

BOOKS, IDEAS, INTERVIEWS/LIVRES, IDÉES, INTERVIEWS

EVALUAREA ÎN EDUCAȚIE. MERITOCRAȚIE ȘI MEDIOCRITATE. BOOK REVIEW

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1. Identification data

Marin Manolescu (2019). *Evaluarea în educație. Meritocrație și mediocritate*. București: Editura Universitară.

The paper, counting 416 pages, was published in the collection Științe ale Educației, the author being Professor at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Department for Teacher Training, and Doctoral supervisor in Education Sciences. The career of Professor Manolescu is outstanding, participating in the establishment or consolidation of reference structures in the field of initial and continuing education of teachers.

In the last 15 years we have witnessed evaluation as a constant of Professor Manolescu's writings: *Evaluarea școlară - un contract pedagogic/Testing and evaluation - a pedagogical contract* (2003), *Activitatea evaluativă între cogniție și metacogniție/The evaluation activity between cognition and metacognition* (2005), *Teoria și practica evaluării/Theory and practice of evaluation* (2010), *Perspective inovative ale evaluării. Evaluarea digitală/Innovative perspectives of evaluation. Digital assessment* (2016), *Referențialul în evaluarea școlară/Reference-based evaluation* (2015).

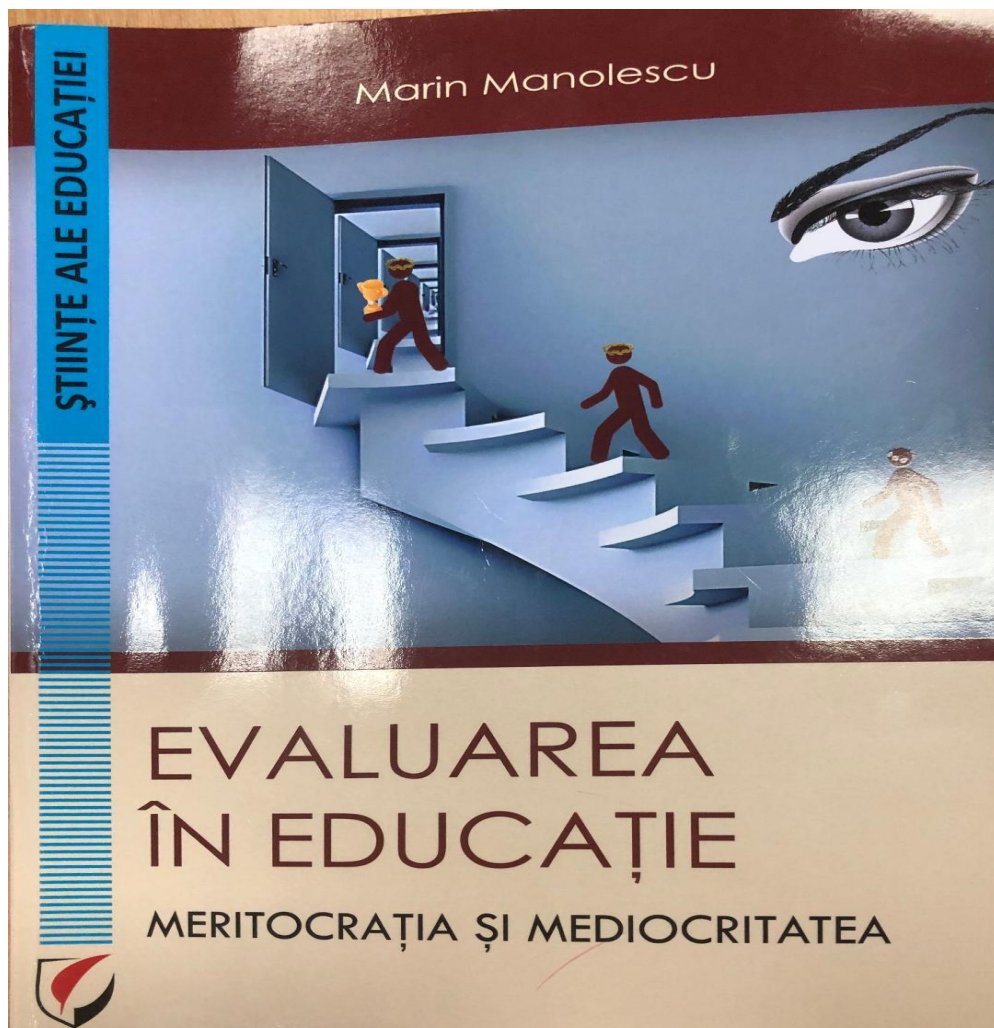
2. Structure and content of the book

The book *Evaluarea în educație. Meritocrație și mediocritate/Evaluation in education. Meritocracy and mediocrity* deserves attention due to the answers it formulates regarding the role of evaluation in education in formal, non-formal and informal contexts, in direct relation with the concepts of meritocracy and mediocrity.

The author carries out longitudinal research of the educational phenomenon in Romania, continuing the historiography of the development of the Romanian school put forward by the great Romanian educator Stanciu Stoian, pointing out its features and the contributions to the development of the evaluation as a source of meritocracy and mediocrity.

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The work, structured in three parts and thirteen chapters, begins with *Introduction*, advocating meritocratic values and defining key concepts: *high achievers*, *meritocracy*, *mediocrity* in relation to school evaluation.



Part I, *Problematika evaluării școlare în societatea contemporană. Funcții, disfuncții, evoluții/The issue of evaluation in the contemporary society. Functions, dysfunctions, evolutions* is structured in three chapters: *Școala și societatea. Necesitatea reconstrucției școlii/School and society. The need for school reconstruction; Evaluarea în educație – funcții, disfuncții, evoluții/Assessment in education - functions, dysfunctions, evolutions; Titluri și diplome. Existența celor două atitudini polarizante: devalorizarea școlii versus supravvalorizarea școlii/Titles and degrees. The existence of two polarizing attitudes: devaluation of the school versus overvaluation of the school.*

In the first chapter of the paper, the author proposes the reconstruction of the compulsory school by strengthening the educational capacity of the school, by enhancing the family cultural capital, in the context of competition as a social state of affairs, so that we move from the elitist school to the democratic mass education.

The second chapter *Evaluarea în educație – funcții, disfuncții, evoluții*/Assessment in education - functions, dysfunctions, evolutions addresses the problem of evaluation between theory and practice, reviewing the paradigms of interpretation of this phenomenon in the context of conceptual and typological diversity at the national and international levels.

Chapter Three, *Titluri și diplome. Existența celor două atitudini polarizante: devalorizarea școlii versus supravalorizarea școlii*/Titles and degrees. The existence of two polarizing attitudes: devaluation of the school versus overvaluation of the school analyzes the status of degrees in the Romanian society: warrants of school-based and professional competence in the paradoxical context of the current situation of the degrees undergoing an inflationary process, while emphasizing the idea that they are becoming increasingly indispensable.

The second part of the book, *Evaluarea în educație și meritocrația*/Evaluation in education and meritocracy is structured in seven chapters: *Meritocrația – model de justiție socială prin educație*/Meritocracy - a model of social justice through education; *Este legitimă legitimarea meritocrației*/Is the legitimacy of meritocracy legitimate?; *Meritocrația socială – recompensa meritului școlar*/Social meritocracy - the reward of academic achievement; *Meritul școlar și meritul social: determinări și interdependențe*/Academic merit and social merit: determinations and interdependencies; *Vocația meritocratică a școlii*/The meritocratic vocation of the school; *Examinarea – condiție obligatorie a promovării elevilor. Repere istorice evolutive*/Examinations - a mandatory condition of the promotion of students. Evolutionary historical landmarks; *Exigențe meritocratice în formarea cadrelor didactice. O perspectivă istoric*/Meritocratic requirements in teacher training. A historical perspective.

The author, by grounding his work into American and European mainstream literature, illustrates the complexity of the notions of *merit* and *meritocracy*, in the context of the consensual and divergent elements regarding trust in meritocracy within two versions of merit and meritocracy: the social version, developed by theorists, and the folk version, as present in the collective mind.

The following approach equally pertains to the area of questions and dilemmas concerning the meaning of *merit*, but this time of academic merit: the significance of academic merit, the extent to which academic merit determines social merit, the social value of degrees and diplomas.

Through the evaluative function the school plays an essential role in promoting meritocracy. How this role materializes in the past and present of the Romanian school is discussed in the chapter *Vocația meritocratică a școlii*/The meritocratic vocation of the school. The exploration of the history of Romanian education is continued in the chapter *Examinarea – condiție obligatorie a*

promovării elevilor. Repere istorice evolutive/Examinations - a mandatory condition of the promotion of students. Evolutionary historical landmarks.

In the book architecture the author allocates a considerable number of pages (almost 100 pages) to the *meritocratic requirements of teacher training, historical landmarks*, starting from the teaching profession to vocationally-oriented teaching, from the evaluation of teachers through the related exams (*Definitivat* and *grade* in the Romanian system of education) to the allegory of mediocre success, while identifying shortcomings in teacher training and in school evaluation, spotting the elements of continuity and change in the training and development of teachers.

The last part of the paper *Evaluarea și mediocritatea/Evaluation and mediocrity* addresses the reference framework of mediocrity, its typology, causes and pedagogical remedial work. Academic achievement enshrined in evaluation fall into the sphere of meritocracy or mediocrity.

The essentialization of the problem of meritocracy and mediocrity in the school framework, the historical view, the inquisitive style invites professional teachers, experts in education, educational policy makers and pre-service teachers to reflection.

REFERENCES

Manolescu Marin (2019). *Evaluarea în educație. Meritocrația și mediocritatea*. București: Editura Universitară.