

MATERNAL SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY IN SOCIAL RISK SITUATION. PSYCHOSOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS

M. GOTEA¹ M. BUSUIOC²

Abstract: *This paper aims to explore some relevant aspects of the intra family dynamics, to reveal the meanings and analyse the evolution of maternal single-parent families that are socially vulnerable, as it is described in the scholarly literature, and to present the specific characteristics of this family type. It also includes some results of a qualitative study carried out among single parent families in social risk situation, from Brasov County. One of the main ideas of the study is that the lack of future prospects and the restricted possibilities to escape from difficult situation, in which they are, induce to single-parents the feeling of fatality, perpetuating undesirable coping styles.*

Key words: *vulnerable groups, single-parent family, single-mother family.*

1. Introduction

Within the multitude of family models emerging in post-modern society, single-parent family has become a well-known and widespread social entity, which now is considered to be normality.

Racoceanu et al. (2010) summarizes its characteristic traits: “from a sociological point of view, the single-parent family can be defined as a social group constituted on the basis of family relationship between a parent and the child or his children, group characterized by affective states, aspirations and values”. This type of family is a social unit where there is only conjugal relationship independent of the parent, so Stănciulescu (1997) proposes using the term parental family.

Investigating single-parent families is difficult to achieve due to the hardship of professionals to enter the intimate sphere of domestic space, but also due to the complexity of family dynamics and, not least, subjectivity statements to which they have access. However, we find a series of research studies and papers that are focused on analysing different dimensions of single-parent families, such as: the effects of single-parent families on children (Iluţ, 2005), behavioural problems of adolescents coming from single-parent families (Devi, Duhan and Sangwan, 2009), the quality of life of these families (Iluţ, 2009), analyses of specific characteristics of different types of single-parent

¹ Transilvania University of Braşov, Faculty of Sociology and Communication, mihaela.gotea@unitbv.ro.

² Social Services Association SCUT, Braşov.

households (Strong, Devault and Sayad, 1998; Heath, 1999; Ştefan, 2006), stress suffered by single mothers and their sources of support (Cakir, 2010; Berger, Magnuson and Osborne, 2012), conditions of success in situations of single-parent family (Olson and Haynes, 1993).

In this context, it is important to emphasize that the distinction between functional single-parent families and those in social risk situation. Although it may seem hard to believe, there are functional single-parent families in which one parent has the ability to manage difficult situations and adopt effective strategies to deal with the problems they face (Olson and Haynes, 1993).

Researches, as stipulated by Cristina Ştefan (2006), show that economic problem is not so acute for functional single-parent family, and the parent's educational level is high enough to ensure success in the labour market.

Instead, research of single-parent families in social risk is necessary for social assistance, because this family does not have enough resources and needs support. In Social Assistance Law of the Republic of Moldova, no. 547/ 25.12.2003, the social risk is "...danger of the person or family being affected by the negative economic consequences, potential loss of physical, occupational or social status (illness, accident, disability, aging, death, maternity, unemployment, social maladjustment, etc.)". Buzducea (2010, p. 31) defines vulnerable groups and those in high social risk as "victims of different family situations or historical socio-structural, faced with chronic shortages, deficient substantial resources, with poor prospects and limited possibilities to escape from situations that inspire fatality and perpetuation of dangerous lifestyles".

Single-parent family issue has a number of unknowns that can be investigated. That is why the thematic investigation directions still remain open, and also because of the continually developing dynamics of this phenomenon and because of the direct applicability of the results in the work of social assistance. In our country, single-parent family is still insufficiently researched, especially the paternal single-parent family. In the case of maternal single-parent families, there are also many unknowns, this being due to their low degree of homogeneity. Consequently, it is important to analyse the dynamics of this phenomenon, the constellation of factors and the problems they face in order to understand and to help reduce dysfunction, and to identify coping strategies, adaptable to most families in need. Moreover, it may outline new methods of intervention for this type of family. Besides these aspects, the extent of the single-parent family phenomenon is also relevant, attracting the interest of researchers increasingly more.

Single-parent family was present at all times. In pre-industrial times, when the traditional family was predominant, single parent family was rare (for which the primary source was death of marital partner) and temporary in nature, because they resorted to remarry rather quickly. But along the process of industrialization, urbanization and modernization, single-parent family registered a spectacular boom. In developed countries like the US, in the 60s there were about 9% of single-parent families from the total number of families, rising to 24% in the 80s-90s. Another illustrative example is that of England where, in 1998, statistics showed 10% of single-parents families, reaching 28% in 2004 (Iluţ, 2009). In Romania, data from the 2002 Census shows that single-parent families represent 11.72% of all households, a percentage of which 84.9% is the share of maternal parent families (Ştefan, 2006). According to The Impact Study from 2009, conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection-Social Inclusion Programs Directorate, the largest increase in the number of single-parent

households is in urban areas, in the case of five (from eight) areas of national development.

All these statistics show that the evolution of the phenomenon of single-parent family recorded an upward trend and its current magnitude has important consequences on individual, social and societal levels, which require precise and specific interventions.

Unlike Western countries, where social protection measures have a strong preventive role, in Romania the social service system focuses more on reducing and eliminating the effects (not causes), on providing financial benefits to the detriment of support services, which would lead to the empowerment of beneficiaries, thus favouring a certain dependence of families on social assistance (Zanca, 2008).

2. Theoretical Background of the Study

Family is a complex unit with its own dynamic and operating systems, with intra-family and inter-family subsystems, and is also a part of the society. Therefore, we believe that the right theoretical approach is the holistic one, but at the same time, the eclectic view - a reality as complex as the family cannot be approached only from the perspective of a single explanatory theory model (Zanca, 2008). The present research is based on ideas of systems theory, the behaviourism and those specific to social learning theory, because it emphasizes how systems and subsystems are interrelated, identify family changes and behavioural manifestations, but also family patterns and models, which were learned and intergenerational transmitted.

3. Methodology

The purpose of our empirical investigations was to identify specific features of single-parent family in social risk. Thus, we conducted a wider qualitative study of the maternal and paternal single-parent families in Brasov County who are in social risk, which were benefiting or not from the public or private social welfare. Next, we will present some of the results obtained on maternal single-parent family.

In preparing this research, we proposed an emic perspective of the study, which means an inner understanding of the phenomenon (as it appears from the statements of those interviewed) and, accordingly, we approached the research only from a qualitative perspective.

As a distinct type of qualitative research, we can say that this investigation is a descriptive one, because research captures multiple areas: intra-family dimension - by describing the internal conditions of the family system, functions, relationships, feelings, strategies, etc.; inter-family aspects - by presenting living conditions, interactions with the environment, socio-economic and cultural context, etc.); diachronic and synchronic dimension - assessments about the past of the families, the patterns, the present situation, the future plans etc.

To achieve the research, we used multiple case study method (Scârneci, 2007), allowing more intensive investigation of cases, in order to discover both the commonalities and the more distinctive. The study of multiple cases is actually instrumental studies, extended to several cases, implying obviously the multiplication of work in analysis and research.

Specific to qualitative research, data collection methods that we have used in this research are as follows: observation, interview and collection/ analysis of social

documents (social inquiry completed and genograms). Regarding the use of social documents, it meant getting data from personal documents of the social services clients (documents owned by institutions where respondents are beneficiaries), after previously have signed the Convention of privacy regarding personal data of subjects. Data collected in these cases mainly concerned obtaining information about the situation of their residence, family socioeconomic status, educational evaluations, psychological, social services from which they benefit, divorce certificates, death etc. This information comes to confirm and complement the others from other methods of data collection. By combining methods of data collection we have achieved methodological triangulation, an element that gives research objectivity, accuracy, complexity, especially validation of the data obtained (Scârneci, 2007).

Among these methods, the largest amount of information was collected by semi-structured individual interviews. We used polyphonic interview, as a specific technique of interview. Everything we have discussed with the subjects was recorded using the recorder, just not to miss any aspect of their stories. Some interviews were conducted at the institution where interviewees were clients, but there were some interviews in their residence. In both cases, we used the observation to supplement or verify data obtained through interviews. The observation field notes were created during the interview, and also, from the desire not to raise doubt to the respondent, most of them were drawn immediately after we completed the interview.

The data collecting instrument, the interview guide, was structured around the following topics: economic situation of the family, housing, single parenting source, the quality of family relationships, methods of childrearing problems facing the sources and types of social support, coping strategies of single parents relationship with former partner; attempt to remarriage; types of daily activities; harsh vision of the future. We have adapted the interview guide based on the context, the understanding that the individual's personality traits, we have adjusted the questions during the interview with the purpose to improve it.

Before starting the interviews, each participant was informed about the fact that: his/her participation in the current research involves no risk; all data collected are confidential and will only be used for research purposes, without revealing the identity of the participants; their personal data are required for statistical purposes only.

The analysis strategy is oriented on variables because we aimed to identify and cut themes present in all cases investigated through material coding and thematic analysis. Regarding theoretical coding, we decided to use open and axial coding. Coding is the first step of the researcher to structure the abundance of information. This approach facilitates the research process by reducing and selecting data, structuring on categories (dimensions) and subcategories. Relevant words or phrases, content-rich, is currently falling within the category or subcategory in which we considered them to be part of. Thus, all text, line by line is sorted, classified, and categorized.

Open coding is not sufficient to get to data interpretation. Next, we used axial coding, a procedure by which the connections between categories and subcategories identified. At this stage, we reveals how each category connects with each other, how they influence or determine each other, what types of inter-categories relationships enables us achieving consistent interpretation of the data collected.

Materials resulting from data collection are substantial, achieving nine interviews with maternal single-parent families, plus social documents and notes collected through observation.

4. Participants

Theoretical sampling is representative for qualitative research. In this research, we have used goal sampling, part of the theoretical sampling, which fits with the study of multiple cases because it allows us to select the representative cases for the investigated topic.

The target population of our research consists of single-parent families, and the target group is formed by single parents from two organizations from Brasov: Astra Day Centre and International Aid Diaconia Association, as well as through acquaintances of our social networks. It is important to note that not all single-parent families in social risk are in the records of institutions, in the social reality there are single-parent families in need who do not apply, do not know or do not meet the eligibility requirements to receive specialized support.

The sample consists of nine adults of single-parent families, female, aged between 32 and 58 years; 1 person without education, two people with primary education, two have graduated 10 classes, two have finished vocational school, two high-school. Regarding the sources of single parent households, these were: divorce, separation or the death of their partner. The number of children of a single parent family ranged between 1 and 5 children.

After data collection phase, the next step was creating the field texts which consisted of transcribing interviews, verification and completion observation notes and documents collected from the official personal files. The text is the main element in qualitative research because actually the analysis and interpretation (by coding, sorting, synthesis, classification and, especially, comparison) is performed on it, and also communicating research results is presented as text.

5. Characteristics of Maternal Single-parent Family - the Presentation and Analysis of Data

After processing the data through open and axial coding, several main categories have emerged, each of them having a different number of subcategories.

These *main categories* are:

- Socio-economic situation;
- Source of single-parent family;
- Relational area;
- Specific problems of single-parent families;
- Fluctuation of the condition of single-parent;
- Daily activities;
- Future projects.

In the following lines, data analysis results will be detailed on the mentioned categories and their related subcategories.

5.1. Socio-economic Situation

Most women interviewed argued they could not enter the labor market nor had a job with a very small salary, due to their low level of education, and this was increasing the risk of poverty. This confirms an aspect illustrated by previous studies regarding the causal relationship between education, poverty and single-parent households (Iluț, 2008).

In most of the cases, the *sources of income* are the benefits, allowances and other social benefits or unemployment. One parent interviewed has a job, which is below her training, but that provides a relatively safe and steady income. Another person has an income from early retirement but before receiving this financial right, she did not have a job because she was dismissed and has benefited of unemployment support. It is obvious that the incomes are insufficient, that is why these families are beneficiaries of social assistance system, from which they complete a part of their necessary financial resources to meet daily needs.

In terms of *budget management strategies*, we identified the same principles that underlie these ways of sharing and managing financial resources. First, these families are focused on debt payments and utility bills, then the bare necessities for children and, finally, if anything remains of the family budget, it is targeted for food: "*First I seek to pay all my debts, electricity, water and if loan something to give back. I possibly postpone eating or to wash myself but not this.*"

The explanation given by mothers, regarding the list of priorities is that they prefer to pay their debts or loans because they want to preserve the availability of these resources for handling the crisis situation.

Housing conditions are generally poor. It is however noted a difference between mothers who live alone and those who share living space with an extended family. Mothers living alone have little space in area (for example, nine square meters room, a shanty divided into two rooms), without of most utilities (gas, sewer, hot water, heating, electricity, bathrooms) .These families face a feeling of powerlessness when home is damaged and cannot by their own resources and powers, to resolve the situation. If mothers share with their extended family the dwelling conditions / housing facilities are better because administration expenses and care of the domestic space are shared with other family members. But these people face other types of difficulties, namely: respect for rules, restrictions on freedom of movement and decision-making on residential patios. Freedom of single mothers in decision-making can be considered one of the few advantages of social risk of single parent family. This is why some mothers choose to refuse the help offered by their parents or other relatives (providing them shelter or better housing conditions), in exchange for freedom decision and movement, they prefer to live in precarious conditions. Moreover, those who are homeless and have been received in the space of their relatives live constantly with the fear of becoming homeless with their children again at the slightest mistake. Mental pressure on these women is considerable.

5.2. Sources of Becoming Single-parent Family

The *main sources of maternal single-parent families* (which we have found out at interviewed persons) are divorce / separation and death of partner. The present study included only a case of single mother, whose partner died; the causes of death were accidental and father's death was a shock for children, which we will subsequently see, they do not want a paternal substitute and for the wife as well. Regarding the causes of divorce or separation, they are multiple, but more relevant is how marital disruption has occurred, affecting relations between the former partners and further relations with children.

In all cases of divorce or separation, marital disruption was confrontational, even violent, and consequently, the relations between the former partners are cold, non-

collaborative, and distant. These issues are reflected on the *quality of relationships between children and father*, mother having a high degree of influence and control over children. Father's relationship with children is cold (or at most characterized by sporadic visits), showing that a low degree of involvement in the growth, care and education. Especially mothers complain that former partners do not give any financial support to raise children, not even the alimony established by courts of law.

5.3. Relationship Area

This category contains three main secondary categories and subcategories. The first category relates to the *quality of relationship between mother and children* she take care. Generally, parental relationships are perceived as good by the respondents, based on understanding and cooperation regarding domestic tasks. Mothers specify that boys are more "mother-oriented" so the affective component is much more pronounced among boys and their mothers.

In families with several children, mother's attention is directed, in a greater extent, on the youngest child, so that other brothers complain that they are discriminated. This is reinforced by the fact that they get more responsibilities and tasks based on age of the mother. Then we have discovered subcategories that bring into question the relationship between siblings, a conflictual relationship, generated by differences made by the mother. "*...And that big one says to me: yes, because you love only the youngest, us too little.*"

However, there are also tensed situations between mother and children, usually when they have undesirable behaviors. This connects with another subcategory presenting data on *methods of educating and disciplining children*, adopted by mothers. These methods are based on the system of rewards-punishment, but punishment prevails. A worrying aspect is that in the cases of all maternal single-parent families analyzed in this research, corporal punishment is present, beating, among other forms of punishment: "*I make them stay on their knees, not allow them on 'TV ... at this moment you remain there and not get up for several hours!*"

The information contained in the secondary category describing *relations between single parents maternal and the extended family* proves that mothers, who need more external support, do not receive it, results that are consistent with the other studies conducted in the field (Iluț, 2008).

These relationships are perceived as normal by the subjects, but data analysis attests that extended family relationships are cold and distant. Mostly, the received help from other relatives consists of material support (food, clothing, household objects) and less financial one. Regarding socio-emotional support, it is offered, in a greater extent, by the circle of friends (which is extremely low anyway).

To complete the partial takeover resources and tasks related to educating children, most mothers investigated argue that they often ask help to friends and social welfare institutions (in which they are beneficiaries). The fact that single mothers do not appeal more often to family support or refuse its support is argued by critically reproofs or imposing life choices or decisions. "*... If I ask my parents... what they say ... say well if you did not come home and did not stay with us ... They reproached I did not listen and I never went home.*"

Relationships with friends and institutions that provide social support are perceived by the interviewed subjects to be closer than those with the extended family.

5.4. Specific Problems of Maternal Single-parent Family

This main category is one of the multidimensional ones, which results from the multitude of data with a high degree of complexity and the weight they occupy in the overall picture of each interview (see Figure 1).

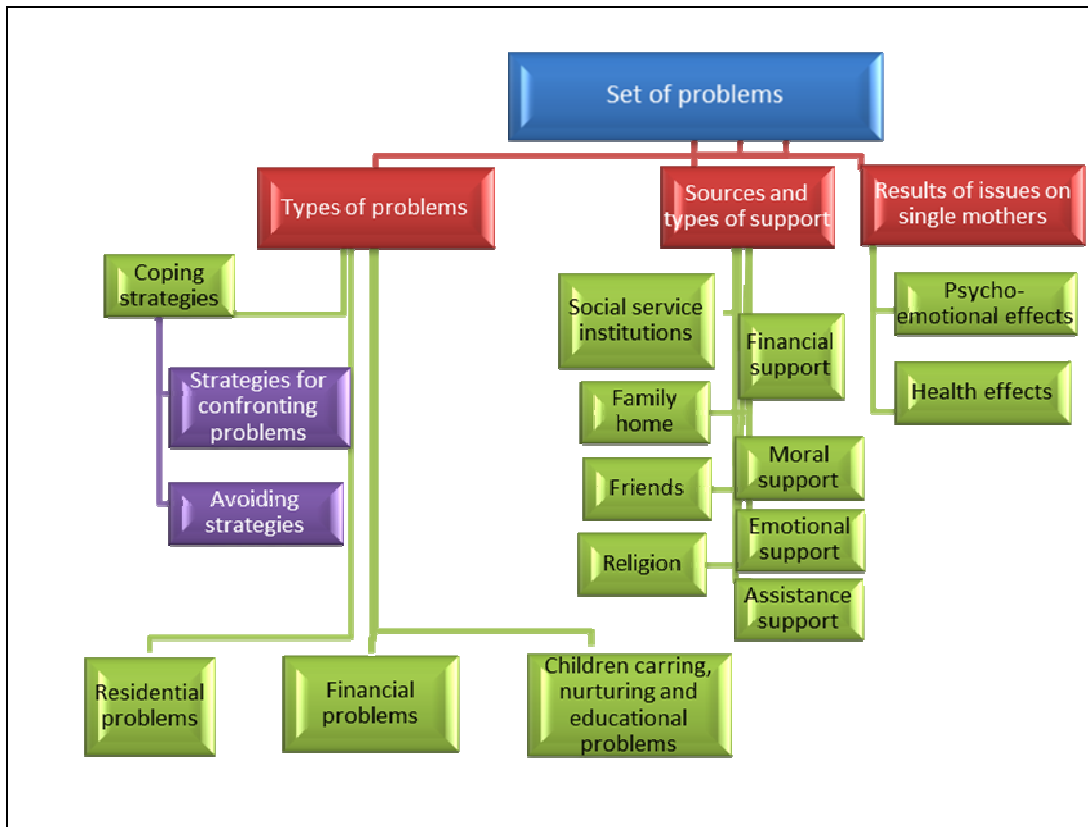


Fig. 1. *Specific problems of maternal single-parent family*

Financial problems are obvious, and generate other *types of problems* to single mothers, such as problems related to living space, health, care and education of children. However, these women perceive as acute problems other aspects of their lives as a single parent. For example, data resulting from interviews shows that most mothers feel more acute problems of housing and especially limited space, the environment in which it is located (direct contact of children with marginal subcultures) and conditions / equipment which complicates the existence of these families: "*But what bothers me most is the space, 'cause the money is stretch from month to month.*"

One of the interviewed mothers told us that the lack of money leads her to go with her elder son (14 years old) in the woods, at night, to provide enough wood for heating in winter. These *strategies of solving the problems* have a high degree of danger, both in terms of her and child health, and regarding the danger of being caught by authorities - act qualified as theft and, moreover, that reflects a pattern of undesirable behaviour. This

is one of the many dramatic issues faced by maternal single-parent family, generated by poverty.

The way that single mothers manage to solve problems depends heavily on personality and intellectual traits, relational capital, communication skills and even models learned (patterns) that influence the choice of how we deal with issues (strategies of confrontation or avoidance). These potentials are largely subjective and make the difference in psychosocial and economic status of their families. Another problem common to all single mothers is related to the behaviour of children. All mothers are faced with educational and behavioural problems, even delinquent children.

Another secondary category is *the sources and modalities of support*. As we have already said in previous lines, the financial support is mostly offered by friends and social welfare institutions, while the family of origin provides rather material help, if the relations between its members are good. Psychological, moral support is obtained mostly from girlfriends, with whom the single mothers can discuss any aspect more or less pleasant in their lives without fear of being judged. Another resource is the psycho-moral belief in God, something which is mentioned by all interviewed mothers. They claim to be faithful, and the daily activities include some religious rituals (prayers, church attendance): "... *the first thing is to pray to God. I'm pretty religious. As we wake up we only pray and after that we do what we do.*" As regards to formal support, it comes from institutions of social assistance (counselling, education, recreational activities, and food supplies) to these families, especially children.

The *effects of single-parenthood on single mothers* are multiple and complex, both in the sphere of psycho-emotional and physical one, having repercussions on the health of these mothers. They all accuse that the role overloading, responsibilities pressure, physical and mental effort trigger a number of health problems in particular, the strong depression, and cardiovascular disease. It is not to be neglected the beliefs of these people who come to regret having children, to think about abandoning them, and even suicide. The most dramatic aspect, with strong effects on the psyche of children is that these ideas are discussed with them "... *I was in a situation that ... I say I'd better never have had you, alone I would have been much better, I would not have had so many problems, I would not have been so worried ... more say I will give you to the state, I'll kill myself ... Sometimes I have these kind of thoughts.*"

Researches on single-parent families (Iluț, 2008; Ștefan, 2006) have showed that the most acute problem, single mothers are facing, is financial one. Studies conducted in other countries (such as, a pilot study on the sources of income of single mothers in Turkey) attests to that fact. Problems faced by single mothers in Turkey were divided into six groups, including financial problems, children problems faced by father absence and cultural attitudes of society. More than half (56%) of the participants blamed financial problems (Cakir, 2010).

5.5. The Fluctuation Condition of Single Parent

The status of a single parent can be a temporary one, any time single parent can marriage or cohabitate. But precisely these adults from single-parent families remarry harder, as specialists underline (Lamanna and Riedmann, 1991; Iluț, 2005). Factors that decrease the likelihood of remarriage for those in a single-parent family in social risk are complex, some of these are the following: fear of the mother that the future partner is not

accepted by children (children can manifest a hostile attitude towards the future step father, considered as an intruder) that he does not correspond to the role of fatherhood, including the fear (if there are female children) that her partner will abuse the girls. Mothers remarry harder also because of their over protective attitude towards children, but also because of their low value on the marriage market. Interestingly, although their situation is quite precarious, these women are involved in relationships that are not materialized in a marriage, instable intimate connections, arising new born babies from them - the kind of couple relationship that drives them to a more complicated existence.

From the perspective of intergenerational transmission theory of behavioural and relational patterns, the social models significantly influence the condition of single-parent households. In eight of nine cases included in this study, mothers come from families with a similar life trajectory. These mothers also have experienced the divorce/ separation with attempts to remarriage/ living arrangements. This aspect cannot be seen in the statements of the respondents, but the analysis of social documents, mainly from social inquiry and genograms, reveals this idea.

5.6. Daily Activities

This category highlights the fact that mothers are preponderantly involved in *domestic chores*, on which they put a special accent, in contrast to the *professional ones*. In the interviews, it was surprising to discover that even people who are active in the labour field do not detail their professional activities. In case of lack of utilities or other items that facilitate domestic chores, activities related to the household require more physical resources of time and energy to achieve them. This creates lack of time, and energy to conduct other activities such as *rest and recreation*. All these issues may cause some physical and mental degradation (decreased self-esteem) of people in the situation of single-parent households.

5.7. Future Projects

As daily activities are centered on the household and children (not for the personal needs of mothers), so it happens in future projects. Apparently insignificant, this category can be a motivation to continue their daily activities and to improve living conditions, especially if these families are focused on achieving aims and specific plans for the future. The vast majority of these plans regarding the future include achieving socio-educational success for their children, or even the survival. But most single mothers in social risk situation do not project life in the future and focus on meeting the present needs.

An important aspect emerged from the analysis is the way in which the self-perceived by the subjects of education and life decisions affect maternal single parents. Mothers with a very low level of education or even illiterate put a special emphasis on the education of their children because they can overcome the condition they are in: "*And my ambition was that my children go to school, even though I raise them on my own.*"

Lack of future prospects and limited possibility of escaping from the difficult situation induce the feeling of fatality in the investigated cases of single-parent families, perpetuating undesirable coping styles. All these aspects determine us in framing these families as households in social risk.

Conclusion

Researching family is not a very easy thing to do because it involves the researcher to enter into the intimate sphere of the family, to discover and reveal deep aspects regarding the dynamic of everyday life.

In conducting the research on single parents, we have faced this type of barrier, having difficulty in convincing the single parent to participate in interviews. We believe that in order to remove this obstacle is required prior knowledge between the researcher and the interviewees, in other words, you need a certain degree of familiarity between the two parties involved in the research.

Another difficulty encountered during the study, was generated by the lack of recent information, both on statistical data (there is no centralized data on single-parent families in institutions) and those relating to news in the thematic area. Latest studies and data in the field are often synthesized in international articles, to which access is sometimes restricted.

We can also underline that in our study few cases of maternal single parent were included; therefore the obtained results are merely contextual.

New directions for researching, suggested by some results of our study, might include: the importance of cultural differences in the support activities for these families, which are the main factors that make the difference between single-parent families at social risk and the functional ones, relation between daily rituals and stability of family life, fluctuation of single parent and the condition of single parent households, internal and external factors that prevent some single-parent families to access social support offered by the care organizations.

The fact that in our country this type of family has registered an upward trend in recent years has numerous consequences both on micro and macro-social level. The results of the research presented can contribute to a better understanding of the characteristics of maternal single-parents and can provide some new intervention directions in working with these families. Thus, we believe that social workers need more specific methods and techniques to assist them in the process.

References

- Berger, L. M., Magnuson, K., & Osborne, C. (2012). Family Structure Transitions and Changes in Maternal Resources and Well-Being. *Demography*, 49, 23-47. DOI: 10.1007/s13524-011-0080-x.
- Buzducea, D. (2010). *Asistența socială a grupurilor de risc* [Social Work of Groups in Risk]. Iași: Polirom Publishing House.
- Cakir, S.G. (2010). A Pilot Study on Sources of Stress and Support Single Mothers in Turkey. In *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences. WCPCG-2010*. 5, 1079–1083. DOI:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.239.
- Devi, K., Duhan, K., & Sangwan, S. (2009). Relationship of Micro and Meso Human Ecological Environment Problems on Adolescents in Single Parent Families. *Asian Journal of Home Science*, 4(1), p. 107-110. Available at: http://www.researchjournal.co.in/upload/assignments/4_107-110.pdf. Accessed: 26-11-2012
- Heath, D. T., & Orthner, D. K. (1999). Stress and Adaptation among Male and Female Single Parents. *Journal of Family Issues*, 20(4), 557-587.

- Iluţ, P. (2005). *Sociopsihologia și antropologia familiei* [Sociopsychology and Anthropology of Family]. Iasi: Polirom Publishing House.
- Iluţ, P. (Ed.). (2008). *Stări și fenomene ale spațiului domestic în România* [States and Phenomena of Domestic Space in Romania]. Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press.
- Iluţ, P. (Ed.). (2009). *Familia monoparentală în România și fenomene conexe* [Single-Parent Family in Romania and Related Phenomena]. Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press.
- Lamanna, M. A., & Riedmann, A. (1991). *Marriages and Families: Making Choices and Facing the Change*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Olson, M. R., Haynes, J. A. (1993). Successful Single Parents. *Families in Society*, 74(5), 259-267.
- Racoceanu, N. (Ed.). (2010). *Familia monoparentală, insecuritatea economică și politica guvernamentală. Metodologie de evaluare a calității vieții familiilor monoparentale din România* [Single-Parent Family, Economic Insecurity and Government Policy. Evaluation Methodology of Quality of Life in Single-Parent Families from Romania]. National research project available at: www.monoparentalitate.ro . Accessed 26-11-2012.
- Scârnci, F. (2007). *Îndrumar de cercetare calitativă în științele socio-umane* [Qualitative Research Guide in Social and Human Sciences]. Brasov: Transilvania University of Brasov Publisher.
- Stănciulescu, E. (1997). *Sociologia educației familiale* [Sociology of Family Education]. Vol. I. Iasi: Polirom Publishing House.
- Strong, B., Devault, Ch., & Sayad, B. (1998). *The Marriage and Family Experience. Intimate Relationships in a Changing Society*. (7th edition). Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Ștefan, C. (2006). *Familia monoparentală. O abordare politică* [Single-Parent Family. A Political Approach]. Iasi: Polirom Publishing House.
- Zanca, L. (2008). *Asistența familiei și copilului. Metode și tehnici de intervenție* [Family and Child Welfare. Methods and Intervention in Family Assistance]. Braşov. Transilvania University of Brasov Publisher.
- *** *Moldavian Social Work Law 547/ 25.12.2003*.
- *** Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection Programs Directorate Social Inclusion (2009). *Studiu de impact asupra măsurilor promovate prin O.U.G. 105/2003 privind alocația familială complementară și alocația de susținere pentru familia monoparentală la nivelul anului 2009* [The Impact of the Measures Promoted by O.U.G. 105/2003 Regarding Complementary Family Allowance and the Support Allowance for Single-Parent Family in 2009]. Available online at: http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Domenii/Incluziune%20si%20asistenta%20sociala/Raportari%20si%20indicatori/190510Raport2009_%20alocatie_com.pdf. Accessed: 26-11-2012.