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**Abstract:** Supervision is considered to be an extremely important stage in the professional development of the specialists in the fields with assistential nature, such as: psychotherapy, coaching, personal development, counselling, etc. In Romania, the supervision of social services has become compulsory through the Order 288/2006. A great part of the content of standards for the case management, including those referred to supervision, namely to the theoretical and methodological development of some teachers, such as: Professor PhD Ștefan Cojocaru, Professor PhD Ana Muntean, Professor PhD Elena Zamfir. In this review, we will synthesize a part of Professor Ștefan Cojocaru’s contribution to the development of the field of appreciative supervision, as it is presented in the volume *Appreciative methods in social work. Survey, supervision and case management*, published with Polirom Publishing House in 2005. We will aim to also synthesize a series of echos of his work in the Romanian scientific literature.

**Keywords:** appreciative perspectives, supervision, social work, case management.

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**Postmodern view on the supervision process**

We see supervision as a process, a professional relationship grounded on communicative action. For Habermas (2000), communication is crucial for building the relationship with the otherness. Like social constructionism (Gergen, 2005; Sandu, 2016), Habermas's theory is based on the idea critics of social actor rationality. This criticism is part of the postmodern project of establishing a linguistic twist (McCarthy, 1981, pp. 272-275; Caras (Frunză) & Sandu, 2014a). Social constructionism places the formation of constructs at the level of interactions in the social

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environment, individuals assigning and redesigning them towards social environment (Sandu, 2016).

**Views on supervision in social work**

The volume *Appreciative methods in social work. Survey, supervision and case management* presents the implementation of a new paradigm in social work, centred on strengths, on inherent positivity of the social systems, on what works in their functioning.

Starting from the idea of David Cooperider on the appreciative inquiry, Ştefan Cojocaru develops a paradigm of appreciative social services, including the appreciative intervention, the appreciative case management and the appreciative supervision. Appreciative inquiry proposes a methodology of research-intervention in the organization which excludes the focus on the problem, replacing it with focusing on what work in that organization, on what gives life and value. Starting from the appreciation of the experience and projection of the development of the organization, the method targets a four-stage route which ends with the establishment and implementation of a plan of appreciative development of the organization (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2005).

The appreciative approach of social work (Cojocaru, 2005) is based on focusing on positive practices, starting from the strengths of the beneficiaries, but also of the organization offering services, the intervention being therefore constructed to lead to maximizing the satisfaction of the beneficiaries (Sandu, 2013).

**The meaning of the term “supervision”**

The operational definition Ştefan Cojocaru (2005) uses is that the supervision represents an administrative and educational process of supporting the social workers in developing their own abilities of offering quality services for the beneficiaries. In this regards, the author emphasizes on the role of supervision in ensuring the quality of services that must be at the level of the professional standards assumed by the agency. For this purpose, the agency must constantly evaluate/re-evaluate its services, adapting them to the needs of the beneficiaries.

The appreciative supervision was developed by the author synthesizing the elements specific for the appreciative inquiry, which he overlapped with the specifics of supervision in social work, as it is traditionally defined by Kadushin (2000). In order to legitimize the efficiency of the practice of appreciative supervision, the author creates an experiments
in which the supervision centred on problem and the appreciative supervision were conducted in parallel, measuring the efficiency of the further intervention of the social workers on the qualities of his own clients. The author observed that in the studied cases, appreciative supervision not only proved to be more efficient, but also less expensive. The author shows that in the case of supervision centred on the problem, its effects on the quality of the intervention diminish and disappear after three months (Cojocaru, 2005).

The appreciative supervision was implemented in parallel with a new form of appreciative case management, who also proved its practical efficiency.

The functions of supervision

Starting from Alfred Kadushin (2000), Ştefan Cojocaru formulates a series of functions that supervision should fulfill in order to ensure the quality of the social services: the educational function, and of improvement of professional competences, the methodological orientation targeting the guidance of the professional in choosing the strategies of intervention and the administrative function that targets an interface between the management of the organization and the social workers, in expressing the function of control over the quality of practice.

The specific of appreciative supervision in social work

Supervision is seen firstly as a process of social construction driven by the interaction between the social actors involved – supervisor – supervised – agency – beneficiaries, etc., each of the social actors involved participate in the social construction of the reality, through own values, knowledge, ideas, placed under negotiation (Șandu, 2016) and from the process of obtaining an interpretative agreement, generating a specific reality, generally unitary, but specific for each context in which the supervision is produced.

Aiming to theoretically develop the idea of appreciative supervision, Ştefan Cojocaru builds a model that underlies a series of principles that derive from the general ones of the appreciative inquiry, customized in the process of supervision, and which we can synthesize as follows:

1. The universality of the need for supervision. All professionals in social services need supervision, regardless of the level of competence reached. The beginner social workers will benefit mainly from the educational dimension of supervision, while those with experience will be more
interested by the supportive dimension, destined to diminish the professional stress and the overload.

2. Centering on experience, on what works, on the elements of success of the individuals and the organizations. The process of supervision is a learning one, starting from the experiences of the people supervised and its clients, and from the way in which the successful practices can be generalized in other areas of social action (Cojocaru, 2005; Milicenco, 2016). Centering on what works targets the value of the elements of maximum success in the supervised people’s experience, through a process of appreciative amplification process. The appreciative supervision targets the construction of a positive vision on the individuals and institutions that would constitute the foundation of the positive action.

3. Supervision as partnership. The process of supervision should be symmetrized by transforming it into an appreciative partnership between the supervisor and the supervised, that would lead to the co-construction of the professional development of the supervised person.

4. The anticipatory principle formulated in conjunction with David Cooperrider, according to which the social systems evaluate the direction in which they are questioned, in other words the subjects of the social interaction will rather be subject to change in the directions in which a process of systematic reflection is developed, the appreciative guidance of the communication generating social change in itself (Cojocaru, 2005).

5. The poetic principle which aims at the permanent reconstitution of the social practice (Cojocaru, 2005; Milicenco, 2016) by the operational redefining of the meanings given to the supervised’ own practice.

Types of supervision in social work

From the institutional perspective, we can talk about two types of supervision: internal and external. The internal supervision refers to the process of supervision in which both the supervisor and the supervised are members of the same organization, while the external supervision is done by inviting a supervisor from outside the organization, who has a greater freedom of action by not having collegial relationships with the supervised, and on the other hand, by not being subordinated to the organization’s management (Cojocaru, 2005).

According to the frequency, supervision can be permanent, periodical or temporary (Cojocaru, 2005).

According to the number of participants, supervision can be individual or in group. Ştefan Cojocaru (2005) mentions that in the process
of individual supervision, the supervisor should pay due attention to all three functions of supervision. In the process of group supervision, one or more of the supervisors support the professional development of a supervised within a group of teams.

**Instead of conclusions**

Starting from the contributions of Ştefan Cojocaru to the founding of supervision in Romania, as well as from a series of research conducted in the Masters of Supervision and Social Planning within the Al. I. Cuza University from Iasi between 2008-2010, which aimed at implementing the appreciative supervision (Sandu, Unguru, Ponea, Cojocaru, 2010; Baciu, et. al., 2010; Sandu & Unguru, 2013; Sandu & Caras, 2013; Caras (Frunză) & Sandu, 2014a; Caras & Sandu, 2014b), more than 10 years after the introduction of the obligation of supervision, we wish to establish a diagnosis of the social construction of supervision in social work, to be studied in the N.-E. area of Romania. The theoretical and methodological construction developed by Ştefan Cojocaru, along with a wide scientific literature, could be a starting point in understanding the phenomenon to the extent in which the volume analysed was a fundament of education and professional formation of supervisors in social work in our country, and being the most widely spread theoretical perspective in the Romanian scientific literature. The entire Romanian literature dedicated to supervision in social work, one way or another send to the mentioned work, being therefore a premise of unifying the speach regarding the supervision, determining us to consider that at least a part of the key elements of appreciative supervision could be found in the stories on practice of supervision.

**References**


