

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF POLITICAL STUDIES AND PUBLIC  
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**DOCTORAL SCHOOL**

**Doctoral thesis**

**THE RELATION BETWEEN THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND ON THE EUROPEAN  
LABOR MARKET.**

**CASE STUDY: Masters graduates of the Department of International Relations and  
European Integration**

**- SUMMARY -**

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Professional training is one of the most important factors to influence integration on labor market. This aspect is highlighted by statistics which depict the fact that the lowest occupancy rates have been registered amongst individuals with a low educational level. According to a survey conducted by The National Institute for Statistics in 2014 “the highest level of occupancy for individuals capable of working has been registered amongst higher educational level graduates (82,5%). The lower the educational level gets, the lower the occupancy level becomes. Thus, in Romania, 65,0% of the individuals with medium studies were working and only 44,4% out of the individuals with a low educational background”<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, CEDEFOP and OECD studies have shown that in 2014, 80% of the graduates of higher educational programs in the European Union have been integrated on the labor market, whereas only 70% of the individuals with a medium and low educational background have managed to integrate on the labor market<sup>2</sup>.

Labor market integration plays a central role both in the European Commission’s strategy concerning the higher education reform (The European Commission, 2011), as well as in the Europe 2020 Strategy (The European Commission, 2010).

The current research aims to analyze the relation between demand and offer available on the labor market in member states in the European Union. The equilibrium between offer and demand present on the current labor market depends, to a great extent, in adapting both the education and professional training to the demands available on the market. The thesis is structured in four chapters, as follows:

### **1. First chapter “Employment policies in the European Union”**

The purpose of this first chapter is to define the research problem and to analyze key concepts such as: social policies, “social welfare”, “social Europe”, the European Social Model. Throughout time, The European Commission has undergone numerous measures towards elaborating an integrated policy framework for Member States, measures which have consequently given rise to the appropriation of “The European Social Model”. The starting point of my research is the

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<sup>1</sup>INSSE press release concerning Occupancy and unemployment in 2014  
[http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com\\_anuale/ocup-somaj/somaj\\_2014r.pdf](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com_anuale/ocup-somaj/somaj_2014r.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>CEDEFOP, “*Employability and skills of higher education graduates*”, available online:[http://euskillspace.cedefop.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUSP\\_AH\\_Graduates\\_0.pdf](http://euskillspace.cedefop.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUSP_AH_Graduates_0.pdf)

ascertainment of the fact that working labor policies serve as a main component of the European Social Model.

## **2. The second chapter ”The need for competencies and learning in the knowledge society ”**

This chapter attends to another dimension of research, namely training possibilities. I will explicitly refer to the central role of competencies in analyzing the training possibilities and the European codifications instruments which are being used towards ciphering the relation between offer and demand. If in the previous chapter, the research emphasized the establishment of a common framework for the European occupancy for workforce and the formation of a common market, this chapter will inquire the European instruments that are being used in institutionalizing the demand and training offer, more exactly the European Qualifications Framework, Europass, ECTS, and others. Another important aspect that is being taken into consideration in this chapter is the evolution of the perspectives that characterize the work labor market in the knowledge society, using the 2020 Strategy and several studies conducted by CEDEFOP concerning “ the need for training”.

## **3. The third chapter: Case study: The professional insertion of the Department of International Relations and European Integration master degree graduates**

This starting point of this chapter is to scrutinize the extent to which specializing in international relations and European studies in terms of a master degree program are in accordance to the needs of the labor market in Romania. A relative new specialization, it has an interdisciplinary design, thus being designated for a large mass of beneficiaries. To this extent, I have investigated the training offer by using a questionnaire designed for graduates of the international relations and European studies program in SNSPA and I have examined the employers’ point of view through a semi- structured interview. This chapter eventually aims to underline to which extent higher educational systems contributes to the forging of the European Social Model and the way in which universities address the requirements of the knowledge society.

#### **4. Fourth chapter “Conclusions and recommendations”**

The thesis ends with an analysis of the way in which instruments specific for the European Union are being used in the considered training field, the opportunity of the international relations and European studies qualification in terms of the 2020 Strategy and the evaluation of the need for competencies as well as their influences upon training programs.

Having the above mentioned structure, my research commences with defining the general conditions for implementing the European Social Model, analyzing the contribution of occupancy and European social policies, in order to attain a precise example, particularly workforce, in terms of offer and demand considering a specialization such as international relations and European studies.

I have chosen this particular case for the nature of its complex character (RISE delivers 7 specializations out of the ten available ISCO fields), for its peculiar situation (there cannot be defined an single-linear relation between offer and demand, nor a niche occupation, protected as well as controlled), and taking into consideration the fact that RISE offers transversal competencies, a point of interest for many beneficiaries categories.

Last but not least, as I will emphasize throughout my thesis, the political science qualification (generally), international relations and European studies namely, forge needed competencies in implementing the European social policies, towards attaining new approaches innate to the 2020 Strategy to the extent of ensuring European democracy and approaching citizens, a priority for the European Union.

The scope of this research can be depicted in two pillars:

- a. On the one hand, I have analyzed the institutionalization of the relation between offer and demand in terms of training, an action specific to European instruments aimed to encourage a development centered on competencies, in the context of choosing the knowledge society;
- b. On the other hand, I have restricted this public policies analysis to a concrete case – the ‘political sciences’ qualification and its role in advancing the knowledge society and implementing the European Social Model.

I have chosen this research approaches considering the fact that the attention given to this qualification in public policy documents has been irrelevant in comparison with its importance in attaining a sustainable democracy, in developing active and responsible citizens, a needful condition for the knowledge society.

Moreover, researches conducted by the academic society in the field aimed towards its main epistemological status are quite wary, in dissonance with its importance. Not only is the problem itself not a discussion point (priority being given to knowledge specific to ‘‘hard power’’ fields), but there are few data concerning training in this key area: there is a lack of reports in terms of number of graduates in this field, the specialization of political sciences (Eurostat indicators depict only training in fields such as mathematics, science and technology), there are no specialized comparative analyses nor national databases concerning production and capitalization in this area.

Concluding, my research aims to be a plea towards capitalization in the field of political sciences so that the civic, political and social dimensions of the knowledge society can be attained. In accordance with the mentioned scope, **the main objective** of this research is, firstly, to depict the fact that, even though member states emphasize on an high degree education in fields such as science, technic and technological, a qualification in political science is as important as the prior mention ones for the knowledge society. Secondary to this objective, I will investigate to which extent the knowledge obtained during study programs are in accordance with the needs of the labor market.

**The research hypothesis is the following:**

**If the need for competencies is not in accordance with the professional training offer, then, the labor market will be characterized by major imbalances.**

**The secondary hypothesis is the following:** Training in the field of political sciences provides vital competencies for the knowledge society, towards sustaining democracy and implementing the European Social Model.

To this regard, my research is meant to be both multidisciplinary, as well as interdisciplinary, highlighting training in terms of a relation between demand and offer.

Thus, the following research activities have been conducted:

- An analysis of the way in which higher education training contributes to the development of the Social European Model, through the specialists that are schooled in order to be in accordance with the needs on the labor market;
- An analysis of the relation between educational level and occupancy, by taking into consideration 3 indicators (occupancy rate according to the level of education, unemployment rate per education level and graduates of political sciences programs), hence I develop a comparative analysis between Romania and other member states in the European Union;
- An analysis of the role that universities held in the knowledge society, namely the contribution that the qualification in the field of ‘political sciences’ holds;
- Conducting a case study concerning the international relations and European studies specialization, in the framework of ‘political sciences’ qualification, where I will analyze the opportunity that this training offer presents;
- Conducting an interview with employers who work with graduates of political sciences programs, interview which aims to show their view upon the role that this qualification has in our society.

**The research methods** used upon constructing this research are miscellaneous, and consist of alternating quantitative investigations with qualitative researches. Thereby, I have used: document analysis, a survey that targeted graduates from international relations and European studies (class of 2015 ) and a semi-structured interview designed for employers who work with graduates of political sciences programs.

The public policy document analysis affects active workforce occupancy policies, to instruments correlated to the European Union’s social dimension, to implementing the knowledge society and to the evaluation indicators that have been used.

The current research aims to collect both quantitative, as well as qualitative inputs coming from employers who work with graduates of political sciences programs.

The quantitative data will be amassed by using a survey, designed towards administrating a questionnaire within groups of international relations and European studies graduates, whilst the

qualitative data will be compiled by conducting individual semi-structured interview with employers who work with graduates of political sciences programs as an integrative field. All the above mentioned research instruments are original and are completely depicted in the annexes of the thesis.

### **Method of collecting data by using a survey**

There is an increase in recognition, both at national, as well as international level, of the importance that measuring quality, formal and non-formal one, has.

The ability of professional insertion of graduates and their transition on the work labor market is becoming a criteria used when considering the efficiency of higher educational programs, as it is a consequence of the increase in participation in higher educational programs worldwide.

The research has been conducted in the Department of International Relations and European Integration, in SNSPA. This research highlights the opportunity of this specialization on the work labor market in Romania and measures the satisfaction level of graduates in concern with the professional training offer. One of the most important problems analyzed during this research concerns the rate of occupancy in the ranks of master degree programs graduates within the Department of International Relations and European Integration, and, especially, an urgent matter for the spokespersons in charge with public policies in the European Union, the underemployment or under-employment, one of the scopes of this research consisting of identifying how graduates succeeded in getting a job, in accordance with their studies.

In the European Union, monitoring studies for the occupancy of graduates (graduate survey) are being conducted in more well-known universities with the purpose of tracking the graduates' workplaces and their careers. Consisting in the graduates' self-evaluation, these inquiries are valuable instruments that are to be used when evaluating the rate of employment. These are more than simple means of measuring the percentage of graduates who manage to find a workplace, thus being used when describing the quality of the working place, the time that has passed when looking for a work place and the professional satisfaction of the graduates.

This type of inquiries are useful for a multidimensional evaluation of the professional insertion of higher education programs, especially when there are established proper mechanisms, for the

usage of both higher education authorities, as well as higher education establishments may value relevant information.

My survey takes into consideration the assumed research options, thus referring to the following questions:

- To what extent have the graduates been satisfied with the educational curricula and their preparation attained when studying at DRIIE, class of 2015?
- What is the rate of occupancy amongst DRIIE graduates, class of 2015?
- How long after graduating did they succeed in getting a job?
- Did DRIIE graduates find a job in the same field as their educational background?
- In their regard, did the attained training suffice the needs and expectancies of the work labor market (in Romania and the European Union)?
- To what extent the professional experience attained whilst working as a student has helped the graduates in their career, as well as when trying to get a job and a promotion?

The survey has been structured in two parts, one dealing with the training program in the university, and the other part referring to the International Relations and European Studies graduates' career and their occupancy.

### **Method of data collection by using semi-structured interview**

The economy in OECD countries is more and more based on knowledge and information. Knowledge is now recognized as an engine for productivity and economic increase, thus leading to a high regard on the role of information, technology and learning in economic performance.

To this regard, the semi-structured interview deals with the knowledge society from a different point of view as the specialized literature depicts, centered on scientific and technical knowledge.

Thus, I have paid attention to the contribution of political sciences in producing and capitalizing knowledge in crucial areas specific to exercising rights and responsibilities, civic participation, accountability and collective negotiation. The interview has been applied on employers, and representatives of institutions, organizations and companies, individuals capable of nurturing competencies developed amongst faculties specialized in political sciences.

Thus, the inquiry concerning the occupancy perspective for graduates, analyzed through the survey, is completed by the employers' point of view, concerning occupancy.

The key questions, which I have used in the survey targeted for graduates, are meant to inquire the following aspects:

- The role of the qualification in the field of political sciences in the knowledge society;
- Identifying competencies attained through political science programs, competencies that, from the employers point of view would help the development of the knowledge society;
- Identifying the profile of the employer of political science graduate;
- The role of competencies in political sciences in the knowledge society;

Providing the fact that useful data were needed for my research inquiry, the interview has been applied to the following respondents:

- 5 employers from the public sector;
- 4 employers from the private sector;
- 4 employers from the nonprofit sector.

Monitoring studies of occupancy amongst graduates are not yet given a high importance in Romania, whilst in the European Union these studies are valuable instruments for evaluating occupancy rate and professional insertion capacity. This interest amongst member states of the European Union considering monitoring studies for professional insertion of graduates is mainly due to the fact that, on the one hand, this type of inquiry can be used as a mechanism for ensuring that quality is attained at institutional level, and, on the other hand, it is a very good instrument for the implementation of national and international policies in higher educational programs.

Even though applied to a small group, my research aims to fall in the lines of the efforts conducted towards introducing monitor studies of graduates professional occupancy as well as higher educational level in Romania, as a valuable instrument that is to be used when measuring the efficiency that characterizes the higher educational programs.

Given the objectives established by the Europe 2020 Strategy, the age criterion has been one of the variables inquired in my research. The average age of graduates that have responded to this survey is 25 years old.

The analysis of this variable is of the utmost importance when taking into consideration the fact that Romania has taken as a strategic objective, through the National Reform Plan, attaining a percentage of 26,7% individuals with tertiary education amongst population that falls in the 30-34 years old group. The manner in which graduates self-evaluate their studies represents a very important input for the development of educational programs, as well as for the evaluation of master degree programs.

This is why, my research has identified the fact that graduates have a high degree of satisfaction, 42,3% more exactly, in regard to the studies that they have graduate. Another dimension which I wanted to analyze in this research was to what extent attaining a professional qualification at the Department of International Relations and European Integration is in line with the expectancies of the work labor market in Romania and the European Union. 44,2% of the graduates that have taken part in the survey consider that the training provided by the Department of International Relations and European Integration is partial in accordance with the necessities of the work labor market in Romania and the European Union. This result provides a very clear perspective upon the way in which graduates retroactively evaluate their studies, as well as a feedback in terms of improving possibilities for the training programs by using a better correlation with the work labor market necessities and expectancies.

In addition, the graduates offer several improvement recommendations for the master degree programs in the Department of International Relations and European Integration:

- Establishing a support program towards facilitating the occupancy of the graduates after graduation;
- Internship programs in institutions from the same area as the master degree program;
- Cooperation programs developed with other universities;
- Providing professional counseling during studies.

Monitoring if graduates have managed to integrate on the work labor market, and, especially how long after graduation, has been a very important objective of my research. The attained data have

shown that 84,6% of the respondents have managed to integrate on the work labor market, 50% out of which were working whilst a student. Even though the occupancy rate, amongst the group of graduates from a master degree program in the Department of International Relations and European Integration, is a high one, 63,5% of the graduates do not work in the same field as their studies.

In comparison with their studies, 42,3% of the respondents consider that their work place level is in accordance, whilst 26,9% of the graduates consider that their work place is not suitable, being under, for their level of education.

For a broader view of the professional training offer inquired through this survey designed for graduates of a master degree program in the Department of International Relations and European Integration, the research is completed with the occupancy perspective, hence using the semi-structured interview applied on employers.

Even though the knowledge society focuses primarily on the exact, technological and technical sciences, the employers point of view concerning the role of political sciences in the knowledge society sustain the necessity of training in the political sciences field. 46,2% of the interviewed employers consider that training in the field of political sciences contribute to the establishment of the knowledge society.

An important objective of my research based on interview targets the way in which employers evaluate graduates' competencies and their chances of taking part into the knowledge society. The retrieved data emphasize that 61,5% of the questioned employers consider that graduates have the necessary competencies towards participating in the knowledge society, thus confirming the hypothesis that the political sciences field plays a defining role in the establishment of the knowledge society.

Out of the useful competencies for the knowledge society pointed out by the interviewed employers, we mention:

- ‘the capacity of identifying both the European and international problems, analyzing and interpreting them from a modern political theory point of view; the capacity of establishing and developing communication relations, partnerships and cooperation

with other individuals, public institutions, mass – media, NGOs; the capacity of applying politics, regulations and juridical international and European instruments in concrete social and political situations’’;

- ‘‘competences in close relation with analyzing and interpreting, those related to identifying causes and those related to writing/expressing/ arguing complex aspects’’;
- ‘‘knowledge of the methods and technics of scientific research, correct usage of basic concepts, the capacity of independently, analytical and critical arguing, the capacity of transparently stating an issue, questions and research hypotheses’’

The transversal competencies are, from the employers’ point of view, in a closer relation with the necessities of the work labor market, thus identifying as adequate for the knowledge society the following competencies:

- Teamwork;
- Personal motivation for self-progress;
- Critical and logical thinking;
- Social and civic competencies;
- Personal and professional development;
- The usage of modern technology and communication.

On the other hand, the questioned employers consider that some aspects of democracy ought to be sustained through adequate competencies during training in the field of political sciences, as follows:

- Knowing how political institutions function;
- The ability to exercise rights and responsibilities;
- Critical thinking.

My research has managed to emphasize the peculiar characteristic of training in the political sciences field, and, particularly, professional training in the international relations and European studies fields, through competencies that the graduates receive by undergoing these programs.

Even though, both national, as well as European, the visibility of the political sciences field is a low one, data concerning the graduates in the field of political sciences are not gathered, these

being merged with other graduates in the field of social sciences, law and business, employers think that there are several development possibilities, and recognition in the field of political sciences, as follows:

- Developing partnerships amongst universities and NGOs and involving students in internships;
- Developing a complex and transparent recruitment system for political sciences graduates;
- Highlighting the extraordinary importance of the expertise of graduates in the political sciences field.

Another objective of the interview was to inquire if the employers provide sufficient affirmation opportunities for graduates in the field of political sciences. Most of the employers consider they offer sufficient affirmation opportunities for graduates in the field of political sciences, through means such as:

- Opportunities for deepening and attaining new competencies concerning analyzing and evaluating public policies;
- Research, lobby and advocacy projects developed at national and European level;
- Projects that require monitoring national public policies in the field of migration and social dialogue;
- Research grants in the civic field.

The international relations and international studies graduates' opinions are perfected by those of the employers, thus shaping a very clear image of the importance of training in this field has through the highly qualified work that it prepares, firstly, towards taking part in the knowledge society and through its special contribution in the development of the European Social Model.

My research is limited by the fact that for such a major study a lot of resources are needed. Firstly, the case study concerning monitoring graduates is targeted on a single class of graduates from the Department of International Relations and European Integration, and, for a better supporting of arguments, an analysis of more data would have been needed. For the further development of the research, monitoring studies of graduates would be relevant if they were conducted as a partnership

with other universities, towards attaining a comparative analysis, with greater chances of generalizing the conclusions.

Another limit of my research consists in not managing to obtain data concerning graduates in the field of political sciences at a European Union level, even though I have addressed 10 associations from the higher European educational level and 26 universities that provide training in the field of political sciences at European level. At a national level, I have encountered the same difficulties in compiling data as I have not succeeded in obtaining data from private universities that are accredited in the field of political sciences. Perhaps this ascertainment sustains the idea of providing more attentions to political sciences as training field, imperative for the knowledge society.