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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

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Ionuț-Marian ANGHEL

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FOSTERING RURAL TRANSFORMATION IN ROMANIA: ENTREPRENEURSHIP, LAND REFORM AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Alin CROITORU¹,
Flavius MIHALACHE²

Abstract: *The article analyses the employment structure in Romania's rural areas during the post-transition period, focusing on entrepreneurship and public policies designed to support economic development within rural settings. These two mechanisms of economic and social change are explored using official statistics from Eurostat and the National Institute of Statistics, as well as survey data. Particular attention is paid to rural policies adopted due to the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Since Romania has joined the European Union, CAP has become the core framework for promoting the agricultural sector and implicitly rural development. Rural Romania's employment structure is no longer dominated by the category of self-employed people in agriculture and we can notice a general increase of the number and percentage of employees with wages. Building on prior research which revealed the precariousness of the self-employment in subsistence agriculture and the challenges of integrating these people on the labour market, we emphasize the gradual decrease in absolute and relative terms of this category of self-employment as a major trend in the rural employment structure. At the same time, the paper contributes to the general debate on entrepreneurship and its transformative effects by looking at the specific profile of Romanian entrepreneurs in agriculture, employing the distinction between opportunity and necessity driven entrepreneurship.*

Keywords: *rural environment, entrepreneurship, employment, self-employment, rural development*

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Objectives and theoretic framework

This study explores the importance of certain processes of transforming the Romanian rural areas during the period of transition, starting with the changes noticed in the employment structure of the rural population, the intricacies of the land reform and the analysis of the institutions involved in the management of the rural development programs. The analyses regarding the evolution of occupation structure focus on self-employment and entrepreneurship, highlighting the coordinates of this type of activities and the premises for its future evolution. At the same time, we briefly describe the framework of the policies aiming to reform and support the rural environment, implemented in Romania, after 1990. In order to accomplish these objectives, we use various official national and European documents, we monitor the evolution of the main synthetic indicators regarding the occupation and the economic activities in the rural areas, and we analyse the results of an international study centred on entrepreneurship (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – GEM).

Previous analyses and studies on the economic situation of the rural areas and on the coordinates of the labour market point to several structural problems, which outline a chronic situation of underdevelopment (Bíró, 2015; Davidova, 2011; Feher, Goşa, Raicov, Haranguş, & Condea, 2017). The over-employment of the population in the subsistence agriculture is the defining element for the Romanian rural environment in the post-socialist period (Ciutacu, Chivu, & Andrei, 2015; Ciutacu et al., 2015; Fredriksson, Bailey, Davidova, Gorton, & Traikova, 2017). The preponderantly agricultural occupations, which are often non-formal and in subsistence agriculture (Fredriksson et al., 2017; Otiman, 2012; Tudor, 2015), are seen as a result of the economic difficulties experienced by the entire population during the transition period, as a consequence of the difficult economic environment (Cace, 2006; Preoteasa, 2008). We will contribute to this general debate by analysing official statistics and the longitudinal evolution of the employment structure of rural population.

Empirical studies focused on self-employment and entrepreneurship revealed that rural and urban areas provide different business opportunity structures and individuals decisions are dependent on distinct economic forces (Faggio & Silva, 2014). This is directly related to individual motivations behind employment choices and business initiatives and there is an increasing literature which acknowledge significant differences between opportunity driven and necessity driven entrepreneurship (Maritz, 2004, Block & Wagner, 2010; Deli, 2011; Fossen & Büttner, 2013; Fairlie & Fossen, 2018). Literature related to opportunity driven entrepreneurship derives its conceptual framework mainly from the classical legacy (Schumpeter, 1939, 2008; Sombart, 1915; Weber, 1978), while researchers focused on necessity driven entrepreneurship pointed out the structural determinants and opened new lines of inquire. Necessity is a driver towards entrepreneurship for those individuals who are forced by circumstances to engage into self-employment or entrepreneurship due to the lack of employment opportunities (Haas, 2013; Serviere, 2010). Both theoretical lines can contribute to the analyses of the economic evolution of the rural Romania and the focus of this paper on legislative measures and institutional transformations can benefit from both theoretical lines mentioned above. Romania can constitute an excellent site of research due to its

high developmental gaps between rural and urban areas (Kulcsár & Brădăţan, 2014; Sandu, 2011).

Insights provided by opportunity driven entrepreneurship point out the important role played by visionary individuals who are able to transpose creative ideas in businesses (Dimov, 2007, 2011). These individuals are characterized by certain entrepreneurial qualities and they are eager to benefit from market opportunities (Kirzner, 1992; Shane, 2000), but the relationship between business ideas and their implementation into market setting include also a series of structural characteristics (Croitoru, 2013, 2017). The specificity of the national context offered unique opportunities for people able to enterprise within tough economic and social contexts seriously affected by the communist inheritance and the delayed transition towards market economy (Stoica, 2004, 2012).

In this paper we refer to the rural evolution, starting with the point of general collapse of the co-operative property and agriculture (Swain, 2013) towards the point Romania became part of the EU. Multiple economic, political and social phenomena overlapped during the Romanian tormented transition (Rusu, 2008); within the paper, we place the emphasis on the reconfiguration of the land property and the employment opportunities in rural areas. The successive measures for land (re)distribution as well as drastic decline of the employment opportunities in former communist industrial facilities (Varga, 2014; Voicu, 2005) forced a significant part of the rural population to choose between engagement into subsistence agriculture (Popa, 2010), international migration (Sandu, 2010; Şerban, 2011; Croitoru, 2015, 2018;) or various forms of precarious employment (Preoteasa, 2015). Each of these premises generated specific pathways of development at individual, community and national level.

Framework of public policies for supporting the rural environment

Main stages

During the first years of post-communist transition, Romania's lack of sustainable policies in order to support the vulnerable rural population or to favour the economic development of the rural areas seriously affected the employment opportunities from these areas. The social and economic problems of the rural environment have been approached rather through national policies (Mihalache and Croitoru, 2011; Pricina 2012, Preotesi, 2016). Looking back to the post-communist period, one may identify three large periods in the evolution of the Romanian rural environment, accompanied by different views regarding the ways the state should get involved in the processes of social change.

Firstly, policies addressing the rural population during the first decade after 1990 were dominated by the theme of returning the land properties and of transforming the agriculture on private property basis. The return of the land was difficult and required several stages (Hartvigsen, 2014; Sabates-Wheeler, 2001). The decision to disband all agricultural cooperatives and state farms, stipulated by Law 18/1991, caused a series of

social and economic effects, which affected both the economic coordinates of the agricultural and industrial sector, and the standard of life of an important category of the rural population (we refer mainly to the population that was working in the state farms or in units of the agro-food industry). This period witnessed the establishment of the economy on new bases. During the first stage, transition stalled the development of the rural localities, reduced the activities in the non-agricultural sectors, increased poverty and produced new social phenomena, as subsistence agriculture (Mathijs & Noev, 2004; Tudor, 2015). The governmental responses to the problems of the rural were non-systematic and weak in the '90s. The main element of the public debate was the optimal way of returning the properties nationalized during the communist period. The only positive evolutions concerned the start of national programs for the development of the rural infrastructure, but the progress was also limited (Marin, 2015).

The period between 2000 and 2007 did not bring major changes in the situation of the rural environment and of the rural population. The new pathway of improved economic stability and the resumption of economic growth brought along some progress in occupation and in the standard of life for the population, but the poor profitability of the family farms continued to be one of the central problems of the rural economy and emigration became a strategic decision for larger categories of Romanians (Sandu, 2010). The problems caused by the dependence of large categories of people on the subsistence agriculture worsened, while gaps in the regional development were increasing (Sandu, 2011). At the social level, the Law 416/2001 regarding the guaranteed minimal income (VMG) produced its most important effects among the categories of vulnerable population, by setting the grounds for a framework of institutional support for the poor families (the targeted population lived in rural and urban area as well). Previous studies highlighted the fact that most of the beneficiaries of the Law 416/2001 were either rural dwellers, or inhabitants from small towns (Preotesi, 2016). Another Law of that period, 247/2005, regarding the reform of property, stipulated a lifelong fee of 100 euro/ha/year for the landowners aged 62+ who decided to sell their land (the fee was of only 50 euro/ha/year if the land was leased). This law aimed to encourage land aggregation and to establish a younger age structure of the landowners, but its effects were limited. On the one hand, the law was criticised for the low amounts that it has stipulated, and on the other hand, its enforcement has been difficult due to the subsequent changes in the normative framework.

A significant adjustment of the policy framework supporting the rural population and then reorganisation of the agricultural sector occurred after 2007, when the National Plan for Rural Development (PNDR) started. The framework of public policies gained some coherence under the pressure of the conforming to the framework of Common Agricultural Policies (CAP). Even though important criticisms can be formulated against this type of program (Marquardt, Wegener, & Möllers, 2010; Șerban & Juravle, 2012), the structural funds and, particularly, the PNDR programs allowed the consolidation of consistent mechanisms supporting the entrepreneurial initiatives in the rural environment (Cace, Cace, & Nicolăescu, 2012; Petrescu, 2015; Pricină, 2012). Supporting changes to the rural economic structure, through public policies, is obviously a long-term process. At the level of public policy, the stimulation of

association between the small agricultural producers and the development of their entrepreneurial skills was a central topic of debates both during the pre-accession period, and after joining the European Union. The agricultural associations, which in the public debate were labelled as viable forms of aggregating the agricultural entrepreneurial initiatives, did not benefit, nonetheless of a real support from the policy-makers. The measures supporting association were limited to the adoption of the normative framework for the functioning of this sector (Law of the agricultural cooperation, 566/2004; Law 1/2005 regarding the organisation and operation of cooperation), and to several other stipulations favouring the activity of these forms of association, restricted, particularly to the public interventions financed through PNDR 2007 – 2013 and PNDR 2014 – 2020.

Main institutions involved in the implementation of the rural development programs

The implementation of certain measures stipulated by the CAP, supporting the agriculture and rural development, is done through the activity of two governmental agencies subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, having complementary activity: The Agency for Rural Investments Financing (AFIR) and The Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture (APIA). These organisations have complementary roles and developed a structure of territorial units spread in all the counties of Romania.

The Agency for Rural Investments Financing (AFIR) was established in 2014 by the reorganisation of an older organisation (The Agency of Payments for Rural Development and Fishery – APDPR), assuming its tasks in the implementation of pillar II of the Common Agricultural Policy, the programs intended to support the social-economic development of the rural areas. Both small agricultural producers and commercial companies, NGOs and local authorities were among the beneficiaries of AFIR programs. Besides the central bodies, the agency has 8 regional centres and 41 county offices. The receipt and selection of FEADR projects financed by PNDR, monitoring and control of the funded projects and management of the payments for the running programs, are among the main assignments of the agency. Practically, AFIR is the institution responsible for PNDR implementation, for the execution of all the intervention programs supporting the economic activities, quality of life improvement and the modernisation of villages.

The Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture (APIA), on the other hand, is an organism established in 2004, playing a role in the implementation of the system of direct payments, subsidies granted to the agricultural producers according to the pillar I of the Common Agricultural Policy. The period 2004-2007 was dedicated to the accumulation of experience in the implementation of the financial programs for the rural environment, which subsequently assumed the sections of guaranteeing and orientation associated to the European Agricultural and Guarantee Fund (EAGF), and also managing the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). To this purpose, the law establishing the Agency stipulated that the number of positions must exceed 1,000 by 2007, which allowed APIA to establish a large operational staff in the

territory (42 county offices), with a matching impact in running public rural development projects.

In its activity, The Agency for Payments and Intervention in Agriculture (APIA) used three major sources of funds: the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and funds from the state budget for objectives complementary to PNDR (national payments in the plant and animal sectors, state aids for agricultural insurance, the lifelong revenue program etc.)

Entrepreneurship and employment in rural areas

General framework

The economic dimension of the Romanian rural world is currently undergoing a process of reconfiguration. The traditional agricultural practices, although persisting, are in an obvious decline. The agricultural sector is increasingly dominated by the great exploitations or farms. The process of large property consolidation is revealed by the official data. At the same time, for the peri-urban areas, there are manifest signs pointing towards a process of diversification of the rural economy, by the development of the non-agricultural sector. Research on Romania's metropolitan areas explored the serious challenges of collaboration between urban and rural administrations within the national legislative framework (Stănuș, 2011) and pointed out that outcomes of this process are highly dependent on local political actors (Stănuș, 2018). Also, a significant number of rural localities were transformed in small-urban municipalities (Mihalache, Croitoru, 2014) and this process has also a series of unanticipated consequences and limited access to PNDR funds for these new urban entities.

Within this context, the evolution and specificity of the Romanian rural entrepreneurship are related to the specific coordinates of the rural areas, being difficult to identify regularities or national models of evolution. Some rural occupations are more or less suitable for the development of individual entrepreneurial practices, while others are rather closer to associative organization. Take, the example of a village with tradition in vegetable growing: it is very likely that the villagers develop a system by which a large number of households (organised on the principles of family association) have licence of producers and sell their vegetables on the markets from neighbouring towns/communes. On the other hand, the rural areas, in which the cereal crops are dominant, may be organised around some large agricultural exploitations (either associative forms in which the land is leased, or there are several entrepreneurs who bought large areas of agricultural land). Thus, the analysis of the Romanian rural, and the identification of the premises that can generate rural development must take into account the strong regional specificity (Sandu, 2011). Beyond the peripheral or non-peripheral location of the rural localities in relation with the centres where the resources concentrate, one should also consider the economic, cultural and social characteristics associated to the regions where the rural locality is situated.

Official INS data allow us outlining a general image of the evolution of occupation among the rural population (Table 1). In absolute figures, the occupied population significantly decreased between 2002 and 2017, particularly in non-standard occupations (self-employed workers and unpaid family workers). At the same time, the population of employees increased, mostly on the background of a higher offer of poorly skilled and paid jobs, in sectors such as the processing industry, merchandising and constructions. The number of rural dwellers employed in industry increased by almost 100 thousands people between 2012 and 2017. Over the same time span, the number of people employed in constructions increased by more than 200 thousands people, while in the merchandizing sector, the increase was of about 160 thousands people (INS, Tempo). We are thus speaking of a progress in the occupational structure of the rural population, even though, for that time, this process may seem a modest one.

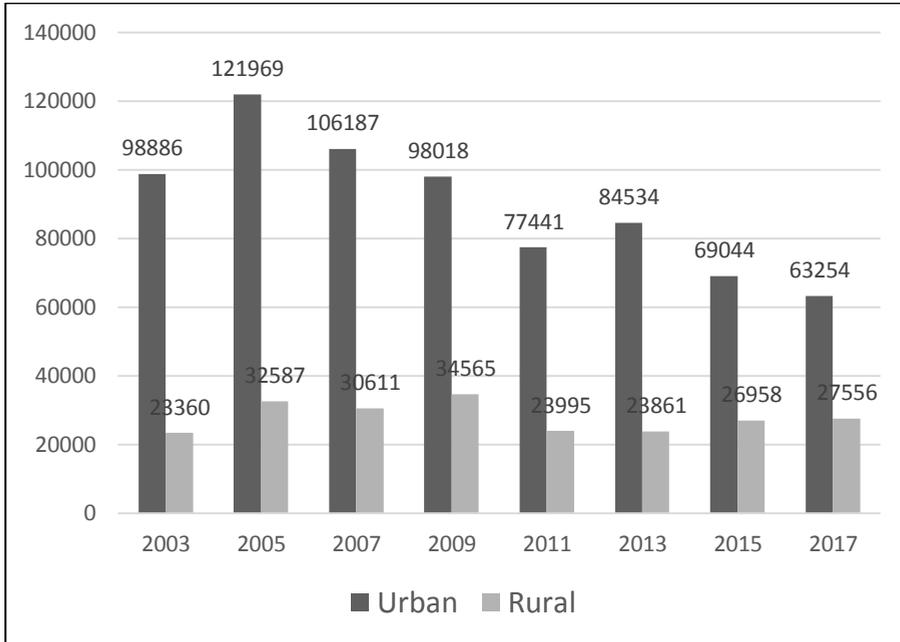
Table 1. Evolution of the main categories of work participation of rural population, in 2002 – 2017 (thousands of people)

	2002	2007	2012	2017
Employees	1.482	1.545	1.506	2.003
Owners	32	30	24	27
Self-employed	1.747	1.610	1.446	1.208
Unpaid family worker	1.343	1.151	1.009	0.619
Member of an agricultural company or cooperation	213	352	No data	No data
Total	4.626	4.341	3.987	3.901

Source: INS, Tempo database

The rural entrepreneurial sector is poorly developed and mostly circumscribed to agricultural and commercial activities. The official statistics are rather limited, but allow sketching the main characteristics of the rural entrepreneurship. The typical rural entrepreneur is a mature person, usually a man, most of the times owner of an agricultural commercial company, or of a rural shop.

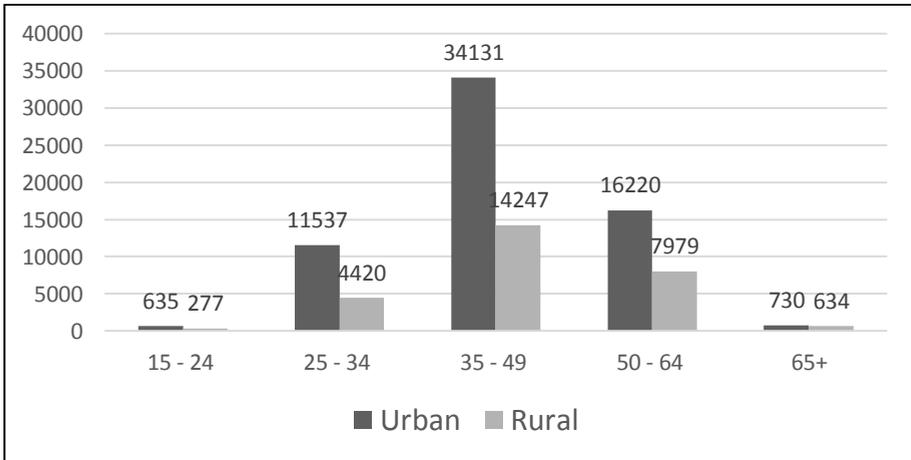
Even though the differences started to decrease during the recent years, we can still speak of under-representation of the rural entrepreneurs compared to the urban ones (Table 1). In 2017, there were some 27,000 rural entrepreneurs and more than 63,000 urban entrepreneurs. In absolute figures, the most favourable period for the rural entrepreneurship was 2005-2009, when their number exceeded 30,000. The global economic crisis affected deeply this category of population; there was a massive decreasing of the entrepreneurial activities (for instance, in 2011 there were just 24,000 entrepreneurs, significantly less than in 2009). The post-crisis increase of the number of entrepreneurs was slow, and the catch-up process has not yet finished.

Chart 1. Number of rural and urban entrepreneurs

Source: INS, *Tempo* database

By gender, the statistics show that women account for less than 30% of the total entrepreneurs (specific gender inequalities within Romanian labour market were emphasized also by several studies – e.g. Morândău, 2015; Croitoru, 2018). By groups of age, more than 50% of the entrepreneurs are aged 35-49 (Chart 2). The young people are less involved in such activities, both because for a long time there were no tailored programs supporting the start of businesses, and because of social and economic constraints (Drăgoi et al., 2017; Olah & Flora, 2015; Pricină, 2012; Căce, Căce și Nicolăescu, 2012). Several other factors exist behind the poor representation of the young people among the entrepreneurs, some pertaining to their personal options and opportunities. Migration is one such factor (Sandu, 2010; Șerban, 2011). Many of the people who migrate in search of work are young persons, and this bears an influence on the perspective of entrepreneurship development resulting in a shrinking number of possible entrepreneurs.

Chart 2. Age groups structure of the Romanian entrepreneurs, by areas of residence (2017)



Source: INS, Tempo database

Exploring entrepreneurship in agriculture

The research focused on entrepreneurial practices extended significantly during the last years and Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) is the flagship venue for international comparative research in this field. The GEM's datasets are made available to the public three years after collection and at the moment of our study the most recent data were collected during 2015. We use these survey data in our article mainly for exploring some essential features of entrepreneurs who owned businesses in agriculture in Romania.

The complex methodology behind GEM is detailed by Reynolds et al. (2001) and Bosma, Wennekers and Amoros (2012). For exploring some characteristics of the Romanian entrepreneurs in agriculture, we extracted from the total sample only those respondents who own businesses at the moment of the survey (2015). Based on this methodological decision we had a total sample which included 251 entrepreneurs and around 20% of them were in agriculture. The sample is not representative for the total population of entrepreneurs from Romania but allow us to employ some comparisons between those who own businesses in agriculture and those who operate in other niches of the market. Firstly, we introduce the main characteristics of the sample using descriptive statistics. This general image makes the reader aware of several limits of this sub-sample. Secondly, we use a logistic regression model for emphasizing some significant predictors for business owners in agriculture.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the sub-sample of Romanian entrepreneurs

		Entrepreneurs in agriculture	Entrepreneurs in other industries	Total sample of entrepreneurs
Motivation for involving in the firm	Take advantage of business opportunity	22%	42%	39%
	No better choices for work	50%	27%	31%
	Combination of both of the above	9%	10%	10%
	Have a job but seek better opportunities	19%	21%	20%
Tertiary level of education completed		16%	53%	45%
Male		64%	56%	57%
Age (No. – mean value)		43,8	41,65	42,08
Household size (No. – mean value)		4,5	3,5	3,78
No. of cases		50	201	251

Data source: GEM, 2019 <https://www.gemconsortium.org/data/sets?id=aps> (year = 2015)

The data presented in the Table 2 offer the main descriptive features of the sample using a comparative perspective. We can note that the general level of education within our sample of entrepreneurs is higher compared to the level of the general population (2011 National Census revealed a share of 14% with tertiary education). The share of male entrepreneurs is 57% within our sample and the average age is around 42 years. Around 40% from the total sample is involved in business to take advantage of business opportunities, while others had mixture motivations or were driven towards entrepreneurship by necessity. All these variables are introduced as predictors in the logistic model presented in the Table 3, for testing the significant relationships with the status of entrepreneur in agriculture.

Table 3. Logistic regression model – Business owner in agriculture (DV)

Variables in the Equation	B	Wald	Exp(B)
Age (no. of years)	0,007	0,147	1,007
Household size (no. of members)	0,245 ⁺	3,402	1,278
Tertiary education (YES = 1)	- 2,695 ^{***}	12,7	0,068
Male (YES = 1)	0,876 ⁺	3,397	2,402
Opportunity driven entrepreneurship (YES = 1)	- 0,913 ⁺	3,165	0,401
CONSTANT	-2.478 [*]	5,222	0,084
-2 Log likelihood	130,612		
Cox & Snell R Square	0,193		
Nagelkerke R Square	0,32		
No. of cases	184		

Note: ^{***} p < 0.001, ^{**} p < 0.01, ^{*} p < 0.05, ⁺ p < 0.1.

Data source: GEM, 2019 <https://www.gemconsortium.org/data/sets?id=aps> (year = 2015)

The logistic regression model (Table 3) confirms that the entrepreneurs who work in agriculture have a specific profile. Individuals with tertiary education have lower odds ratio to engage into entrepreneurship in agriculture exposed by the negative significant relationship between this predictor and DV. We have also found a negative significant relationship between opportunity driven entrepreneurship and owning a business in agriculture. This can be a clue that businesses in agriculture are motivated by a mixture of reasons in which the lack of employment opportunities play an important role. At the same time, entrepreneurship in agriculture is masculinized within this sample and we have found higher odds ratio for men to own a business in agriculture compared to women. Literature pointed out that entrepreneurial activities have to be analysed in a household context (Carter, Kuhl, Marlow, & Mwaura, 2017), and within this sample, a higher number of household members increases the odds ratio for enterprising in agriculture. This can be a proxy variable for a traditional model of family (Morândău, 2014, 2015), which is more often encountered in rural Romania.

Conclusions

The transformation of the Romanian rural area during the transition period was marked, before all, by the lack of a coherent strategy to guide the processes of social change. In the field of rural development policies, the accession to the European Union was a turning point that brought a consistent program of support for agriculture and village development (PNDR). Before 2007, the policy makers did not manage to develop and implement an efficient strategy for the rural areas, fact that adversely influenced the rural development processes. Prior research emphasized that these aspects caused long term negative effects linked to emigration. However, our paper revealed significant transformations regarding the employment structure between 2002 and 2017. Even if the general decrease of employed individuals can be linked to emigration and population aging, one can note from the data that the self-employment (mainly in subsistence agriculture) and the category of unpaid family workers constantly decreased, while the total number of employees with wages increased and cumulated over 50% of the working rural population.

In close connection with the lack of sustainable policies, the economic activity and occupational structure of the rural population were characterized, during the transition period, by under-development, which consolidated the gap between Romania and the other former Central and East European communist countries. Despite the progresses achieved after 2012, materialized in the reduction of occupation in agriculture and increase of the number of employees, the under-occupation of the rural population persists. Also, the total share of business owners remains low and there are important differences between rural and urban propensity towards entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurial sector is under-represented and lacks institutionalized forms of support. Rural entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship in agriculture can assume certain roles in the rural development process, but our analyses point out that many of these entrepreneurs were driven by necessity towards this form of employment. Against this background, their economic impact at local, regional and national levels is limited because of their lack of skills and resources for growth. The bases of the rural

entrepreneurship prove to be weak: low proportion of the entrepreneurs within the total occupied population, their concentration within the agricultural sector and in merchandizing activities, and the poor development of most such initiatives. We consider that the improvement of the rural occupational profile requires measures targeting both a higher employment rate of the rural population, and the encouragement and development of entrepreneurial activities, both agricultural and non-agricultural.

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ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPORT MEASURES AND INTERVENTIONS ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract²: *Social inclusion of people with disabilities is an essential prerequisite of human rights. In the current context, according to data, the social welfare system faces an increasing number of people with disabilities. The social services for these beneficiaries cover a relatively small fraction of their needs. The main type of support for this vulnerable group is in-cash social benefits, while other social inclusion measures are occupying a marginal place in practice. The accent on granting in-cash social benefits to the detriment of social reintegration programs leads to an increased dependency of disabled persons to the welfare system. Although it is considered that the situation of people with disabilities has improved since 2000, several problems occur as a lack of financial and human resources, as well as to the difficulty of setting up a coherent support system for people with disabilities. Disability is not a simple attribute of an individual, but rather a cumulative addition of various conditions created by the social environment. The management of disability requires social action and it must become the common responsibility of the whole community/ society in the sense of producing necessary environmental/ attitudinal changes to facilitate participation of persons with disabilities in all the spheres of social life.*

Keywords: *disability, socio-economic issues, discrimination, needs of people with disabilities.*

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² The article is based on two chapters, analyses written by the author of the article in two projects: (1) "Inclusive for the Labour Market", applicant: Catalactica Association, POSDRU / 165 / 6,2 / S / 143249, project co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program, 2014-2015, in the Report: Evaluation of the Impact and Effectiveness of Measures and Interventions for Persons at Risk of Social Exclusion – People with Disabilities and (2) Needs Analysis at the level of Romania, of the disabled persons involved in the project, the result of Result 3 of the project: "Erasmus +" European Network of Initiatives for the Social Economy for Adults with Disabilities – NO LIMIT ", Project: 2014-1- RO01-KA204-002910 , Applicant "Beethoven" Technological Highschool, Craiova, 2014-2016.

1. Introduction

Disability is perceived as a problem that concerns the European society. This problem translates into permanent preparation for inclusion and maintenance of people into the mainstream of social life. According to statistics, 80 million citizens, representing approximately 16% of the total EU population, have a disability, ranging from mild forms to more serious ones, such as mental health problems. The unemployment rate among disabled people is two times higher than the unemployment rate among healthy people. People with disabilities are a vulnerable group, among whom the rate of poverty is 70% above average, and whose employment rates are also low. (MMJS, 2013).¹

This article focuses on the analysis of the current situation for people with disabilities in terms of the impact and effectiveness of support measures and interventions, especially at national level. The article continues with an analysis of public policies for people with disabilities. The emphasis is on European and national legislation, particularly on the legislative provisions that regulate and stimulate the full integration of people with disabilities supported by the main national documents. The purpose of the analysis is to highlight to what extent the current national policies for the inclusion of people with disabilities are effective. In developing policies, programs, services for people with disabilities, it is necessary to consider the general and specific needs (related to health services, education, well-being, economic and social security, facilitating the development of skills, community integration), so as to remove the obstacles to full participation.

The article emphasises a series of needs and specific problems that people with disabilities are facing, revealed by statistical data (most of the data refers to Sept. 2015). People with disabilities often face stigma and social exclusion (Manea, 2007). Social exclusion of people with disabilities is based on two important and closely linked areas: education and work, as persons with disabilities sometimes do not have equal access to education, health, chances on the labour market, or social relationships etc. Therefore, the social exclusion of disabled people translates into their difficulties or even their inability to take an active part in economic, social, political and cultural life.

The last part of the article underlines the general conclusions of the analysis. These refer to the effectiveness of support measures and interventions offered to people with disabilities both at national and European level. By developing and addressing social policies and specific legislation on people with disabilities, decision-makers have included in their strategies a fundamental element according to which the improvement of the situation of people with disabilities as well as social inclusion are in close connection with their access to education and to the labour market.

¹ Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, Romania

2. The legislative framework regarding disabled people. Romania and the European Union.

At European level, several legislative documents and strategies have been adopted to regulate and stimulate the full and active integration of people with disabilities within society. Some of the most important documents are:

- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- European Social Charter, revised in 1996 and entered into force in 1998;
- Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU);
- European Strategy 2010-2020 for People with Disabilities: a renewed commitment to a barrier-free Europe;
- European Employment Strategy, adopted in Amsterdam in 1997;
- Council Directive 2000/78 / EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

The elaboration of the European Strategy 2010-2020 on disability was achieved in 2010: a renewed commitment to a barrier-free Europe whose main objective was *“to provide people with disabilities the ability to enjoy their full rights and benefit fully from participation European economic and social life, especially through the single market”*. The Commission has identified eight main areas for action: accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health and external action.

Since 2014, the Romanian Ministry of Labour and Social Justice proposed for public debate the National Strategy *“A society without barriers for people with disabilities”* 2015 – 2020¹. The basic principle of this strategy, *“assuring normality”*, is seen as a process design/redesign of social systems, so as to enable persons with disabilities to live as far as possible independent in their own family, in the ordinary life of the community. In practice, normalization translates into achievement *“of choosing the less restrictive”*, which implies that by every measure of placement and / or assistance to persons with disabilities to ensure as far as possible the same level of autonomy and social participation as the other members of the community.

In terms of participation, the Commission considers that *“there are many obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from exercising their full fundamental rights – including the rights deriving from European citizenship – and that obstructed their participation in society on an equal basis with others”*².

Romanian legislation is in the process of harmonization with European regulations regarding the conceptual framework on the disabled. In Romania, the definition of persons with disabilities is identified in Article 2/ Law no. 448 of 6 December 2006 on the protection and promotion of rights of persons with disabilities: *“Persons with disabilities, within the meaning of this law are those persons who, because of physical, mental or sensory*

¹ Decision draft National Strategy "A society without barriers for people with disabilities 2015-2020"

² European Strategy for Disabled, 2010-2020

absence, lack the skills to carry out normal daily activities requiring protective measures to support recovery, integration and social inclusion”.

The law was amended in September 2010, stating that: *“People with disabilities are people whom the social environment, the misfit weaknesses of their physical, sensory, mental, mental and / or associated ones prevent them from total or limit their access to equal opportunities in society, requiring protection measures in support of integration and social inclusion”.*

Chapter VI of Law 448/2006 (Articles 85-90) entered into force on December 23rd, 2011. Article 6 paragraph AA) defines “disability” as *“people who have physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation of individuals in society on an equal basis with others”.* It is apparent, therefore, that the legislature has fully incorporated in the adopted Law 292/2011 the definition stipulated in the Convention, thus addressing disability on an equal opportunity with others, without limitation integration and inclusion. As Moroianu Zlătescu (2015b) underlined, the issues that Convention put in question make monitoring and implementation more challenging than most conventions.

Since 2005, Romania is addressing strategic integration into the community, with equal rights for people with disabilities. The paradigm shift occurs by Government Decision H.G. 1175/2005 approving the National Strategy for protection, integration and social inclusion of people with disabilities in the period 2006 – 2013, Equal opportunities for people with disabilities – towards a society without discrimination, a planning instrument of social policies and programs for people with disabilities. The special protection of persons with disabilities is legitimized by a series of laws, government decrees or ordinances, presented in Table 1.

Table 1: National legislation regarding the protection of persons with disabilities

Acts	Main provisions
Constitution of Romania	Provisions of Constitution, the fundamental law of Romania, Art.41 par. (1) stipulates that “The right to work cannot be restricted. The choice of profession, trade or occupation, and the workplace is free “. So, all people in Romania, including those with disabilities, have guaranteed the access to the labour market. <i>“Disabled persons shall enjoy special protection. The State will ensure the achievement of a national policy of equal opportunities, prevention and treatment of disability, the effective participation of persons with disabilities in the community, respecting the rights and duties of parents or protectors.” (Art.50)</i>
Labour Code	Provisions of article 5, stipulate the principle of equal treatment for all employees and employers in labour relations, and that is forbidden <i>“any direct or indirect discrimination against an employee based on gender, sexual orientation, genetic characteristics, age, nationality, race, color, religion, political opinion, social origin, disability, family status or responsibilities, trade union membership or activity.”</i>

Acts	Main provisions
Law no. 448 of 6 December 2006 on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Within the law exists provisions regarding to the rights and obligations of economic, social, cultural and political rights of persons with disabilities. Most of these rights involve preparing for an active and productive life (right to education, right to rehabilitation and social integration) and assure that the next generation will contribute positively and actively to the whole society.
Decision no. 1175/2005 of 29.09 / 2005 approving the “National Strategy for protection, integration and social inclusion of people with disabilities in the period 2006-2013”	Ensuring the right to health for people with disabilities. By objective 2.2. – Providing family support that objective was to be achieved during 2006-2013 from MMJS, DGPPH, MS and local authorities, by <i>“accessibility for people with disabilities and their families to government social security programs, and reducing health poverty; incorporate the needs of disabled persons and their families in all policies, strategies and programs for national development, local county or local public authorities”</i> .
Social Assistance Law no. 292/2011	Art. 86 states that the person with disabilities benefit personal care at home, granted by formal or informal caregivers, these one benefiting from the facilities and support services, regulated by special laws and Art. 87 paragraph. (1) stipulates that <i>“a person with severe disability, depending on the nature of disability and the specific care needs can be assisted and cared for at home by a family member employed as a caretaker formally, as provided by law”</i> .
National Education Law no.1 / 2011	Art.12 par. (6) stipulates that <i>“the state guarantees the right to education of all persons with special educational needs. Special education and integrated special are part of the national system of school education “</i> . Article 12 (7) of Law 1/2011 of National Education <i>“Special education and integrated special school training is a form of differentiated, tailored and form of educational assistance, medical and social complex, designed for people with special educational needs “</i> .
National Strategy for protection, integration and social inclusion of people with disabilities in the period 2006 – 2013	The strategy aims to establish a national policy for protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities by highlighting three general objectives: 1. promotion social integration of people with disabilities as active citizens able to control their lives; 2. support for families who composed people with the disabled; 3. increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
Social Inclusion Strategy of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020	The strategy stipulates the continuation and development approach initiated by the previous national strategy, based on the evaluation results and its implementation in accordance with their obligations under international and European organizations’ documents to which Romania is a part of.
Law no. 76/2002 on the unemployment insurance	According to Art. 48 of the law, employers who organize training programs for their employees, conducted by

Acts	Main provisions
system and employment stimulation	authorized providers are granted from the unemployment insurance budget, an amount representing 50% of the expenditure on vocational training services organized for a number of more than 20% of staff. Employers are required to maintain working relations with people participating in program at least one year from the date of the grant amount for that program.

Sources: *Constitution of Romania* (Art.41, Art.50), *Labour Code* (Art.5), Law no. 448 of 6 December 2006 on the *Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, Decision no. 1175/2005 of 29.09 / 2005 approving the “*National Strategy for protection, integration and social inclusion of people with disabilities in the period 2006-2013*”(Objective 2.2), Social Assistance Law no. 292/2011 (Art.86, Art.87), *National Education Law no.1/2011*(Art.12, Alin. 6), National Strategy for protection, integration and social inclusion of people with disabilities in the period 2006 – 2013, Social Inclusion Strategy of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020, *Law no. 76/2002* on the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation (Art.48)

Social services for adults with disabilities are coordinated by the General Directorate for People with Disabilities (Art. 34 paragraph 1 of Law 448/2006). Services may be provided: at home (specialized care at home, mobile team, and personal assistant), in the community (professional personal assistant), in and public, private or public-private day centres and residential centres.

In order to integrate persons with disabilities into the labour market, Law 448/2006 lays down the conditions necessary to ensure the accessibility and “*set of measures and works to adapt the physical environment and information and communications environment according to the needs of people with disabilities, which is essential for exercising rights and fulfilment of the obligations of persons with disabilities in society.*” (Article 5 (2) of Law 448/2006).

Regarding the implementation of the UN Convention on the employment of people with disabilities, Romania, through the General Directorate for People with Disabilities, will need to develop measures and strategies to support the empowerment and rehabilitation of the labour market by identifying those skills and needs to ensure inclusion in the labour market of people with disabilities.

At a first view, legislation in Romania in the field of disabled people can be perceived as being proper rules of non-discrimination (Moroianu Zlătescu, 2015), containing a number of provisions that encourage obviously their support policies to increase the number of disabled people into employment. Reality shows that, like other areas, implementation of legislation is deficient and tracking of these provisions is inappropriate managed by the Romanian authorities.

For improving implementation of cohesion policy on persons with disabilities, future regulations of legislation should start from the premise need for interventions aimed at creating an inclusive labour market for persons with disabilities, improving their skills and education level, in order to raise their living standard.

3. The needs of people with disabilities. Socio-professional situation of people with disabilities in Romania

A significant number of people with disabilities don't have equal access to education and employment opportunities, do not receive specific services they need, and are, therefore, excluded from everyday activities (Neagoe, 2014). In this way, the state “condemns” people with disabilities to isolation and marginalization. These people cannot perform their civic obligations, lacking equal opportunities for the participation in community life (ONPHR, 2010).¹

While the social system in Romania started to be connected to European standards, a significant segment of people with disabilities still do not enjoy the same rights as the rest of the population. To support the authorities, and thus, people with disabilities, it is vital to identify the problems that these people encounter in society.

The main problems with which disabled people in Romania are confronted are: reduced access to specialized social services, difficulties in framing and maintaining employment, reduced access to any form of education, caused by a lack of availability of early education for children with disabilities (Stanciu, 2013) and the lack of accessibility of the physical environment and education, difficult access for people with physical disabilities in means of transportation, limited access of disabled people mobility in Romania in cultural, sports and leisure, stigma and social marginalization.

Insurance an independent life for every disabled person necessarily depend on the removal of all obstacles to meeting the needs of health, education, professional integration of leisure, socializing etc. As anyone needs support in his or her own development, accessibility of public environment, the working environment for people with disabilities represents an important mechanism in their freedom of movement. Although the legislation in Romania dedicated to accessibility is broad enough to ensure the best possible independence for persons with disabilities, meeting the obligations of public institutions is in an incipient stage (IPP, 2013).²

The needs of people with disabilities, both physical and mental, referring to the care, communication, travel, education, employment and revenue assurance can launch various responses from the community. Often, society does not recognize the real needs of people with disabilities.

By developing and addressing social policies and specific legislation in the field of disabled people, policy makers, both at European and national level, have included a cornerstone in their strategies whereby improving the situation of persons with disabilities and social inclusion are closely linked to their access to education and access to employment.

¹ National Organization of Persons with Disabilities in Romania

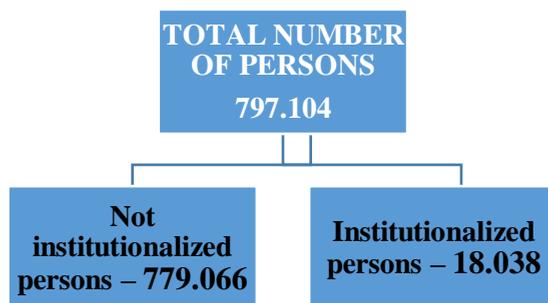
² Institute for Public Policy, Bucharest

In order to integrate on the labour market, Law 448/2006 lays down the conditions necessary to ensure the accessibility and “*set of measures and works to adapt the physical environment and information and communications environment according to the needs of people with disabilities, which is essential for exercising rights and fulfilment of the obligations of persons with disabilities in society*”.

Public authorities are obliged to take specific measures to ensure assessment, guidance, training and retraining of people with disabilities through development / diversification / financial support of programs for professional orientation for people with disabilities by providing education and training for occupations needed in the area disability, linking training individuals with disabilities with the labour market requirements by creating the necessary framework for access to professional evaluation and orientation in any profession, according to the abilities of people with disabilities.

At the end of 2017, the total number of persons with disabilities in Romania was of 797.104 people (ANPD, MMJS).¹ Of these, a percent of 97.7% (779 066 persons) is in the care of families and / or live independently (not institutionalized) and a percent of 2.26% (18 038 people) is in public residential care for adults with disabilities (institutionalized) coordinated by the two above mentioned institutions.

Chart 1. Number of people with disabilities at 31 Dec. 2017



Source: MMJS, ANPD Statistical Bulletin – September 30, 2018

It is worthless to mention, as many authors underline (see for example Manea L., 2000), that the quality of life of disabled people in the care of families and / or live independently (not institutionalized) is better than of people living in public residential care.

The evolution of the number of disabled people from 2003 to 2017 and a breakdown of the number and percentage of people institutionalized and non-institutionalized to total population are found in the Table 2.

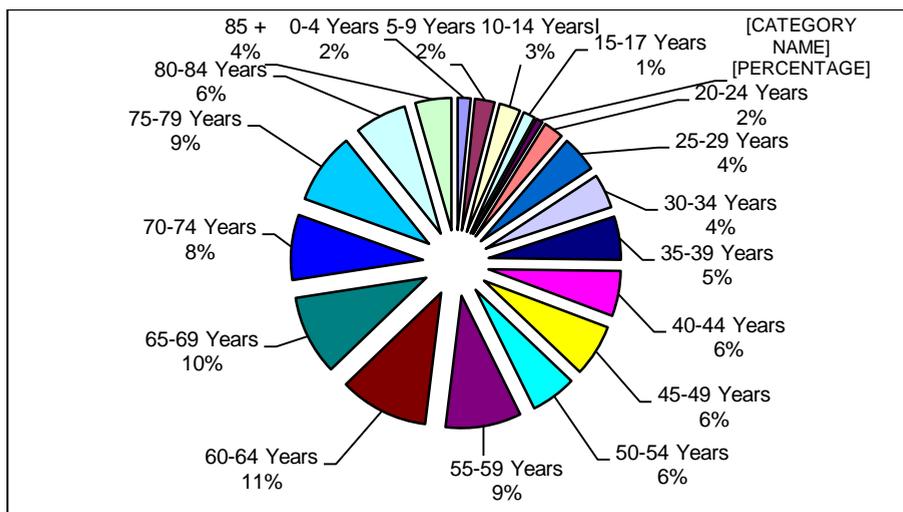
¹ National Authority for Persons with Disabilities

Table 2. Evolution of the number of adults with disabilities (2003-2017)

Year	Total population	Disabled (PH)	% population	Disabled non-institutionalized	Disabled institutionalized	% Disabled
2003	21.733.556	351.996	1,62%	332.294	19.702	5,60%
2004	21.673.320	369.419	1,70%	350.200	19.219	5,20%
2005	21.623.849	404.691	1,87%	386.960	17.731	4,38%
2006	21.584.365	432.933	2,01%	415.802	17.131	3,96%
2007	21.537.536	510.646	2,37%	493.910	16.736	3,28%
2008	21.528.627	571.952	2,66%	554.760	17.192	3,01%
2009	21.496.664	620.042	2,88%	602.951	17.091	2,76%
2010	21.431.298	628.393	2,93%	611.390	17.003	2,71%
2011	21.354.396	629.307	2,95%	612.160	17.147	2,72%
2012	20.254.866	636.310	3,14%	618.921	17.389	2,73%
2013	19.697.103	648.223	3,29%	631.112	17.111	2,64%
2014	19.942.642	678.110	3,40%	660.917	17.193	2,54%
2015	19.488.083	698.010	3,58%	680.340	17.670	2,53%
2016	19.638.309	786.546	3,91%	768.456	18.090	2,30%
2017	19.523.621	797.104	3,59%	779.066	18.038	2,26%

Data source: www.anpd.gov.ro and www.insse.ro

The share of people with disabilities by age groups (by 2015) is found in the Chart 2.

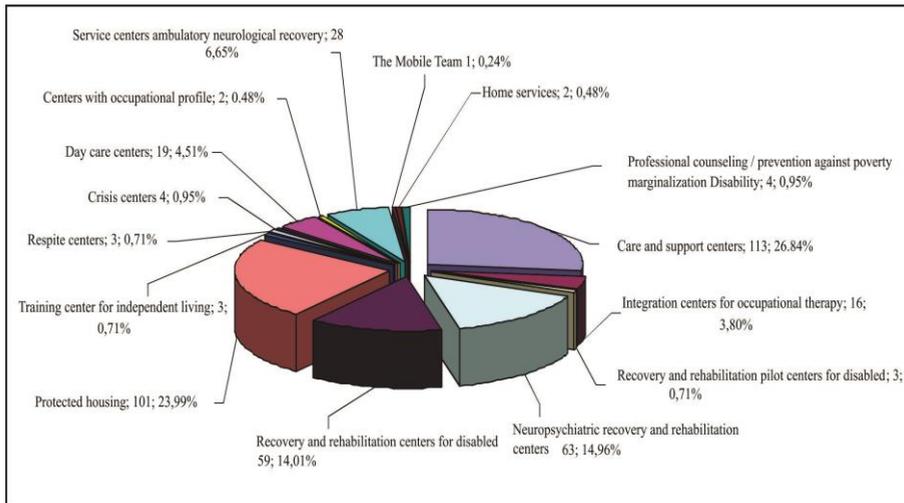
Chart 2. Share of persons with disabilities, by age group, 2015

Source: MMJS, ANPD Statistical Bulletin – September 30, 2015

The number of public institutions for social care for adults with disabilities on 2015 was 421 (compared to 399 on 30 September 2014), of which 365 residential (compared with 342 on 30 September 2014) and 56 non-residential – day care (compared with 59 on 30 September 2014). A third of residential institutions are centers of care and support,

with 6583 beneficiaries, so 37.23% of the total 17,682 persons in residential institutions. There are a significant number of beneficiaries in the 63 neuropsychiatric recovery and rehabilitation centers, 6,024 persons respectively. (MMJS, ANPD, 2015)

Chart 3: Public institutions social care for adults with disabilities residential and non-residential – under the coordination of Romanian Ministry of Labour and Social Justice by Disabled Persons Protection Directorate at September 30, 2015 (number and %)



Source: MMJS, Statistics, 2015

Individual program of rehabilitation and social integration is the document that stipulates the types of adequate social services disabled person. In accordance with the law¹, people with disabilities can receive social services provided at home, in the community or day centers and residential centers. The types of centers for the disabled are: centers of care and assistance centers, recovery and rehabilitation centers, integration through occupational therapy, training centers for independent living centers, respite / crisis centers, centers for community and training, protected housing. In 2015, the situation at national level, residential and day centers for adults with disabilities is as follows:

¹ Law no. 448 of 6 December 2006 on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Table 3. Public services for people with disabilities, the types and number of beneficiaries¹

Type	Type center	Number of center	Number of beneficiaries
Residential services	Crisis centers	4	13
	Care and Support Centers	109	6.469
	Integration centers through occupational therapy	17	885
	Recuperation and rehabilitation pilot centers for disabled	3	212
	Training centers for independent living	3	25
	Centres of neuropsychiatric recuperation and rehabilitation	56	5.370
	Recuperation and rehabilitation centers for disabled	58	3.250
	Respite centers	3	23
	Protected housing	90	761
	Total	343	17.008²
Non-Residential services	Psychosocial counselling center / vocational guidance	4	72
	Centers with occupational profile (type day-care center)	1	18
	Service centers by ambulatory neuromotor rehabilitation	29	1.242
	Day-care center	19	963
	Mobile team (home assistance)	1	0
	Services at home	2	43
	Total	56	2.338

Source: MMJS. (2015). Strategy Draft "A society without barriers for people with disabilities 2015-2020"

Data from Table 3 shows an imbalance between residential homes and day centers both in number and, especially, the number of beneficiaries. Disproportion contends that any institutionalization of more than 17,000 beneficiaries will not be covered by existing services in the community, which is already required, mainly institutionalized persons.

Another elementary aspect in the full integration of people with disabilities is the labour market inclusion. "Labour market participation of persons with disabilities is influenced by level of education, work experience and training and other variables such as age, marital status (married men and unmarried women having a higher level of employment), urban / rural or mobility to and from work. Accessibility to work, the attitude of employers or family members are potential determinants factors of employment and further research is necessary for their future." (Stănescu et al., 2013, p.16).

¹ National Strategy Draft "A society without barriers for people with disabilities" 2015-2020

² Information only refers at people receiving residential care in public structures. The difference of 662 disabled adults in residential centers are covered by private offer this kind of service.

Special Law 448/2006 stipulates three categories of forms for employment regarding persons with disabilities, namely: the free labour market, at home and in protected forms. If the free labour market is competitive market for all people, through employment at home, person with disabilities benefit from the employer of transport to and from the home of raw materials and necessary activity, as well as finished goods.

Employment disabled person in protected forms of employment is in a protected workplace or an authorized protected unit. Regarding barriers that arise in the way of labour market inclusion, WHO concludes that persons with disabilities are disadvantaged.

For example, their lack of access to education and training or financial resources may constitute grounds for exclusion from the labour market, but also other reasons could be the nature of the job and or the perception of employers about persons with disabilities. Social protection systems can create incentives for people with disabilities. In this regard, OMS suggests more research on the factors influencing labour market outcomes for people with disabilities.

The total number of disabled people employed in Romania (2015) was 31 691. On types of disabilities, the situation was: people with physical disabilities employed – 8417, somatic – 12,981, -3,462 auditory, visual – 2,680, mentally – 790, psychic – 1,186 associate – 1,575, deafblind – 21. A year earlier, in 2014, the number of persons with disabilities employed at national level to June 30 was 30,533. A review of the number of disabled persons employed, types of disabilities highlights the following: disabled people employed – 7881, somatic – 12,262, -3,441 auditory, visual – 2,924, mentally – 764, psychic – 1208 associated – 1492, HIV / AIDS – 327 rare diseases – 213 deafblind – 21. In June 2012 the percentage of people with disabilities employed adult in work over the total number of adults with disabilities was 13%. The value is significantly lower than the 58% overall employment rate of the working age population during the same period. (MMJS, 2015).

Nationally, the employment rate of disabled people is significantly lower compared to the general population. According to a study by the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) in 2013, only 4.6% of the 622 892 people were employed, while 622 892 were registered as disabled institutionalized. Table 4 illustrates the situation of people with disabilities employed by type of disabilities and regions in 2015.

Table 4. Disabled persons employees by type of deficiencies, by regions, on September 30, 2015

Total disabled	Physical	Somatic	Auditive	Visual	Mental	Psychic	Associated	Deafness-blindness	
TOTAL / Region	31.691	8.417	12.981	3.462	2.680	790	1.186	1.575	21
Nord-Est	2.934	801	1.065	412	280	70	106	116	0
Sud Est	3.165	884	1.164	322	325	51	63	283	14
Sud Muntenia	4.959	1.176	2.377	550	341	46	215	200	0
Sud Vest Oltenia	3.173	757	1.495	288	211	48	62	248	0
Vest	3.318	969	1.130	445	349	117	158	89	1
Nord Vest	4.798	1.570	1.859	480	371	136	165	169	0
Centru	4.238	1.249	1.628	449	302	225	118	199	2
București Ilfov	5.106	1.011	2.263	516	501	97	299	271	4

Source: MMJS, ANPD Statistical Bulletin – September 30, 2015 by the General Directorates for Social Work and county Child Protection and Bucharest sectors.

Most studies for people with disabilities conducted by several institutions Academic Society of Romania – 2013¹ and 2009²; Institute for Public Policy – 2011³ and 2012⁴; Association Alternativa 2003⁵; Agency Media Monitoring – 2010⁶, which addresses the issue of labour market integration of disable people, show that the main barriers to market access their labour are the mentality and attitude of employers and society in general, insufficient qualification of persons with disabilities, both educational and professional, professional integration by lack of support and lack of incentives for hiring persons with disabilities.

Under the Law 448/2006, there are a set of measures to stimulate companies to employ people with disabilities, particularly subsidized employment for these people. According to a survey conducted for MMJS in 2013⁷, a percent of 0.05% of total employment achievements programme of work of the NEA is implementing this type of active measure in 2011, compared to 0.06% in 2010. Incentives for employment of disabled persons stipulated in Law 448/2006 had an impact, but they are not sufficient given that employment of persons with disabilities increased but remained below 7%. (MMSJ, 2013).

¹ “Access to labour market reduced for people with disabilities”

² “Diagnosis: Excluded from the labour market, obstacles the employment of disabled people in Romania”

³ “Diagnosis on rural employment for people with disabilities”

⁴ “Deuce of a disabled person's chances of finding a job in Romania”

⁵ “Socio-professional integration possibilities youth with disabilities in Romania”

⁶ “Employment Policies for people with disabilities: results, directions, recommendations”

⁷ “Analysis relevance of measures and interventions support offered to disabled”

Inclusion of people with disabilities on labour market can be improved by better matching public strategies legislative changes in the field and identify mechanisms to surpass the barriers that affect their long-term competitiveness in the labour market (Stănescu et al., 2013).

In developing policies, programs and services for people with disabilities is necessary to consider the needs of general and specific (related to health services, education, welfare, in terms of economic and social security, to facilitate skills development, community integration) their data, so to be removed obstacles to full participation.

4. Conclusions and further measures to improve public policies on people with disabilities

Measures to improve public policies on people with disabilities, as derived from interviews conducted within the project “Inclusive for the Labour Market” and other research listed below, refer to accessibility, participation, equality, employment labour, retention, social protection and health services.

The perceptions of the institutional representatives on the vulnerable groups in Romania are quite diverse and comprehensive. On the one hand, they are included in the category of vulnerable groups, defined on the basis of ethnic criteria (e.g. Roma), based on age criteria, combined with occupational status (young people up to 25 years old integrated into the formal labour market or unemployed aged over 45), people with disabilities, women.

Persons with disabilities meet obstacles to full participation in all areas, i.e. to ensure equal access to the physical and service environment for other members of the society, there are not enough buildings to have their access ramps inside. These obstacles affect the quality of life of people with disabilities and contribute to lowering the standard of living, including the emergence of poverty. Although, at the theoretical level, the existing legislative framework – Law no. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of people with disabilities – seems to contribute to the observance of the European norms regarding the accessibility of the public environment, as well as the equal access to quality services, in practice compliance with it is a precarious one.

At national level, the impact of existing facilities should be analysed, and the evaluation process should include participation of vulnerable groups. Local authorities should provide facilities to stimulate self-employment (by exempting from taxes or offering space to initiate a business).

According with the specifications of the study conducted for MMJS (2013)¹, most companies prefer to pay the amount stipulated by law at the expense of hiring disabled people. Employers use the provisions of Law 448/2006 and prefer alternative solutions not to hire disabled people:

¹ Relevance of Measures and Support Interventions for Disabled People

In line with another survey (IPP, 2011)¹ on employment in the private sector: “stipulation of the obligation to employ a minimum number of persons with disabilities in the private environment for companies with more than 50 employees, as evidenced by interviews with employers, the fulfilment of this obligation is difficult to achieve, partly due to the activity profiles that are very different from the public sector, but also because the private environment feels like this interference in their own management. Therefore, the solution of some incentives to hire a person with disabilities – both for the employee and for the employer – to replace the risk of sanctions currently in place, would probably be more appropriate than the one currently in place in the law.” (IPP, 2011, p. 12).

Regardless of how the hierarchy of vulnerability of the above-mentioned group categories is structured, most institutional representatives interviewed include people with disabilities as the most vulnerable. Their vulnerability is defined both in relation to the risk of social exclusion, many of whom are considered to be discriminated by the members of society and in relation to the risk of specific types of exclusion, such as exclusion from the labour market. In addition to the structural factors acting through exclusive mechanisms, institutional representatives believe that (in general) the attitude of public opinion and (in particular) the attitude of some key actors with which people with disabilities interact, such as teachers / educators and their potential or current employers, represents factors that sustain and amplify their social exclusion.

The attitude of society towards people with disabilities is considered to be a more hostile one, especially due to the lack of interest of civil society in properly informing the usefulness of people with disabilities „*The idea is that people with disabilities are vulnerable because society has a negative idea about them, which stems from the lack of interest of society for these people that can be useful in many aspects. The person with disabilities is not a person who can no longer be useful, the person with a disability can have a common condition that we can all have, and that does not prevent them from exerting their work.*“ (counsellor, DGASPC, Arges)²

In according with the specialists, is possible to talk about more or less obvious forms of discrimination. When it comes to the labour market, employers are dissuaded from people with disabilities, and at the same time the population has some reticence over them. “*Employers think that a disabled person does not have the same productivity and work capacity as a man without such deficiency. It is obvious that a person does not have a 100% work capacity, although it depends on the situation because a person with locomotory disability, for example, can perform a smooth office job. We should discuss differently, not to mention globally about people with disabilities, because these people can do certain activities.*” (representative of AJOFM, Arges)³.

About employment integration is possible to talk only in certain cases of disability, it is obvious that people with disabilities can be useful at work, but it is more difficult for them to fit into the current economic context. The issue of people with disabilities is

¹ Employment Diagnosis for People with Disabilities

² “Inclusive for the Labour Market” project.

³ Idem

considered to be treated only for reasons that are based on interest in the form of self-benefit and benefit by representatives of organizations for people with disabilities.

Regarding the solutions identified for the efficiency of the employment programs among people with disabilities, an integrated program that could accommodate the needs of people with disabilities is highlighted, with emphasis on the importance of a mediator of AJOFMs to mediate relations between employers and people with disabilities „*If we were to talk about solutions, I would talk about an integrated program, about leaving the needs of people with disabilities (if we are talking about people with disabilities), about a mediator function of AJOFM between employers and people with disabilities, and maybe permanent counselling during the job.*“ (Estuar Foundation representative, Bucharest)¹

In order to increase the efficacy of employment programs addressed to people belonging vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities, cooperation between local institutions is very important. A first step in stimulating the integration of people with disabilities into work would be that those commissions that determine the degree disability of a person to be assessed should also consider setting out the types of lucrative activities that they can carry out. In this way, it would become clear in what kind of work the person with disabilities could later be employed.

In order to improve the situation of people with disabilities, two-dimensional interventions are necessary: 1) employers' awareness of the fact that vulnerable persons, despite their situation, may be active persons; 2) adjusting legislation by further stimulating firms to hire people from this category of people.

Legislation requires some adjustments and, beyond that, it is important that the regulatory provisions are better known to employers. There is a need for some legislative changes, the legislative framework being considered “bushy” but also “permissive” by some institutional representatives. Legislative changes should take into account and consider granting tax incentives to employers, as well as tax and tax relief for people with disabilities “*Legislative changes would be needed, but not restrictive provisions by which employers or forced to fit certain categories of population. Tax incentives can be an important incentive to increase employment.*” (AJOFM representative, Argeş)²

The analysis of interviews with institutional representatives revealed a typology of the factors that impede access to the labour market, which can be described by the following categories of factors:

- objective economic factors: the economic situation, which had the effect of shifting the supply of jobs;
- structural factors, related to the available job profiles, profile inconsistent with the demand for jobs from the disabled;
- subjective factors related to the lack of information of employers on the capacities of disabled people.

¹ Idem

² Idem

Lack of information and negative labelling of people with disabilities, and especially those institutionalized, either at present or at any given time, are factors that generate the rejection of people with disabilities.

It can be concluded that at national level there is a comprehensive legislative framework governing the situation and rights of people with disabilities, but applicability is one which can be perceived as being precarious. Laws need to be duplicated by administrative measures (reorganization or institution development), human resources training (involved in law enforcement) to help provide support tailored to the real needs of people with disabilities.

The development of the legislative framework must be achieved also by means of promoting and guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities to work – lack of discrimination in the selection, employment process, their maintenance and promotion in the workplace, the observance of the measures on labour protection, the prohibition of abuse of work and forced labour.

The social protection system has a fundamental role in creating incentives or counter-incentives for the employment of people with disabilities.

There is a considerable distance between “*theory*”- the legislative framework and the *actual practice*, the provision and development of programs and services for people with disabilities. The causes of this distance developed and preserved between the law and what is actually happening can be related both to the lack of a more effective promotion of the legislation in the area of people with disabilities and to the possible institutional, organizational, human and financial deficiencies. Legislation needs to be reassessed, complemented and revised at points where inefficiency or workability is recorded.

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POPULATION DYNAMICS IN ROMANIA DURING THE LAST CENTURY. 1918-2017

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Abstract: *The study presents the evolution of the Romanian population in the period 1918-2017, in an European context and in a wider world context. Important stages of demographic evolution are described, in a historical approach and based on the analysis of relevant statistics, among which administrative data from the national censuses. The study also identifies several factors that have contributed to population dynamics. It is clear from the conclusions that during a century, the demographic evolution of the Romanian population was non-linear as a result of the extreme political and economic conditions in various stages, which had major implications in social terms.*

Keywords: *population, historical approach, ethnic structure, natural growth, factors.*

Introduction

In the period 1918-2017, Romania faced several major historic events, with socio-economic and political implications. In 1918, Romanian nation enrolled on a new road through the Unification of the Romanian Principalities. Then, there were initiated several political-economic processes of deep social impact, such as the involvement in the two World Wars or the initiation of agrarian reforms (in 1921 and 1945). The entry into the Communist era of 1945 had deep social implications: the cooperativization of agriculture concluded in 1962, the industrialization of the national economy from the 70s, the general background of the urbanization and the modernization of the society.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Romania underwent a rather late modernization process, visible also through the tendencies to overcome rural poverty, which was very extensive at the time. To study the phenomenon, human and material resources have been mobilized, especially in the field of sociology and economics

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In socialism, after the 50s, by reducing social inequalities and creating a quasi-general employment framework, the problem of poverty came out of public attention, virtually absent from the official speech of power. Subliminal, however, over four and a half decades of communism, this problem has not left the collective consciousness. Awareness of the poverty situation persisted especially in the case of the rural population, which was brought into an area of extreme precariousness the quality of life, first by transferring the burden of paying the massive costs of war debt, then by supporting the costs of industrialization and urban upgrading through the collectivization of agriculture and the control of agricultural commodity prices.

On the other hand, the reports of the communist regime, concerning the economic achievements in industry and agriculture, massively distorted the statistical indicators. As a result, certain indicators referring to the socialist period have to be interpreted with reserve. All economic and social changes affected the dynamics of the population during the century.

Population during 1918 – 2018. Global reference

The trend of world population growth in the last century ranged between 1.6 and 2 billion (in 1900-1927) to over 7.5 billion (in sept 2017). This increase has been unevenly distributed across continents, relative to (under) development. Most of the population grew on extra-European continents (excluding North America and Australia). Between 1950-2000, Africa's population grew nearly four times (from 228 to 814 million) and Asia almost tripled (from 1.4 billion to 3.7 billion). The overall mortality of children aged under five decreased by 53% over the past 25 years. According to the UN, so far only 62 of 195 countries have managed to achieve the targets set in the area of decreasing infant mortality. Infant mortality in the world has fallen from 12.7 million in 1990 to 5.9 million in 2015¹. The female gender tends to have a lower mortality rate, with the mean gender difference of about 5 years.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of the world population: 1900-2000

Continent	1900	2000
America de Nord	5	5,2
Europe	24,7	11,9
Asia	57,4	60,5
Central and South America	4,5	8,5
Africa	8,1	13,4
Oceania	0,4	0,5

*Source: *** United Nations Population Division, Briefing Packet, 1998 Revision of the World Population, Prospects; World Population Prospects, The 2006 Revision.*

¹ UN (2015). World Population Prospects.

Europe, from a population of 458 million in 1914, reached about 726-730 million inhabitants in 2000 (UN, 2015). Although the European countries have made great strides in health care over the last century, there are still important gaps in life expectancy (OECD, EC, 2012). At the average, it increased from 30-40 years in 1900 to 80.6 years in 2015 (Eurostat, 2017). After 1990, in the European countries, the average life expectancy at birth increased by over five years. The gap between the countries with the highest life expectancy (Spain, Italy, and France) and those with the lowest life expectancy (Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria and Romania) remained at the same level for about eight years. In 2010, the largest segment of the European population was the 15-64 age group, accounting for 67% of the total population (UN, 2015).

Population in Romania during 1918 – 2018

Inside The Union of Romanian Principalities in 1918, the total population of Romania doubled, registering 14,670 thousand inhabitants in 1919 (Table 3). The term Great Romania entered into circulation after the Treaty of Versailles of 1920. Romania between the two World Wars had the maximum territorial extension in its recent history – 295,641 km², existing in that form until 1940. Despite the territorial readjustments after World War II, the population of Romania has continuously increased since 1919 for seven decades. The peak of growth was registered in 1990, when Romania's population represented 158% of the population of 1919.

In 1989-2012, Romania's stable population decreased by more than 3.1 million inhabitants, more than 77% of the negative growth of the stable population being determined by emigration. In 2016, the number of populations approached the year 1960, after 26 years of continuous decline. More than 4 million people are currently working abroad. The year 2017 marked the birth of several children of Romanians across the border than in the country.

The Peace Conference in Paris (1919-1920) was the basis for its nationalities. The new European borders would include as few as minorities in national states. Thus, new states such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, etc. were established and Romania has completed its territory. At that occasion massive population shifts occurred. From Romania, about 200,000 people went to Hungary, and 42,000 Turks from Dobrogea and southern Bessarabia settled in Turkey. More than 200,000 Jews (especially from Poland and Soviet Russia), 30,000 Aromanians (from Greece, Bulgaria and Albania), 10,000 Romanians from the USA and Canada¹. After 1918, more than one million Romanians remained outside the national borders: 250,000 in Russia, 230,000 in Yugoslavia, 60,000 in Bulgaria, 23,000 in Hungary, 40,000 in Albania, 13,000 in Czechoslovakia, 200,000 in the United States, 100,000 in Australia and 70,000 in Canada (ibidem).

The main causes of population decline during the period 1990-2012 were: 1. international migration, which resulted in an average annual decrease of the population

¹ *** (2017). Noul cadru de evolutie a Romaniei dupa 1918. Analiza comparativa cu alte state ale Europei,

by 104.2 thousand persons; 2. family planning that caused the annual birth rate to be reduced in 2012 by 51% lower than in 1989; 3. overall mortality – higher in the 1990s as compared to the 1980s. Romania already shows specific European demographic disadvantages, but also some in addition to most EU 28: declining population, aging population, increasing migration of working-age population, a much higher mortality rate (12% o) than the European average (9.7% o) in 2012 ¹.

Table 2. Dynamics of the stable population of Romania after the Union of the Romanian Principalities (thousands of inhabitants)

Year	1912	1919	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
Population (thousands of inhabitants)	7.160	14.670	16.000	14.280	15.907	16.311	18.403	20.252	22.201

Year	1990	2002	2011	2016	2017	2018
Population (thousands of inhabitants)	23.206	21.698	20.121	19.760	19.630	18.748

Sources: MICDGS (1923). *Romanian Statistical Yearbook 1912, 1919 and 1920*; the 1930s ... 1960 – *The Statistical Yearbook of Romania*, CNS, 1965; 2002, 2011 – *Census of population and households in Romania*, INS, 1992, 2002, 2012; 1970, 1980, year 2016: *** INS: *The resident population in Romania dropped to 19.7 million ...*; Mibai, A., 2017, *Romania has also lost ...*, ZF, *** *Romanian population on 1 June 2018, Demograph 2018*

Table 3. Dynamics of life expectancy in Romania in the period 1900-2018

Year	1900	1930	1948	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014	2018
Duration in years at birth	36,4	42,0	52,0	68,6	69,2	69,9	71,2	73,7	75,0	75,2

Sources: *** 1990, *Statistical Yearbook of Romania 1989*, C.N.S., *** 2013, *Romania in figures*, I.N.S.; Ghețău V., *The life expectancy of ... 1978*, *** File: *Life expectancy at birth, 1980-2014 Eurostat*, 2016; *** *World Life Expectancy- Romania 2018*, WHO, 2018

Life expectancy in Romania is well below the European average. If in countries like Spain, Italy or France, the life expectancy reached 82.5 years, respectively – 82.4 years, and – 82.2 years, Romania is ranked 24 in the EU 28, with a life expectancy of 74.5 years (women – 78.1 years, men – 71 years) (UE, 2012)

In the first three decades of the 20th century, the increase in the life expectancy of the Romanian population was 5.6 years, which means an annual average increase of 0.2 years, that is, half of the average increase recorded in the period in the other states Europe. This was one of the causes favouring the increase of the gap between Romania and the other European states, at 15-20 years (Ghețău, 1974). Between 1990 and 2010, the increase in population life expectancy was only 3.8 years (0.19 years per year), even lower than in the 1900-1930 period. This is happening to a country obsessed for a

¹ *** (2012). Demographics of European Union.

century to run in the race to catch up with the West. The ethnic structure of the Romanian population in the period 1930-2017 evolved as follows:

Table 4. Dynamics of the ethnic structure of the Romanian population between 1930-2017

Year	Nationalities							
	Romanians	Hungarians	Germans	Russians, Ruthenians	Hebrew	Bulgarians	Gypsies	Other nationalities
1930	71,9%	7,9%	4,1%	5,5%	4,0%	2,0%	1,5%	3,9%
2017	89,4%	6,6%	0,27%	0,16%	0,02%	0,03%	2,45%	1,0%

Sources: Constantinescu N.N., 1996, *Economic History of Romania*, Economic Publishing House, p.402; for the year 2017, calculations Stanciu M. on data from *** *Ethno-demographic structure of Romania*, <http://www.edrc.ro/recensamant.jsp?language=0>

Highlights of the demographic transition in Romania

The demographic transition in Romania has been strongly influenced by the interdependence between the political, demographic and socio-economic variables. This has been shaped by the combined effects of mortality, birth, family life, age transition in the demographic pyramid, morbidity and migration.

The demographic transition is a statistical phenomenon, registered since the beginning of the 18th century, and consists in a significant decrease in mortality and birth rates. Over time, there is a gap between the decrease in mortality and the birth rate, the first preceding the second, resulting in a transient increase in the population. The demographic transition was reflected in the urbanization and modernization of European societies. The phenomenon has been facilitated by increasing the quality of life, using modern means of combating mortality, changing the procreative behaviour, by switching from an average of 5-6 children to a woman at a lower number, or even below the minimum replacement rate, (increasing the level of education, increasing the age at marriage, its participation on the labour market, the evolution of the dominant role of the child in the family the costs of raising the child becoming prevalent over the possible economic contribution of the existence of the child in the family) .

In the twentieth century, except for the war years and the 1990s, the population naturally grew continuously before 1967, and as a result of the pronatalist policy between 1967 and 1989. After 1990, the population declined by an average annual rate of 0.15%¹ In Romania, the demographic transition lasted 120 years, ending in 1991, the pronatalist policy of communism determining its prolongation². During the demographic transition, the population of Romania increased 2.7 times, from 8.7 million (in the years 1870-1880) to 23 million inhabitants, in 1990, after which it declined. Here are some aspects of the demographic transition:

¹ *** (2006). Cartea verde a populației în România

² *** (2013). Evoluția mortalității generale în România

The highest figure of the birth rate, in 1912 was 43.4 ‰; The population of Romania grew by 4,392,378 inhabitants, or a quarter, between 1920-1939. Gross birth rate in 1966 was 14.3 ‰. After 1967, when abortions were banned, natality increased to 27.4 ‰; in the period 1986-1989, however, the birth rate decreased, again, to around 16 ‰. After 1989 the birth rate dropped to 10.4 ‰ in 2000; if in 1989 there were 369,000 children born, in 2016 there were 189,783 – the smallest number after 1876;

The peak figure of the general mortality rate, in 1902, was 28,1 ‰; it took 50 years (1850-1889) to reduce overall mortality to 30‰ and 50 years (1900-1929) to reduce it to 20‰, which was maintained until 1947, after which in 17 the biggest reduction in mortality (1948-1967) has reached 9%.

At the beginning of the 20th century, infant mortality (deaths under 1 year) was 197‰ of live births, in 1938 it was 179‰, in 1950 it was 100‰ (in Britain, France, Holland – 50‰), in 1968 it was 59.5‰, in 1990 it was 26.9 ‰ (below 10 ‰ in the western countries).

In May 2016, infant mortality was 9.0 per thousand, as in most EU states it was below 5 in a thousand (Iliceanu, 2016). The divorce rate increased from 2.2 to 4.2 per 10,000 inhabitants between 1901 and 1929. The divorce rate decreased from 20 to 14 per 10,000 inhabitants between 1960 and 2013, with a minimum value in 1970 (4 to 10,000 inhabitants)¹

The population's natural growth has evolved to negative values since 1992, starting from a positive value of 20.5 ‰ in 1912. Romania recorded a population increase of 26% between 1960 and 1990 and decreased by 14 % in the period 1990-2015, according to INS data. In total, the natural minus increase of 66,718 people is also a historical record. In 2016, Romania ranked third among the countries with the largest demographic decline in the European Union, after Germany (-187,000 in 2015) and Italy (-161,800), as absolute numbers.

Table 5. Population dynamics by residential area

	2011		2002		1992		1930	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Total population	20122641		21698974		22810035		18052896	
Urban		54,3		52,7		54,3		20,2
Rural		45,7		47,3		45,7		79,8

Sources: *** (2011). *Population and Household Census*, <http://www.infotravelromania.ro/recensaman.html>, RL online, 02 February 2012, <http://www.romanialibera.ro/actualitate/eveniment/recensaman--7-1-million-households-and-8-4-million-homes--provisional-results-252257>, ICS (1930) , (1940). *Romania's Statistical Yearbook*

¹ *** (1930). *Romanian Statistical Yearbook*, the Official Gazette and the State Imprints of 1932, United Nations Population Fund. (2017). UN Green Paper; Eurostat data. (2015). Marriage and divorce statistics; Iliceanu R. (2016). *** (2013). *Evolution of general mortality in Romania*

The age structure of the demographic pyramid of Romania is unbalanced, with many generations born between 1967 and 1989 and few generations after 1990. The existence of few generations, corroborated with the phenomenon of migration of working generations, has contributed to the acceleration of the aging phenomenon of the population from Romania.

Table 6. Population dynamics by gender, 1992-2011

Population – gender	2011		2002		1992		1930	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total	20121641	100,0	21698181	100,0	22810035	100,0	18052896	100,0
Male	9788577	49,6	10581350	48,8	11213763	49,2	8870778	49,1
Female	10333064	51,4	11116831	51,2	11596272	50,8	9182118	50,9

Source: <http://www.infotravelromania.ro/recensamant.html>, 02 February 2012; <http://www.romanioliberal.ro/actualitate/event/census-7-1-million-households-and-8-4-million-homes---provisional-results-252257>; ICS (1935). (1936). *Romanian Statistical Yearbook*,

Both in 1930 and in 1992, 2002 and 2011, the proportion of the female population in the total population remained slightly higher than that of the male gender, with the respective differences being more pronounced in 2011 and 2002 than in 1992 and 1930.

Conclusions

The current demographic indicators represent a reversal of the years 1918-1920 when the country's population has doubled. The Romanians of those times, who were thrown out by national history, struggled with the sacrifices, to enter the country again, and live here. Now, however, many of those born in Romania have left and are still living through foreign countries. And all this, although Romania seemed much poorer and less tender in the 20's than it is today.

In the case of Romania, history has proved not only full of surprises but also ruthless. If we refer to the transition to the market economy, which is claimed to have lasted about a decade (1990-2000), it has indeed proved to be heavier than a war (Belli N., 2001).

Romania faces, without openly recognizing, a social catastrophe. The first demographic disaster occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century when the reunification of the people was made with the cost of living of 985,000 people on the front, behind their front wounded in hospitals, plus 75,741 war crimes¹

In World War II, Romania lost another 833,000 people, or 4.22% of the country's population in 1939 (19.934 million inhabitants)². This, without considering the loss of the population of the detachment from the national territory, following the Ribbentrop-

¹ *** Archives of the Ministry ..

² *** Anti-Fascist Monitor ..

Molotov Pact of 1939 – Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (26 June 1940) and the Vienna Diktat when North Transylvania was embedded in Hungary and the Cadrilater in Bulgaria (30 August 1940). Then Romania lost a third of its territory.

In Communist Romania, another demographic disaster was applied, this time over more than four decades, by the internal representatives of Stalinist-Marxist-Leninist ideologies. Between 1947 and 1989, the Communist state triggered a systematic demographic process on political and class criteria, destroying the country's political elite before 1940. They were otherwise eliminated from public life and in many cases even from life, the most prominent representatives of the old intellectuals, but also “undesirable” by different social categories. All this has strongly and long-term undermined the substance and value of civil society in Romania. Those missing have been so valuable and so many that they are difficult to count (anyway, of the order of several hundreds of thousands). And the number of years of unmet political detention can also be considered a kind of death, not only that people are being eliminated from public and social life but also subjected to a criminal process of destruction. In such conditions, perhaps 10% of Romanian citizens were eliminated, not only about the political or intellectual elite, but also about a medium, intelligent and valuable social blanket – wealthy peasants, priests, artists, actors, doctors, lawyers, and others.

The fourth massive undermining of the national being took place after 1989. Although the statistics are not conclusive, the performances of the new statisticians are (with all respect) inferior to those of the predecessors of the interwar period, it is estimated that over 4-5 million fellow citizens emigrated in the last 30 years, looking for a job. That's why in 2017, most Romanian children were born across the border and not in the country.

In 15 years, Romania could once again reach the population of 1946, when it was about 16 million inhabitants. In 2013, the number of births in Romania dropped below 180,000, 2013 being the first year in which the fall in population was made predominantly (95%) due to negative natural growth rather than migration. (Tempea, 2014)

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READ ALL ABOUT IT! HOW MOBILE PHONE WEB ACCESS ELEVATES ONLINE NEWS CONSUMPTION

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Abstract: News reading has shifted away from printed newspapers towards the online environment. Some of the most appreciated hardware for reading online news nowadays are the mobile devices, especially smartphones. The purpose of this research is to test the coherence and the trustability of the relation between mobile phone empowered web access and the custom of reading news(papers) online. The results of a bivariate linear regression analysis ($\alpha = 0.05$) based on Eurostat data for 30 countries spanning over an interval between 2013 and 2018 (180 observations) point out to a positive relationship, yet only of moderate effect (Multiple R = 0.63; $R^2 = 0.40$). The Discussions section investigates possible causes of this effect and, based on the findings, provides pieces of advice that newsroom managers could employ in the editorial strategy in order to better engage with their audiences.

Keywords: mobile phones; newspapers; online news; digitalization; editorial content

Introduction

The diffusion of innovation has permitted the incorporation of features into mobile phones other than the traditional dialling and texting options (Ling et al., 2006), changing the cell phone from a device meant at reproducing sounds at distance into a multimedia instrument that combines several communication means such as sound, image and text for reflecting ideas (Westlund, 2008).

Rettie (2008) believes that mobile phones meanwhile provide the means of interacting (reading news included herein) at times and spaces previously unthought of. Reading news online has become such an ordinary aspect of human lives, that some people check their mobile phones several times a day for new information (Molyneux, 2018). Nelson and Lei (2018) even believe that mobile platforms are “*the*” medium “*du jour*” of reading news. This has got consequential effects on the paperbound editions of newspapers. Although newsrooms have begun their digitization operations as early as the rise of the global internet during the 1990’s (Harris, 1991; Moeller, 1995), the speed

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at which the handheld-connected digital economy escalated in recent years has made even PC's or laptops seem obsolete in comparison to mobile phones or tablets when it comes to reading news. Under such circumstances, circulations of paperback copies of newspapers have nearly dropped out of sight in the presence of higher convenience and accessibility for readers of searching for news by browsing the internet from a mobile phone, a substitute for print media (Jang, Park, 2016; Schmitz Weiss, 2018; Thurman, Fletcher, 2018), especially since free-of-charge editorial content is automatically included into the fixed costs of internet subscription, and one does not have to pay extra, as in the case of buying a printed gazette.

This research paper is classified into five parts. The Literature Review presents how news reading behaviour has shifted away from paperback newspapers towards the online environment and characterizes the latter. Out of the whole amount of the web-sphere, particular attention is directed towards regarding mobile phones (i.e. smartphones) as a media to access and read news. In this endeavor, several pros but also cons of reading news from the cellphone are being discussed, which then lead the way to the Methodology of the research, that prompts out to the target of the paper: to identify how significant the custom of reading news via mobile web is. This chapter also highlights the arrangement of the research, by offering facts concerning data sampling, variable choice, the selection of the Hypotheses and of the Research Question etc. The Results part exhibits the outcomes of the analysis, while the Findings and Discussions chapter attempts to offer a critical interpretation of the results based on a conjunction with the highlights within the Literature Review. In the end, the Conclusions try to encapsulate the main findings of the paper and to stipulate possible directions for upcoming research.

Literature review

For Berry and Hamilton (2009), mobility is strongly changing the way people behave. Mobile phones have recasted the ways in which readers receive news by enabling rapid access and around the clock coverage (Wolf, Schnauber, 2015). While several decades ago, readers would have had to wait for the printing of the edition to buy their copy of the newspaper, nowadays news can be read as soon as published, during night or early in the morning, or *'on the go'* at any other time (Sandner et al., 2007). Location and time dimensions have dramatically changed since the ascent of the mobile phone as a media device (Goggin et al., 2015), making the piece of news an issue of here and now, irrespective of the where's and when's of its production, not to mention that the radius of editorial content has shifted by allowing readers the opportunity to access news produced all over the world (Oppegaard, Rabby, 2016). Likewise, the news supply is appreciably higher on a mobile device that can be endlessly updated throughout the entire day (d'Haenens et al., 2004), compared to a print edition that is limited in space and by an end of edition specified time for the forthcoming issue.

In these conditions, news production and consumption budges towards online, with not only a majority of consumers using smartphones for accessing news, but also with the lion's share of news websites creating digital apps for phones (Dunaway et al., 2018). While it might seem obviously that digital-natives such as the Gen-Z'ers read

their news directly from the mobile phone (Călin, 2015; Călin, Bîrsănescu, 2017), it should be recorded that customary readers of newspapers have also been attracted towards digital news content (Lin, 2018) thanks to the aforesaid benefits, thus increasing the electronic mobility of journalism and decreasing the offline readership at the expense of the online community.

Yet the patterns of reading news have changed even for the ‘traditional’ newspaper customers. Whilst buying a newspaper was a deliberate decision meant at offering access to information for the buyer, nowadays mobile web has stimulated incidental consumption (Boczkowski et al., 2018). If, prior to mobile web, buying news was a calculated habit that saw the consumer dedicate some specific hours of the day to reading the purchased item, more recently, through mobile devices, news reading is rather occurring as a chance, without any previous calculation of intention to read news. Mobile news is mostly read because it pops up while browsing through the smartphone and it is accessed or ignored as a result of an on-the-spot decision. This has revoked the custom of consecrating some set hours or moments of the day for news reading and replaced it by unplanned usage spread at any given time.

At the same time, the custom of acquiring news (i.e. the active search for news) has been replaced by a passive reception of news (Shah et al., 2017; Wilson, 2000), where the mobile phone user only opens what the operating system recommends. Hence, while mobile phone web use alters the habits of reading news, its effects on the amount of reading are rather moderate because the reader has been induced in a “*mobile-device-assisted-passivity*” when it comes to consuming news. To this passivity accounts also the fact that a preponderance of news nowadays is endorsed and opened through social media systems such as Facebook or Twitter instead of being accessed from news agencies.

Despite of audiences having shifted towards digital operating systems (Lin, 2018; Westlund, 2013), the small screens of smartphones make it rather difficult for users to browse through the news (Motamedi, Choe, 2015). Chyi and Lasorsa (2002) have argued since two decades ago that readers would not be ready to pay for an inferior reading experience, such as the lower screen of mobile phones and the lower font dimensions in browsing apps in comparison to the larger screen of a computer or a PC-tablet. Therefore, online news editors faced the pressure of adapting to the consumer market. Publishers have transformed their way of doing journalism to fit mobile consumption habits (Nel, Westlund, 2012), i.e. by offering shorter content intertwined with more photo or video material (thus providing customer experiences that early day online media was unable of), by offering free-of-charge content, or by enabling ‘*simplified views*’, thus shifting the digitalization of news consumption even further, a process that Gherseti and Westlund (2018) believe has got fragmentation effects on media. These effects see media content disintegrate according to the wishes of the readers: the readers themselves decide what news they want to read on their mobiles and from what source. Mobile phones have become a beloved source of news consumption particularly because they allow readers to design their own ‘news repertoire’ based on their topics of interest, instead of having to read the ‘given’ of a newspaper edition (Van Damme et al., 2015).

Methodology

In spite of news consumption being relocated towards the online environment and becoming increasingly ‘audience-centered’, there is evidence that not all land is of milk and honey. Whilst some people choose to read their online news on mobile devices, others still prefer computers or tablets. Given this dichotomy, the current research aims to find out just how powerful the habit of reading news via mobile web is and how it influences overall online readership volumes. Hence, the purpose of the research is to verify the validity and the strength of the connection that exists between mobile phone internet access and the habit of reading newspapers online, subsequently readership numbers. The research starts from the assumption that an association exists between the variables, so it wants to test its strength and direction.

Assuming that the connection is declared true, the research wants to find out if the use of mobile phone internet has got an influence on the volumes of reading news(papers) online. The Research Question thus asks: *To what extent does mobile web influence the volume of reading news/newspapers online?*

A bivariate linear regression has been used to explore the relationship between the Predictor Variable x expressing mobile phone web and the Criterion Variable y expressing online news consumption. The regression formula used is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

where Y is the criterion variable, β_0 is the intercept value, β_1 is the coefficient of x to be predicted and ε the error component.

Statistical data has been gathered from Eurostat for 30 European countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway). The datasets expanded over a timespan of six years, between 2013 and 2018 included, whereas extrapolation taking into account the latest four years has been used for obtaining data for 2018, unavailable from Eurostat. At the same time, missing pieces of data within the defined timespan have been obtained through intrapolation, amounting for a grand total of 180 observations that have been inserted into the regression model. The de facto sets of data retrieved from Eurostat were originally depicted as “*People using mobile phones to access internet (%)*” (x) and “*Using internet for reading online news/newspapers (% of individuals)*” (y), the meanings of which have been translated through “*mobile phone web [access]*” (Predictor Variable) and “*online news consumption*” (Criterion Variable) in order to serve the thematic of this research.

The Null Hypothesis (H_0) assumes that no relationship exists between mobile phone web access (x) and the habit of reading news or newspapers online (y). An ANOVA Single Factor Analysis has been carried out to test the hypothesis. If H_0 proves false, then the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) claims that the use of mobile phone web has got an impact upon the habit of reading news online. This assertion is grounded on previous literature findings made, amongst others, by Boczkowski et al. (2018),

Dunaway et al. (2018) or Wolf and Schnauber (2015), all highlighting the disrupting changes that mobile web had on news reading.

Research results

The validity of the Null Hypothesis has been assessed with an ANOVA Single Factor Analysis ($\alpha = 0.05$), the outcomes of which (Table 1) provide sufficient evidence ($F_{\text{value}} > F_{\text{critical}} = 20.65 > 3.86$) to dismiss H_0 and to acknowledge H_a as true, basically that using mobile phone internet has got an influence on the habit of reading news(papers) online.

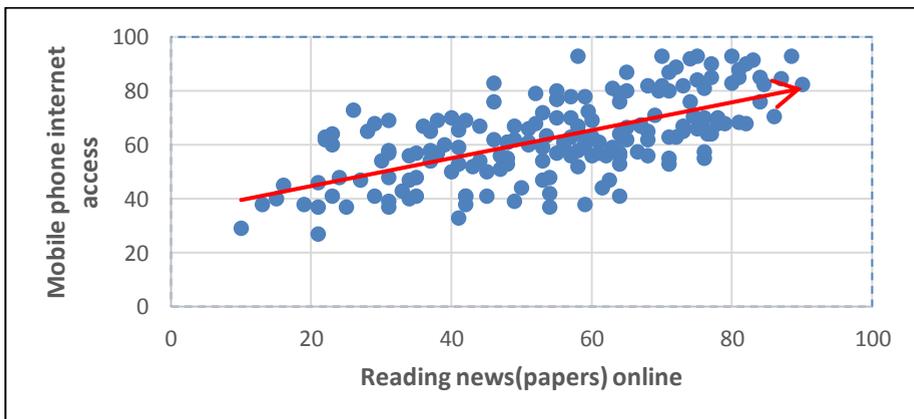
Table 1. ANOVA Single Factor Analysis results

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	5945.46944	1	5945.46944	20.6579301	7.52076E-06	3.8675648
Within Groups	103034.431	358	287.805672			
Total	108979.9	359				

Source: own computations based on statistical data inputs collected from Eurostat.

The Significance F value of the bivariate regression ($5.19E-22$) is below the limit value of fit ($\alpha = 0.05$), hence demonstrating the statistical reliability of the research results. A certain connection can be established between mobile phone internet access and reading online news(papers). The Multiple R value indicates a moderate and positive relationship between the variables (63%), a fact that can also be graphically demonstrated by the scatterplot display in Figure 1, where the trendline has got an ascending path. The dots on the graph show a movement towards the right, highlighting that an increase in the usage of mobile phones to access the internet leads to a raise in the habit of reading news(papers) online. The trendline indicates the existence of a positive relationships between the variables.

Figure 1: Scatterplot display for the correlation analysis



Source: own computations based on statistical data inputs collected from Eurostat.

The R Square value (0.40) highlights that up to 40% of the variation in online newspaper reading behavior can be explained by mobile phone internet access (Table 2).

Table 2. Regression results

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.638614
R Square	0.407827
Adjusted R Square	0.404501
Standard Error	11.65851
Observations	180

Source: own computations based on statistical data inputs collected from Eurostat.

The coefficient value of web mobile access (0.51) shows that each internet access via mobile phone bares a 51% chance of accessing news(paper) websites to read online (Table 3). Hence, there are considerable chances that once a user has accessed the internet on his or her mobile phone the destination will be some news agency or newspaper. At a coefficient of 51%, one in two hits of the internet on the mobile phone would possibly end up on a news site ore app.

Table 3. Regression coefficients

	Coeffi cients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	34.41644	2.692342	12.78308	5.75E-27	29.10341884	39.72945	29.10342	39.72945
Mobile Phone Web Access (x)	0.517664	0.046755	11.07195	5.19E-22	0.425399388	0.609928	0.425399	0.609928

Source: own computations based on statistical data inputs collected from Eurostat.

The positive value of the intercept ($\beta_0 = 34.41$) shows that even if consumers did not use internet on their mobile phones, they would still read newspapers online, primarily from other handheld or desktop devices, such as tablets, laptops or personal computers. The regression indicates that, what the access of mobile phone internet does, is to increase the readership for the online news websites. According to the regression formula $[Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X + \epsilon]$, the chances of reading newspapers online (Y) would increase from $\beta_0 = 34.41$ if no mobile phone web is used to $Y = 34.4+0.51+11.6 = 46.51$ when the latter is used. This accounts for 35% higher chances of reading online news when the internet is also used on the mobile phones, and not limited to other devices.

Findings and discussions

The results of the regression analysis answer the research question by indicating that a positive and moderate relationship exists between mobile web and reading news(papers) online. Reading news on mobile phones via mobile internet access has become a custom nowadays, yet this habit often occurs by chance, simply because the item of news pops up as a recommendation, while browsing through the web of the phone. Research results have indicated that each internet mobile access supports a 51% chance (coefficient value of the x variable = 0.51) of reading news online, which, in turn, could lead to a 35% increase of the customer base of a given online news portal. News editors or newsroom managers should be aware that they have one in two chances to make their item of online news read if they prompt the news on the user's mobile phone screen, which would respond to the desiderate of increasing managerial efficiency (Crişan-Mitra, Borza, 2014; Manole et al., 2011; Verboncu, Zamfir, 2017; Voinea et al., 2015). Mobile marketing and advertising campaigns should not be ignored under such circumstances. A proper editorial strategy has one in two chances of increasing the readership of online news portals. It also has to be considered that many smartphone users nowadays do not actively search for news, but passively receive the recommendations of browsers/operating systems. Therefore, one of the most fruitful solutions for news editors to increase their readership is Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which can aid items of news, this would be better and more often recommended to the users, based on the latter's web search interests. In the end effect, this can also lead to increased levels of online trust (Colesca, 2007) in news providers.

The passivity in receiving news could also explain one of the most interesting findings of the research: the moderate effect that exists between the variables. While it might be expected that digital technology enhances online news consumption, the effect is rather ordinary (R Square value = 0.40). One of the reasons of the moderate effect might be found in the '*mobile-device-assisted-passivity*' (MDAP). The mobile web news reader does not make a purpose from searching for news; he or she is not necessarily interested in finding some specific item of news, but only reads what the browser or operating system recommends based on previous search interests. While on the desktop web the user would have mostly still had to search for a specific online newspaper to read a particular news, and thus would have entered into a perceptual rapport with the newspaper brand, the latter emotional partnership and, subsequently, the levels of involvement, have been reduced through MDAP. Such sequels tend to become contemporaneously customary, when people usually act after having observed others' behaviour (Drămnescu, Enăchescu, 2018) and account for the moderate effects of the hereby researched relationship, as mobile devices are not primarily intended to serve as news-reading facilitators, but mostly as entertainment tools. The mobile web structure has enabled leisure and entertainment behaviors – e.g. multi-player gaming (Călin, Cernat, 2016; Lopez-Fernandez et al., 2018; Männikkö et al., 2018), web-surfing (Shen et al., 2018), social-networking (Jeong et al., 2016; Wolniewicz et al., 2018), photo sharing (Grieve, 2017; Leaver, Highfield, 2018; Thelwall, Vis, 2017), gambling and betting (Gainsbury, 2017; James et al., 2017) – that have altered the morphology of reading news, if not even substituted it. The changing landscape of the user vs. world

wide web relation has transformed web use from information seeking intended, to entertainment intended, which has had negative effects of searching for news online.

Both the need for editors to invest in marketing campaigns for boosting their news readership, as well as the disposition of the world wide web towards entertainment, have added towards a propensity of social media as news supplier. Some decreasing levels of trust in traditional mass-media corporations have been reported, mainly due to corruption scandals or partisanship, which have made readers step out of the habit of paying money for the printed editions of newspapers and opt, instead, for free content or alternative news sources (Fletcher, Park, 2017), which are mostly shared through social media such as Facebook or Twitter. The fact that the relationship with the newsroom is intermediated by social media platforms explains the moderate effects of the R Square value, because the reader does not have a direct contact with a particular news provider any longer, but opens different pieces of news being shared on social media by distinct providers, including friends or relatives.

Odd enough, the tendency towards using social media for accessing news also accounts for a pullback attitude of readers, motivated by the fear of fake news. Readers nowadays are aware that not all news distributed in social media is verifiable and, thus, tend to offer lower levels of trust for social media prompted news in comparison to those that they would have placed in a traditional news agency or newsroom. Yet, the world wide web entertainment function has increased comfort levels with mobile phone users, reducing their active search of news from a particular source and increasing their passivity of receiving news recommendations. Such a switch from essence to form is typical for postmodern societies (Drămnescu, 2013), in which the mobile phone user is caught in the middle between not searching for verifiable news and waiting to receive news which he then considers to be 'fake' just to step out of it.

Conclusions and future research

This research has indicated that using the mobile phone to access online news can significantly increase the readership volumes of internet-based news editors, supporting the recent findings of Molyneux (2018) or Nelson and Lei (2018), who regarded the mobile phone as being the 'nec plus ultra' of reading news today. Although correlation effects have been demonstrated to be rather temperate, the paper has presented several strategic options that newsroom editors or managers have got in order to better engage with their audiences. Having an internet access is a condition of the present-day news reading, part of a larger mass communications prospect (Bușu, Bușu, 2014; Vlăduțescu, 2014), a fact that explains the positive relationship between mobile web and reading newspapers online.

The moderate effects of the relationship might be traced back to the elaborated landscape of the online news area. This paper has only dwelled into a minor part of this terrain. One of the limitations of the research and which might be worth studying in future attempts is that the paper does not make a difference between accessing news via an internet browser through the provider's website and opening news from a digital app awaiting to be downloaded from an Appstore. Dunaway et al. (2018) have already underlined that news websites also have to create digital apps if they ought to exploit

their competitive advantages at maximum. Based on Lin's (2018) claim that online news readers are increasingly attracted to digital apps, prudent judgment might affirm that web browsers such as Internet Explorer or Google Chrome lose terrain themselves. Hence, it would be interesting to find out to what extent mobile web influences (or, at its part, is influenced) by the two distinct ways of news consumption: via apps and via browsers. Such attempts could well enlarge the apprehension of news digitization for editors and managers, who undoubtedly have to strategically master social and technological changes that impact upon the success of their work. Extended research is still needed in order to create a better picture of a topic that undoubtedly raises strategic challenges for editors: whereby the internet allows higher and faster competition compared to printed newspapers, the battle for an ever-reducing attention span of the readers is far from having ended.

The contributions of this paper to managerial knowledge are based on the main insight drawn from the regression results: the independent variable '*Mobile Phone Web Access*' has got potential to elevate the number of online news readers. Starting from this situation, the paper has suggested several managerial approaches that editors can use to connect to their audiences. Not at least important is the fact that the research has acknowledged the existence of a certain customer passivity when it comes to reading news which are supported by online environments. When making decisions, managers should take this '*mobile-device-assisted-passivity*' into account and be aware that an important deal of the customers will only open news items if they are prompted towards them. Investing in more e-marketing and SEO might prove a good solution not only for attracting readers, but also for reaching the managerial goal of creating a strong and reputable organizational brand identity (Buşu, 2013a, 2013b; Marcu, 2016).

This research contributes to the digital economy, in general, and to the online news market, in particular. In a global context in which communication approaches have changed and people are seen swiping their touchscreens on the buses, in the subways or while walking on the streets, expecting readers to scroll the mouse wheels in search of news will not be sufficient any longer (Dima et al., 2014; Gifu, Teodorescu, 2014). News editors will have to incorporate smartphones and mobile web in their editorial content strategies, if they hope for increased competitiveness.

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BOOK REVIEW:
**SURDU MIHAI. (2016). THOSE WHO COUNT:
EXPERT PRACTICES OF ROMA
CLASSIFICATION. BUDAPEST: CENTRAL
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 276 P.**

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How are the Roma classified and categorized in expert, administrative and policy papers and what were/are the impacts or implications of these classifications in the lives of the Roma? These are the main questions of Mihai Surdu's book. As we are pointed out in the introduction *'This book is not another book about Gypsies and Roma [...] it is one about the history of their classification and about their classifiers'* (p. 1). As he explains throughout the book, the ethnicisation of Roma was the result of classifications and categorizations by policy experts, scholars and (Roma) political entrepreneurs. Thus, if we want to understand who the Roma are, we *'should not analyze the Roma (as ethnic identity is contextual and fluid) but to look at their various classifiers and to their modalities of objectification'* (p. 4). In doing so, he rejects the essentialist markers of Roma ethnicity (e.g. language, cultural practices, collective self-identity) and rather critically interrogates the processes of classification in expert and scientific practices as they seem to be always embedded in *'regimes of truth'* (Foucault, 1997), that is corpus of knowledge, techniques and scientific discourses that are used to govern (part of) a population. In the end, he does not seem to suggest that the Roma do not exist but rather that *'Roma population exists as a negative and oppositional construction made by dominant groups and self-internalized by many of those labeled as Roma'* (p. 39). As a corollary, Surdu's argument is that the construction of Roma as an object of study is dependent on the political regime and that the type of knowledge that is produced becomes authoritative because it is associated with power holders and thus confers them with an authority of truth.

In order to reinforce his arguments, Surdu criticizes methodologies of data collection, be they census, policy papers or quantitative *'representative'* surveys because they are largely embedded in an essentialist approach. For Surdu there is a huge gap between recent ethnicity theories that acknowledge the social construction of an ethnic identity and the essentialist practices in quantitative surveys that uses ethnicity as fixed and immutable. As he states clearly *'My claim is that policy research and official statistics on Roma as <abstracted empiricism> use the concept of ethnicity in the taken-for-granted mode, but also in social*

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studies and surveys, and this way research practices contribute to the reification of Roma identity, instead of leaving it open for self-determination and analysis` (pp. 43-44). Indeed, in most of the studies, ethnicity is used as an independent variable that is used to explain other social phenomena such as unemployment, poverty, lack of education. Therefore, it is treated as a cause of such processes: `Ethnicity is the cause of poverty and not vice versa` (p. 59).

In discussing how Roma representative samples are constructed in Central and Eastern Europe, Surdu claims that although most policy experts and political actors do not trust the number of Roma self-identified in the census, most of the quantitative surveys use the census for representative samples. As I have noticed scrutinizing recent researches on Roma conducted by European Commission, UNDP, World Bank, Fundamental Rights Agency, the Roma `samples` are chosen based on the census, from those localities with compact and poor Roma neighbourhoods, where one has the most chances of finding poor, uneducated Roma with poor health status and insanitary dwellings. The findings always show that there is almost no change in time in the socio-economic status of Roma, despite the policies that were implemented for them. What is more interesting is that although some of the surveys acknowledge these methodological flaws, the findings end up in policy and political reports as being representative for the whole Roma and not for those living in compact neighbourhoods. As Surdu explains, *`the sampling strategies in the poor Roma neighborhoods, as well as considering Roma ethnicity as a categorical and independent variable, may transform the academic researcher into a contributor to the reification, racialization and stigmatization of Roma groups` (p. 63), by equating a group with various other characteristics (cultural, historical, cultural) with poverty and underdevelopment.*

In chapter four, *`Ethnicity implications in Censuses and Surveys`*, Surdu interrogates the negative implications that collecting data on ethnicity in censuses have for involved ones. He describes the role of censuses in Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa, two political regimes that used data collected on ethnicity to justify their repressive policies on some ethnicities. He goes in depth with analyzing modern data collection in Romania and finds that until de 1930 census, the Roma were registered as a fiscal category and not as an ethnic one. Only in 1930, the Roma from Romania were for the first time registered as an ethnic minority but this also had political implications. The data from the census were used to craft the *`population exchange`* programs of the Antonescu regime. Surdu accuses Sabin Manuilă (the director of the Central Institute of Statistics) and other Romanian scholars of being *`fervent eugenists, whose concept of the nation had a biological and racial connotation` (p. 129). I do not agree (partially) with this statement since other scholars show that the Romanian interwar intellectual elites have embraced only to a small extent the ideas of the Nazi ideology about racial purity. As Maria Bucur's (2002) study reveals, unlike the eugenic movement in Germany, the Romanian eugenicists considered increasing the hereditary stock through health education rather than racial purity, as well as through voluntary measures rather than through coercive ones. Only during Ion Antonescu's regime did the eugenic ideas become radicalized. The number of Roma in the 1930 census was fiercely contested by experts and scholars (just as in most of the censuses) for being underrepresented, which makes Surdu claim that *`Gypsies appear as a racialized population whose true characteristics should be better obtained through external observation and scientific estimates than by self-ascription` (p. 132). Thus, the**

census contributes to the essentialist assumption that ethnicity can be objectified and measured by ticking a box from a list of ethnicities and cannot be contextual and fluid, depending on the context.

In the last part of the book, Surdu analyses the most influent scholarly work, organizations and policy papers that have an impact on framing Roma. His main research questions are: What particular branches of science contributed the most to shaping the field of what could be regarded as studies about Roma? And what are the main frames through which Roma are distinguished as an object of study? To answer these questions, Surdu listed 251 publication on Roma (mostly after 1989) that resulted after using the Google Scholar engine and divides them into five categories: Romani Studies, Public Policy, Social Sciences, Public Health/Genetics and Legal and Human Rights. He finds that although most of the papers are academic, from the broad field of social sciences, the most influential ones come from public policy or expert reports. The most influential (through citations) non-academic publishers are the World Bank and Council of Europe.

Further, Surdu takes as units of analysis several papers from the World Bank and UNDP to see how the Roma were framed and objectified through research findings. I do not understand why he chose the UNDP report *'Avoiding the dependency trap'* since UNDP only ranked 11 in his non-academic publishers ranking with only 22 citations. Probably the report strengthens his own arguments. For Surdu, the World Bank reports frame Roma in essentialist terms, by attributing them a *'common and reluctant-to-change Roma culture [...]* Roma culture seems to transcend countries borders and it seems to be monolithic and autonomous entity detached from local cultural influences and completely deterritorialized from its proximate environment' (p. 181). Thus, poverty is explained in cultural frames (because of their culture, lifestyle, neglect for dwellings, they are poor). Instead of addressing the systemic issues that the Roma face, the reports transfer the responsibility of these issues on Roma themselves. These frames was strengthen through repetition of the same ideas in the three reports from 2000, 2002 and 2005 and probably influencing Roma policy and scholarship judging by its numerous citations. The UNDP report also uses an ethnic explanation for *'welfare dependency'*, considering that *'the economic status of Roma is explained by the disinterest in adopting proactive life strategies'* (p. 194) and that the Roma suffer from a culture of dependency, where *'survival on social welfare is an acceptable option'* (p. 196). Last but not least, Surdu critically interrogates genetic studies (largely influent in the last two decades) which, in his opinion, incorporate the *'storyline developed in Romani studies'* (p. 221), e.g. culture unity, endogamy etc., but in arguing these ideas, they use unrepresentative samples, based on *'available ethnological classification, which do not allow for generalization'* (p. 212).

In the end, I would like to make some overall remarks on Mihai Surdu's book. First of all, while reading his book, one can say that he is indebted to social constructivist theories in Romani studies such as the ones promoted by the Dutch School (Lucassen et al., 1998), which claims that Gypsy identity is a construction imposed by Western European governments by stigmatizing and labelling all nomad groups that had a nomad lifestyle and were dangerous to the newly centralized nation-states. Also, Judith Okely (1983) believes that the British authorities could have categorized under this label various groups of vagrants or beggars who had been uprooted by the dilution of feudal

relations and turned into poorly-trained workers in search of jobs in industrialized cities. The Gypsyologists' mistake was, according to Okely, that they linked the transmission or learning of the Romani language only through biological descendancy, while any other influences on the dialects of the Romani (Persian, Byzantine, Slavic or Romanian) would have been only elements of *'corruption of a pure Gypsy, Indian language'* (p. 8), denying the possibility that groups of vagrants or beggars categorized as Roma could have taken Sanskrit words from merchant groups traveling from east to west of Europe. Thus, for Western Europe, one cannot firmly affirm that who is now labeled as Roma is a descendant of an Indian group. But for Central and Eastern Europe I do not know studies that have applied this framework of thought to indigenous Roma.

Second of all, Surdu constantly reminds the reader that there is a huge interest from policy experts, scholars and political entrepreneurs after 1989 in Roma related issues, but he never fully explains why this happened. What were the structural conditions, contexts and disputes that led to the burgeoning literature and policies on and for Roma after 1989? Are we talking only about *'academic and political interest due to the money, power, academic and managerial position that circulate in political and academic networks within European and national bureaucracies?'* (p. 1) that the author states in the introduction of his book? I think not.

Last, but not least, Surdu seems to suggest that the Roma identity is only imposed from above (policy experts, international organizations, Roma political entrepreneurs), but he simply ignores any grassroots attempts to oppose the homogenizing umbrella of Roma. At least for Romania, the umbrella of Roma is locally challenged by occupational sub-groups, such as Gabori, who consider themselves to belong more to the *'Gabori nation'*. There are also different reciprocal representations among Roma sub-groups that maintain the social distance between them. Thus, there is no collective Roma identity, but rather, as Ioana Bunescu (2014) remarks, a (self) identification of Roma in contextual sites. The Roma sub-groups can resort to diverse attributes – wealth, traditions, emancipation, and local culture to distinguish themselves from other subgroups.

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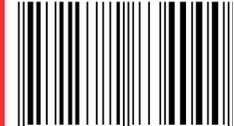


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