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Developing a career promotion model for Romanian football referees

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This thesis was done in memory of my last cousin, Cristi who was also a football referee, and who encouraged and assisted me during the early stages on my refereeing career. Without him, I would have not started refereeing and I would have not been what I am today.

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ABSTRACT

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Football refereeing has become more demanding in terms of physical and mental preparation. Elite football referees are seen as athletes nowadays and the latest changes have brought major challenges in terms of job and occupation. The officials have changed their perspectives regarding their sport involvement due to the national football associations which have decided to have a certain number of professional referees. Therefore, top level football referees have taken the path towards professionalization.

The aim of the study was to develop a career model for the football referees. The model was created through the career development theories and studies. Super's career development theory (1953) was the starting point of the created model. The ideal model was tested on the Romanian elite football referees.

The present study is using a qualitative research approach with participant observation and guided in-depth interviews. The qualitative methods were chosen in order to get a deeper perspective about the referees' career development process. All interviews were recorded and made face-to-face. Romanian top league referees (N= 5) were interviewed during the Romanian Elite Referees' Conference in Antalya (Turkey) in February 2009. The referees' identity is protected, as no names appear in the study. This is done to avoid problems which could result if their identity is revealed.

The proposed career model has five stages and represents the professionalization path from a free-time activity to a full-time job. Each stage represents a certain period in the referee's life, and the demanded skills for each level will be discussed in this part of the study. *Exploration* represents the Referee Course and Grassroots football. *Implementation* is the second period and is the Fourth League (the highest district league). *Consolidation* is the Third League, the lowest national league. The Second League is represented by the *stabilization* period. *Maintenance* is most important period in a referee's career because they are refereeing at the highest national level and have the opportunity to be selected as an international referee.

Practical suggestions were given in order to develop the quality of refereeing in Romania. This study provides support for Romanian refereeing through proposing guidelines for a Code of Ethics in order to create credible observers and referees systems. A new promotion system having mentoring as a key point for each career level is developed. More advice for each career stages is given in this part. This chapter's aim is to increase credibility and transparency about refereeing activity in Romania.

Keywords: football referees, career development, professionalization, mentoring.

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INTRODUCTION

Football, or soccer as it is known in America, is one of the most important sports today. According to Rainea (2005, p.6), the most famous Romanian referee, football is not “only what you see on the pitch, the fight between two teams for victory, but also it is a passion, it is a sophisticated machine which brings together energies, people, money and a huge amount of diplomacy”.

Taking into consideration its large fan base, football has a social and political impact in many communities. Simon Kuper (2005, p.1) expressed in his book “Football against the enemy” a significant statement regarding football’s importance as a social phenomenon: “...in Naples when a man has money, he first buys himself something to eat, then goes to the football, and then sees if he has anything left to find a place to live. The Brazilians say that even the smallest village has a church and a football field- well, not always a church, but certainly a football field” (Simon Kuper, 2005, p.1), while the C.F. Barcelona museum is “the most visited placed in the city even ahead of Picasso canvases” (Foer, 2005, p.189).

The football political implications were proven by Foer (2005) in his book “How football explains the world” through some examples. Firstly, the Jews created a football team named Hakoah in ‘30s in Austria in order to liberate them from violence and the anti-Semitism movement, while in the Middle East, the Islamic organisation Hezbollah have been sponsoring a football team in Lebanon. Moreover, the fans have been using football stadiums as the best place to express their political views. Basques could express their cultural pride without being arrested in the Franco’s period, only in the stadium where they were supporting Real Sociedad or Athletic Bilbao. The Maracana stadium, in Belgrade, is known as the place where the Red Star’s fans created the Serbian national identity. Additionally, the team fans were recruited as soldiers in the elite troops during the Serb – Croatian war. All these examples were given because it is important to outline football’s social and political impact over society. Moreover, it has helped people many times to express their views in a free manner in the stadiums.

In terms of practice, football was also played by the inmates on Robben Island in the '60s and '70s, when they were fighting against apartheid in South Africa. Its role was to keep their body in good shape from a physical and mental point of view. The prisoners organised their own football championship through their own football organisation. The most interesting thing is that they realised that football is impossible without referees, therefore they established a Referee Union and they recruited and educated after the FIFA rules some prisoners who were in charge of refereeing the games. The inmates who wanted to become referees had to pass periodically theoretical and practical tests. The inmates' motto was: "No referee, no organised football!" (Korr and Close, 2008, p.77) The last example wants to emphasise the importance of referees in football.

1.1 Refereeing as part of football culture

A tremendous change regarding football refereeing happened when Pierluigi Collina started to officiate at the highest level. He was the first referee known by all football fans and the first official who appeared in an advertisement with football players. (Foer, 2004, p.163) Understanding the referees' increasing importance for developing the game, UEFA decided to make a film about the European top level referees. The documentary was made during EURO 2008, which took place in Switzerland and Austria, and showed that referees are also humans. Yvan Cornu, the UEFA's head of refereeing, considered it "a success, and which can change and improve the perception of football referees in the general public" (UEFA, 2009a). The officials were presented not only in their moments of glory but also with their families, during their meetings or trainings, or in unpleasant situations, when they did mistakes during games. "The Referee" may be just the starting point of analysing and researching the football official from the sociological and psychological perspectives.

Refereeing activity has its specificity. First of all, the officials receive money for each game they are refereeing. They are part of a team (three or four officials at a game), but all the time with new colleagues, having different educational backgrounds. Even if they are preparing physically and mentally on their own or have a training session with colleagues once a week, they must act as a team during the game. So refereeing seems

to be a combination between an individual and a team sport. Somebody else (referee committee) decides the appointments, so they are practising at moments, which are independent of them. Refereeing is more than running and whistling, it is taking decisions on the spot, knowing the “Laws of the game” and engaging in permanent mental and physical preparation. The referees have also supervisors at their games, but each game has another supervisor, who evaluates the referees’ work and is able to give them advice, which would help them in the future games, in order to improve the performance and quality of refereeing. Therefore, considering that the observer is a referee coach, the referee has a different one at each game. The higher leagues involve more issues concerned with refereeing such as physical, tactical and mental preparation, referee as a leader and manager, which are the new trends in officiating in a football game. Although refereeing is becoming more and more demanding from the physical and psychological point of view, public opinion is really different and they do not understand the referees’ mistakes. Thus, the game referee is reminded only when he makes a mistake and we have several examples such as the English referee, Graham Poll, who showed three yellow cards to the same player before sending him off in a World Cup game or the Swedish official, Hansson, who missed the Henry’s handball and France go to World Cup 2010 in South Africa. Therefore, making the comparison between players and referees, the fans keep alive in their minds only players’ goals and good games, while the referees are remembered only for their mistakes. Nobody will remember if a referee who officiates in ten games without a mistake as one Romanian referees said.

“People expect good service from a referee, but they will never forget our mistakes. Referees are people for sport, we cannot manifest our joy on the field, only in the locker room when the team and individual performances were good, enjoying and giving a high five with colleagues. Scoring players enjoy every stadium, but you as a referee cannot manifest on the pitch even if you call a good penalty kick or allow a great advantage, we can do it only at home.”

Many studies on football are about its main characters, players or coaches, but the officials have not been so interesting for researchers so far. The research to date has

tended to focus on referees' physical and physiological activities (for example Krustup et al., 2009; Bizzini, 2009) and mostly is about the international referees. The psychological aspect was studied in terms of decisions taken by referees on the football pitch and if they are influenced by the fans or players (for example Boyko et al., 2007; Philippe et al., 2009). In addition, the only research found on the sociological aspects of refereeing was in Finnish (Nevala, 2005).

The aim of this study is to develop a career model for the Romanian football refereeing. Throughout this paper the term referee will be used only for the referees, so that the assistant referees (linesmen), will not be part of this study. During the interviews, the Romanian referees tested the proposed model and further development suggestions were made.

1.2 The thesis' structure

The thesis has been divided in six main chapters. The first part of the second chapter is a description about Romania as country, followed by a brief description of the sport in Romania, while the last part consists of a presentation of the main football bodies and the competition system.

Chapter three is focused on the research task and methodological aspects. The aim of the study is defined and the thesis design is described. Participant observation and guided in-depth interviews were the qualitative research methods chosen for this study. Five Romanian referees were interviewed face-to-face. Moreover, all the research steps are going to be described in this part of the study.

The fourth chapter begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research and debate the main career development theories. The chapter finishes with the career development model proposed for the football referees, adapted after Super's career development theory.

The significance of this study is that it proposes another perspective regarding football refereeing, because it will be analysed from a sociological view point in the core part of the study which is presented in the chapter five. This part describes what each stage in the career development model means.

The outcome of this thesis is a five stage model in refereeing. It is basically the career path from the Grassroots football to the FIFA list. Based on the interviews, each level requests different skills, which will be discussed in the fifth chapter. Moreover, each level represents a stage in the professionalization process.

Chapter six is focussed on the future development of the Romanian refereeing system. It is divided in three subchapters. Firstly, certain advice regarding the administration part of refereeing is given in terms of the Referee Committee, referee observers system and football referee's education system. Secondly, a new promotion system is developed from the highest district league to the top league. Part of the promotion proposal is also the mentoring system which may be considered the core part of this chapter. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to other recommendations regarding the proposed career model.

The last chapter is dedicated to the study conclusion and limitations. The study conclusions will be briefly presented. Finally, there will be certain subjects proposed for further research in order to develop the football refereeing field from the sport sociology perspective.

2 Romania

Romania (Figure 1) is one of the biggest countries in south-east Europe, not only in dimension (237,500 km²) but also in population (22, 5 millions). The capital, Bucharest, - is located in the southern part of the country (inside of the Ilfov district), with a population of 2, 2 millions. (ROMANIA, 2010)



Figure 1. Map of Romania (HARTAROMANIA, 2010)

The country is divided into forty-two administrative districts: forty-one districts plus Bucharest which is also considered a district. From a political perspective, Romania has been a parliamentary republic since 1990 and part of the European Union since 2007. Romania was a communist state from 1947 until 1990. (ROMANIA, 2010) The communist period played a major influence on sporting activity in the country, especially football, as the best players could not be transferred abroad.

Although Romanian sport has had incredible results in gymnastics (Nadia Comaneci), handball (men's and women's national teams) and tennis (Ilie Nastase), football seems to be still the most loved sport in Romania. It has the biggest number of participants (one million participants; around one hundred thousand of registered players, two thousand eight hundred football clubs and four thousands referees). (FIFA, 2009)

2.1 Football in Romania

Romanian football has achieved some major significant performances in the World Cup and European Championship. Other big football performances in Romanian football are at club level through the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Super Cup winner, Steaua Bucharest, in 1986. Some semi-finals have been played by Dinamo Bucharest and Universitatea Craiova. Moreover, football is one of the sports which is not

subsidised by the Romanian government, thus the Romanian FA is in charge of this facet concerning football.

The Romanian Football Association is responsible for everything regarding this sport in Romania. Although the Professional Football League organises the top league, the Romanian Football Association organises the second league and the third league. In terms of players, the top and second leagues levels consist of professional players, while the third league consists of semi-professional players. The rest of the lower leagues are organised by the forty-two football district associations and are amateur players. In my opinion, the Romanian FA has the most important role, because it is making the rules and regulations for the Romanian football.

2.2 Romanian Football Association

Although the first Romanian club competition was in 1909, ASAR Cup (ASAR means Romanian Athletics Society Association), the Football Association Commission started its activity on the 1st of December 1912 and it was part of the Romanian Union of Sportive Federations. During this period the national championship was played regionally and in a cup format. The Romanian Football Association (RFA) was founded on the 16th of February 1930 and was admitted as a FIFA member at the Budapest Congress in 1931. The Romanian FA was one of UEFA's founder members in 1954. The Romanian Championship had its first season in 1932 and the first Romanian Cup tournament in 1933. (FRF, 2009)

The Romanian FA is also in charge of all national teams. The Romanian National team was one of thirteen countries which took part in the first World Cup Finals, in Uruguay in 1930. They have qualified on six further occasions although have not performed well during the Finals. Their best performance was a third place in the U-20 World Cup in 1981. (FIFA, 2009) Moreover, Romania has reached the European Championship three times in 1984, 2000 and 2008.

Between 1990 and 2000 was an important period for Romanian football as the national team had its best performances at the World Cups and European Championship. The national championship attracted negative media attention due to corruption scandals. The journalists reported that players, referees and managers were involved in “organising” games, to their advantage. Even if there were many situations, the Romanian Football Association did not take any decision about them against these protagonists.

The Romanian national level football system changed several times due to economical and sportive (performance related) reasons. In the 90’s, the whole Romanian society was in transition after the communist period, therefore it also affected football. The top league had sixteen teams for three – four seasons. At the same time with the economical growth, the FA decided to return back to eighteen teams in the first league. The second league had three series of eighteen teams each. In 2000, the RFA decided that two series are enough. The same thing happened in the Third League where from nine series with eighteen teams each, there are now six series with eighteen teams each. As a result, all these changes to the competition system affected also the refereeing system, therefore it was nearly impossible to create a long period strategy.

Mircea Sandu has been RFA’s president since 1990 and is one of the most respected people in Romanian football, known as “the Godfather”, and the winner of five successive RFA presidential elections. Being elected by the clubs representative of national level clubs and the presidents of district football associations, he has played an important role not only in Romania, but also in Europe. A close friend of Michele Platini, Sandu helped the Frenchman to win the UEFA’s presidency, when he arranged a meeting with all FA’s presidents from Eastern and Central Europe before the UEFA’s elections. At the same elections, which took place in 2007, Sandu was also elected as member of UEFA’s Executive Committee and sustains Romanians’ causes at the European body. One example of this support was when Sandu helped two young Romanian referees to become internationally recognised officials (FIFA list) even if they had not been refereeing in the top league for at least two years as the international rules are require.

2.3 Romanian Professional Football League

The Romanian Professional League (RPL) is the football body responsible for organising the top league (Liga 1) in Romania and operates on a similar level as RFA, having Dumitru Dragomir as president since 1991. “Corleone”, which is Dragomir’s nick-name, was club president during the communist period at Victoria Bucharest, a club owned by the Romanian secret services. He is known as one of the most influential persons in Romanian football and is a member of the Executive Committee of Romanian FA.

The RPL’s members are those from top league clubs. The club presidents play an important role in football due to their influence. The most powerful Romanian football clubs in communism times were Dinamo, the police club, Steaua, the army and Ceausescu’s son team. These two clubs from the capital have been playing an important role not only due to their economical and political influence but also because of their presidents and team-managers. Their influence is well-known around the national team, FA’s commissions and referees, in order to help these clubs to have a better position on the championship table.

2.4 Romanian Referee Committee

As part of football, Romanian refereeing has a strong tradition. There were several officials who were assigned to referee important games in European cups or national teams’ competitions. Nicolae Rainea is the most famous referee. He refereed five games at three World Cups and was also referee of the Champions League final in 1983 together with Ion Igna. Ion Craciunescu was Ion Igna’s assistant referee for the Euro ’88 semi-final, when Holland played against West Germany. He is also the last referee who was assigned to referee an important game, the Champions League Final between Ajax Amsterdam and AC Milan in 1996.

The Romanian Referee Committee is part of the Romanian FA and is formed by former top league referees. The committee is in charge of the referees from the national level (the First, Second and Third League). The district referee associations are taking care of the referees from the regional level (Fourth League and Grassroots football). An interesting fact is that most of the members have been part in different positions in all Committees since their retirement in mid '90, but none of them assumed the Romanian refereeing condition, to feel responsible for the promoted referees who proved not to have the best qualities or for all the corruption scandals. Unfortunately, a lot of corruption scandals regarding referees were in Romania in the last decades and many referees could not finish their career at forty-five years old and were forced to give up this activity sooner. There have been three generations of referees found guilty of corruption. Although in the last period there were many former referees working for the Referee Committee, one has been most of the time involved in it. Dan Petrescu, known as "Fibre", is a former FIFA referee and former president of referee commission in the '90. Moreover, he had been club president for a year. Petrescu is recognized as Sandu's and Dragomir's close friend. His name is connected to the other two Romanian football personalities.

In terms of administration, Romania is one of the three European countries which have not signed the UEFA referee convention. The convention means economical and logistic support from UEFA for the refereeing development from all levels from the Grassroots to elite level. The other two countries which have not signed the convention are San Marino and Azerbaijan. The main reasons for not signing the convention are: the lack of educational programmes for grassroots referees, the fact that many of the domestic top-league games are refereed by foreigner referees due to the corruption scandals and the fact that promoting referees is done after an exam (UEFA preferring the mentoring system and continuous monitoring programme).

The referee groups in terms of organisation were different during the last decade due to the Committee's Presidents who considered that each of them may be the best. The Romanian Referee Committee has had the strategy to promote new referees to the top leagues all the time. Therefore, there were several types of referee groups. At one stage, the referees from the First and Second League were in one group, named National Group and League Group formed by the Third League referees. After a period of time

the committee decided to dismantle this method so there were again three groups based on leagues: First, Second and Third Group. The Second and Third League referees had been in the same group for one year (2007). Finally, one President of the Committee decided to divide the referees again into three groups based on leagues. Although, there were several changes in the Romanian referee system, they have not brought the expected results.

3 RESEARCH TASK AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

This research study is focussed on proposing a new approach regarding football referees' career progress during their career in the sport. In this chapter, the research task is defined and the implementation of the study is explained in detail.

3.1 Aim of the study

The purpose of this study stems from the fact that there have not been any holistic approaches concerned about the career model of football referees, even if some of the national football associations have referees as full-time employers. Hence, there is an acute need for a theoretical approach in order to have a starting point for a referees' career model in football.

My general research aim is to underline the problems referees face nowadays regarding the professionalization of football. Furthermore, the research task is to fill the void between the career development model and football refereeing, as no research between them have been done so far.

The main aim of the study is to construct a career development model for the Romanian football referees. The model has been inspired not only by theories and studies about career development but also through my own experiences and observations as a football referee in the Romanian Third League and finally through the preliminary reading of the interviews with the Romanian top-league football referees. Recommendations regarding a promotion system will be made in order to develop Romanian refereeing in the future.

Moreover, my hypothesis is that the social, sportive and economical changes have had a direct influence on the development of football culture, and thus a direct influence on the career paths of Romanian football referees. It is important to understand the current state of Romanian refereeing and how it has reached this situation. Undoubtedly, the

changes within society and the sport affect the views and experiences of elite athletes, in the case of this study the elite Romanian football referees. Therefore, an important issue is that the Romanian refereeing system is negatively influenced by outside factors.

To understand the current status of referees, it is essential to know the history of refereeing and moreover to understand the overall social, economical and cultural connections. Just like in any other activity, refereeing can not be studied as a separate phenomenon without linking it to society and the changes that have occurred over time. That is especially the case in Romania or any other Eastern European country where the communist system affected the whole society. It is important to know and understand how refereeing culture has evolved and how top-level referees have perceived the change and development. Therefore, career development may be considered a really important topic nowadays, which should be explored.

In order to achieve the aim of my thesis, I explored and analysed the career models approaches for different fields. The general research methods selected were qualitative ones and more specifically, interviews and observation. The adapted model was pre-tested to football refereeing during interviews. They focused not only on the sportive aspect of refereeing but also on the social and cultural components, and changes which have affected it in the last decades.

3.2 Qualitative research

Choosing the right research method will help the researcher to accomplish the aim of the thesis. Therefore, it is necessary to make the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research methods. According to Patton (1980, p.22), quantitative measurement provides “a standardized framework” based on data collection through questionnaires, while qualitative data provides a “detailed descriptions of the situations, events using direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts. Qualitative data describe the people’s experiences in depth. So, qualitative data provide depth and detail.” Considering the fact that referees’ career approach is a new area in the field of sport sociology, I considered it necessary to have a detailed

perspective about the subject and thus the qualitative research method was chosen for my study.

Case studies, observation, grounded theory, interpretative phenomenological analysis, interviews, ethnography, document and content analysis are all tools of the qualitative research method. Observations and interviews were considered to be useful for my study. However, the main research method for this study was interviews. The data was collected via interviews of the Romanian top-level referees and through researching previous studies in the field.

3.2.1 Participant Observation

According to Schwartz and Jacobs (1979, cited in Adam, 2009, p.54) “participant observation refers to being in presence with others on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, the participant observer has some kind of nominal status for them; he is part of their daily life”.

I had sufficient access to the research setting because I have been refereeing since 2002. I am a Third League referee in Romania and I have also refereed in the Finnish Second Division (Kakkonen) for one year during my studies in Finland. Therefore, there had been no “red tape” from whom I have needed to get acceptance from, in order to gain access to the settings. Working closely with most of the participants (refereeing and participating at meetings together), I have been able to get in touch with them and establish a professional and personal relationship. Moreover, I was familiar with most of the stories the participants would report, during the interviews. Although many situations were observed, not all of them could be entirely verified.

Being a football referee helped me to get closer to the studied phenomenon and basically to become part of it, although this may cause problems in terms of objectivity. Schwartz and Jacobs (1979, cited in Adam, 2009, p.55) criticised the participant observer because they might “be subject to the danger to get too involved in the research setting and thereby losing his objective (scientific) orientation.”

Even though participant observation started in 2007, when the brainstorming about the thesis began, it does not serve as the main research technique for this study, thus no documentation as field notes were made. Participant observation was more used to facilitate the primary research method – guided in-depth interviews – by getting a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon which characterise football refereeing.

3.2.2 Guided In-depth Interviews

Patton (1980, p. 206) considers that there are four types of interviews: informal conversational, guided approach; standardised open-ended interviews and closed interviews. “The informal conversational interviews are without any predetermination of questions topic or wording. The guided approach interview has specific topics and issues to be covered which are specified in advance. The standardized open-ended interview means that the exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order and the questions are worded in a completely open-ended format. The last type of interview, the closed one provides questions and responses determined in advance; responses are fixed, so the respondent chooses from among these fixed answers.” (Patton, 1990, p.288 - 289)

On the other hand, in-depth interviews was defined by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.361) as the one which “provides a greater breadth than the other types of interviews.” Moreover, “in-depth interview aims to explore the complexity and in-process nature of meanings and interpretations.” (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005, p.56) More specifically, in this research, in-depth and guided approached interviews were conducted. The questions were constructed to set the conversation limits and all questions were theme-based ones. The interview themes were: General aspects of refereeing, Individual career history, Personal development, General social aspects of refereeing, General refereeing issues, Actual promotion system and Improvement proposals for the promotion system. All of the referees interviewed had to answer the same questions based on the previous themes. All interviews were conducted in Romanian.

3.3 Timeline and the description of the research process

Brainstorming around this research topic began in autumn 2007. The reason why this particular topic was chosen was due to my strong personal interest towards it. The idea of career development study started when I realised that there is a big difference between referees' job from the 80's and nowadays. The requirements are so different and refereeing is now more than a free time activity. The number of football teams increases each year which is not in keeping with the increase in the number of referees. The majority of football associations have a crucial problem in finding new officials for their games. They have adopted different strategies over time. One of these is to have just one referee at certain games instead of three. It happens all the time in lower leagues and junior games in countries like Romania, Germany, Finland and Ireland. Another strategy is to attract young people in this activity. Although in the 70's and 80's referees had started their career around thirty years old, nowadays teenagers who are sixteen or seventeen years old have already started their refereeing career.

“The earlier you start refereeing now, the better it will be for you career. I was born in a weird period. When I was a young player, the clubs were looking after old ones. As soon as I got older, the clubs started looking after young ones. The same in refereeing, when I was a young referee, they told me to wait in the line, and now when I am an experienced referee, the committee is looking after young referees. What to do? That's life!” (Referee 3)

As the basis for theoretical background, this study has major and minor concepts. The major concepts are career development, professionalization, mentoring, while the minor ones may be considered serious leisure, sport participation, motivation, or commitment. Defining concepts such as professionalization and career development are essential to this research, as they bring an insight perspective in order to know and understand refereeing as an activity and how refereeing is influenced by different factors. On the other hand, searching for refereeing literature, I found only articles about physical condition and advice regarding how to officiate a game. There is hardly any research

done on the sociological side of refereeing. Therefore, providing adequate understanding of the theoretical background contributes to the interpretation and analysis over the collected interview material. Thus, there were two stages to find the concepts relating to my theoretical background and their utility for my study. These two processes were the annotated bibliography and the literature review, which was conducted in spring 2008.

After finalising the research plan in the summer 2008, even if I used participant observation, the interviews were still considered as the best method for my study. Before conducting the interviews they needed to be structured first into a framework, which was carried out during autumn, 2008. However, the final decision on how the research would find its form was made a year later, autumn 2009.

In terms of data collection, the study was influenced by the corruption scandal in Romanian football in April 2009 when the President and Vice-President of the Romanian Referee Committee plus four top league referees were arrested. Moreover, another twelve referees were involved in this scandal. All these officials have been banned from football since May 2009. The referees involved were also two FIFA referees who were in my first sample. For some reason, they refused to be interviewed during the 2009 winter training camp.

Completing the master's thesis was an incremental process. The study structure was revised in autumn 2009, due to data analysis and conclusions. The last changes to the thesis were made in the spring of 2010. The whole research process can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1 Timeline of research process

Actions	Time
Brainstorming about the thesis subject	October 07
Annotated Bibliography	January 08
Literature Review	April 08
Research Plan	August 08
Structure of the interview framework	November 08
Sampling	December 08
Data collection	February 09
Data analysis	March 09 - September 09
Structuring and Restructuring the thesis	October 09- December 09
Strengthening the main theoretical concepts and results	January 10
Conclusions and Finalising the thesis	February 10

3.3.1 Sampling

According to Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991, p.191), “sampling is one of the most important events in the whole research process and a good sample should be the type and size that will reflect an accurate profile of the population.” Patton (1990, p. 182) found two types of sampling: the random sampling and the purposed sampling. Even if the random sampling gives a better generalisation, it is used more in quantitative research. Hence, the purposed sampling is more common in qualitative research. The purposed sampling can be divided in twelve types of sampling: extreme cases, intensity, maximum variation, homogeneous, typical case, stratified purposeful, critical case, snowball, criterion, theory-based, confirming, opportunistic, random purposeful, politically, convenience and mixed combination. The criterion sampling was considered to be appropriate for this study because it covers a wider range of Romanian top league referees. It is defined as “picking cases that meet some criterion, quality assurance.” (Patton, 1990, p.182- 183) Five top league referees out of twenty, who are officiating games in the Romanian First League, had been chosen via “criterion sampling”. Moreover, as defined by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005, p.47), “criterion sampling is all cases that meet a set of criteria. The criteria should be carefully selected, so as to define

cases that will provide detailed and rich data relevant to the particular research problem”.

The required sampling principles, defined by the researcher, for a top-level referee was that they must have reached the top-league in Romania. Therefore, the sampling, done by December 2008, was divided in four categories. These categories are: in the first category was formed by the referee with the highest international experience (more than five years as international referee), the second category is represented by the talented referee who is also international referee (FIFA referee), the third category was formed by the former international referees who are still officiating in the First League and the last category consists of the new referees in the top league. There were no more referees included in the sample because it was considered that more people would not add any extra value to the research. Additionally, a bigger sample would have expanded the research process to much.

3.3.2 Data collection

Data collection was done in spring 2009 through face-to-face interviews, conducted in Antalya (Turkey), where the Romanian Referee Committee organised the winter training session for the elite Romanian referees, between the 15th and 22nd of February 2009. All the conversations were taped with the approval of the respondents. This interview method was chosen because I was interested in noticing the respondents' body language and facial expression. The interviewees were familiar to me, through officiating games together or attending previous meetings, thus made it easy and convenient to set face-to-face appointments. All respondents agreed to be part of this study without hesitation.

On another positive note, knowing the respondents made it easy to create a conversational and relaxed interview atmosphere. At the same time the training camp atmosphere helped me because the referees were more relaxed than during the season. During the season the referees are really exhausting from a mental point of view. A normal week for a referee consists of training sessions, analysis of the previous

weekend game, media reactions, work, family and preparation for the next game, which can be a really important game. Having the opportunity to interview them in Antalya, where they could speak in a very informal manner, if they wanted to do so, was also my intention.

The aim of the interviews was to generate situations in which the respondents had the possibilities for individual interpretation. As the in-depth interviews give some freedom, the questions were not vigorously followed. They were conversational, hence depending on the respondent some questions were discussed more than others and some questions were ignored completely because they were considered irrelevant.

3.3.3 Data analysis

The data analysing process included transcribing the interviews, their translation from Romanian to English and the data analysis. First of all, all of the five interviews were transcribed during spring 2009, which meant around thirty hours of work and more than seventy pages of transcripts. Secondly, they were translated from Romanian to English as certain parts of them will be used in the thesis. This was one of the most difficult tasks because it took around seventy working hours and more than sixty pages.

In terms of analysis, I had five answers for each question, thus after comparing them, the most complete and relevant one was chosen as a quotation in the text. Furthermore, when it was found necessary, a link would be made between the quotations and the used concepts. Therefore, even if the study will come up with some suggestions and conclusions, the readers may draw different conclusions from the findings, based on each reader's experience, cultural and educational background.

3.3.4 Study Ethics

The chosen referees, via criterion sampling, were informed about the purpose of the study in advance. A cover letter was delivered to each of them before the interview in order to familiarise themselves with the interview's topic. They were given detailed information regarding the study and how the interviews would be used in the thesis. Moreover, it was agreed with them that their identities will be protected as long as they are active referees. The reason is because their image and careers may be affected if any influential person in Romanian refereeing may find out their identity and think that further actions against them should be taken.

Researching a social cultural group, as referees are, regarding their career perspective was quite a difficult task as interviewers in expressing all their feeling about the subject. It was obvious that sometimes it was difficult to express their frustrations regarding the system as long as they are part of it.

3.4 Reliability and validity

Hammersley (1992, p. 67) found that reliability is “the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observers on different occasions.” According to Kirk and Miller (1986, p. 41-42), there are three types of reliability in the social sciences: quixotic, diachronic and synchronic. Quixotic reliability means “the circumstances in which a single method of observation continually yields an unvarying measurement”, while diachronic reliability means “the stability of an observation through time. The last type of reliability is synchronic reliability and is defined as “the similarity of observations within the same time-period”, being assessed through triangulation methods. The synchronic reliability is typical for studies which are using more qualitative methods at the same time, thus also for this study because it uses guided in-depth interviews and participant observation. Furthermore, in order to have a reliable study the interviews should avoid the low-inference descriptors, which can be done through tape-recording, face to face

interviews, transcribing the interviews and using long extracts of the data in the report, as in my thesis case. (Silverman, 2006, p. 287)

Validity represents “the interpreted truth as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers.” (Hammersley, 1990, p. 57) Furthermore, Silverman (1993, p.156) considers that there are two different types of validity appropriate for qualitative methods: triangulation and respond validation. Triangulation is a comparing mix between different data and methods, whereas respond validation is “taking one’s findings back to the subjects being studied, verifying one’s findings, it is argued, one can be more confident of their validity” and is characteristic for interviews. Considering that this study has as its research methods the guided in-depth interviews and the participant observation, triangulation may be considered an appropriate method in order to validate the hypothesis and the proposed model.

4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Career has been a central concept in people's lives in the last decades. Therefore, there has been an increasing amount of literature on career and career development concepts. Hall (2002, p.10) defines career as "the lifelong sequence of role-related experiences of individuals." On the other hand, Sears (1982, p.138) considers career as "the individual's work and leisure that take place over his life span." Thus, career may be defined as the lifelong sequence of jobs or leisure activities experienced by individuals during their life span.

"Career success" is the "positive psychological and work-related outcomes accumulated as a result of one's work experience" (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001, p.2). The path from career to a successful career is through the career planning and career development. Career planning is "a continuous process of self-assessment and goal setting" (Kleinknecht and Hefferin, 1982, p.31). The process of planning and career development should be an integral part of someone's ongoing professional development and it is not a one-time event, but rather is a process that enables the people to develop as professionals and achieve the settled objectives. Career planning is a dynamic process which brings changes in the working-life. The career planning concept may be applied also to the referees who are setting different goals in order to reach top level football.

"When I started refereeing I made a scale and I wondered how many steps I had to pass and then I set my goals. There were five stages [from the Grassroots football to the FIFA list] and I made time for them and they had been fulfilled sooner or later." (Referee 1)

Miller (1968, p.18) argues that career development is "a learning process, so cognitive changes result in changes in vocational behaviours". Career development may be conceptualised as "the lifelong process of managing learning, work, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving future." (Sears, 1982,

p.138) Considering that during our lives we take certain decisions related to our careers, the career development process is the lifelong learning process which leads to changes in vocational behaviour caused by the personal growth and professional maturity. Thus, career planning represents the individual's aims and goals, while career development is represented by the tools and the learning processes which make the goals achievable. This study will focus on the development part of football refereeing and not on the planning part.

According to Sharf (1997, p.3), "career choice applies to decisions that individuals make at any point in their career about particular work or leisure activities that they choose to pursue at that time." Youth strive, nowadays, to find the right work place and environment which can provide them personal satisfaction and growth. They are forced to decide not only about their future career earlier than in the past, but also about their leisure activities. The same situation occurs in football. The junior footballers, which do not have many chances to become professional players, have to choose if they want to continue playing at a lower level or start refereeing, which can bring them to a higher level. There are situations when active players are also officials (it is accepted but someone cannot play and referee at the same level), and choose a career only when they are forced to.

4.1 Trait and Factor Theory

In the early 1900s, Parson proposed the first career development theory which became known as the "Trait and Factor" theory. It focuses on the match between, Parson's concepts based on the individual's skills, achievements, interests, personality and values known as 'trait' and, Sharf's model which focussed on the job requirements and conditions recognized as 'factor'. In Zunka's (1990, cited in Ireh, 2000) view, "Trait and Factor" theory means "matching the individual's trait with requirements of a specific occupation, subsequently solving the person's career-search problems."

"Trait and Factor" theory may be important for refereeing because each stage in refereeing requires certain abilities and this theory involved both sides: the referee with

his attitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resource and limitations considered as trait and the Committee, as factor which provides the refereeing requirements for each level, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages in order for all referees to have an equal chance of promotion. Applying such a theory in Romanian refereeing may be a new phase for the officials because that means transparency and clear promotion criteria.

4.2 Holland's Personality Theory of Vocational Choice

Holland's (1959, cited in Ireh, 2000) theory assumes that one's career choice is a product between his or her specific heredity and personal forces which include peers, parents and culture. Holland proposes six character types which are compatible with the work sectors: (1) Realistic - person is aggressive, prefers concrete problems, has good organisational skills and is unsociable; (2) Investigative - person is task-oriented; (3) Social - person is the best character for teaching and therapeutic roles; (4) Conventional - person performs structured verbal and numerical roles; (5) Enterprising - person is the right character for dominating, selling and leading others; (6) Artistic - person prefers indirect relationship and taking care of environmental problems. According to these six types, it is easier to find the right person for each necessary job and consequently, the job should be congruent with the personality.

Holland's theory is interesting from two points of view. Firstly, many of our former referees have at least one relative (usually his son) as referee, which lead me to assume that the youngsters' career decisions have been influenced by their fathers. Secondly, it would be interesting to find out which character type is the best for refereeing. Considering the types of characters presented above a combination between investigative and enterprising characters seems to be appropriate for officials. Investigative personality is determinant for referees because their main task is to take the right decisions on the pitch, while enterprising behaviour is essential as he has to manage all characters (players and team-managers) on and off the pitch.

4.3 Roe's Early Determinants of Vocational Choice

Related to Holland's theory is Roe's, which assumes that the career choice is based on childhood experiences. Therefore, there are three types of emotional climates: the emotional one (overprotective, encourages dependence), avoidance (rejecting the child) and acceptance (encourage independence). Roe (1957, cited in Ireh, 2000) found that a relationship exists between home climates and occupational classification. The classifications were: service, business contact, organisations, technology, outdoor, science, general culture, arts and entertainment. Therefore, the best childhood emotional climates for referees should be analysed and based on this, to include refereeing in one of the occupational classification.

4.4 Ginzberg's General Theory of Occupational Choice and Super's theory

According to Ginzberg, Ginzburg, Axelrad and Herma (1951, cited in Ireh, 2000) the process of occupational decision-making can be analysed in terms of three development stages that can be differentiated by the way an individual translates his or her impulses and needs into an occupational choice.

The *fantasy period* is between six and eleven years old, when the child tries out a variety of adult situations by playing work roles. In this period, the choices are made arbitrary and not based on reality, abilities or potential. The second period, between eleven and seventeen, is known as the *tentative period* and it is the first step in career decision. Many teenagers are taking their first decisions in this period based on their interests, values and potential skills. The last stage is divided in exploration, crystallisation and specification and it is known as the *realistic period*. Teenagers over eighteen are included in that group. This period is characteristic for the compromise between his or her desire and the real opportunities in the working life.

Ginzberg et al.'s original theory stated that: (a) "occupational choice is a process that remains open as long as one makes and expects to make decisions about his or her work and career"; (b) "while the successive decisions that a young person makes during the preparatory period will have a shaping influence on (his or her) later career, so will the continuing changes that (he or she) undergoes in work and life"; (c) "people make decisions about jobs and careers with an aim of optimizing their satisfaction by finding the best possible fit between their priority needs and desires and the opportunities and constraints that they confront in the world of work" (Ginzberg et al., 1951, p.172-173). As a conclusion, the occupational choice is not a single decision and the developmental process takes place over a period of ten or more years. This theory has some limitations because the researchers consider that people are taking the most important decisions regarding their careers only when the person is young. Nowadays, one person is changing the job field twice or more during their career.

On the other hand, Super's (1953, cited in Ireh, 2000) theory proposed four stages in an individual's career development: exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. These stages are based on the roles played by each person in society (studying, working, family, leisure activities). The importance of these roles can be seen by a person's participation in an activity, his or her commitment, or how much it is valued by this person.

Super's findings are more complex than Ginzberg et al.'s theory because each of Super's stages is divided into smaller periods. The *exploration stage* (fifteen to twenty-five), which includes information about different jobs, career alternatives and starting to work, has the following substages: crystallisation (people decide what they want to do), specification (period when youngsters try to find employment), and implementation (people plan their career objectives). The *establishment period* is from twenty-five to forty-five and means the starting period of working life. The establishment's substages are: stabilizing (settling down in a job and getting used with it, meeting job's requirements), consolidating (being comfortable with the job and increasing the competence level in this position), and advancing (more responsibility, bigger salary). Between forty-five and sixty-five is the *maintenance stage* (individuals maintain job and position). The substages are: holding (keeping a secured job), and innovating (contribution something to the profession). *Disengagement* (sixty-five and above) is the

final stage and is divided into: deceleration (less time working), retirement planning and retirement living. Super's conclusion was that career decisions are continuous throughout life.

Super's theory complexity is because his deduction is following the person during all his life, while the Ginzberg's premise is only for a short period of life, the adolescence stage. It is true that Ginzberg's assumption is applying also to refereeing where it is a desire for young referees, thus career decisions are important to be made at an early stage. But officiating can be a life long career development process and not only a short experience in a person's life. Thus, Super's theory is more reliable for refereeing activity.

Concluding the theory part, all theories presented have an importance for refereeing. "Trait and factor" theory is important because a successful career means to achieve certain outcomes. Secondly, the referee character is central as he needs certain skills in order to touch high levels in his career. Thirdly, as I previously mentioned taking into consideration the refereeing specificity, Super's theory can be applied better to this activity rather than Ginzberg's one. Super's theory is going to be the theoretical background for the referees' career model proposed.

4.5 The referees' career development model

In this part, I propose a model of career development in Romanian refereeing. The model has five stages and each stage is based specifically on the refereeing in Romania.

The career development model proposed in this study is adjusted after the nurses' career model recommended by Donner and Wheeler in 2001 and has as its theoretical background Super's theory in 1953. These stages are: *Exploration, Implementation, Consolidation, Stabilization* and *Maintenance* and are presented in Figure 2.

The pyramid was used to emphasise the small number of referees that reach the top level in refereeing. Therefore, out of four thousand Romanian referees only twenty five reach the top league and just seven the international level (FIFA list).



Figure 2. The career development model for Romanian football referees proposed by Andrei Antonie based on Super's career development theory (1953) and Donner and Wheeler (2001) nurses' career model.

Exploration is the first step in refereeing and is represented by the theoretical refereeing course and the first step in refereeing – officiating at the Grassroots level. Secondly, *implementation* symbolises the entry level of senior football, the Fourth League (the highest district league). *Consolidation* means the Third League (Semi-Professional Football). The *stabilization* stage signifies the Second League referees, while the top League and international career (FIFA list) are part of the *maintenance* period. Additional to all these stages and concepts is one more period, disengagement or the retirement, which will be debated at the end of the next chapter and is seen as a continuation involvement in football as observer or more as a committee member.

Although the model is inspired from Super's theory, in my model it is impossible to refer to a certain period of time. It represents basically the football league, where the referees are doing their job. Therefore, each stage will last depending of each referee's abilities and promotion possibilities.

Some of them can stop at the *consolidation* period or *stabilization*. The ideal situation is when a referee is reaching the *maintenance* level. However, each stage of the model will present certain challenges which will be discussed in chapter 5.

5 THE PATH FROM THE GRASSROOTS TO THE FIFA LIST

In this chapter, each stage of the proposed model will be described in detail, in terms of the required skills. At the same time, each model level means certain challenges for referees, which will be also presented. Therefore, the study is going to follow an ideal referee's career from their first referees' training-course until their first international game, which could be considered as a professionalization path in refereeing. Thus, professionalization may be considered the core concept of this chapter. Quotes from the interviews are used to enforce the importance of each level and its characteristics. Additionally, the quotes strengthen the theoretical concepts that are used in each part of this chapter. The model description will be followed with the withdrawal part, while at the end of this chapter some conclusions will be presented.

Professionalization is not a new concept and represents the path from an occupation to a profession. According to Vollmer and Mills (1966, p.11), professionalization represents "an indigenous effort to introduce order into an area of vocational life which is prey to the free-playing and disorganising tendencies of a vast, mobile and differentiated society undergoing continuous change. It seeks to clothe a given area with standards of excellence, to establish rules of conduct, to develop a sense of responsibility, to set criteria for recruitment and training, to ensure a measure of protection for members, to establish collective control over the area, and to elevate it to a position of dignity and social standing in the society."

Weber (1968, cited in Ritzer, 1975, p.631) found eleven professionalization characteristics: power, general systematic knowledge, rational training, vocational qualification, specialization, the existence of a clientele, salaries, promotions, professional duties, a distinctive way of life and a full-time occupation. Each of these elements will be presented in this chapter as part of the professionalization process. However, the most important concept is vocational qualification. The National Council of Vocational Qualifications (1989, cited in Norman and Bonnett, 1995, p.59) defines vocational qualification as "a statement of competence clearly relevant to work and intended to facilitate entry into, or progression in, employment and further learning, issued to an individual by a recognised awarding body." According to the same

organisation, vocational qualification has five levels, as many as the proposed referee career model. Therefore, each referee level will also be analysed from the vocational qualification perspective.

Considering professionalization characteristics, football refereeing has witnessed tremendous changes in the last ten years. Although the pace and outcomes of those changes varied throughout the world, the goal everywhere was to transform refereeing from an free-time occupation to a profession comprising autonomous, well-educated, career-oriented workers, especially at the highest level such as in European top leagues and FIFA list. The Referee Committees and referees' trade unions, as organisations, are focusing on redesigning educational programmes to meet the changing needs in football, implementing standards of practice, and establishing refereeing as a respected and credible profession. The National Referee Committees have begun to think that refereeing is more than a free-time occupation thus could be considered a career. As a result, they have taken more control and started to look at how to create futures for referees, as individuals, and for the profession as a whole. Thus, the path towards professionalization starts from the referee courses and reaches the highest level at the top league. It follows the referee's career all the way long.

5.1 Football referee

One generally accepted definition of a referee is an official who supervises a game or match to ensure that the rules are adhered to. According to Anshel, Hamill, Haywood, Horvat and Plowman (1991, p. 10), the referee is "the person who enforces the rules of participation in sport competition and administers sanctions (penalties) in case of rule violations," being in the overall control of the game. He is helped by two other officials on the field of play called referee's assistants or linesmen." (Cox, 1999, p.31) In my opinion, this is the most complex and complete definition and will be used in this study. Although there is no clear definition regarding the referee in the "Laws of the Game", the International Board specify that the referee has "full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed" (FIFA, 2006, p.16). So the four officials have the power to decide everything regarding a

football game, but the only one who is responsible for the facts is the referee because he has the last decision regarding the game. The assistants and the fourth official “assist the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game” (FIFA, 2006, p.16). It is important to know that this study is referring only about referees and not about assistants, also known as linesmen. At the same time, in this study the referee will be named also as an official.

Finally, refereeing may be defined also as the art of managing human behaviour through enforcing the laws of the game. Officiating is a sequential series of processes and responses such as: Vision, Thinking, Decision-Making, and Value Judgment. These processes happen very rapidly. The official should be capable of responding promptly to any infringement of the laws and make a prompt value judgement of the players’ actions. If we consider the referee as a state authority, he is for example: a policeman, because he is watching the game closely, federal prosecutor due to evaluation, judge when he is deciding and executor officer when the laws are enforced.

5.2 Becoming a football referee

“I started refereeing because I liked the idea of justice, discipline and honesty.”
(Referee 1)

The officials’ age limit has been a debated issue not only concerning their retiring age but also about their starting age. In the last century, refereeing was an alternative for retired players in their thirties, while junior football is officiated by adolescent referees, nowadays. This is not only an effect of the football development and the opportunities offered by refereeing but also due to the continuous increase in number of football players’. There are no rules regarding their starting age, but more and more teenagers start refereeing when they are fourteen or fifteen. Even if there is no a certain recipe for success in refereeing most of the top level referees had been playing football when they were young.

“In the 70’s referees began when they were older than thirty, in the 90’s older than twenty, and nowadays teenager games - in Holland and Germany are refereed by someone who is the same age or one year older. If we need referees for performance, they must be very young, for example - to be sixteen years when they get to the Fourth League, so that they can referee the Top League when they are twenty-five.” (Referee 1)

Starting refereeing at an early age does not automatically guarantee one the possibility to participate at international competitions as the World Cup. However, there are some disadvantages such as lack of team-work or social skills, which you get from participating in a team sport. There is also one weakness, the fact that youth do not have enough time to play in order to understand football, by practicing it. Referees who have a playing history are considered more talented, by observers, than others who have not practiced, because former players are considered that they have a better knowledge of the game.

“Maybe starting when they are seventeen or eighteen years old is ideal but in parallel to practicing the sport. Sport develops team-spirit, which some referees are missing. The sport orders you; [it] makes you to be punctual at practice.” (Referee 4)

Therefore the district referee associations try to attract young officials in order to educate them for the highest level, such as domestic top leagues and international games. In conclusion, one identified problem of the district referee associations is the lack of marketing strategies in order to attract new teenagers to refereeing. However, the recruited teenagers take their first steps on the path to become a referee, when they start the referee course, which is assimilated with the *Exploration* period.

5.3 Exploration – The Referee Course and Grassroots Football

Exploration is the first stage of the proposed model and means “examination in order to learn and to find out more about something.” (Oxford Dictionary, 1995, p.406) The *Exploration* period is around two years depending on the needs of each district football association, meaning the number of registered referees and the number of senior football leagues. The first part of the *Exploration* period is the referee course, which lasts around six months; the second part is represented by the Grassroots football.

People who are not the greatest footballers but want to be involved due to their love for the game start refereeing. Sir Alex Ferguson (2008, p. xi) wrote in the book’s foreword “Seeing Red” that the referees, who are getting involved at a young age at the grassroots level, deserve credit and thank from all the football fans. Youth involved in football as players, but do not have many opportunities to become professional players and want to remain in football have refereeing as alternative. This is the main reason for choosing motivation as a concept for the *Exploration* period. Starting refereeing appears as an alternative to playing football but allows one to still being involved in the world of football.

“One of the reasons to become a referee was that I did not want to break from this phenomenon that is football. I really like this way of life with daily training, training camps and sporting life. I wanted to have continuity.” (Referee 4)

5.3.1 Motivation for football persistence

“For athletes and referees it is a matter of determination. When you stop to like it, you should leave the competition. It is about individual motivation. It can be a way of life, it can be a hobby. “(Referee 5)

Vallerand and Thill (1993, cited in Sarrazin et al, 2002, p. 395) defined motivation as “the hypothetical construct used to describe the internal and/or external forces that produce the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behaviour”. Clary, Ridge, Stukas, Snyder, Copeland, Haugen and Miene (1998) functionally described motivation as “the reasons, purposes, plan, and goals that underlie and perpetuate individual action”.

Motivation can be defined also as self-determination. Sarrazin, Vallerand, Guillet, Pelletier and Cury (2002, p.396) consider that self-determination can be divided into three types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation, but only intrinsic motivation is a characteristic for refereeing. Deci (1971, p.107) defined intrinsic motivation as doing an activity for the pleasure it provides or for its own sake.

Using Vallerand and his colleague’s findings, Sarrazin et al. (2002, p.397) proposed three forms of intrinsic motivation: “towards knowledge (engaging in sport for the pleasure and satisfaction that one explores while learning, exploring or trying to understand something new), toward accomplishment (practising sport for pleasure and satisfaction of out-doing oneself and the process of trying to reach new personal objectives), and toward experiencing stimulation (sensory pleasure, aesthetic experiences, fun and excitement).” In refereeing, the first form of intrinsic motivation (knowledge) is the referee course, the first step before becoming a referee. Secondly, the accomplishment is represented through promotion from a lower level to a higher level, while refereeing for one’s pleasure means experiencing stimulation.

“Being a referee means to carry on with my playing life, because I have been part of football since I was child. I have always wanted to be part of football, and becoming a referee came due to an end to my playing career and I believe that I will always do only football. I am not interested in anything else other than football. Half of my life is dedicated to family and the other half is football.” (Referee 3)

“Extrinsic motivation is instrumental in nature and is experienced when someone engages in an activity as a means to an end”. (Sarrazin et al., 2002, p.397) Extrinsic motivation has three levels: external regulation, interjected regulation and identified regulation.

Deci and Ryan (2000, cited in Sarrazin et al., 2002, p.397) defined amotivation as the lowest level on the self-determination continuum which is neither extrinsic nor intrinsic. At the same time, amotivated sportive has the perception of lack of contingency between actions and outcomes, feeling incompetent and lack of control, having as a consequence his drop-out.

5.3.2 Referees' Course Logistics

“District Referee committees should be more involved in this activity because there are no conditions. We should begin from the bottom, to have a projector, a DVD, a laptop, and even once a week to meet with the county referees to prepare them for what refereeing really means. Practically, refereeing is a self-teaching activity in Romania.” (Referee 3)

Unfortunately, the district referee committees have no infrastructure facilities in order to educate new referees. The only teaching material is the book “Laws of the Game”. Moreover, not many high level referees are interested in teaching at the referee school and the ones who are actually running the courses seem not to have pedagogical skills. As a result, the new referees' education is lacking serious teaching materials. The football boards could help the referees a lot but there is no possibility to present them as all of them are in electronic format. From a pedagogical point of view, they should learn more from the course through images and video-clips but they are forced to find out on their own on the pitch, the place where the action happens.

5.3.3. Refereeing at Grassroots level

“The junior [up to U-15] games have the most difficult situations due to their strange dynamic, and the referee does not know what to call.” (Referee 4)

There is no difference between referee and assistants in grassroots football because the officials are doing both jobs, depending on their appointments. The specialization appears just when they are promoted to the Fourth League. Moreover, there are associations which are forced to appoint only one referee at the grassroots football games due to the lack of referees and the amount of games. At the same time, these games do not have any supervisors, thus many officials have to do the job on their own without any feed-back of their work. Basically, the first year after the referee course is spent by the new officials at the grassroots level, officiating matches such as mini-pitch and junior football. Therefore, it is a period full of emotions and the officials can enjoy football and not feel the high level of pressure.

“I remember with love, joy and emotions, excepting the first match which I do not forget but does not have a major importance, because the first game, where I was appointed, was postponed which is not a great memory. I remember a U-14 game in 2003, and the winner went to the final tournament. It was a beautiful period when I was refereeing important games which decided hierarchies.” (Referee 5)

Refereeing important games at junior level means that the referee is prepared for the next step in his career which is the highest league in the regional level, the Fourth League, which is the *Implementation* period in an official career. To sum up the *Exploration* period, the interviewed referees agreed that there is a lack of educated instructing for new referees and lack of teaching materials (DVD's, projector etc.)

In terms of professionalization, refereeing means a general systematic knowledge, Level One of the vocational qualification, power, existence of a clientele and salary. Firstly,

general systematic knowledge is represented by Laws of the Game. All the basic facts are gained during the referee's course. Secondly, the first level of vocational qualification means "the competence that involves the application of knowledge in the performance of a range of varied work activities, most of which are routine and predictable." (ENCYCLOPEDIA.THEFREEDICTIONARY, 2010) The first level of vocational qualification is obtained through refereeing at the Grassroots level. The power is given by the "Laws of the Game" which says that the referee is in charge of everything that happens on and off the pitch. Lastly, the clientele is represented by the football clubs, while the salary means the money received by referees for each game officiated.

5.4 Implementation – The Fourth League

If the *Exploration* period is more focused on discovering refereeing and its basic features, the *Implementation* means the first step in refereeing as sport participation. *Implementation* means "to put something into effect, to carry something out." (Oxford Dictionary, 1995, p.595) The Fourth League, the highest regional league, has its specificity when we are talking about the players who are running this division.

"In the Fourth League, football is a contact sport. It is a difficult task for a referee, because all the experienced players from the national leagues in their old age come there to play and of course they cannot run. It is difficult for the young referees to make the right decisions." (Referee 2)

Even though it is difficult for the young referees to make the right decisions, officiating at this level is an easy task most of the times, because the new referees are just implementing the things learned from the referee course and grassroots football. Each referee starts usually as an assistant referee and after a certain period (six months) they decide if they want to continue as linesman or start as a referee. Moreover, it is the period when they do not really realise what refereeing really means, for example, the

referee team is usually meeting at the stadium one hour before the game, they prepare the administrative tasks (match sheet) and officiate the match. After the game, the referee complete the match sheet in order to be signed by the teams and afterwards, the referee team has a short chat, with the observer, regarding the game and leave for home.

“The Fourth League is an inertia running, but the referees do not realise many things, you are like a child in the kindergarten, you do not figure exactly what happens, it is like an inertia movement, not giving great attention, you are less than 50% focused on refereeing” (Referee 5)

Getting to the Fourth League may be the easiest step in refereeing, because there is no exam and the promotion is done as a consequence of refereeing qualification. The only requirements needed to be fulfilled is to pass the physical and theoretical tests, thus most of the referees, would officiate at least for some time at this level.

5.4.1 Demand of physical preparation

The Council of Europe defines sport in the European Sports Charter (1992, article 2, p. 1) as “all form of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels”.

Sport has been defined as “institutionalized physical activity with elements of competition. Sport participation must be physically and psychologically active in a formal sport organization.” (Patriksson, 1988, p.31) Furthermore, researchers believe that sport participation influences mental health and psychosocial development (Skard and Vaglum, 1989, p.65).

There are four major reasons for sport participation: competences (learn and improve skills), affiliation (makes friends, be part of a team), fitness (be physically active, get in shape) and fun. Each referee is part of a referee club so he should have certain friends there; he graduated the referee course and has the competence to officiate the football games. Passing the physical test and each game means also to be physically active, while having fun is every game which finishes without controversial situations and both teams congratulate them for the performance. Analysing all sport participation perspectives, refereeing can be considered sport participation.

The physical preparation is really important for referees because the game's speed has increased and modern football is more demanding, from a fitness point of view in the last few years. Previous studies made by English, Danish and Japanese researchers revealed a considerable toll, around ten kilometres being covered by a referee in a typical match. Of this distance, it is estimated that 47% is spent jogging, 23% walking, 12% sprinting, and 18% reverse running, with an average heart rate of one hundred and sixty five beats per minute recorded. (Wolfson and Neave, 2005, p.233)

All the referees interviewed agreed that physical preparation is the first thing which should be done in order to have good performances on the pitch. Therefore, each of them is doing daily training.

“I dedicate two - three hours of training daily: ninety minutes for training and another ninety minutes for recovery (pool, sauna and shower).” (Referee 3)

The referee fitness test changed in the last period due to football developments. The old test was the Cooper test and consisted of twelve minutes continuous running on an athletic track and the referees had to do a minimum of two thousand seven hundred meters. Realising that the Cooper test had not been reliable for refereeing, the international referee bodies changed the fitness test. Nowadays, two things are very important in football: speed and capacity for high intensity run. Thus, UEFA decided to have a new fitness test, known as the FIFA test, which is an important barometer of the physical condition. The first part of the test consists in six sprints of forty meters, and the second part is called “Interval” test with ten laps of four hundred meters athletic track. The test measures stamina: one hundred and fifty meters tempo run must be done

in thirty seconds time limit, and each run is split by thirty-five seconds and fifty meters recovery walk. Mike Riley (UEFA, 2008), the English FIFA referee, pointed that: “the new test is very good because it is exactly what we are doing on the pitch, the sprints are toward the penalty areas, and the interval running is exactly like refereeing: run, walk, jog and after that run again. It is basically the same like a football match.”

At the same time, the UEFA’s Referee Fitness Expert, Werner Helsen, found out that: “the referees who perform best in the new physical test perform best also on the football pitch, the one with the lowest heart rate in the interval test show the highest intensity running during the game. Those who perform the best in the fitness test, they show the closest distances from incidents, so in that respect we can predict based on the fitness test what referee will perform better or will be able to perform if the game asks during match.” (UEFA, 2008)

But officiating in the highest regional league does not mean just passing the fitness test. Based on previous studies, Curtis, McTeer and White (1999, p. 349) found that there are also negative aspects of sport participation such as excessively frequent involvement, too rigorous or over competitive activities. In refereeing, most of the negative experiences at regional levels are due to violence, which can make referees drop out from this activity.

The atmosphere is sometimes hostile in the countryside, where the home team fans are expecting to be helped by referees to win, and unfortunately there are also some physical violence situations, which results in young referees dropping out.

“It was one of my first games in the Fourth League, where the away team was top of the table. In the third minute, the away team forward has a goal opportunity and kicked the ball towards the goal. At this moment, the goalkeeper kicked the opponent in the penalty area. I stop the game; showed the red card to goalkeeper and a penalty kick for the away team. Luckily for me was that being in the countryside, there was no fence around the pitch, and the peasants stay always beside the away team post and along the lines. Thus there was no at the

home team's goal. When I showed the red card, the whole village started to run after me, including the home team players. I looked and noticed that beside the goal was a vineyard, so I went there and ran and ran, (I was twenty-one), thus the distance between me and them get bigger. At a certain point, one of the peasants shouted: "Hey! Wait a second" and they started to negotiate with me, about my decision. "Red card but no penalty". In the end, they realised that there was no room for negotiating. I sent off the goalkeeper and gave a penalty kick. After the game, they invited me for supper and the home team captain explained to me why they were doing this: "Hey dude, I wanted to tell you something: you are the only referee that has not changed a decision. Until now, we have twisted them all; you are the first that we could not manage to convince". (Referee 3)

Being courageous and stubborn, in a positive way, can be considered determinant skills when you are refereeing in the Fourth League. These are personality features which are considered as important for any official, but a referee can show them just at this level if, we are refereeing from a physical aggression perspective, because verbal violence is present during the referees' entire career. However, most of the referees who have strong personalities and enjoy refereeing are able to get over the difficult moments and continue their career path.

"Even if I got beat about three or four times I never thought to give up refereeing." (Referee 2)

Specialization, rational training and Level 2 of vocational qualification are the professionalization's characteristics which appear during the *Implementation* period. Specialization means the separation between referees and assistant referees, while rational training is the demand of physical preparation in order to be fit for the games. Level Two of vocational qualification means "the competence that involves the application of knowledge in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a

variety of contexts. Some of these activities are complex or non-routine and there is some individual responsibility or autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, is often a requirement.” (ENCYCLOPEDIA. THEFREEDICTIONARY, 2010) The individual responsibility and autonomy is refereeing at the rational training which demands a good performance on the pitch. Moreover, starting from the Fourth League, team work is playing an important role in the referee team.

Summarising the *Implementation* period, the interviews revealed not only the importance of physical preparation but also the challenges, such as physical and verbal violence, the referees have to face in order to continue their sport career. Therefore two or three years experience at this point, can give referees the expertise to move to a higher level. Referees who succeed in passing over these district level challenges will get to a higher level, which is the *Consolidation* period.

5.5 Consolidation – The Third League

The Third League means the lowest national league and consolidation is the action of “becoming or making something more solid or strong; to unite or combine things into one.” (Oxford Dictionary, 1995, p.246)

“The Third League is the best place where you can learn refereeing, and is clearly the basis and foundation for the next stages. It is good because referees can referee many games at this level, the Third League games, combined with the national junior games which are two days later. The Third League has been the most important period; it laid the foundation bricks for the future. This period creates the refereeing root for what is going to follow. It is clear that refereeing every week is very important at that level.” (Referee 5)

The *Consolidation* phase may be considered the most important period from the refereeing development perspective, as this is the first moment when you start feeling that refereeing is an important activity. If the *Implementation* period was considered by referee 5 as the referees' kindergarten, the Third League is the primary school, the place where the students create their own style of learning and development. Moreover, based on the previous quote, the referee has the opportunity to create their own style of refereeing, trying different methods of positioning on the pitch, aiming to create their own referee personality, as this is the only place in a referee's career when the pressure is not high.

"The most important years in refereeing are in the Third League. There nobody tells you anything even if you do not show a yellow card, or you influence the outcome of the game." (Referee 4)

The *Consolidation* period does not bring only refereeing benefits but also personal ones, such as travelling around the country and being in contact with new people.

"Starting with the Third League, I had already started to feel like a referee. Being a national referee, you have the opportunity to meet new people, thus you can make new friends and to understand how people from different parts of the country are thinking. At the same time, you visit new places and meet new cultures and traditions from different parts of the country." (Referee 3)

Travelling all over the country and visiting new towns makes refereeing a serious activity. Thus most of the referees' free time is spent on officiating games so from the theoretical concepts perspective this activity can be considered as a serious leisure.

5.5.1 Refereeing as a hobby

The “serious leisure” concept developed by Stebbins (2005a, p.23) is the “systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find there in the acquisition and the expression of a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience”. Stebbins developed the concept after several case studies on musicians, therapists, baseball players, archaeologists, astronomers, magicians and stand-up comedians. (Yoder, 1997, p 407)

According to Baldwin and Norris (1999, p.3), Stebbins recognised that serious leisure participant are hobbyist, career volunteering and amateurs from the societal perspective. Hobbyists are classified according to five categories: collectors, makers and tinkerers, activity participants (in non-competitive, rule based, and pursuits), players of sports and games (in competitive, rule based activities with no professional counterparts) and the enthusiasts of the liberal arts hobbies. Many of them accomplish this by reading voraciously in a field of art, sport, cuisine, language, culture, history, science, philosophy, politics, or literature. Career volunteers provide manifold services in education, science, civic affairs. (Stebbins, 2005b, p 185) Amateurs are found in art, science, sport, and entertainment. It is also a widely held assumption that serious leisure is an adult male pursuit, due to male stream leisure studies and conclusions drawn from feminist leisure analysis (Tomlinson, 1993, cited in Stebbins, 2005b, p. 186). Even if serious leisure is not considered a professional activity, refereeing in the Romanian Third League seems to be more than a hobby. The main reason is because the games are played on Friday, thus the official hardly can find a job which permits them to be out of office every Friday.

Social identity theory proposes that people do not simply relate to each other as independent or isolated individuals. Instead, membership of a social group, and being seen by others to be a member of a group, is an important mediator of an individual’s cognitive, affective and behavioural processes (Jones, 2000, p.286). As Gillespie, Leffler and Lerner (2002) suggest serious leisure is able to generate its own social identities, including patterns of time allocation, expenditures, family relationships and

norms. Consequently, serious leisure is a higher level of sport participation, like refereeing in the Third League.

Serious leisure is characterised by six distinctive qualities: perseverance, the following of a 'career' path, significant personal effort, benefits to the individual, the identification of participants with the activity, and the unique ethos that exists within the activity (Stebbins, 2001). *Consolidation* may be considered the most important part of refereeing from the formation perspective. Most of the time is dedicated to refereeing, because the games are on Friday, which means personal effort. The career path gives referees hope that they can get a promotion. Lastly, they are identified socially as part of refereeing. Therefore, analysing the serious leisure's characteristics, refereeing can also be interpreted as serious leisure.

5.5.2 Observers' role in football refereeing

"I have learned something from every observer. The assessors have told me something I had to improve after each game, and I wrote in my notebook. When I met him the second time, I was careful not to make the same mistakes that I made in the previous game when they were observer and this helped me very much. People appreciated me because I had been receptive and attentive to what I received." (Referee 3)

Considering the best period for refereeing development, the Third League should provide good career development conditions. A Scottish referee observer, Robert Valentine commented about his role as an observer. "My role on a match day is to first of all view the referee's performance. I have to understand these are young referees at the beginning of their career and so I am not looking to be critical of them, but in a coaching capacity to see if they make some small mistakes which can be rectified for future matches." (Adams and Harrison, 2009) The observers point should be constructive and sometimes a hard process for the referees. There are difficult situations

but, when a referee is willing to learn and to progress, they find the way to profit from that feed-back and learn from it. The referee's personality, open-mindedness and the ability to listen ability to the observer is really important at this level for improvements in future performances.

On the other hand, not all observers are really interested in developing all referees' abilities and this happens due to personal interest. The same referee interviewed recognised that the biggest problem in Romanian refereeing is the observers system. They are recruited from the former referees but there is not any selection procedure, when we are talking about their ethics or knowledge of the laws.

“Each game has four referees and one observer who should be the fifth member of the referee team, but this does not always happen and it is a very serious issue. They consider that we are making mistakes on purpose. Current observers have forgotten that they were referees and made mistakes like us. That is the biggest problem in Romanian refereeing. They forgot that they were referees and now they are assessors. There is no referee on earth that does not make mistakes, but, in Romania, it depends what game goes wrong, which people or club president is involved and the most important who is there to defend you.”
(Referee 3)

Moreover, the observers are influenced by the club and they cannot be objective in their work.

“In Romania, some observers have ulterior motives, when the referee says something he can feel the hostility in his voice. The observer says: if I give you eight, I will have problems with X-team, while if I give you six then Z-team will be unhappy. He [observer] must go to the game and find exactly the referees' team performance with its good and not so good parts of it. Unfortunately, in

Romania, more than 70% of the observers do not know how to behave with the referees and to help us for future development. There is no observer to come to congratulate and make us feel that our work is appreciated, even if we had a less than good game.” (Referee 4)

The observers’ attitude and education was emphasised best during one interview when one referee outlined the difference between the foreign observers and the Romanian ones.

“The difference is similar to the gap between a Romanian Third League game and a UEFA Champions League game.” (Referee 1)

Furthermore, there are also protected officials, the relatives of the former top league referees, who do not meet the required standards for refereeing; these issues especially are present in the highest level. There was a situation when the former Romanian Referee Committee’s president son, Augustus Constantin, who missed all the physical tests in 2008, but he continued to referee in the top league. (Udrea and Marinas, 2009) Most of these former referees are involved in refereeing activity, having members’ positions in the Romanian Referee Committee and their personal concerns. An interesting fact is that three out of the last four Referee Committee presidents have one son each refereeing in the top league, while two out of three sons are international referees. This creates a lot of frustration for actual referees who feel that not everybody has an equal opportunity to develop their career.

“The committee members [observers] are more concerned with their children who are referees and most of them are refereeing in the First and Second League, rather than developing Romanian officials.” (Referee 3)

All the referees interviewed concluded that a three year period in the Third League is the best period in order to achieve all the skills necessary for the next stage in their career which is the *Stabilization* period. At the same time, the main issues of the *Consolidation* period are the observers and the game schedules. The observers because

they seem not to be really interested in their job, due to their lack of education, and the game schedule because the referees can hardly find a job which permit them to leave the office every Friday during the season. Three professionalization characteristics appear in the *Consolidation* period. Firstly, promotion is done after an exam from the Fourth League to the third. Secondly, a distinctive way of life appears also because the referees from the Third League are travelling around the country in order to referee different games. Thirdly, the vocational qualification third level is “the competence that involves the application of knowledge in a broad range of varied work activities performed in a wide variety of contexts, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable responsibility and autonomy and control or guidance of others is often required.” (ENCYCLOPEDIA.THEFREEDICTIONARY, 2010) Refereeing in the Third League is more demanding from the sportive perspective, meaning more responsibility. At the same time, guidance and control are represented by observers which should help referees to create their own style and habits regarding officiating.

5.6 Stabilization – The Second League

“The Second League is like the college for the students. There is no longer room for games, now you cannot afford to do certain things, you have a bigger responsibility, and the training must become more responsible. Refereeing in the Second League, you meet new situations like travelling to the game one day before; the games are filmed, sometimes live on TV, journalists and spectators.”
(Referee 5)

There is not a big difference between the Third and Second League. *Stabilization* is the period when the officials become a name in refereeing. They become known as a national level referee. The official’s performances do not vary greatly and there is no room for big mistakes, when it is about the decisions on the pitch. It is not only the maturity in refereeing but also the preparation period for the top league from a refereeing perspective. Becoming a Second League referee means a lot for one’s career

perspective and it is one of the first moments when you feeling that your perseverance has paid off. Theoretically this can be explained through commitment.

5.6.1 Commitment to refereeing activity

Commitment is another type of perseverance. Mowday, Porter and Steer (1982) defined commitment as a relative strength of an individual's identification and his involvement in a particular activity or organization. The three components that contribute to the individual's commitment level are affective, normative, and continuance. Each component of commitment develops individually as a function of different antecedents; however patterns of relationships between affective, normative, and continuance commitment have been shown to exist (Allen and Meyer, 1990) where the interaction between each commitment type has been deemed significant enough to examine commitment as a single construct (Riketta, 2002). Sarrazin et al. (2002, p.403) concluded that commitment represents "individuals' psychological state of attachment to their participation or a motivational force for continued involvement". Moreover, Rusbult (1983, cited in Sarrazin et al., 2002, p.404) defined it as an "individual's intent to stick with an activity or a relationship and to feel psychologically "attached" to it."

In terms of sport, Casper, Gray and Stellino (2007, p. 256) consider sport commitment as "a psychological state representing the desire and resolve to continue sport participation in a particular program, specific sport, or sport in general. Moreover, another definition is "a psychological construct reflecting the desire and resolve to continue participation in a sport over time" (Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons and Keeler, 1993, cited in Casper et al, 2007, 257). Scanlan et al. (2003, p. 361) defined the construct as "various levels of specificity including commitment to sport in general, to a specific sport or sport program, to a specific team." The same study concluded that sport commitment has six components: sport enjoyment, involvement opportunities, involvement alternatives, personal investments, social constraints and social support. Each of these components will be analysed in this part in order to emphasise the commitment importance for the Second League referees.

Sport enjoyment is “the positive affective response to the sport experience that reflects generalised feelings such as pleasure, liking and fun”. (Scanlan et al., 2003, p.367) Refereeing in the Second League is a moment of pleasure, because the official can feel the smell of the potential top league and at the same time the lack of pressure which is provided by this level. Moreover, the difference between the Third and the Second League is not big, thus the games are not really demanding, the only difference is the team’s infrastructure and the game preparation from an organisational point of view.

“... for me the most important thing is refereeing. It is the biggest pleasure for me, football is my life, and refereeing is my pleasure. I have a great pleasure to be on the football pitch to referee. I am feeling on cloud nine when I am refereeing.” (Referee 3)

Involvement opportunities represent “valued opportunities that are present only through continued involvement.” Involvement alternatives are “the attractiveness of the most preferred alternatives to continued participation in the current endeavour”. Personal investment is seen as “the resources put into the activity, which can not be recovered if participation is discontinued.” (Scanlan et al., 2003, p.367) Refereeing means a lot of sacrifices, as two periodical physical and theoretical tests have to be passed, which demand proper preparation. Having the appointments during the week-ends, the referee cannot participate in social activities such as weddings, parties or other meetings between friends.

“Everything I have done it has been due to a great passion and I have felt like this. I have never felt sorry that I have not gone to the night-club but rather I went home to run or I have not gone with my friends for a barbecue or on holiday and I went to referee a game.” (Referee 4)

5.6.2 Publicity in football refereeing

“Refereeing means an important source of image and financial position. In my town where everybody knows and congratulates me after the good games and this is the enormous satisfaction, when the people appreciate me. When I was suspended, people stopped me on the street and encouraged me; this is worth more than any money that I have earned from refereeing.” (Referee 4)

Social constraints and support are part of the referee’s social image. Social constraints mean “the social expectations or norms that create the feeling of obligation, to remain in the activity”, while the social support is defined as “the support and encouragement the athlete perceives that significant others provide for his or her involvement in sport”. (Scanlan et al., 2003, p.367) Officiating at the second highest level brings social recognition, especially in small communities, where everybody knows everybody. Furthermore, it is really pleasing when a referee feels that the people appreciate their work, congratulating them after a good performance and also supporting them after a controversial game.

Although the referees are respected persons, they are not popular ones because each of their decisions makes some people unhappy. Regardless, the social recognition does not mean only people’s appreciation, but also some advantages to be a public person, when we are talking about solving daily problems.

“There are not many top league referees and this status makes you become a public person and from this position you can solve daily problems easier than others. Anyway, refereeing brings you public recognition, social status and position, wherefrom you can get some collateral benefits.” (Referee 2)

Even though refereeing has some external benefits such as social recognition and financial benefits, the football fans do not consider the referees the most honest people in the world. Fans call them cheaters even if the whole refereeing foundation is that they make honest decisions. They want to get the right decisions but if there are mistakes, they should be honest mistakes.

“In Romania, they do not accept human error. Anyone who is working makes mistakes. It is painful to consider that the referees are thieves. The thieves are the ones who steal from the pockets.” (Referee 4)

Considering referees as thieves stems from Romania’s cultural background when former referees had to adapt to the political and social situation which was in Romania, at that time, like the communist period and the transition to democracy, which is understood differently by each Romanian referee. Thus active referees believe their image is tainted by these past events.

“The “glorious” past of former referees is the problem. I think we need some time to become credible.” (Referee 4)

Anyway, many of the officials have done it for a long time and it becomes a life style for them, which can be defined as commitment to this activity. At the same time, officiating at the second level, they have some promotion expectations, thus there are continuing to do this job. Getting appointments in the second level requires some skills and one of them is game management.

5.6.3 Game Management

“You have to feel the game, to keep it in hands, when the players are focusing just on their playing, you leave it free and let them play football, but when you notice that they start again with unsporting behaviour, you must be more strict

and call everything to calm them down. That means to feel the game” (Referee 3)

The football associations are not only looking after referees who have good stamina and excellent theoretical preparation, but also the referee committees need officials who are feeling the game (“Fingerspitzengefühl”) in German. This concept refers to tact and instinct, knowing what to do and when to do it. According to UEFA Champions League Magazine (2009, p. 13), the good referees are the ones who are feeling (Fingerspitzengefühl) the game: this word is useful when a referee adheres to the rules of the game taking special circumstances into account (using one’s common sense). Typically he should make allowances for a derby or playing conditions, or he does not caution someone for an innocuous foul in injury time in a friendly game. If a red card is fifty-fifty, and the referee did not show it that means he used fingerspitzengefühl. “If one team is losing by four or more goals, a referee with fingerspitzengefühl should choose to blow for full-time on ninth minutes rather playing any time added on”. Anyway, every referee is different. Some rule the match with an iron hand, while others put the game into players’ hands. Some referees control a game just stepping onto the field. Their personality alone controls the game. Others try to control the game by issuing cards.

“Michael Vautrot [former French referee] considers referees as pilots of an airplane, when the weather is beautiful all the pilots are good, but when there are storms or electrical discharges, they must prove their quality, because the pilots are responsible for all passengers. Thus, a good referee is the one, like the pilot during unfavourable weather, who knows to press the right buttons at the right moment.” (Referee 4)

But feeling the game does not mean only to make decisions according to the game spirit. It also means to be able to solve the most difficult moments of game where the tension reaches high levels. Therefore, the referee’s reaction can solve the problems on the pitch in order not to affect the football show.

Furthermore, he is responsible for everything that happens during the football game he was appointed to and the best way to do it is through the game management. Management may be defined as “the attainment of organisational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organising, staffing, directing, and controlling organisational resources.” (Daft, 1999, p.35) Therefore, the manager of the game is the referee.

“It is very important for a referee to know how to referee also for him. An Italian referee told me that he refereed a Champions League semi-final and Villarreal was the home team. In the eighth minute, he gave a penalty-kick for them which they missed. Well after it, the Spanish team could not pass the half way, because he considered that they got everything they deserved. He told me: I gave them the penalty kick, they missed it, and well it was time to whistle for me, because the referee would have been blamed for any small mistake from that moment. Most of the games have tense moments in the final minutes, so the referee needs to know how to break the game.” (Referee 4)

Planning means “defining goals and objectives” for the referee team, “developing strategies and setting policies and procedures.” (Daft, 1999, p.35) The collaboration before the game is the planning stage in management. The referee team usually decides about the way of acting in different situations such as: mass confrontation, counter-attacks, and difficult situations in the penalty area. The referee is in charge of asking his assistants certain things. Organising involves “responsibility and authority relationships, including tasks” inside the team. (Daft, 1999, p.35) Team organisation is also within the referee’s responsibility, and is discussed also before the game when some members of the officials’ team may take care of the administrative issues. Controlling is not a management function used by referees for the assistants, but it is used by referees for players and coaches, taking corrective action whenever it is necessary.

“The referee is like a manager who must be aware of all employees, giving someone the permission to drink a glass of wine if he did a good job, but not permitting him the second because he would get smashed. At the same time, you should not leave somebody else to drink anything because he would drive the car into a lake. The players are like children, in case they do something good, you give them sweets, but if they did something bad you are not giving them the sweets and you do not really need to hit them. In Romania, the pressure comes from the technical area, from coaches who are provocative, thus you should know how to moderate them” (Referee 4)

Leadership is part of management, and according to Mintzberg, management has three functions, whereas leadership is part of the interpersonal function. The leader communicates and motivates his colleagues. (Mintzberg, 1973, p.92-93) Assistant have better performances with the referees who have better communication skills and also motivate them not only before the game at the technical meeting but also during the game through different referee’s signals which encourage each of the team’s members. Nowadays the new communication system permits referees to speak to each other during the game, thus this system is not only beneficial for solving match situations, but also it can be used sometimes to motivate and encourage your referee colleague.

In his book “Leadership. Theory and Practice”, Daft (1999, p.39 - 40) outlined the difference between a leader and a manager and each main characteristic. If the managers are deciding the strategies and dividing the employees into different groups, the leaders are in charge of getting everyone lined up in the same direction. In terms of relationships, the managers are more interested in reports, having formal authority relations with the others. On the other hand the leaders are more interested in motivating and inspiring people, so all connections with the team are based on personal influence. Thus, the referee should have some leadership features in order to motivate and help his assistant colleagues before and during the game. This might sometimes be a difficult job as referees are most of the times from different towns, so maybe they

have never met before. However, it is a must to have a good game, taking the right decisions and having proper collaboration during the game.

The formal authority position is a management's characteristic, but the leadership power comes from the personal characteristic. If the manager considers himself a "boss or supervisor, the leader acts as a coach or facilitator". Daft (1999, p.41) The leaders have some personal qualities such as "enthusiasm, integrity, courage, and humility". (Daft 1999, p.41) If the management "encourages the emotional distance, the leadership means a genuine concern for others. Whereas management denotes providing answers and solving problems, leadership requires the courage to admit mistakes and doubts, to take risks, to listen, to trust and learn from others." (Daft 1999, p.41) The same thing is also for refereeing, where the best managers and leaders are getting to the top.

The outcomes of these two concepts are different. Management produces a "degree of stability, order and efficiency, and leadership is needed to help organisation to move in the future." Daft (1999, p.45) Thus, I consider that the referees must be good managers and leaders, to help their colleagues and coordinate everything that happens on and off the pitch in order to develop not only the refereeing but also the football.

In addition, game management should not be only on the pitch but also off the pitch. The relationship between the referees and the team-leaders is really important, starting with the stabilization period.

5.6.4 Romanian football environment for referees

"Mentality of the team-leaders is the following: if he offers you something and you refuse, he does not consider you an honest person, but he thinks that you have received more from the opponents." (Referee 4)

Romanian football has been seen as corrupt for as long a period due to the permanent scandals which affect it. Therefore, most of the times, the officials have been not only abused verbally by the fans but also by the team-leaders. Team-leaders mean club

president, team-delegate or any person involved in the administrative part of a football club. Their interference in refereeing may be seen from different perspectives such as naming the president of the referee committee, in appointing the referees for different games or in bribing the referees.

After communism, “in the nineties, Romanian domestic football was dominated by so-called Cooperativa, a loose cartel of around of dozen clubs who exchanged home wins to ensure that none were ever relegated”. (Wilson, 2006, p.218) Gheorghe Stefan, Ceahlaul’s president, and Jean Padureanu, Gloria’s president, were seen by the sport newspapers as the heads of this cartel. Stefan is known as “Pinalty” for the numerous amounts of penalty kicks his team had in its home games, while Padureanu is the Romanian football “Lord”. The “Lord” is known for his honesty regarding his word and promises. There were signals between teams, but also the referees were intimidated and assaulted, during that period.

In 2006, it was an important moment in Romanian football, when under Romanian FA president’s eyes, the club presidents promised that it was a “zero-hour” on match-fixing and there would be big punishments against any club who is suspected. As usual there were no decisions against them which made Popescu, the former Barcelona player to declare: “Until the entire leadership of Romanian football is changed, the history of corruption will repeat itself”. (Wilson, 2006, p.223) Therefore, Wilson (2006, p.222) stated that “it is hard to know when Romanian football was not corrupt” in his book “Behind the curtain”.

Romanian clubs and federation officials were known as very generous. Most of the national level clubs have a former referee in the board. They were supposed to help the team through their referee friends. Even if there were no domestic decisions taken against the clubs in terms of corruption, UEFA suspended a club and a referee for bribing. Stefan’s club, Ceahlaul, and a referee, Florin Chivulete were banned, for one year, because they tried to bribe a French referee with prostitutes ahead of an Inter-Toto Cup game. (Wilson, 2006, p.219) These bribing methods are quite common in Romanian football. The team leaders are known to be friendly people with the game officials, especially before the game. David Elleray (2004, p.129), the former English FIFA referee, could feel it on his own. The English referee was appointed for a World

Cup game against Czechoslovakia at Bucharest in 1992. Before the game the Romanian official offered them a dinner at a really fancy restaurant, where they could eat caviar and drink champagne. As a bonus they could choose from a wide range of women who covered all interests. The FA's official told them that the girls are singers, even if they never sang a single word.

But the team-leaders have not been focussing only on the referees but also on the Referee Committee members. The committee members have been also involved in scandals regarding brown envelopes. Steaua's owner, Gigi Becali, blamed Nicolae Grigorescu, the former Referee Committee president, for borrowing seven thousand pounds from him and playing them at a casino and not giving back the money. (Wilson, 2006, p.227) The biggest referee corruption scandal was in 2009, when the president and vice-president of Romanian Referee Commission were arrested for corruption. Together with them another three referees were arrested and another fourteen are involved in the trail. Gheorghe Constantin, the arrested president, was filmed by a club owner, when he received brown envelopes for promoting a referee to the top league and helping his team through appointments with referees who can help him.

Moreover, the team-leaders have not been only bribing the Committee members with money, but also in deciding the Referee Committee president. It happened in August 2009, when Dinamo's president succeeded in changing the referee commission after only two months. Aron Huzu, the following president after Constantin, declared when he was appointed as president that he would give up the position if there would be again foreign officials in the Romanian top league. After only three stages, Borcea, Dinamo's president, convinced Romanian FA's Executive Committee to accept that the most important games of the championship to be refereed by foreign officials, which brought Huzu's resignation.

It is clear that the club's influence over the referee committee is still strong. The actual referee committee president has accepted without hesitation the FA and clubs conditions, even if the decision to bring foreigners to referee in Romania has been considered a terrible decision for Romanian refereeing. At the same time, the new referee president, Vasile Avram, would not have been appointed as head of Romanian Referees if the Executive Committee would not have changed the Romanian FA

regulations. The former regulations would not permit a person who has an immediate relative to have any position in the Referee Committee and Avram, a former FIFA referee, has his son as a top league referee. Thus, the regulations were changed, after Huzu's demission, in a way that a new head of referees and commission can be chosen.

The game appointments have been affected also by the club leaders who have been influencing them. Ionica Serea, a former FIFA referee declared after his exclusion from refereeing: "the truth is that the clubs' presidents appoint the referees". (ZIARE, 2009) The connections system is vital in Romanian system because without it, the suspension comes as a consequence, sometimes even if the referee is not guilty.

"I had difficult moments when I had been out for three, four months due to situations of tension, not to say more... There were situations when members of the Referee Committee told me that I had made the right decisions on the pitch during the games but I had to be suspended..." (Referee 1)

The referees are sometimes happy to get a two- three game ban even if they are not guilty, because other colleagues were excluded from refereeing after one game. The former FIFA referee, Adrian Porumboiu, plays an important role in Romanian refereeing, being also a club owner at the same time. He excluded Serea from refereeing after a Vaslui's game, Porumboiu's club, when Serea was accused by Porumboiu that he did not call two penalty kicks for Vaslui.

Although the sports newspaper and most of the fans know these realities, there were no actions against the presidents who are acting against the Romanian football refereeing. The referees are also concerned about the facts and their performances are influenced by the club officials. Moreover, honesty is hardly considered one of the referees' qualities and they can feel it from the team leaders' approach when we are talking about the pressure created by them before the games. Thus, one of the biggest problems of the Romanian refereeing is that a referee cannot be trusted. It is obvious that the commission's members should be strong persons and take positions in order to defend Romanian refereeing and its officials.

Concluding, the *Stabilization* part, there is need for a common effort from all referees, observers and Committee members in order to improve the image of Romanian refereeing. All corruption scandals have affected the whole refereeing system, because the team-leaders' mentality provoke the biggest problems for the officials. To sum up, the main points of the stabilization period are: the publicity from the social perspective, the game management from the refereeing point of view, and the working environment (team-leaders).

Professional duty and the fourth level of vocational qualification are the professionalization characteristic of *Stabilization*. The professional duty is represented by commitment for refereeing as their pitch performances are to be more important, including the game management. Level four of vocational qualification means "the competence that involves the application of knowledge in a broad range of complex, technical or professional work activities performed in a variety of contexts and with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and the allocation of resources is often present." (ENCYCLOPEDIA.THEFREEDICTIONARY, 2010) Commitment represents the resources allocation, while the complex, technical and professional work are represented by game management and team work inside of the referee team.

5.7 Maintenance – The First League and FIFA List

"The First League is totally different. It means the master's degree. Firstly, the Top League is the satisfaction that you are one of the top thirty referees in the country. It means a great responsibility. You feel new things such as the newspapers reporting about your game. Above all is the fulfilment and satisfaction that you managed to get to a certain level." (Referee 5)

The top league represents the most important part of referees' career. Basically, the best officials reach this level and have the opportunity to prove their skills. At this level each

detail is really important. Comparing refereeing to the educational system, if the Second League is considered high-school, the top league is the master's degree in refereeing. This distinction is made in order to emphasise the difference between the two football leagues.

“...the most important thing for me is to be prepared in terms of: technical, tactical, physical and theoretical preparation. It is important to keep the preparation level.” (Referee 3)

Maintenance is the highest level in officials' career. There is no room for learning new things and the one who reached this level have to prove their qualities through good performances on the pitch and efforts invested outside of the field.

“I felt I was a referee for the first time when I refereed a game which decided the winner of the Romanian championship. The Romanian Referee Committee's president phoned me one week before the game to ask me if I am prepared to referee it. Even if, honestly, my legs were shaking, I was confident and I accepted. When I came out of the tunnel onto the field for the formal pitch checking before the game, all the home team fans stood up and started to yell the home team's name and this was the moment when I felt for the first time that I was referee. The observer told me that if I got that appointment means I had certain skills to be there. At the same time, all Romanian referees were watching me and envying me because of this appointment and he[the observer] told me: Now is the time to prove you are referee.” (Referee 4)

At the same time, refereeing in the highest domestic league is the moment when referees get the feeling that they are an important person on the football field. Around five thousands (LIGA1, 2010) fans attend each game, while most of the games are broadcasted nationally due to the fact that football is the most popular sport in Romania.

Mentioning all these facts related to the top league, I think that this is the moment when refereeing may be considered a job.

5.7.1 Football Refereeing as a job

“People treat us as professionals. I believe that all referees who are in the top league do this job from passion and love for this sport. All of us want to prove to fans that we are doing our best for the show.” (Referee 4)

The common understanding of a professional has changed in the last decades. In the ‘50s or ‘60s not many activities (such as doctors, lawyers) were considered to be an occupation, while nowadays even refereeing is considered a profession. A profession is defined as “a vocation, in which a professed knowledge of some department of learning or science is used in its application to the affairs of others or in the practice of an art founded upon it, a paid occupation which requires advanced education and training.” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1995, p. 924) Moreover, Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933, p.34) characterise a profession as an “occupation which is based upon specialised intellectual study and training, the purpose of which is to supply skilled service or advice to others for a definite fee or salary.” Certain groups of professionals develop their own code of ethics, have recruitment patterns, and are establishing certain autonomous organisations in order to transmit the knowledge of the occupation and develop it socially. Due to its formal mechanisms, the professions can have control over the activities and services. Considering the profession a social entity, it is moving, shifting, growing, and splitting which helps the organisation to elaborate ideologies, recruit and proselytise certain persons. (Denzin and Mettlin, 1974, p.375)

According to Ritzer, the profession has three sociological perspectives: the structural, the processual and the power approaches. The structural approach is “ahistorical and points to a series of static characteristics possessed by professions and lacking in the non-professions.” The processual approach is focussed on a “series of historical stages through which an occupation must go enroute in order to become profession”. The

power approach is seen as “monopoly over their work tasks.”(Ritzer, 1975, p.630) At the same time, the profession has the autonomy and monopoly over the decisions, because it gets the public acknowledgements regarding its skills and abilities in a certain field. (Lawson, 1979, p.232) Analysing Ritzer’s perspectives, refereeing may be considered a profession. Firstly, refereeing passed over different historical stages in terms of development and requirements. Secondly, the refereeing characteristics as theoretical and physical preparations recommend refereeing as a profession. Moreover, the public opinion considers that referees are officiating experts.

The tremendous changes, which affected football, have also had consequences in refereeing. In the ‘70s, a high level player was playing around forty games per season while nowadays he is playing more than seventy. Obviously, also the refereeing was affected and as it became more demanding not only on a pitch performance viewpoint, but also in the referees’ personal life. Usually a game appointment means travelling to another city in the previous day. Moreover, there are many games also during the week therefore refereeing is not an easy task for the top league officials from a job perspective. Even though referees need a lot of time for preparation, the Romanian football bodies are not prepared to sustain the referees. Therefore, the professionalization is a difficult process which is made more by the referees rather than the other football organisations.

“It is difficult to become professionals in Romania, even if it is very difficult because of the games, due to long distances between cities to find a job or to have your own business. Not many referees find understanding at their workplaces, thus we have many problems in games preparation, performances and moreover there are also personal problems, referring to our safety. We can not always travel by plane, so we are always in a hurry to get home or go to work. Due to the fact that we dedicate a lot of time to refereeing, we have a professional life even if we do not have this title” (Referee 2)

However, refereeing in the top league means a lot of responsibility and more required skills in order to have good performances on the pitch and one of them is tactical preparation.

5.7.2. Referees' tactical preparation

“The game starts as soon as you get the appointment; begin training, studying teams, and watching games from previous matches of the teams you are going to referee.” (Referee 5)

Tactics have started to be very important for a referee in order to know how the game is played, to know something about the tactics of the teams on the pitch and to know individual technical skills of players. Reading the game has been a crucial aspect for coaches, but nowadays a referee must be a good reader of the game too. Tactics change how teams defend, and how their opponents attack against that defensive system. The referee, as a result, will have a part of the pitch which will become a priority, an area that he must raise his attention levels. Tactics at dead ball situations are also very important. Everything is studied and planned perfectly during the training for these kinds of situations. Coaches give a lot of time in preparing for such situations and the referees must be ready to react to what can happen in the penalty box. Some tactical systems are easier than others for referees. Good tactical preparation tends to reduce the unpredictability, the surprise effect. A referee must reduce the gap between the action (what the teams do on the pitch) and his reaction. The longer this time is the more difficult the job becomes for the referee because he is always behind. The more you reduce the gap (and it can never be totally eradicated) the most a referee can understand what is going to happen and his interpretation will be better.

Officials can prepare themselves well by watching previous games of the teams they are going to referee. Fortunately games are shown in various TV channels nowadays. Statistics can also be very useful. The referee can watch examples of a team's long ball tactics, to understand a team's approach to a game so he is prepared for the match and ready to adapt to that. Therefore, the teams' tactics are important in order to have a

good game. The tactical preparation may be done using the latest technology, and pro-zone is one of the latest football software. This software analyses a football game, presenting each players performance. Using it, the referee may see to whom each player is going to pass to, using statistics and also all players' position on the pitch in different situations: defence, attack, dead balls. The next step for a good game after tactic preparation is the mental one.

5.7.3 Referees' mental preparation

“There are moments when concentration is so high; there is just you and the players. There are moments when you practically do not hear the audience. It happens to me not to hear the coaches on the bench when they are protesting and screaming even if they are at forty meters.” (Referee 5)

Mental preparation has the same importance as the physical one. On the field referees should be able to display a certain number of mental skills such as communication, leadership, team cohesion with the assistants, self-confidence, ability to stand the pressure and concentration. All of them have great ability to cope with stress despite the fact that people challenge them all the time: media, players, coaches. The mental side of refereeing has two parts: the mental preparation before the games and the mental recovery after the games.

The game pressure is huge not only from the players, but also from the referees. Both players and referees have superstitions before the matches. The French FIFA referee, Laurent Duhamel, is sitting all the time on the same side when he is in the changing room, while some referees need music before the game. On the other hand, there are referees who need silence around them. The mental preparation depends from referee to referee and Mattia Piffaretti, the UEFA's sport psychologist for elite referees, has different “tools for referees and they are tailored to the individual needs, based on the stimulation of the breathing techniques. They are used either to cool down, to lower the

tempo of breathing and after to lower the tempo of the heart rate or other uses them to wake them up using music, some referees listen to music in the locker room before the match, some others need silence, and others like to joke a little bit before entering the match and this depends on the habits and the personality. The goal setting is part of the techniques, one has to learn, by setting and achieving these goals, which reinforce the self-confidence and the willingness to set new goals, realistic goals, performance goals more than outcome goals and planning the goals on short, mid and long term.” (UEFA, 2009b) The mental preparation continues as the physical one. Also during the games concentration reaches peak levels.

For a referee, the game means taking three - four decisions a minute and maybe these decisions are tight, difficult, based on very ambiguous situations and at the national level they have really difficult situations and they have to handle pressure, physical and psychological abuses, thus the referees are drained from a mental point of view after a game.

“The referee is physically exhausted after a game and very tired mentally. On the pitch, he has to control twenty-two characters [players], plus coaches and he is in charge of everything that happens, moreover pressure from fans’, leaders’ and media’s pressure, thus when you are home you are really confused. Therefore, it is important for mental recovery, to go for a walk in the park or in the forest, to go to the cinema or theatre. Isolated and quiet places help me to relax. The psychological recovery is very important for me, because a massage can remove your physical tiredness or you can study the Laws of the Game for the theoretical preparation, but the mental recovery must be done properly because refereeing is a long race.” (Referee 4)

Refereeing is a highly exposed job and the officials have to move on to the next match because they have a very tight schedule and they cannot afford to stay on a match too long. Referees are human so always there is a challenge and a difficulty to pass over

situations when there was a mistake. Laurent Duhamel thinks that: “Mentally the game is over forty-eight hours after the game is finished if the game went well, but it did not go well you have to dig deeper into your mental reserves to bounce back from the experience and it takes more time to get back on the track, put the last game aside, so it can take three, four, five days sometimes”. (UEFA, 2009b) The problems appear when the performance is not the expected one. This is the moment when people from the officials’ life, such as family, have an important role to play.

“The role of my family is very important. If you do not have stability, it is very hard to have good professional results and this is not only in refereeing. You need peace to prepare you in order to achieve a high level of performance. I am lucky that I have had the support of my wife and parents who have supported me although I know that they have suffered in many moments, and I advise referees to have stability in their life.” (Referee 2)

Nevertheless, the family is important during the whole career for referees providing tolerance:

“They need to understand what you are doing. There are days, weekends when you are away from home even if they want you to be together, or they want to go on holiday and you can’t because you have the periodical test in two weeks and you should prepare. Or you tell them that you cannot visit them that weekend, and they are able to understand the situations and to support you. Family is like an airport, you take off but after a period you land back. It is important to know in your mind that you are sustained: they are here for me to help me.” (Referee 5)

Consequently, football referees are able to remain confident in the face of considerable physical and verbal abuses and criticism not only from the fans but also from the media. Media is playing an important role these days.

5.7.4 Media interference in refereeing

“In the world there are only three jobs which are perceived as bad ones and are blamed all over the world by people. These are policemen, garbage men and football referees, but only the referees are all the time in the media attention.”
(Referee 1)

Even if the most important football characters are the players and coaches, there are many situations when the media decide to focus on officials. Referees achieve this notoriety, because media devote so much careful attention to every yellow card or offside. Moreover, their performance is ranked by newspapers with stars, as with restaurants. It is true that sometimes referees' performance makes the media to look closer at refereeing.

Unfortunately, the media does not protect the officials and they are the main characters of the game whether they make a mistake or not. Therefore the media pressure is huge especially in domestic competitions, where every Sunday night, during the season, a jury of former referees dissect every controversial decision.

“...the most difficult job on Earth is to be a Romanian referee in the highest domestic league. There has not been any match in which the referee made a mistake and not all to jump on his head and to say that he has been guilty. If a player misses four goal opportunities and the referee made a minor mistake, the referee is blamed. All these are done by clubs' presidents and coaches. The

biggest problem is that the media promotes negative things about Romanian refereeing. They do not say positive things but only negative ones” (Referee 3)

Moreover, it is influenced by certain factors such as team-leaders or former referees who have different interests in the debated subject. The top league’s team leaders are using the media as a pressure tool in order to put pressure on referees and to get favourable decisions during the games. Therefore, there have been many situations when the referees have been feeling that they are hunted by the journalists and that they do not present the facts in an ethical way.

“The media plays an important role because it is not objective; each one has an affinity towards a club, or a team-leader. Moreover, the talk-shows are clearly driven to certain subjects and certain trends. They do not accept human error. It is painful when they consider referees as thieves, and our image is affected. The thieves are the ones who steal from the pockets. On the other hand, a funny thing is that the referees are the only robbers in the world who are stealing and leaving from the “crime” place escorted by police.” (Referee 4)

5.7.5 Becoming an international referee

“The most important moment of my career was when it was announced that I would be FIFA referee.” (Referee 3)

The best seven top league referees are assigned every year to represent Romanian refereeing abroad as FIFA referees. The ones who are meeting all requirements presented in this chapter are assigned as international officials. All FIFA referees interviewed recognised the FIFA list appointment as the most important moment of their career.

Becoming an international referee means recognition of all the work and efforts during the past years. International referees are assigned to officiate at all the games organised by UEFA and FIFA. Moreover, they must pass the physical test and attend the different courses organised by the European body. UEFA has also its own promotion system with five categories. The new Romanian FIFA referees enter into the Category Five, which is the lowest one. The referees' promotion and relegation is done twice a year and is based only on the international appointments marked by UEFA observers. (UEFA, 2009c)

The problem is that the promotion system, on the FIFA list, is debatable as the referees feel that not the best ones are appointed as internationals.

“I believe that not the best values come up in Romania. All the problems will be solved and the envy between referees will disappear when on the FIFA list will be the best referees, the ones who run the best, who write very good, have excellent preparation and have a great family life. But when you hear different things about your colleagues, you are wondering why these kinds of persons are promoted to the international level.” (Referee 4)

As it was presented, the *Maintenance* period brings the most satisfaction, but on the other hand seems to be the most complex from a refereeing perspective. In terms of refereeing, it requires: mental and tactical preparation, depending to the game difficulty level, while the media pressure is reaching high levels. Moreover, this is the stage when refereeing can be considered a job in professionalization's term as refereeing requires a lot of time (theoretical, physical, tactical preparations). Therefore, it may be a full-time occupation and the highest level of the vocational qualification which means “the competence that involves the application of a range of fundamental principles across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts. Very substantial personal autonomy and often significant responsibility for the work of others and for the allocation of substantial resources features strongly, as do personal accountabilities for analysis, diagnosis, design, planning, execution and evaluation. (ENCYCLOPEDIA.THEFREEDICTIONARY, 2010) Diagnosis, analysis and planning represent the tactical

and mental preparations before the game. The highest level of vocational qualification may be considered the expert level in refereeing.

On the other hand, the whole football phenomenon may be the mental tiredness which can be another challenge for the football umpires.

5.8 Withdrawal challenges in football refereeing

Withdrawal or retirement means the process of transition from sportive participation to another activity or sets of activities. The retirement process is a very complex one because several factors interact in a complicated way. Retirement from sport is viewed as a transition into alternative roles, relationships and activities. The transition is influenced by the same social factors that affect all people. Synonyms for retirement are drop out, to go away, enter seclusion, withdraw, retreat, give ground, move back, burn out and attrition (Coakley, 1983, p.1). There are situations when retirement comes earlier than forty-five for certain officials and this can be due to drop out or burn out.

5.8.1 Drop out from refereeing

“I would drop out only in case of an injury or medical problems” (Referee 5)

The drop out concept is related to the sport participation model. Sociology of sport has promoted the idea that there are two types of people in the world, athletes and nonathletes. Athletes can be categorised as starters, survivors and dropouts. A starter is an athlete who is a consistent participant, a dropout is an individual who withdraw and a survivor is an athlete which is on the team but do not participate in competitions (Carron and Robinson, 1982, p.365). In the referee case, the survivors are the ones who are still refereeing going to a higher level than the Fourth League.

Moreover, dropping out can be analysed from several perspectives and levels like: individual level, sports club level, sport federation level and the national sport movement model (Patriksson, 1988, p.30) Researchers found several reasons for giving up the sport activity. One of them is the pressure of other activities. Most of researches have found that the main reasons for dropping out are other activities, and this is obvious especially in sport where the level of professionalization is quite low. (Keil and Volp, 1987, p. 373) Burton (1988, p.246) considers that “having other things to do” is an optimistic interpretation of drop out. He has also a pessimistic opinion about dropping out: athletes are giving up because “the activity threatens their perception of ability.”

Researchers classified the individual dropouts as: “the reluctant dropout, forced out because of injury or cost of program; the voluntary dropout, who wanted to sample other sports or situations but was not necessarily unhappy in the present situation; and the resistant dropout, who still valued sport participation but was currently unhappy in his or her present situation” (Petlichkoff, 1992, p.108). The reluctant drop outs among referees are just at the national level. Most of the referees interviewed would leave refereeing just in case of an injury.

“If you start refereeing when you are fourteen years, you can get promoted to the Third League when you are twenty-one, so there is a risk of dropping out because you will get tired of refereeing in the district level. You would not find any motivation to meet the same team-leaders, coaches and players, and it is enough to be cursed or even beaten.” (Referee 4)

There are some causes which makes referees not continue their involvement in officiating. Firstly, the referees who are not promoted to a higher level and are at the same level a long period of time. Therefore, it is impossible to talk about a career development model for them. The same situation can be with the referees who are starting their career too early and being a Fourth League referee for five or six years means too much.

Thus, the drop out factors is physical or verbal abuses for the *Implementation* period and injuries when we are talking about the rest of referees from First and Second League. The Third League referees that cannot find a work-place, which permit them to go Fridays to referee are also forced to drop-out.

5.8.2 Burn out from refereeing

“I had many people who sustained me and guided during the difficult moments in my career and moreover I did some psychologist sessions. I am an introverted person thus I got isolated, being ashamed to meet people. I trained during the night time, in parks not to be seen by them. Despite the fact I am very strong person, I do not know if I would be able to live again the same situations.”
(Referee 4)

First of all, it is important to be outlined that burn out is different from drop out. The reason is that burn out has a stress dimension and has also several physiological effects, while drop out does not have these effects. Basically, burn out is a reaction to chronic stress (Cherniss, 1980, cited in Smith, 1986, p. 34). Harris (1984, cited in Smith 1986, p.34) stated that burnout is “a state when individuals become fed up with whatever they are doing, and throw in the towel”. The burnout syndrome has physical, mental and behavioural components and its development represents complex interactions between environmental and personal characteristics. It is a physical withdrawal from a formerly pursued and enjoyable activity. It includes also negative emotions such as anxiety or depression, feelings of helplessness or lack of control, or the inability to engage in other activities or relationships. (Smith, 1986, p.36) So “burnout represents the manifestations or consequences of the situational, cognitive, physiological and behavioural components of stress.” (Smith, 1986, p.42) In refereeing, the officials who make big mistakes during the games and had to be suspended for a long period suffer with this. At the same time, the suspension is followed by media attention and clubs’ pressure against the officials.

Burnout has also some physiological effects over stressed athletes such as tension, fatigue and irritability. Sleep-related disorders, increased susceptibility to physical illness and lethargy tend to occur. (Freudenberger, 1980, cited in Smith, 1986, p.44) All these stressed periods make some referees burn out, especially when they have found out that the expected support from the Referee Committee is not coming but they assist the clubs.

“I was close to burn out, because of some things, I thought were unfair at first, but then I realised that there are only some tests in order to strengthen me. Pressure is a positive thing is you are a smart boy, thus I learned to move up again.” (Referee 1)

Maslach and Jackson (1981, cited in Smith, 1986, p. 43) found out that burn out has three major dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and feelings of low accomplishment. Goodger, Gorely, Lavalley and Harwood (2007, p.128) offered a description of each dimension as: “physical/ emotional exhaustion is associated with intense training and competition. A reduced sense of accomplishment is related to skills and abilities athletes are unable to achieve personal goals or they perform below expectations. Sport devaluation refers to a loss of interest, a ‘don’t care’ attitude, or resentment toward performance and the sport.”

Burning out in competitive and individual sports is higher compared to team sports. There are several reasons for this kind of hypothesis: individual sports are demanding in terms of time and effort requirements, the repetitive nature of training produce boredom and the individual nature of sport reduce the level of social support received from others. (Smith, 1986, p.46) Streepy (1981, cited in Smith, 1986, p. 47) also founded individuals who suffer from burnout have a low tolerance for frustration. It is expected the same issues are found also in the officials’ field, because they are somehow part of individual sports. Moreover, the pressure may be a factor for burn out. The difficult games, not expected performances may make them decide to stop refereeing completely.

5.8.3 Retirement due to the age limit

If we cannot talk about a specific retiring age of football players, the referees' retirement age is forty-five. Yvan Cornu, UEFA Head of Refereeing, explained the UEFA's reasons to change the age limit in the 90's: "the fitness of the referees was not optimal at that time and this was the reason why the age limit decreased firstly to forty-eight and after to forty-five. I would like to give credit to referees who are prepared mentally, physically and technically. We should also consider that football is a faster game so we need fitter referees. We need new referees as well, for the future and I am still convinced that the best performance is around forty years old. So it is important to stop when they have good performances rather to wait and to be too late, and having bad performances. The other referees should also have opportunities to be promoted, so that is called natural replacement" (UEFA, 2009d)

On the other hand, the experienced referees, who are officiating at the highest level, such as UEFA Champions League, are thinking differently about the retiring moment. Peter Frojdfelt, the Swedish referee considers that: "I do not like it. If I am fit enough and I can make the test with no problem, I can referee normal, good, than we do not need to have an age limit. In Sweden, it was forty-seven the age limit but they took it away now, so I can be sixty-five rolling in my wheel-chair but I have to pass the test." (UEFA, 2009d)

But the higher ranked referees do not finish their involvement in refereeing after their retirement. They become observers or even members of the referee committee. Furthermore, most of the referees would like to be involved in refereeing after their retirement, and see it as a duty for everything they received from refereeing.

"I would love to help the new referees with my knowledge I have managed to acquire during my career, to have the opportunity to give it back, even if it is not from a high position. It is not necessarily to be observer, but instructor or

referee coach may be the most appropriate word for what I would love to do.”

(Referee 5)

5.9 The Path from an Educational Activity to a Full-time Job

The presented career development model is the ideal one for a football official. As I previously mentioned, some referees may stop at the *Consolidation* or *Stabilization* stage, but some continue onwards reaching the peak. Considering all the facts presented in this chapter, refereeing at the top league should be considered a full-time job. In figure 3, the whole professionalization process is presented. Each level has certain characteristics which are adopted after Weber's professionalization characteristics. The features which are present in more than one stage are bolded. Additionally, these features are going to be present from that moment in the referee's career until their retirement. On the other hand, the features written normally mean that they are specific only for that level.

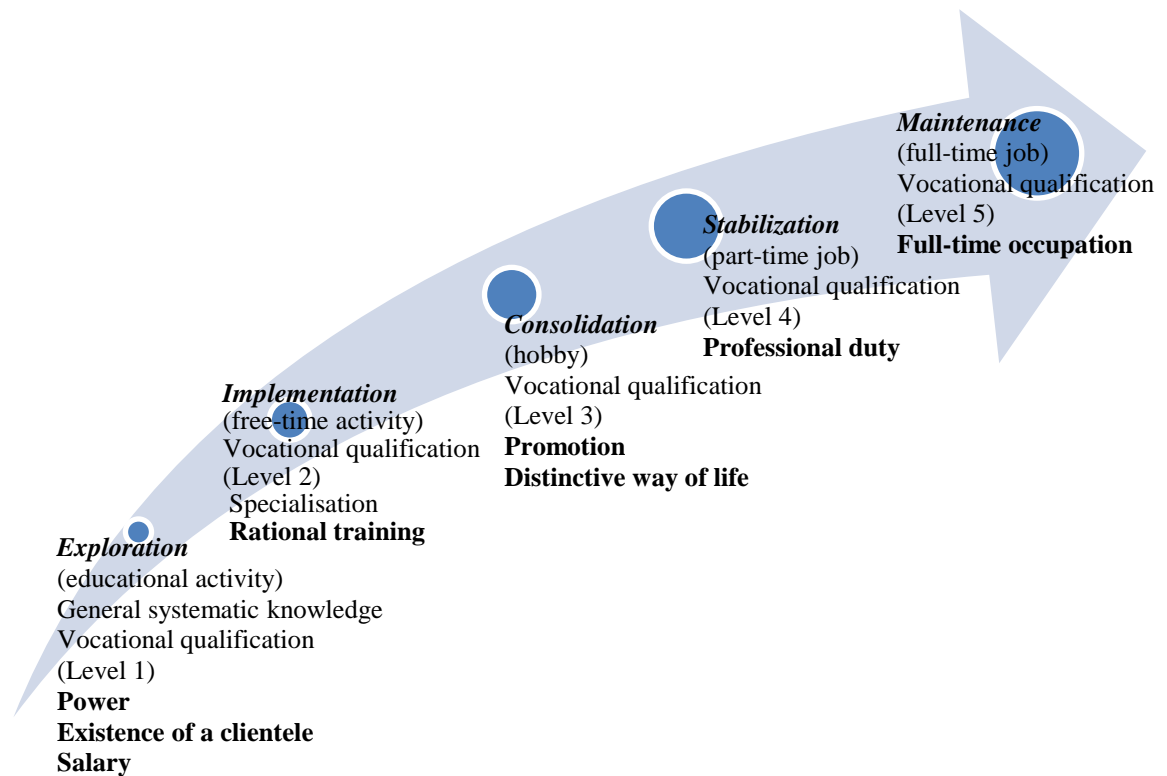


Figure 3. Professionalization process in refereeing inspired after Weber's professionalization characteristics.

Exploration is the educational period for referees when they get the general systematic knowledge represented by the Laws of the Game. At the same time, the Laws of the Game give the referees the power to apply all the rules on and off the pitch. The clientele are the football clubs, while the salary is the money the referees receive for their work. Power, clientele and salary are going to be present in all levels of the proposed model. The first level of the vocational qualification is characteristic for *Exploration*.

The free-time activity is the period when the referees improve their abilities (Level 2 of vocational qualification). At the same time, the *Implementation* is the moment when the officials decide if they want to be assistants (linesmen) or referees (specialisation). In addition, the rational training (physical training) is starting to be important from this level and it is important until retirement.

Refereeing becomes a hobby during the *Consolidation* period, when the referees improve their abilities (Level 3 of vocational qualification). Moreover, they start a distinctive way of life as they need to due travel around the country for officiating

games. Promotion is one of the most important issues in refereeing because this represents the step from a lower level to a higher one and starts to be important from the consolidation stage. The promotion issue is discussed in the chapter 6.

Stabilization period is second in importance and is characterised by the referees' professional duty. Professional duty is represented by game management. Furthermore, the officials reach the second level in importance of the vocational qualification (Level 4).

Refereeing becomes a full-time occupation during the *Maintenance* period when all details (mental, tactical preparations) are so important. The top league referees reach also the highest level of vocational qualification so they should be considered referee experts.

5.10 Challenges to implement the promotion model

This chapter presented the current problems in Romanian refereeing from the Grassroots model to the FIFA list (international career) and what each level demands. The career model was analysed not only from the sportive perspective but also from the sociological ones. All identified problems during the interviews and the participant observation are going to be presented in table 2. It is important to understand that some of the problems are specific only for one stage, while some are specific for more stages. Thus, those problems are in bold when they appear for the first time. The issues, which appear in more than one stage, are written in italics from the second stage, in order to emphasise its importance.

	Exploration	Implementation	Consolidation	Stabilization	Maintenance
Level	Grassroots Football	Fourth League	Third League	Second League	First League
Problems	lack of educated instructors	physical preparation	<i>physical preparation</i>	<i>physical preparation</i>	<i>physical preparation</i>
	lack of teaching material (DVD, video tapes)	physical and verbal violence	referee observers	game management	tactical preparation
	lack of marketing strategies	drop out	<i>physical and verbal violence</i>	<i>referee observers</i>	mental preparation
				<i>drop out</i>	team leaders
				publicity	<i>referee observers</i>
				<i>physical and verbal violence</i>	<i>team leaders</i>
				<i>drop out</i>	mass media
					<i>publicity</i>
					<i>physical and verbal violence</i>
					burn out
				<i>drop out</i>	

Table 2 . Identified problems in Romanian career model

Each level on the career model has some issues revealed by the guided in-depth interviews and outlined by the participant observation. Hence, each problem founded will be discussed a little bit in the next paragraphs.

In terms of referee administration, the lack of qualified human resources appeared to be the biggest problem as the instructors that teach the referees course are chosen randomly. In addition they do not have any previous education, and is characteristic for the *Exploration* period. Secondly, the referee observers system for all national leagues (*Consolidation, Stabilization* and *Maintenance*) seems to be affected by the observers' ethics quality and their qualification in terms of pedagogical and psychological skills. Returning back to the *Exploration* stage, the Romanian referee administration gives the impression that no marketing strategies for attracting new referees are applied. Moreover, the ones who decide to become a referee are faced with an unorganised learning environment as long as no teaching materials are available for them, except the Laws of the Game.

Implementation period is the stage when the physical training starts to be important for a referee and it will continue until the referee retires. Although the fitness preparation is important, the referee bodies do not offer any coaching support for fitness development. The games at the highest district level mean also contact with verbal and physical violence. Many referees, from this level have been hit by the players, team-leaders or spectators. The ones who can not cope with this abuse drop out. Dropping out will continue to appear at each stage of the model, but the causes will be different from stage to stage.

The Third League, the *Consolidation* period, means the period when each referee creates his own style, therefore the referee observers should play an important role. As was previously mentioned, the lack of refereeing education does not help referees as much as it is supposed to. Refereeing at national level, the officials do not get the same treatment in terms of violence although verbal violence occurs especially from the spectators. Dropping out appears when the referees cannot manage to find a proper job in order to continue their refereeing career. This happens because the Third League games are played on Friday.

The *Stabilization* period is second in importance in the proposed model and is characterised by the game management, team-leaders and publicity. Game management represents understanding the game and the referee capacity to develop the game. Team-leaders are one of the biggest hindrances for football refereeing, as their interference in refereeing spreads to all levels, from administration, observers, appointments, and referees. On a positive note referees receive more publicity and social recognition from this level which is more obvious in the top leagues. Moreover, dropping out appears from this level only when the referees get injured, thus they are forced to give up.

The *Maintenance* is the peak point of the model and therefore may be considered the most complex. Game preparation is not considered any more only by the physical preparation, but the tactical and mental ones play an important role. At the same time, the mass-media plays an important role because most of the games are broadcasted and the sport-shows analyse the referees' performance in the smallest detail. The burn out phenomenon is replacing the drop out, because as it was debated the burn out means

that the referees give up due to the mental tiredness. Thus, some burn out situations may appear at this level.

The solutions from the debated problems will be proposed in the next chapter. The proposals will come in order to develop Romanian refereeing as a whole, in terms of administration and the promotion model. They will follow again the whole career model and suggestions will be given for each level.

6 SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ROMANIAN REFEREE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

This chapter focuses on the main practical suggestions in order to develop the Romanian football refereeing system. As a result, the suggestions will be divided into three parts: the first is the administration part, which includes the district referee committees and the Romanian Referee Committee, the second is focussed on the referee promotion system as part of the professionalization process, while the last one will give some practical advice regarding all the stages of the proposed model.

6.1 Code of Ethics

Taking into consideration that the Romanian Referee Committee has had five presidents in the last year and the corruption scandal which affected Romanian refereeing, I think that it is really important to create a strong referee committee in order to offer stability. Moreover, the referees' performances have also been affected by this managerial instability.

The first step in order to build a credible system is to adopt a code of ethics which must be generally accepted by everybody involved in Romanian football refereeing. The ethical code must have certain basic requirements which must be fulfilled by all those who want to be involved in Romanian refereeing. Therefore, the Romanian Referee Committee members should not have any relatives involved in football as referees or team-leaders in order to avoid nepotism and to maintain credibility in the eyes not of referees and the general public. The same rule should be applied also to the observers and mentors from all football levels in order to build a healthy system.

Secondly, the observers and referees should not have any commercial or working relation with any football club. There have been situations when an observer has been working for a club in the top league and he has been observer in the Second League. On the other hand, there have been referees who were refereeing in the Second League and they have been working as coach for a junior team for a Second League club.

Thirdly, the referees who have relatives working for a football club should be asked to give up refereeing in order not to affect the refereeing public image. Fourthly, all referees and observers who were excluded from refereeing due to morale issues, like involvement in corruption scandals must not have any position in refereeing later on. All these guidelines are given in order to create credibility to the Romanian referee system.

6.2 Referee Observer System

As it was outlined in chapter five, the referee observer system does not give the best results in terms of development from a referee's point of view. Therefore, it would ideal if the whole referee observer system concept would be changed from the Referee Committee to the Fourth League. Considering that the Ethic Code would be adopted, the Referee Committee members should be only former FIFA referees¹. The new referee observer system concept is based on recruitment and human skills.

Thus, all observers must pass a yearly exam in order to be licensed. A condition for participation is to have bachelor's degree. The annual exam should consist of: theoretical and video tests, a medical test, a psychological and pedagogical test and an IT test. The theoretical and video tests are important to see their capability to analyse different football situations and their knowledge regarding the rules. The medical test is important because they must be healthy from a mental and ophthalmological perspective. The psychological and pedagogical tests are important because they are going to have an educational job with the referees, so it is important to create the best learning environment for the referees. The IT test is really important, because the observers' reports are still hand written, so the referees have no access to their marks as they cannot read the observer's report. In conclusion, although the exam seems to be complicated all its components are part of the observers' job.

¹Former (...) referee means both retired referees and assistant referees, when I am refereeing at the observer' system.

Hence, the First League observers should be only former FIFA referees. The Second League observers should be only former top league referees and the Third League observers should be only former Second League referees. At the highest district level, the same rules should be respected, thus the former Third League referees will observe the Fourth League referees. Consequently, the observer should supervise games at one level below that level they used to referee.

6.3 Referee Promotion System

“If I apply everything the Laws of the Game says, in fifteen minutes I would be alone on the pitch.” (Referee 3)

The professionalization process involves also a promotion system from the bottom to the highest level. Promotion should be considered a key issue in the professionalization process. The only way to get promoted was through an exam, which proved not to be the best solution, because good theoretician and athletes promoted have not always been the best referees. Moreover, as it was mentioned in the previous chapters, refereeing means more than running and knowledge of the Laws of the Game.

“It goes away the times when refereeing mean exclusively the performance on the pitch. On the pitch the referee must be a very serious person, but outside he should be relaxed, social, to make jokes, to be able to talk about a book, a film or a documentary, general knowledge issues. The referees must know to give a press statement, to know how to talk to certain people. Refereeing means much more than the decisions taken on the field. The way he eats and dresses mean maybe more than 60% of the whole performance as a referee. Every detail means so much.” (Referee 4)

On the other hand, many referees were promoted by the former Referee committees and they proved that their character was not the best, as they were involved in scandals.

Most of the people who proposed referees for promotion have an interest in their own success.

“In Romania, people are not trustworthy; you cannot trust X when we ask him who the best referee is. You need people who are completely neutral in this regard. We have to forget about nepotism. We must recognise that there is a lack of character in Romania, especially when we are talking about the referees’ selection.” (Referee 4)

Thus, promotion in Romanian refereeing has been a question of luck and influences.

“Promotion in Romania is 50% chance and 50% chance” (Referee3)

It was generally accepted by the referees interviewed that there are probably better referees in the lower leagues who have not been lucky enough to be observed and promoted to the top football.

“...the opportunity makes the difference, because there might be better Third League referees than me, but they had no chance to be seen and promoted. It depends very much who is behind you. Unfortunately, in Romanian refereeing, the best do not reach the highest level.” (Referee 3)

Romanian refereeing system does not have any promotion criteria. Most of Romanian referees have felt that there were no equal promotion chances for everybody.

“Criteria must be clear, distinct and tangible for everyone. The criteria must be mathematically exact and no factors should be left out in order to be debatable” (Referee 5)

Therefore, I would like to propose a promotion model. The proposed promotion model is based on a mentoring system which has the capacity to develop referees’

performances and the model starts from the Third League to the top league. The system may be assimilated with a Referee Academy on three levels.

6.4 Mentoring system

“The referees’ mentors should be like parents, telling you the basics and the finest issues regarding refereeing in order to help you to build a career. The seven years of home education are very important, and the mentor is in charge of it. A mentor is like a father, being praised after a good game and to encourage him after a bad performance, not kicking him in head. The mentor must meet the referee in all life circumstances: his family, life-style, if he drinks or takes drugs, his friends, or if he misses nights. The mentor must tell him how to dress, how to introduce himself, how to warm up and so on. Unfortunately, not many referee observers have these qualities. It is very hard to be mentor.”

(Referee 4)

There are several activities (such as nursing, lawyer etc.) where the mentoring system is more than welcome, and one of these is refereeing. Related to the career development concept is the mentoring system proposed by Burlew. Having a mentor has positive effects on a person’s career progression. Burlew defines a mentor as “anyone who provides guidance, support, knowledge, and opportunities for whatever period” (Burlew, 1991, p.213). According to other researches, there are several mentors or phases of mentoring. The relationship between a mentor and the referee is an ongoing dialogue. The mentors remain in constant contact with their referees by email or phone, and by either visiting them or inviting them to the mentors' place. Their discussions focus on on-field performances as well as on matters such as diet, social and private conduct.

There are several referee committees in Europe (Scotland, Germany) which adopted a real mentor system, where one assessor is in charge of three or four referees. The mentor follows each referee at least three games per season and tries to develop the referee's skills. Romanian Referee Committee had applied it for the Top League referees for a short period but in my opinion the lower division referees need this kind of approach because the top league referees are experienced enough, while the young referees need help in order to develop their skills and improve their performances.

Refereeing has also three phases of mentoring. Burlew's model will be adapted to refereeing activity. These three levels are: training mentor, education mentor and the development mentor. Each of these mentor types is attached to at a certain moment in the referees' career which will be debated in this chapter. Hence, this part is dedicated to the promotion solution. Moreover as a guideline, the mentors must have been rated two levels higher to the level they will be mentoring. Each mentor should be in charge of two or three referees.

"I was the first top league referee in my district, the rest were refereeing in the Second and Third League. So what would I have asked them about the top league as they had no clue what happens there?" (Referee 3)

6.4.1 Exploration and Implementation

"The training mentor guides the worker as he masters the job and acclimates to the new working environment, supports the worker until he feels capable of on-the-job responsibilities and comfortable within the organisation" (Burlew, 1991, p.215). In refereeing, the training mentor is the person in charge of the first two periods in a referee's career – exploration and implementation. The training mentors should be divided into two categories: the referees' instructors' course and the Fourth League mentors.

The course's instructor is the one who explains the "Laws of the Game" and he gives the first practical advice for the new referees. Usually, the training mentors have not

been high-level referees, but they are experts from a theoretical point of view and have officiated at the lowest national level. In order to increase the referees' education level it is necessary to have educated instructors. The training mentors should be selected from the licensed Fourth League Observers or they can be also active Third League referees. Each district should have at least one instructor. Their education should be provided by the Romanian Referee Committee and the courses should include topics as pedagogy, psychology, nutrition and fitness. They should get a license before teaching, which should be renewed yearly.

The training mentor from the Fourth League should be the Third League licensed observers or active Second League referees. It is important to have experienced referees who give advice to young officials. The advice must include physical and tactical preparation, moving on the pitch, trainings regarding technical and disciplinary decisions issues, which will help the officials to develop their abilities. Therefore, the training mentor should behave more like a referee coach, attending the games and helping him actively during it.

“... shouting during the game: “Go left!”, “Run more!” is very important, because after the game if someone comes and tell you these things, firstly you are very tired physically and cannot perceive what he says, then you do not remember when he said that you did something in the twentieth minute. You remember only the important situations, but the rest of it is most likely forgotten.” (Referee 4)

Moreover, the mentors and observers from this level should give practical advice in order to develop the referees' skills and abilities.

“...for a referee it is not important that an observer comes after the game and tells him that the penalty kick was called wrongly, because also the referee could feel it in the first second after the call. The observer should teach the referee how to show a card, to whistle differently a penalty and a foul around

the middle line, where to be on the pitch in certain situations and how to deal with players in tense conditions” (Referee 4)

The referees who want to become a national referee (Third League) must pass an exam, which does not promote the best referees to the top. Therefore, the system should be improved in order to have better officials.

“Each district should name three referees based on certain criteria... taking into consideration both their refereeing qualities and personal ones, how they behave outside the pitch.” (Referee 2)

The selection process of the Academy’s Third level should take a year, starting from September and to finish in June the following year. Firstly, the named referees will have to pass certain tasks for example: two physical exams (the new FIFA test- high intensity and the Cooper test) and the theoretical exam with a mark better than seven out of ten for each of them. Secondly, the ones who pass these, will meet in three or four courses and the referee committee will have the opportunity to meet them and to watch them refereeing. Thirdly, each of these courses should contain physical, theoretical and video tests. In addition to these, some psychological tests should be done in order to know better the referees behaviours. This way after this period, the Committee members will know each referee and will be capable of making different statements about them. Therefore the best of them will be promoted to the Third League, which is the *consolidation* period in a referee career.

6.4.2 Consolidation

“The education mentor has a broader role involving foresight and an understanding of how one progress in an occupation. This type of mentor looks toward the future and may help the worker plan for the future; make decisions about educational activities, related work experiences, and life-style choices, make contacts with successful professionals; work through hopes, dreams, and frustrations; and develop the necessary

qualifications to succeed” (Burlew, 1991, p.216). *Consolidation* is the period of a referee’s career when there is a demand for educational mentors. The education mentors have an important role in the referees’ future career, helping them to create their own style.

The mentors should be selected from the Second League licensed observers or active First League referees. Considering the education mentors importance for the referees’ development during the *consolidation* period, their selection should be carefully.

“I had an observer at a game and the referees’ team was waiting for him in the hotel lobby. All of us were watching the clock because he was supposed to meet us at seven o’clock, and seven sharp, the elevator’s doors opened and he came to the lobby for the meeting. I wondered if he stopped the elevator between floors to reach the spot. This happening tells everything about him and about his thinking accuracy” (Referee 1)

The Third League referees should be divided into three categories, thus a referee can not be promoted faster than two years from the third level to the second one and having less than fifty games at this level. The third category should be formed by the new referees promoted from the Fourth league and the ones who have no promotion chances such as older referees. In the second category there should be the referees who have two or three years at this level and have still a chance for promotion, while the first category should be formed by the referees who are supervised for promotion. In this system, it is important that each referee from this level have the chance to be promoted through the monitoring system, when they are in the First and Second Group. The categories should be revised after every six months, thus a really talented referee can reach the first category after one year.

In terms of education, the referees proposed for promotion should have a bachelor’s degree. But, the first condition in order to have a chance of promotion is to have certain character feature, which each referee should have: honesty.

“A spine is an important quality of a referee.” (Referee 5)

The selection process for the Academy’s Second level should take a year, starting from September and finishing in June the following year. In order to get into the Academy, the referee should have a bachelor’s degree. The supervised referees that pass the “honesty” test should again be part of a selection procedure which contains: two physical exams (the new FIFA high intensity test and the Cooper test) and the theoretical exam with a mark better than seven out of ten for each of them. The ones who pass these, will attend three or four courses and the referee committee will have the opportunity to meet them and watch them refereeing. Moreover, each of these courses should contain physical, theoretical and video tests. In addition to these, some psychological and social interaction tests should be done in order to know better the referees behaviours. As a result after this period, the Committee members will know each referee and will be capable of making different statements about them. Moreover, the referees must officiate in the tough games in the Third League in order to be promoted. The tough games mean the first place against second and if they can manage it, it is obvious that they are ready for promotion.

Concluding, the best referee will appear after a year and the best characters should be selected out of this first category referees.

6.4.3 Stabilization

“The third type, the development mentor, is involved in helping the worker to become a well-rounded individual. Some ways a mentor at this stage helps a worker to grow include enabling the individual to assess his or her strengths and weaknesses, develop a plan of action in order to make positive change, gain insight into future directions of the organisation so he or she will be prepared for change, try creative talents in areas not previously explored, and network with many types of people for exposure to new ideas and styles of behaviour” (Burlew, 1991, p.218).

The last category of mentors is the most important for the Second League referees. Observers should be top League licensed or Referee Committee members and scout permanently for young and talented referees from the second level. They are assessors for the top league games and the most important games in the Second League.

“I had observers, former FIFA referees that told me before the game what is going to happen and it happened, because of their experience.” (Referee 3)

These mentors are important because they are preparing the next top league and international referees. The Second League observers should be former top league referees.

The Second League referees should also be divided in two groups. The second group is formed by the newly promoted referees and the ones without any promotional chances, while the first group is composed of those who are on their way to the top league. The referee groups should be revised after each six months, thus the best referees can reach the first group faster.

The condition to be eligible for the Academy's First Level is to have a master's degree. As usual the selection procedure should take a year, starting from September and to finish in June the following year. It should also contain: the two physical exams (the new FIFA high intensity test and the Cooper test) and the theoretical exam with a mark better than seven out of ten for each of them. The ones who pass these, will attend three or four courses and the referee committee will have the opportunity to meet them and to watch them refereeing. Moreover, each of these courses should contain physical, theoretical and video tests. In addition to these, some psychological and social interaction tests should be done in order to understand better the referees' behaviours. The psychological must be done in order to see if the referees are able to cope with the pressure and to see their reaction under the media and public pressure. Moreover, an English language test must be passed, because the future top league referees are also potential international referees in the future.

“In the UEFA observer report is a box “Improve English” and if you, as a referee, have this box ticked twice, the appointments will start to come less and less.” (Referee 4)

This is the reason why the English is needed for the potential top league referees, as they are going as fourth officials with the international referees. Moreover, the referees must officiate again first against second place in the Second League to see if they meet the promotion requirements. In this way after one year, the Committee members will know each referee and will be capable of making different statements about them.

6.4.4 Maintenance

In the top league, each referee has an observer who is like a mentor for him, therefore I do not think it is necessary to have a mentoring system for them. Moreover, the FIFA referees may have some mentors from UEFA, which help them to develop.

“UEFA mentoring system meant an exceptionally opportunity; UEFA invested in me more than two hundred thousand Euros.” (Referee 1)

In conclusion, through this system, I think that implementing the mentors and observers system at each football level would result in Romanian football refereeing developing greatly. At the same time, the proposed promotion system may be associated with a Referee Academy as long as most of the refereeing aspects are taken into consideration before the referees' promotion. Therefore, I consider that the referees would have better performances if they are promoted through the academy system rather than the exam system.

6.5 Other Practical Suggestions

Excepting the administration and promotion suggestion, there is also a need for some practical advice regarding the issues outlined by the interviews and revealed in the proposed model.

During the *Exploration* period, the main issues were the lack of a marketing strategy in order to attract new referees and the lack of teaching materials. The Romanian Referee Committee together with all the District Referee Committees should set a common strategy in order to attract the young referees through different communication channels (internet). The teaching material problem may be solved really easy if the Romanian Referee Committee would sign the UEFA Referee Convention because most of the funds are for the referees from the Grassroots level in order to improve their learning facilities.

Implementation period is characterised by the physical preparation needs and the possible verbal and physical violence which is directed towards the referees. The physical preparation issue may be solved for all refereeing levels if the Romanian Referee Committee would hire part-time athletics coaches specialised in football refereeing and would put the trainings for a certain period on the Romanian Referee Committee's web-site. The violence problem may be solved in cooperation between the Romanian Referee Committee, Romanian FA and the Districts Football Associations through programmes such as: "ZERO Tolerance towards Violence." Through all these decisions together with a "healthy" promotion system, I consider that the amount of drop-outs would decrease and the refereeing quality at the district level would increase.

The referee observer's issue, in all levels, was discussed earlier in this chapter, the only issue which should be solved in the *Consolidation* period is the game schedule. As match day for the Third League is Friday, most of the referees struggle to find a job. Therefore, in cooperation with the Romanian FA, the Referee Committee should schedule the games during the weekend.

The only practical advice regarding *Stabilization* is about the team-leaders. The three football bodies should declare zero tolerance in terms of verbal violence from the team-leaders to referees. Moreover, as soon as any club interferes in the refereeing issues, the Romanian Referee Committee must take extreme decisions in order to avoid any interference in refereeing issues.

The *Maintenance* period is the most important period in the referees' life, thus the Referee Committee should provide all the assistance needed for referees in order to produce excellent performances on the pitch. First of all, the Committee should hire a sport psychologist and a sport sociologist in order to help referees who have had less good performances. Moreover, the sport sociologist's support should increase the friendship level among referees, creating better communication among them. In terms of tactical preparation, the Committee should provide referees software programmes (like pro-zone) which help them to understand better the top level team tactics. Furthermore, Pro-licensed coaches should come to referees' meetings and have tactical classes with the referees from the national level (First, Second and Third League).

In conclusion, these are only some practical suggestion with the intention being to develop not only the Romanian refereeing, but also the Romanian football. In my opinion, it is impossible to have high quality football without high quality referees and vice versa, so the football and refereeing must develop together, hand in hand, in order to have a better and fairer competition on all levels.

CONCLUSIONS

The research hypothesis was that social, economical and sportive changes have a direct influence on the career path of football referees and that the Romanian referee system is negatively influenced by outside factors. The aim of the study was to create an ideal career development model for Romanian football referees. The theoretical and empirical aspects discussed have confirmed the hypothesis and the career model. The changes which have affected football in the last decades have had an influence also on the football refereeing. The financial and social implications football has in Romania, has increased the pressure on the “referees’ shoulders”. Moreover, outside factors that have a negative influence may be considered the football team leaders and mass-media which added pressure on referees. The interviews with the elite Romanian Referees validated the theoretical model created and proposed in the first part of the study.

Since the aim of the study and problems, set at the beginning of this thesis, were achieved, it can be also argued that the validity of this research is at a good level. The founded answers have been discussed throughout the thesis. The theoretical background was presented in Chapter 4 and the starting point for the presented model, which is Super’s theory. The proposed career model and everything it involves was detailed in Chapter 5. Consequently, the career model for Romanian football referees has five stages and represents a certain period in the referees’ career. The *Exploration* period means the Referee Course and Grassroots Football while the *Implementation* is represented by the Fourth League (the highest district football level). *Consolidation* period is the lowest national level (the Third League), the Second League means the *Stabilization* period, while the peak point of the referees’ career is represented by the *Maintenance* period, the First League. Furthermore, each career stage has its characteristics and challenges. The study reliability may be debated due to my personal involvement in refereeing. However, I tried to present an objective image of Romanian refereeing during my study. Moreover, all suggestions are debated in Chapter 6 in order to develop Romanian football refereeing. It can therefore be concluded that the validity and reliability correlate positively with the success of this research.

Considering all the steps from the Referee's Course to the top league and how demanding football refereeing is at the highest level, a simple theory can be drawn from this research. Hence, Romanian football refereeing is in on the professionalization path and in a certain period it will become a recognised profession. Although this model is realistic in terms of refereeing stages, it is not realistic in terms of suggestions because its implementation requires new people with a vision about the future of refereeing. Thus, the system formation can be done only if the FA's board wants to change the refereeing image.

This thesis provides a broadly-based insight into the challenges facing football refereeing, focussing more on the psychological and sociological aspects rather than on the sportive perspective of refereeing. Although the results of this qualitative study cannot be generalised on a larger scale (all National Referee Committees), it could be said that the committees that are organising football similar to Romania would benefit from this research. In addition, the National Football Associations which have more leagues may find interesting ideas in terms of refereeing in this study and use them in order to increase the refereeing quality in their countries.

The study limits are linked to sampling, because all the interviews were done only with top league referees. I think that broader sampling with referees from all levels (Second, Third, Fourth League) and people involved in the refereeing administration (members of the Romanian Referee Committee and District Referee Committee) would have given me a better overall image and more perspectives. In contrast, all these interviews may have complicated the research process too much.

Concluding, this research has been extremely interesting and greatly contributed not only to my personal expertise in the field, but also to my professional development in terms of academic skills and refereeing knowledge. On the other hand, I think there is a real demand that football referees be studied in the near future. One study should be about the career development of referees from countries such as England, Italy and Spain. Moreover, taking into consideration the increasing number of people who are moving from one country to another in terms of jobs and studies, it would be interesting to see if a world-wide system for all football referees would be reliable in the future. Moreover, future research should focus on the sociological and psychological aspects of

refereeing, specifically focussing on team-work between referees, referee and football player relation, or referee and coach relation.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW LETTER REQUEST AND CONFIDENTIALITY NOTE

Dear Mr. ,

My name is Andrei Antonie and I am referee in the Romanian Third League. Moreover, I am currently studying Sport Management & Administration as a degree student at University of Jyväskylä, Finland, and I am in the final term of that study programme. I am now in the process of working on my Master's thesis.

Within the scope of my thesis, I would like to investigate Romanian football referees career development and I would like to include the experiences you have made as a referee. The master's thesis title is "The Career Development Model for Romanian Football Referees." The main topics covered by my research are: career development, mentoring system, Romanian referee system.

The aim of this letter is to request an interview with you regarding your referee career. At the same time, I assure you that the interview will be conducted in a confidential manner. I guarantee you that your name will not appear in the thesis and I will treat the interview with absolute confidentiality and will use it for this academic paper only. I will not disclose any information that might identify the respondent under any circumstances. Therefore, you should not worry about how you answer the interview. Other parties will not at any time have access to the interview audio-tape or transcripts.

In the situation you are interested; the audio-tape or transcripts will be available to you. Secondly, the final version of the thesis will be offered to you in case of your request.

Considering that you will accept my invitation, I am looking forward to meet you.

Best regards,
Andrei Antonie

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E-mail: andrei.antonie@jyu.fi

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Part 1

Warm-up questions

How old are you?
 Have you ever played football?
 What level did you played?

General aspects of refereeing

Would you like to define refereeing?
 What refereeing means for you?
 What role does it play in your life?

Individual career history

How old were you when you thought to start refereeing for the first time?
 Why did you start refereeing?
 How long have you been refereeing?
 Which were your expectations when you started refereeing?
 How realistic were they?
 Do you have or had any referee idol?
 Why was he?
 Which are the reasons of doing it?
 How important is refereeing in your life?
 Can you describe shortly your refereeing career and the most important moments?
 How many stages has your career had?
 Which have been the most difficult moments in your career?
 How did you pass over them?
 How many times have you thought at giving up refereeing?
 Which have been the reasons? (to find the difference between drop out and burn out)
 How did you pass over these moments?
 In what situation would you give up refereeing?
 Who have been the most important supporters of your refereeing career?
 Which has been your family role in your referee career?

Personal development

What have you done in order to promote to a higher level?
 Which have been your learning methods?
 How do you find the games you are refereeing at the moment? (A scale from 1 to 10)
 How many hours per day do you spend for referee activity?
 What are you doing in order to improve the quality of refereeing?
 What do you need to develop your skills?
 How important have been the supervisors for your career development?
 Do the supervisors influence your performance?
 Do you have any mentors, which have helped you to develop your refereeing skills?
 Who are your mentors?

General social aspects of refereeing

How do you find to be a referee in Romania?
 Would you like to tell me what kind of benefits are to be referee? (All kinds)
 What kind of disadvantages do you find being referee?
 Would you like to be involved in football (refereeing) activity after your retirement?
 Many referees have somebody in their families involved at least in football, would you advice one of your relative to start refereeing?

Part 2

General refereeing issues

What age is the best for starting refereeing?
 Would you like to describe the qualities of a good referee? (3 qualities)
 What is necessary to have a successful refereeing career?
 How would you define the observer?
 Are the supervisors helping the referees to develop their skills?
 How do you find the observers? Give me at least 3 qualities to be a good observer.
 Which is the difference between international supervisor and the Romanian ones?
 How do you define the mentors? Give me at least 3 qualities to be a good mentor.
 Can the observers be considered mentors for referees?

Actual promotion system

How do you find the promotion system in Romania?
 Is it possible to give me any reasons for this?
 How do you find Romanian Referee Committee promotion criteria?
 Do you consider that Romanian Referee Committee helps referees to develop their skills? How do you find the Romanian Referee Committee developing methods?
 Do you feel that each referee has the opportunity to prove his abilities?

Improvement proposals for the promotion system

What should be improved?

Which would be the best way to develop the refereeing skills in Romania?

In your opinion, what qualities are necessary in order to be promoted to a higher level?

Which should be the promotion criteria? (For each level from the Fourth League to the Top league)

Would you like to detail more your reasons for your criteria?

Would be the mentoring system helpful for referees' development?

Do you think that refereeing can be considered a profession?

Thank you!!!