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JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY POSITIVE PRACTICES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

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Cătălin BERESCU

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SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Andrei PÂRVAN¹

Abstract: *The effective action research requests and involves innovative and sturdy strategies to discover and to understand social life. Visual methodologies (as Photovoice) can provide the novelty and the engagement to support the effectiveness of the research, to support the interpretative phenomenological analysis and to enable it for deeper understanding and a foundation for appropriate interventions also. As a participatory method, Photovoice is considered an innovative approach and its use in Republic of Moldova is unique, as it is the context: a community development and educational reform project happened in rural communities with various socio-economic profiles, with different degrees and on different levels of marginality, vulnerability, social and economic under-development. We have chosen individuals from four of the communities involved to find out how they see their role and the collective participation to support education. As the projects which is related to, the study gives insights on the functions of education and about how the things can be done. In all cases, for all the communities, the education (and the school also) seems to value the bond with the community, with its past (in terms of elders, customs and the habitat: nature, wildlife etc.), with the local identity. The emergence of community mechanisms to rediscover local identity creates the premises for a more consistent support from the community in future community development efforts or educational reforms.*

Keywords: *Photovoice, community engagement, community development, cohesion, identity, Republic of Moldova*

Introduction

The use of visual methodologies in the field of education research is a novelty that can contribute to innovative approaches. The methodological foundation of photovoice is closely linked to Caroline Wang and her collaborators (Wang & Burris, 1994, 1997; Wang, Yuan, & Feng, 1996).

Photovoice is described by relevant literature as a participatory action research method in which subjects use cameras to photograph individuals, contexts or situations they consider representative for peculiar aspects of their individual and/or social lives

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(Harley, 2012; Sutton-Brown, 2014). The term VOICE is in fact an acronym that designates *Voicing Our Individual and Collective Experience*, which synthesizes the nature and purpose of the method, i.e. to communicate individual and collective experiences.

The key feature of photovoice is that participants can select and capture on site, with no external interventions, life experiences, actions or emotional states. Applying this methodology gives access to objective (activities, acts, persons) and subjective (thoughts, emotional reactions) data regarding study participants, thus contributing to an in-depth understanding of human behavior.

The epistemological foundation of photovoice consists of three theoretical perspectives: (a) *feminist theories*; (b) *education for critical consciousness* and (c) *documentary photography*. Each of these conceptual models emphasizes the role of the individual in the process of producing change and driving community development. The “education for critical consciousness” model emphasizes that the *individual-community* dyad can contribute to social equity. Critical dialogue, as a structural element of this model, enables the community to identify, discuss and design remedial activities for issues that affect individual and collective well-being. Feminist theories that postulate the role of women in restoring gender equality are also consistent with this concept. Documentary photography supports vulnerable populations or groups in capturing and subjectively expressing personal and community life histories. In doing so, individual stories can become instruments with significant psychological and political-administrative impact (Kuo, 2007).

Traditionally, photovoice has been applied to investigate disadvantaged populations (marginalized, stigmatized, with a low educational status) (Hernandez, Shabazian, & McGrath, 2014). Following the developments proposed by Wang and Burris, the method started being used in the medical field (Allen & Hutchinson, 2009; Burke & Evans, 2011; Epstein, Stevens, McKeever, & Baruchel, Nieuwendyk, 2011; Shea, Poudrier, Thomas, Jeffery & Kiskotagan, 2013; Wang & Burris, 1997). Graziano (2004) states that the method’s growing popularity is due to the accuracy of the collected data. Consequently, we are witnessing an extensive use of photovoice in sociology (Barlow & Hurlock, 2013), anthropology, economics and human geography (Guell & Ogilvie, 2015, Power, Norman & Dupré, 2014).

Simmonds, Roux, and Ter Avest (2015, p. 35) emphasize that photovoice promoters have significantly contributed to the development of methodological features that support subjects in documenting their own life experiences, strengths or weaknesses of the communities they live in, which are then transferred to an informational repository that stimulates reflection and can influence political decisions. Although the method’s utility is visible, Sutton-Brown (2014) sets out a series of arguments to highlight the lack of methodological coherence in applying photovoice. Ciolan and Manasia (2017) propose a photovoice adaptation for educational context-based use.

Starting from the methodological framework originally proposed by Wang and Burris (1990), we highlight the following series of phases in applying photovoice: (1) selection of the research topic; (2) recruitment of participants; (3) informational group meetings; (4) data collection (taking photos); (5) photography analysis; (6) photo exposure. We

propose a discussion of the outlined phases, each one consisting of two sections: a general approach and a part focused on the study conducted within context (The EDUabil+ project). This mixed approach allows us to summarize relevant literature recommendations and to seamlessly introduce them in the study covered further.

Setting the Stage for Community Participation: The EDUabil+ Project. EDUabil is a series of socio-educational projects ran in Republic of Moldova by CATALACTICA Association for Socio-Economic Development and Promotion from Spring of 2014 to the late Fall of 2017. The main goal of the first one was to support nationwide the educational reforms in Moldova. The following (branded as EDUabil+) aimed to empower various communities to identify and to enable strategies to mitigate the local issues, engaging parents and local resources using innovative and sustainable approaches. This study has been enclosed into the last project, “Engaging the Community to Support Education”.

Methodology

Participants

Subjects belonging to a specific population are selected to contribute to the data collection and analysis process (Ciolan and Manasia, 2017). Participants in a photovoice research have the responsibility to take photos that will be the subject of further discussion and analysis. Increasing awareness about the project is the first step in recruiting participants. Thus, it is important that the opportunity to participate in such a project be known to community members. The relevant literature operates with two categories of methods that can be used in the consultation process, i.e. (a) conventional methods and (b) unconventional methods (Wang & Burris, 1997).

While conventional methods feature posters, flyers, e-mail marketing campaigns, unconventional methods can involve so-called “snowball” selection processes (researchers can identify a group of people interested in participating, who, in turn, recruit other people). Sutton-Brown (2014) states that, regarding the selection criteria, various techniques can be used.

Given the particularities of the communities in which the project was implemented, the author employed a “purposive sampling” selection process. The aim was to select a heterogeneous group of subjects, in terms of gender, age and place of residence. Thus, 13 subjects ($M_{age} = 33,4, SD = 15,8$) were selected and actively participated in all stages of the study. Participation in the study was voluntary, and subjects were able to withdraw from the group at any time. At first, participants filled an informed consent form, which guaranteed participants that the photographs would be used solely for the purpose stated in the project. The 10 women and 3 men belong to 4 communities (6 from Lupa Recea, 3 from Sireți, 2 from Bădragii Vechi and 2 in Fîrlădeni).

Data collection procedure

Related to the longitudinal design of the study, data collection is a process characterized by a certain duration. The time frame set for taking photos allows participants to represent a vast array of situations and experiences via images. The duration of the data

collection process depends on the research topic and on the nature of the implemented project. The completion of this stage leads to the collection of a significant amount of visual and narrative data.

For the present study, participants took photos reflecting the community's involvement as an educational factor over the course of four weeks. We believe that the optimal duration of the data collection process would have been between six and eight weeks, which is why we consider this to be one of the limitations of the present study. Participants continuously built a collection of images and added descriptions that were subsequently analyzed. Thus, a total of 78 images and descriptions were collected.

Data analysis

Given the participatory nature of the photovoice methodology, the data collection and analysis phases overlap, and the subjects become co-researchers. After the collection of the photographs, a preliminary analysis was carried out in order to create an interview guide that would support the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

During the interview, the subjects were exposed to all the photographs. The subject selected 5 photos based on the criterion of personal and collective relevance. The selected photos were discussed based on the SHOWeD technique (Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang, 1999), widely associated with PV use. Thus, participants answered questions meant to guide the discussion towards the assessment of learning patterns: "What do you see in this photo?" / "What do you think is actually happening in this photo?" / "What does this photo tell us about the community in which the picture was taken?" / "Why do you think this (positive or negative) situation exists?" / "Do you think something could be done in this regard (to improve or change things)?"

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The analysis of the interviews was carried out by means of IPA. The first step was to read and re-read photo descriptions and interview transcripts. Relevant quotes were selected and noted during the second phase of the IPA. Descriptive, interrogative and reflective comments were associated with each quote. Each text sequence was synthesized in a single text item. Items were then grouped into clusters via a polarization process (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The results of the analysis are presented and discussed in the results section.

Following the completion of group interviews, four photos were selected from each community to be displayed in a caravan. Short descriptions, selected from the texts written by the subjects who had taken the photos, accompanied each picture. Figures show examples of photographs taken during this study. The photo caravan's purpose was two-fold. On the one hand, it aimed to raise awareness on the need for active participation of the community in the educational process for children, adolescents and young people, and, on the other hand, it aimed to raise awareness among a wider audience on the needs of the study subjects' communities.



Figure 1¹. One of the photographs displayed in the caravan



Figure 2². Instance of photograph reflecting community engagement in the value transmission process

¹ “Arduous road”. Through mud and puddles the people go, you can’t overcome. I think authorities may have to something to solve this problem.

² “A business card from the ancestors. A business card from the ancestors is reflected by promoting the community folk costume”.

Results

Bădrăgii Vechi

The project developed in the Bădrăgii Vechi community (*Courage, Enthusiasm, Health, Wellbeing – Bădrăgii Vechi Sports and Educational Center*) aimed to involve the community to support educational activities for and via exercise. The project's secondary objective was to promote a healthy lifestyle.

According to the participants who took pictures, the project acted as a binder and managed to create a “sports family”, as one of the subjects put it:

At the end of a sports competition, everyone, regardless of age, feels they are part of a family.”



Figure 3. Photos taken in the Bădrăgii Vechi community

The photos capture situations that converge towards the idea of *community cohesion* and the need to find activities that enhance intergenerational collaboration. Thus, education restores one of its traditional functions, i.e. the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next.

“We needed to do this... to do things together... grownups and children. After all, school is not only one that can provide an education.”

Involvement in a project that promotes physical activity and exercise as vectors of a healthy lifestyle manages to add a bit of dynamism to the community's daily activities:

“Both children and grownups have become interested in having healthy lifestyles. [...] I think everyone is happy to be part of the project. It's something else ...”

Another photo supports the ideas of novelty and change that the project manages to instill in the Bădrăgii Vechi community.



Figure 4¹. Photo that suggests the project has triggered engagement in beneficial activities

The photos strengthen the idea that the implementation of the project, on the one hand, creates opportunities for establishing intergenerational relationships and, on the other hand, supports the use of certain community resources:

“It's been a while since I've seen children on the sports ground. They spend a lot of time on their computers. They don't play together that much anymore.”

We believe that our project does face certain challenges in terms of sustainability. The role of the local facilitator can be expanded by planning non-formal activities that use the available sports equipment. Also, developing the curriculum (e.g. optional classes) may target designing learning experiences that focus on and develop intergenerational cohesion.

¹ “The spare time... booked with sport. The youth from the village, in their spare time, do games even on the schoolground. “

Fîrlădeni

The project implemented by the Fîrlădeni community (*Promoting aesthetic education and harnessing the value of the local culture*) aimed to discover and promote certain aspects that define the local cultural identity.

Some of the photos focus on community issues with which the public administration or locals have trouble dealing. One such issue consists of stray dogs.

“I took this photo because I liked majestic gaze. I don’t know if it has an owner. There were many around these parts. People would come and just leave them here.”

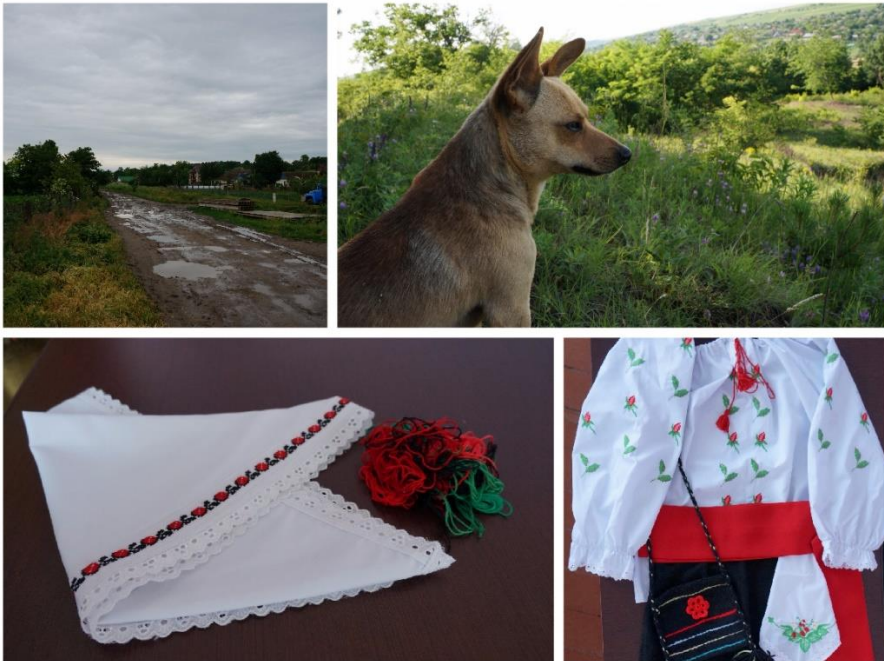


Figure 5. Photos taken in the Fîrlădeni community

The transfer of experiences and values appears to be one of the main functions that education acquires, and the community enhances it. In fact, identifying significant goals from a socio-historical perspective can contribute to the reconstruction of a community’s identity. The history of the place is brought forward to present day and strengthens the collective consciousness and the sense of belonging.

“I photographed this well (see Figure 6) on a very hot day because it needs to be repaired. People who pass by quench their thirst with cold water from this holy spring that was once dug by villagers. Over time, it can become a local historical monument. It is a traditional draw well. You don’t see these anymore.”



Figure 6. The well – image suggesting the community’s need to reiterate and establish local symbols

The nostalgic vision of the traditional village is also complemented by the possibility to train children and adolescents in making traditional clothes. For the community, they are like a “visiting card from our ancestors”, as one of the study participants, C.A., puts it. Therefore, the role of education is to create and develop a connection to one’s ancestors, and traditional wear is an important part of the process (see Figure 7).



Figure 7¹. Three-point handkerchief – image that suggests the need to pass on intergenerational values and local identity elements

The explanations and stories accompanying the handkerchief and shirt-making process complete the cultural heritage picture.

¹ “The three-point handkerchief. Nothing is more beautiful than a three-point handkerchief embroidered with ornaments collected from our elders in the community.”

“Yes, I told them where these motifs come from. Someone from the ethnographic center came here and told them about it. We explained why and how we sew them.”

According to participants, these activities manage to bring the old village back to life:

“I was watching them work and I could see myself when I was a kid. It was as if time stood still.”

Beneficiaries assuming a new cultural identity appears to be a consequence of the project’s implementation. Thus, adolescents who were actively involved in traditional wear-making activities proposed introducing the traditional Romanian shirt (*iê*) as a school uniform, which would contribute to creating an organizational identity of the school, consistent with the local culture. We consider this to be a promising proposal that has the potential to ensure the project’s sustainability. To the same end, students could start getting involved in digital marketing activities, e.g. promoting traditional wear in virtual environments (social networks, virtual stores etc.).

Lupa Recea

The Lupa Recea community aims to revitalizing its former school, which was closed down following school network optimizations. Educational afterschool activities were planned and carried out here, and students could enjoy a multidisciplinary approach to interesting topics.

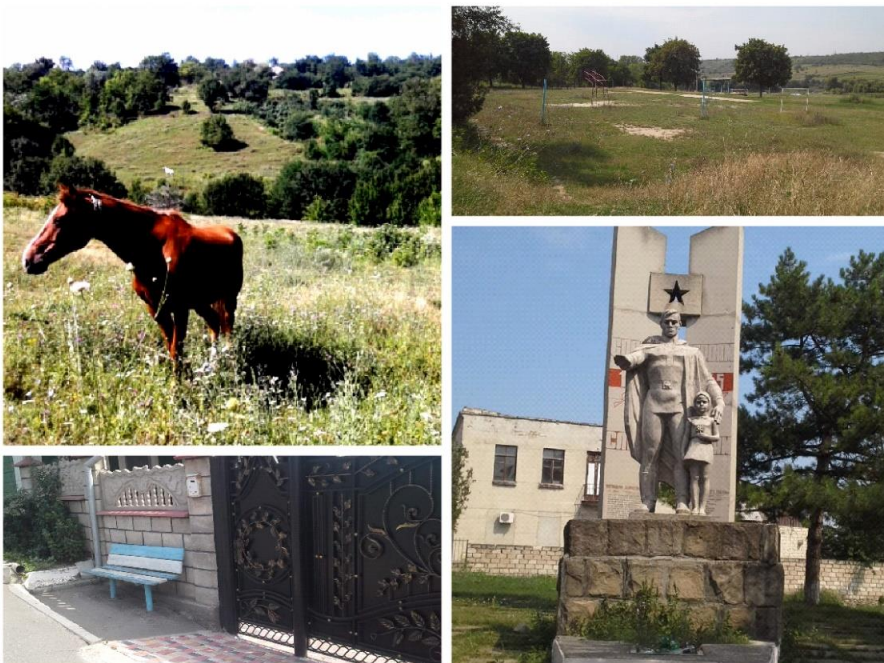


Figure 8. Photos taken in the Lupa Recea community

The approach the project proposes is based on the principle of reciprocity: redirecting an intellectual capital (e.g. skills, know-how, abilities), acquired as a result of active participation in education, towards community members.

Some of the photos discussed by participants highlight the “root metaphor”, explained by the need to bring back to the community what it, in turn, provided some of its members (see Figure 9):

“This is where we spent our childhood, where we can now share beautiful memories, where we can smell flowers, ripe grapes and forest acacia flowers... up the hill you can see an old lady who tends to her garden and a child who carries water from the spring. Childhood is and will certainly remain our most precious time spent here on Earth.”



Figure 9. Childhood land – image that suggests community attachment

Remembering childhood as a “magical time” motivates the community to create authentic life experiences for the children and adolescents in Lupa Recea. Consequently, another study participant states:

“My native village is small, but full of hardworking people. We are surrounded by forests, orchards and vineyards... I value the village, so, whenever I leave, I happily come back because this is where I’ve had and I’m still having wonderful moments with the people I love.”

Moreover, one of the personal development activities aimed to cultivate attachment and respect for the participants’ native village (Figure 10), validating the aforementioned reciprocity principle.



Figure 10. Personal development activity “Let’s love our village”

The village theme is also represented via projective-imaginative activities (see Figure 11). For those involved in the planned non-formal education activities, the relevance of this topic (native village) is capital and apparent: “they must take this village further!”



Figure 11¹. Image that illustrates the concern to build a shared local identity

Developing a daytime education center was a shared motivational mechanism that inspired locals to support the “school after school” idea (see Figure 12). According to the opinions expressed during the group analysis, the project managed to make the

¹ Development activity “My village in the future!”

community more aware of the children commuting to the communal school (Codreanca). The village lacked both a school and the rituals of walking to and from the school, i.e. the life rhythm a school timetable sets, and the sense and direction that educational activities give to generations of students.

There is a wide range of intellectual, social and personal development activities, which is also reflected by the photographs collected during the study.



Figure 12¹. Image that suggests community member engagement in developing the Education Center

Sireți

The photos taken and analyzed in the Sireți community converge towards the idea of a project that has brought together various topics: developing environmental beliefs and behaviors, nature-oriented education, attachment to one's native village, and issues related to the intellectual education of the younger generation (e.g. fun math).

¹ Parents from Lupa Recea are preparing the working spaces, making voluntarily restorations.

As we noticed when presenting photos from other communities, the idea that the village is a space rich in symbols and meanings also appears in the photographs taken in Sireți:

“Cultivating the love for one’s native village, for peaceful nature, for transcendental places with rich history... the connection between generations... These emotions strengthen the idea that as long as people come together... all is not lost!!!”

Photograph descriptions present the village as a “piece of heaven” and associate it with a source of positive emotions: “Anyone can find peace of mind here... freedom... happiness... joy...”.



Figure 13. Photographs taken in the Sireți community

Another photo set complements the romanticized vision of the village with an idealized view of the child, invariably associated with innocence (see Figure 14).

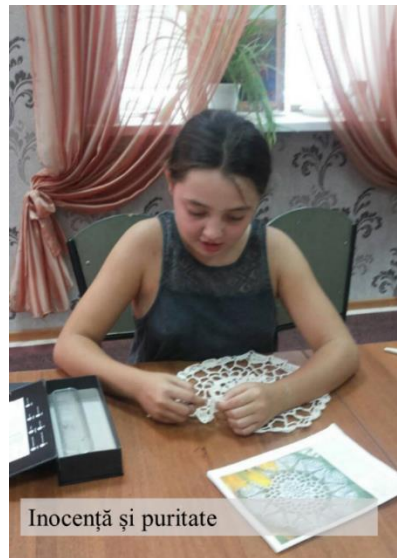


Figure 14¹. Suggestive photo for a child's image in the community

The village and childhood picture are complemented by nature, which is a fundamental element. The unanimous opinion is that the role of education is also materialized by cultivating the interest of children and adolescents for the beauty of nature. The motivation is expressed firmly by the phrase: “*We are nothing without nature.*”

We deem it necessary and relevant to center the project around a theme that can generate a visible impact on the community that consists of genuine learning experiences for project beneficiaries. This multidimensional approach can affect the in-depth examination of the themes and hamper the project's sustainability.

Limitations

One of the main limitations we identified is the time frame allocated to the data collection process. We previously stated that the optimal duration for a study based on the photovoice methodology was 6-8 weeks, given the project's objectives.

Photo analysis group meetings were held during networking meetings, which limited analysis time. A part of the subjects who attended group discussions were also involved in other activities (planned to be held simultaneously). We believe this interfered with the in-depth analysis of the experiences captured in the photographs.

Additionally, the location where the analysis meetings were held favoured interference by other people or activities and interrupted the analytical process.

¹ “Innocence and purity.”

The last possibly hindering element consists of the distance between communities and the difficulty in planning frequent meetings to facilitate the photograph creation and analysis process. In general, information sessions are complemented by facilitation sessions that are held simultaneously with data collection.

Conclusions

All the EDUrabil projects aimed (among other issues) to enable or reenact the bonds in the community and the community tissue. We considered a prerequisite for any intervention, action or measure related to the social life and to increase the social development before the economic development. Based on the previous research and interventions (Cace, Preotesi, 2016, p. 18), we considered Republic of Moldova being in the second of the five stages of growth: preconditions of take-off (Rostow, 1971). One of the key elements is the change of the structure and social mobility through the national identity and shared interests' development.

The research has revealed every community has its own model of bonding. The structure of community, the agents of change and the specific of change explain the differences but there are also elements which made us think about a pattern exposed through the photovoice methodology.

At Bădragii Vechi are people doing things together in the project because of tradition of sport contests or simply activities taken place in the recent history (a "sports family"). The community cohesion could be observed at the football matches (when it happened) and in the preparing activities which preceded the Center existence. These activities enhance intergenerational collaboration, highlighting the knowledge transfer from one generation to the next.

At Fîrlădeni, the local cultural identity issue become stronger than the public management issues dealing. The collective consciousness relies on the traditions, the handicrafts and cultural products. They provide are consistent with the sense of belonging and the vehicle which link the history of the place to the present, making it significant.

For the Lupa Recea locals the fortune is the intellectual capital, managed as a part of the active participation in education of the community members. This capital supposes exchange and reciprocity, supervision and maintenance (even on the level of property, the former school being an asset which need maintenance). The revitalized school (a devaluated place after being previously closed) and the nature are landmarks are part of an inextricable attachment.

Sireți is the closest community to the new and dynamic environment, Chișinău. As the most recent involved in the EDUrabil projects, mixes various and wide expectations related to the societal trends. Next to the urban, the richness of symbols and meanings unveils nature as a fundamental and never-ending element, subject of community interest and bonds.

Here occur some general reflections, valid for all the communities studied. We may say about socio-historical approach, a nostalgic vision of the traditional village or the old

village, as it has been perceived and represented by the locals. To bring it back to life seems to be a core for all the communities and for all the subjects involved in the process. The new is the old or it is built on the old, at least. This perspective is common, despite the variations of the socio-educational projects developed in the communities. Some are more applied (as Fîrlădeni, targeting also skills and market opportunities), some focuses on leisure and socialization (as Bădragii Vechi), some are recovering the community demand for education for children and even adult training (as Lupa Recea).

The process of the community development begins with the reconstruction of the community identity. In all our cases (as it results from the Photovoice data) is it still a cultural identity discovery and a cultural assuming process. Or it may be the need or the search for the comfort, for safety or for the functioning resources (Bauman, 2001, p. 111). But these are only premises for a more consistent support from the community for future development efforts.

Although we cannot expect a substantial evolution of the community-based educational paradigm, the carried-out experience reveals an increased consistency of actions that respond to that identity issue, then changing needs and local vulnerabilities regarding the way the education act is done, its purpose and content.

For instance, it seems the educational reforms and the community development have to overcome, in a way or another, this community identity issue. And then step further to face and deal with the nowadays society educational challenges.

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POVERTY IN ROMANIA DURING 1945-1989

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Abstract: *This study aims to identify the manifestation of poverty in Romania during the socialist period. We used various relevant data, even though often indirect (not referring explicitly to the phenomenon of poverty), information and indicators published by the national and international statistics of the time, as well as studies and papers by contemporary Romanian economists and sociologists (as Axenciuc, Pasti, etc.). In pursuing our objective of surveying the phenomenon of poverty during the socialist period, we monitored three large periods, in which the dominant causes of the phenomenon were somehow different: period 1945-1972, dominated by the efforts of paying the debts of war and of national implementation of a policy of nationalization and of change of the forms of property; period 1973-1979, dominated by the massive social effort for industrialization; the cooperativization of agriculture, concluded in 1962 and the total servitude of the intensive work in the rural, were used massively to generate the resources needed for the technical support of the process of industrialization; period 1980-1989, when the access of the bulk of population to consumer goods and services became extremely precarious, on the background of the effort of paying the debts Romania contracted for industrialization; the establishment of a political-economical quasi-élite, with privileged access to consumer goods and services stressed further the polarization of the access to basic foods.*

Keywords: *poverty, war debts, nationalization, industrialization, restricted consumption, privileges.*

Introduction

One can identify the phenomenon of poverty during the socialist period by observing three large periods, in which the prevailing causes of the phenomenon were different:

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- 1945-1972 period – dominated by the efforts of paying the debts of war (preponderantly by the share of agricultural products imposed by the state to the peasants); after this stage, it followed the national implementation of policies of nationalization and change of the forms of ownership on the means of production. The implementation of such policies impoverished massively the peasants (by cooperativization), and other categories of owners from the urban;
- 1973-1979 period – dominated by the massive social effort for industrialization; the cooperativization of agriculture, completed during the previous stage (in 1962) and the total servitude of the intensive work in the rural were used massively to generate the resources necessary for the technical support of the process of industrialization; the modernization of agriculture, much as it was done, was rather a consequence of the industrial development and of its need to sell its products, less an objective per se.
- 1980-1989 period – when the access of the population to consume goods and services became extremely precarious, on the background of the continuous effort to pay the debts taken by Romania for industrialization; the establishment of a political-economical quasi-elite, with privileged access to consumer goods and services stressed further the polarization of the access to food.

Period 1945-1972

Payment of the war debts and passing the national wealth into state property

After the war, the country was experiencing a state of social decomposition. The year 1945 was dominated by the worsened national poverty, due to the massive destructions caused by the war, of the lower agricultural production for several years in a row, and by the need to pay the war compensations. After assuming power, in 1945, the new political regime had to solve, in the first instance, several social problems that could not be postponed. The Communist Party, taken by surprise by its fast assumption of the political power, displayed a first reflex of adaptation to the situation, by the initiation of the agrarian reform, on March 23, 1945, by the government of Petru Groza, with the purpose to enhance the social cohesion and general support for the party. By the expropriation of the last estates that remained after the 1921 land reform (1.5 million hectares of agricultural land), 1.1 million hectares of agricultural land were distributed to the peasants, and 400.000 hectares remained in the state reserve. Along with the land, some 9,000 agricultural machineries were also confiscated, and this practically abolished the class of big land-owners, but also stroke a blow to the wealthier people.

On the 8th of May 1945, the government established sovromuri, by which the national wealth was to be exploited to the benefit of the USSR.¹ According to the contract, for six years, these sovromuri transferred to the USSR various raw materials, other materials, and agricultural products from Romania. This happened on the background of the dramatic decrease of the agricultural and industrial production, after the war, due

¹ Sovrompetrol, Societatea Sovromlemn, Sovrommetal, Sovromtransport the Soviet – Romanian bank, etc.

to the loss of production capacities and labour force, and also because Romania already had in 1945 a smaller territory (80.5%) than in 1938, and the total population decreased from almost 20 million in 1938, to 15 million inhabitants in 1945. The decrease of the agricultural and industrial production per capita was large – the grain cereals production decreased to 303.4 kg/inhabitant, from 549.3 kg/inhabitant. In other domains, particularly in industry, the decrease was less dramatic. The steel production was in 1947 of 11.5 kg/inhabitant compared to 14 kg/inhabitant in 1938, the paper production decreased from 2.9 kg/inhabitant in 1938 to 1.9 kg/inhabitant in 1947, and the sugar production, from 5.5 kg/inhabitant (average of 1933/34-1937/38) to 4.6 kg/inhabitant (average of 1945/46-1949/50).

The economic situation of Romania was disastrous in 1947. Broad categories of population suffered chronically of hunger. Because of the wild exploitation of the Romanian economy by the USSR, the price of the consumer goods sky-rocketed. About 40-50% of the exporting capacities of Romania was delivered for free to the USSR. In consequence, in 1946-1947, the price of the staples had increased by up to 1,000% (the meat by 400%, the potatoes by 800% and the bread by 1,000%).¹

The average consumption per capita reflected the austere standard of living. In 1947, the average annual per capita consumption was in Romania of just 2,350 calories/day, compared to 2,760 calories/day in 1938; the average annual meat consumption decreased from 18 kg to 14 kg, for milk and dairy products, from 103 kg to 96 kg, while it remained unchanged for sugar, 5 kg annually), the non-food consumption also decreased (for instance, average annual consumption of textile decreased from 2.6 kg to 1.9 kg, of cotton, from 1.8 kg to 1.2 kg, of wool from 0.7 kg to 0.4 kg). The scale of the decrease is probably better seen if we consider the gross domestic product per capita: in comparable prices (1938), it decreased from 76 USD in 1938 to 54 USD in 1947 (Alexandrescu 1986, p. 236-238, p. 240-241, Murgescu, 2010, p.334).

After World War Two, the agriculture was still the main economic branch in Romania. In 1948, the peasants still accounted for about 75% of the total population. The Petru Groza government, which assumed power on March 23, 1945, enlarged the mass of agricultural land owners, achieving a new land reform, whose main purpose was the disintegration of the large estates. This reform gave 1,057,674 hectares of agricultural land in the property of 796,129 peasant families. At that moment, the peasants were classified in to five categories: peasants with no land in property, poor peasants, middle peasants, wealthy peasants (also labeled as *chiaburi*) and estate owners (Gheorghiu-Dej, 1953)

By the 1948 Constitution, several concepts have been introduced into the mental of the Romanian society, whose purpose was to generate a different social context for the expression of the standard of living of the population. Work had become the “basic factor of the economic life”, being a “duty of every citizen”. The State assumed thus the duty of improving the standard of life of the population.

¹ *** *Economia României după al Doilea Război Mondial 1945-1965*

By the October 1947-11 June 1948 nationalization and by the subsequent nationalizations (continuing until 1953), the movement and functions of the private property were narrowed significantly, aiming thus to decrease the social and economic inequalities existing before 1947.

In March 1949, the government nationalized the agricultural land larger than 50 ha, including the machinery and tools of the agricultural exploitations given in private property by the Land Reform of 1945, taking the first steps towards the collectivisation of agriculture. Gradually, the monopoly on the largest part of the economic patrimony and on its mechanism of functioning has been introduced, with both positive and negative consequences for the economy and population.

The public property ultimately succeeded to remove the free market and the private economic initiative, everything being now dominated by the public sector developed based on centralized and planned economy and market. The main sources of benefits and accumulation have been monopolized, the state becoming the main administrator of the national wealth, which it oriented towards the general development and industrialization. The population active in the nationalized domains, became employed in urban, and employed or cooperatist in the rural, being thus integrated within a structure that was fully dependent on the state, on finding a job and on the discretionary repartition of the welfare by the representatives of the state power.

For many years, using the system of quotas (established for the payment of the war debts), the peasants were compelled to deliver to the state a consistent part of the agricultural production of their households, the amount of which varied with the region. Many times, the peasants remained only with the wheat for the next year seeding, sometimes even with less. The system of quota ruined many large rural agricultural households and impoverished the Romanian villages.

The years 1949-1950 were the resumption, with great difficulties, of the activities from industry and agriculture, given the great losses of economic and human resources and of production capacities, endured during the war. In industry, the production of 1949 was just 85% of 1938, with great decreases in the food industry (-38%) and in the oil industry (-25%), etc. (Constantinescu, 2000, p. 140).

The accelerated industrialization of the economy started after 1950, aiming to take out the country from the state of underdevelopment. To support it, additional labour force was needed, taken from the rural areas, much more than in the inter-bellum period. The newcomers to towns needed lodging, which is why the towns turned, almost overnight, into vast construction sites. The dwellings were assigned discretionary by the people in power, preferably to the party activists, security forces and the obedient workers that integrated and were collaborating with the declared intentions of the regime. Thus, in some two decades, real forests of blocks emerged in towns, and countless worker districts.

By the 1952 Constitution, the Popular Republic of Romania was declared a state of the working people from towns and villages, implicitly declaring thus the hostility of the communist regime towards the people aiming to live without working. It acknowledges thus the existence of three types of economic and social formations: the socialist one,

the small production of goods (cooperatives) and the private one. In 1956, echoing to the worry of the communist leadership toward the potential social effects of the Hungarian revolution, the Bucharest regime eased slightly the nationalisation measures. The wages of workers increased, the compulsory quotas for the peasants have been abolished, the wages of teachers and the school grants increased.

Influences of the centralization of agriculture on poverty.

In 1959, the process of collectivization of the agriculture officially started. The agrarian reforms of 1921 and 1945, despite their limits, allowed, nevertheless, the establishment of a consistent social stratum of small landowners. Hence, land confiscation by the communists (which had started in 1949) was not without incidents determined by the opposition of the landowners. Collectivization was done by imposing the state power until 1962. About 80,000 peasants were arrested because they did not agree to enter the agricultural cooperatives. The process of collectivization that run, with syncope, during 1949-1962, consisted in the confiscation of most agricultural properties in the country and their merging into agricultural farms (CAP) administered by the state. The government often used violent methods of persuasion, imprisonment and confiscation of the entire wealth of the opponents. Some areas that escaped cooperativization remained only in the mountain areas. The cooperativisation of agriculture in Romania was quasi-total, according to the Stalinist pattern, being averted only in the mountain areas. The Romanian peasants could keep only their dwelling, and had to work for the CAP, for a pay much lower than in industry or services, that could not even cover the subsistence level.

A collectivization such as that from Romania, which brought the peasants into a state of extreme poverty, had been done only in Albania. Other Central and East-European states gave up such idea of collectivisation, granting the peasants higher land ownership rights (in Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary). Other states, such as the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, although assumed the idea of collectivisation, offered the peasants more reasonable payments, like those in industry, which prevented the decay of the rural households. The Romanian cooperatist system, thus formed, would soon enter crisis, and its effects were felt by the dramatic decrease of the standard of living of the peasants. In the 80s, the animals from the peasant households, reared on about 15% of the total agricultural area that remained outside the cooperatives, accounted for some 50% of the total livestock. Nevertheless, the food crisis of the 80s made even the collectivised peasants to endure hunger. Therefore, although the Romanian village experienced a long period of turmoil due to the centralization of the agriculture, the standard of living of the peasant household, did not exceed too much its medieval condition.

On the background of the more or less open opposition of the peasants (many times the peasants were sabotaging the work in cooperatives, lacking the consciousness of making an immoral or illegitimate act when they were destroying or stealing from the common wealth), a process of agricultural modernization was initiated, nevertheless. Agricultural farms, animal production farms rearing pigs, poultry and cattle were established. Irrigation systems were constructed, the cooperatives received tractors and agricultural machinery from the domestic production. The 1965 Constitution declared

Romania a Socialist Republic. The capitalist enterprises had vanished from the social and economic landscape, while in the rural, the peasants had been turned into a rather obedient social class.

Period 1973-1979

Quasi-general employment

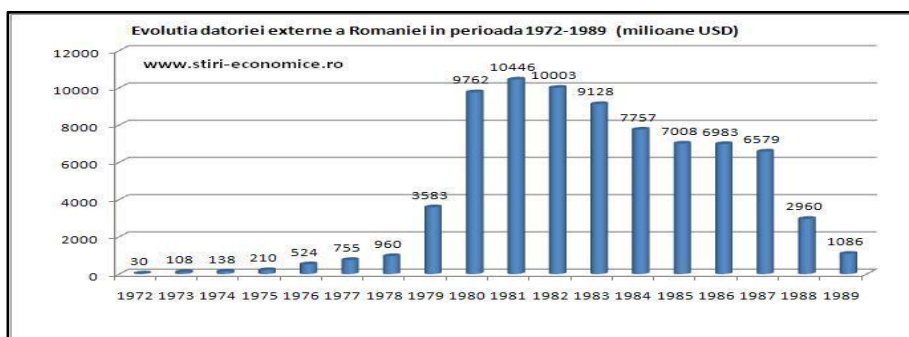
The process of socialist transition was neither short, nor simple. The regime holding the power proved to be tenacious in accomplishing its objectives. Many other measures with broad social impact were introduced, among which free education, free public health care services, electrification of the urban and rural localities, building new districts in towns, development of public transportation networks, etc. New programs of development have been initiated after 1950, with increasingly substantial investments in industry. All these generated new jobs. After the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in 1965, the Romanian socialism entered the era of Ceausescu, and Romania started a process of leaving behind the economic subordination and the ideological domination of the USSR.

The development of a basal level of the public education and health care services, reduced drastically the general mortality from an average of 19.5‰ in 1930-39, to an average of 9.5‰ in the decade 1967-76, and of infant mortality, from 59.5‰ in 1968 to 31.1‰ in 1976 (Trebeci, 1979, p. 128, p. 465-467).

After 1972, Romania took several foreign loans to develop its economy, thus becoming a country producing tractors, chemical products, locomotives, household appliances, electronic devices, etc.

The industrial production multiplied 31 times, the real per capita income – de 4.5 times, and the retail sales – 15 times (Pasti, 2006, p.85). Although such statistical evaluations were not made at that time, one may infer that, at least the provision of a subsistence living, in the 60s-70s, was no longer a problem for the people having their dwelling and working for the state, in cooperation or even as self-employed.

Chart 1. *The evolution of Romania's foreign debt in the period 1972-1989 (million USD)*



Source: *** *Economia României după al Doilea Război Mondial 1945-1965*

Of course, poverty as social phenomenon did not completely vanish along three decades of socialism, but on the background of the quasi-general legal duty to be employed, the phenomenon became rather seldom, and somehow shadowed there, where it persisted. Poverty continued to affect, though, many of the former poor, who did not manage to exceed their own condition, on the background of unfavourable socio-economic factors, such as the inertia of illiteracy, peripheral or rural residence, poor health state, old age, lack of a minimal capital of relations (relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc.), being a Roma etc.

However, a new category of poor people appeared which was usually out of the spotlight and, on the contrary, was trying to stay out of the attention of the security and repression organs of the regime – the representatives of the old regime elite, people whose properties and goods have been confiscated, the people with “improper file” – former landowners, bourgeois, former legionaries or other categories of potential opponents of the regime, representatives of the clergy, or simple intellectuals who refused to collaborate with the communist regime, etc. All these people had no success (or where even obstructed, in various forms, due to their improper personal file) in their attempts to integrate within the general trend of promoting the so-called “*new values of the socialism*”, and to get a job.

The absolute priority given by the communist regime to industrialization, caused the agriculture to be used intensively to that purpose. Hence, the Romanian rural, what was left after the depopulation of villages by drawing the people to towns, maintained continuously a clump of social problems, many of which also existed during the interbellum period: poverty at the level of subsistence, deficit of education, deficit of access to services, deficit of community development.

Level of wages and attempt to reduce poverty

In the interval 1950- October 2015, according to INS data, the average net national wage increased from 371 lei to 1871 lei.¹ Two monetary reforms were performed during that interval – in 1952, and in 2005. Between 1950-1970 the inflation rate was 8.3%, although in 1950-1960 it was 16.5% (Ciumara, Ciutacu, 2004). Therefore, in 1969-1979 – a period when the average net wage of the employees increased throughout the national economy – the national economy experienced a deflationist process, which actually meant a general increase of the purchasing power of the employees in Romania, therefore, a trend of sustained decrease of the social incidence of poverty.

In the interval 1960-1989, the largest categories of employees migrated gradually from poorer salaries (80.3% of the employees were paid less than 1000 lei in March 1960) towards better wages (68.1% of the employees were paid 2501 to over 4000 lei in September 1989) (Table 1). The data show, however, that this trend was lower after 1980, because of the increase of the consumer price index by 38.4% in 1985, and by

¹ *** *Cu cât au crescut salariile de la Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej la Klaus Iohannis, 12 ianuarie 2016*

48.1% in 1989, compared to 1970. Thus, the purchasing power decreased by 32.5% in 1970-1989.¹

Table 1. Alleviation of employee poverty. Distribution of the employees by groups of net wages, consumer price index and evolution of the purchasing power – interval 1960-1989 (%)

	March 1960	March 1965	June 1970	March 1974	March 1980	March 1985	Sept.1989
Total number of employees	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Up to 1000	80,3	83,8	24,4	48,9	-		
1001-1300	13,8		38,1		3,8		
1301-1500	3,3	8,0	14,1	17,7	8,2	3,8	
1501-1700	1,3	3,6	8,8	11,3	13,1	4,5	
1701-2000	0,8	2,5	7,3	10,1	23,5	12,1	6,8
2001-2500	0,5	1,6	5,4	7,7	28,8	30,8	25,1
2501-3000		0,5	1,7	4,3	12,1	22,3	25,7
3001-3500			0,7		5,4	13,6	19,4
3501-4000			0,3		2,6	6,7	11,5
Over 4000			0,2		2,5	6,2	11,5
Consumer price index	Index of the year%		100%	102,6 (in 1975)	109,4	138,4	148,1
	Increase from one period to another%		100	102,6(in 1975)	106,9	126,5	107,0
Purchasing power	Index of the year %		100%	97,4(in 1975)	91,4	72,2	67,5
	Cumulated decrease%			-2,6(in 1975)	-8,6	-27,8	-32,5
Trend of employee poverty	Decreasing employee poverty	Decreasing employee poverty	Decreasing employee poverty	The trend is changing	Decreasing employee welfare	Strong decrease of employee welfare	Decreasing employee welfare

*Source: data centralised and interpreted by Mariana Stanciu; data from the Statistic Yearbook of RSR 1985, DC.S, RSR, p.68, Statistic Yearbook of RSR 1990, CNS, Romania, p.124; *** International Financial Statistics, Yearbook, 1997, p.700-701*

Table 1. shows the trend of decreasing employee poverty up to 1974, which changed direction in March 1974 and remained so until 1989. The strongest erosion of employee welfare was in 1985. A large disproportion appeared, after 1975, between the volume of goods and the affordable demand of the population, which led to a surplus of monetary mass in circulation by the increase of the inflation rate.

¹ *** *International...*, 1997

Period 1980-1989

Precarious access to consume goods and services.

Disappearance of the market

The beginning of paying back the foreign debt of Romania marked the massive sacrificing of population access to several consumer goods (meat products, dairy products, furniture, footwear, electric power, fuels, etc.) and services. Therefore, several myths circulated, during the socialist period, both within the collective consciences, and among the theoreticians. One of that of market disappearance. However, the market of consumer goods and services did not disappear; it functioned during the first 2-3 decades within the limits allowed by the communist regime (outstandingly well until 1970-75), after which it went underground and acquired the characteristics of an arena. Another myth was the disappearance of the wealthy. Nonetheless, the wealthy did not disappear, only the former rich people (from the interbellum period) remained behind the public attention. New ones appeared, probably, less rich, but properly dissimulated; good evidence for this are the people who turned rich overnight after December 1989. Of course, unlike the interbellum period, in socialism, there was a process of flattening the economic and social differences, but this was just for the majority of population which, one way or another, lived from working. There was simultaneously, however, a phenomenon of disguised welfare polarization, whose dimensions became obvious immediately after 1989. The two poles were, on the one hand, the broad mass of employees in industry, agriculture and services and, on the other hand, the people favoured by the communist regime (leadership, security employees, party activists, etc.). They not only had much higher incomes, but also preferential access to consumer goods and services – resorts, special shops with limited access, pubs with exclusivist regime, etc.

The polarization of welfare during the socialist era was achieved not only regulated levels of the income, but also by the preferential facilitation, of the favourites, to the access to consumer goods and services. The rest of population, most of it, had to survive on the black market of consumer goods and services. During the last decade of socialism, the Romanian society was confronted with the phenomenon of the black market for consumer goods and services, at a level comparable, maybe, with the war times. This actually was a field of tough competition between the potential consumers “with connections” and those “without connections”. Ultimately, that competition was between the “consumers with much money who could pay the demanded price” and those who had to consume what they could buy with tickets. Nobody considered the potential consumers with less money and who could not venture on the risky land of the black market.

The black market of consumer goods and services peaked towards the end of the period, when only the empty shelves remained from the socialist market. The measures to limit consumption, taken by the regime, also affected other aspects of life, such as the purchase of fuel and the right to use the private cars on Sundays. Particularly adverse effects were produced by the cut of the power supply – completely aberrant under the conditions in which the industry accounted for 72-74% of the national

consumption, the rest being consumed by the population (Antal, 1992, p 367). Therefore, during that period there was a massive phenomenon of pauperization of the population without access to the consumption opportunities of the people in power and of their privileged ones, via the black market. Specific foods, but not only (especially the ones imported officially or underground) became exchange coin for the acquisition of other goods and services. For instance, the payment of the “free” health care services was done with imported goods (coffee, cigarettes, chocolate, etc.). Such practices contributed massively to the pauperization of the people who, not having alternatives to meet their consumption requirements, had to spend all their incomes in this way, to acquire staples or the access specific services.

The 80s were the most difficult for most of the Romanian population. The chronic hunger endured by the majority of the population results from the average consumption per capita of basic items, from the cold homes and from the daily cut of electricity, such sufferance were imposed systematically to the population for over a decade – transforming the regime of Ceausescu into a profoundly detested regime by the affected population. At the same time, the representatives of the power were living in conditions of absurd luxury even compared to a reasonable notion of luxury, ignoring and despising most of the population.

In 1982, the communist authorities approved the well-known program of “scientific feeding” of the population, which recommended a specific ration of the height and weight of a person. The old people remembered that in the 50s, after the war, the staples were procured with tickets, in minimal amounts. This state of things improved, somehow, in the 60s and early 70s. By early 80s, the price of food and household appliances and services started to increase, and the food shortage was increasingly frequent. The former food tickets were used again, which spoke of the failure of the socialist regime. Food consumption was limited, and the free circulation of the products was hindered by the authorities. Each country had to deliver to the centralised state fund, at fixed prices, the so-called, surplus of food. The tickets for sugar and oil discriminated the population: higher amounts for the urban and lower amounts for the rural. The bread is sold in limited amounts. To discourage the tendency of depositing specific products, a decree from October 1981 was punishing with imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years “the purchase from state or cooperative shops, with the purpose of stockpiling, amounts exceeding the monthly requirements of a family” products such as the flour, sugar, oil, rice flour and rice. In 1982, the “specialists” determined that the Romanian people had excessive consumptions – 3,300 calories per day and reduced the ration of calories to 2700 – 2800 units.

Thus, in 1982, the annual consumption of foods per person was regulated to the following amounts: meat and meat products: 60 – 70 kg; fish and fish products: 8 – 10 kg; milk and dairy (without butter): 210 -230 litres; eggs: 260 – 280 pcs; fats (butter, margarine, oil, lard): 16 – 18 kg; vegetables and vegetable products: 170 – 180 kg; grain leguminous: 3 – 4 kg; fruits and fruit products: 65 – 95 kg; sugar and sugar products: 22 – 26 kg; potatoes: 70 – 90 kg; cereal grain products (flour, corn flour, rice): 120 – 140 kg. This did not mean that such amounts were available on the market. This „offer” was considered too generous, even though it existed only in theory, which is why it was drastically reduced in 1984: meat – 39.12 kg; milk and dairy – 78.73 kg; vegetables –

66.08 kg etc. Of course, when these products were available, the people had to stay in lines for hours, always frightened that “they might not but this time either”. In the rural, in exchange for the right to ratios, the peasants were forced to sell eggs and milk to the cooperative, at the price set by the state. If they wanted to slaughter a pig, they had to give another to the state (Mihai, 2016).

Table 2. Average yearly consumption/capita of basal products, Romania 1970-1989

Products	1970	1980	1985	1988	1989
Meat and meat products (equivalent fresh meat) (kg)	31,2	62,0	55,1	52, 4	50,2
Fat (total) (kg)	14,1	17,8	17,6	16,6	16, 7
Milk and dairy (no butter) (litres)	110,7	162,9	170,6	149,8	135,9
Eggs (pcs.)	142	232	254	260	229
Sugar and sugar products, in equivalent sugar (kg)	19,3	28,2	6,3	25,0	24,7
Cereal grains products (equivalent flour) (kg)	196,0	172,7	143,0	152,9	157,3
Potatoes (kg)	62,3	70,6	78, 4	58, 3	71,7
Vegetables and vegetable products, equivalent vegetables (kg)	86,7	121,4	169,8	138,9	135,6
Fruits and fruit products (in equivalent fruits) (kg)	34,6	45,8	71,0	52,9	53,9
Textiles (garments included) (m2)	19,3	28,6	28,1	28,3	27,9
Footwear (pairs)	2,62	3,50	3,75	3,58	3,62

Source: *** *Statistic Yearbook of Romania, 1990, CNS*

A consequence of this program, in 1989, was that, the production of basic foods decreased strongly compared to 1985 and even 1989. The meat exports exceeded much the meat imports, reaching 203,000 de tons in 1980, 211,100 tons in 1985, 237,300 tons in 1986, 187,900 tons in 1987, 153,520 tons in 1988 and 93,700 tons in 1989. From 1980 to 1989 the annual meat consumption of the Romanian population decreased by more than 200,000 tons, the priority given to exports being, next to the decreasing production of meat, a major factor for the decreasing standard of living.

Table 3. Production of basic foods in Romania, in 1989

	MU	Production in 1989	% of	
			1988	1985
Meat from slaughtered animals	Thousands tons	685,8	84,7	69,5
Fish	Thousands tons	216,0	81,6	83,0
Consumer milk	Thousands hl	5.687	101,7	98,6
Edible oil	Thousands tons	247,7	76,2	75,4
Meat preparations	Thousands tons	275,6	97,6	98,8
Butter	Thousands tons	45,6	115,4	97,0
Cheese	Thousands tons	81,6	112,4	93,4

Source: *Constantinescu, 2000, p. 257*

On the other hand, although the leadership of the country claimed, in every possible way, that during the socialist period the income of the employees increased (and they did so, in nominal value) the purchasing power of the employees decreased substantially and continuously.

The list of deprivations endured by the population during the final years of the socialist age should be completed with other chapters of consumption, such as the serious deterioration of the public transportation services. This was so, because the production of buses for the public transportation decreased continuously, after 1980, from 3,702 items, to 1,404 in 1989, that of trolleybuses, from 350 to 164 items, and that of vans, from 4,469 to 1,906, while the production of trucks and hauling machines, from 31,711 to 13.515219. The consequence was the decrease of the stock of vehicles for public transportation, both urban and interurban, the drastic reduction of the offer of services. Meanwhile, the total population of the towns increased from 10.3 million inhabitants in 1980, to more than 11.3 million in 1989, and the total length of the public transportation routes decreased from 18,168 km in 1980 to 16,647 km in 1985, and the stock of vehicles, from 15,434 to 11,526, the strongest decreases being in the stock of busses. Severe reductions also existed in the interurban public transportation, both in terms of the stock of vehicles, and in the total length of the transportation routes, average daily travelled distance and number of passengers (Constantinescu, 2000, p. 225, apud Murgescu, 2010). Very serious problems also appeared due to the chronic and severe underfinancing of the public health services, of the educational and cultural services, by the reduction and total ideologization of the public TV station.

Much of the rural population has been dislocated from their own households, being relocated unwillingly in blocks of flats (most of them deprived of a minimal access to utilities), in order to obtain more agricultural land. Thus, several rural localities decreased overnight, becoming semi-urban settlements, lacking, however, the facilities and advantages of a life in the urban (common transportation, sewage, tap water, etc.). The peasants have been forced out of their homes and moved to blocks, the villages destroyed and their houses, even new, were flattened. Thus, some 6,000 rural settlements disappeared from the map of Romania.¹ Together with those households, much of the souls of the unrooted people must have certainly be shattered, their identity of peasants, their capacity of generation and regeneration of the values that they nurtured for decades in their mind and heart. The urban areas were also affected of overnight demolition and transformations. Until 1989, about 25% of the buildings from Bucharest were demolished to make space for projects of the Ceausescu family. Thus, hundreds of culture and art places and eight churches, plus other monuments were moved from the foreground to the background, hidden from sight.

By far, Romania of the 1980-'89 became in the public consciousness, the country with the least liberties and the lowest standard of living in Europe, not after Bulgaria, as nowadays, but after Albania. The Romanians were longing after Bulgarian, Russian and Hungarian goods, for any foreign good. Anything foreign was better than the rare thing that could be purchased from Romania. The Romanians were humiliated in any way

¹ *** Generația revoluției. Uniformizarea României, planul faraonic, 2013

possible by a political regime completely lacking horizon, extremely primitive and aggressive.

Therefore, the discourse about poverty during the socialist period is somehow off the typical patterns for the discourse on poverty. Poverty was almost omnipresent, diffuse, felt at personal level. It was not only the frustration of life in poverty, or on the brink of economic poverty; it was a mountain of humiliation that shadowed any domain of life. The Romanians were humiliated both at home and abroad, when they were managing to escape to the free world. They were seen there, as having escaped from prison, sometimes with suspicion, other times with mercy, by the citizens of the free world. But even more serious than this humility lived at any moment – on the street, at the desk of public institutions, in shops, in own home (the poor people had, in the best case, crammed apartments, where you could hear the neighbour coughing or flushing the toilet water), in the bus (or over hanged), within the family or household, was the fact that all these had become a sort of dangerous normality. The people had become almost immune to humility, became used to a bad living standard, particularly those born during the communist regime. Communism seemed everlasting, nobody believed in a change.

Conclusions

In the four and a half decades of socialism, the employment of the population in agriculture, 80% in 1918, decreased to about 50% of the population occupied in agriculture and services, the rest being employed in industry. Certainly, such massive social mutations, influenced the social and economic status of all the categories of population. In 1989, Romania produced 25 times more electric power per capita – 3,276 kWh, compared to 130 kWh in 1950; 18 times more steel - 623 kg per capita, compared to 34 kg in 1950; 2.5 times more cereal grains – 794 kg per capita, compared to 316 kg per capita, in 1950; the number of dwellings was substantially higher, and infant mortality had decreased 4.3 times – from 116.7 children ‰ inhabitants. However, the relative position of Romania, within the European context, at the end of the communist period, put it on one of the bottom ranks, behind not just the developed capitalist states, but also behind most of the former Central and South-Eastern Europe socialist countries.

Table 4. GDP/capita - Post-war Romania within the European context (GDP/capita, PPP, USD Geary-Khamis 1990)

Year	Romania	Average of 7 East European countries	Average of 36 European countries	Romania in relation with the European average
1938	1,242	1,764	3,226	0,38
1950	1,182	2,111	3,655	0,32
1960	1,844	3,070	5,316	0,35
1970	2,853	4,315	7,697	0,37
1980	4,135	5,786	9,643	0,43
1989	3,941	5,915	11,113	0,35

Source: Maddison, 2003, p. 44-45, 56-57, 68-69, 96-101, from Murgescu, 2010, p. 331

The lags, in absolute values, between Romania and the European countries increased throughout the post-war period, despite the forced industrialization and the regime of austerity imposed by the communist leadership. In relative terms, Romania maintained throughout that period its rank below half of the European average, and below the average of the other East European countries.

Romania suffered more than other European states the effects of World War Two, particularly the effects of the Soviet occupation. It experienced thereafter some three decades of economic growth above the European average, followed by a last catastrophic decade of communism from the economic point of view (Murgescu, 2010, p. 332). Despite the communist rhetoric and the appearances, Romania – most of its population – was poorer and more kept under repression during the socialist period than the population of other socialist countries. During the socialist age, many of the deficiencies of the interbellum age were eliminated or alleviated – such as illiteracy, the lack of jobs, the lack of education, the lack of access to health care, etc.

Table 5. Economic level of Romania within the European context (1989)

Country	Added value – processing industry USD/capita)	Cereal grains output (kg/ha)	Average daily intake of calories (kcal)	Average daily intake of animal protein (gr)	Cars /1000 inhabitants
Albania	258	2.914	3.049	20,2	
Austria	3.793	5.407	3.496	64,8	366
Bulgaria		3.991	3.683	52,2	137
Czechoslovakia		4.951	3.609	63,3	138
Denmark	3.935	5.646	3.622	66,2	309
Switzerland	6.736	4.541	3.565	63,8	424
FRG	6.690	5.715	3.464	63,8	420
Greece	923	3.306	3.793	57,3	143
Ireland	3.537	6.169	3.779	66,9	208
Italy	2.297	3.816	3.508	57,3	303
Poland	836	3.136	3.464	56,1	119
Portugal	839	1.659	3.414	49,9	202
UK	4.048	5.792	3.181	53,9	349
Spain	1.857	2.669	3.567	59,1	276
Hungary		4.772	3.668	55,5	169
USSR		1.925	3.380	56,1	45
European average	2.642	2.807	3.423	58,0	197
Romania	778	3.109	3.252	38,3	50
Ranking of Romania	22/24	19/24	19/24	22(23)/24	23/24

Sources: Grigorescu, 1993, p. 64, 71-72, 175, 176, 187

But the political regime in power generated different types of realities regarding the complexity of the poverty phenomenon, which usually affected the ordinary people (less favoured by the system). Those realities were maybe even more serious than the poverty before the war (by their long-term consequences on the general mentality and on the development of the social resources after 1989) – fear or losing liberty due to the resistance against the forced political indoctrination, fear of the criminal repression in the communist prisons, humiliation of being Romanian among other Europeans, humiliation of the sensation of chronic hunger, humiliation of buying the daily necessities by making compromise, by spending long hours in line, extra charge, traffic of influence, by favouring the speculators and discretionary agents of the administrative services, the feeling of total loss on own life by the aggressive pronatalist policies, feelings of deep collective dehumanization in the hospital homes or from the social work institutions – some brought in light only after 1989, etc. These and many other are, maybe, harder to understand and believe by the generations after 1990. But this doesn't make them less true. For those who lived such realities, poverty was not a mere economic fact easy to put up with, or easy to go past.

Year 1989 was the end of an era and the prelude of a social explosion. Egalitarian rhetoric from the socialism and awareness of the social problem of poverty. The egalitarian rhetoric of the communist regime – rather persuasive for over four decades – certainly had a decisive role in formatting the collective conscious and subconscious. This made many people believe that although there was poverty in socialism, particularly in the 50s-60s, life entered, however, its normal path after 1975-80. Indeed, there have been several years of hope. The society seemed to rebirth, illiteracy was lower, the high rate of construction of dwellings generated credibility and hope towards the regime, it was rather easy to find a job, and the young generations (those born in families with no “problems of social origin”) looked confident towards the future. In towns, most of the population able to work was employed in industry or in services administered by the state. The rural population, although still facing serious economic difficulties, and was dissatisfied, was reconciled, somehow, defeated, if not convinced by the tenacity of the system. The communist regime had succeeded to reduce the private property in almost all spheres of the social life, making most of the population dependent on the system, through their jobs, all their life being organised around the job (phenomenon exacerbated after 1980). The place of work was the basic point of distribution of the economic resources, which allowed access, if needed, to training courses, dwelling, health services and other services – all these and many other being conditioned by having a job. This was also the way to get some benefits (treatment tickets in resorts) and not few times – through the administrative system or repartition – even some consumer goods (food, clothing, household appliances, etc.).

The place of work was also the main centre of recruiting and communist indoctrination of the masses, although this was done starting from the preschool level of the educational system. At least in the urban, Romania had become an almost compact nation of employees, even in the rural being jobs for the people with various skills and trainings. But the gradual destruction, by the communist regime, of any elements of economic autonomy of the population households, initially by limiting the area of the private property, then by the complete dependence on the work of the able ones, led

towards a situation of extreme social vulnerability of most of the population. This risk materialized in December 1989, when the situation of any state employee had become endangered overnight, because of the so-called necessity of reforming the Romanian economy, which disturbed so much many interests of expansion of the western prosperity.

The social categories most affected by poverty in socialism could be: the rural population deprived of land, which could guarantee their survival – such rural families were living from what they received from the CAP; the urban population with low incomes, which had difficulties in accessing the black market of goods and services (whose prices were regulated by the – very high – demand and the – very low – offer), most of the people reprimanded politically and their families (provided they had not been eliminated physically, or didn't leave the country, they continued to subsist economically, nobody knows how), the population affected by the masked unemployment (increasing sacking, particularly after 1985), some people with disabilities, much of the Roma population, etc.

As in the interbellum period, but at a larger scale, in the years of socialism, much of the rural poverty – the extreme poverty or the severe/absolute poverty – which could not be solved by remaining in the rural, migrated towards the urban. Part of this population managed, maybe, to enrol in the educational system, some of them becoming career militaries, firefighters, security people or militia men, other engineers, or party activists, obtaining thus better paid jobs. Most of them, however, didn't succeed, or succeeded more modestly to integrate within the urban life, working for minimal or medium wages, getting qualified on the job, or getting employed as clerks in various services. Anyhow, getting more than they had before in the rural, they had a life at the limit of survival or economic precariousness.

Thus, after 1989, together with the change of the political regime and massive reorganisation of the state enterprises, the former dependence on a job at the state unexpectedly showed its risk potential. Many categories of employees were sacked in great numbers, and the people had to learn how to live by themselves, in an environment that had suddenly turned, theoretically, into the “free world”. They no longer depended on the system which, not everybody, but many were detesting, although they resisted heroically in it for decades. But how they had no source of income, even precarious. The promised social protection of the transition period, it contributed, paradoxically, to making Romania the poorest country of the European Union, for several decades.

After 1945, much of the rural population migrated towards the urban, so that the proportion of the urban population increased from 37 million, in 1948, to 12 million, in 1989. This was some 20-25% of the total population – most probably the poor people who didn't find a viable solution of living in the rural, came to the urban, adding to the already existing poverty. Of course, over more than four decades, the movement of the population and the demographic dynamics were sufficiently fluid to complicate the evolution of poverty in socialism. After 1990, the population of Romania still had the highest rate of poor people in the European space. Therefore, from this comparative perspective, we are discussing about a situation that is slightly similar with that from the

interbellum period. Although, according to some social analysts, the socialist period pulled up Romania in matter of economic development, it didn't eliminate the gap of development to the West. Thus, Romania had to solve, in the early 90s, not just a simple problem of economic growth, but a serious chronic state of structural underdevelopment.

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THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS MADE BY THE MUNICIPALITY OF BUCHAREST UPON QUALITY OF LIFE

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***Abstract:** Starting from evidence suggesting declining population figures in Bucharest, the research asks for the reasons why the Municipality should continue its investments in public transportation, given the negative demographics and natural growth. Research results indicate a strong and linear positive relationship between investments and number of journeys with public transport services. Building on this finding, the paper discusses that public administration investments in transportation eventually lead to improvements of the quality of life, by reducing the negative externalities of private vehicle use.*

***Keywords:** public transport, public expenditures, infrastructure investment, quality of life, transport accessibility.*

Introduction

Researchers have been investigating the demand for public transportation services ever since motorization has come to play a significant role in urban areas. Questions about the relationship between transportation demand and critical determinants of economic progress such as congestion, extension of urban spaces or mobility of individuals have played a role ever since (Albalade, Bel, 2010; Banister, 2008; Eliasson et al., 2009; Kottenhoff, Freij, 2009; Proost, Van Dender, 2008).

More recently, the worldwide challenges of sustainability and environmental protection have restored attention towards public transport as a mean to reduce the faulty and deteriorating effects of individual vehicle use (Maizlish et al., 2013). Improving transport services is regarded as an indispensable action of public administration in

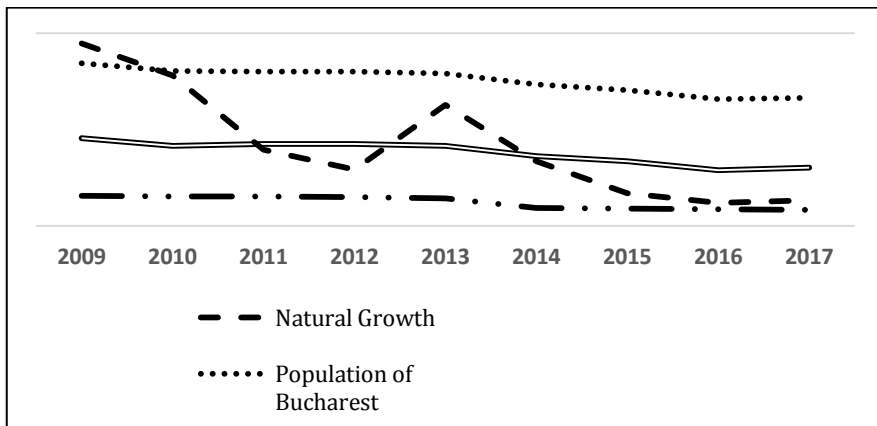
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order to improve quality of life (Frank, 2000). Districtual decision-makers have to diagnose supply and demand for public transport and accordingly tailor budgetary allocations so as to produce a transport structure practicable and affordable enough to encourage people to reduce the amount of private transport and opt for the less polluting and cheaper communal alternative.

Bucharest, the capital city of Romania, has found itself in a post-communist transition towards capitalism over the past thirty years and it is still undergoing major redevelopment projects (Nae, Turnock, 2011). As the country's leading development region in terms of foreign direct investments or educational and employment opportunities, Bucharest has witnessed a fast growth in the number of businesses opening offices in the city.

These transformations have set new challenges for the public transport system, which many people rely on for commuting to their jobs. At the same time, private vehicle transport is still at high levels. Earning better thanks to the existing opportunities, many inhabitants have purchased land or dwellings at the outskirts of Bucharest and have moved residence there (Suditu, 2009), using the own car to commute to the city. The convenience of the private vehicle use, the rather slow adoption of public alternative transport or intermodal transport solutions, the emergence of ride-sharing businesses and the fact that, according to a 2005 World Bank study, 93% of yearly trips in Bucharest were made without a pass (Carruthers et al., 2005, p. 19) are but some of the causes that have led to a diminishment by 46% between 2009 and 2017 and by 7.5% alone since 2014 to 2017 in the number of trips with public transport. Figure 1 graphically displays these reductions, whereas it also highlights that, apart from the declining public transport trips, Bucharest also faces demographic pressures (constantly declining population and negative natural growth) that might raise significant concerns for municipal transit.

Figure 1: Demographic evolutions and public transport evolution in between 2009 and 2017



Source: own display based on statistical data inputs collected from the Bucharest Agency of Transit (STB), the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (INSSE) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP)

Given the declining figures, the purpose of this research is to ascertain if and why the Municipality of Bucharest should continue public budget investments in transport. The Research Question asks „*What are the main justifications for the Municipality of Bucharest to continue public investments in transport considering that a diminishment of the number of yearly journeys with public transport can be witnessed?*“. By trying to find an answer to the question, the paper aims to provide insights that might assist public policymakers make better decisions in what concerns investments in the future of public transport in Bucharest.

Literature and Method

Public transport is important for societal and economic welfare. Good public services can diminish dependence on private vehicle transport and have a significant environmental impact upon the quality of life (Ellaway et al., 2003). In economics, a good transport infrastructure can be a catalyst for the productivity of both the state-owned sector and of private businesses (Cohen, Paul, 2004). Therefore, a minimum of investments made by central or local authorities is imperative for endogenous growth and for the wellbeing of an economy (Button, Nijkamp, 1997; Button, 1998).

Next to public consumption, public investment makes up for the amount of public expenditure. Devarajan et al. (1996: 314) make a distinction between „*unproductive*“ and „*productive*“ public expenditures. „*Unproductive*“ expenditures do not yield resources and do not create any competitive advantages for the public administration. Such expenditures can include debt payments (Ferreiro et al., 2009), interest payments (Groneck, 2011) or maintenance expenditures (Townsend, Thirtle, 2001). The unproductive expenditures are understood as the costs that a public administration is subject to through its manner of conduct. The „*productive*“ expenditures are constituted by investments meant at amplifying economic productivity. They can produce return on investment and increase governmental earnings. Public investments can be made either by centralized or decentralized government level and are used in order to supply the population with goods or services of essential significance for the welfare of the community, among them transport.

Investment in public transport can target several areas of development. Creating new routes and increasing the number of vehicles can lead to better spatial and temporal accessibility and affordability (Bocarejo, Oviedo, 2012). Improved acces from different areas of a city can encourage people to use public transport services in exchange of the own vehicles, resulting in lower transport costs and, thus, an increase of household available income. At the same time, transport accessibility and mobility are key for „*participation*“ in urban opportunities that are pivotal determinants of matured societies (Delmelle, Casas, 2012; Martens, Golub, 2012), such as commuting to work (López-Iglesias et al., 2018), commercial and leisure activities.

Overall, accessible public transport can improve quality of life (Metz, 2000). The threat of increased private vehicle use on environmental and individual issues can be combated through public transport plans that can decrease congestion, pollution and costs (Redman et al., 2013).

This research took the form of a desk research based on secondary data. Two different data sources have been used for the same series of time (2009-2017, $n=9$ years). Internal secondary data regarding the number of yearly rides with public transit has been collected from Bucharest's Agency of Transit (STB) annual reports publicly available on the organization's website¹. External secondary data concerning public expenditures on transportation made by the Municipality of Bucharest has been drawn from the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP). All Figures and Tables in this research are based on the author's own computations of data retrieved from these two sources of data, if not otherwise indicated.

The Null Hypothesis (H_0) claimed that no relationship existed between the independent variable x (municipality investments in public transportation) and the dependent variable y (number of yearly rides with public transport). The Alternative Hypothesis claims the opposite as true. For testing the research hypotheses, a statistical data analysis based on a bivariate linear regression according to the following equation has been carried out:

$$Y_j = f(\beta_0 + \beta_1 x + \epsilon)$$

where Y_j is the dependent variable, which is a function of the intercept value β_0 added to the coefficient of public investments in transportation to be predicted ($\beta_1 x$) plus the error term (ϵ).

Research results

The regression analysis is statistically relevant at a confidence level of 95% (Significance $F = 0.01 < \alpha = 0.05$; Table 1). The correlation coefficient ($0.77 > 0.70$) points out to a strong and linear positive relationship. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.59$) indicates that nearly 60% of public transport rides can be explained by the investments made in transportation.

Table 1. Anova and Regression Statistics

<i>Regression Statistics</i>					
Multiple R	0.7729104				
R Square	0.5973905				
Adjusted R Square	0.5398749				
Standard Error	113518.79				
Observations	9				
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig. F</i>
Regression	1	1.33847E+11	1.33847E+11	10.3865761	0.01459621
Residual	7	90205609211	12886515602		
Total	8	2.24052E+11			

Source: own computations in Microsoft Excel based on statistical data inputs collected from the Bucharest Agency of Transit (STB) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP)

¹ Societatea de Transport Bucuresti (Bucharest Transport Company) (STB), Activity Report, available at: http://stbsa.ro/raport_activitate.php

Based on the set of natural numbers \mathbb{N} collected for data analysis in this research, the mean values of „Rides with public transport (in thousands)”, respectively of „Municipality Investments

in Transportation” have been calculated as follows:

$$\mu = \frac{1}{n} * \sum_{i=9}^n Xi$$

where μ is the arithmetic mean of the set of natural numbers \mathbb{N} , n accounts for the respective 9 terms in \mathbb{N} and Xi is the value of each term of \mathbb{N} for average. The means obtained show that, on average, there have been 618.776.000 rides with STB per annum between 2009 and 2017, while, during the same interval, the Municipality of Bucharest has invested, on average, 1.287.287.135 Lei per year in transportation (see also the Anova Descriptive Statistics in Table 2).

Table 2. Anova Statistics

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Rides (thousands)	9	5568988	618776.4444	28006547962
Investments in Transportation	9	11585584219	1287287135	23816307877901600

Source: own computations in Microsoft Excel based on statistical data inputs collected from the Bucharest Agency of Transit (STB) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDR-AP)

Based on the mean values, the Variance has been calculated for the two indicators, according to the formula:

$$\sigma^2 = \sqrt{\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{n}}$$

where σ^2 is the variance value, x is each of the nine individual terms in \mathbb{N} , μ is the arithmetic mean, while n is the amount of terms in \mathbb{N} .

For the number of rides with STB, the Variance has been calculated as:

$$\sigma^2 = \sqrt{\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{n}} = \sqrt{\frac{(788.223-618.776)^2 + (761.078-618.776)^2 + \dots + (426.636-618.776)^2}{9}} = 28.006.547.962$$

Similarly, for investments in transportation made the Municipality, the Variance has been calculated as:

$$\sigma^2 = \sqrt{\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{n}} = \sqrt{\frac{(1494754845-1287287135)^2 + (1494754845-1287287135)^2 + \dots + (1494754845-1287287135)^2}{9}} = 23816307877901600$$

Finally, the standard deviation (σ) of the two variables has been calculated as the square root of the variance ($\sqrt{\sigma^2}$). The standard deviation value for the rides with STB was:

$$\sqrt{28.006.547.962} = 167.351,$$

while for the Municipality investments in transportation

$$\sqrt{23816307877901600} = 48.801.954.$$

The negative value of the regression intercept ($\beta_0=-460163$) lets understand that if public authorities did not invest in transportation (i.e. if the independent variable was null), then public transit services would not be used, or would only be used beneath potential (in numbers, public transit rides would drop by 460163 per annum if investments in transport stopped). The predicted coefficient of the independent variable ($\beta_1=0.000838$, $p = 0.01 < \alpha=0.05$) is significant and positive, even though of a low value.

Discussions

Although the regression values are insignificant as numbers per se ($\beta_0=-460163$; $\beta_1=0.000838$), their utility for the research resides in their ability to demonstrate that, if the Municipality of Bucharest suddenly stopped investing in transportation, then the number of yearly rides with public transit services would most probably diminish. Municipality investments in transportation can explain up to 60% of the numbers of yearly rides with public transit services.

This shows that other factors have as well got an impact on how often the citizens of Bucharest use the STB services, but, at the same time, that public investments in transportation shouldn't be ignored either, as they have their own share to play in the utilization of transit services.

Therefore, investments in transportation should be continued at least for maintenance purposes, e.g. for preserving the current status and not downgrading any further. Even if the demographics of Bucharest are not encouraging and even if the number of public transport rides has dramatically dropped over the course of no more than a decade (2009-2017), municipality investments should be continued because they have got a direct and positive influence – albeit not necessarily very strong – on the number of rides and, thereafter, as demonstrated by Metz (2000) and Redman et al. (2013) on the quality of life.

Using the Standard Deviation calculated in the Results section, a benchmark of what would mean commonplace, subpar or excellent values of public transportation, respectively investments in transportation in Bucharest can be studied, whereby normal values would be distributed between $(\mu+\sigma)$ and $(\mu-\sigma)$. Hence, normal values for rides with STB would be distributed between $(618.776.000+167.351.000 = 786.127.000)$ and $(618.776.000-167.351.000 = 451.425.000)$, while for public money invested in transportation between $(1.287.287.135+48.801.954 = 1.336.089.089)$ and $(1.287.287.135-48.801.954 = 1.238.485.181)$.

A common year for the public transit agency of Bucharest would mean carrying out between 451,42 million and 786,12 million transits, while for the municipality, a standard year would bring investments between roughly 1.24bn Lei and 1.34bn Lei. Table 3 shows that, for the number of rides, only one year has been above standards (2009), five years have been among normal values (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014), while three years – the latest of them – have been between normal (2015, 2016, 2017). This distribution analysis reveals a steady, but continuous decline of yearly rides carried out by STB.

Table 3. Distribution values for the number of rides carried out with the public transit agency of Bucharest (STB)

Year	2009	$(\mu+\sigma)$	2011	2010	2012	2013	2014	$(\mu-\sigma)$	2015	2016	2017
Rides with public transport (thousands)	788223	786127	769261	761078	750946	725605	461006	451425	447671	438562	426636

Source: own computations in Microsoft Excel based on statistical data inputs collected from the Bucharest Agency of Transit (STB)

The distribution values show that the number of rides, as well as the amount of investments have declined in 2015, 2016 and 2017, these being the only (and the same) years with values below average for both variables (Tables 3 and 4). This equivalence met at the subpar end cannot be observed at the other side of the equation. Between 2009 and 2014, the annual investments in transportation have been within normal distribution in one instance (2011) and five times below average (2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014). However, the high amounts of investments have not been matched by the numbers of public transport rides.

Table 4. Distribution values for the municipality investments in transportation (in Lei)

Year	Municipality Investments in Transportation
2009	1494754845
2012	1374399699
2013	1359172434
2010	1358336789
2014	1355128519
($\mu+\sigma$)	1336089089
2011	1325727194
($\mu-\sigma$)	1238485181
2015	1227478629
2017	1083398472
2016	1007187638

Source: own computations in Microsoft Excel based on statistical data inputs collected from the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP)

The only cases of parity can be observed for 2009 (the year with the highest values for both x and y) and 2011 (within standard limits). Apart from these two years, 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014 have seen the Municipality of Bucharest make above the average investments in transportation, but only for obtaining average results in the amount of ridership. Under such circumstances, the subparity of 2015, 2016 and 2017 might be an indication of economic adjustment policy: the adverse (and nonlinear) impacts of earlier years have been adapted towards alignment. A rationalization of expenditures can be observed after 2015, with direct influence on the number of rides. The average of expenditures between 2015 and 2017 has decreased by 14% compared to the entire average between 2009 and 2017. This has led to a 29% drop of rides over the same period observed (Table 5).

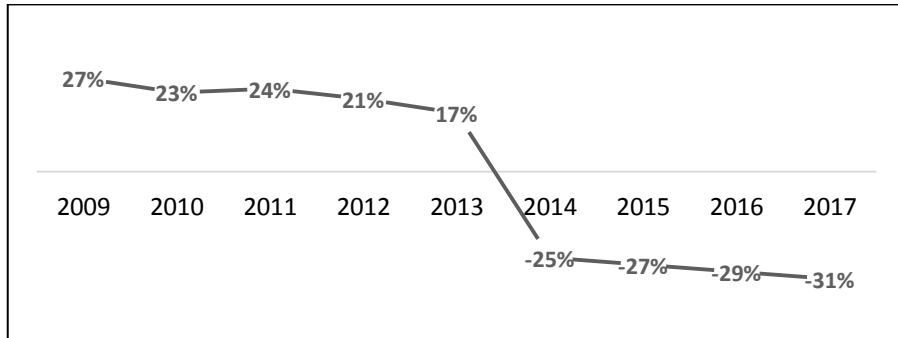
Table 5. Percentual changes in the number of rides and the amount of municipality expenditures

	% Change Rides y-o-y	% Change Rides vs. mean value	% Change Expenditures y-o-y	% Change Expenditures vs. mean value
2009	/	27%	/	16%
2010	-3.44%	23%	-11.30%	5.50%
2011	1.07%	24%	2.45%	3%
2012	-2.38%	21%	1.18%	6.70%
2013	-3.37%	17%	-1.10%	5.60%
2014	-36.46%	-25%	-0.29%	5.30%
2015	-2.89%	-27%	-9.41%	-4.70%
2016	-2.03%	-29%	-17.94%	-22%
2017	-2.71%	-31%	7.56%	-16%

Source: own computations based on statistical data inputs collected from the Bucharest Agency of Transit (STB) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP)

Figure 2 graphically displays the aforementioned percentual changes.

Figure 2: *Percentual changes in the amount of municipality expenditures compared to the average expenditures between 2009 and 2017*



Source: own computations and display based on statistical data inputs collected from the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP)

Conclusions

This research has demonstrated that a directly proportional and positive relationship exists between investments made by public administration in transport services and the number of rides with public transport. The more people use public transit services, the higher the quality of life can be expected, as negative externalities of private vehicle use (such as traffic jams, or air and noise pollutions) can be avoided. Therefore, public authorities should continue investments in public transport. Although the decision of the Municipality of Bucharest to decrease its investments over the course of the years (32.6% less money invested in 2016 compared to 2009) can be justified by the reduced demographics and natural growth or by an ever-increasing preference of citizens towards ride-sharing services such as Uber, expenditure on public transport should not be ignored. Economic convergence policies aligned with demographic and societal realities meant at decreasing unnecessary expenditure should not also automatically mean drastical drops of budgetary allocations towards public services. Public authorities have the responsibility to continue investments in public transportation, even if, as has been seen in this article, the number of journeys diminishes. Giving up investments in public transportation would also mean giving up the pursuit of an improved quality of life for the citizens, which would be unacceptable.

The main limitations of this research are based on the insufficient sample size for an adequate statistical measurement. The research only took into account a data range of nine years, based on publicly available information. The data sets are relying on very small samples, which could raise questions upon the regression model. Future research should use larger samples and more variables for a better regression design. At the same

time, the interpretation of the results might be better double-checked with available research existing on the topic.

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THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN UNDERSTANDING THE POPULISM

Marin DRĂMNESCU¹

Abstract: *Populism has become a well-defined attitude-movement in Central and Eastern Europe, integrating this region into a more widespread European phenomenon. Populist politicians in most European countries, through their speech, exploit social frustration generated by economic problems, indicating the main culprits: corruption, political elitism and immigrants. Against this background, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, they systematically attack democratic institutions, the parliament, court decisions, the justice system, central banks, the political neutrality of civil servants and media independence. The challenges faced by democracies and social organizations in the current context are extremely complex requiring appropriate and effective solutions. Since the changes occurring in the social and political environment are extremely dynamic and with hardly predictable effects, the political factor, through its decisions, becomes crucial for a coherent articulation and for the offered and taken solutions. Populism has not emerged ex-nihilo, but after a long period of cultural and ideological exhaustion of the elites in power. The fact that the populist phenomenon draws attention to the corrosion of democratic governance being able to generate movements of social rebellion without an articulated program and without clear objectives, requires a theoretical approach based on understanding the phenomenon from a multidimensional perspective. The identification and presentation of populist manifestations from the perspectives of various fields of research (historical, sociological, ethical and communication) is the main objective of this research. Thus, the section dedicated to a short history of the populist phenomenon synthesizes the main theories through which the understanding of the phenomenon, the relationship between the leader and the people he is calling for, as well as the evolution of neo-populism in general. The next section, Multidimensional approaches of the populist phenomenon, briefly presents a theoretization of populist manifestations in a historical, sociological, ethical and communication context.*

Keywords: *populism, populist cycle, ideological inconsistency, populist rhetoric, neo-populism*

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Introduction

Understanding the populist phenomenon involves a profound theoretical documentation. Thus, the presentation of populist manifestations from the angle of view of sociology, ethics or act of communication is an added value to the complete understanding of this phenomenon. If populism is understood and explained through research tools belonging to different research domains, it can be prevented or diminished more efficient.

Most experts recognize the difficulty of achieving a consensus on the imposition of a definition or a clear and complete understanding of the populist phenomenon as it can be understood differently in different situations. Such populist behaviors can be expressed in a diverse political spectrum, whether right or left-wing, can trigger reforms, can coagulate masses or induce a general perception that develops various socio-political behaviors. Simultaneously, these behaviors can be manifested either in urban or in rural areas and can engage energies both in the progressive or conservative camp (Pantelimon, 2012, p. 15 – 29). What characterizes these events is that they do not have an invariant, a specific constant, being multifaceted, multidimensional and poorly organized (Puhle, 1987, p. 88).

According to Alexandre Dorna, we find ourselves before a new populist cycle¹. The continuous attrition of the democratic mechanisms has facilitated the return and the consistency of populism and the political elites are proving to be incapable of managing this growing phenomenon. Following this escalation, the intellectual elite tends to withdraw from the political life in a context that favours the confusion between ideology, on the one hand, and economic and electoral calculations, on the other one. Against this background, political strategies are becoming increasingly personal and the interest in a collective ideal dilutes more deeply.

Kurt Weyland (1999, p. 381-384) considers populism a political strategy that reminds three cardinal properties: (a) a leader who addresses a heterogeneous mass of adherents who feel excluded and are willing to mobilize; (b) the leader who interacts directly, in a familiar, almost personal manner to adherents, eliminating the intermediaries in a non-negotiable way, especially the implied parties; (c) if the leader has a political party, it will be used as a personal vehicle, with a low level of institutionalization, being called leadership party. In this definition the focus moves to the populist leader and to his role, and by neutralizing the concept of "people", the social basis of populist phenomenon is eliminated.

A short history of populism

It is a fact that populist movements can belong to a diverse political spectrum, becoming manifest for both right and left doctrines, can be conservative or progressive, or both at the same time, can keep certain customs, norms, structures or initiatives or

¹ Betea Lavinia (2007). Crizele democratiei și fetele populismului, *Revista Cultura* no. 63, Secțiunea: Cultura interogației [<http://revistacultura.ro/cultura.php?articol=983>]. Accessed on August 2015.

sometimes reform them radically and brutally. Sometimes these movements can revolutionize society and could have originated both in urban and in rural areas. Thus, these movements generically known as "populism" does not have a specific character class, being multifaceted, with a low degree of organization, and which want to promote social changes, oriented in a particular direction. (Puhle, 1987, p. 88 – 89)

The term populist has its etymological origin in *populus*, it refers explicitly to the people, to its will of expression. (Knight, 1998, p. 224). By extension, its area includes semantic ideologies, doctrines, movements, regimes, political parties, human groups, leaders and leadership styles that are in a certain relation to the people or show some affinity with it. Terminological confusion is amplified because the very notion of "people" is not precisely defined and understood. Ernest Laclau (1977, p. 166) argues that although "the people is a theoretical concept with a defined status, and, despite its frequent use in political discourse, its precise conceptualization does not exceed the metaphorical or allusive level".

The evolution of the concept in time, drew new nuances and meanings, derogatory, in addition to the recognized ambiguity and elusive character, that of the anathema, undesirability or insincerity. (Dorna, 1999a, p. 4-5.) The appearance and the evolution of populism can be explained by the combination with different periods of crisis, of intense socio-political activism, but only partially, as it was demonstrated that this phenomenon can occur naturally in periods of normality or relative social stability. In response to the populist manifestations, political elites, and not only these, foresee a rather pessimistic attitude that encourages this phenomenon rather than disintegrating it. This explains why populist movements, or their leaders are increasingly present and active in European political space, although it does not cross a crisis of great complexity.

In fact, the growth and expansion of populist phenomenon do not result in the end of democracy as a form of government, but rather force it to an up-to-date, an update and readjustment in accordance with the specific developments of (post) modern societies.

The hermeneutical approach of the concept reveals that the closest meaning to the essence of the phenomenon is given by identifying populism with a subtype of heterogeneous political movement, with a social basis imprecisely defined, "characterized by a leader more or less charismatic," (Pantelimon, 2102, p. 226) performing (or trying to) a direct, unmediated contact with the masses by applying a specific style of politics combining the emotional appeal to the people as a whole, consistent criticism and rejections of existing policies, on the one hand and the promise to solve fast, easily and efficiently various social issues, early identified.

Although, generally, the emergence of populism was associated with periods of stress and social anxieties, with a special kind of social enthusiasm that causes popular mobilization, it is empirically demonstrated that populist manifestations also occur in periods of social, of relatively smooth functioning of democratic mechanisms.

Peter Wiles, (1969a, p. 11) trying to capture more the characteristics of the syndrome rather than those of the doctrine of the populist phenomenon, has developed a list of characteristics of this concept. Thus, populism is more moralistic, with reference to

obtaining ethical or moral reactions rather than programmatic, with a vision or direction of evolution which is stated or fixed in a program. This feature emphasizes less the logic and the efficiency of movement (mandatory through planning and program) and more the attitudinal aspect or the subsequent reaction of this aspect, reaction which proves to be accurate in terms of moral, national and spiritual aspect.

In all forms of populism, the contact between leaders and masses, besides the familiarity, sometimes unnatural, of the leader compared to those with whom he comes in contact, has more a magical-mystical dimension, maintained by a thematic and metaphorical speech, while its manifestations have an agglutinated, unorganized character that lacks internal discipline. From an ideological perspective, populist ideas and concepts associated with its overall vision, its interests and aspirations are weak, inarticulate, emotional, and any attempt to identify, define or clarify them typically receives a hostile response. Another characteristic of populism, worth mentioning, is its explicit opposition to the inequality produced by institutions, while it supports or is neutral towards structural inequalities. (1969b, p. 12)

The onset of populist manifestations consists in more consistent, more emotional and more personalized criticism of the establishment. The amplification of populism is generated by (a) the citizens' awareness of the differences between the speech of those who govern and reality (b) the absence of the effective ways of being heard, (c) the realization that political elites are not concerned or are unable to mitigate or eliminate the present crisis (c) the numerical increase of the dissatisfied citizens up to the achievement of a critical mass whose tension can erupt at any time. The accumulation of the uprising masses may remain dormant, but against this background, populism is rapidly growing, shaping itself as a warning and not as a violent explosive reaction against authority.

The whole populist phenomenon, from a certain perspective, revolves around its leader, with his activism, charisma, personal style, attributes by which he considers himself the savior of the nation, the mythical hero, or providential man appeared at the appropriate time as necessity. This paternalistic aspect turns his relationship with people into a direct, understanding, living, familiar and spontaneous one, which transforms him from the bearer of the message into the living symbol of it. The Speech is more rhetorical than demagogic, because it is extremely emotional, related to facts and consequently arises and maintains hope.

Many researchers summarize their explanations of populism, the leader's personality, the way he imposes in front of people. (Dorna, 1999b, p. 5)¹

Populism also features a multi-faceted nature. Consequently, the phenomenon itself is as a powerful integration and coagulation engine of popular expectations, which may give rise to a moderate nationalist attitude. Since it lacks a structured organization and

¹ See also Alexandre DORNA, *Le Neopopulisme et le charisme*, Text, colloque – Université de Grenoble: La tentation populiste, September 2001; Alexandre DORNA, *La democracia: un espejismo?*, Lumen, Buenos Aires-Mexico, 2003; Alexandre Dorna, *Quand la démocratie s'assoit sur de volcans: l'émergence des populismes charismatiques*, *Amnis Revue de Civilisation Contemporaine de l'Université de Bretagne Occidentale*, No. 5, Caen, 2005.

the mass movement is defined by a lack of unity, the binder which ensures its functioning is to be performed by the leader and not by intermediate, structural levels.

Through a comparative analysis of populism with other populist political movements that are centered on an articulated doctrine, populism reveals an ideological indetermination, its vision on governance being and in a permanent construction. When populism acquires political power, its vision of governance is strongly imbued with popular pragmatism. The ideological inconsistency is determined by the dichotomous approach by which the nation is placed against the momentary elites and its claims are simplistic and concrete. Because of the absence of an ideology and a coherent and programmatic political program, the leader remains the main catalyst of popular grievances.

Analyzing the symbols that appeal to populist discourse, it appears that the founding myths of a nation are intensively used which leads to inciting the collective imagination and enhancing the credibility of populist discourse.

The propagation of the message and the populist symbolism is through direct contact with people and not mediated by institutions as in the case of political elites. In this case, populist message can contaminate in a nondiscriminatory manner large and varied masses of social categories, hence its multi-classed character. The lack of political program or ambiguity is compensated by emotion and recourse to social moral, aspects that may generate some programmatic issues. (Puhle, 1987, p. 91)

In its classic version, the populist leader gains partisans and elections based almost exclusively on his charisma, his ability to attract and charm, the hypnotic impact that he has on the masses. He appears as a self-made support which does not require any power structures, relying solely on his convictions and ability of persuasion. (Dorna, 2004, p. 58.)

By attitude, the classic populist leader behaves fraternally or paternally depending on the context, promoting contact and dialogue with the masses. Horizontal communication creates the illusion of naturalness, spontaneity, sincerity. Non-verbal language accompanying management dialogue often has large, open, welcoming gestures exposed as an invitation. Para-verbal perspective reveals a deep, soothing, non-imperative but persuasive voice. This perfect actor creates lasting impressions of sympathy, stress relief, pleasure of conversation. Enthusiasm is continuously revived and maintained through many forms of contact: blink or friendly handshake in situations of direct interpellation.

Neo-populism, besides the charisma of the leader, also has easy access to modern new technology (Internet, social networks, the blogosphere, audio-video online platforms). The IT environment and the wide range of facilities represent one of the characteristics of the new populism, being also an important element of differentiation from the previous populist experiences. But neo-populist strategies seek to capitalize and overcome this elective routine.

Once in power, neo-populist leaders have the ambition to expose publicly, using their personal style of doing politics, bringing on the public agenda issues rejected by earlier political parties. (Burgos-Vigna, 2005, p. 2)

The neo-populist leader increasingly relies on and uses innovation in mass communication and, especially, on television and on the Internet. This requires some technical skills, availability and successful use of these new tools in order not to turn their potential into their disadvantage. Considering the interdependence between the leader and the media, with a focus on television, many authors have labeled neo-populism as being, in fact, a tele-populism.

The new medium of information and publicity resulted in a cessation or reduction of direct address, supported by a technological media contact, thanks to these instruments of mass communication.

The conclusions arising from the theoretical approach and the marking of the evolution of the concept of "populism" support the view that it (a) uses a generalizing and exalted language. It makes the apology of an ideal past or future – which is to be found. Populism is moralist par excellence, activating intentions and feelings, being less pragmatic and actionable; (b) people, communities are designed either as a whole or as the leader property. The political solutions proposed by populism (historical or advanced) are simple, reductionist and not infrequently utopian; (c) it is xenophobic in different degrees and intensities. It rejects the minimalist justification, "the other", rejects foreigners, migrants, disadvantaged groups, change, novelty, innovation policy; (d) it is anti-elitist, based on the belief that the political decision must be of reach of ordinary people and represent their will. The ruling elite intermediates unnecessarily, corruptly, or according to its interests between the populist leader and the masses; (e) it is based on economic clichés of ignoring laws and constraints of collective actions of rational agents, reducing explanations to emotions, feelings and intentions.

Multidimensional approaches of the populist phenomenon

For a deeper understanding of populism, one can start from the idea that there are many dimensions from which this phenomenon could be addressed and interpreted for a more complete and scientifically valid understanding. The empirical finding that populism has various forms of manifestation in all political regimes and all social subsystems, influencing broad masses of population and administrative structures or affecting the functioning of state institutions as administrative and politic democratic intermediaries between elites in power and the people, determined the approach of the phenomenon from a multidimensional perspective.

The historical dimension of the populist phenomenon

In a historical paradigm, one can speak of two great populist traditions, American populism and respectively Russian populism, having as sources the Russian Narodniks and the American populists of Jeffersonian inspiration. Both forms of populism

marked in one way or another, the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The differences between the two populist paradigms consist primarily in the attitude towards private property.

Table 1. Characteristics of populist ideology in the 19th century

	USA	Russia
1. Mass movement	yes	no
2. "Intelligentsia" as leader	no	yes
3. Supports individual property	yes	no

Source: Peter Worsley, 1969, Concept of Populism, in Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (eds.), Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics, Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, London, p. 212.

From the American perspective, populism appears as a movement or as a mass ideology of independent farmers from the 19th century and other modest social categories, with lower mobilization, seeking the fulfillment of the real interests of its members, even though they are often defined in an unclear, imprecise way. The essence of this type of populism is pro-capitalist and directed against the state in a reticent, reserved and cautious manner. The 19th century populist discourse appears as a combination between the anti-statism of principle and the needs of government intervention (social assistance, financial assistance, etc.)¹. The bases of this type of populism is rooted in the idea of Jeffersonian democracy that imagined a patriarchal society of farmers-citizens and the existence of a vaguely outlined state whose interventions must be minimal, such as subsidies or other forms of collective support.

*“American populists, whose political expression was the People's Party, had a different social base. The independent farmers constitute the core of the movement, and private ownership is for them the basic economic principle.”*²

The populist discourse shapes its opponents in the big trust-holdings of the time, banking or rail, which became more active and present in social life, affecting or disrupting small businesses.

The political vision of American populists calls for an increase of federal power to defend the interests of "the people." It is noted that in the American version, unlike in Russia, populist mobilization is triggered from people and not from the elite.

The Russian version of populism is the product of urban "intelligentsia" fueled ideologically with ideas from the German Romanticism and which has no access to political decision. Consequently, the central element of Russian populist lies in the criticism of capitalism, naturally supporting anti-capitalist ideas.³

¹ <https://bogdanmandru.wordpress.com/doctrine-politice—populismul>

² www.revista22.ro/22-plus-nr-339-populism-o-tipologie-16019.html

³ Idem

The analysis of the historical dimension, summarized that (a) populism is not just xenophobia, dichotomy, sidedness in speech and political attitudes like fascism, which it totally eliminates from the speech, but firstly, the populist utopian claims to resolve hic et nunc major social issues and the taking of some risks which it does not know and cannot manage; (b) contemporary populism is a product of social division and is fundamentally different from that of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century. It is not a reaction to the phenomenon of immigration or globalization, but a result of social dynamics. It is a speech, an attitude, a reaction to anxiety and social insecurity; (c) Current populism, regardless of how it happens, does not appeal to ideology but to identity.

Here is the explanation that national identity is a major theme of cultural populism, radically different from the old populism in that it does not highlight superiority, but specific differences.

The sociological dimension of populist phenomenon

The sociological dimension crystallizes the idea that this attitude has gradually become a relatively well-shaped movement in Central and Eastern Europe, integrating this region into a more widespread European phenomenon. Populist politicians in most countries of Europe through their speech, exploit social frustration generated by economic problems indicating the main culprits: corruption, political elitism and immigrants.

Currently, the most representative democracies face serious problems caused by the erosion of values, the inedited ideological partisanship, widespread migration policy and a strong distrust of voters towards political parties.

The growing presence of populist topics both in speech and in attitude in EU environment policy shows that populism appears, takes shape and develops more rapidly in countries where representative democracy lacks solutions to partial failures, providing the illusion of those who cannot elaborate answers within their power of understanding and adaptation.

Considering the size of populism as a political phenomenon, coupled with the fact that populism is a call for direct democracy and populists can only protest, but never govern - this view must be challenged. Populism, unlike liberalism, lacks a coherent policy of distinct ideas. But it cannot be simply defined as any political movement that stirs up the masses by promoting simplistic policy proposals. More appropriate to say is that populism cannot be understood at the policy level, being more a particular way of political image.

A populist leader who promotes a purely moral image of an elite, directs voters to a set of expectations. Voters who support populist movements accept this because they believe that the current elites truly fail to represent them.

In fact, they are not against representative democracy as such, but they just want their representatives to be changed and replaced by people they consider as close to the image of moral purity proposed by the populist leader.

This feature of populism - such that people want one thing and that only their elected representatives can satisfy this desire - evokes a symmetry between populism and technocratic governance. Similarly, technocrats assume that there is only one correct solution to every social challenge and therefore a political debate is no longer necessary. But the democratic exercise involves the opposite: political alternatives and varied solutions arisen by different perspectives.

On the other hand, the populist rhetoric tends to be a collection of assertions belonging to both right and left, with a strong focus on leadership, on the one hand, and on popular equality, on the other hand. Usually, the sent populist message is illiberal and intolerant to traditional civil liberties. One can say that the populist leader appeals to people, positioning himself against the existing political system in an attempt of a project, usually utopian.

By A. Dorna (2004, p. 230) current society is faced with a new populist cycle. The viral expansion of populism was possible due to the globalization of the market economy which became the most immediate and most effective contamination.

The scarcity of trust in political parties and politics in general, can be understood in classical terms of political science, as a consequence of the unfavorable economic environment that boosts populist manifestations. But, from a sociological and socio-economic point of view, the retention and not infrequently the rejection of population for parties becomes understandable if one considers the asymmetric distribution of resources, whether material or otherwise.¹

On the other hand, there are to be seen obvious ruptures and distances between symbols and elite culture, and society.

Populist parties succeed in mobilizing citizens, by introducing in their speech negative assessment of the political system and issues concerning integrity, competence, elite responsiveness and the efficiency of the political system taken as a whole. On the other hand, the relative ease in mobilizing citizens is based on valuing their dissatisfaction seen by the very structural elements of the ideology of populism: (a) the notion of monolith people whose will is expressed through the actions of a political leader, (b) acute aversion against political intermediaries (political parties and traditional elites) and (c) institutional and bureaucratic procedures that interpose between political intermediaries and direct expression of the will of the people. (Canovan, 1999, p 46)

Thus, highlighting the failures of representative democracy and questioning the ability of the elite to deal with social problems, by actions, behaviour and populist speech, one succeeds the orientation of the undecided towards the group of dissatisfied citizens.

Currently there is a resurgence of populist phenomenon in Eastern Europe that transcends this space, having the same consistency in Western socio-political environment. Thus, there is an increase of the visibility of Western populist parties and movements, their success being due to the exploitation of the social concerns related to

¹ <http://revistacultura.ro/cultura.php?articol=983>

the phenomenon of immigration, socio-economic insecurity, but also of manifestation of political elitism and corruption.

Table 2. Results of European elections from 1979 to 2014

	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Left-wing populists	1,7	2,3	2,1	1,5	2,7	2,9	2,9	3,6
Left-wing	39,7	38,8	39,3	36	33,3	33,3	29,2	26,5
Total of left-wing	41,4	41,4	40,9	37,5	36	36,2	32,1	30,1
Right-wing	51,1	46,6	38,6	42,2	39,8	39,2	44,5	37,8
Right-wing populists	2,1	4,6	6,2	7,7	6,8	8,1	6,6	6,6
Total of right-wing	53,2	51,2	44,8	49,9	46,6	47,3	51,1	44,4
Others	5,4	7,7	14,3	12,6	17,4	16,5	16,8	25,5

Source: <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0315-ascension-of-populist-parties-but-relative-stability-in-the-balance-between-the-political-parties>

As shown in the table above, although the rise of populism in the European elections is uncertain, especially in some Member States, it remained relatively at the same European level. Left-wing populists have gained a slight advantage (+0.7points) across the EU, compared to 2009, achieving their greatest result in European elections. Right-wing populists stagnated at 6.6%. Although the populist progression is real, it is relatively weak in the EU as a whole but it is stronger in some countries. Left-wing populism focuses on attacks on social and economic policy in Brussels and the right-wing populists focus more on a rejection of immigration, even when it comes to EU citizens, especially Central and Eastern Europe, namely, Romania and Bulgaria.

Although the effects of populism on democracy are indirect, they are mediated and augmented by the manifestations of public opinion under the form of extremist anti-minority attitudes sympathizing with conservative and authoritarian social behavior patterns. These behavioral attitude patterns can generate, through their non-democratic expression, risks to liberal democracy institutions and practices. Although the spread of populism in Europe is recognized, there is still no consensus on its impact on European companies.

Ivan Krastev (2007, p. 63) believes *"populism is a direct consequence of the tension between liberalism and democracy, derived from an increasingly acute need for a direct democracy, on the one hand and the growing of charismatic leaders, able to clot popular discontent and frustration."*

Tackling populist sociologically revealed that (a) populism is not synonymous with "radicalism" or "extremism", but they correlate rapidly and may condition each other especially in times of socio-economic and political crisis when one also notes a decline in public confidence in parties and their leaders; (b) there is a "soft" populism condemning only certain aspects, certain failures of social systems, but which is manifested in a constitutional framework and a "hard" one that threatens the entire constitutional framework and the whole democratic construction; (c) identity-

nationalist strategies are used by the populists to increase their influence and attract popular support. These strategies are more efficient in former communist countries since they are associated with the communist ideology still present in the collective memory; (d) Eastern populism is directed more against the new elite who benefit of a more prolonged transition to a market economy, and against the illegally enriched people, than against a democratic regime; (e) populism is specifically focused on the media and political figures in the region, being dependent on them but also on issues fighting corruption, the immorality of justice or politicians;

In Southeast Europe populism is the subject of civic and political environment, especially of the parties with institutionalized structures in the territory, by requiring minimal 'isolation' of populist parties or by weakening their influence resulted from the redistribution of popular support.

The ethical dimension of populist phenomenon

The ethical dimension of existence has both cognitive and human ontological valences. Ignoring, treating with indifference, trivializing or defying frequent truths about the social-cultural human nature with balanced physical and moral support, may be diminished, corrected, resized through continuous general systematic and moral education in order to train and internalize those values that are acceptable and largely desirable socially and in terms of community, i.e. those who found the civil society and democratic state of modern type, in which the separation of powers and the fundamental civil rights are guaranteed, protected and promoted.

If politics is understood as an extension of what is moral, focused on objectives aimed at the common good, then the presence in this sphere of some duplicitous, populist, demagogic characters who see the act of power as a tool to access the human resource and who calls for a politics deprived of moral conscience and ethics, is undesirable and requires the identification of democratic filters through which the access to top power be limited or stopped. (Sârbu, 2005, p 59)

The political, economic, cultural elite should be concerned with the establishment of new, accessible and understandable truths; should have true opinions and enhance understanding explanatory understanding. To appeal to the emotion of the audience, to simple solutions resulted from complex solutions, to the expression of particular views, which, by generalization are converted into universal truths or explanatory limitations and confusion, is to fertilize the populist soil.

The insistence on entertainment, speculation, amateurism and improvisation, egocentrism and self-esteem advertised in any circumstances and at any price to the detriment of a minimum regulatory context provides a vast fertile territory for the populist rhetoric, demagogic manifestations, nationalism and authoritarian, dictatorial tendencies.

In such a context, such a construction *"some people refuse to do the job, while others indulge in situations of beggars, or becoming more individualistic, more selfish and petty"*

(Sârbu, 2005, p. 62), making way to free and non-vectored impulses and behaviors associated or directed against self and / or others.

The acute moral deficit, the almost generalized moral depreciation in our society have visible effects: the rejection of personal cultural values, the language despises, customs, traditions and the whole history. New media can produce mutilating effects on people and their becoming. All these online means of persuasion promoted from a certain angle, can stimulate aggression, sexuality, pornography unless they oppose a moral stability or firm character consistency. In the current society there is no longer a question of information or access to information, but of sorting the information, of selection between what is good, useful, uplifting and what is distorted, toxic, ephemeral, transitory or useless. The constant and insistent centering on consumption, regardless of the way it takes place, tends to robotize the individual and clouds the major human meanings of social life. (Krastev, 2007, p. 56-61)

Moral autonomy, to be morally independent or to freely express yourself, is determined by internal, subjective factors and external, objective factors, independent from the individual.

The objectivist perspective considers the existence of the objective moral order being independent of consciousness, meaning of people's beliefs, ideas and feelings.

In a society regarded as normal there are possible even manifested deviations from the principles and rules. Accepting rules requires a free conscience expressed through will and observable in the behavioral act. On a subjective level, however, the same idea of rules refers to conventional and free will by which one can justify their circumvention of its enforcement. For describing and understanding such situations, one proposed the notion of constitutive rule defining events, facts, circumstances not related only to the subject but also to various social institutions. (Jones, 2007, p. 39 - 44)

These rules are more than mere conventions, enrolling in the socio-cultural constructs in continuous becoming, with greater objective value. From this perspective, ethics senses how the legal system components are or are not respected, systems which can be understood as one of the ways of morality.

The formation of an autonomous personality by assuming a value system necessarily to personal development involves the existence beyond normativity, of that system of values that is to be assumed. In other words, the moral conscience appears as a formed structure composed of cognitive, emotional, volitional and practical-action elements and its apparent objectives lies in the formation of both moral conscience and moral conduct.

The ethical dimension of populist phenomenon increases further hope in humanist values, ethical virtues, moral values that define or should define contemporary man and his actions, either individual or community, political or spiritual. The investigation of the ethical dimension revealed, inter alia, that (a) in Eastern Europe, issues of political, legal and moral philosophy are avoided, misunderstood, ignored or treated lightly. The absence or truncation of the moral structure of the individual and the community creates behavior and social environments morally impaired, promiscuous, favorable or

used as opportunities of populist affirmation and (b) the necessary imposition for a major change in contemporary democratic societies contemporary-oriented toward a moral thinking correlated with a new political thinking, correlation understood as a stable reference against any form of political or social slippage.

The communicational dimension of the populist phenomenon

Political communication is defined as *"an interactive process that involves the transmission of information between politicians, media and the public"*. (Norris P., 2002, p. 127). The procedural dynamics of this type of communication is directed "top down" and contains messages considered of major importance for citizens, and "bottom-up", consisting of individual opinions and attitudes of politicians. (Franklin, 1995, p. 586)

The main way in which the audience's, more precisely the electorate's, opinions are influenced and formed has always been and will continue to be political discourse. Any form of political discourse is centered on an interest and concerns, in a pragmatic manner, the reaching of a predetermined goal.

Every politician, without expressing their motivations, interests and objectives, in the long or short term, tries, through his speech, to be "the man we need," the one that promotes the public and the national interest, beyond small or personal interests.

The difference between political speech and other types of speech lies in its manifest pragmatism, in its determination to explicitly targeted action for gaining and maintaining political power through the consent of the electorate, the people. It is pointed out the strong inclination to masses of people and their feelings, present in the populist discourse.

Unlike other types of discourse, politics has certain characteristics: (Sălăvăstru, p. 19-21) (a) intentional ambiguity (invigorates influence and incites to action by insisting on certain representations and beliefs); (b) the hidden character of the message (masking the real intentions of the speaker); (c) imperative tone (beyond the understanding and acceptance of the message, it claims instant action from the subject, excluding deliberation); (d) explicit polemic substrate (competitiveness with other speeches of other movements, parties, interest groups, relying on the public interest and adherence)

The analysis of this dimension revealed a number of conclusions that can be definitive for understanding the populist phenomenon: (a) political speech is the main tool used by politicians to obtain voters' support or other social categories of people; (b) political communication and therefore, the populist rhetoric use, at a large scale, non-verbal communication elements that are consistently present in the general behavior and concrete actions of the politician.

The analysis of the communicative dimension highlighted the strong cultural importance of gestures and the strong verbal support of verbal communication, which it nuances and potentiates and the focus on the essential aspects of the physical and publicized presence of the politician; (c) by identifying the key characteristics of persuasion and manipulation, heavily used in populist political communication, and not

only, we concluded that, while persuasion has to do with the conscious and voluntary participation of the persuaded one, in the case of manipulation, the individual is forced to do something against his will, by exploiting a shortage of information or a permanent or momentary affective incapacity; (d) in populist communication, the central theme becomes more important than the sent message, the emphasis being shifted to define an occupied position and to obtain recognition to fill that position; (e) generally, in every communication exchange, particularly in the political one, there are interests that will guide behavior towards obtaining an advantage over the other, meaning an attempt to impose a possible reality that is guaranteed to satisfy the involved interests; (f) through communication and populist discourse there are produced discernable effect on the constraint level of what to believe, to think or to act as a result of the interdependence between communication and action, context in which may appear negotiations, consensus, conflicts, blockages or polemics.

Conclusions

The main features of populism extracted from the historical, ethical, sociological and communication perspectives identified by our research are:

- a. Populism has a generalized and exalted language, deeply emotional, the main references of populist discourse referring to (a) the return to a glorious, harmonious, non-conflictual or deeply moral past or (b) the design of an ideal future, characterized by solving current problems, achieving social harmony and respecting the will of the many, the future that is to be identified and directed to.
- b. Populism par excellence, is strongly declaratory and moralist, having the power to (re) activate the desires, needs, intentions and feelings and to contaminate the broad categories of the population. In counterpoint, populism is less pragmatic and actional, sometimes even utopian.
- c. The people, the electorate, the auditorium, the community are perceived or deliberately designed either as a single, compact, monolithic unity or as the leader's property, constantly at his disposal. The political solutions proposed by populism (historical or advanced) to solve the problems it identifies at the "corrupt power" or to fulfill the promises it makes, are usually simple, reductionist and not infrequently utopian. The solving methods by which the populists undertake change, have a familiar character, willfully friendly, methods that they see possible to resolve any kinds of problems: community, national or international.
- d. The speech is directed critically and radically against the institutions, political, cultural, economic elites in power and considered a priori, incompetent, corrupt and illegitimate. Their change is demanded "urgently", and the suggestions are radical and follow a simple scheme: the total change, "fundamental change", populism blatantly showing contempt for gradualism, processuality and compromises of any kind.
- e. Populism, through discourse and action, is xenophobic in different degrees and intensity. It rejects, with minimalist justification, "the other", rejects foreigners,

migrants, disadvantaged groups, the change, novelty, political innovation. Throughout its attitude, populism is reluctant to change. By the variable radicalism of the demands, depending on the context and interest, populism refers to the recovery of a harmonious, original, moral and worthily condition.

- f. Populism criticizes, attacks, despises, proves hostility and positions against the political intermediaries of the ruling elites and the people (political institutions, parties and movements, administrative structures, etc.). The distrust in democratic mechanisms and structures provides "energetic support" to fight state institutions. By disposing as many of possible from these intermediaries, populism promotes a direct, unmediated, almost familiar connection between leaders and the people.
- g. Populism is anti-elitist, regardless of the elite type: political, cultural and economic. Populist belief expressed by its leader is that the political decision should be at common people's hand and to represent their will. For populism, mediation between elites and the people is unnecessary and opens opportunities for corruption or for satisfying personal interests.
- h. The control or the seduction of the masses is through the induction of fear or feelings of rebellion, by resorting to conspiracy themes, common in populist discourse. By stating possible conspiracy, populism succeeds in binding and attitudinally mobilizing the masses.
- i. Populism is immobile, and resistant to change, adopting a monolithic type of politics that excludes dialogue or on other participants. From the height of this vision of unilaterality, it postulates the existence of a national interest and criticizes, ridicules, vulgarizes or demonizes other interests which oppose it.

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INTERVENTION IN ROMA COMMUNITIES. VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Corina CACE¹

Abstract: *The study developed within an integrated program follows the actions carried out on the labour market for the employment of the Roma population. Are these measures effective and respond to the needs of the Roma population or the lack of adequacy to the specifics of the population leads to poor results? Data collection methodology included face-to-face questionnaire interviews with predefined questions, administrated by trained field operators. A total of 112 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities were also collected. Most of the possible action delivering conclusions and recommendations are strongly related to the specifics of the target group, i.e. adult Roma individuals living in communities with low educational stock, placed too far outside the paths to success of policies and interventions dedicated to vulnerable communities. To their overwhelming majority, both persons and relevant legal community representatives see education/training/improvement one of the few opportunities with success potential, e.g. skilling for as many as possible Roma individuals, coherent programmes for basic education, specific jobs to Roma etc.*

Keywords: *regional development, social development, employment, vocational training, Roma communities*

Introduction

This study has been conducted within project “OPTIMAL- Establishment and development of a network of Centres of Social Inclusion for the Roma”, project co-financed from the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013 “Invest in people”, implemented by the Association for Socio-Economic Development and Promotion Catalactica, Bucharest, in partnership with the Foundation for Social Recovery Integration and Development ECHOSOC Bucharest, and the Association for Integrated Development, Olt, Slatina.

General objective of the project was to facilitate the access to labour market for a number of 1,088 Roma people from the rural areas covered by a network of 4 Centres

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of Social Inclusion for the Roma (CSIR) from the 4 southern regions of development in Romania: South-East, South-Muntenia, South-West Oltenia and Bucharest-Ilfov, in order to prevent their social exclusion and marginalisation, and to avoid discrimination and the risk of poverty.

The effects generated by the project considered not just improving the participation of the vulnerable groups to the labour market, but also the establishment of conditions for their subsequent development.

By its design and objectives, the project pursued three main directions:

1. Development of the personal capacities of the people from the vulnerable groups regarding their access to labour market, by supplying integrated and specialised services (education, formation, information, counselling, market labour orientation, assistance in finding and getting a place of work);
2. Encouraging, by activation and mobilisation of the local communities and employers, to identify viable solutions to increase the level of professional insertion of the Roma people and to use their potential in a manner that ensures both the cohesion, and the social equity within the targeted communities.
3. Implementation of a set of measures adapted both to the specific needs of the target group, and to the opportunities circumscribed within the socio-economic context of the communities where the project is to be implemented, by scientific documentation, quantitative research and qualitative evaluation of the activities performed within the project, as well as of their impact on the target groups.

Any explanative action with actional finalities requires deepening the Roma problem detached from the existential context of the people belonging to the community. We focused our analysis on the segment of rural Roma population, whose structural conditionalities we will discuss for the 4 regions of development, where the planned interventions are to be conducted. We analysed the 4 regions in a unitary manner, given the existing similitudes between them. At the same time, an analysis at the county level was conducted, on the specificity of each region.

Methodology

The quantitative research within the project corresponded to activity 4. *Evaluation of the occupational needs of the Roma people, and of the impact of the support interventions provided within the marginalised communities of Roma in rural areas*, in agreement with the specific objectives 1. and 2. of the project.

Specific objective 1. Facilitate the access to labour market for a number of 1,088 Roma people, from the rural areas, of which 450 women, from regions South-East, South-Muntenia, South-West Oltenia and Bucharest-Ilfov, by providing, complementary to the support of the local volunteers, services of professional information and counselling, and services of social work and psychological assistance, to motivate them to integrate/reintegrate on the labour market, within 4 Centres of Social Inclusion of the Roma.

Specific objective 2. Increase the level of insertion on the labour market and labour force mobility by diversified and tailored professional formation, within the community, based on the evaluation, within the areas covered by the Centres, of 896 Roma people from South-East, South-Muntenia, South-West Oltenia and Bucharest-Ilfov, by certifying at least 716 trainees.

Specific activities have been performed within activity 4., to evaluate the employment requirements of the Roma people from 56 marginalised Roma communities, using a methodology relying on scientific research criteria. This activity was completed by the analysis of the impact of the support services provided within the marginalised Roma communities, validated by 4 focus-groups in which experts in the field of the social inclusion of Roma people participated. This evaluation supported directly project activities, i.e., determining the covered areas (Activity 5.), selection of the communities, of the 8 programs of professional formation (Activity 6.), and the supply of scientifically-validated information to promote the employment opportunities for the Roma within the covered areas (Activity 7). The main target group of this project consisted of Roma people. The research activities of the project were performed during the first 6 months of project implementation, namely, April 16-October 16, 2014.

The research started with a desk-research, with a purpose of making a regional analysis, whose results were used both to produce the samples of the quantitative research (the list with the 56 marginalised Roma communities), and to select and justify the counties where the 4 CISR were to be established. The same analysis outlined a brief evaluation of the requirements for professional formation by regions and counties. Based on this evaluation we selected 2 type of professional formation adequate for the Roma from the 8 courses of professional training. The rest of 6 types of professional formation were identified based on the data collected during the field research and by in-depth analysis of secondary data. The research experts conducted this desk-research on data from ANOFM, INS, from previous research, unofficial data from NGOs and experts in this field.

Data collection methodology included face-to-face questionnaire interviews with predefined questions, administrated by trained field operators. Data collection was conducted between June 16, 2014 - August 16, 2014. A total of 1064 questionnaires with Roma people were collected, and 112 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities. The breakdown by region is as follows:

- Bucharest-Ilfov region: 16 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities. In Bucharest, 4 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities; in Ilfov County, 12 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities;
- South-East region: 32 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities. in Constanța, Tulcea, Brăila, Vrancea and Buzău counties, 4 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities; in Galați County, 12 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities;
- South-West Oltenia region: 28 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities.: in Gorj, Mehedinți, Olt and Vâlcea counties, 4 questionnaires with

- representatives of the public authorities; in Dolj County, 12 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities;
- South-Muntenia region: 36 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities.: in Argeş, Dâmboviţa, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Ialomiţa and Călăraşi counties, 4 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities; in Prahova County, 12 questionnaires with representatives of the public authorities.

Outcomes of the Quantitative Research

Analysis of support interventions provided in marginalised Roma communities in the rural area on each of the 4 regions of development (South-Muntenia, South-East, South-West Oltenia, Bucharest-Ilfov)

At the level of the European Union, interventions regarding the increase in the socio-professional integration degree have as background a series of programmatic documents substantiating the normative reference framework in the field for the member-states. *The Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 Strategy set out* as main measure for achieving the objectives regarding economic development the increase in population's employment. The Strategy 2020 sets as main objective in the economic field achieving an employment rate by 75% in the case of the population aged 20 to 64 years by encouraging youths' participation in the labour market, supporting the participation of elderly and less skilled, and as result of increasing the integration degree in the labour market of legal migrants. Stimulating the creation of quality jobs at the level of the entire community area is supported by the *Package on labour force employment* a tool providing for three categories of targets that presents simultaneously the directions of actions for achieving them. The Package aims to *support job creation at community level* (diminishing taxation, efficient use of subventions, and exploiting the potential of key sectors as main identified intervention means). Additionally, and to *encourage labour market dynamics* as regards both the professional and geographic aspects (by supporting workers seeking jobs, and supporting vocational training initiatives, and by ensuring the free movement of labour force). Moreover, to *strengthen governance in the field of employment policies* (based on developing some efficient mechanisms for monitoring the assembly of policies in the field).

The Compact growth and jobs from June 2012 represents the agreement of member-states to implement the necessary measures for achieving the objectives determined by the Europe 2020 Strategy. One of the aimed targets of the Compact is to identify efficient solutions to the issue of unemployment and the jobs' deficit registered at community level as result of the economic crisis. The agreed-on intervention means in this respect target the adoption of structural reforms intended to increase the employment degree especially among youths and other people categories from vulnerable groups based on increasing the investment level in the human capital.

We define the vulnerable group as a marginalised group that is either excluded or in risk situations and strongly linked to the major phenomenon of poverty, or to the associated indications. These, in their turn, place the individual, and individuals representing the group in situations of inferiority, deprive them of resources and

influence strongly the bias about the perception of reality. We call “associated indications” all elements contributing to aggravating the chronic poverty state consistent with the loss of action appetite, with ignoring opportunities, and low resilience against environmental factors. Finally, belonging to a vulnerable group brings with it phenomena such as marginalisation and undesirability, that are no longer temporary states but show an obvious potential to become chronic.

In the year 2012, Romania had an employment rate for the population with ages between 20 and 64 years by 63.8%, respectively by 5 percentages below the European average, and the in-work poverty rate (in 2010) was by 17.3%, that is more than double of the average recorded at EU level. As regards the unemployment evolution, the period after 2008 is marked by significant oscillations and by values placed constantly below the European average. Nevertheless, the lacking employment structure in our country shows significant weights of population either unemployed, or employed in economically non-viable sectors (as in the case of the *unpaid family worker*, and good part of the *self-employed*, or *persons employed in agriculture*) that are indicative for the existence of large categories of populations either under-employed, or at risk of unemployment. Possible directions of action could be *improving labour market functioning, facilitating the transition from unemployment and non-employment to active positions on the labour market, improving vocational skills and increasing the quality of employment for persons in disadvantaged groups*.

In the case of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, an inclusive dimension of the labour market supposes higher attention paid to vulnerable groups at the level of some intervention fields, such as:

- labour market integration and combating discrimination;
- improving access and participation to initial and continuing education for vulnerable groups;
- promoting gender equality and combating social exclusion of women;
- developing an efficient system of social services dedicated to diminishing marginalisation and social exclusion risks.

Recent Romanian studies approach the issues related to lacking employment of the population from the perspective of the adjustment requirements of the policies in the field in view of ensuring balanced and sustainable economic growth (Ciutacu and Chivu, 2007; Preoteasa, 2008; Stănescu and Cace, 2011; Paraschivei, 2012; Șerban, 2013). Other studies highlight the necessity of implementing some support measures for sustaining persons from disadvantaged groups. (Fecioru, 2008; Dumitrescu and Prisecaru, 2012). The analyses about the impact evaluation for policies in the field are very scarce and represent, to their majority, sectoral approaches (Georgescu, 2006; Fecioru, 2008; Dumitrescu and Prisecaru 2012; Stanef, 2012). The studies realised in this respect highlight the importance of the active measures for rendering flexibility to the labour market, and for decreasing social risks, while signalling at the same time that Romania has the lowest participation of the population aged 25 years and over to continuing training (Șerban 2013). Achieving the flexicurity objectives represents one of the important directions of actions in the area of employment policies (Ciucă and Pasnicu, 2009; Dumitrescu, 2010). Though integrating perspectives that would provide

for a systematic vision on the impact of active employment policies are absent, in the context of the current period the following interventions and specific types of intervention stand out as regards active measures:

- information, counselling, mediation, and labour force placement;
- incentivising economic agents in view of employing individuals from disadvantaged groups;
- stimulating the creation of new jobs by granting advantageous credits from the unemployment insurance budget;
- managing the training/reskilling courses system;
- encouraging professional and territorial mobility of the labour force.

Linked directly to the needs of vocational employment, any intervention has as background a first specialised approach in the framework of the development process of a training offer/programme. This approach is represented by the stage of collecting, analysing and interpreting the information regarding the needs and interests of the potential training beneficiaries. In order to be successful, any training programme will be adjusted to the implementation context to which belong the beneficiaries of the training. For realising a precise radiography of the context (organisational/community aspects regarding human resources, and expectations related to the course, and up to training needs that motivate the implementation of a training programme) a needs analysis is an absolute requirement.

The needs' analysis is a specialised and specific approach in the framework of drafting and implementing adult training courses. The needs analysis represents the stage of collecting and analysing the information about the implicit and explicit needs of the beneficiary organisation, needs for which the developed course would provide solutions.

For realising an exact and valid analysis, tools will be developed that are aimed specifically to the need's analysis, as was done in the framework of the project. A questionnaire was elaborated that was applied in the living environments of the individuals from the target group, and complementary methods (unstructured conversations, unsystematic observation, documents' analysis) contributed to successful gathering of relevant data.

The needs' analysis process is developed in several distinct stages. In order to adjust the phasing of the need's analysis to the specifics of the project, we retain the following stages:

Stage 1: documents' and secondary data analysis aimed at the targeted issues;

Stage 2: evaluating the expectations of the persons targeted by the training depending on the personal needs, and motivations in relation to the specific training offer;

Stage 3: differentiating training needs of the potential beneficiaries;

Stage 4: concretising the needs' analysis in a training plan.

End goals of realising the needs analysis are:

- determining the socio-demographic characteristics of the target group;
- defining the necessary competences to train during the training process;
- establishing the courses that meet the competences' requirements within the organisation;
- elaborating the curricula for guiding the training programme;
- defining vocational and transversal competences to be developed during each course;
- formulating the general and specific objectives for each course;
- establishing the training methodology associated with each course;
- elaborating performance standards to be employed in evaluating the achievement of the training objectives;
- defining the specific evaluation methodology.

Determining the training needs in the context of the present project is of external nature at first level. It is based on public data regarding the employment level, and vulnerabilities that the major field of intervention pursues to improve/to correct as already cited above. Thus, the action need is completed by formulating a specific training need.

At a second level, the activity developed within the project used the specialised tools and methodology (designing and applying questionnaires addressed to the members of the target group of the project in the 56 selected communities, but also institutional representatives from among the local public authorities), as described hereunder.

The specific of the target group (adults in this case) is represented by the diverse commitment to multiple roles, from work activities, political and citizenship ones, to the family ones, etc. In all these activities conflicts emerge (understood as contrasting status and reality perception situations) that leave their imprint on the personality of the individual. As adult, changes are difficult to assimilate, because change presupposes substantial, structurally functional modifications in the explanatory, value, and actional models the individual was used to.

Education is such an adjustment mechanism of the individual to the world, and of the world to the individual. This adjustment is operated, however, by an internalised, three-dimensional model: knowledge, appreciation, and action. Preponderantly in the case of adults we refer to an assimilation –internalisation-development process, but also to one of restructuring-generalisation-change process as regards the relationships between adult and the environment (social, work, family, etc.). The adult shows sometimes a passive attitude to learning/training generated by the reluctance towards change and fear of not answering to exigencies, or of ending with diminished social prestige. We might conclude, thus, that the activities aimed at adults are a process of learning, but mostly a practical action of harnessing and applying life knowledge and experiences.

The life experience accumulated by adults, as well as the need of expressing the aforementioned impose in the framework of the methodology the use of active and participative forms and procedures, with emphasis on expressing own opinions. Almost all interpretations given to learning underpin that the learning process is influenced decisively by motivation. “*The concept of motivation is one of the most spectacular in the entire psychology*” (Lindworsky, 1921). Motivation is an all-encompassing concept for all those states or phenomena translated by concepts like aspiration, wish, hope, will, interest, etc. (Thomas, 1964), and “*reasons are determined by the problems man is faced with, to the same extent to which tasks are determined by reasons*” (Hiebsch, 1966).

Individuals intend planning their own lives more than ever, and they are expected to contribute actively to the life of the society. Education, in its broad sense, is the key to learning and understanding the way in which these challenges might be approached. (European Commission 2001).¹

Support interventions provided within Roma communities were studied by relating them to the institutions representing active local authorities within them. Measures and actions unfolded for Roma communities in the field of vocational training and employment were studied, and solutions were explored for improving the current situation as the relationships between/ and with Roma inside the target communities were evaluated.

At the same time, the awareness degree about the programmes and actions developed in the field of employment was measured within the Roma communities, both at the level of the local authorities, and at the level of the Roma persons targeted by the respective programmes. Thus, the interventions undertaken within Roma communities can be validated as regards the efficacy of their dissemination.

The study at the level of the local authorities aimed to analyse the situation as regards the Roma communities from four regions of development: Bucharest-Ilfov, South-Muntenia, Oltenia and South-East. The field research was developed in the period June-August 2014, with an error margin by 2.6% at a confidence level by 95%. 118 interviews were done with the representatives of the local authorities, after the following structure (see Table 1): Most interviews were achieved with the representatives of mayor offices (64), followed by those realised in schools (30). 6 interviews were done with the employees of medical offices, 5 with representatives of the police, 4 with representatives of UATs (Territorial Administrative Units), and two interviews each were performed in churches and high-schools. One interview was done with representatives of the County Labour Force Employment Agency Office (AJOFM), one each with the representative of a kindergarten and of a local association. Finally, one interview was with a social worker, and another one with a local counsellor.

¹ Memorandum regarding continuing learning, European Commission 2001.

Table 1: Structure of interviews realised with local authorities, according to the type of institution

Type of institution	No. of achieved interviews
AJOFM	1
Association	1
Church	2
Medical office	6
Kindergarten	1
High-school	2
Police	5
Town Hall	64
School	30
UAT	4
Total	116

The interviews realised with the representatives of the local authorities were unfolded according to the following structure: 16 in Bucharest-Ilfov, 42 in South-Muntenia, 28 in South-West Oltenia, and 32 in South-East (*see Table 2*).

Table 2. Structure of interviews realised with local authorities, according to the region of development, and county

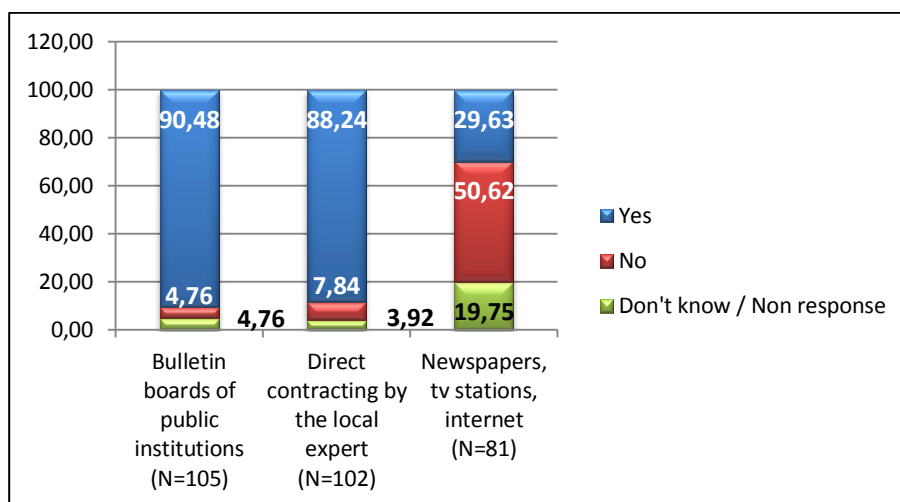
County	Region of development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South-Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
	Number of achieved interviews			
Argeş		5		
Brăila				4
Bucureşti	4			
Buzău				4
Călăraşi		5		
Constanţa				4
Dâmboviţa		6		
Dolj			12	
Galaţi				12
Giurgiu		4		
Gorj			4	
Ialomiţa		5		
Ilfov	12			
Mehedinţi			4	
Olt			4	
Prahova		12		
Teleorman		5		
Tulcea				4

County	Region of development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South-Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
Vâlcea			4	
Vrancea				4
TOTAL	16	42	28	32

Analysis of implemented interventions

Public institutions dispose of several methods for disseminating the messages regarding the development of certain programmes within the community with objectives in the field of employment and vocational training. We notice that the most used method of this type consists in advertising the messages on the bulletin boards of public institutions (90.48%). Direct contracting by the local expert is a method used by 88.24% from respondents, while mass-media resources (newspapers, tv stations, internet) are used by only 29.63% of all respondents (see Figure 1).

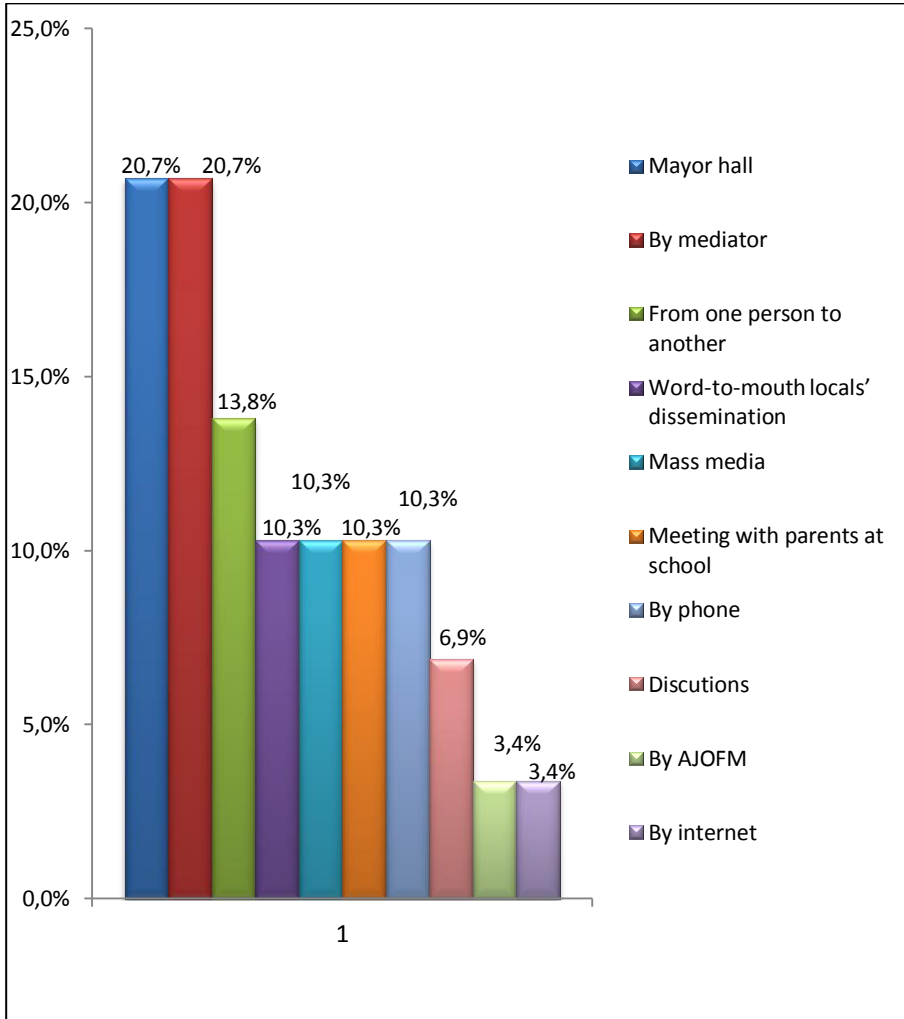
Figure 1. MS1 Which are the methods by which persons of Roma ethnicity from the locality are informed by the new measures and actions aimed at them? – Multiple choice answer



Most of the respondents stated that they use other methods by which persons of Roma ethnicity from the locality are informed about the new measures and actions aimed at them. From these, they have stated that the most spread out methods used are the message of the mayor hall (20.7%), and communication by mediator (20.7%), followed by the word-to-mouth locals' dissemination (13.8%) (See Figure 2).

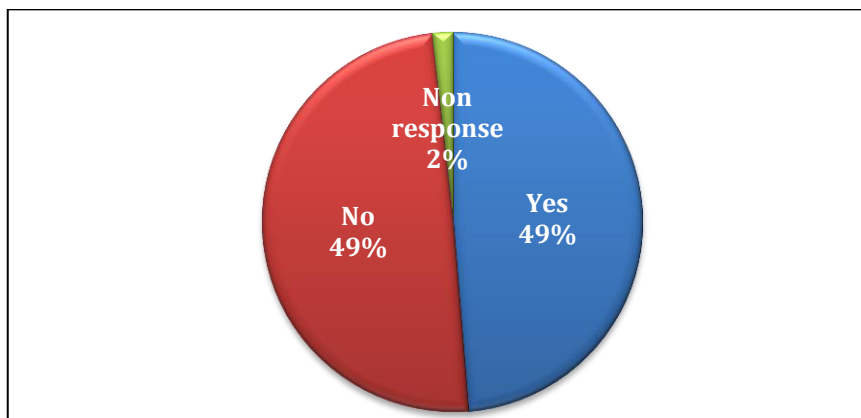
Locals who participated at the study consider that they are informed about the programmes and actions developed in the field of employment by mass media (5 persons), and by direct dissemination from one person to another (3 persons).

Figure 2. MS1. Which are the methods by which persons of Roma ethnicity from the locality are informed about the new measures and actions aimed at them? Others (N=29) – Multiple choice answer



The share of local authorities' representatives who are knowledgeable about the programmes/actions developed in the field of employment is similar to the one of the respondents who does not know about such programmes (49%) (See figure 3).

Figure 3. MS2. Do you know about programmes/ actions developed in the field of employment?
(N=117)



The respondents who stated that they are aware about the programmes undertaken in the field of employment have mentioned most often vocational training courses (44.40%). The actions made by employment agencies are the ones mentioned by a share of 40.70% from the respondents, followed by the Jobs' Exchange (16.70%), and the Employment Caravan (14.80%).

Asked about the programmes and actions developed in the field of employment, the inhabitants from the targeted communities in the framework of the study, and who stated that they know about such actions have mentioned on the first four positions the programmes already acknowledged by the local authorities (see Table 3). They mentioned to a higher share the vocational training courses (39.50%), followed by actions organised by the employment agencies (38.30%), the Jobs' Exchange (19.80%), and the Employment Caravan (8.60%).

Table 3. MS3. Programmes/ actions developed in the field of employment known to the respondents – Multiple choice answer

Developed programmes ^a	Answers	
	Local authorities (N=54)	Inhabitants (N=81)
Training courses	44.40%	39.50%
National Employment Agency (ANOFM)/County Employment Agency Office (AJOFM)	40.70%	38.30%
Jobs' Exchange	16.70%	19.80%
Employment Caravan	14.80%	8.60%
Adverts	7.40%	
Social canteen/meal vouchers	5.60%	

Developed programmes ^a	Answers	
	Local authorities (N=54)	Inhabitants (N=81)
Leaflets	3.70%	
Building a factory	3.70%	
Centre for parents' and children counselling/vocational guidance	3.70%	
School after school	3.70%	
Courses provided by the Mayor's Hall	1.90%	3.70%
EU provided through the EU		3.70%
Roma Alliance		2.50%
Second chance	1.90%	
Sport activities	1.90%	
Cultural activities	1.90%	
Sanitary activities	1.90%	
Phone	1.90%	
Entrepreneurship		1.20
NS/NR		17.30%
Total	155.60%	134.60%

The interviewed representatives of the local authorities state that most of the beneficiaries of these programmes or actions are individuals of Roma ethnicity (in 92.3% of the programmes that were mentioned, in total 26 cases). A respondent discussed about the organisation of some skilling courses in the period 2012-2013, to which participated 80 persons of Roma ethnicity, and another respondent reminded about the courses provided by AJOFM to which 4 individuals of Roma ethnicity participated. The respondents mention as locations where programmes in the field of employment were developed Galati, Tecuci, Prahova, Tulcea, Viziru, Urziceni, and Jilava. From the descriptions of the respondents who discussed about the location of the actions, we find that in Urziceni was developed an action addressed to MGW beneficiaries, and in other locations the programmes were dedicated to persons of Roma ethnicity (*see Table 4*).

The interviewed inhabitants consider that the programmes and actions developed in the field of employment are addressed to individuals of Roma ethnicity (9 cases), to youths (2 cases), or unemployed (one case). As period for developing the actions at the community level, 9 inhabitants mention the years 2007, 2008, 2011, 2013, and 2014, but also the programmes developed yearly in Galati. The localities mentioned by the inhabitants are Bucharest, Galati, Alexandria, Valenii de Munte, Constanta, Medgidia, Targoviste, Focsani, Tulcea, Buzau, and Campulung Muscel. We find that in Galati, Alexandria and Focsani were developed actions aimed to individuals of Roma ethnicity, and in Valenii de Munte actions addressed to the youths (*see Table 5*).

Table 4. MS3. Locations where programmes/actions in the field of employment were developed that were known to the representatives of the local authorities, on types of beneficiaries

	Location					
	Galati	Tecuci	Prahova	Viziru	Urziceni	Jilava
MS3. Beneficiaries						
Persons of Roma ethnicity	1	1	1	1	0	1
MGW Beneficiaries	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table 5. MS2. Locations where programmes/actions in the field of employment were developed that were known to the inhabitants, on types of beneficiaries

MS2. Beneficiaries	Location			
	Galati	Alexandria	Valenii de Munte	Focsani
Persons of Roma ethnicity	1	1	0	1
Youths	0	0	1	0

As result of the performed interviews we found that in Galati, the AJOFM has yearly actions in the field of employment; however, the obtained outcomes are poor. At the same time, the outcomes indicate the organisation of Jobs' Exchanges in Prahova in the period 2012-2013, but without achieving the result of hiring individuals from among the Roma ethnicity. At the same time, the Jobs' Exchange organised in Jilava resulted in the employment from among the MGW beneficiaries. As outcomes of unfolded programmes, the representatives of the local authorities mention gifts and money assistance provided to Roma ethnicity persons in the framework of the Employment Caravan and of the programmes aiming the skilling of participants. In the case of most types of programmes mentioned by the respondents, we notice that the outcomes were evaluated by the latter as "satisfying" (*see Table 6*).

The interviewed inhabitants evaluated the vocational training courses as discriminatory and after which no jobs could be obtained (*see Table 7*).

Table 6. MS3. Outcomes of the programmes/actions in the field of employment known to the representatives of local authorities – Multiple answers

Programmes' outcomes	Developed programmes ^a						
	ANOFM/AJOFM	Leaflets	Advertisement	Phone	Vocational training	Jobs' Exchange	Employment Caravan
Satisfying outcomes	2	2	2	1	2	0	0
Roma rejected the jobs provided by AJOFM	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
No hiring	1	0	0	0	2	1	1
Poor outcomes	1	0	0	0	2	1	2

Programmes' outcomes	Developed programmes ^a						
	ANOFM/AJOFM	Leaflets	Advertisement	Phone	Vocational training	Jobs' Exchange	Employment Caravan
Jobs were obtained	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Roma received gifts and money assistance	0	0	0	0	4	1	3
Courses are not in accordance with the requirements of the labour market	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Very good outcomes	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Table 7. MS2. Outcomes of programmes/actions in the field of employment known to the inhabitants – Multiple answers

Programmes' outcomes	Developed programmes					
	AJOFM	Jobs' Exchange	Employment Caravan	Vocational training courses	With the assistance of the mayor's office	Training provided by the EU
No workplaces were obtained	1	0	1	6	2	0
Participants were paid	0	0	0	2	1	0
Obtained outcomes were unsatisfying	2	1	0	0	0	0
Roma did not participate	0	0	0	2	0	0
Provide a skills' certifying diploma	0	0	0	1	0	0
Very good outcomes	0	0	0	2	0	0
Discriminatory	1	1	0	3	0	1
Jobs are poorly paid	1	0	0	1	0	0
People are not interested by the information	0	0	1	1	1	0
Courses are useful	1	0	0	2	0	0

Even though the representatives of the local authorities targeted in the framework of the study did not evaluate very positively the outcomes of the programmes implemented at the level of the communities they represent (according to the above data), 75% of the respondents consider that there are improvement perspectives for the condition of Roma (*see figure 4*).

Out of these perspectives, the respondents looking optimistically at the future consider that the most useful measures consist in putting emphasis on educating future

generations (23.10%), investing in the community future (19.20%), in developing skilling programmes (17.90%), and in Roma inclusion programmes (17.90%). The aids for Roma are best appreciated by respondents (21.60%) (see figure 5).

21% of the respondents consider that there are no improvement chances at community level. From the reasons of the respondents who evaluate negatively the evolution in the condition of Roma, the most often mentioned refer to lack of jobs (30.40%), lacking concern shown by individuals of Roma ethnicity (21.70%), migration (17.40%) and the absence of programmes for Roma (13%) (see figure 6).

Figure 4. MS4 Are there improvement perspectives in the condition of Roma at the level of your locality? (N=114)

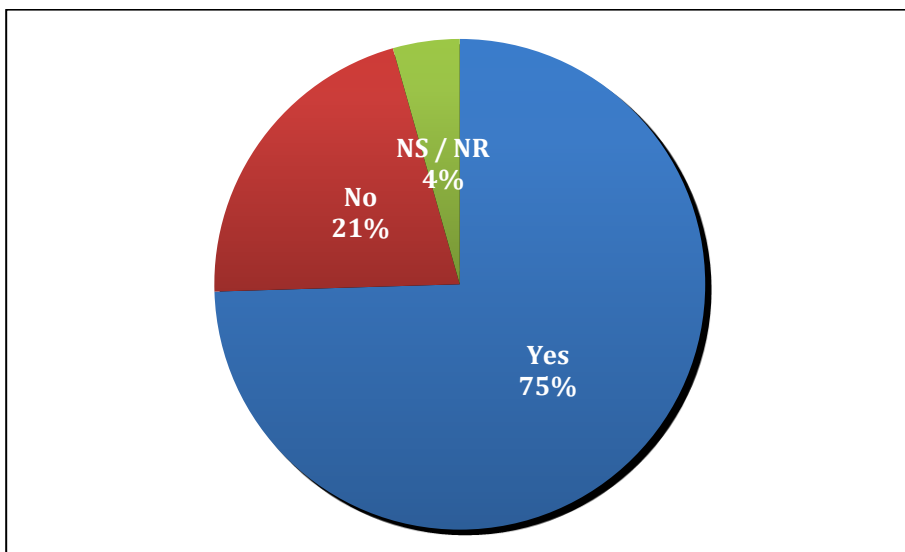


Figure 5. MS4.a Perspectives of improving the condition of Roma at the level of the community – Yes (N=78) – Multiple answer

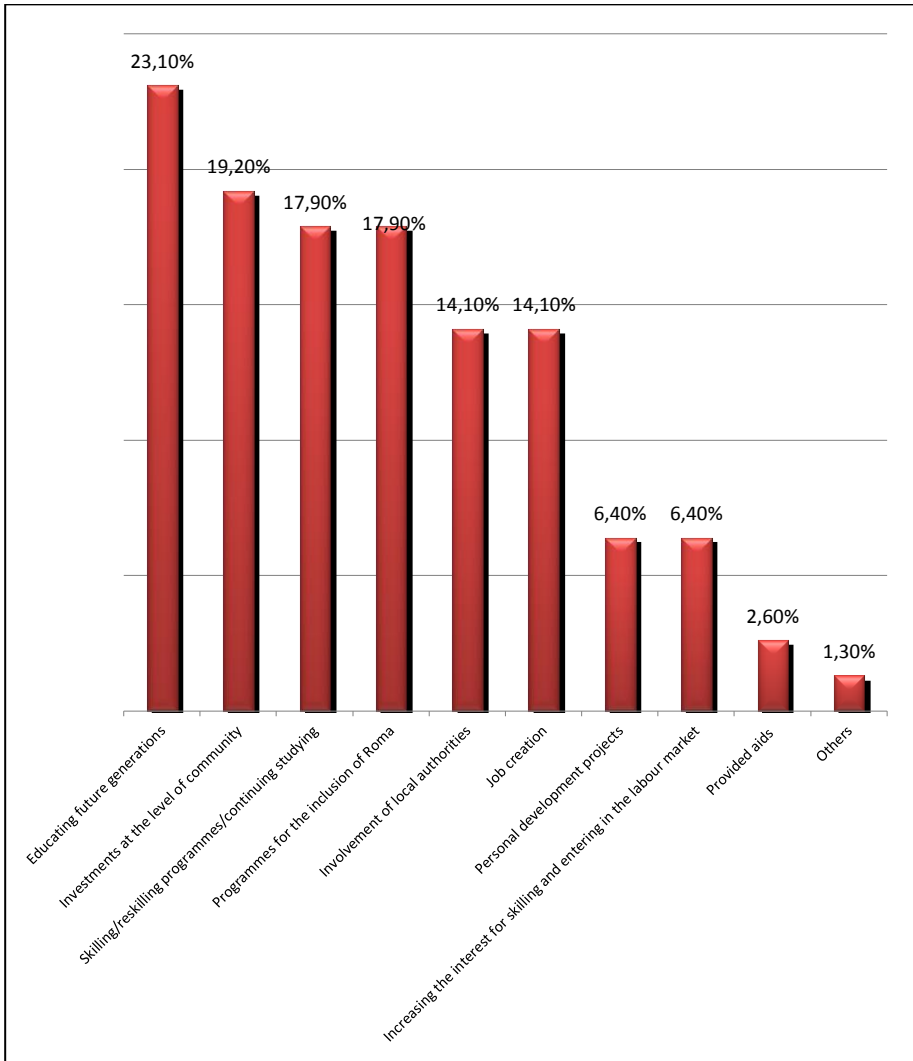
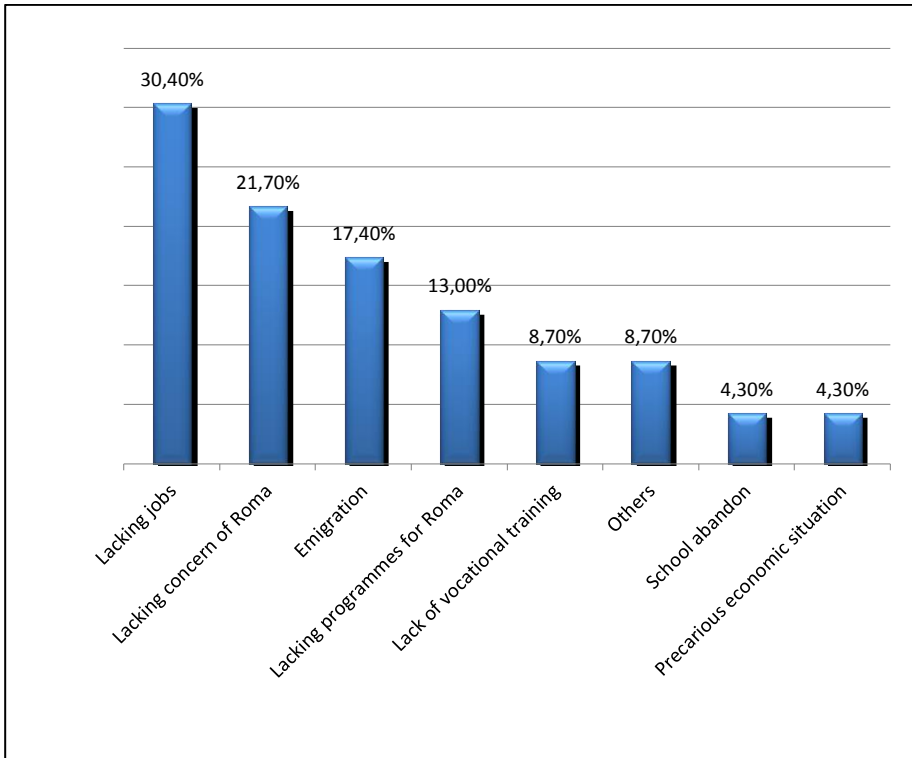
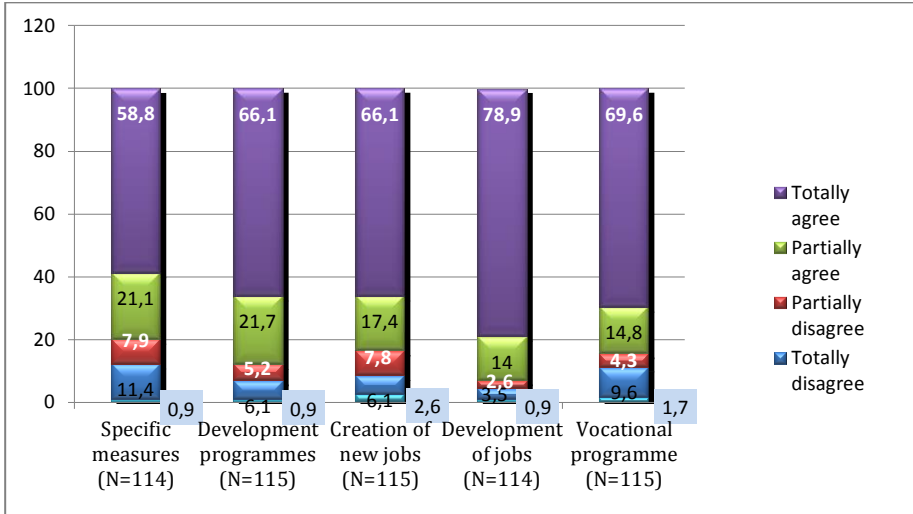


Figure 6. MS4. a. Perspectives of improving the Roma condition at community level - No (N=23) - Multiple answers



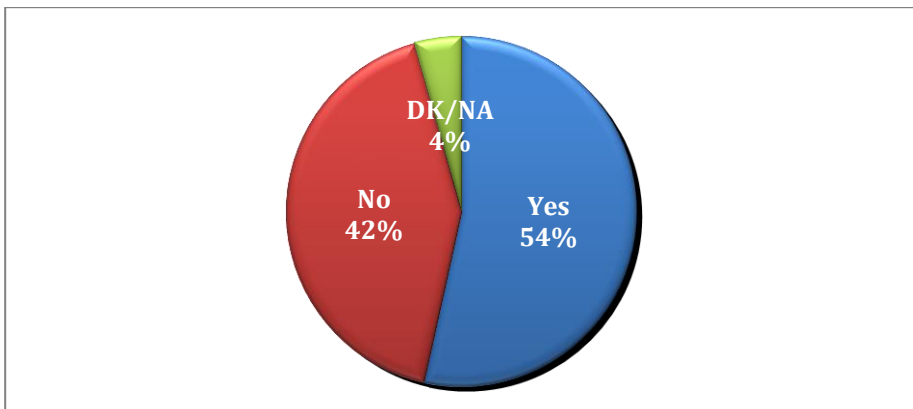
Most of the respondents agree completely that supporting the development of jobs addressed to Roma would increase the insertion chances in the labour market of the persons of Roma ethnicity (78.90%). The next measure that most of the respondents agree with totally or partially is that it would be beneficial to the labour market integration process of Roma to provide for the design of some basic skills development programmes (87.80%). Out of the respondents, 19.30% are completely, or partially disagreeing with the fact that the development of some specific measures for the vocational programme for Roma people would help them with the integration in the labour market (see figure 7). Seven of the respondents suggested as other measures that would contribute to the Roma labour market insertion process the guidance of pupils to vocational schools, adult counselling, on-the-job training, promoting the artistic traditions, but also the creation of new jobs.

Figure 7. MS5. *In your opinion, which are the measures that might increase the insertion chances in the labour market of Roma ethnicity individuals?*



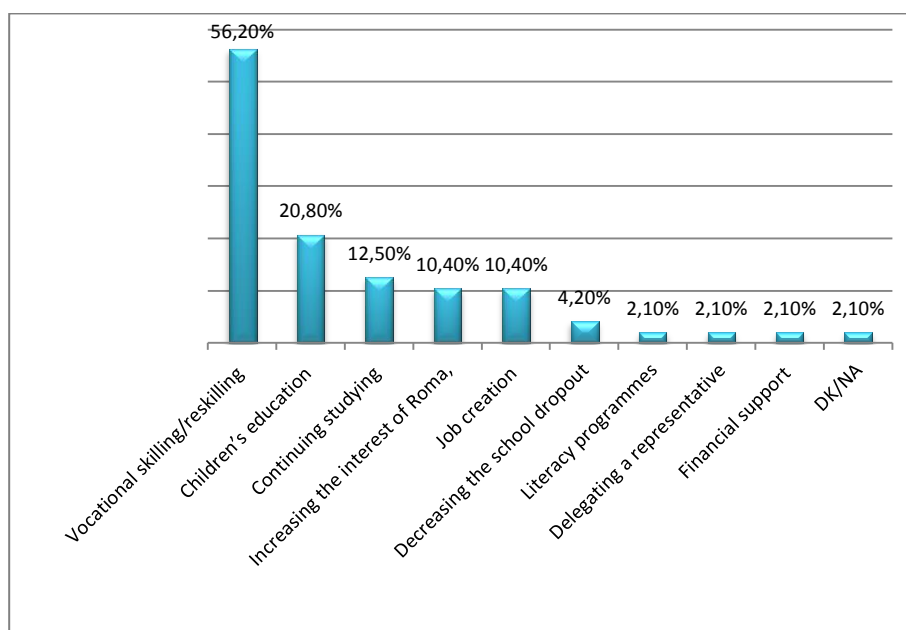
54% from the respondents consider that education and vocational training of Roma ethnicity individuals is adequate to the current requirements of the labour market, whereas 42% do not agree with this finding (See figure 8).

Figure 8. MS6. *Do you consider that adequacy exists between vocational education and training of Roma ethnicity persons and the current demands on the labour market? (N=116)*



From the individuals stating that the vocational training of the Roma ethnicity individuals is not adequate to labour market demands, the solutions suggested for achieving adequacy were vocational skilling/reskilling (56.20%), children's education (20.80%), continuing studying (12.5%), and other measures as regards education, increasing the interest of Roma, job creation and providing financial support (see figure 9).

Figure 9. MS7. Solutions for adequacy between educational and vocational skilling of Roma ethnicity persons and current demands in the labour market (N=48) – Multiple answers



59% from the respondents declared that they do not know which the skilling needs are in the county (see figure 10). From among them, most consider that skilling courses are necessary in the field of constructions (79.40%). 38,20% from the respondents who are aware about the skilling needs at county level consider that skilling in agriculture is necessary, 36.80% propose gaining skills for working in trade, and 16.20% support the need of skilling in the textile industry. Other skills considered as necessary, mentioned by less than 15% of the respondents are bodyguard, hairdresser, fitter/plumber, car mechanic, car drivers, cleaning staff, and workers for the manufacturing industry, for the health and transports' sector, workers for handling natural resources, and activities in environmental protection. Jobs can be found in pastry/bakery, education, but also as fiddler, handicraftsmen, shoemakers, and as carers for elderly, as well (see Figure 11).

Figure 10. MS9. Please enumerate the most sought skills at county level (N=68) – Multiple answers

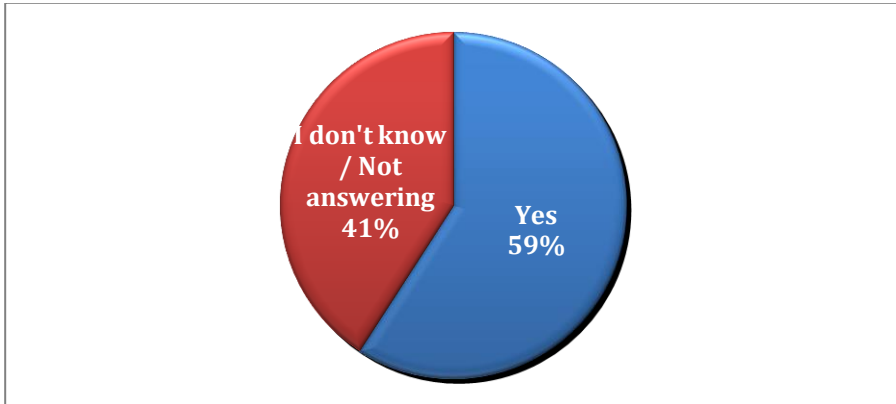
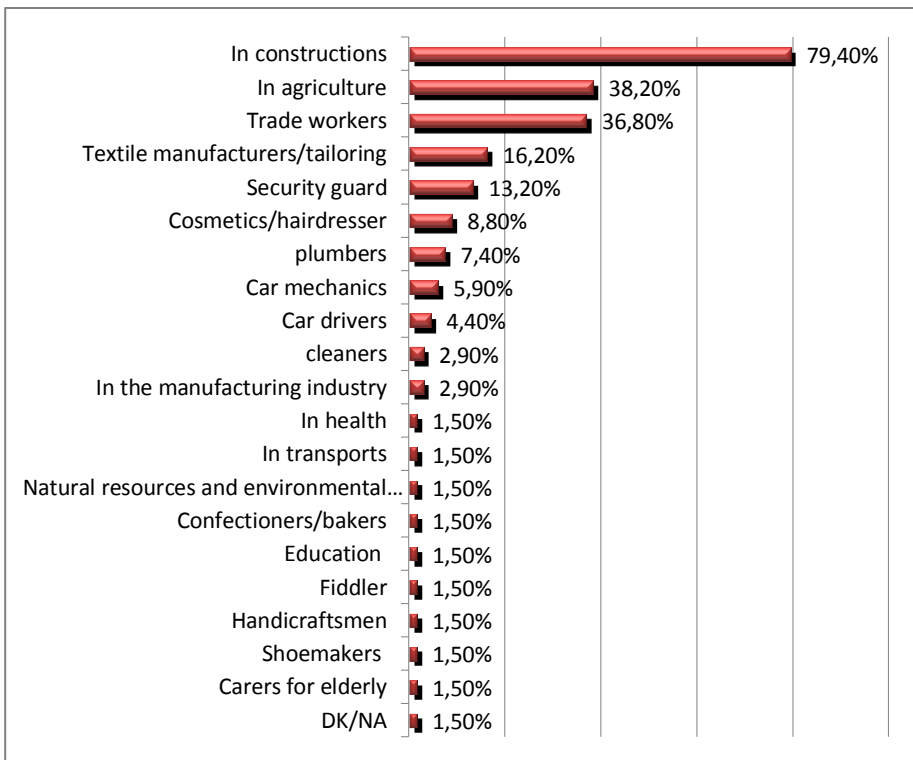
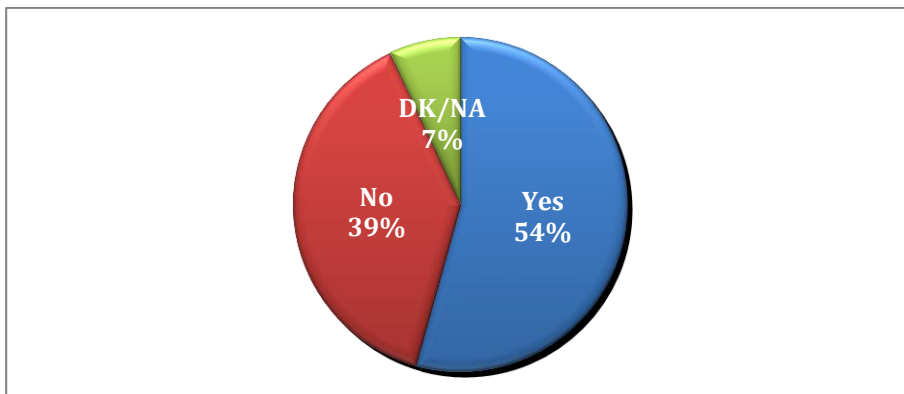


Figure 11. MS8. Do you know the skilling needs in the county? (N=115)



A percent of 54% of the respondents considers that the employment programmes are adequate for persons of Roma ethnicity, while 39% consider the opposite (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. MS10. Do you believe that the employment programmes are adequate for persons of Roma ethnicity? (N=116)



Out of the respondents, 93.9% are agreeing totally or partially with the fact that reconversion courses adequate to market demands are necessary as they could contribute to rendering efficient the employment programmes addressed to persons of Roma ethnicity. At the same time, the respondents consider as necessary that job offers should address low education levels (89.20%), but also be accessible also from the perspective of the distance and be placed in the outreach area where individuals who would access them live (89%). From the respondents, 15.60% consider that organising paid reconversion courses would not represent a solution for rendering efficient the employment programmes, while 15.70% maintain speeding up the process of issuing identity cards for persons of Roma ethnicity who don't have IDs with the purpose of contributing to the employment of Roma ethnicity persons (see Figure 13). We find that 39% of the respondents are of the opinion that, in the proximity of the localities they represent employment opportunities exist, or will exist in the near future, and 57% stated that no jobs are found in the outreach of the area they represent (see Figure 14). The average distance to the localities that the respondents referred to as the closest town is 24.47 km.

Figure 13. MS11. In your opinion, which are the solutions for rendering efficient the employment programmes among persons of Roma ethnicity? – Multiple answers

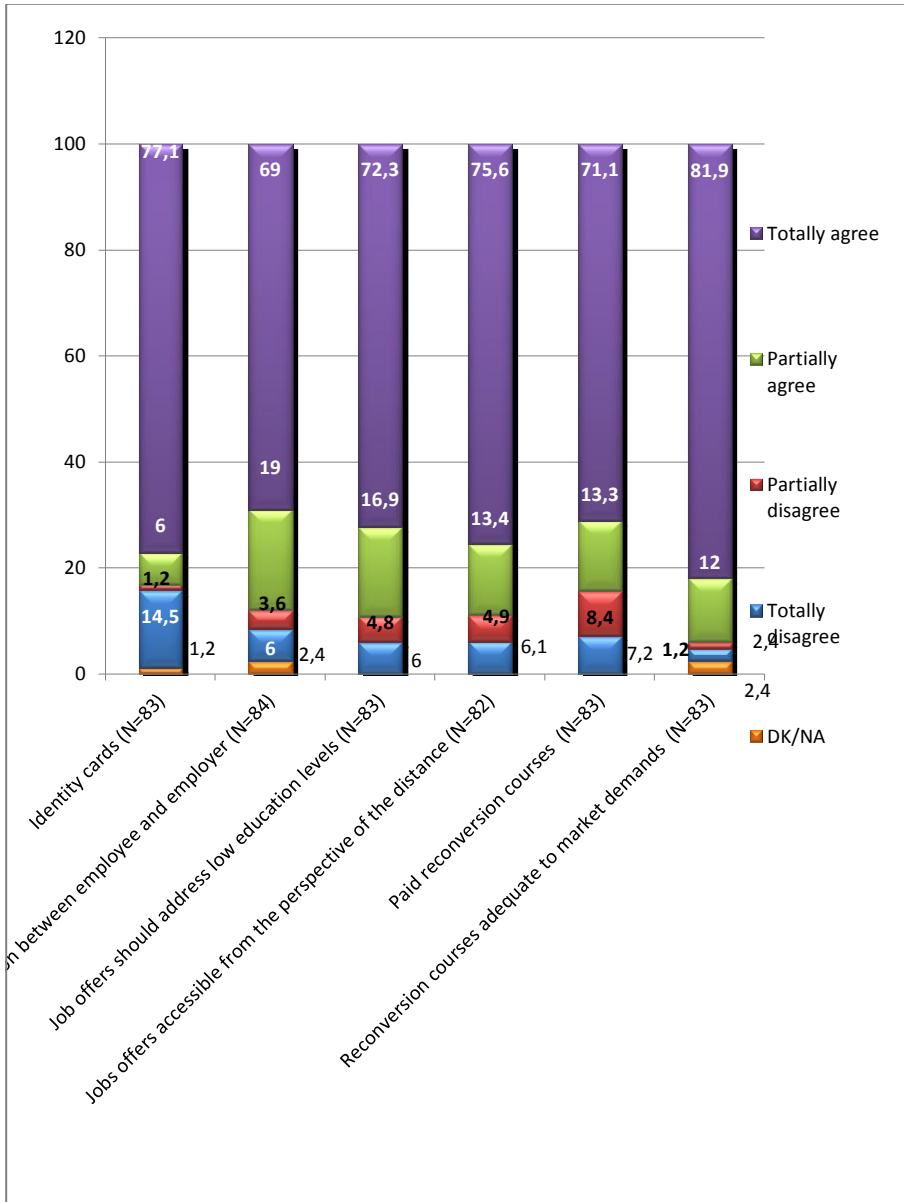
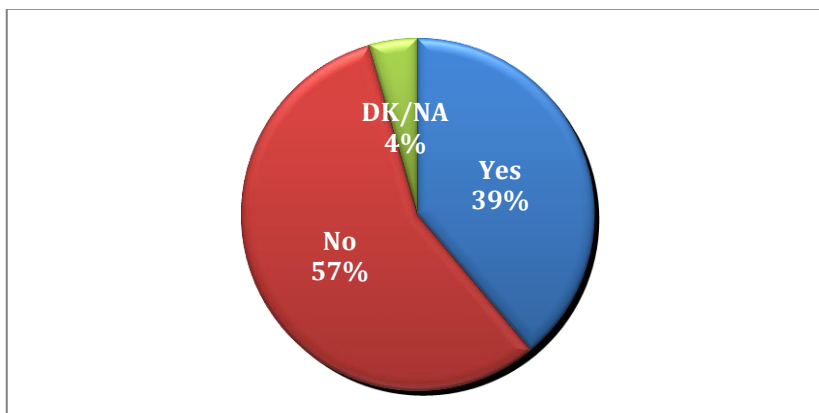
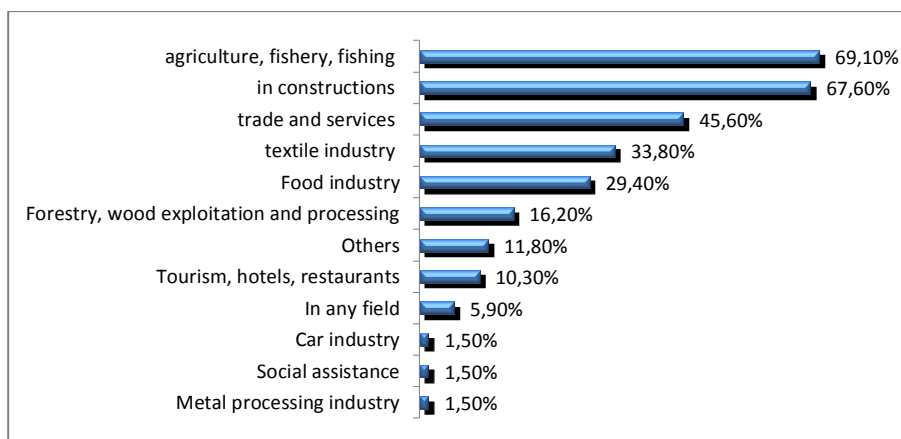


Figure 14. MS12. Are there employment opportunities in the locality or in the proximity of the locality? (N=113)



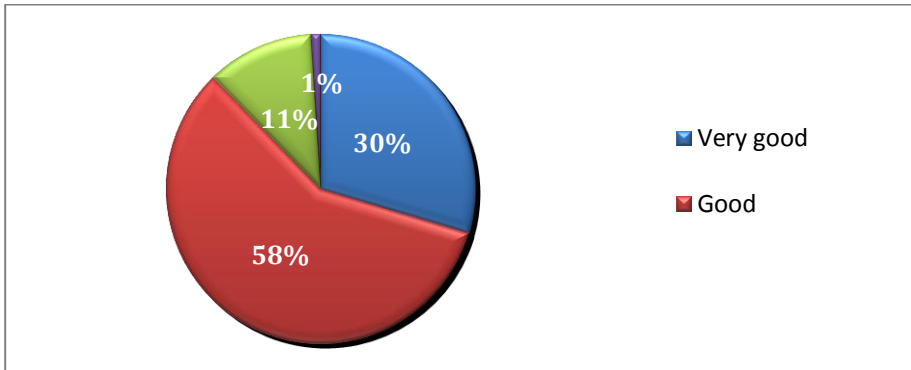
The participants of the local authorities participating to the study are of the opinion that in the localities or in the proximity of the localities they represent there are employment opportunities in agriculture, fishery, fishing (69.10%), in constructions (67.60%), in trade and services (45.60%), and in the textile industry (33.80%). Less than 30% of the respondents consider that the inhabitants are provided with employment opportunities also in forestry, tourism, car industry, social assistance, or metals' processing (See figure 15).

Figure 15. MS13I n which of the following fields of activity would exist employment opportunities in the locality or in the proximity? (N=68) – Multiple answers



Most of the respondents consider that the relationships between the Roma in the locality are good (58%), and very good (30%) (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. RR1. What are the relationships between the Roma in the locality according to your opinion? (N=98)



From the respondents, 76% state that at community level are mediators who manage the relationships between Roma and the local authorities, and 20% declare that appointed persons exist at local level who are focused on mediating the relationships between Roma and the authorities (see Figure 17). From among the persons involved in mediating the relationship between Roma and authorities, most of the respondents believe that the Roma leader fulfils this task (46.30%). A percent of 39% considers that the sanitary mediator accomplishes this task, and 37.80% from the respondents have pointed out the local expert. Less than 20% of the respondents consider as responsible with the mediation of the relationship between Roma and the authorities the education mediator, the social mediator, the local counsellor, the Gypsy leader (Bulibasa), the community worker, or even the local authorities (see Figure 18). Most respondents are of the opinion that managing the relationship between Roma and local authorities unfolds good (40%), and very good (48%) (see Figure 19).

Figure 17. RR2. Are there persons to mediate the relationships between Roma and the authorities at the level of the community? (N=96)

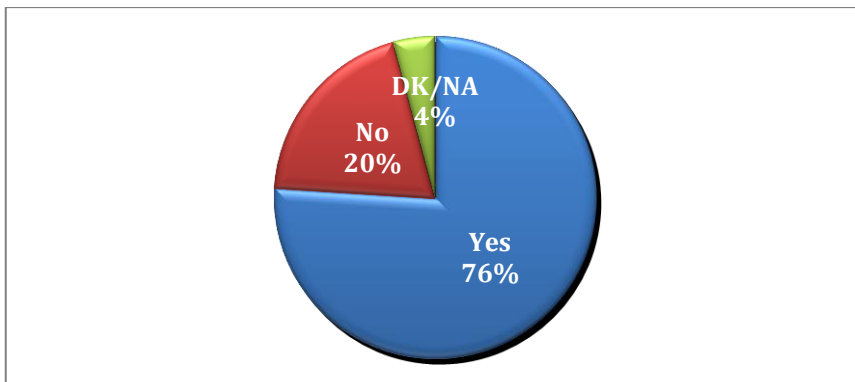


Figure 18. RR3. Persons mediating the relationships between Roma and the authorities at the level of the community (N=82) – Multiple answer

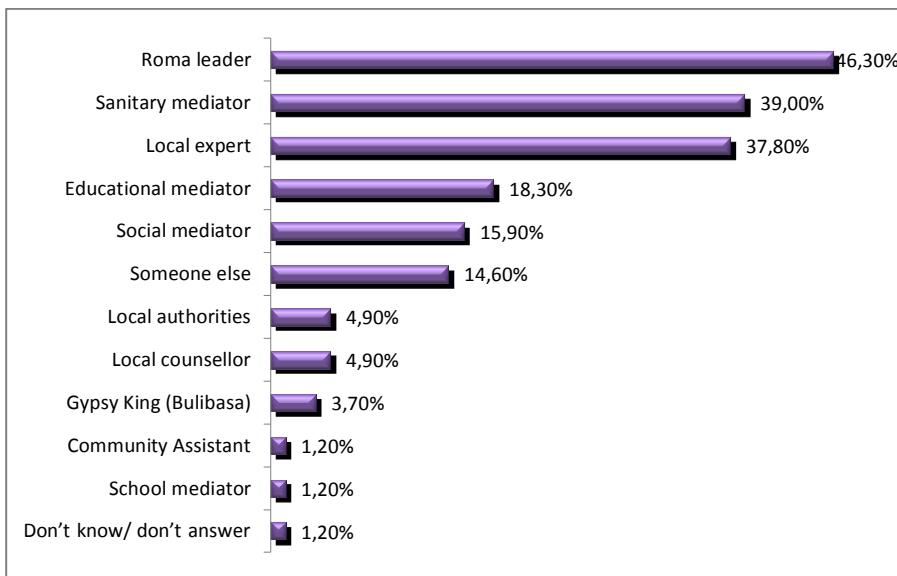
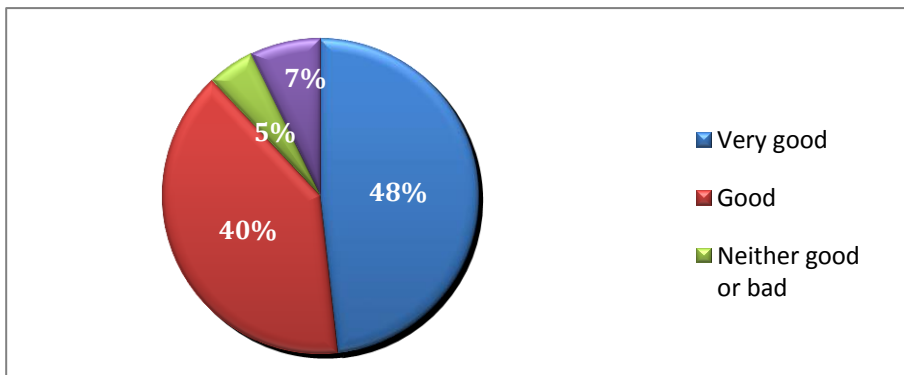


Figure 19. RR4. In your opinion, how are these relationships managed by the mediating persons? (N=83)



Analysis of the interventions implemented at the level of the 4 regions of development

In South-Muntenia were achieved 42 interviews, from which 27 with the representatives of the mayor's offices, 12 with school representatives, one interview with a representative of the police, one with a social worker, and another with a local counsellor. In South-East were realised 32 interviews, from which 16 in the mayor's offices, 7 in schools, 5 at the medical offices, 2 at the police, one in a high school and another in a UAT. In South-West Oltenia were achieved 28 interviews, 17 at the mayor's offices, 6 in schools, 3 in UAT, another at the medical office, and one other at the high-school. In Bucharest-Ilfov were done 16 interviews with the representatives of schools (5), with the representatives of mayor's offices (4), with employees of the police (2), with church representatives (2), and with the employee of a kindergarten, one with a representative of an association, and one with the representative of AJOFM (*see Table 8*).

Table 8. Structure of interviews realised with local authorities, according to the type of institution, on regions of development

Institution	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South- Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
AJOFM	1	0	0	0	1
Association	1	0	0	0	1
Church	2	0	0	0	2
Medical Office	0	0	1	5	6
Kindergarten	1	0	0	0	1
High-School	0	0	1	1	2
Police	2	1	0	2	5
Mayor's Office	4	27	17	16	64
School	5	12	6	7	30
UAT	0	0	3	1	4
Missing	0	2	0	0	2
Total	16	42	28	32	118

At the level of all regions of development, more than half of the respondents declared that information methods are used for notifying the persons of Roma ethnicity about the measures and actions organised for them like advertising on the notice board of public institutions, and contacts through the local leader or expert. In South-West Oltenia mass media is used as method of notifying to lesser extent than in the other regions of development (14.30%) (*see Table 9*).

Table 9. MS1. Which are the methods by which persons of Roma ethnicity from the locality are informed about the new measures and actions undertaken for them? (Yes), on regions of development – Multiple answers

Method of information	Region of Development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South-East	South-West Oltenia	South Muntenia
Notice board of public institutions	68.80%	83.30%	89.30%	75.00%
Contacted directly by their local leader/expert	56.20%	71.40%	96.40%	75.00%
Newspapers/television/local sites	25.00%	26.20%	14.30%	15.60%
Advertising		7.10%		
By AJOFM			3.60%	
Mouth-to-mouth communication		2.40%	3.60%	6.20%
By the mayor's office	25.00%	2.40%		3.10%
Through the mediator		7.10%	3.60%	6.20%
Written press adds		4.80%		3.10%
Meetings with parents			3.60%	6.20%
By phone		7.10%		
Internet advertisement		2.40%		
By organising debates		2.40%	3.60%	

Almost half of the respondents at the level of the four regions of development stated that they are aware about the programmes developed in the field of employment. In South-West Oltenia, 42.90% of the respondents stated that they know about such programmes (*see Table 10*).

Table 10. MS2. Are you aware of programmes/actions developed in the field of employment? (on regions of development)

	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
Yes	50.00%	50.00%	42.90%	51.60%	48.7%
Not aware/ don't know	50.00%	47.60%	57.10%	45.20%	49.60%
NR		2.40%		3.20%	1.70%

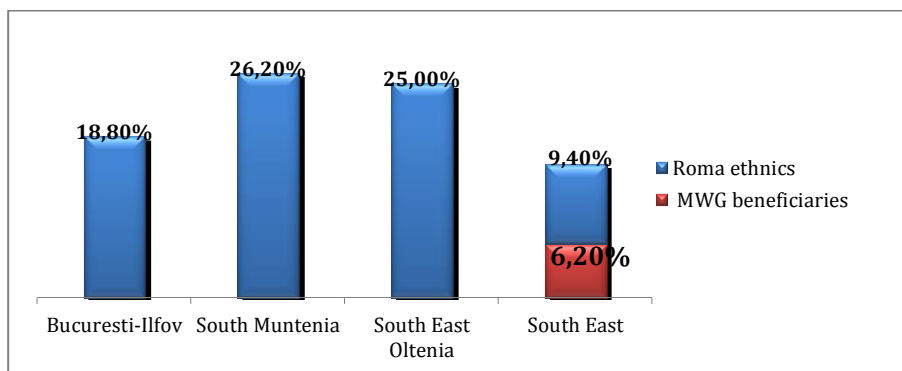
Most respondents from the region Bucharest-Ilfov stated that they are aware about skilling courses (25.00%), and about the Employment Caravan (18.80%). In South-Muntenia, 33.30% from the respondents mentioned skilling courses, and 14.30% mentioned the actions of the employment agencies. In South-West Oltenia, 21.40% from the respondents mentioned the programmes developed by employment agencies, and 14.30% mentioned the skilling courses. The interventions of the employment agencies were mentioned by 28.10% from the respondents in South-East (*see Table 11*).

Table 11. MS3. Programmes/actions developed in the employment field known to the representatives of the local authorities, on regions of development – Multiple answers

	Regions of development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
Skilling courses	25.00%	33.30%	14.30%	6.20%
Employment Caravan	18.80%	7.10%	3.60%	3.10%
ANOFM/AJOFM	6.20%	14.30%	21.40%	28.10%
Jobs' Exchange	6.20%	11.90%	3.60%	6.20%
Advertisements	6.20%		3.60%	6.20%
Social canteen/lunch vouchers		2.40%	3.60%	3.10%
Counselling centre for parents and children/vocational guidance		2.40%	3.60%	
Building a factory		2.40%		3.10%
Courses provided by the mayor's office		2.40%		
School after school			3.60%	3.10%
Posters				6.20%
Second chance				3.10%
Sport activities				3.10%
Cultural activities				3.10%
Sanitary activities				3.10%
By phone				3.10%

Out of the beneficiaries of the programmes developed in the employment field, most of the respondents at the level of each region of development mentioned the persons of Roma ethnicity. Only 6.20% of the respondents from South-East mentioned the beneficiaries of the MGW (*see figure 20*).

Figure 20. MS3. Beneficiaries of the programmes/actions developed in the field of employment known to the local authorities, on regions – Multiple answers



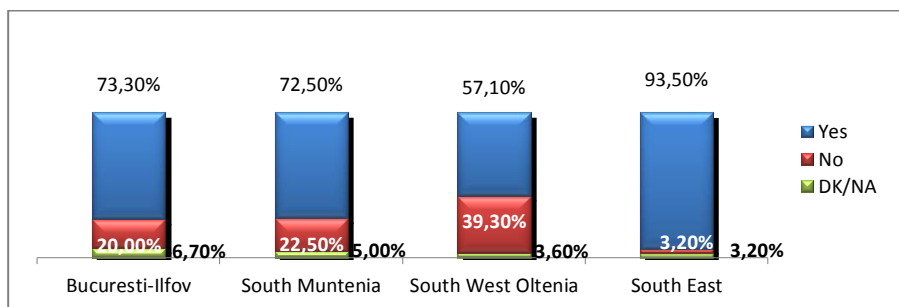
As outcomes of the programmes developed in the field of employment, we find that they were evaluated as poor at the level of each region of development. However, at the same time, we find that jobs were gained, and results regarded as satisfying as well (*See Table 12*).

Table 12. MS3. The outcomes of the programmes/actions developed in the field of employment, known to the representatives of local authorities, on regions – Multiple answers

Outcomes	Regions of development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
	No. of respondents			
Poor outcomes	2	1	1	1
Roma received gifts and monetary aids	2	1	0	1
No hiring	1	1	0	1
Jobs gained	1	1	0	1
Courses are not according to the requirements of the labour market	1	0	0	0
Satisfying outcomes	0	1	1	2
Roma refused jobs provided by AJOFM	0	1	0	0
Very good outcomes	0	0	1	0
Total	4	6	3	5

Most of the respondents at the level of each development region consider that there are perspectives for improving the situation of Roma at the level of the localities they represent. In South-East are recorded 93.50% of the optimistic respondents as regards the Roma situation in the future, the highest share as compared with the other targeted regions (*see Figure 21*).

Figure 21. MS4. Are there perspectives for improving the situation of Roma at the level of your locality? (on regions)



We find that in the regions Bucharest-Ilfov, and South-Muntenia the respondents put emphasis on educating future generations as factor in the positive approach as regards Roma condition (25.00%, respectively 16.70%). In both South-Muntenia and South-West Oltenia, the investments at the level of the community are indicative for the improvement of the Roma condition (16.70%, respectively 14.30%). At the same time, in South-West Oltenia, respondents consider that the skilling/reskilling programmes organised will improve the condition of the beneficiaries (14.30%). The respondents in South-East consider that the programmes for the inclusion of Roma will contribute to improving the condition of Roma at the level of localities (28.10%) (*see Table 13*).

Table 13. MS4. Are there perspectives for improving the condition of Roma at the level of your locality? – Yes, on regions –Multiple answer

Reasons for improvement	Regions of development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South-Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
Educating future generations	25.00%	16.70%	7.10%	15.60%
Investments at the level of community	6.20%	16.70%	14.30%	9.40%
Job creation	6.20%	14.30%	7.10%	6.20%
Skilling/reskilling programmes/continuing studying	6.20%	9.50%	14.30%	15.60%
Programmes for the inclusion of Roma	6.20%	7.10%	3.60%	28.10%
Involvement of local authorities		9.50%	10.70%	12.50%
Personal development projects		4.80%	7.10%	3.10%
Provided aids		4.80%		
Increasing the interest in skilling and entering on the labour market			7.10%	9.40%
Others				3.10%

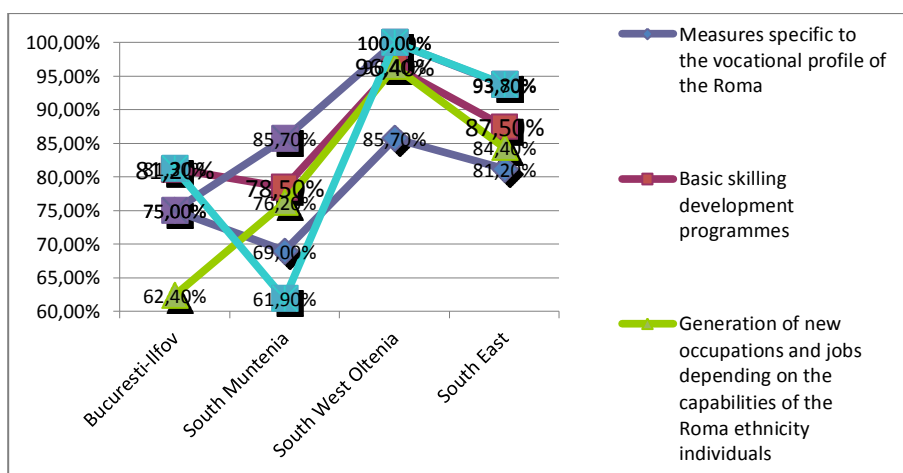
The pessimistic respondents as regarding the future of the Roma condition at the level of the localities they represent from the region Bucharest-Ilfov consider that the lack of programmes dedicated to Roma (12.50%), along with the lack of concern from the Roma (6.20%) represent both important reasons for an unchanged future. In South-Muntenia, 9.50% from the respondents consider that the lack of jobs affects the future of Roma. The representatives from South-West Oltenia put also emphasis on the lack of jobs as main factor for an unchanged condition at the level of Roma (10.70%). In South-East are mentioned the lack of jobs (3.10%), but also the lacking vocational training of Roma (3.10%) as factors for a similar situation of Roma also in the future (*see Table 14*).

Table 14. MS4. Are there perspectives for improving the condition of the Roma at the level of your locality? –No, on regions – Multiple answers

Reasons for lacking improvement	Region of development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
Lacking programmes for Roma	12.50%		3.60%	
Lacking concern for Roma	6.20%	2.40%	10.70%	
Lacking jobs		9.50%	7.10%	3.10%
Emigration		4.80%	7.10%	
Precarious economic situation		2.40%		
Others			7.10%	
Lack of vocational training			3.60%	3.10%
School abandon			3.60%	

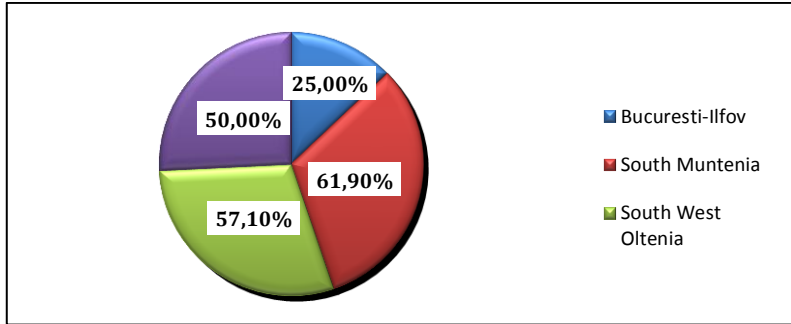
The representatives of the public authorities from South-West Oltenia sustain to the largest extent, compared with the ones from the other regions of development, as measures for Roma insertion the adoption of some measures specific to the vocational profile of the Roma. This should be realised together with the unfolding of some basic skilling development programmes, the generation of new occupations and jobs depending on the capabilities of the Roma ethnicity individuals and supporting the practice of handicrafts specific to Roma. In Bucharest-Ilfov, the respondents believe less in the capacities of the measure dedicated to the generation of new jobs for the Roma as insertion measure in the labour market (62.40%), whereas in South-Muntenia are found the fewest respondents that credit the measure of supporting Roma handicraft occupations (61.90%) (see Figure 22).

Figure 22. MS5. In your opinion, which are the measures that might increase the insertion chances in the labour market for Roma ethnicity individuals? – Multiple answers



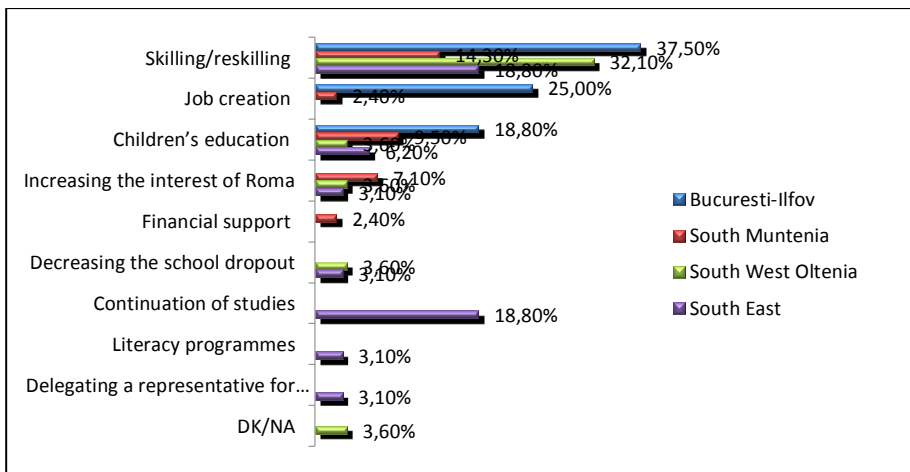
In South-Muntenia are found the most respondents considering there exists adequacy between education and vocational qualifications of the Roma individuals according to the current requirements of the labour market (61.90%), whereas in Bucharest-Ilfov only 25.00% of the respondents agree that the vocational training of Roma meets the demands of the employers (see Figure 23).

Figure 23. MS6. Do you believe there is adequacy between education and the vocational skilling of Roma individuals according to the current demands in the labour market? – Yes, on regions



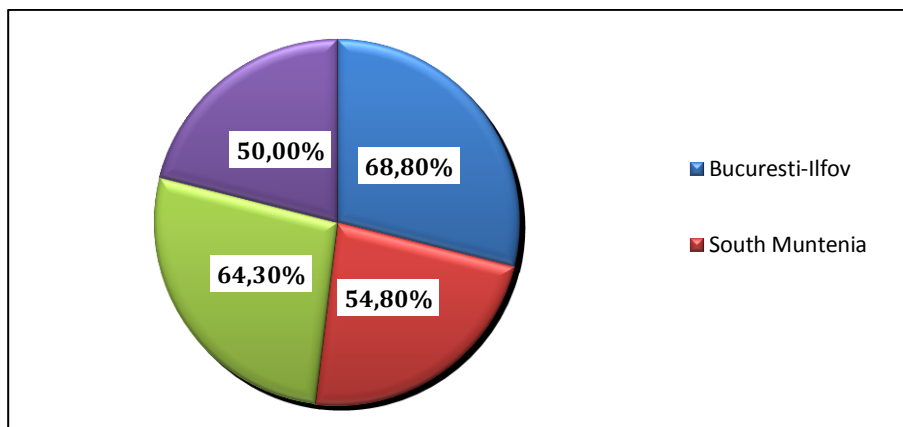
The representatives of local authorities at all levels the regions of development consider that adequacy might be obtained between education and vocational skilling for Roma ethnicity individuals according to current labour market demands either by skilling or reskilling them and by educating the children (see Figure 24).

Figure 24. MS7. Solutions for the adequacy between education and vocational skilling of Roma ethnicity individuals according to current labour market demands, as identified by the representatives of the local authorities, on regions – Multiple answer



The respondents from Bucharest-Ilfov consider to the largest extent as compared with the respondents from the other regions of development that they are aware about the skilling needs at the level of the county they represent (95.80%). Half of the respondents from South-East believe that they can discuss about the skilling needs in the county (see Figure 25).

Figure 25. MS8. Are you aware about the skilling needs in the county? – Yes, on regions



The representatives of the local authorities for the analysed four regions of development consider that in the field of constructions are the most skilling requests. In Bucharest-Ilfov, 43.80% from the respondents consider that at county level is demand for skilled persons in trade. From the respondents in South-Muntenia 11.90% consider that after constructions, skilled persons are sought for agriculture and in the textile industry. Out of the respondents from South-Oltenia, 42.90% are of the opinion that there is demand for skilling in agriculture. The respondents from South-East place after the skilling demand in constructions, the demand for trade workers (25.00%) (see Table 15).

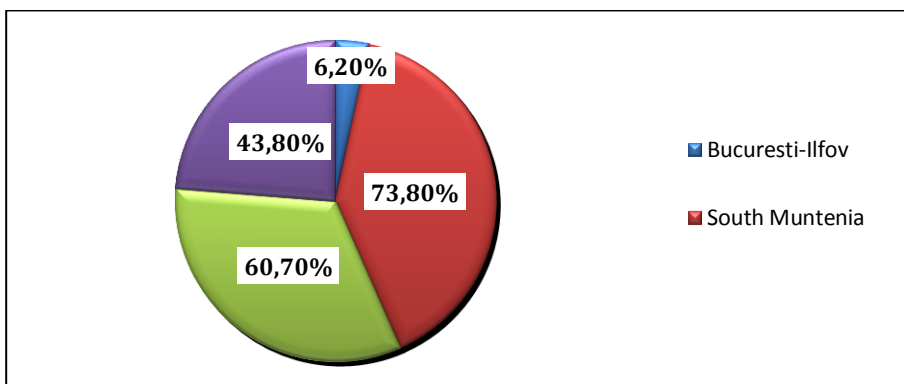
Table 15. MS9. Please enumerate the most demanded skills at county level, on regions – Multiple answer

Skilling	Regions of development			
	Bucharest - Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
In constructions	56.20%	45.20%	60.70%	28.10%
Trade workers	43.80%	4.80%	28.60%	25.00%
Security guard	31.20%	4.80%		6.20%
In agriculture	18.80%	11.90%	42.90%	18.80%
Textile manufacturers/tailoring	12.50%	11.90%	3.60%	9.40%

Skilling	Regions of development			
	Bucharest - Ilfov	South Muntenia	Souh-West Oltenia	South-East
Cosmetics/hairdresser	6.20%	7.10%		6.20%
Cleaners	6.20%	2.40%		
Plumbers		7.10%		6.20%
Car mechanics		4.80%	3.60%	3.10%
In the manufacturing industry		4.80%		
In health		2.40%		
In transports		2.40%		
Confectioners/bakers		2.40%		
Fiddler		2.40%		
Handicraftsmen		2.40%		
Shoemakers		2.40%		
Car drivers			3.60%	6.20%
Natural resources and environmental protection workers				3.10%
Education				3.10%
Carers for elderly				3.10%
NS/NR	6.20%			

In Bucharest-Ilfov, we find the fewest representatives of the local authorities considering that the employment programmes are adequate for the Roma ethnicity individuals (6.20%). From among these, 81.20% consider that these programmes are not adequate for Roma. In South-Muntenia, 73.80% from the respondents consider that the employment programmes are adequate for individuals of Roma ethnicity (see Figure 26).

Figure 26. MS10. Do you believe that the employment programmes are adequate for individuals of Roma ethnicity? –Yes, on regions



In the region Bucharest-Ilfov, 81.30% from the respondents consider that the reconversion courses are one of the solutions to render efficiency to the employment

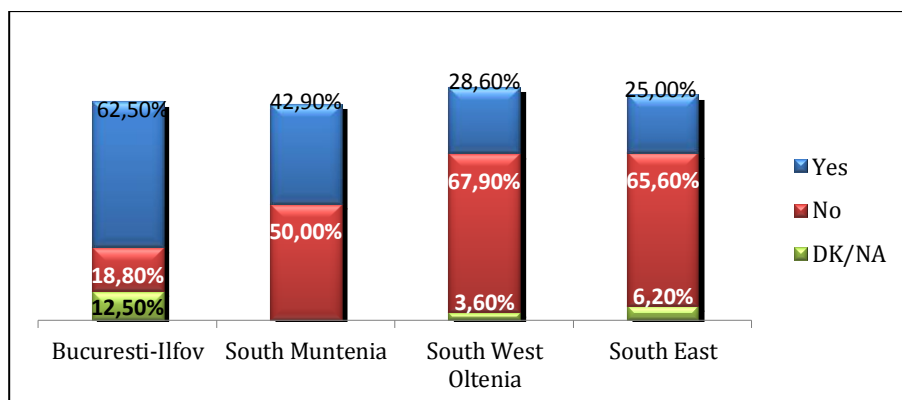
programmes for individuals of Roma ethnicity, while 81.20% consider that the solution would be to provide jobs adequate to those with low educational level. In South-Muntenia, 57.10% from the respondents appreciate that the development of reconversion courses adequate to the market demands will contribute to improving the employment programmes for Roma. The same opinion is shared also by the representatives of local authorities from South-East (75.00). In South-West Oltenia, paid reconversion courses represent a solution for 64.30% from the respondents (*see Table 16*).

Table 16. MS11. In your opinion, which are the solutions for rendering efficient the employment programmes among individuals of Roma ethnicity? – On regions – Multiple answers

Solutions	Bucharest-Ilfov	South-Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
Paid reconversion sources	81.30%	45.30%	64.30%	62.50%
Effective and real job supply adequate for a low educational level	81.20%	54.80%	60.80%	65.60%
Reconversion courses adequate to the demands of the market	75.00%	57.10%	64.20%	75.00%
Mediation of the discussion between employee and employer	75.00%	54.70%	57.20%	71.80%

More than half of the respondents from the regions South-Muntenia (50.00%), South-West Oltenia (67.90%), and South-East (65.60%) consider that in the proximity of the localities they represent, the employment opportunities are inexistent, and will not be created. From the respondents in Bucharest-Ilfov, 62.50% are of the contrary opinion, considering that the localities they represent provide for employment opportunities (*see Figure 27*).

Figure 27. MS12. In the locality, or in its proximity do employment opportunities exist, or will exist? On regions



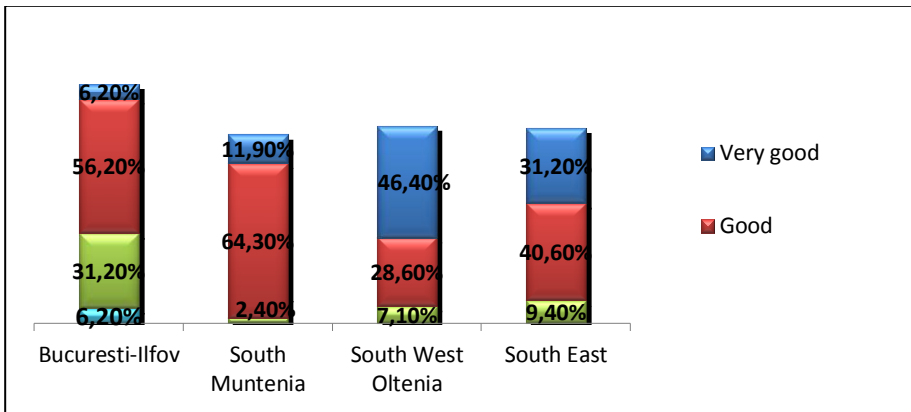
The interviewed representatives of the local authorities consider that in constructions and agriculture are the best employment chances. Thus, in the region Bucharest-Ilfov, we find 56.20% of the respondents who consider that constructions and agriculture are the most important employment fields. Nevertheless, to an identical share is mentioned also the food industry. Out of the respondents from Bucharest-Ilfov, 50% are of the opinion that jobs can be found also in the field of trade and services. In South-Muntenia, 45.20% from the respondents place the field of constructions on the first position among the fields of activity providing for employment opportunities in the area, while 40.50% consider that people can find jobs in agriculture, as well. Out of the respondents in South-West Oltenia, 32.10% maintain that jobs are provided in agriculture, and 37.50% from the respondents in South-East support the same idea. In South-East, 31.20% from the respondents consider that residents can find jobs in constructions (see Table 17).

Table 17. MS13. In which of the following fields of activity are provided employment opportunities in the locality or in proximity? – on regions – Multiple answers

Fields	Regions of development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South - Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
Constructions	56.20%	45.20%	28.60%	31.20%
Agriculture, fishery, fishing	56.20%	40.50%	32.10%	37.50%
Food industry	56.20%	19.00%	3.60%	6.20%
Trade and services	50.00%	26.20%	17.90%	21.90%
Textile industry	31.20%	31.00%	3.60%	12.50%
Tourism, hotels, restaurants	31.20%	2.40%	3.60%	
Forestry, wood exploitation and processing	25.00%	4.80%	7.10%	9.40%
In any field	25.00%			
Car industry		2.40%		
Social assistance				3.10%
Metal processing industry				3.10%
Other fields of activity	31.20%	2.40%		6.20%

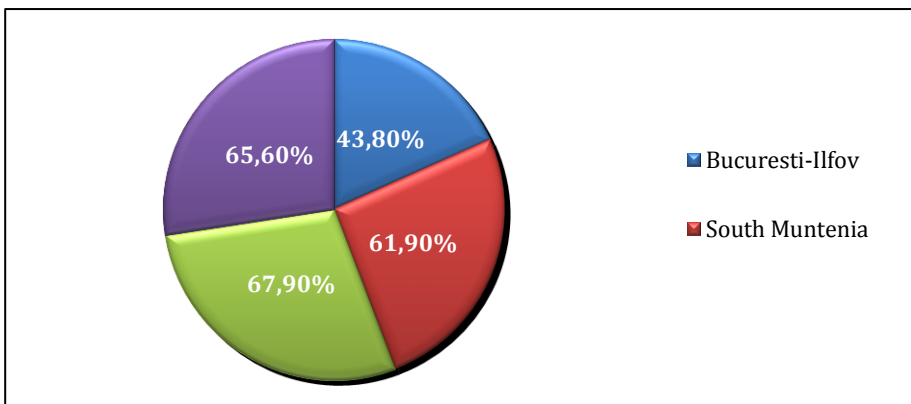
As regards the relationships between Roma at the level of the studied communities, the representatives of the local authorities consider that, to the largest extent, these are good and very good (see Figure 28).

Figure 28. RR1. What do you think about the relationships between Roma in the locality? (on regions)



According to collected data, Bucharest-Ilfov has less mediators as share than the other targeted regions (43.80%) as regards the relationships between Roma and local authorities.

Figure 29. RR2. Are there persons for mediating the relationships between Roma and authorities at the community level? – Yes, on regions



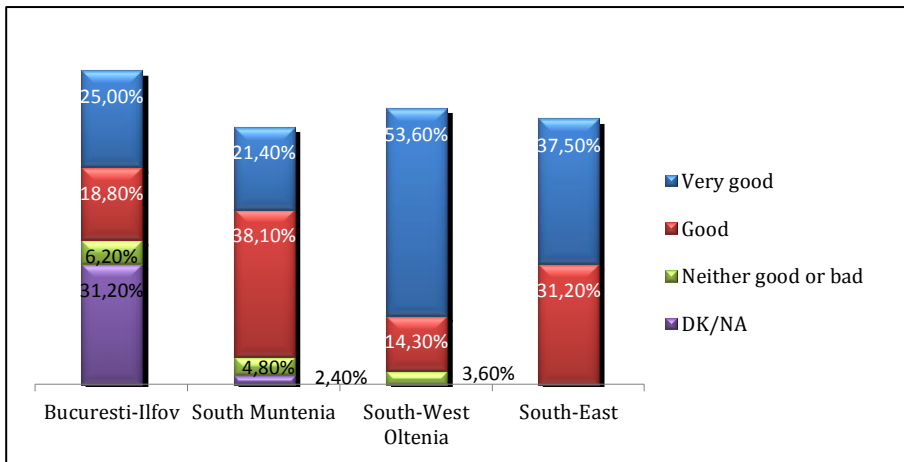
In the region Bucharest-Ilfov, the local experts are the persons regarded by 37.50% from the respondents as the first responsible for mediating the relations between Roma and authorities at the level of the community. In South-West Oltenia (46.40%), and in South-East (46.90%), the Roma leader is regarded as the main mediator. The respondents from South Muntenia consider that the sanitary mediator is the main responsible for mediating the relationships between Roma and authorities (23.80%) (see Table 18).

Table 18. RR3. Persons mediating relationships between Roma and authorities at community level, on regions – Multiple answers

Mediators	Region of development			
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East
Local expert	37.50%	7.10%	32.10%	40.60%
Roma leader	25.00%	14.30%	46.40%	46.90%
Sanitary mediator	12.50%	23.80%	28.60%	37.50%
Social mediator		11.90%	14.30%	12.50%
Local counsellor		9.50%		
Gypsy King (Bulibasa)		7.10%		
Local authorities		2.40%		9.40%
Educational mediator			25.00%	25.00%
Community Assistant			3.60%	
School mediator				3.10%
Someone else		16.70%	3.60%	12.50%
Don't know/ don't answer	6.20%			

As regards the way in which individuals mediating the relationships between persons of Roma ethnicity and authorities are evaluated, the interviewed representatives of the local authorities consider these as positive to their majority, at the level of each region of development (see Figure 30).

Figure 30. RR4. In your opinion, how are managed these relationships by the persons mediating them? On regions



Conclusions

Most of the possible action delivering conclusions and recommendations are strongly related to the specifics of the target group, i.e. adult Roma individuals living in communities with low educational stock, placed too far outside the paths to success of policies and interventions dedicated to vulnerable communities. The conclusions are in accord with other study findings (Arpinte, Cace, Scoican, 2010; Cace, Duminičă, Preda, 2005).

To their overwhelming majority, both Roma and relevant legal community representatives see education/training/improvement one of the few opportunities with success potential, e.g. skilling for as many as possible Roma individuals, coherent programmes for basic education, specific jobs to Roma patterns etc.

At declarative level, a certain assumption of community responsibility as regards the issue of vocational employment might be found. However, the outcomes of the research reveal contradictory details, impersonal and inconsistent interaction ways. For instance, the preferred way of information for the population is the advertising on the mayor's hall notice board (a space rather outside daily routes of the citizens, or ways presupposing more effort than simple advertising). This approach has as specifics the precarious control over information and the absence of support mechanisms, and message depersonalization etc.

The same line of thinking is also as regards media use, which is indicated as one of the sources of information about jobs (though the efficiency in such situations is rather low). The adult mentioned as committed to a variety of multiple roles restructures his/her adequacy to reality, however not by displaying a passive attitude. Therefore, the use of active and participative forms and procedures, which are direct and exploit the motivation of the adult, is recommended insistently.

The negative perception as regards the improvement chances of the situation at local level is one form of sabotage of any similar approach. As such, the effective activity of community development needs compulsory to consider the creation of positive representations about existing jobs, and the concern for the issues of Roma individuals.

Designing and implementing activities, projects and programmes that cover essentially the need of education (for children who are considered the future), and for adults (with instrumental value, in view of training the essential skills for a trade/profession) is preferable as compared with assistance measures. The lack of institutional decisiveness ("political will"), the context displaying shortcomings at the level of administration's functioning and information are but two of the major impediments that fracture "at grass root level" any strategic approach (which, otherwise, falls not in the competence of local authorities, but rather in the one of county and national ones).

The jobs dedicated especially to Roma ethnicity individuals, and the organization forms of the economic activities should rather be subjected to critical analysis in the conditions of a competitive and unsupportive environment. Nevertheless, they should be considered as provisory and transitory options precisely for diminishing gaps and inequalities. However, they belong into a wider context, where local leadership and

socio-economic development initiatives benefit from smart and long-term equitable design.

The study aimed to analyze the situation of Roma from marginalized communities in four regions of development: Bucharest-Ilfov, South-Muntenia, South-West Oltenia and South-East. 118 interviews were done with the representatives of the local authorities and 1072 interviews with the residents of the target-communities.

The outcomes of the achieved interviews with the representatives of the local authorities show that the most used method for disseminating announcements about the development of certain programmes within the community with objectives in the field of employment and vocational training consist in advertising on the notice boards of public institutions, followed by direct contacting by the local expert. From the residents of the targeted communities, 91% stated that they are not aware about programmes or actions developed in the field of employment. At the same time, 49% of the interviewed representatives of the local authorities stated that they are not aware as regards such programmes. Both among residents and representatives of local authorities are popular as programmes in the field of employment, skilling courses, and actions organized by employment agencies, like Jobs' Exchange or the Employment Caravan.

From the representatives of the local authorities, 21% consider that the situation of Roma cannot be improved because of the lacking jobs (30.40%), and the lacking concern shown by persons of Roma ethnicity (21.70%). Other reasons are emigration (17.40%), and lacking programmes addressed to Roma (13%). 75% from all respondents consider that there are perspectives for improving the situation of Roma by educating future generations (23.10%), investments in community development (19.20%), by developing skilling courses (17.90%) and Roma inclusion programmes (17.90%).

From among the representatives of the local authorities, who stated that they are aware about the skilling needs at county level (59%), 79.40% consider that skilling is necessary in the field of constructions, 38.20% in agriculture, 36.80% suggest gaining skilling as trade worker, and 16.20% support the need of skilling in the textile industry. The other qualifications considered as necessary and mentioned by less than 15% of the respondents are security guard, hairdresser, plumber, car mechanic, car driver, cleaners, in the processing industry, in health, transports, natural resources and environmental protection, pastry/bakery, education, fiddler, handicraftsman, shoemaker, elderly carer. The representatives of the local authorities from the analyzed four regions of development consider that in the field of constructions is the highest demand for skilling. In Bucharest-Ilfov, 43.80% from the respondents consider that skilled persons are sought in trade. 11.9% from the respondents in South-Muntenia consider that after constructions, skilled persons are sought in agriculture and in the textile industry. 42.9% from the respondents in South-West Oltenia are of the opinion that there is demand for skilling in agriculture. The respondents from South-East place after the skilling demand in constructions, the demand for trade workers (25%).

For rendering efficient the employment programmes unfolded for the Roma population in marginalized communities, the representatives of local authorities suggest the organization of some reconversion courses (93.9%), decreasing the demanded educational level (89.2%), and ensuring accessibility from the perspective of the distance, that is placement in the proximity of the area where persons pursuing to access the latter live (89%).

As regards employment opportunities in the proximity, the representatives of the local authorities are of the opinion that availabilities exist in agriculture, fishery, and fishing (69.10%), in constructions (67.60%), in trade and services (45.60%), and in the textile industry (33.80%). Over half of the respondents from the regions South-Muntenia (50%), South-West Oltenia (67.9%) and South-East (65.6%) consider that in the proximity of the localities they represent, employment opportunities are inexistent, and will continue to remain inexistent. 62.5% from the respondents in Bucharest-Ilfov are of the contrary opinion, considering that the localities they represent provide for employment opportunities. In the region Bucharest-Ilfov, we find 56.20% from the respondents who consider constructions and agriculture as the most important employment fields, but to the same share is mentioned also the food industry. From the respondents in Bucharest-Ilfov, 50% believe that jobs are found also in the field of trade and services. In South-Muntenia, 45.20% from the respondents place the field of constructions on the first position on the list of areas of activity providing for employment opportunities in the area, and 40.50% consider that people can also find jobs in agriculture. From the respondents in South-West Oltenia, 32.10% maintain that hiring is made in agriculture, and 37.50% from the respondents in South-East maintain the same thing. In South-East, 31.20% from the respondents consider that residents can find jobs in constructions.

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Appendix

Profile of the respondents

The study at the level of local authorities as regards the situation of the Roma communities in the regions of development Bucharest-Ilfov, South-Muntenia, South-West Oltenia, and South-East unfolded in the period June-August 2014, with an error margin by 2.6%, at a confidence level by 95%. There were realised 118 interviews with the representatives of the local authorities, according to the following structure (*see Table 1*):

Table 1. Structure of interviews realised with the representatives of the local authorities by region of development, county, and type of institution

Region	County	AJOFM	Association	Church	Medical Office	Kindergarten	High-school	Police	Mayor's Hall	School	UAT	Missing	Total
South Muntenia	Arges								5				5
	Calarasi								3	1		1	5
	Dambovita								6				6
	Giurgiu								2	2			4
	Ialomita								2	2		1	5
	Prahova							1	7	4			12
	Teleorman								2	3			5
Total							1	27	12			2	42
South-East	Braila								1	2	1		4
	Buzau								2	2			4
	Constanta				1				2	1			4
	Galati				2		1	1	7	1			12
	Iulcea				2				2				4
	Vrancea							1	2	1			4
	Total				5		1	2	16	7	1		32
South-West Oltenia	Dolj								12				12
	Gorj								2	2			4
	Mehedinti								1	2	1		4
	Olt				1		1				2		4
	Valcea								2	2			4
Total				1		1		17	6	3		28	
Bucuresti-Ilfov	Bucuresti	1		1		1				1			4
	Ilfov		1	1				2	4	4			12
Total		1	1	2		1		2	4	5			16

Most interviews were realised with institutions having as object of activity public administration (69). At the level of all analysed regions, the interviews were realised mainly with the representatives of the public administrations and with representatives from education (*see Table 2*).

Table 2. Structure of interviews realised with representatives of local authorities, by object of activity of the institution, by region of development

Object of activity	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
	Number of interviews				
Local administration	4	28	20	17	69
Defending rights of the Roma community	1				1
Public order	2	1		2	5
Education	6	12	7	8	33
Religious profile	2				2
Medicine			1	5	6
Labour force placement	1				1
Missing		1			1
Total	16	42	28	32	118

We find that in 2013 the average in the number of employees at the level of the studied institutions is higher than over the past four years, and this increase is found in the situation as regards the number of Roma ethnicity employees, as well (*see Table 3*)

Table 3. Average of employees within the institutions where interviews were realised

Employees' average				Roma ethnicity employees' average			
2010	2011	2011	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013
25.69	26.30	25.42	26.38	2.01	2.11	2.05	2.43

Most interviews realised with the representatives of local authorities had as respondents the individuals with a length of service of 20 years and over (*see Table 4*).

Table 4. Structure of interviews realised with the representatives of local authorities, according to length of service, on regions of development

Length of service	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
20 years or over	2	21	20	16	59
between 10 and 19 years	6	10	5	7	28
Between 9 and 2 years	4	11	3	9	27
Missing	4				4
Total	16	42	28	32	118

Most interviews were realised with the teaching staff (17). In South-Muntenia were realised 5 interviews each with 42 representatives of the teaching staff, referents, social workers, and secretaries. In South-West Oltenia the managers offered most interviews (5) (*see Table 5*).

Table 5. Structure of interviews realised with the representatives of local authorities, by occupation, on regions of development

Occupation	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South-Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
Teaching staff member	5	5	1	6	17
Police agent	2	1	0	1	4
Representative of an institution	2	0	1	0	3
Priest	2	0	0	0	2
Referent	1	5	4	0	10
Manager	1	4	5	0	10
Counsellor	1	3	3	1	8
Office clerk	1	3	0	0	4
Administrator	1	0	0	1	2
Social assistance	0	5	2	5	12
Secretary	0	5	0	2	7
Vice-Mayor	0	4	2	3	9
Mayor	0	3	3	5	11
Expert on Roma issues	0	1	2	1	4
School mediator	0	1	1	0	2
Librarian	0	1	0	0	1
Sanitary mediator	0	1	0	0	1
Nurse	0	0	3	2	5
Physician	0	0	1	3	4
Accountant	0	0	0	1	1
Missing	0	0	0	1	1
Total	16	42	28	32	118

Most interviews were realised with the representatives of the local authorities with a length of service between 9 and 2 years within the institution.

Table 6. Structure of interviews realised with the representatives of local authorities, according to length of service on the job, on regions of development

Length of service on the job	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South-Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
20 years or over	1	10	6	6	23
between 10 and 19 years	7	8	6	4	25
Between 9 and 2 years	5	21	15	20	61
Less than 2 years	1	3	1	0	5
Missing	2			2	4
Total	16	42	28	30	118

The respondents with responsibilities in the public administration collaborated to this study in realising 26 interviews out of 118 (*see Table 7*).

Table 7. Structure of interviews realised with the representatives of local authorities according to on the job responsibilities, on regions of development

Responsibilities	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South-Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
Education	5	7	1	4	17
Public administration	2	12	4	8	26
Institution's management	2	8	7	6	23
Counselling	2	1	1	2	6
Public order assurance	2	1		4	7
Religious activities	2				2
Mediation	1	3	4	2	10
Social enquiries/ social assistance		7	5	2	14
Pension files/indemnities/ allocations/ MGI		7	4	2	13
Legal activities		7		1	8
Agricultural activities		4	1		5
Social aid		4		2	6
Civil status		3		1	4
Population, houses, and cattle evidence, etc.		1	2		3
Sanitary mediation		1	2		3
Accounting activities		1		1	2
House authorisations		1			1
Emergency situations		1			1
Librarian		1			1
Cadastre		1			1
Medical consultations			2	5	7
Total	16	42	28	32	118

From the interviews realised with the representatives of local authorities, 95 were with individuals in the rural area (*see Table 8*).

Table 8. Structure of interviews realised with the representatives of the local authorities, after place of residence, on regions of development

Place of residence	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
Rural	9	33	27	26	95
Urban	7	3		3	13
Missing		6	1	3	10
Total	16	42	28	32	118

Most of the interviews were realised with representatives of the local authorities of male gender (70). In South-Muntenia questionnaires were filled with 50% representatives of the male gender, and 50% with women respondents (*see Table 9*).

Table 9. Structure of realised interviews with representatives of the local authorities, by gender, on regions of development

Respondent's gender	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
Male	12	21	17	20	70
Female	4	21	11	12	48
Total	16	42	28	32	118

Among the respondents at the level of public institutions, are found 18 young individuals with ages between 24 and 35 years of age. As regards interviews, 51 were realised with individuals aged between 36 and 50 years, and 42 interviews were done with persons aged between 51 and 60 years (*see Table 10*).

Table 10. Structure of interviews realised with representatives of the local authorities, by age, on regions of development

Age	Region of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
24-35 years	3	4	5	6	18
36-50 years	8	22	6	15	51
51-60 years	3	13	17	9	42
66-80 years	0	2	0	0	2
Missing	2	1	0	2	5
Total	16	42	28	32	118

From the interviews realised with the representatives of the local authorities, 64 were realised with university graduates (*see Table 11*).

Table 11. Structure of interviews realised with the representatives of the local authorities, by educational level, on regions of development

Educational level	Regions of development				Total
	Bucharest-Ilfov	South Muntenia	South-West Oltenia	South-East	
High-school	4	4	10	6	24
Post-High-School Education	1	6	2	2	11
University	8	26	12	18	64
Post-University studies	3	6	2	6	17
Missing			2		2
Total	16	42	28	32	118



BOOK REVIEW

CACE S., SALI N. (COORD.) (2013). THE EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH CAPACITY OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Cătălin BERESCU¹

This is the English version of the title of a book that was published in Romanian as "Evaluarea capacității de cercetare a instituțiilor de învățământ superior din Republica Moldova", a one hundred pages report on the situation of research in Moldova. The study was achieved in 2013 by Association for Social and Economic Development and Promotion Catalactica, for the Ministry of Education of Moldova through a grant provided by Soros-Moldova Foundation and as part of the Better Governance Program.

It is not customary that a review starts with an inquiry of its own purpose, however, this should be the case when doing a review in English for a Romanian text. This has to do with the nature of the book, which is a policy report, and therefore it should be of interest for a larger set of institutional actors, most of them international. It is also a tentative to reach the readers that have a particular interest in Moldova, and a wider audience of researchers that are interested in comparative studies in education and research policies.

Conducted by a mixed team of ten Romanian and Moldavian researchers, the research was coordinated by Sorin Cace and Nicolae Sali. In an attempt to cover the entire field of research and higher education in Moldova, they did a systemic analysis of the institutional framework, of the legal provisions and of the institutional capacities of the universities that are involved into research projects. Interviews were conducted with

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researchers and two focus groups were achieved with the representatives of the research fora. Since both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed from the design stage of the study, the results are robustly embedded in a layer of carefully collected data. The unapologetic conclusions reflect strongly the opinions of the Moldavian researchers that are working within the system while the mixed methodology that is used by the authors allows them to make full use of the secondary data that was available at the time of the study.

The structure of the book reflects the technical nature of the analysis, perfectly aligned with what should be a standard for any evaluation in this field. The first part places the university level research of Moldova in a European context. It also provides a description of the national administrative framework by reviewing the main documents that regulate the area and by briefly describing the organs of management and control. Many of the aspects that are already present in the Romanian legislation that addresses the issue of evaluation of research capacities can be traced in the study.

Throughout the material we are presented with very direct critiques of the Moldavian system of financing education and research and of its institutional architecture. A strong critical approach is noticeable from the very beginning, as the book starts with an elaborated executive summary in which grave problems of public control and lack of transparency are highlighted. Furthermore, the analysis is detailed throughout every chapter and comes together in the fifth part, that is dedicated to conclusions and recommendations. One of the contributors, Gheorghe Ciucureanu, aptly summarizes in the first chapter the situation as follows: a) the performance of the research and development system in Moldova is relatively stable but quite far from the European level, b) that the strategic directions are harmonized with the European ones but underfinanced and not assumed by the social partners, c) that the lack of financial means leads to an outdated infrastructure, d) that the personnel's average age is high and the number of employees is too low, and e) that international partnerships are rare. In addition to that, the economic partners are scarce and there is still the need to adjust many of the procedures to international standards.

The second chapter puts together data resulted from the two main methods of research that were employed – the qualitative and the quantitative – and starts to bring into the general picture the indicators that reflect the capacity of the higher education units to run research programs, to collect indicators and compare the level of performance of the institutions, to evaluate the spending in a comparative manner with what is going on at an international and regional level and to assess the institutional design. Taking advantage of the ethnographic vignettes that resulted from the interviews, the authors are using them in order to underline the phenomena that was described with quantitative data. One of the issues is that of the overlapping of activities in between the current teaching activity and the research activity and the observation that there is very little research outside education. The older generations of researchers' fear that, because of the very low salaries and the lack of perspectives, young people are not attracted any longer to science. Things that nowadays work, are mostly connected with the projects developed in collaboration with international partners, while older researchers accuse the fact that the younger generation will not be able to benefit from a constant support in their professional development because of the irregular character

of this type of financing. It is therefore acknowledged that the lack of national programs is impeding the development of the future generation of researchers.

Local researchers are described as being stimulated through prizes and, despite the very low salaries, it looks that this creates some dynamic through student circles and motivates the young researchers. There is a nice touch of optimism in this remark and this is part of the effort of the authors to keep a balanced and fair view of the situation in Moldova.

But the main obstacles that are perceived by those involved in operational programs are related with the lack of infrastructure. Since Moldova is a developing economy, the involvement of the private sector in research partnerships is very limited, and here the authors of the study accuse once more the monopoly of the Moldavian Academy of Science. A less detailed but more recent peer review paper on the Research and Innovation system of Moldova (EC, 2018), and it reinforces the idea of the dominance of the Moldavian Academy of Science, stating that it acts indeed as a ministry of research (p. 6).

It is precisely the type of contradiction that cannot be solved based on the opinions of the respondents, nor on the observations of the researchers; the centralized system appears to be too weak to stimulate the activity, still too strong to let initiative flourish. In my opinion this has less to do with the institutional research architecture of Moldova and a lot more with the place of the country on the regional scene, with the prospects of its international relations in the near future and with the nature of its economic activities. This is briefly considered (p. 32), but the nature of the study is not one of a political economy paper, more of a policy analysis in a relatively narrow domain, leaving so the description of the general historical and economic context to the reader, presumably one that is already familiar with the contemporary struggles of Moldova.

A brief remark that has to do with the language of the book, from the perspective of a prospective reader of the study that is either a native Romanian speaker or somebody that is proficient in Romanian: as it was mentioned at the begging of the review, the book is written in Romanian. For a Romanian reader the book opens a window into a way of speaking Romanian that is specific to a Moldavian speaker. I think that this is a very interesting encounter of two contemporary ways of developing the scientific language. We are all familiar with regional variations of language that are so present in every language, but we rarely engage into a much deeper reflection on the way in which regional variants work. What is obvious throughout the book is the effort of the co-authors to find linguistic formulas that aim to reflect, in the most precise way possible, a set of social actions and features. By doing so, a new scientific language standard appears to emerge, a thing that can be observed through the variations of style, general vocabulary and jargon that can be found in the book. Any foreigner who is only familiar with the standard version of Romanian will have to invest some effort into disentangling the mix of regional speak and international jargon. Luckily for all of us – some may say, unfortunately – the global version of English that is so dominant in our area has such a heavy influence that it is to be expected that all of us will end up

speaking different versions of the new „academic pidgin¹”, that is in use and that would somehow level up the jargon in social sciences as it already did in „hard” sciences.

The third chapter is the most technical one and goes into great details about the projects implemented by universities, from selection and financing to mechanisms of stimulating research and bureaucratic barriers. It is the most elaborated chapter and it reflects the hard work of the team to collect and interpret data. Though various judgments about the value of research activities in Moldova are present in every section of the book, the authors felt the need to add a fourth chapter that specifically summarizes the way in which the results are used by the universities and by the society. In brief, it shows a major concern of the informants about being a part of the economic development of Moldova, but not leaving aside the academic development of individual researchers.

Conclusions

Moldova does not have a system of education and research that is aligned to the European practices of today, and the last five pages before the very detailed annexes are dealing with all the aspects of this lack of integration. All the details that were described through the chapters are reunited here and are followed by brief recommendations. What has been observed is that scientific research is a major preoccupation of the academic system and that a sustained activity at the master and doctoral level is crucial in the development of the field. Reconsidering the role of the Moldavian Academy of Science is paramount to the reform of research in the ex-Soviet republic, in order to insure the access of more institutional actors to research funding and to distribute grants in a competitive, transparent and just manner. In the annexes one can find all the documents that were analyzed, several schemes of different research structures, budgeting data, performance and visibility data and the questionnaire that was applied during the research. All these are valuable data for further comparative studies.

The book is an excellent illustration of a fairly recent European audit culture that, despite being underdeveloped in our part of the world, and not really welcomed by academics in Western Europe (Shore, 1999) is an unavoidable exercise if we want to understand the architecture of the system and the challenges it has to face. Both the analytic dimension and the critical one are present in the work of the collective and the final result is a very precise and vivid picture of the situation of research in Moldova.

¹ This a formula, an idea, for which I am indebted to prof. Thomas Acton who advanced it as an informal review in connection to a thematic issue published in English in a Romanian journal by Romanian authors. He mentioned on that occasion that, even though, from a literary point of view, the English that was used by the Romanian authors was far from perfect, the struggle to find linguistic formulas that accurately describe ideas and situations is a fertile exercise that is peculiar to a community of researchers. It is precisely what can be observed in the material produced by this Romanian-Moldavian team.

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