DISABILITY, A DETERMINING CONDITION OF POVERTY

HANDICAPUL, O CONDIȚIE DETERMINANTĂ A SĂRĂCII

CZU: 364.26:316.344.2 **https://doi.org/10.59295/spd2024s.96**

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Summary. *This work seeks to identify the relashionships between disability and povert and also empasizes the importamce of disability role globally and the interdependence between disability and poverty. In the contemporary period, the subject of socio-professional insertion, the fight against discrimination as well as the improvement of living conditions for people with disabilities have been constantly addressed by international bodies for the protection of human rights, by public authorities at the national level as well as by researchers in the field of social security so as to reduce the risk of impoverishment, respectively of social exclusion for the people with disabilities around the world.*

Keywords: *disability, discrimination, marginalization, poverty.*

INTRODUCTION

The socio-professional inclusion and the economic status of people with disabilities astfelare real concerns for social policies initiated by the international mechanisms for the protection of the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities worldwide.

In this context, I consider it opportune to debate this issue, also taking into account the worrying percentage of 16% of the world's population that people with disabilities currently take place. This percentage ranks the disabled population as the number one minority globally, according to the World Health Organization.

In correlation with poor education, disability leads to the impoverishment of the disabled population. Important to note here is that the proportion of people with disabilities is significantly higher among groups with a lower level of education.

Physical impairment can be an important source of discrimination for people with disabilities, although social perception is currently based on a complex of indicators in terms of how to evaluate human interactions. Through the lens of socio-cognitive mechanisms, people are influenced by the perception of an beauty ideal when interacting with disabled people, who are frequently discriminated against and social rejected.

Going back in time, we find that on Europe, medieval culture reminds us of the jesters roles that disabled people played at the royal court, while the classical era refers to the offense that the royal court perceives regarding the presence in the social life of disabled people.

In France, the 20th century began with the emergence of special education for people with disabilities, an initiative that continued until the 1960s when complex processes regarding the disabled people integration were initiated.

Over time, society's perception of people with disabilities has shifted from the desire to eradicate people to rehabilitation and finally to social integration. The contemporary social model is based on universal human rights and promotes the equality concept and respect, encouraging the people with disabilities participation in social life, social inclusion and social dialogue.

The socio-cultural environment in which people live influences their inner evolution and the way they relate to the outside. Individuals with disabilities, unlike others, depend to a greater extent on the environment to which they relate to.

Evolved societies ensure equal opportunities for all its members, but this objective is only considered fulfilled to the extent that citizens are provided with the appropriate development to access the equal opportunities offered by the social environment.

The social exclusion of people, therefore, does not belong to the economic side, but rather to defective interpersonal relations.

The interdependence between disability and poverty has been shown to be stronger when poverty multidimensionally measured in the form of multiple deprivations, compared to when it is measured in terms of earned income.

World Bank President James Wolfensohn said in a press release that people with disabilities in developing countries are among the poorest people. They have been largely overlooked in the world development agenda until now, but the concern for poverty reduction strategies is a unique chance to rethink and rewrite that agenda.

The link between disability and development was further emphasized by Judith Heumann, the World Bank's first advisor to promote the persons with disabilities international rights, who indicated that of the 650 million people living with disabilities today, eighty percent live in developing countries.

Representing the largest minority globally, I believe that through the social representation of this minority group we will encounter new information regarding the difficult social inclusion of people with disabilities.

THE MINORITY CONCEPT

The minority represents a collective that is in a lower position in a social power relationship, not being considered a positive example of norms and customs, but a negative one, a fact that makes it become the object of inferiorization in many cases.

Minority does not refer to an intrinsic feature of the group's nature, but to a position of inferiority in the power relationship between two groups. More precisely, we understand by the concept of minority the deviation from the norms valued by society, from the standardization process imposed by the social environment everywhere, a fact that causes permanent tensions between minorities and the majority.

In 1968, a study initiated by Gordon on identity consciousness revealed a stronger awareness of the dimensions that assimilate us to a minority, and not of universally valid characteristics. In this sense, jews who deny their religious affiliation, whites who evoke their ethnic affiliation are just a few examples that support Gordon's theory.

Moscovici distinguishes between two types of groups: nomic groups that actively protect their points of view and anomic groups that disapprove of the points of view of others, having the following features [1, p. 64]:

The characteristics of nomic groups	The characteristics of anomic groups
Deviance and a counter-norm	Deviance without a counter-norm
Representation as independent social groups	They are represented in the form of social categories
Social interaction underlies the representations of these groups	Representations about these groups are based on ethnocentrism processes
It causes norms awareness	It doesn't cause norms awareness
It creates a social conflict	It doesn't cause norms awareness

Guided by social action, we distinguish four types of existing societies, according to Moscovici [1, p. 65]:

	Few nomic groups	Numerous nomic groups
Few anomic groups	Society with high uniformity and little social conflict	Society in an objective change
Numerous anomic groups	Society in a state of anomie, characterized by little activity	Society in disintegration and radical change

1. The ideal society is the one in which there are few anomic minorities and few nomic minorities, this being characterized by a low degree of conflict and a high degree of social uniformity.
2. The society with few anomic minorities and many nomic minorities is the society that is in social change, the proposals of the minorities being against the social norms.
3. The society with many anomic minorities and few nomic minorities is a disordered society, little active from a social point of view, where social marginalization is high and recovery solutions are non-existent.
4. The society with many anomic minorities and many nomic minorities is the least desirable society, on the verge of social disintegration which is characterized by the delegitimization of the majority.

THE IDENTIFICATION CONFLICT WITH MINORITIES

As we have observed, minorities are perceived as social groups with negative traits.

Minority identification conflict refers to the discrimination of minorities with common elements to individual identity because the minorities social precept, respectively their assessment, makes people admit identification with a negatively valued minority.

Sharing the social behaviors of the out-group represents a primary risk for the majority because this fact can reverse the poles of social power between the majority and minorities. By investing common principles and ideas with minorities, members of majorities could give a chance for social power to the minorities.

THE PSYCHOSOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO POVERTY

Statistical data provided by Eurostat shows us that in 2022, a percentage of 28.8% of the European Union population with disabilities was exposed to the poverty risk or social exclusion.

International mechanisms with protection role in the the rights of people with disabilities estimate that in 2022, a percentage of 60-70% of the European population with disabilities would have been exposed to the poverty risk, in the absence of social transfers income (social benefits, allowances and pensions), which essentially contributed in reducing the disabled population at risk of poverty percentage to 20.5%.

Marx thinks that between the income sources and needs there is a interdependence relationship with bilateral meaning. While individual needs to contribute to the production of goods and services, as these needs are met, other needs are born. We conclude, therefore, that the last quarter of a century, which is notable for the increase in the production of goods and services, is consistent with the growth and development of new needs, taking into account the percentage increase of people with disabilities during this period.

The income of people with disabilities is composed of two elements:

- primary income which consists in salary, land, properties, loans;
- the income from social transfers which is composed by pensions, social aid, disability allowance, health services, transport.

In the case of people with disabilities, the primary income may be missing or may be insufficient to meet their needs, which leads this social category to an increased risk of poverty.

In order to reduce inequality and poverty as important social problems, European countries follow two directions:

- Reducing inequalities:

For this purpose, the authorities with responsibilities in the social protection field compensate the reduced incomes of minorities with social transfers incomes and promote social policies to maintain the economic-financial status of people who do not present a marginalization risk and poverty, thus encouraging the reduction of economic inequalities between members of society.

- Fighting poverty:

To achieve this objective, the national social protection mechanisms promote social policies to combat and prevent poverty by providing social benefits to poor minorities in order to ensure the financial equality principle for all members of society.

Poor minorities are no longer perceived as responsible for their status, but rather as victims of the social system. The specialized literature highlights several structural theories in this sense, that are applied in parallel for certain social categories.

- The theory of the political structure in association with the market economy is the representative theory of the poor, of the socially assisted, of the elderly, of the disabled as a result of reduced financial resources and insufficient representation in professional organizations, trade unions, political parties.

CONCLUSIONS

People with disabilities face physical, social, economic and/ or environmental barriers to their participation in social life, which can lead them to poverty and marginalization. Lack of accessibility in the physical environment and discrimination can prevent people with disabilities from entering the school system, limiting their skills, knowledge and future ability to work and produce economic value. The same barriers can prevent people with disabilities from being included in the labor market or limit the type and amount of work they can do, reducing their income. In addition, the increased costs of ongoing health assessment, medical treatments that disability entails can have a negative impact on financial resources and in many cases lead people with disabilities to poverty. Although social protection schemes can help alleviate poverty, people with disabilities face various barriers in accessing social protection programs. These barriers include the lack of accessible information provided to people with disabilities about social protection programs and how to apply for them, the absence of the necessary documentation, the limited accessibility of working spaces with the public for people with disabilities, the generalized discrimination by representatives of grant offices against those with psychosocial disabilities and the difficulties encountered in social integration cause the disabled population to be marginalized, thus increasing the risk of them leading a life on the edge of poverty.

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