributed to the village Vladichentsi. Regionally, the proportion of persons aged 65 and over was highest in areas Vidin (28,9%), Gabrovo (27,9%), Kyustendil and Lovech – by 26,4%. The data and the ratio between persons of working age to older people is critical. According to the same data of the NSI "the most favorable ratio in Vidin (69,2%), Lovech (65,7%) and Gabrovo (64,6%)."

Over the next 30 years is unlikely to happen big leaps in the development of Bulgarian village, and that means a process of slow fading and dying of the life and spirituality in it. See more in Nikolova, Ivelina. Vladykino village Vladichentsi. S., 2018, pp. 31 – 35.

<sup>2</sup> Dentchev, Stoyan, Dimitar Christozov. Information and information brokerage. Sofia: AI "Prof. Marin Drinov ", 2012, p. 12.

This project aims at preserving the Christian, cultural and historical heritage of northwestern Bulgaria and translation into modern environment. This is the current challenge of increasing interest to the scientific community and to the Bulgarian public. It is no secret that unlike other areas of the country, Northwestern Bulgaria is facing extremely serious challenges: according to recent data, it is the area with the lowest regional domestic product per capita in the entire European Union. It is clear that the depopulation of the villages is a serious threat to Bulgarian spirituality and culture and at the same time it is a problem that the scientific community faces with an extremely high degree of anxiety.

In view of these facts, we aim to focus our attention on a societal challenge of regional importance. Our main research question is: How to build a strategy for the preservation and translation of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage of Northwest Bulgaria? For this purpose, we have selected several typical cases from the Vidin region, from which we can reflexively document the results of the studies related to the Christian and cultural-historical fabric of the region by means of theoretical analyzes and by audio-visual means. In interdisciplinary terms, intersection points arise in the problem of the way of life, culture, tradition, memory, customs, practices, etc, settled in the spaces and material traces of the objects surveyed. The answer to the question asked will look at these signs of local identities, Christian and cultural projections of the objects, which lead us to visible traces that are theoretically and practically discussed. It is important for us not only to reflect the forms of transmission of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage, but also to look for strategies for its survival and translation today. Some of these strategies are related to the abandonment of theoretical, audio-visual and practical traces of the research sites that mark the paths for preserving Christianity, culture and history, and the contemporary translation of the scars of local identities today. These strategies we call "strategies for storing and translating Christian, cultural and historical heritage."

According to the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization 2014 – 2020, the focus of the scientific potential in the country, the focus of the research and the strategies for innovation development in Northwestern Bulgaria, namely in the Vidin region, were the subject of discussions and analyzes in different scientific and specialist sectors. Unfortunately, however, the practical results of their development do not take into account the necessary progress.<sup>3</sup> One of the major problems in science and scientific research is the longstanding relationship to humanities as a phenomenon with a difficult to recognize practical and applied nature. If humanitarian research and innovation is seen as a social factor responsible for the development of public life as a whole, solving the challenges

<sup>3</sup> In the Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization 2014 – 2020 we read the following: "In the region are included the districts of Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Lovech and Pleven. According to the Government's targeted policy to support the development of the Northwest region (with the lowest GDP per capita across the EU), the capacity for intelligent specialization in three thematic areas of ISIS – Mechatronics and Clean Technologies, Healthy Way Life and Biotechnology "and" New Technologies in Creative and Recreational Industries" (p. 33).

of poor cultural and spiritual expression could be made much easier.

As far as the studies on the villages of the Vidin region are concerned, in the recent past a small part of them has been subject to historical, archeological and ethnographic interest, lacking any interdisciplinarity. A small number of villages are also in the research field of the highly profiled specialists. There is also a low efficiency of research applications and low participation of external specialists.

To the known studies on the subject we can mention the following (arranged in chronological order): Tzouhlev, D. History of the Bulgarian Church. S., 1911; Stoin, Vassil. Folk songs from Timok to Vita. S., 1928; Tzouhlev, D. History of Vidin and its district – Vidin, Kulsko, Belogradchik, Lomsko, Oryahovsko, Vratsa, Ferdinand, Berkovsko and Krajna. S., 1932; Bonchev, B. The Vidin Book. Part I – IV. Vidin, 1946; Stoykov, G., Vassilev, A. Expedition in Northwestern Bulgaria. S., 1956; Loukash, D. Vidin and the Vidin Sandzhak in the 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. S., 1975; Nikolova, M. Folk Costumes from Vidin County. S., 1983; Kostov, Boris. Dimovo: History or event history. S., FE, 1986; Kanitz, F. Dunavska Bulgaria and the Balkan. Volume 1. S., 1995; Balabanov, P., P. Boyadjiev, N. Tuleshkov. Fortress construction on the Bulgarian lands. S., 2000; Trifonov, Ivan and others. Cooperative "Saedinenie" Dimovo. Vidin: Express ZM, 2003; Kostov, Boris. Izvorski Monastery "Uspenie Bogorodichno" in time and us. Shumen: Sun. Nikolov et al., 2006; Minkov, B. Vidin as it was. Vidin, 2003; Ivanov, R. The Roman Cities in Bulgaria. S., 2007; Mila Dushanova, Slavcho Nikolov. Shumen: Slavcho Nikolov & Co., 2007; Atanasov, Hr. The Ottoman Periphery: Society and Economy in Vidin and the Region in the 18th Century. S., 2008; Vassilev, Jordan. The temple "St. kings and equals apostoli Konstantin and Helena, Dimovo, Vidin Diocese: A Short History. Oversight. Plovdiv: Revival, 2011; Lishkov, Hr. Old Vidin chronicles. Vidin, 2013; Vasilev, Yordan N. Dobridolski monastery "Holy Trinity". Plovdiv: Blakema, 2013; Zikov, P. The True History of the Principality of Vidin. S., 2014; Ivanov, R. Ratiaria and its territory. Volume 1, S., 2014; Readings, E. Traveling. S., 2014; Candlelight over the time: 80 years of community center "Paisii Hilendarski", Dimovo / Composition. Traditional Poetry Competition "Dobrogled": Collection of poems. Dimovo: "Paisii Hilendarski-1927", 2015; Kovachev, R. Inventory of the Vidin Sandzhak from the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: Economic and Military-Administrative Structure. S., 2016. The above-mentioned writings reveal not only a deficiency in a variety of research fields and topicality in the studied subject, but also a scientific fragmentation and lack of interdisciplinarity. However, the present project offers a returning to the culture and spirituality of the Vidin region as an attempt to see it from a different (interdisciplinary) research corner.

Listed writings show not only a deficit of various research fields and topics of interest in the studied issues, but scientific fragmentation and lack of interdisciplinarity. However, this project offers recurring to the culture and spirituality of Vidin region as an attempt to be viewed and analyzed from different (interdisciplinary) research angle. The deficit of knowledge in this area is a good opportunity

to create a direct mobility of researchers from the university circle who come into contact with specialists from the narrow profiled units in the corresponding centers in the municipality of Vidin.

### 1.3. Globalization and transition as objects of the project

Knowledge society and consequently the economy based on knowledge, are the fruit while incentive for globalization – the process of increasing economic, social, technical, political and cultural relations between countries, organizations and people. The development of the knowledge society and globalization have a revolutionary effect on research, which is as follows: changes in the modes of production, transfer and application of scientific knowledge; changes in the ways and forms of scientific communication; new forms of organization of knowledge networks, modules, outsourcing, etc; changes in policies and organization of research (cooperation, internationalization).<sup>4</sup>

In connection with the study of global processes on a global level, and in particular the selected objects of study, the next question emerges: What and how to be saved in the memory of residents of small towns in the increased mobility of a different nature? Since the process of constant changes and transformations changes the lives of people to an extremely fast pace, have we a reason to talk about stability of tradition as a subject to enhanced interdisciplinary research of a team with a strong total interdisciplinary mobility? To these and other serious questions we could not answer in a few sentences. They deserve special attention in this study and we could not separate them.

Many want to preserve Bulgarian village and the unique spirit and traditions in it because it is patriotic, national, a Bulgarian identity. When we talk about patriotism we should clarify that we consider the following meanings: "birthplace", "homeland," "motherland". This is where our roots go where they performed the strongest generic links, where persist unbroken stand of family memory. However, different economic, migration and other processes over the last thirty years unleashed a number of occasions to doubt the purity and harshness stored in memory and tradition. The Bulgarian village is where the primary strengths connections between people and between people and the place itself are preserved. The village is our patriotic nest, which transmits the strongest emotions carried over "from the birth parents and all others born in the same place in the same country".<sup>5</sup> Here are the distinctive roots and sensitive religiosity of the people. They she necessarily refracted through the love of family and clan, to the nation and national identity. Perhaps for this reason in many religious customs and practices in the village are included elements of lifestyle of people from their everyday life. They do not even pay attention to it and consider everything completely natural. In this sense, it has potential for another type of mobility – mobility of traditional ways of life in the very closed community. This translation implies extremely enhanced multiplicity of

<sup>4</sup> Parizhkova, L. New forms of organization of knowledge. S., Za bukвите – O pismeneh, 2014, pp. 57 – 60, 83 – 115.

<sup>5</sup> Chavdarova-Kostova, Siyka. Intercultural education. S., 2001, p. 190.

identities, which in turn, in the context of contemporary global changes, causes increased interest of a number of interdisciplinary studies, mainly within the current project.

We should not overlook the question of whether we have sufficient grounds to talk about different types of identities (religious identity, national identity, etc.), which overlap in meaning and significance with the concept of "patriotism", understood as "love of family, genus the nation who are carriers of national identity (national identity), national values and historical memory."<sup>4</sup> Could identity be grasped as a mobile concept that triggers questions about transitions, development, and changing static to some ideal dynamics? A similar set of questions is dictated by the ambition of the interdisciplinary team to cover, justify and discuss the core content of such phenomena.

In a very natural way mobility is associated with translation, transition, change and a number of other challenges of a different nature, which especially in a small village like Vladichentsi, which is the main subject of research project, means call for the protection of a number of distinctive practices. For this very reason it is natural to see the link between the concepts of "memory", "genetic memory", "religious memory", "past", "origin", "history" in the context of the idea of mobility, interdisciplinary and translational.

An interesting discussion considered by team "Theology", is related to the ability to preserve the religious identity in the Bulgarian village in the presence of such a large stream of daily changes. We should add the demographic factor and many other components that due to the specifics of the settlement are happening locally. The internal stagnation of many social and cultural markers significantly weakens the pillars of national and religious identity, speeds changes which hit on the identity strength and meaning. This in turn enhances the mobility of all key mechanisms that multiply its impact on many other areas in the life of a small closed society.

#### 1.4. What is the meaningful of the terms "transition" and "transformation"?

Today many suggest that the so-called "Transition" in our country has done, but in practice this is not so. Or maybe similar illusion is created by the dynamics of the times in which we live and which in any way reminds us that change is the most important thing nowadays. It makes us constantly feel insecure, clueless and ignorant. This situation creates numerous transformations that reasonably begin in larger cities, then are transferred to smaller settlements. But the opposite is also true: the beginning of the profound changes occurs first in villages that are gradually impoverished due to economic, political, social, and demographic reasons and hence unlocks processes for which most of the people are not prepared. [That's why these transformations have if not severe, yet significant impacts on the most important factors for Bulgarian heritage: faith, nationality, tradition.

At the same time, however, we understand that many transformations in society, be it large or small, are impossible to succeed if the people of this community are still looking to rethink memory and wish to translate its messages in all spheres of their lives. Since a number of

reasons the village is the first small community where this process is possible, it becomes a key medium for ignoring the effects of the transformation. And here is the paradox – if people in cities in larger communities and even large nations are the best target for penetration of many transformations because they provide countless open channels, it little society, which preserves the species of memory, remains locked for the full impact of the transformations. It is the storage of collective memory, national and religious, precisely because it is the root of all, that for one reason or another has distracted and lost its inner motive in the large settlement. Pronounced functioning of the full-blooded life in the city is completely drowned in the small village for obvious reasons. We could assume that even if we attempt these people to be attracted to the way of life that unfolds in big cities, the results would not be even half similar to those observed in urban areas. Somehow closed society manages to preserve its preventive mechanisms despite the transformations and hence trigger the action of many barriers, not only to preserve itself but also to make itself invulnerable to some degree of their influence. This process is even more visible in small villages.

For example, in the collective consciousness of Bulgarians there are general ideas, schemes and systems, experienced, learned or heard in the past, and thus multiple channels were created which built the national identity. Similarly there is the question of religious memory. Even in a small village, such as village Vladichentsi where there has never been built a temple and people are completely illiterate in religious sense, they guard their religious roots and knowledge, although we realize that this religious knowledge is not correct. By oral tradition, practice and experience the religious memory of the population, cleared of all constructs and bordering very closely with domestic and pagan Christianity, is guarded because this same memory protects the population as Bulgarian Orthodox.

## 2. Meaning and limits of the concept of "mobility"

Since the 1980s the mobility of people and "the experience of diversity," which it includes, are considered an essential feature of postmodern society. Mobility in the 1980s is understood and studied in relation to concepts such as nomadism, wandering, travel and migration; identity: nomadic and multiple, individuation; hybridity; interaction between time and space; continuity and discontinuity; roots, borders, territories; center, peripherals, marginality and transgression; cultural differences; social transformations and more.

### 2.1. Physical and virtual mobility

Today limiting the consideration of mobility only in the physical aspect does not reflect the complexity of the phenomenon. Mobility today can be viewed by terms such as "fluid schedules," in which the individual moves in "zigzag"; "archipelago" (in geographical, temporal and spatial sense) as an image of the movement between "islands" of varying activity, as opposed to concentricity of continuous habitat; different ways of mobility (moving in

space, but with the help of (virtual) access to various spaces through the Internet, etc; "infomobility" (information + mobility), which means that access to information is becoming increasingly important. In other words, nowadays fluidity, continuity – physical, technological, in terms of time, becomes a fundamental principle, which is mostly result of the incredible development of the ICT.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.2. Mobility as a way of life in a small enclosed community

Since the 1990s, with the launch of the digital revolution and unprecedented globalization, the term "mobility" gets new meanings and uses and gradually gets away from the original meaning of physical mobility. Secondly, it includes mobility of people, goods and capital, but also of social practices, information, ideas and knowledge. Mobility in the broadest sense is becoming a feature of modern society and not only characterizes life in modern times, but itself is a way of life. In no small degree this applies to lifestyle and ongoing mobility in the small settlement, such as village Vladichentsi – the main object of the research project KP-06-OPR 05/6.

In the 20th century speedily happen several changes in Bulgarian agriculture that give their lasting effects even today. Our grandparents remember collectivization of agriculture, which comes after the start of "building a centrally-planned (socialist) economy. The second change is in the early 1990s in the transition to a market economy coupled with the reform of the agrarian sector".<sup>7</sup> According to specialists "the changes in agricultural policy in Bulgaria in mid-century are aimed at enhanced (and somewhat violent) collectivization and mechanization and increasing the productivity and quality of output."<sup>8</sup> These and other aspects of the topic would be subject to special surveys. Without engaging with opinion in its detailed study (which is unnecessary in this case), we will try to briefly outline the contours of this segment of the various transformations that are ongoing and continue to occur in our village.

As elsewhere in the country, in our village collectivization proved a turning point in its development in the second half of the 20th century. On the one hand, it made the village part of the vast family of the farmers in the country and built a completely new type of land for its lifestyle and planned economy. Villagers were transformed from private owners in public workers type laborers who participate in a joint cooperative farm. The transition to this new situation was for many sharp and villagers were forced to adjust to this

transition, to adapt to the new way of life and stop being farmers. Some researchers see in this loss of values and the cooperation itself is recognized as "unique and lasting chronotope of social energies".<sup>9</sup>

Probably part of the people in Bulgarian villages had confidence in communist ideology in connection with collectivization. However, this does not solve the problems in the Bulgarian village and in particular in our village. If the land is united in large blocks, agricultural work is mechanized, agriculture is built on scientific bases, some partial results can be achieved. For the ordinary residents of the village Vladichentsi, however, this is a change, that leads to corruption and poverty. Their main problem is to overcome the worst results of the intruding practice. Many of them can not survive the departure of the animals and the land. And it can not be otherwise, because "cooperation on the ground broke the umbilical cord between the peasant and the land".<sup>10</sup> It is "the point from which everything begins and where it ends".<sup>11</sup> Heavy political interference in the rural socio-economic life remains a serious trauma in many of the villagers, and according to a number of stories, leading to the death of older people who have been deprived of the lifestyle they have become accustomed. It is understandable why this intervention raises attempts of resistance and strategies to prevent its spread in the village. Many rightly describe in a few words this historic slice of life in the Bulgarian village: "This rural idyll turned into a terrifying rural curse. Life in the country was no longer a gift, but actually possible or where it seemed the most terrible punishment."<sup>12</sup> All this literally defeated, ruined and left orphaned legacy, dreams and future of the people. They were deprived of the most cherished. Most are brutally deprived of their future, they also lost forever their past, which somehow has kept the history of the village Vladichentsi. This transformation, outstripping people's minds pace, literally transformed the face of the pretty and peaceful village. The joy of traditions, festivals, rituals and family celebrations, that life was rewarding them so generously, gradually worn out and was replaced with sorrow and shame.

We can imagine what it meant to the villagers to stop being peasants and to get used to the changes. They understand very well that this convention is misleading, because they can only adjust to the new lifestyle. The convening of this way of life for many of the village was impossible. Rural residents refused to adapt to the new situation. Rural cooperative was stigmatized as the greatest possible harm to villagers, as a symbol of waste of resources, because the collective home was totally publicly disgraced.

<sup>6</sup> Ivancheva, Lyudmila. The mobility of researchers as a prerequisite for professional development, realization of the "fifth freedom" and successfully build the European Research Area. – In: Strategies of educational and scientific policy, 2010/4, pp. 348 – 367. Karshakova, Rada. Scientific communication. Ruse: Ruse University "Angel Kanchev", 2009, pp. 5 – 92.

<sup>7</sup> Rangelova, Rositsa. Agriculture as a factor for change in the Bulgarian village. – In: Villages for sale, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> According to the recognition of the historian E. Nikova only PA during his management care for Bulgarian village – as invested capital and politics (Nikova, E. Dying of Balkan village. Lecture on March 25, 2014 Institute of Balkan Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, American Center, City Library, Sofia).

<sup>9</sup> See more in Mizov, M. Cooperative – special hronotopos social energies. – In: The building in the Bulgarian village – bright past and uncertain future. Troyan, 2013, pp. 27 – 39.

<sup>10</sup> Naydenova, Penka. Supply and demand of goods "village" or betrayal of national wealth? – In: Villages for sale. OMDA, S., 2015, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Nedelcheva, Tanya. Fundamentally rootedness in Bulgarian village. – In: Villages for sale, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> Mizov, M. A quarter-selling Bulgarian village. – In: Villages for sale, p. 59.

From this and other examples we see how the idea of mobility is gradually replacing the concept of territory for fixed territorial social, professional and other groups. A concept of fluidity, changeability of solid boundaries in all areas of life – career, personal life, leisure, science and business. Paradoxically, the "center" marginalizes and crossing and blurring of borders, creating a temporary "territories" became common and prestigious. The distance is not measured by miles, but by the quality of communication: two scientists who live on both ends of the world and have a good scientific communication are better linked than researchers who work at the same institution but do not talk to each other.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.3. Academic mobility and scholar mobility

#### 2.3.1. Importance and use of concepts

Mobility is a general principle of modern society. It includes academic mobility and in particular scholar mobility. The term "academic mobility" has different interpretations that affect the one hand, the subjects of this mobility, the other – the period of mobility. According to a closer understanding academic mobility covers only scholars and doctoral students. The wider understanding of the term includes students. The period of mobility is typically defined as temporary; as defined by UNESCO term "academic mobility" is "a period of learning, teaching and / or research in a country other than the country of residence of the student / teaching."<sup>14</sup> Thus excludes permanent establishment in another country, which is essentially a migration. Therefore, some authors propose the term be extended as "academic mobility and migration." Others talk about "mobility" to cover the different types.<sup>15</sup>

For the purposes of this article we will use the term "scholar mobility" to limit both the subject of mobility (only scholars) and the period of relocation (limited in time and not permanent / migration). According to the definition of UNESCO academic mobility implies a "period of training, teaching and / or research in a country other than the country of residence of the student or scholar. This period is of limited duration and after it ends, the student or the scholar returned to his country. It includes physical mobility and virtual mobility".<sup>16</sup> In virtual mobility, with no real physical presence, a scholar can work together with colleagues and use their scientific infrastructures. The mobility of scientists today is becoming a fundamental factor in the development of successful science: a tool for education and training,

dissemination of scientific knowledge and enhancing competitiveness.<sup>17</sup>

#### 2.4. Specifics of scholar mobility in Project KP-06-OPR 05/6 from interdisciplinary perspective

Scholar mobility is not a new phenomenon, nor is a new idea of the university as a place of scientific communication and education, open to people of different nationalities. Nowadays though, it is a qualitatively different phenomenon, a result of globalization and the knowledge society; it is also of unprecedented amount: in 2005 worldwide scholars working abroad are close to 90,000, while in 2015 they are nearly 125,000.<sup>18</sup> There is an increasing competition to attract scholars internationally due to the increase in economic value and prestige of knowledge, respectively profession of teaching. In the ideas of neo-liberal economics mobility of scholars is a requirement and guarantee their professional competitiveness.

In the narrow range in connection with this project we can mark briefly the following important details: the research team consists of well-established specialists in the field of theology, ethnology, linguistics, study of science, history and archeology. They have been working together for years, with their scientific research covering issues both in the areas mentioned and in the field of interdisciplinary research. The members of the team are in close contact with specialists from different European universities, which further contributes to access new knowledge and specialized scientific literature. Research team specialists are involved in various national and international projects with a theme similar to the project theme in which they partner with both EU countries and universities outside of the project.

The team of the project has been selected according to a number of indicators: professional field (theology, ethnology, linguistics, study of science, history and archeology), preliminary experience in similar type of projects, number and timeliness of previous scientific publications in connection with this project. The interdisciplinary nature of the project implies the widest possible expansion of the selected areas, but not the dispersion in the selected research directions. Depending on this, the team includes scientists from the basic organization: theologians, historians, archaeologists, ethnologists, archivists, social anthropology specialists and others. Their previous experience in similar projects ensures the success of this project. Most of the team belongs to the common-cultural project "The Transforming Village" to the FIF of the PU, which is the starting point for the deployment of this project.

Of importance are those scientists who know the region (Northwest Bulgaria, Vidin region) and have a preliminary experience in working with local specialists. The team members' publications in the project topic have a narrow profile, reflected in referenced publications and quoted by SCOPUS, with an impact factor or an impacted rank. Each

<sup>13</sup> Ivancheva, Lyudmila. Op. cit., pp. 348 – 367. Karshakova, Rada. Op. cit., pp. 5 – 92.

<sup>14</sup> Balasooriya, Ch. et al. Academic mobility and migration. – In: Academic mobility. Nina Maadad, Malcolm Tight (Eds.). International Perspectives on Higher Education Research (Volume 11). Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2014, pp. 117 – 137.

<sup>15</sup> Murphy-Lejeune, Elizabeth. The Student Experience of Mobility, a Contrasting Score. – In: Students, Staff and Academic Mobility in Higher Education. Mike Byram, Fred Dervin (Eds.). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, pp. 12 – 26.

<sup>16</sup> Albuquerque, Alexandra. Academic Mobility: a non-Machiavellian Means to Global Citizenship, p. 2. Available at: [http://recipp.ipp.pt/bitstream/10400.22/2974/1/COM\\_AlexandraAlbuquerque\\_2013.pdf](http://recipp.ipp.pt/bitstream/10400.22/2974/1/COM_AlexandraAlbuquerque_2013.pdf). Last visited on 28.06.2016.

<sup>17</sup> Ivancheva, Lyudmila. Op. cit., pp. 348 – 367. Karshakova, Rada. Op. cit., pp. 5 – 92.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

of them participated in at least one such project; some of which were successful project managers.

## 2.5. Benefits and results of the scholar mobility in the project KP-06-OPR 05/6

The benefits and results of the scholar mobility in the project KP-06-OPR 05/6 are mostly related to the socio-cultural and scientific spheres.

### 2.5.1. In the socio-cultural and scientific spheres

Socio-cultural benefits of mobility of researchers include knowledge and exchange of various cultural and social models and mainly understanding of others, which in turn leads to a fruitful and smooth professional communication between scientists in an international environment. The mobility of scientists leads to the creation of international groups which are essentially unique temporary social groups that influence both the scholars and the scientific unit – host. After returning to their university these scholars have already changed socio-culturally and bring this change in their permanent colleagues.<sup>19</sup>

Regarding to the project, it is directly linked to work on questionnaires and conducting research at three levels: anthropological, archival and relating to the history of the Orthodox church. This operation involves processing theoretical analysis and field materials, analyzing and summarizing results, and archiving field materials. At this level of the project the team leaders, the members as well as the external collaborators actively participate.

An important sector of the work of the team is the sector "Workshops and Seminars", which includes workshops, preparatory meetings for field studies and summary of results. At this stage, there is an approved strategy for conservation and translation of the Christian, cultural and historical heritage of northwestern Bulgaria. A scientific seminar (roundtable) was organized to publicize the preliminary results of research among the academic community, as well as workshops to prepare the report for the second stage and the overall report. Actively involved are the project manager and coordinator, all team managers and team members. At this stage it is expected to clarify the obligations and responsibilities to each of the project participants, to design a theoretical framework of questionnaires, to verify hypotheses, and to prepare the terrain results for scientific publications. It is also essential to elaborate a strategy on how to collaborate with local authorities, disseminate the results of field studies and carry out meaningful research report on the results of operations of the first phase of the project and comprehensive report.

### 2.5.2. Professional and personal benefits

Professional and personal benefits of mobility of researchers is associated with the expansion of their scientific worldview out of the comfort zone and provoking fresh ideas, as well as exchange of experiences and concepts, including tacit knowledge through direct contact in particular working

context.<sup>20</sup> Consequently mobility includes and requires specific qualities of the scientist: practicality, entrepreneurship, market orientation skills, knowledge management projects; flexibility, adaptability – both on a professional and on a personal basis; cooperativity in different academic environment; intercultural communication; self-reflection – adequate self-assessment and self-presentation (professionally and personally). Skills that scientists develop during their professional mobility can be summarized as: 1) the skills necessary for working and communicating with other people ("people skills"); 2) skills to the business performance of the individual himself ("self-sufficiency / self-efficacy skills"). In the first group are: communication skills, including intercultural, language skills, ability to work with information and communication technologies. In the second group are: skills for problem solving, organizational skills, abilities to reason, confidence, adaptability.<sup>21</sup>

### 2.5.3. Results of the active scholar mobility in the project, together with local specialists, in the municipality of Vidin and municipality of Dimovo

Expected results from the project implementation should be understood as a dynamic process in the short and long term, focusing on the interaction of three groups of participants: scholars, local specialists and external experts. As a result of the study, working theoretical strategies with practical applicability to preserve and translate the Christian, cultural and historical heritage are expected to be derived; innovative practices for interactions between local sectors and a basic organization for the purposes of the project. Such interaction will increase the attention of the scientific and the Bulgarian public to the Vidin region as an attractive center for up-to-date scientific research related to the Christian, cultural and historical heritage; the prestige of the Bulgarian village will rise as a center of culture and spirituality in the region. In this sense the beneficiary of the project is the Bulgarian society in the Vidin region, represented by the local spiritual, educational and cultural institutions. In this way, there is also a potential to continue the research after the project is completed: participation in Horizon 2020, various operational programs and others.

### 2.5.4. Contribution to solution of problems, related to the societal challenges

The contribution of the project is profiled in different sectors of public life in the Vidin region: education, culture, Christianity, history, etc. It mainly consists in the practical application of the strategy for preserving and translating this intangible wealth on a local basis (in schools, in the work of the Roma, in the DA, Vidin, in the municipal sectors, in the local libraries, in the tourism sector and etc). The project will help to develop models and technologies of inter-unit interaction, accumulate scientific knowledge and outline perspectives for its use.

<sup>20</sup> Siemers, Olga. Skills for here or to take away? Outcomes of academic mobility for expatriate researchers. – In: Journal of International Mobility, 2016/1 (№ 4), pp. 28 – 51.

<sup>21</sup> Stoeva, Liliana. Communication in science. – In: 40 years Wissenschaftslehre in Bulgaria. Center for Science Studies and History of Science. Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2008, pp. 175 – 190.

<sup>19</sup> Ivancheva, Lyudmila. Op. cit., pp. 348 – 367.

In particular, we can identify the following units on which the resolution of the public challenge reflects:

- 1) "New knowledge and scientific results" sector: Contribution to building new knowledge in interdisciplinary terms (the fields: theology, history and archeology, and ethnology). The development of specialized scientific studies reflecting the societal challenge and strategies for storing and translating local identities. They reflect the practice and apply the theoretical results of the project.
- 2) "Local specialists" sector: contribution to the work of RIM-Vidin, DA-Vidin, libraries and community centers, schools, cultural and educational institutions. Contributions extend at the level of support and improvement of the work process, facilitating the access to databases, building interdisciplinary relations, filling in a shortage of theoretical research, practical application of project results, etc.
- 3) Rural Tourism and Pilgrimage Tourism: In terms of social life in the region, the results will contribute to improving work in the sectors related to local rural and pilgrimage tourism in Vidin Municipality and Dimovo Municipality.

### 3. New forms of scientific communication in the process of scholar mobility

Among the new forms of scientific communication in the context of scholar mobility stand electronic journals and social media. The emergence of the Internet made possible the creation of electronic journals, which are versions of print ones or original. Their advantages are that they are easily accessible; with the possibility of an interactive dialogue between the user and the author through his email address, website, etc; with additional services such as data selection and navigation in one or more documents and more.<sup>22</sup>

Social media are mediated communication environments and provide new and practically unlimited possibilities for super accessible, diverse and flexible web-based communication.<sup>23</sup> They are defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that are based on ideological and technology of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."<sup>24</sup> They become a place for new communication, which is characterized by dynamics, intensity, speed of sharing and feedback; synthetic media, synchronous and asynchronous forms of information sharing; informality of communication and others. The model of communication "one to many" changes to the model "many to many" – from monologue to dialogue. A dialogue is seen as "obstetric" knowledge – according to Socrates tradition, and as a

condition of self-awareness and making the connection with the world – according to Martin Buber.<sup>25</sup>

The Internet is a natural and extremely favorable environment for scientific communication. Particularly important are the options for spontaneous creation of new scientific contacts and research networks, which gives a new interpretation of the iconic concept of "invisible college".

#### Challenges to mobility

Along with the benefits there are a number of challenges to mobility:

- Social challenges – adapting and integrating foreign social and cultural environment; loss of familiar and new social contacts; settling the family in a new place or parting with it; domestic problems, etc;
- Impact on the professional identity delay in his career due to differences in the organization of the scientific process and adapting to different academic environment;
- Appearance of inequalities in the distribution of scientists (geographical, social, gender, nationality, etc). Because of increasing market, competitive principle of formation of research centers and clusters. The possibility that some scientists to be more mobile than others (because of their personal and professional qualities; socio-economic development of the country of domicile, including educational institutions, etc), produces inequality and privilege.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Dentchev, Stoyan. IT and challenges facing the nation. – In: Annual of section "Informatics", Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, Volume 1, 3 – 12, 2008, pp. 3 – 12.

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