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A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS IN THE PROJECT ‘TYPOLOGIES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND MARGINALIZATION IN RURAL LOCALITIES AND SMALL TOWNS IN ROMANIA’¹

Mihnea PREOTESI²
Cristina TOMESCU³

Abstract: *The project begins from the coordinates provided by the sociological literature which show that local underdevelopment is the result of structural factors as lack of employment and the predominance of employment in (subsistence) agriculture, lack of infrastructure (access to public utilities such as gas, drinking water or paved roads) but also the distance to the nearest city that could be a pole of development or human capital (the education stock of the local population) and it tries to refine the analysis by overlapping the typology looking at local contexts and by deciphering the factors and mechanisms of underdevelopment at local level. The proposed approach has an*

¹ Articol realizat în cadrul *Grantului de cercetare* Nr. GAR-UM-2019-XI-5.6-7/ 15.10.2019, cu denumirea *Tipologii ale subdezvoltării și marginalizării în localitățile rurale și orașele mici din România (MARGINALRURAL)*, grant realizat cu sprijin financiar din Fondul Recurent al Donatorilor, aflat la dispoziția Academiei Române și gestionat prin Fundația „PATRIMONIUM” GAR-UM-2019 (Article within the Research Grant No. GAR-UM-2019-XI-5.6-7/15.10.2019, with the name *Typologies of underdevelopment and marginalization in rural localities and small towns in Romania (MARGINALRURAL)*, grant with financial support from the Recurrent Donor Fund, available to the Academy Romanian and managed by the "PATRIMONIUM" Foundation GAR-UM-2019)

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exploratory character. The article explain this approach in the first part, and in the second part presents a synthesis of the results of the analysis of the data collected in Alba county (as an exploratory case study) for testing the research tools in the first phase of the project.

Keywords: *development, underdevelopment, marginalization, rural localities, small towns*

1. Introduction

The project *Typologies of underdevelopment and marginalization in rural localities and small towns in Romania* is part of the strategic vision of the Romanian Academy, regarding the support of multi-disciplinary research on major topics for Romanian society. From this point of view, the proposed analysis involves various capabilities of the researchers, at the border between social, economic and psycho-social: employment, education and health services at the local level, local poverty rate, development or local underdevelopment, social exclusion/marginalization, social activism, etc. Another dimension of the Academy's strategy that is considered by the project refers to strengthening the research capacity of institutes by supporting researchers to carry out projects on topics relevant to Romanian society and their active involvement in describing and explaining social phenomena and processes.

In today's Romania, there are significant inequalities in economic development, as well as in social development between rural and urban areas, between large and small towns, between development regions, between the country's counties. On the other hand, in addition to these differences between the mentioned categories, there are also intra-category inequalities, between the counties of each region and between the localities of the same county.

In addition to the structural factors of development, certain characteristics that describe the local context enhance the development at the local level, both in terms of dynamics and development model and the impact on certain categories of population. Vulnerabilities and vulnerable people also exist in poor localities from poor areas, in underdeveloped localities from relatively developed areas, but also in localities with medium or high degree of development, either vulnerable in marginalized areas or marginal in non-marginalized areas.

Starting from the structural factors of development and from the typologies built on them and operationalized in social measurement models - such as the one proposed by Dumitru Sandu and operationalized in an index of local development - the added value of the proposed project lies in refining the analysis by overlapping this typology over a typology of local contexts and by deciphering the factors and mechanisms of

underdevelopment, at local level. The proposed research has an exploratory character. In this research framework, we did not aim to test and validate some hypotheses, the approach being predominantly qualitative, but to substantiate some hypotheses to be tested and validated in future research.

The reduction of the initial budget, on the one hand and the unforeseen difficulties arising from the emergence and development of the COVID 19 pandemic, on the other hand, led to the need to reduce the volume of data collection within the project, without affecting the logic and objectives of the proposed approach. A condition in this sense was the maintenance of the representation of all categories of localities and counties selected according to the cross-criteria according to the model of the preliminary proposed typology in the design of this research. We also aimed at the balanced representation of each type of locality, at the level of each of the two selected development regions. Therefore, even if in some counties we selected only rural localities and in others we included small or very small towns, at the level of each of the two development regions, there are represented all four categories of proposed localities.

2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

The paradigm of social development is the result of the crossing of two types of approaches to the underdevelopment phenomenon, which are based on two competing theories: the theories of modernization, respectively the theories of dependence.

Modernization theories propose the paradigm of development as modernization, after an evolutionary scheme. According to this scheme, societies progress from the traditional to the modern stage, which represents the phase of their maturity. Beyond differences of perspective on modernization factors and their mode of action, *“modernization theories converge on a common conclusion: underdevelopment is the common feature of the societies at an early or intermediate point on the road to modernity, in contrast to developed societies, which have reached this point”* (Preotesi M., 2007, p.565).

One of the important models of economic growth in the economic literature is the model of W W. Rostow (1959), who talks about six stages of growth of societies: 1.) *The traditional society*, characterized by subsistence agriculture and a primary economy, in addition, a reduced capacity for economic growth due to reduced modern technologies. Also, it is characterized by reduced individual economic mobility and resistance to change. 2.) *The preconditions to take-off* are represented by the external increase in demand of raw materials, large-scale investments (canals, ports irrigation), increased spread of technology, commercial agriculture develops, crops are exported, social structure changes, individual social mobility begins and the also development of national identity and common economic interests appear. 3.) *In the take-off phase*, urbanization increases, industrialization takes place, technological discoveries occur.

The 'secondary' sector (commodity producer) expands and the ratio between the secondary and primary sectors of the economy is moving towards the secondary. 4). *The road to maturity* leads to the diversification of the industrial base, more industries are expanding, and new ones are taking root. Transport infrastructure is developing. Large-scale investments are made in social infrastructure, hospitals schools. 5). *The period of mass consumption* is represented by the industrial base that dominates the economy; the primary sector has a very low share in the economy and society consumes goods, consumers have disposable income, beyond basic needs for additional goods. Society is urbanizing, with a movement from rural to urban 6). *In the post-consumer society* (beyond consumption), people feel in a society with high economic security and are moving towards nonmaterial goods.

Sociological perspectives on modernization introduce social and cultural factors along economic factors. Such perspectives have Inglehart R. (1977), Voicu (2002), Emery and Flora (2006). Inglehart (1977) talks about a development model that is based on the cultural dimension and which has two axes: secular-rational values versus traditional values and values of self-expression versus survival values.

According to Emery and Flora (Emery & Flora, 2006, p. 20) there are 7 types of capital that contribute to the transformation of communities: 1) *natural capital*, which refers to the particularity of the location, natural resources, geographical isolation, or non-isolation; 2) *cultural capital*: traditions, values, ways of relating to the world that determine certain types of action; this capital influences, the locally recognized power relations of some groups, determines certain types of local privileges; 3) *human capital* refers to people's skills and abilities to use local resources and access external resources and the ability of leaders to promote participation and inclusion, to act proactively in shaping the future of the community; 4) *social capital* refers to the cohesion of the community, it reflects the connection of people and organizations to do things together. A special type of social capital is the entrepreneurial social capital that influences the economic development of the community. The latter includes internal and external networks and local mobilization of resources; 5) *political capital* reflects access to power, organizations, parties, connection to resources, the ability of people to get involved in actions that contribute to the well-being of the community; 6) *financial capital* refers to the financial resources available to invest in the community, in business development, to support social and civic entrepreneurship, to accumulate well-being for community development; 7) *built-up capital* refers to infrastructure, to access resources and support activities.

Emery and Flora talk about a spiraling down in which case there is the decline of all types of capital: job loss, population decline, aging of the community, reduced fertility, young people leaving the community, income decline, loss of welfare transfer between

generations, the decline of infrastructure, the decline of social capital. Deterioration of the quality of life in the community takes place through a system effect.

Spiraling up refers to increasing opportunities and community well-being: expanding human capital by accumulating knowledge and skills, increasing opportunities for young people to stay in the community, involving young people in entrepreneurship, investing in infrastructure, protecting the environment, increasing social capital, involvement in volunteering and philanthropy. The 7 types of capital interact with each other systemically, support each other in the situation of growth but also influence the case of decline. The perspective is therefore a functionalist one, the community is seen as a system in which any segment is related to another. Due to this interdependence, the change in one point of the system causes effects in the whole system.

Starting from A.G. Franck's (1996) theory of dependence, according to which export-oriented development solutions create harmful imbalances for poor communities, the model emphasizing the relationship of export of solutions from developed countries to underdeveloped countries, there were derived concepts such as regional development, in the sense of dependence on the large urban centers for the small localities around them.

One direction of analysis is the studies on the impact of structural development factors and how they are regulated by the functioning of local social mechanisms. In Romania, authors such as Cătălin Zamfir (2007), Sandu D. (1999, 2011) Voicu M. (2004), Voicu B. (2005), Tesliuc, Grigoraș, Stănculescu (2016), Preotesi M. (2013) designed models for analyzing the social development of communities in Romania.

The sociological perspective on modernization introduces as determinants of modernization, along the economic ones, the social and cultural factors. Newer approaches to the phenomenon of underdevelopment, give an increased importance, both to the stock of social capital and to that of human capital, on the one hand, as indicators, on the other hand, as predictors of social development. Community development is a particular case of social development. The model for measuring local / community development proposed by Dumitru Sandu (1999, 2011) identifies two types of structural factors of community development: human capital, respectively, infrastructure, at community level.

To measure local / community development, Sandu D. builds the local social development index to reproduce the current configuration of social development disparities in Romania. The local social development index is calculated by aggregating seven primary indicators. The relevant and available indicators for the community capital of the localities are (Sandu, 2011, p. 5) human capital (education stock at community level), vital capital (average age of people over 14 years and life expectancy at birth), material capital (number of cars per 1000 inhabitants, average area per dwelling, gas consumption per capita) and size, residence category of the locality. The

conclusions of the 2011 Sandu's analysis show that life chances are strongly differentiated in Romania depending on where you live, and disparities are structured on four axes: urban-rural housing, residential concentration, access to services and infrastructure and employment sector, a fifth axis with limited relevance in urban space refers to relational capital, associated with cultural diversity.

These axes together with four fields: education, health, consumption, social relations constitute the framework of inequality of social development manifested at regional level. Sandu shows that the biggest axis of differentiation is between urban and rural. In Romania, the rural continues to have a much higher infant mortality than the urban, a lower life expectancy than the urban. The quality of housing is systematically better in urban than in rural areas for all counties in the country. A second axis refers to the chances of accessibility. Sandu shows that social development is higher in communes close to the city and in communities with access to European roads, compared to those that have access only to communal or county roads. Commuting is also a factor. Rural localities with increased commuting bring income within the community. The third axis refers to the predominant agricultural occupation of the population. In the plain communities the activities of growing cereals are predominant, associated with low incomes. Communities where animal breeding is a developed sector tend to be more socially developed. The fourth axis is given by the size of the locality as the number of inhabitants. In communes with a small number of inhabitants, mortality rates by age group tend to be higher. The fifth dimension is given by relational capital. Regarding the education stock, the average number of school years completed by the population in a locality is a relevant indicator for both urban and rural areas. (Sandu, 2011, p. 18-20).

2.1. The perspective of marginalized areas

In recent years, several studies dedicated to community development and the identification of marginal areas under World Bank funding in Romania (2015-2017) made typologies of marginalization, of disadvantaged urban and rural areas in Romania. Tesliuc, Grigoras, Stanculescu in *The Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas* (2016) talk about rural poor communities, segregated communities, and marginalized rural communities. According to their analysis, most people at risk of poverty or social exclusion live in rural areas, but rural poverty comes in various forms, from poverty in small villages or with an aged population to communities with low human capital, low formal employment, improper housing.

The study shows that most analyzes of marginalization in Romania focused on rural areas at the level of the administrative unit (usually at the commune level) and only a few studies conducted at the level of locality, most based on qualitative research techniques. Most analyzes in Romania took into account the following indicators: human capital (education, health and the number of family members or children); employment (relative to the number of unemployed, undeclared work, work in

subsistence agriculture); living conditions (quality of housing and connection to public utility networks). (p. 19-20).

The Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas uses the term "marginalized rural areas" for compact urban areas inhabited by people with a disproportionately low human capital, few declared jobs and improper living conditions compared to residents in other rural areas. The following criteria are used as for marginalization: human capital - proportion of the population aged 15-64 who have graduated at most 8 classes, proportion of people with disabilities, chronic diseases or other medical conditions that hinder their daily activities, proportion of children (0-17 years) of the total population; employment - proportion of people aged 15-64 who are not employed in the formal labor market (employees or employers) and do not follow a form of education, proportion of people aged 15-64 who are not employed in the formal labor market (employees or employers) and do not follow any form of education; housing - proportion of dwellings without electricity, proportion of overcrowded dwellings, proportion of dwellings without running water, housing insecurity (proportion of non-owner dwellings). (p 21). Also they look at the history of the area, access to public services, issues related to crime and public order, community relations, utilities (water, sewerage, electricity) geographical environmental barriers, environmental risks, key groups in the area and population fluctuations, major community problems interventions already implemented in the area.

On the other hand, The Atlas of Marginalized Urban Areas in Romania (World Bank, 2014) defines the different types of disadvantaged urban areas, as well as the "bags" of urban marginalization, where deprivation is the most severe. "Marginalized" urban areas are defined as areas within cities and municipalities that do not meet an appropriate standard on any of the three criteria, have a shortage of human capital, have a low level of formal employment and offer unsuitable living conditions. "Disadvantaged" urban areas are, by definition, areas within cities and municipalities that do not meet an appropriate standard on one or two of the above criteria. (p.4). Subtypes of marginalized urban communities are ghetto-type areas with poor quality blocks or in former working-class settlements, slum-type areas with makeshift houses and / or shelters, historic (central) areas of some cities (p.11).

In our research approach we propose, we aim to build an explanatory model of how contextual factors can enhance the action of structural factors of development. The experience of a series of previous projects in which some team members were involved (such as those summarized in Preotesi, 2014) reveals the importance of these contextual factors in shaping a local development model.

A first category of factors concerns the recent history of the locality and of the nearest important city from the perspective of the deindustrialization and reagrization processes. A second category of factors concerns the ways of responding to the social

change of the inhabitants of these localities - either passive ways, such as accessing social benefits, or active ways, such as professional reorientation, or ways of withdrawal, such as migration. We propose an in-depth analysis of the mechanisms and factors that shape the architecture of these choices at the individual-family level.

The Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas (Stănculescu et al. 2016) reveals that regional differences are significantly larger in the case of marginalized rural communities, and the share of marginalized rural areas with a significant Roma population is important, except for the North East region, where the share of non-Roma communities is significantly higher compared to mixed or high share of Roma (over 20%). According to this Atlas, in rural localities in Romania the proportion of the population aged 15-64 who graduated at most 8 classes is 47% (in marginalized rural areas, reaching 80%). The proportion of people aged 15-64 who do never have attended a form of education and have never been employed on formal labor market (employees, employers or retirees) is of 54% in rural areas, respectively 83% in marginalized rural areas.(p.25, p.35)

According to the Atlas of marginalized urban areas mentioned (World Bank, 2014), marginalized areas are found in all types of cities, whether small, medium or large and in all regions of the country, but the share of these areas is over 10 times higher in Romanian very small towns compared to the very large ones. The proportion of the population living in advantaged areas, either in terms of human capital, housing or employment, is increasing, in direct proportion to the size of cities - from 29% in very small towns to 43% in small towns, 70% in medium-sized ones, reaching 79% in the big cities, respectively, 81% in Bucharest. At the regional level, the proportion of the population living in advantaged areas varies between 60% in the cities of the North-East and 79% in the Bucharest-Ilfov region. The share of the population in marginalized areas is 4.3% in the North-East and Center, 4.2% in the South-East and 3.7% in the West, while the other regions have equal rates or lower than the national average of 3.2%.

According to an analysis of the answers to the open questions regarding the main local level problems identified by local institutional representatives, from data collected in 2017 in an MLSJ project, named SIPOCA code 4⁴, there are poverty and lack of jobs. The lack of jobs is compensated by the practice of subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture and occasional activities, these types of precarious employment generating in work poverty. Employment in subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture has a significant share of the total employed population according to NIS TEMPO data⁵, in

⁴ Implementation of a public policy development system in the field of social inclusion at the level of Ministry of Labor and Social Justice", SIPOCA 4 code -2016-2018. The authors of this article were part of the projects as experts.

⁵ National Institute of Statistics: <http://statistici.inse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/inse-table>

the third quarter of 2019, over 2 million people were employed, cumulatively, in self-employed activities in agriculture and as unpaid family workers.

At community level, precarious employment and low education stocks lead to poverty and social underdevelopment. The relationship between poverty, marginalization and local development is a complex one. Although there are certain areas of overlap, the maps of marginalized areas do not overlap with those of poverty (according to the cited sources). In addition, data such as those presented above show that the very benchmark to which marginalization refers is an indicator of the underdevelopment of the rural environment.

Poverty maps do not perfectly overlap with those of in-work poverty. The analysis of the results of the SIPOCA 4 project (MLSJ, 2016-2018)⁶, reveals that the relative poverty rate correlates positively with that of labor poverty and negatively correlates with the share of the employed population in the working age population. While the positive correlation between relative poverty and in work poverty is enhanced by the quality of employment, the negative correlation between relative poverty and the employment rate of the working age population is enhanced by the quantitative aspects of employment.

If both indicators have values significantly above the national average, the share of the employed working age population is relatively high, but a large share of the employed population is involved in activities that do not bring well-being.

When employment is effective, but a small share of the working age population is employed, the poverty rate is high, while that of working poverty is low. The ideal situation, in which both the poverty rate and the poverty rate at work are at a level significantly below the national average is conditioned by the existence of a large share of the employed working age population, and by the efficiency of employment. The simultaneous fulfillment of the two conditions is a premise of social development, but social development also depends on the type of employment, not only on its efficiency. Only in certain contexts is individual employment efficiency transferred to the high level of local development.⁷

The profile of marginalization is different in the case of Roma communities compared to non-Roma. While most marginalized rural areas are small, Roma communities tend

⁶ Synthesized in Preotesi M., 2018

⁷ This complex relationship between employment and social development will be the background of an analysis Preotesi Mihnea, (2020) chapter *Analysis of the differentiated impact of the dynamics of individual well-being on the local development in the Romanian countryside. An analysis in the mountainous and submontane rural areas*, in the volume Zamfir C., Stănescu I. (2020) *Romania 1989-2019: social policies and strategic options*, ongoing manuscript

to be more extensive. A share of 86% of Roma living in marginalized communities live in Roma communities with more than 250 inhabitants

Landform is one of the factors influencing rural marginalization. And according to this criterion, there are differences between the profiles of marginalized Roma communities and respectively non-Roma. While in the villages located in the plain the probability of having a marginalized area is three times higher than in mountain villages and hilly mountain villages, in general, Roma communities are much more numerous in marginalized rural areas in mountain villages and in hilly mountain villages.

Most communes with marginalized areas are medium-developed or poor, in terms of the share of the population that is at risk of relative poverty - the probability of having a marginalized area is almost 10 times higher in poor communes than in developed ones. In the case of marginalized Roma communities, they are significantly more likely to be in developed communities (with low poverty rates). In the case of Roma marginalized communities, they are significantly more likely to be located in developed communities (with low poverty rates), marginalization being associated, rather with the Roma ethnicity than with elements that characterize the local and zonal socio-economic context.

3. Research methodology

Starting from a social measurement models such as the one proposed by Dumitru Sandu and operationalized in an index of local development, our project refines the analysis referring to a typology of local contexts and by deciphering the factors and mechanisms of underdevelopment, at local level, through a qualitative methodology. The proposed research has an exploratory character.

The methodological approach was subsumed to the theoretical model that integrates the two complementary perspectives: the perspective of social (under) development and the perspective of social marginalization. By operationalizing the concepts into measurable indicators and crossing the two categories of indicators of underdevelopment, at local level, respectively, of the incidence of marginalized areas, we identified a list of indicators that characterize in various combinations, types of localities. Using these indicators as selection criteria, in a first phase, we selected several counties that integrate a significant number of such combinations of local factors of underdevelopment and marginalization.

The desk research and secondary data analysis stages resulted in the selection of counties, respectively, in the subsequent phase, the selection of localities where data are to be collected in the next stage of the project (in 2021). For the “piloting” of the proposed typology model, six counties were selected, according to the following algorithm: 1). we excluded the most developed, respectively, the most underdeveloped 2

regions (North East, West Oltenia, West and Bucharest Ilfov); 2). from the remaining four development regions, we chose a region with a higher degree of development (Center region), respectively, one with a lower degree of development (South Muntenia Region); 3). in order to ensure the most complete representation of the typology of rural localities, in each of the two selected regions we also selected more developed counties and counties with a lower degree of development, in a regional context; we crossed this criterion with that of the degree of urbanization at county level and with that of intra-county development disparities. We also aimed to cover all types of landform combinations.

Table 1. Selection of development regions and counties and criteria used for selection

Development region	Selected county	Selection criterion / county profile
Center	Brasov	County with varied landform, high degree of urbanization, low rate of urban poverty and relatively high rate of rural poverty - high share of Roma
Center	Alba	County with predominantly mountainous landform, with medium degree of urbanization, with small and isolated villages and with a large share of small towns, under 10,000 inhabitants
Center	Mureș	County with varied landform, medium degree of urbanization, high share of Roma and high rate of rural poverty
Sud Muntenia	Călărași	County with plain landform, poorly urbanized, with a pronounced agricultural profile
South Muntenia	Argeș	County with varied landform, relatively economically developed, with low degree of urbanization and large intra-territorial discrepancies
South Muntenia	Dâmbovița	County with varied landform, relatively economically developed, with a very low degree of urbanization and with large intra-territorial discrepancies

The design of the research methodology focused on each of the project phases. If in the first phase we used an algorithm for selecting the counties, the second phase involved the elaboration of a methodology for selecting the localities in each of the 6 selected counties (Alba, Brașov, Mureș, from the Center region, respectively, Arges, Călărași, Dâmbovița, in the South Muntenia region).

In substantiating the proposal of the project we made a preliminary analysis of the results of a previous project (in which data were collected for each locality in Romania)

SIPOCA 4 (MLSJ / NIER, 2016-2018) from the perspective of the relevance of the locality size indicator as the main predictor of socio-economic development at local level. According to this criterion, we selected for the preliminary analysis rural localities and cities with a population under 20,000 inhabitants from the 6 selected counties. Rural localities were grouped into the following categories:

- rural localities with a population of less than 3000 inhabitants.
- rural localities with a population between 3001-6000 inhabitants
- rural localities with a population of over 6000 inhabitants

Therefore, the second phase of the project involved the selection of rural localities / small towns in each of the 6 counties where data will be collected in 2021. For this purpose, we performed a secondary analysis of the data from the SIPOCA 4 project (MLSJ / NIER, 2016-2018), mentioned above, validated, where possible, with official NIS data. By crossing the two categories of indicators, of underdevelopment, at local level, respectively, of the incidence of marginalized areas, we identified a list of indicators that characterize in various combinations, types of localities. The specific ways in which various combinations of indicators are made, at local level, generate typologies of under-development that will represent important landmarks in the selection of localities where data will be collected in the next stage of the project.

The preliminary comparative analysis of the socio-economic profile of the 3 categories of localities includes the indicators selected and presented in the table below.

Table 2. Development indicators

The average population
The average distance from the nearest city with over 30,000 inhabitants
The average distance from the county town-center
No. employees per 1,000 inhabitants
No. persons left to work abroad / per 1000 inhabitants
No. commuters per 1,000 inhabitants
Weighted average poverty rate
% of the self-employed population in agriculture in their own household and on their own land
% of people benefiting from VMG
% dropout after 8th grade (students who do not enroll in high school)

In addition to the general characteristics that characterize the socioeconomic profile of each locality, such as geographical positioning, main sources of income, local and regional labor market, accessibility and quality of infrastructure (roads), access to public

utilities, school infrastructure, the profile is configured by a series of characteristics that describe in specific ways the local context and enhance the process of local development, as well as the impact of this process on some categories of population.

Vulnerabilities and vulnerable people also exist in poor localities in poor areas, in underdeveloped localities in relatively developed areas, but also in localities with medium or high degree of development, either vulnerable in marginalized areas or marginal in non-marginalized areas.

The desk research stage integrated the analysis of the specialized literature related to the targeted topic and the secondary analysis of data collected in projects on consubstantial topics. The next stage was dedicated to strengthening the methodological approach and developing data collection tools. The desk research and secondary data analysis stage resulted in the selection of localities where data will be collected in the next phase of the project.

The proposed methodological approach was a mixed, mainly a qualitative one, the analysis of the data collected by filling in data sheets at ATU level, validated and completed with statistical data, representing the background on which the qualitative research was designed. Local data collection targeted the following target groups: relevant institutional representatives at local level; population in marginalized and non-marginalized areas, respectively vulnerable people from marginalized areas (two subcategories: vulnerable Roma people; vulnerable non-Roma people).

Although we did not propose the statistical representativeness of these categories of localities, respectively, respondents from each locality, our approach aimed at respecting the desideratum of a theoretical representativeness, in the sense of comprehensiveness of the categories. Therefore, on the one hand, rural and urban localities were selected, localities from the plain area and from the mountain area of the county, located at greater or lesser distances from the county seat, with a significant share of the Roma population and without ethnic Roma. On the other hand, although the criterion for choosing respondents in this exploratory phase of data collection was mainly that of availability, we conducted interviews with relevant institutional representatives, at local level, individual interviews, but also focus groups with vulnerable people, Roma or non-Roma, as well as interviews with local entrepreneurs.

4. Synthesis of the results of the analysis of the data collected in Alba county - an exploratory case study.⁸

In the first phase of the project, we set out to carry out an exploratory case study in Alba County for testing the research tools. In selecting the localities from Alba county, we considered the exploratory character of the proposed research approach. In this context, one of the selection criteria was the availability of respondents with the role of *key informants*. In addition to testing the tools and methodology, maintaining the flexible, less structured nature of the approach, increases the heuristic potential of this exploratory approach.

Alba, being a county with a relatively large share of mountain and sub-mountain areas where animal breeding remains one of the basic activities for a significant share of families, in this context, the analysis aimed at the complex relationship between type configuration and weight of the types of employment and local development.

One of the types of underdevelopment analyzed in this case is that of relatively economically developed localities but underdeveloped from the complex perspective of the definition of local development proposed in the project. The complex relationship between employment and social development is operationalized by the relationship between the type of employment and its efficiency, at the individual level, on the one hand, at the community level, on the other hand. When employment is effective, but a small share of the working age population is employed, the poverty rate is high, while that of in work poverty is low.

The ideal situation, in which both the poverty rate and the poverty rate at work are at a level significantly below the national average is conditioned by the existence of a large share of the employed working age population, and by employment efficiency. Simultaneous fulfillment of the two conditions is a prerequisite for social development, but social development also depends on the type of employment, not just its effectiveness. Only in certain contexts is individual employment efficiency transferred to the high level of local development.

The low degree of local development, reflected by the low stock of education, the low share of employees and the prevalence of agricultural activity, is also characteristic of some localities that are not poor and where the standard of living is average or above average, from the income perspective. The identification of communities with a similar social development profile, both in poor areas and in areas with a relatively high level of development, substantiates as a research hypothesis the existence of mechanisms of

⁸ Synthesis of the results of the analysis of the data collected in Alba county is made by Mihnea Preotesi (author of the case study in Alba)

community underdevelopment that follow a common structural logic that we find even in developed areas of the country.

In addition to other previous research experiences, very recent preliminary results of a research project on a complementary topic validate the hypothesis stated above and provide the premises for in-depth analysis of these mechanisms that maintain the spiral of social underdevelopment in "rich" rural communities.

One such example is that of some of the mountainous and sub-mountainous areas, where animal breeding has represented and still represents an activity that can bring income that ensures a decent living for farmers and their families, but which does not generate local development. Subsidizing agricultural activity *“can produce, in certain local contexts, ambivalent and opposite effects, from the perspective of farmers, respectively, from the perspective of local development”* (Preotesi, 2020).

In the context described above, we selected a small town, Abrud, located in a submontane area, respectively, a locality in the Apuseni Mountains, Albac commune. The third locality selected for this exploratory study is a locality from the plain area, with a pronounced agricultural character, Bucerdea Grânoasă commune.

While the first two localities are at great distances from the county center town, but also from any important city, Bucerdea Grânoasă is located at a relatively short distance from Alba Iulia (30 km.) And only 10 km from Blaj municipality.

The greater proximity to an important city, the higher access of the population to the public utility infrastructure, on the one hand, the relatively large share of the Roma population and the population living in marginalized areas, on the other hand, individualizes this locality among the three selected localities.

The data collected in the three localities from Alba County were collected from a predominantly qualitative perspective, being validated and supplemented with data collected from a quantitative perspective, through questionnaires addressed to ATU⁹ representatives, from the project database mentioned above (SIPOCA 4).

In each of the three localities in Alba County where we collected data, we identified specific elements that can generate positive or negative effects on local development.

Albac commune, due to the great distance from the county seat and any other city with over 30,000 inhabitants, low population and its spread in 16 villages, with some houses scattered on steep slopes difficult to access, large percentage of the population occupied in agriculture and the low share of employees, has premises of local under-development. The presence of a high school in the locality, the tourist potential, having an accentuated positive tendency of capitalization and development of associated services,

⁹ Territorial administrative units

on the one hand, the experience and resources generated by working abroad, the experience of accessing European funds for building and developing agritourism pensions, on the other hand, represent elements that can support a process of sustainable local development.

However, it depends on the way it takes advantage of the local resources, and on the concrete ways in which tourism can have a significant positive impact at the local level, through the effect of multiplication in the local economy. The diversification of the tourist services offer, and the professionalization of this activity will be able to increase the number of employees in the commune and to increase the efficiency of agricultural activities.

The balanced exploitation of local resources and the protection of the environment will be particularly important, today subject of an intensive exploitation of wood and other aggressions, such as intensive grazing. This phenomenon, less present here, in the conditions in which there are not very large farms, with thousands of sheep, is not serious both by its magnitude, but by the inefficient use of natural resources, materialized in the high degree of waste, as long as subsidies are seen as an end and not as a mean of increasing the economic efficiency of the activities.

The city of Abrud also has ambivalent characteristics from the perspective of local development. Although, compared to rural localities and small towns in Romania, both the share of employees in the employed population and the education stock are at a relatively high level, the differences compared to developed urban areas are significant. The long distance from the county town center, the large share in the economy of the sources of income of a poorly efficient agriculture, carried out in small and very small individual farms, mining restructuring, significant migration of young people to cities and lack of occupational alternatives, the quasi-inexistence of local social services are rather unfavorable premises for local development.

Bucerdea Grânoasă commune is a commune in a process of local development in the last 14 years since it became an independent commune. There are elements favorable to development, such as the proximity to Blaj and the distance to the county seat, the significant share of local employees, investments made by city hall in improving infrastructure, including school infrastructure, the relatively low rate of permanent internal and external migration and the significant rate of successful circular migration.

However, this development process is hampered by certain characteristics that define the socio-economic profile of the locality. The low stock of education produces negative inter-generational effects, mainly, but not exclusively, for the Roma population. The percentage of students who access the higher educational level, after finishing high school in the locality is still quite low.

The local supply of jobs locally is very precarious. Even if the alternative of commuting to Blaj, Teius or Alba Iulia is a handy one, the lack of local investments and local employers are indicators and factors that hinder local development, the local budget is not fed with consistent amounts from such a source of income.

From the data and observations collected on the spot, it appears that the discrepancies between the Roma and the non-Roma population, despite the reduction of the gaps on certain dimensions, remain significant. Considering the high and growing share of the Roma population in the commune (20%), local development cannot be achieved without implementing a strategy to accelerate the reduction of these gaps. The increase of the education stock and the reduction of the discrepancies between the Roma population and the non-Roma population of the locality represent the main challenges of the local development process.

Conclusions

Therefore, in each of the three localities in Alba County where we collected data, we identified specific elements that can generate positive or negative effects on local development. The way in which these elements of local context are combined in a specific historical evolution, potentiates their impact on the local development process.

One of the conclusions of this first phase of the project is the need to refine the approach in the next phase of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The static perspective of the analysis of the current situation of the selected localities from the perspective of local development will be integrated with the dynamic perspective of the processes aimed at the socio-economic evolution of the locality.

Such processes, identified in the exploratory approach presented in the Interim Report of the project aim at phenomena of reagrization of some urban localities, the change of migration patterns and the local impact of these changes, the concentration of agricultural properties, the impact of growth and changes in agricultural subsidy conditions.

On the other hand, among the aspects that may have an indirect impact on the evolution of local economy activities and sources of income, there are certain legislative changes or certain developments in the "de facto" application of laws, such as those that are referring to deforestation.

The results of the first exploratory phase of the project, will be operationalized and integrated in the consolidated version of the data collection tools, both the files through which data will be collected at the level of the selected ATUs and in the qualitative data collection tools.

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POLICE OFFICERS, AT-RISK-YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PROJECT: A CASE STUDY OF THE SOUTHSIDE OF BELIZE CITY

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Abstract: *This study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What themes emerge out of the interactions between police officers and at-risk-youths? (2) What larger ramifications emerge from the study (if any)? The study found that at-risk-youth tend to fear and distrust the police but that fear fades away, confidence and trust in police officers is built, depending on the way police officers treat the youth in each situation. At-risk-youth saw the police in positive light when police officers played the role of the helper in the situation rather than the role of security agents. The study also found that since police officers have more power in their interaction with at-risk-communities, they influence and largely determine the realization of peaceful and inclusive communities. The study recommends investing in projects that bring together police officers and at-risk-communities to work for peaceful and inclusive societies. Building stronger relations between police officers and at-risk-communities requires intentional long-term policy commitment that provides opportunities for police work, especially community policing to be integrated into community development work.*

Keywords: *community; police; justice; inclusion; peace; development*

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goal 16 seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, to provide access to justice for all and to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (UNDP, 2015). Achieving this goal in Belize means two things: (1) addressing the problem of gun-related violence; (2) improving the relationship between police officers and at-risk-communities, especially the youth. Focus on at-risk-youth is important because the youth provide the

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vulnerable pool of candidates from which organized crime groups recruit members. Focus on improving relations between youth and police officers is important because it contributes to the desired quality of policing practices and community safety.

The Southside of Belize city is among the poorest parts of the country. The city was established by the British during the 1600s. Slaves from West Africa were settled there to work in forestry as woodcutters. There were about 39,555 people of African descent, representing 69% of the city population, according to the 2010 census. The area is heavily congested with increasingly new informal houses attached to the original buildings. Most households are female headed, yet unemployment among women is 68.7% (Government of Belize, 2019).

Most of the reported crimes that occur on the Southside of Belize city are gang and gun-related. There are about 900 to 1,400 gang members in the city. About one in five youth in the city is exposed to gang activity. Gang networks operate in the community, schools and informal peer networks. Over 80% of gang members who have been studied reported that they had family members affiliated to gang organizations. Youth tend to join gangs at the ages of 13-16 years. They do so to seek protection, feel safe or revenge a killing or harm caused to them or to a family member. Youth who are often recruited into gangs are also associated with the following risk factors: (1) they come from broken homes; (2) they were suspended or expelled from school; (2) they dropped out of school; (4) they were not able to join high school or college because of poverty or other socio-economic related circumstances. Daily activities in the city are often interrupted by gang activities therefore limiting the freedom to conduct socio-economic activities. Many youths studied had experienced or witnessed gang related violence firsthand and were exposed to trauma (Inter-American Development Bank, 2019).

About 66% percent of young people on the Southside live below the poverty line. There is disproportionate contact between law enforcement and young men on the Southside (Peirce, 2017). This often creates police-community conflict. Youth violence in the Southside is attributed to factors that include drug trafficking, the presence of gangs, availability of illegal firearms, human trafficking, fragmentation of social ties, lack of education, lack of employment for youth, and failure to implement programs designed to help youth (Peirce & Veyrat-Pontent, 2013). There is a disconnect between state security provisions and engaging vulnerable youths exposed to violence and victimization (Baird, 2013).

The traditional view of peace, security, justice, law and order assumes that government, having been entrusted with coercive power, legitimately applies that power to enforce peace (Pandit & Basu, 2015). On the streets, the presence of government is embedded in the presence and work of the police. Studies show that police culture is rooted in the historical inclination to unfairly treat people of African, Asian, or other minority identity. Racist beliefs, xenophobic attitudes and prejudices are still entrenched in

policing practices, even in places where the police service or force is diverse. Negative stereotypes are part of daily workplace talk in the justice system and inform the way police classify people because of their ethnic origin. For example, police officers tend to classify people of African or Asian origin as deviant, troublesome, hard to handle, suspicious, aggressive, riotous etc. This characterization by government agencies legitimizes stereotypes, derivative negative perception and the way people of the respective ethnic origin are treated during police encounters (Bowling & Philips, 2003).

This study is guided by labeling theory which is based on the principle of symbolic interactionism. Labeling theory assumes that people tend to act or behave in accordance to the label imposed on them (Bachman & Schutt, 2012). If someone is labelled a suspect for example, by authorities or public, others will treat that person as a suspect. In reaction, the person is likely to act in reciprocity to the way they were treated. The theory is used in this study as the lens through which data is analyzed. The assumption guiding the analysis is that labels imposed on at-risk-individuals influence the way those individuals are perceived, treated and the reactionary behavior they assume to survive the situation.

The Project: Improving relations between police officers and at-risk-youth

In September 2017, a young man was stopped by police officers on patrol while riding a bicycle in Belize City. The interaction turned into an altercation. The young man was arrested. The employer of the young man, concerned with the relationship between police officers and young people in the city, shared this experience in a community meeting at Belize City Friends Center. Belize City Friends Center is a non-profit faith-based organization involved in community development on the Southside of Belize city. The center engages in a range of development work, for example peace building, networking, and resource mobilization to address socio-economic problems affecting the community, such as hosting medical camps to improve general public health, or hosting legal clinics to increase access to justice and relief assistance.

The center, in response, started a community safety forum to invite community leaders to the discussion about the interaction between police officers and the youth. TV advertisements and talk shows were used to mobilize community voice about the issue. Community leaders who participated in the community safety forums formed a coalition that later met with the Commissioner of Police and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs, who at the time supervised the police department. The meeting focused on concerns about policing on the Southside of Belize City and how to improve relations between police officers and at-risk youths. Among the resolutions of the meeting was a call to civil society organizations and the police department to start projects that could improve relations between police officers and at-risk-youth.

Following the resolution, Belize City Friends Center and the Police department partnered to conduct a campaign against human trafficking. This project was meant to promote community safety by bringing together at-risk-youth and police officers to work on an issue of mutual concern. Police officers and at-risk-youth were both agents of change and it was anticipated that they would see and label each other as such. The study focused on the following questions: (1) What themes emerge out of the interactions between police officers and at-risk-youths? (2) What larger ramifications emerge from the study (if any)?

Methodology

The study took place during and after campaigns held in the fall of 2017, spring, summer and fall of 2018, spring, summer and fall of 2019. Participants in the study were police officers sent by the police department to take part in the campaign and community leaders who worked with at-risk-youth who volunteered to participate in the project.

Apart from literature review, data comes from what people say, feel, think or how they respond to a given situation under study (Loseke, 2013). Data was obtained from secondary sources such as research reports, oral accounts of incidents relevant to the study, problem centered key informant interviews, and participant observations. Problem centered key informant interviews are used to elicit information from informants when the researcher is seeking a deeper understanding of a subject. Questions are asked in a way that allows the informant the flexibility give a direct answer or tell a story (Witzel, 2000). Eight key informants participated in the study. They were interviewed about their experiences participating in a project where at-risk-youth interacted with police officers on a community project. Seeking oral narratives from participants enables the researcher to obtain data that entails the individual's personal reflection on the experience that is subject of the study (Creswell, 2013: 70-73).

Data analysis was based on hermeneutics – the idea that a text does not exist in a vacuum but as a response to something in the context where that text exists. In hermeneutics, the role of interpretation is to expose new ways of seeing the text, against the way the text has been usually understood (Fernandez 1967 in Bernard & Ryan 2010, 257-258). Considering that the text here, is the interaction between police officers and at-risk-youths, which has often been incidental and negative, analysis in this study seeks to go beyond incidental encounters to incorporate intentional encounters between police officers and at-risk-youths. It seeks to add voice to the discussion about making community policing a way of life, integrating community policing in the community's development vision, planning and work, in ways that make interaction between police officers and at-risk-youth a way of life-about issues of mutual concern.

Thematic Issues from the Project

(a) The fear of police officers

From recruitment to the early stages of the project, at-risk youth involved in the project tended to fear and distrust the idea of coming to work with police officers on a community project. Community leaders who recruited youths to work with police officers on the project learned that many youths were afraid of coming near or into contact with police officers: “Them no good to we” (they are not good to us), one volunteer was told.

Some of the fears youth expressed about encounters with police officers were not as a result of the direct experiences of the individuals who shared them, but as a collective feeling shared in community. A few months before the campaign started, Kelvin, a form 6th student who had been very popular in the community because he was a DJ and a volunteer with the Department of Human Services, went missing after police raided his father’s house. The incident sparked protests from hundreds of youths supported by rights groups. During the protests, there were unconfirmed reports from the speakers that he had been kidnapped by the police and was being secretly held. Kevin was later found and was brought to address the protests. He did not say where he was but he condemned the police raid. The incident was one among many that were shared in the community to explain why youths avoided police presence or encounters.

To bring youth to work together with police officers, community leaders spent time in community creating awareness of the importance of the project and encouraging young people to work with community organizations and police officers to address a critical peace and community safety issue like human trafficking. During the first phase of the campaign, forty-five youths turned up to participate in the project.

(b) Confidence in working with police officers

At-risk-youth developed confidence to positively engage and work with police officers after they saw the way police officers on the project treated them. Aware of the reservations the youths in the community had, community leaders decided to use sports as a mechanism to start the relations between youths and police officers. At the start of the campaign, the police department sent a team of cadets to participate in a basketball tournament with other six teams of at-risk youths from various areas of the Southside considered rival gang territories. The event began with all participants gathered in a large circle, followed by self-introductions, and an address from the host of the campaign. After this, the youths engaged in a community workshop led by a senior officer from the Police Training Academy. After the workshop, the youths regrouped into their teams and started basketball games. Apart from leading the workshop, others played the roles of the referees, while others cheered or provided aid to the participating teams.

At the end of the games, there were more spontaneous interactions between the youth and the police officers. In the campaigns that followed, more youth teams from the community participated, after they learned from those who first attended the campaign, that the interactions between police officers and the youths were safe, communal and educative. The use of sports as a tool to initiate positive interactions between police officers and at-risk-youth proved not only effective, but also provided a practical experience on alternative ways to envision developing positive routine encounters between police officers and at-risk youth in the community.

(c) Treatment of at-risk-youth during the project

In one of the campaigns, the police department sent two police officers to talk to at-risk-youths about the status of human trafficking in Belize and what they could do to help address the problem. Before they started talking about human trafficking, the officers first talked about their lived experiences growing up on the Southside, why they chose to join the police force, and the challenges they faced while they served. This approach to engaging with the youth triggered about 30 minutes of questions and answers. This was the longest time youths had engaged the officers by asking questions. The questions ranged from how to respond to different human trafficking scenarios to personal aspirations of youths like how one can join the police force.

At the end of the workshop, participants in the campaign went around the community and distributed flyers about human trafficking and conversing. Some youths engaged police officers at a nearby police checkpoint and shared with them about the human trafficking campaign project. The treatment of at-risk-youth evolved from that of a stranger to a core-worker. By sharing their personal experiences, the police officers no longer appeared strangers to the youths. The sharing made the youths see officers as relatable. It enabled the youths to envision police officers and police work in new, but most importantly positive ways.

Concluding thoughts

At-risk-youth tended to see the police in positive light when police officers played the role of the helper in the situation rather than the role of security agents. Police carry immense power, even in at-risk-communities. Therefore, the use of police power during police interactions largely influences relations between police and at-risk communities. During the project, the youths looked at the police officers for guidance and leadership. Intentional community development work, to create opportunities for police and members of at-risk communities to engage in meaningful development work in communities, will provide opportunities for integrating policing practices within the development framework of the community and the communities' way of life. Consolidating and sharing knowledge and action from such experiences will build a

knowledge base for policy agenda setting to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

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LABOR FORCE BETWEEN DESIDERATUM AND REALITY

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Abstract: *The scientific approach of the study follows two perspectives on the labor market: a first analysis is dedicated to the employees absorbed on the labor market and of the companies that benefit from European funds in order to get out of the world economic crisis more easily. According to the National Institute of Statistics, the number of employees in the Romanian economy reached 4.984 million employees in September 2019, compared to 4.943 million employees in September 2018. New employment in the construction, wholesale and retail sectors, health and social assistance, hotels and restaurants, transport and storage, IT and consulting led to an increase in the number of employees in the economy by 41,000 between September 2018 and September 2019. The sectors that helped the economy reach the threshold of 5 million employees in 2020 were the constructions from public and private investments and the manufacturing industry. The second perspective of the study aims at the standard of living of employees' households and the purchasing power of their incomes in order to cover not only the basic needs of food, clothing, housing, its maintenance, but also the satisfaction of having a social life, of evolve professionally, to go out with family on the weekend, to meet relatives or friends, etc.*

Keywords: *labor force, education, professional skills, unemployment, vulnerable groups.*

1. Introduction

In Romania, the areas where connectivity is good, where significant investment is made in infrastructure and where foreign direct investment rates are high, the level of economic growth and the level of average wages are high. Lack of digital connectivity and adequate infrastructure further deepens disparities between and within regions, and

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education and training can make a positive contribution to improving market competitiveness.

In the period 2014-2020, Romania's financial allocation from EU cohesion policy funds amounts to 26.8 billion euros, which represents about 2% of annual GDP. The programs in Romania in which 888 million Euro EU funds were allocated, in 2019, were for smart growth (2.7 billion euros); for sustainable growth and sustainable transport (13 billion euros); to increase labor inclusion (EUR 6.2 billion)¹

Increasing the absorption rate of EU funds would make it easier for beneficiary states to emerge from the global economic crisis. European countries that have strong institutions and consistently promote economic and social policies appropriate to European integration and their own development will benefit more from these EU funds and reach a "saturation point" after a longer period. (Cace C. et al., 2010, p. 87-101). Until 2019, the investments made with the help of EU funds in Romania led to the reconstruction of 318 km of Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) railway lines, to the start of works on 4,364 km of new or rebuilt roads, between which 692 km in the TEN-T network and the reconstruction and modernization of four airports. 2,708 micro and small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as 178 social enterprises, also received support; approximately 350,000 people have integrated into the labor market, benefiting from educational services.

2. Labor force as desideradum

In 1990, Romania had over 8 million employees, and at the opposite pole, the worst level of the number of employees was registered in 2011, when there were 4.095 million employees. The crisis years 2008-2009 "erased" more than 740,000 jobs from the economy.² Romania has one of the lowest labor force participation rates in the EU, and its working age population has been steadily declining since 2008, while the labor force and skilled labor shortages have widened.

The year 2019 brought other rather bad news for the industry; ArcelorMittal Hunedoara Company with 640 employees have suspended production from December 1, 2019 and the platform Bucharest Heavy Machinery Company with 400 employees, announced that it will close in 2020. The latest data show that the number of employees in the industry decreased by 23,000 employees, from September 2018 to September 2019. In 2018, the share of long-term unemployment in the total

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european_semester_country-report-romania_ro.pdf, accesat 05.09.2020, European Commission Brussels, Commission staff working document, 2020 Country Report on Romania, SWD (2020) 522 final).

² <https://www.zf.ro/zf-24/2020-un-an-crucial-pentru-piata-muncii-se-va-atinge-pragul-de-5-mil-de-salariati-pentru-prima-data-in-ultimii-20-de-ani-sau-nu-18677589>.

unemployment rate increased to 44.1%, after falling from 50% in 2016 to 41.4% in 2017.

Currently, about 100,000 long-term unemployed are registered with the public employment services. 88% of them come from rural areas, about 9% are Roma and over 90% are identified as having a low level of employment. The percentage of young people who are not employed and do not follow an education or training program (NEET) was 14.5% in 2018, one of the highest in the EU. The employment rate (among people aged 15 to 64) is still among the lowest in the EU, especially among women (58.7% in Q3-2019, compared to 77.9% among men) and people with a low level of training (43.8% in Q3-2019, compared to 88.8% among those with a high level of training)¹

As nominal wages rose at a faster pace than inflation, this increase was also reflected in real wages, increasing their purchasing power. In 2018, the nominal remuneration per employee increased by 16.3%, and as a result of rapid increases in public sector wages and minimum wage increases.

In the period 2015-2019, the minimum wage increased from 975 RON (210 euros) to 2,080 RON (442 euros), in January 2020 being increased again to 2,230 RON (496 euros). About 20% of people who have a full-time contract receive the minimum wage. Romania, together with Bulgaria and Lithuania, recorded minimum wages more than twice higher in real terms compared to 2010 (Eurofund, 2019).

According to the National Institute of Statistics, the number of employees in the economy reached 4.984 million employees in September 2019, compared to 4.943 million employees in September 2018. The labor market could reach 5 million employees in 2020 (NIS, 2019). The steady increase in the number of employees over the past five years has come despite criticism of raising the minimum wage in the economy, saying that forcing employers to give a higher minimum wage will reduce their potential to create new jobs. In fact, the increase in the minimum wage determined those who were not interested enough to enter the labor market. New employment in the construction, wholesale and retail, health and social care, hotels and restaurants, transport and storage, IT and Consulting sectors has led to an increase in the number of employees in the economy by 41,000 between September 2018 and September 2019. *"For two years Romania has been in a favorable situation from an economic point of view, and the percentage of the working population is at a record level. In the short term, the most important thing is economic growth. Romania has had an uninterrupted economic growth in the last seven years, which has determined this degree of*

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european_semester_country-report-romania_ro.pdf, accesat 05.09.2020, European Commission Brussels, Commission Working Document, 2020 Country Report on Romania, SWD (2020) 522 final

employment. If this economic growth continues, it is possible to reach a number of 5 million employees" (Cepăreanu A., 2020).

Public investment could lead to a faster growth in the number of employees in the economy. The sectors that could help the economy reach the threshold of 5 million employees in 2020 are the construction sector based on public and private investment and the manufacturing industry. *"The greatest growth potential is in construction and the food industry because our agriculture is strong, but it is not coupled with a manufacturing industry that brings added value."* (Cepăreanu A., 2020).

The number of employees could also increase from the number of social workers who are able to work. They could enter the labor market and solve part of the labor shortage problem, which would translate into both increasing the number of Romanian employees and the state budget. The number of employees in the economy is important for the increase of the employed population and for the increase of the activity rate. Romania has only about 5 million employees with a population of 20 million, while Bulgaria and the Czech Republic have a population of 10 million and a number of employees similar to Romania. The increase in the number of employees in the economy brings more income to the budget by paying higher social contributions and taxes and slows down the migration of Romanians abroad. Also, job creation is an indicator pursued in international markets, for example the US stock market reacts immediately to the publication of the new job creation indicator in the US.

Public employment services are not effectively adapted to individual needs and are not integrated with social services, despite the fact that substantial funds are available. The percentage of young people who are not employed and do not attend any education or training program is among the highest in the EU. In 2018, 14.5% of young people (15-29 years old) were not employed and did not follow any education or training program (NEET), compared to the EU average of 14.5%. More than a third of them were discouraged workers, short-term and long-term unemployed (European Commission, 2019i). About 69% of young NEETs remain inactive.

In 2018, the share of active women (15-64 years old) was 58.7% (EU average being 68.7%), compared to 7.9% for men (EU average being 79.4%). The lowest activity rates were recorded among younger women (aged 15 to 24) and older women (aged 55 to 64). About 12% of women were inactive due to personal and family responsibilities. In 2018, the gender disparity in terms of employment among people with a child under the age of six was 29%.

The high drop-out rate and the inadequacy of childcare facilities and services affect women's participation in the labor market, especially in rural areas. In the context of rising labor demand and declining unemployment, labor shortages persist in some sectors. In the first three quarters of 2019, enterprises in the services sector (9.8%),

construction (25.1%) and industry (13.7%) mentioned that the labor shortage is a factor hindering the production (European Commission, 2019f) which is in increase compared to 2018.

The mismatch between the demand and supply of skills has persisted in recent years. The European Competence Index, which measures the performance of EU competence systems, shows that Romania is among the countries with the lowest results, especially in terms of skills development and activation (CEDEFOP, 2019). In addition, the occurrence of vertical discrepancies (overqualification rate), although still below the EU average, has almost doubled in the last decade. Thus, in 2018, 18% of workers with tertiary qualifications were employed in positions that did not require this level of qualification, while 28% of employees aged between 25 and 34 with tertiary education held a job for which this type of study was necessary, but their education or skills did not meet the requirements of the job (Eurostat, 2019a). This indicates a growing gap between education and work. Technological changes are expected to lead to a reorientation of demand towards higher skills and qualifications, which may not be fully covered by the current labor supply, given the time needed to adjust the education and training system.

In 2018, almost 2.3 million people (21.5% of adults) had a low level of education. In 2018, only 0.9% of adults aged between 25 and 64 had a recent learning experience (the EU average being 11.1%). This is particularly worrying, given the small number of jobs available that require only a basic level of education. Recently, attempts have been made to address the issue of skills development and retraining. A new regulation on quality assurance in adult learning is also being developed. Expenditure on education remains among the lowest in the EU (2.8% of GDP compared to the EU average). Persistent problems related to the acquisition of basic skills at school and the low level of digital literacy of the population are a challenge for the integration of future graduates into the labor market. Enrollment rates at all levels of education remain significantly below the EU average.

Both the Ministry of Education and the Presidential Administration have presented ideas for important reforms of the education system, but these have not yet been put into practice. Delays in streamlining and modernizing school infrastructure can affect the quality of education. It is estimated that the school age population will decrease by 10% by 2030. In the period 2000-2016, Romania closed 25% of schools and 17% of satellite schools (World Bank, 2018). However, 58% of schools still have a surplus of built space, while 22% of students study in overcrowded schools, especially in urban areas (MEN, 2019). In addition, equity challenges are not addressed effectively, long walking distances to schools and kindergartens in rural areas and commuting costs are barriers to access to education.

Reduced participation in education and early care accentuates inequality of opportunity among students. Only 15.7% of children under the age of three are enrolled in formal childcare services. In the case of children between the ages of four and the age of compulsory schooling, participation increased to 89.6% in 2017, but remains below the EU average (95.4%). Romania is among the last EU countries in the 2018 PISA survey in terms of average results in mathematics, science and reading (OECD, 2019a). Only 10.1% of the adult population has digital skills above the basic level, the lowest percentage in the EU (European Commission, 2019g).

The coverage of the kindergarten network has improved, but the disparities between rural and urban areas persist. Although, there are some improvements, the rate of early school leaving remains very high, deepening existing socio-economic disparities. The rate of people leaving early education and training was 16.4% in 2018, almost 6 percentage points above the EU average. This rate is particularly high in rural areas (about 25%) (European Commission, 2019g) in the case of Roma (European Commission, 2019h) and children with disabilities (European Commission, 2019i). Students with a disadvantaged socio-economic situation, supported by school scholarships have a higher school participation rate. A concrete case is the allocation by the private company OMV-PETROM of scholarships to students, who choose vocational education and which has led to an increase in the school participation rate, especially of children from rural areas (Neagu G., 2016, p.379).

Regional disparities persist, with the highest rates of early school leavers being in the South-East and North-East regions, which also face the highest levels of poverty. The high rate of people leaving the education and training system early in some regions is correlated with low levels of urbanization (eg the North-East region). The most relevant data are those that reflect the situation of students according to the environment of residence and highlight the inequalities between urban and rural areas in terms of education: the chances that students in rural areas will continue their secondary education and follow a prestigious chain are much less numerous than their colleagues in the urban area (Neagu G., 2019, p. 86)

Romania also ranks first in the EU in terms of early school leaving among girls (16.1% compared to the EU average of 8.9%), which is a challenge from the perspective of the likely future persistence of already high gender disparities in employment. Comprehensive measures have not yet been put in place to combat early school leaving by providing appropriate support to vulnerable students. The gross enrollment rate in kindergarten (3-6 years) was 85% in rural areas, compared to 97.4% in urban areas (European Commission, 2019g). Only 37% of Roma children are enrolled in preschool education (European Commission, 2019h). The rate is 15% in cities and 4.2% in municipalities (European Commission, 2019i). According to data from 2016, 53% of Roma have only completed primary education (FRA, 2016).

The rate of early school leaving for people with disabilities is 41.4%, one of the highest in the EU and twice the EU average (19.6%), while the tertiary education rate (22.6%) is well below the EU average (32.4%).

Lower levels of education are in rural and economically disadvantaged areas, including those with a large Roma population. The disadvantaged categories are good to participate in education from the first years, to attend kindergarten and to be supported with educational programs: *"Psychologists and pedagogues have shown that the differences in school achievement of students from advantaged backgrounds and those from disadvantaged backgrounds from a socio-economic, cultural, family background are largely because of insufficient stimulation of intelligence in the first years of life in the case of disadvantaged children. As in the vast majority of states the level of preschool education was not very developed or did not exist, it was necessary to include young children in various educational programs to support them in the learning process"* (Cace, coord., 2013, p.59).

It is more likely that the education of poorer students will be of lower quality (World Bank, 2018), only 4% of new students have parents with a low level of education (European Commission, 2018c).

In 2018, the employment rate of graduates of education and training courses increased slightly, reaching 69%, from 67.2% in 2017, but remains well below the EU average (79.5%). Students enrolled in education and training programs had a limited participation in learning at work, only 10% of them participating in dual programs: learning and work activity. The vocational education and training system is also affected by a low level of graduation, 11% of students enrolled in vocational schools in the period 2017-2018 not being promoted in the next school year (NIS, 2019).

Romania does not have good results in terms of skills activation (which measures the transition from education to employment) and skills development. 46.6% of 15-year-olds perform poorly in mathematics (EU average: 22.4%), 43.9% in science (EU average: 21.6%) and 40.8% in reading (EU average: 21.7%). The difference between students in urban schools and those in rural schools in terms of average reading score is 110 points, the equivalent of almost three years of schooling (OECD, 2019a).

Participation in higher education is low and remains insufficiently aligned with the needs of the labor market. The university enrollment rate decreased, and in 2018 the tertiary education graduation rate for the 30-34 age group continued to decrease, reaching 24.6% (EU average: 40.7%), with women having the highest lower participation rate in the EU (28.1% compared to 45.8%). Regional disparities are also high, with a tertiary education graduation level of 38% in the capital region and between 13% and 15% in the other regions. The number of graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is still particularly low, leading to a shortage

of qualified staff in the labor market. Although 89% of tertiary education graduates find a job, many are employed outside their field of specialization (UEFISCDI, 2015).

The acquisition of digital skills remains limited. The number of very well-equipped schools from a digital point of view and of connected schools in Romania is significantly lower than the EU average. Within the e-education Strategy 2023, Romania has launched two major projects, “School Management Information System” and “National Platform for Education”, which should contribute to the digitalization of education in over 4,500 schools. Continuing professional development affects the quality and inclusive nature of education. The shortage of teachers persists, with a visible impact on school results. It is still necessary to redesign the initial training of teachers and to strengthen the opportunities for CPD. Initial teacher training provides very limited training and practical training, especially in modern teaching techniques or inclusive pedagogy (OECD, 2017).

Teachers reported high needs for teaching skills in the fields of information and communication technology (21.2%), individualized learning (21.5%) and teaching for students with special needs (35.1%). 70% of teachers report that participation in continuing professional development is hampered by high costs (OECD, 2019b).

3. Labor force in reality

After 25 years of economic transformations, the standard of living of the Romanian population is still one of the most critical areas of quality of life. Deliberately maintaining a very low level of income of the majority population in the long run is the key factor in this situation. Thus, with a potential for the labor force reduced by half, the Romanian economy has functioned and still operates at low parameters, not constituting a serious competition for any of the European countries. At the same time, the massive penetration of foreign companies and European products on the domestic market has turned Romania into an extremely profitable economic zone, not only as a market, but also as a cheap labor force, the most cooperative in terms of support for foreign investors. This explains the extremely low level of financial and material resources available to the majority local population, with multiple negative socio-economic effects - meeting the minimum or perhaps not even the needs in all areas of life: health, education, investment in self-development households, etc.

The capacity of the population to pay on time the current expenses (home maintenance, loan installments, payment of utilities, etc.) is quite low, at the level of 2015. More than a third of households (32.2%) had repeated arrears, mainly caused by the unsatisfactory financial situation (NIS, 2015). The most frequent arrears were registered for the payment of electricity, the radio subscription (54.6% of households with arrears), the maintenance of the home (53.2%) and the telephone subscription (34.1%). Lower shares of arrears were recorded in loan rates (9.1%), given that not

many families can afford to take out a bank loan and, in addition, that such arrears are severely sanctioned.

Relatively few Romanian households (9%) resort to bank loans. To solve some needs such as: buying installments of some cars, electronic equipment (43.6%), for repairing or renovating the house (41.6%). Loans for other purposes are even lower in share: (4.9%) for health care, (4.2%) for some investments, (3.4%) for children's education. Urban households are more likely to borrow (11.9%) than rural households (5.4%), as well as men (10.4%) compared to women (5.8%) (NIS, 2015).

In 2018, almost one in two Romanians cannot cope with unexpected expenses. 9.6% of the population could not adequately heat their homes (the EU average was 7.3%). The percentage of the population with arrears on utility bills is also above the EU average (14.4% compared to 6.6%). Unemployed households usually go through the most difficult economic situations, the share of those who could not pay their debts on time being 49.3%. The phenomenon of arrears is also more common in households with children, especially in single parents (48.8%), but also households with 3 or more dependent children (46.0%) (NIS, 2019).

3.1. Population groups exposed to poverty and social exclusion

Despite higher wages, income inequality increased in 2018. The share of incomes held by the lowest-income segment of the population (40% of the population) in total incomes, which was already one of the lowest in the EU, decreased much more.

Although it continued to decline in 2018, the percentage of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion was still among the highest in the EU, with one in three Romanians being at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The most exposed categories are families with children, the unemployed, the inactive, the atypical workers, the Roma, the elderly, and people with disabilities. In rural areas, this rate is more than twice as high as in cities.

In 2018, the poverty rate of the employed decreased, but it is still 15.3%. Poverty risks mainly affect rural areas and vulnerable groups and tend to be associated with a low level of education and an unfavorable socio-economic status. Child poverty remains among the highest in the EU, affecting 38.1% of children compared to the EU average of 24.3%. Social transfers have very little impact on poverty reduction (European Commission, 2019d).

Social conditions continue to improve, but vulnerable groups continue to face significant challenges. The percentage of people exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion has decreased even more, reaching in 2018 the lowest level ever recorded, namely 32.5%. Once out of poverty, it is increasingly difficult to get out of it due to its

high level of transmission from one generation to another and inefficient measures to activate the workforce.

In 2018, the share of incomes of the poorest 40 percent of the population recorded one of the largest declines in the EU, remaining well below pre-crisis levels, 17.6% compared to the EU average of 21.5%. Children whose parents are low-skilled still face a much higher risk of poverty than children whose parents are highly qualified; in 2018, the difference was 70.7 percentage points, well above the EU average of 43.3 percentage points.

Poverty has fallen but remains among the highest in the EU. In 2018, the poverty of the employed decreased, but remained at a high level of 15%. Causes of this phenomenon include a lack of quality jobs, especially in rural areas, and the precarious situation of the unemployed. The rate of self-employment is high in rural areas, and among the unemployed are a significant percentage of unpaid family workers (in small family businesses).

In 2017, although only 45% of all employed people lived in rural areas, 82% of the self-employed and 94% of family workers lived in rural areas. Most self-employed workers in Romania work in subsistence agriculture, some of them working in the construction sector and others in small family businesses. Increases in the minimum wage have resulted in greater differences between the incomes of employees and those of the self-employed, as their incomes are growing at a slower pace.

Children from rural areas and vulnerable groups have limited access to pre-school education, school education, adequate nutrition, health care and housing. The most disadvantaged are children whose parents have a low level of education and those in households with very low work intensity. Children from Roma communities, those living in rural areas and marginalized urban communities, where access to education and social services is limited, are particularly affected. The decrease in the schooling rate and the increase in the dropout rate for these groups indicate a polarization of education (Ministry of Education, 2019) which could contribute to a higher poverty rate.

People with disabilities have limited access to support services. The rate of people with disabilities exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion in Romania is among the highest in the EU (37.6% compared to the EU average of 28.7%). The lack of synergies and complementarity between educational services, employment services and social services further aggravates the situation of this group. In addition, there are no authorized Community services for adults with disabilities (European Commission, 2019i). The deinstitutionalisation of care for adults with disabilities is being implemented at a slow pace, although considerable EU funding is available. Roma also continue to face obstacles in accessing health services due to a lack of identity

documents, low social security coverage, stigma, and discrimination. The enrollment rate of Roma children in the education system is still below the national average, and the rate of early school leaving is high. Almost a third of the Roma population lives in poor neighborhoods and more than half in overcrowded housing.

The low availability of jobs for low-skilled workers and the positive effect of firms with a higher value chain on economic development mean that advanced skills are needed for the working population to make a positive contribution to reducing regional disparities. The high number of people leaving the education and training system early, such as in the South-East Region (21.3%) or the North-East Region (19.5%) and the very low level of training opportunities for adults is still an important issue.

4. Conclusions

Regions with a significant share of labor concentrated in low-productivity sectors are characterized by relatively low business dynamics, low wages, and high poverty rates, which has a negative impact on social cohesion. Therefore, the poorer regions of the country risk entering a vicious circle. Existing industries must therefore increase their productivity and higher-growth economic sectors must strengthen their capacity. Education and professional development can make a positive contribution to improving competitiveness if they are more relevant in the market.

The lack of digital connectivity and adequate infrastructure further deepens the disparities between and within regions. Within the regions, the counties where connectivity is low have a low level of economic growth, while the counties where connectivity is good, where significant investment in infrastructure and where foreign direct investment rates are high, the level of economic growth and average salaries are high.

In terms of internet use and internet-related activities, six of the eight regions in Romania are on the last places of the EU ranking, less than 60% of adults using the internet daily in 2018. The lowest shares are recorded in the Southern-East Region (46%) and in the North-East Region (45%) (Eurostat, 2019a).

In terms of digital connectivity, in 2018, only 68% (EU average - 81%) of rural households in Romania had broadband internet access, compared to 80% (EU average - 86%) in cities and suburbs and 89% in large cities (Eurostat, 2019b).

In terms of digital skills, Romania has a large gap between the inhabitants of the city and those in rural areas. In 2017, the digital skills gap was 23 percentage points, while the EU average is 14 percentage points (Eurostat Regional Yearbook, 2019). To address the digital divide at regional level, EU funding has been provided under the 2014-2020 financial framework. Romania's Operational Program for Competitiveness has allocated EUR 100 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), while the

Rural Development Operational Program for the period 2014-2020 initially provided for an estimated EUR 25 million from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

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A MODEL OF INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *The study aims to present and analyse a model of good practices in community development, based on an integrated approach and bring a better understanding of the advantages of such an approach. The study is based on a project implemented in 12 communities, throughout 46 months, which aimed to improve access to educational and health services as well as build strong communities and inter-ethnic relations. Following the implementation of the project, an evaluating research has been carried out in order to determine the changes and development the project has achieved. The current case study focuses its analyses on data gathered from the particular research, namely on 2 communities and the actions implemented as well as the results they produced. Therefore, analyzing the outcome of the intervention, augmenting the need and benefits of the integrated approach in development projects.*

Keywords: *Community development, Integrated development, Roma communities, Local empowerment, Local Initiative Groups*

1. Introduction

1.1 Project description

“zefiR. Together for Empowerment” was the initiative of a consortium coordinated by Terre des hommes and formed of Amare Rromentza, Împreună Agency, PACT Foundation and Pestalozzi Foundation. Habitat for Humanity Romania and SASTIPEN have also joined us in the project as associated partners. Through this

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project, the consortium aimed to improve the access to education and healthcare for over 20.000 people in rural and small urban areas, from 12 communities, in three districts from South-West Romania: Olt, Dolj and Gorj. The population targeted in this project were persons that belong to vulnerable groups, mainly Roma, especially women, young people and children.

zefiR was based on an integrated approach regarding health and education as main areas of intervention, alongside housing – as a complementary field, based on community development as an underlying approach. Throughout the 46 months of the project, the beneficiaries and the other members of the 12 communities were involved directly in all stages of the implementation, from the participatory analysis of the community needs, to the impact assessment, with wide participation of all interested stakeholders.

The consortium aimed at building strong communities and links between Roma and other ethnic groups, focusing on three directions of action: improving access to quality educational and health services and increasing the capacity of the 12 communities for long term action.

1.2 Project approach

The project relied on a **bottom-up approach**. Activities were conceived and implemented by allowing beneficiaries to participate in all the steps and components of the project, so that the interventions were constructed based on specific and documented needs. Community members were empowered to participate in the decision-making process at different levels in project implementation. In this sense, the project activities were pursued to build trustworthy relationships among community members and ensure a local ownership over the project. Also, the activities in the project were anchored on an **integrated approach**. The project included multiple areas of interventions and proposed various solutions to the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, thus creating synergies among ongoing operations and activities. Since social inclusion issues is very complex and challenging, the project undertook a **long-term perspective** in which change was understood as a gradual process of cultural learning and capacity building.

2. Literature review

Community development, ever since its inception consisted of economic and political development objectives. “It held forth the promise of both building grassroots democratic institutions and contributing to the material well-being of rural people” (Ruttan, 1984). The process of community development has been seen as directly involving the people in finding a solution to their problems, as well as employing a democratic process in solutioning the problems. It has also focused on the transfer or information, know-how, skills and knowledge to people of a community in order for them to be able to resolve their problems. The process of community development was,

as seen by Ruttan “rooted in the concept of the worth of the individual as a responsible, participating member of society...It was designed to encourage self-help efforts to raise standards of living and to create stable, self-reliant communities with an assured sense of social and political responsibility” (Ruttan, 1984).

Community development and its integrated approach has been discussed by Jones and Wiggle 1987, mentioning the fact that for integrated rural development to occur, a new approach of the management and resources needs to be found. They mention that this new type of integrated development needs to “be established away from the social welfare connotations of the past, and towards realizing its true economic potential, which, in turn, has a number of political implications” (Jones & Wiggle, 1987).

In the case of the Roma communities, community development, as mentioned by Ryder, Rostas & Taba (2014) has often fallen into the “trap of promoting forms of therapy and tokenism” therefore the inequality problems, both institutional and structural ones remaining unresolved (Ryder, Rostas, & Taba, 2014). Addressing the problem of Roma inequalities and Roma communities, Sandu (2005) mentions that the general idea involving Roma development revolves around employment and income, which are believed to be the root of the inequalities and discrimination, by the standard Roma elites at the local level. Sandu mentions that Roma people have a very low employment and therefore very low income due to “their low education resources in the context of general low opportunities for unqualified work and, sometimes as a result of work hiring discrimination.” He mentions however that poor housing and health are two factors that play a decisive role too, consequently, leading to more problems and underdevelopment of the communities (Sandu, 2005).

This is where community development projects that involve an integrated approach, focusing on not just employment or education come into play. Integrated approaches that revolve around a series of components and implementation of diverse activities in a wide range of directions, such as housing, health, skill-learning or civic involvement.

Integrated development projects as stated by Masset (2018) are often designed as “packages of multiple interventions” in various fields such as social protection and community-driven development projects. Although these packages are implemented in a specific area, for example nutrition or employment, they include “include many different interventions in the belief that they are all required to achieve the stated goal and that they reinforce each other.” (Masset, 2018)

3. Methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to identify the results and the impact of the implemented activities in the 2 communities from the South-West region (Oltenia) and analyse the results and impact of the activities in the project at the community level, carrying out a distinct analysis for each segment, education, health, housing and

community development. The efficiency of the utilization of resources and the way in which the integrated approach functioned will be analysed.

3.1 Methods and instruments

The survey took place in twelve communities that have been chosen beforehand to be part of the “zefiR: Together for empowerment” project. The survey was conducted between November 12th 2018 and January 12th 2019. The study consists of several quantitative instruments, along with qualitative ones - mixed methods.

The core quantitative instrument comprises 217 variables from all relevant fields, such as health, education, housing, public participation, interethnic relations, along with data regarding the household (income, regularity of income, sources of income, employment status), and demographic data for the selected respondents (gender, age, level of education, religion, ethnicity). The sample consists of 750 valid questionnaires, each community being assigned a certain number of minimum applied instruments. We have tried to maintain the same sampling structure from the baselines study and approximately the same number of in order to be able to produce a further comparison. Out of the 750, for the purpose of this analyses, we included the questionnaires applied in the 2 communities.

The study was carried out using a simple random sample of Roma and nearby non-Roma households. Most of our operators received help in applying the questionnaires from local individuals, both Roma and non-Roma, some of them being familiarized with the zefiR project and the aspects of carrying out research, others having little experience with data collection and the project itself. Each of our operators were trained into correctly applying the questionnaire and selecting the households. Our teams have been in each and every community to make sure everything was progressing as planned.

The household selection was completed using the random walk method, as following: Once the operators were on the first street of the Roma neighbourhood, they were asked to select from the left side the uneven numbered households (1, 3, 5, etc.), or from the right side of the road the even numbered households (2, 4, 6 etc.) then proceed onto the next parallel or perpendicular street in relation to the first street, and choose the other side of the road than they have previously chosen.

Besides the quantitative instruments the study also included qualitative instruments. The qualitative part of the study consisted of focus groups with aflateen members or their coordinator, focus groups with the local initiative groups members, along with interviews with local authorities' representatives and interviews with representatives of the main seven organizations that took part in the implementation of the zefiR project for a better understanding of the project as a whole. The obtained qualitative data has helped getting an insight on the way the projects was implemented, the problems

certain actors were faced with along the way as well as the positive aspects of the beneficiaries and their experiences.

4. Context

4.1 Communities description

The village **Ocolna** is situated in the south – eastern part of Dolj County, bordering Olt County, at a distance of 65 km from Craiova and 19,6 km from Dăbuleni town, which is the nearest urban settlement. It consists of three villages: Amărăștii de Jos, Praporu and Ocolna. From the demographic viewpoint, Amărăștii de Jos has 5520 inhabitants, out of whom 1223 are Roma (census 2011). The Roma community is compact, located outside the village, but easily accessible due to the county road that connects it with the town of Dabuleni. Ocolna village, located 10 km from Amărăștii de Jos has a population that is 100 % Roma. The Roma from the community speak both Romany and Romanian. In terms of religion, the majority are Orthodox and only few Protestants.

The village **Barca** is located in the southern part of Dolj County, on the left bank of Desnauti River, 40 km far from Craiova. It has a population of 3689 inhabitants out of which 754 are self-identified Roma (2011 Census) and 1047 hetero-identified (unofficial sources).

The Roma community has a compact-type living style in the Dragalina district, and a dispersed-type one on the streets Targului and Burebista, while the 20 Rudari (woodworkers) families are placed “towards the pond”. The Roma from the community speak both Romany and Romanian. Regarding the cultural make-up of the Roma communities the following groups could be identified, respectively: woodworkers (Rudari, they identify themselves as Roma), lingurari wooden spoon makers (lingurari), brick makers (caramizari), and farriers (potcovari). Next to them live gadjo, [tismanari respectively representatives of inter-ethnic marriages between Roma and people of other ethnicities] (the oldest attested in the monograph, about 20-30 families), lautari fiddlers (lautari), and clothes tinkers (costorari, makers of traditional clothing in the village), nomad gypsies (laieti).

The Roma people declare themselves as Orthodox. There are no Roma people without identity documents.

5. Components and results

5.1 Community development

The activities conducted in the spheres of education, health and housing were supported through community development interventions that relied on participatory

approaches. Community development initiatives were focused on the identification and prioritization of socio-economic needs at local level, as to increase the general participation of community members in developing and implementing sustainable initiatives. Local problems were approached by mobilizing local resources to address identified community needs.

The main objective of the community development component was to empower local communities through leadership development and capacity building. Activities were directed towards mobilising communities to exercise a greater control over their local contexts by fostering a sense of ownership of local policy decisions and programs. Another goal of the project was to improve the perception of Roma minority at local, regional and national levels, while cultivating self-confidence of community members in taking initiatives to improve their life conditions. Therefore, the project aimed to improve problem solving capabilities and enrich intercommunity dialogue.

The community development activities evolved around the formation and coagulation of local initiative groups. Local initiative groups are understood as forms of cooperation to stimulate social cohesion, civic participation, and community trust building. Each initiative group worked together with a community facilitator and realized an inventory of resources available in the community (e.g. human, material, financial and symbolic resources). These types of resources were correlated with the socio-economic needs experienced in the community, thus constituting the grounds on which local initiative plans were elaborated. However, local action plans are continuously adapted and enriched in relation with local conditions and social change. In order to ensure a high quality of strategies stipulated in local action plans, members of local initiative groups and representatives of local authorities participated in training sessions which improved their knowledge and skills in leadership, problem solving, social and financial management. As a result, community members were trained in the elaboration of action plans, project writing, public participation, advocacy and negotiation with local authorities, resource mobilisation, fundraising and communication, child protection etc.

In the two communities, the activities of community development have been accomplished according to the methodology, and produced similar results in terms of: community awareness, participation in the evaluation of community needs, setting the priority order for the interventions and actual involvement in all the actions initiated by the community. The local group of initiative GIL from Barca, although having a consistent structure, worked less intensely in the beginning, that that from Ocolna, because of the lower number of activities performed within this community. The increased mobilization of the community members appeared when, using the **integrated approach**, more social actors and more aspects of the social life were involved, when the interventions were done in multiple areas: education, health care,

dwelling and economic development. In the case of the Ocolna community, one can notice important changes, both at the individual, and at the community level. The empowering effects of community participation in poverty reduction manifest at the individual and collective levels, at the individual level, giving people the knowledge, skills and confidence to address their own needs and advocate on their own behalf improves their capacity for collective. Participation in collective action gave individuals the resources to exercise agency through their voice, empowering people through capacity building increased the likelihood of their participation in community activities. Increased levels of empowerment allowed the community to have influence over things that matter and obtain power over decisions, enabling them to move from powerless non-participants to active and effective citizens.

5.2 Education

The main objective of the educational activities was **to reduce educational disparities between disadvantaged groups and majority population** by supporting *constructive pedagogical approaches* and by *developing inclusive learning cultures*.

The project aimed to reduce educational gaps through multiple and complementary interventions that covered a wide range of interlinking topics and approaches. Therefore, the educational objectives of the project were planned to be accomplished through different types of activities:

1. *Activities designed to increase access to quality educational services:* Access to quality education was improved by developing structures and institutions that support children's active participation in the educational process. So, 'afterschool programs' were initiated and kindergarten groups were set up and fully furnished;
2. *Activities designed to develop an inclusive and supporting pedagogical culture:* To ensure the efficiency of the educational services developed in the project, the staff working with children within the zefiR institutional structures were trained as to acquire knowledge and skills on various components: methodology of organising 'after school' programs, social implications of mentoring activities, principles of parental education, and techniques of intercultural education. Moreover, other relevant social actors such as teachers, educators, educational assistants and mentors participated in training courses aimed to increase their level of competence regarding an intercultural approach to equity and social justice
3. *Activities designed to raise awareness on the importance of education:* This component of the project worked towards producing some changes in the attitudes towards the role of education in personal development. It included mentoring programs designed to increase the level of participation in school activities among children and parents. Children were exposed to positive learning experiences in school context that might work on their level of engagement in formal education. Also, parental mentoring

sessions were organised in order to increase the level and quality of parental participation in school decision structures and activities. Parents were guided in consolidating both a gratifying relationship with their children and a constructive collaboration with teachers and other school representatives.

4. *Activities designed to support inclusion in education:* Different instructional and informational resources were developed and disseminated in order to articulate an inclusive culture of teaching. These resources include: an intercultural / bilingual preschool curriculum, an intercultural education guide, and a guide for parental mentoring. Not only that these materials define the approaches and practices followed in the implementation of the project, but they also draw some directions that might be used to support inclusion in education on the long run.

The effects noticed in the two communities seem to be significantly different. The parents from Ocolna appreciated the higher involvement of their children in kindergarten and in school, and the better motivation for them to be included in educational programs. For the children from Bărca, the extra-school activities brought along a benefit for their spare time, and opening towards other localities through the trips organised during the project, therefore bringing social inclusion at the individual and educational level. The education component and the activities implemented have managed to address the importance of education, the social exclusion problem, along with access to education and intercultural education, for the two communities, building a positive experience and a safe “playground” for learning in an inclusive environment, through an integrated approach of the educational development.

5.3 Health

The third component of the program aimed to **increase access to quality health care services in disadvantaged communities**. In this context, Sastipen – The Roma Centre for Health Policies had attributes in developing an integrated system adapted to the needs of the communities. This system is conceived as an aggregate of socially viable and innovative tools that facilitate access to basic healthcare facilities for members of disadvantaged groups living in rural and small urban areas. Also, Terre des hommes had interventions whose objectives was to educate people in health-related issues. As such, the project focused on reducing inequalities in access to healthcare services by developing different types of activities:

1. *Activities designed to improve health care infrastructure:* Centres for medico-social assistance were established and equipped as to cover the needs of the local communities in which they were implemented. The centres were developed through an intensive consultation process with representatives of local authorities, formal and informal leaders, and relevant community members. Also, other medical institutions such as hospitals were equipped with medical appliances designed to aid in the diagnosis, monitoring or treatment of medical conditions.

2. *Activities designed to improve the quality of health care services:* The staff working in the centres for medico-social assistance were trained as to assure the highest quality of first aid assistance and elementary medical services (primary consultations, campaigns for screening the risk factors or frequent affections, measurements of blood pressure and glycaemia etc.).
3. *Activities designed to increase health literacy among community members:* The project aimed to promote a healthy lifestyle by educating people to prevent and control various diseases which affect people in the community. Therefore, the campaigns informed people about diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases, hepatitis, tuberculosis, diabetes, cancer etc. Also, people belonging to disadvantaged groups participated in health promotion sessions that tackled themes like effects of tobacco and alcohol consumption. In addition, the campaigns included informative sessions about the importance of precocious diagnosing and medical counselling. Campaigns were organized not only in relation with the activity of the centres for medico-social assistance but also through detached initiatives conducted in a school setting. For example, “Education for Health” was a grant program that aimed to educate children to adopt a healthy lifestyle. In the context of the project, a special focus was placed on activities designed to improve maternal and infant health (monitoring the condition of new-born children, monitoring the pregnant women and lactating mothers, vaccination, and child care). Also, reproductive health was considered a relevant topic, thus being approached through informative sessions regarding contraception methods, pregnancy and parenting.

The health care centre was established in Ocolna, and its outcomes were notable through: a higher number of people included in prevention activities: pregnant women, children and old people, a better evidence of the health state of pregnant women, activities related to the situation of the community children, a better monitoring of the old people, awareness raising activities on health care education, formation activities; therefore through an integrated approach of many health aspects the project succeeded in increasing the access to health infrastructure, and the community members understanding of the need of such tools and information. All community members appreciated the importance and contribution of the health care centre. The relevance of this centre was very high and it properly responded to the need for such type of services.

5.4 Housing

The housing interventions aimed to **facilitate social inclusion by securing better living conditions for families who live in poverty**. Different aspects of housing are identified as potentially compounding factors associated with stigma and discrimination. The circumstances of households within local areas characterized by social and economic disadvantages are interrelated with low levels of education and

employment among residents, thus being part of a complex mechanism that reinforces social exclusion and differentiated access to resources.

Therefore, housing interventions represent discrete techniques used to counterbalance some of the negative effects derived from practices of social or symbolic exclusion.

Therefore, housing is not considered as a separate component of the project but as a supporting intervention to education and health. It was designed to provide support to the most disadvantaged groups and to facilitate the development of trustful relations with beneficiaries.

On the above-mentioned rationales, Habitat for Humanity rehabilitated different buildings such as private houses, blocks of flats, or educational institutions (kindergartens). The buildings were improved according to specific needs and local particularities. However, the dwelling component was implemented only at Barca, where 80 houses were renovated. The renovation represented mounting of thermally insulated windows and works on house isolation.

6. Conclusions

Integrated intervention in development projects

The project clearly shows that communities cannot be supported with a single approach or isolated area, but needs an integrated approach that addresses the complexity of the issues at the community level. Community development activities have identified the following three key areas where integrated approach plays an important role in community development:

a) The synergy between the top-down policies / programs and bottom-up planning

Community development based only on a top-down approach leads to inefficient use of funds and produces poor results.

Activities were conceived and implemented by allowing beneficiaries to participate at all steps and components of the project, thus the interventions were constructed based on specific and documented needs. Community members were empowered to participate in the decision-making process at different levels throughout project implementation. In this sense, the project activities were expected to build trustworthy relationships among community members and ensure a local ownership of the project. The activities in the project were also anchored in an integrated approach. The project included multiple areas of interventions and proposed various solutions to the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, thus creating synergies among ongoing operations and activities. Taking in consideration social inclusion issues are complex and challenging, the project

undertook a long-term perspective in which change was understood as a gradual process of cultural learning and capacity development.

b) Coordination among different sectors and organizations

An appropriate coordination mechanism linking the various plans and activities of community development organizations and institutions can catalyse different development needs of the community and contribute significantly to the global development community.

Such coordination cannot easily be achieved by creating a coordinating body at central or regional level. Furthermore, it is important to develop adequate knowledge between key stakeholders and attitudes regarding community development. In addition, the establishment of appropriate coordination structures and effective channels for information exchange, shared decision making, and collective action are needed.

Among the main strengths of the partnership there can be enumerated: Common values and vision regarding social issues; Complementarity in expertise; Social prestige and relevant past experiences; Previous collaboration with relevant national authorities.

c) Co-operation between stakeholders

In the case of an integrated approach as described above, many stakeholders are willing to engage in the development of the community, as well as people from the community, local leaders and organizations, local authorities and training institutes, NGOs etc. The challenge is to establish a cooperative attitude among all those involved in community development in order to develop actions and approaches that all move towards the same ideal.

The activities conducted in the field of education, health and housing were supported through community development interventions that relied on participatory approaches. Community development initiatives were focused on the identification and prioritization of socio-economic needs at local level, as to increase the general participation of community members in developing and implementing sustainable initiatives. Local problems were approached by mobilizing local resources to address identified community needs.

The main objective of the community development component was **to empower local communities through leadership development and capacity building**. Activities were directed towards mobilizing communities to exercise a greater control over their local contexts by fostering a sense of ownership of local policy decisions and programs. Another goal of the project was to improve the perception of Roma minority at local, regional and national levels, while cultivating self-confidence of community members in

taking initiatives to improve their life conditions. Therefore, the project aimed to improve problem solving capabilities and enhanced intercommunity dialogue.

zefiR project's approach was based on involving all stakeholders. In some cases, the creation of LIGs was achieved with some impediments due to the relatively low educational level of community members willing to actively participate in community development.

However, the involvement of community members formed the basis of the horizontal integrated intervention and cooperation among all social actors.

Another substantial role was the participation of local authorities in different phases of the project. This action has made an important contribution to the efficiency of the implementation.

Attracting the representatives of the schools and of the medical institutions into the network completed the institutional framework and has made the integrated approach possible.

Therefore some of the benefits of integrated approaches identified include: the creation of a strong relation between partners and community members, realistic planning in community development activities, speeding up the initial process of needs analysis and creation of a flexible model for community intervention, local associations independent of local authority and cooperate effectively, capacity building of personnel in supporting vulnerable groups which is decisive to the success of the intervention, structures created for supporting the vulnerable groups (such as medical and social centres) are placed closely to the community, the flexibility and constant adaptation to the needs of vulnerable people (which have proved to lead to successful projects, the involvement of local authorities and usage of realistic and replicable models in accordance with funds available at local and county level, the authorities having an important role in enhancing citizen participation by conducting consultative processes and providing funds for community projects directly involving citizens.

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HANGING IN THERE: ZIMBABWEAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN JOHANNESBURG

Chipo HUNGWE³

***Abstract:** With the worsening political and socio-economic climate of Zimbabwe, migration to South Africa continues unabated. Research has already proven that migration is a result of many push and pull factors. The prospect to improve one's life and that of one's kin remains a key motivation for migration. What needs to be clearly articulated, in so far as Zimbabwean migration to South Africa is concerned, is the level of economic stability of Zimbabwean workers within the South African job market. This is the aspect addressed in this article, which contends that most of the Zimbabwean migrant workers in Johannesburg, South Africa are employed in careerless and unstable jobs that are precarious. While precariousness exists everywhere, and in varying levels, I argue that the migrant status is a devalued identity that leads to exclusion from certain basic rights at work and worsens the situation for most unskilled and semi-skilled Zimbabweans. Zimbabwean workers possess certain characteristics that both create advantages and disadvantages for them as they interact with employers. Employers know this fully well and capitalise on these characteristics, especially the lack of documentation needed to work and stay in South Africa.*

The precarious nature of Zimbabwean migrants is an outcome of a combination of various factors which are: a very strict migration legal framework, institutionalised xenophobia, capitalists whose interests are in lowering labour costs and thus go for cheap Zimbabwean labourers, desperate Zimbabwean workers who would accept anything offered because it is believed to be far much better than what they would receive 'back home' and a sending government (Zimbabwean) which does not seem to care enough about the situation of migrants who are mainly viewed negatively for having left the country in the first place. The precariousness of Zimbabwean migrants is both as much

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a product as it is also a factor of a vicious cycle of precariousness. The intersection of the migrant status (whether documented or undocumented but even worse for the undocumented) with low educational qualifications (for most migrants studied), race (black), poverty and desperation creates barriers and constraints for most Zimbabwean migrants rendering their lives quite precarious.

Keywords: Employer; Labour; Migrant; Precarious; South Africa; Zimbabwean

Introduction

This study explains the situation of Zimbabwean migrants (both documented and undocumented) in the South African labour market showing the extent of their participation and the types of jobs that they participate in. It explains clearly the levels of earnings, conditions of work and how these Zimbabwean migrants feel about their work. In understanding the extent of participation of Zimbabwean migrants in the South African labour market the questions I attempt to answer are: How did they enter the labour market? What kinds of jobs do migrants have? Where do they work? With whom do they work? What are the relations like at work? What kind of contracts, benefits and protection do they have?

In answering these questions the paper exposes areas and varying levels of precariousness faced by Zimbabwean migrants in the South African labour market. Elsewhere I have argued, using the queuing theory that Zimbabwean migrants may be located lower down the labour queue because of various factors that employers consider. These may largely be connected to the immigration policies (Hungwe, 2014). This may leave most Zimbabweans with little choice than to take unattractive jobs on the market as they themselves may be located lower down the labour queue. Some have ventured into self-employment precisely because of this queuing. Whichever option is available, Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg seem to be confronted with varying levels of precariousness in the South African labour market.

Background

Reasons for migration

At the global level, literature reveals that international migration is on the rise facilitated by processes of globalisation and transnationalism. While South-West migration has traditionally dominated, there is an increase in South-South migration (Castles, 2002; Castles and Miller, 2009; UNDESA, 2016). The number of international migrants defined as persons living in a country other than where they were born, reached 244

million in 2015, an increase of 71 million or 41% compared to 2000 (UNDESA, 2016). The majority of migrants (72%) were between 20-64 years reflecting a close connection between migration and labour activity (ibid). Officially recorded remittances to developing countries amounted to \$431.6 billion.

The importance of a job and work in the socio-psychological and economic outlook of an individual cannot be overemphasised. We are who we are because of the jobs we do. An individual's identity is closely tied with their job. With a job comes status and issues of self-worth. Participation in the labour market is also deemed good for the economic wellbeing of an individual and their family. Most migrants leave their countries in search of better jobs and economic opportunities (Prada, 2013). Zimbabwean migrants are no different. Their migration has been deemed "survival migration" (Betts and Kaytaz, 2009) because of the economic motive to acquire work and survive.

Literature reveals that migrants always compare their situation in the destination country with that in the country of origin. Waldinger and Lichter (2003) state that immigrants operate with a dual frame of reference, judging conditions "here" by the standards "back home". As long as the comparison remains relevant, low status and indeed, disreputable work in an advanced capitalist economy like South Africa may not rate too badly. This seems to be the case for Zimbabwean migrants who evaluate the South African labour market as far much better than the Zimbabwean economy. That is why they leave. While the reasons for Zimbabwean migration to South Africa are a combination of the harsh economic environment and increasing political intolerance, Zimbabwean migration has largely been a result of economic pressure [high levels of unemployment, inflation and lack of access to basic necessities for survival] (Bolt, 2015; Crush and Tevera, 2010; Tevera and Zinyama, 2002). Because of these economic reasons, migrants seem desperate to take any kind of job available and thus become willing labourers who may not be choosy on the South African labour market.

Employer interests

Like any other developed economy, South Africa has experienced the growth of the service sector with some of the jobs requiring low levels of skill but with some level of interaction with customers. Most low end service sector jobs are characterised by low skill levels, minimum language proficiency, undesirable night or weekend shifts and typically offer limited or no advancement prospects (Sassen-Koob, 1985: 305). Such jobs may not be desirable to many, especially the natives of a country, leaving migrants to occupy them. Migrants may then eventually occupy positions that are generally looked down upon and are unwanted by the locals. However, in these interactive service jobs, employers want workers with a certain "right attitude". Employers do not simply want friendly employees who are able to keep a smile regardless of how unpleasant the customers or working conditions are, they also prefer "cooperative" to "combative" and

deferential over rebellious employees. In other words, employers prefer a worker who knows his/her place (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003: 16). The migrant typifies this kind of worker by virtue of either being new to the market or if not new, is undocumented or incapacitated in some ways, to cause trouble with the employer.

Employers take advantage of lack of proper work documents in order to engage in work practices that are unacceptable to native born workers. According to Browning and Rodriguez (1985) employers may speed up the work pace and in some instances fail to provide workers with rest periods that other native/local workers receive. Employers may hire undocumented migrants at one level and then require them to do higher level work at no increase in pay (*ibid*). For those that try to resist, employers may threaten to report undocumented migrants to the immigration officials or police (Browning and Rodriguez, 1985). In South African farms, some farmers not only threaten deportation but actually employ undocumented workers who once their labour is no longer needed, are handed over to the police for deportation (Bloch, 2008; HRW, 2006; Dumba and Chirisa, 2010; Rutherford, 2010).

The legal framework of Zimbabwean migration to South Africa

Both Zimbabwe and South Africa belong to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) a regional body that functions to create and perpetuate socio-economic and political cooperation among member states. The two countries have also signed the SADC protocol on the facilitation of movement of persons between and among countries of the SADC region. This Protocol facilitates the movement of SADC nationals without the requirement of a visa for up to 90 days of stay. Some Zimbabweans take advantage of this provision to enter South Africa and eventually do not come back to Zimbabwe upon the expiration of the 90 days. In fact the Immigration Authorities have of late, been reluctant to allow Zimbabweans to enter and stay in South Africa for more than 30 unless they have a work, business or corporate permit. As a result, some Zimbabwean and indeed SADC nationals find themselves with no right to stay and work in South Africa although the right to enter may have been granted.

Zimbabweans can and have entered South Africa using the provisions of the Immigration Act of 2002 amended in 2004 and the Immigration Regulations of 2005. Sections 34, 41, 42 and 49 provide for the arrest and deportation of illegal migrants either by the immigration officers or the police or both and detention for up to three months (90 days). In terms of section 41 of the Immigration Act of 2002, immigration and police officers have the power to request that individuals produce some form of identification on demand. The Immigration Act (section 41 subsection 1) provides that “[...] if on reasonable grounds such an immigration officer or police officer is not satisfied that such a person is entitled to be in the republic [...] such immigration

officer or police officer may take such person into custody without a warrant [...]". The Immigration Act has given state officials power to decide who enters and stays in South Africa and who does not. This has given rise to different forms of exclusions and inclusions and negotiations between the migrants and state employees such as Immigration officers, the police and soldiers, some of whom have benefited corruptly from such negotiations (Vigneswaran et al., 2010). This becomes quite critical especially in a society rocked by very high levels of institutionalised xenophobia.

Globally there is agreement on the rise of discrimination and xenophobia against migrants. These attitudes are sometimes deliberately fuelled by political leaders. This happens in both developed and developing countries (Borjas and Tienda, 1985). In South Africa, while there may be episodes of xenophobic attacks that get attention through the media (the latest having been in September 2019 which claimed the lives of about five foreigners [although the number is disputed] and damaged property of migrant shop owners), Zimbabweans report that xenophobia is an everyday experience. This is particularly the case as Zimbabweans try to access different government institutions such as schools, hospitals, the police and immigration offices and the labour market (Crush and Tawodzera, 2011; Dumba and Chirisa, 2010; Hungwe and Gelderblom, 2014). Migrants also perceive that their situation is exacerbated by the lack of interest in their welfare by their country of origin. This is particularly true for Zimbabwe where utterances by political leaders, especially the late President Robert Mugabe, labelled migrants as traitors or detractors of the ruling regime (McGregor, 2010).

Conceptualising Zimbabwean migrants as the precariat

The growing literature on new forms of work which create vulnerability and instability on the part of workers has called attention to the danger or precarity workers face in the global capitalist economy. This corpus of knowledge called attention to the movement away from the post-war settlement of the standard employment relationship to the new atypical, contingent forms of work which largely expose workers to precarity. Kalleberg (2013) creates a typology of good versus bad jobs on the basis of the vulnerabilities they create on workers. Because of the vulnerability and instability brought by these new forms of work, there have been calls for restoring the dignity of jobs, hence the Decent Work Agenda by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The Decent Work Agenda is premised on the notion that we are humans first before we become workers (Peccoud, 2004). This means that work must not only be meaningful to the worker but must also be dignified and fulfilling.

The concept of precarious work is from the French term *precarite* which refers to vulnerability, instability and insecurity. It is the feeling of being devalued by business,

and powerlessness due to the assault on unions and dealing with a shrinking welfare system (Kalleberg, 2009). The ILO (2011: 05) defines precarious work as:

“[...] work performed in the formal and informal economy and is characterized by variable levels and degrees of objective (legal status) and subjective (feeling) characteristics of uncertainty and insecurity. Although a precarious job can have many faces, it is usually defined by uncertainty as to the duration of employment, multiple possible employers or a disguised or ambiguous employment relationship, a lack of access to social protection and benefits usually associated with employment, low pay, and substantial legal and practical obstacles to joining a trade union and bargaining collectively”.

From the 1970's, European workers became increasingly vulnerable to the labour market and began to organise around the concept of precarity as they faced living and working without stability or a safety net. This is said to have been a result of the following: the increase in spatial restructuring of work on a global scale (mobility of capital) and global price competition, technological advances which enable this spatial restructuring, union decline, deregulation of the economy by governments (neoliberalism), management attempts to achieve flexibility (which led to various types of restructuring and transformations in the nature of the employment relationship; e.g. layoffs and involuntary terminations becoming the norm. Figart and Warnecke (2013) define flexibilization as generally referring to shifts in production processes away from large integrated factory work sites, unionised workers and mass production of standardised consumer goods to spatially dispersed [global] production networks, increasingly casualised and informalized workers and small batch 'just in time' procurement and production), growth and expansion of the information based economy and the service sector which is organised around flexible production (Kalleberg, 2009).

The causes of precarious work are evaluated by the ILO as outcomes of an active and complicated interplay of factors mainly safeguarding capitalist interests while creating a group of vulnerable workers. Thus:

“The making of the 'precariat' is a multilevel process. It is an interaction between abuse of economic power, economic liberalization, global capital mobility, fierce lobbying against protective labour laws and a whole range of state policies guided by economic thinking that believes in the efficiency of free markets. It is this interconnectedness that creates the impression of inevitability, where each single measure looks like an adaptation and reaction to forces deemed beyond control of any actor. In this context, precarious employment is as much a consequence of increased competition as it is a powerful driver of increasing competition” (ILO, 2011: 18).

While precariousness exists in different forms and degrees, there are groups that have been identified as more affected by precariousness than others. Such groups include the young, old, migrants, ethnic minorities and women (Tucker, 2002; Young, 2010; ILO 2011). Young (2010) posits that precariousness exists in a continuum from high precariousness to low precariousness, with high precariousness found in nonstandard/atypical forms of work arrangements. In South Africa, migrants face many obstacles to standard work arrangements and thus end up in non-standard work arrangements. These have created limited space for survival rendering migrants' existences precarious (Crush et al., 2009; Standing, 2011). In its extreme form, precariousness creates "rightless" workers or "denizens" rather than citizens (Standing, 2011). Standing (2011) further warns that as the formal sector shrinks further and further, more people join the precariat which is deemed to be a growing class of frustrated, alienated workers engaged in meaningless jobs. Arguing from a Marxist perspective, Standing (2011) analyses this group as capable of causing social unrest in the future. This paper elaborates and discusses these views giving specific emphasis to the Zimbabwean migrant group in Johannesburg.

Methods and Setting

This research is a qualitative study of 58 migrants based in Johannesburg, South Africa. The material for this paper was originally gathered for a Doctoral research on survival strategies of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg conducted between 2011 and 2013. Subsequent material has been gathered over time to augment the findings of this study. This paper presents views of Zimbabweans without those of their employers. The migrants in the study were sampled using snowballing based on initial contacts made with migrants in Kempton Park and Tembisa. Snowballing is a better method for hard to find populations where no known sampling frame exists (Browne, 2005). The weakness of the study could be the fact that only Zimbabweans were interviewed and thus the perceptions of their employers were not sought. However, it was the intention of the researcher to interview Zimbabweans only as the study sought to understand the perceptions of Zimbabwean migrants in the South African labour market. In-depth and semi structured interviews were conducted. It must be noted that the names indicated in the findings are pseudonyms created to protect the privacy of the research participants. Attempts to validate migrants' narratives were made through thick descriptions, verifications with other migrants and in some instances repeated interviews.

Findings and Discussion

Zimbabwean migrants were found in very diverse fields such as: administration, teaching, accounting, marketing, security, information technology, motor mechanics, engineering, transport, the church and the food service industry, however, some sectors

were more receptive to Zimbabweans than others. These were the Zimbabwean dominated sectors. Zimbabweans rarely moved out of these sectors. These sectors were characterised by easy entry and easy exit. They were also characterised by poor conditions of service and wages with no migrant employee participation. Most migrants (69%) earned less than R6000 (approximately USD\$600) per month with no other benefits available at work regardless of whether migrants were documented or not. The capitalist interests in migrant labour are exposed clearly in the discussion of migrants' perceptions regarding employer preference. Migrants perceived that, on average, employers preferred hiring Zimbabwean migrant labour because of the available opportunity to exploit these migrants and also because of their perceived better investment in human capital and positive attitudes towards work. However, there were few exceptions to this rule as would be revealed in the discussion.

The relations at work were mainly perceived as riddled with racial discrimination and xenophobia. These factors were some of the reasons for migrants' entry into self-employment. Of much emphasis was the fact that successful self-employment hinged on the migrants' ability to acquire legal identity documentation which enabled the 'shedding off' of the devalued Zimbabwean identity.

Strategies of looking for a job

The methods used by migrants to get a job were: standing at strategic points (such as traffic lights at road traffic intersections) carrying a placard or sign describing what one can do; going door by door in shops asking for employment; using agencies to send a curriculum vitae to prospective employers or having a relative referring the migrants or sometimes taking the migrant to the prospective employer. The most common methods among the unskilled migrants included standing at strategic points (especially those targeting the construction industry and odd jobs such as painting and plumbing) and moving door by door (for those targeting the retail and food industry). The whole process of looking for a job is called *ukumaketha* (literally meaning marketing or advertising). Van Nieuwenhuyze (2009) calls this 'the asking strategy' where migrants move around looking for vacancies. Vivienne explains how she got a job as a waitress:

“I found the job on my own... I went shop by shop, door by door looking for a job (and) getting rejected... but I kept my faith never getting discouraged”.

This asking strategy can be stressful as an individual is never guaranteed of good reception where s/he goes looking for jobs. It can also be a process that is potentially embarrassing and degrading especially for the more educated migrants who might have had better expectations and who most likely would have left higher status jobs in Zimbabwe.

Here is another description of ukumaketha by Bernard who got odd jobs while standing by the traffic lights:

“You would stand by a robot (traffic light) and signal with a finger that you are looking for a job and you are alone. The white man would stop and you quickly jump into his truck. There was competition so you needed to be the first to jump into the truck. You would then spend the whole day painting or plumbing or doing whatever was required by the employer...But you needed to be careful in raising the proper finger and signal properly otherwise using the wrong finger would be an insult that elicits anger from the prospective employer”.

For most migrants this process of ‘marketing’ was largely guided by seasoned migrants (relatives and friends) who would go with the new migrant to the traffic light, so it was less stressful. However, for some individuals who had no relatives to induct them (like Bernard who was unfortunate in that his brother who had invited him got very sick and had to be ferried back to Zimbabwe just three days after Bernard’s arrival) they had to use ingenuity to survive although other friends would help in one way or the other.

Participation in the labour market

Of the 33 males, 21 (64%) were employed in the formal sector, ten (30%) were self-employed and two (6%) were employed in the informal sector. There were no unemployed males. Male migrants engaged in all kinds of jobs in order to earn a living. Among the twenty five females nine (36%) were employed in the formal sector while twelve (48%) worked in the informal sector and some were self-employed. Females worked as domestic workers/ housemaids while others were in retail and food outlets, teaching and administration. There were four (16%) female migrants who were unemployed. Women seemed to have fewer opportunities than men when it came to working in the formal sector. However, it must be noted that the distinction between formal and informal sector is becoming blurred as the formal sector is now characterised by casual, temporary and insecure jobs. The informal sector is mainly dominated by small to medium enterprises which offer insecure and unstable jobs. Overall 22 out of 58 migrants were employed in the informal sector while even those employed in the ‘formal’ sector experienced insecurity of tenure, low wages and thus were in precarious positions. Most jobs were contract-based lacking any social insurance. Migrants’ jobs were characterised by long working hours (more than 8 hours) and low earnings. The following table shows estimates provided by migrants regarding their monthly earnings.

Table 1: Earnings per month

Earnings per month	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
None	4	6.9%	6.9%
Less than R1500	7	12.1%	19%
Between R1500 and R3000	16	27.6%	46.6%
Between R3001 and R6000	13	22.4%	69%
Between R6001 and R10 000	6	10.3%	79.3%
Above R10 000 but less than R15000	6	10.3%	89.7%
Above R15 000	6	10.3%	100%
Total	58	100%	

Source: author's own representation

Migrants did not earn much per month. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the migrants took home less than R 6000 (which was about USD\$600 using an exchange rate of 1USD is equivalent to 10 ZAR) per month while the rest (31%) earn more than R6000. Almost half of the migrants studied (47%) earned less than R3000 (about USD\$300). They were barely surviving since these same individuals would pay rent of about R600 per month for a single room and spend almost the same amount in transport costs, the remainder would be utilised for food and other costs relating to the sustenance of the workers. In order to cut costs some migrants preferred shared accommodation with friends and relatives. This co-residential strategy was also common among the Senegambian migrants in Belgium (Van Nieuwenhuyze, 2009).

Migrants' perceptions on why employers chose them over other groups

There were positive and negative reasons given by Zimbabweans as to why employers preferred them over other groups of workers, especially the local South African workers. The common arguments put forward by participants were that employers preferred Zimbabwean migrants because; they were hard-working, intelligent, could speak fluent English, respectful and they maintained consistency in terms of coming to work and executing their tasks. Zimbabweans portrayed local South African workers as unreliable workers who, after receiving their salaries, would not report for duty consistently. The participants further highlighted that some local South Africans tended to be vocal when it came to their rights and benefits at work, creating 'trouble' at work. The earlier discussion of the views by Waldinger and Lichter (2003) indicated how employers dislike workers who are 'combative' and seem not to 'know their place'. In comparison, Zimbabwean employees thought employers perceived them as generally quiet, contented and unlikely to cause trouble by complaining. The migrants were aware of the exploitation and abuse they suffered at the hands of employers but they seemed to have less choice because of their devalued status as 'foreigners'. That is why some ended

up using fake identity books so that they could pass off as South African and become eligible for certain benefits and rights at work available to locals.

Migrants also argued that among the characteristics that gave them a competitive advantage over locals were: their hard-work and eagerness to learn and adapt quickly. They argued that these tended to be valuable characteristics that Zimbabweans were praised for among all migrant groups. Scott narrated how he expressed his zeal to learn on the job:

“After two weeks the white man asked if I could use machines. I agreed and started using a grinder for the first time. I did it for a week and he called me again and asked if I could use a cutter and I told him I will read the instructions and use it. He tested me for two hours and saw that I was able. He was satisfied and then made me the operator of the machine. Other local colleagues got jealous and started asking why the machine was given to a newcomer after only three weeks. They knew I was foreign because I used my real Zimbabwean name”.

This willingness to learn on the job was a tenet shared by both men and women. Karen explained how she was the envy of her colleagues when she became the favourite employee because of her ability to operate a machine:

“I was working at a Fish and Chips outlet and I showed my ability to clean a washer which was believed to be a man’s job. So I was able to clean it in the absence of male employees and the employer was happy. Nobody had taught me to do it”.

In her previous employment, Karen had also managed to excel in a guesthouse (bed and breakfast facility) where she worked as a maid. She had not done that job before but she distinguished herself to the extent that she was given a permanent post. She had started as a temporary worker who was holding fort for someone on maternity leave. She was now constantly being referred to other jobs by her former employer because of her good conduct.

The willingness to learn was also shown in the need to improve oneself through acquisition of diplomas and certificates in various fields. Bernard explained:

“When I did a driving course some of my folks laughed at me saying: whose car will you drive? Where will you drive it in South Africa? Why drive a car when you don’t have a house? But this became my advantage over others. When there was a post that required a security guard with his own gun and a drivers’ licence, that became my opportunity and I was appointed supervisor. I upgraded myself by taking courses in supervision, management and administration”.

This was mainly the case with documented migrants, especially those that had acquired work permits and South African identity books. Among the participants, there were a few migrants pursuing degrees through open distance learning while the majority had acquired diplomas and certificates in various fields. Acquisition of a South African academic qualification was viewed as an added advantage when looking for a job because migrants would not have to endure the hassles of qualifications evaluation by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Even those migrants who had acquired degrees in Zimbabwe felt the need to add certificates and diplomas acquired from South African institutions.

The majority of migrants (76%) stated that employers preferred Zimbabweans because they worked harder than South Africans and were willing to experiment with machines and new methods of doing work. Participants provided negative stereotypical perceptions of local South Africans as lazy, uneducated and unwilling to learn. They used these stereotypes as reasons why employers preferred foreign workers. Tapera had this to say:

“South Africans are lazy. If foreigners go on leave the employer has a problem. You see the boss hugging a Zimbabwean when he comes back from leave, this shows Zimbabweans know their jobs. If it is a local South African coming back from leave the boss is not bothered...so when they get paid they do not come to work next Monday... They drink a lot”.

Migrants generally insinuated that Zimbabweans had a work ethic that was different from South Africans. This work ethic entailed hard-work, dedication and reliability. This perception exaggerated the qualities of Zimbabwean migrants. Migrants under study also believed that their fluency in the English language was far much better than local black South Africans. They generally believed that they were also more educated than South Africans. Vivienne expressed this point clearly when she said:

“I believe that coming here to South Africa was an advantage for me because a lot of people couldn't speak proper English... so if you are a waitress you must be able to communicate with customers. In Zimbabwe we were taught English... even today Zimbabweans have an advantage when it comes to speaking English. It was not difficult for any manager to hire me. I would go there and speak my (her emphasis) English which was far much better than (that of) any South African”.

Mosala (2008) agrees that Zimbabweans have in some sectors gained an advantage over locals because of their command of the English language. However, that better command of English sometimes landed Zimbabweans in trouble with locals who could easily tell that one was Zimbabwean because of the accent. Vivienne further explained:

“[...] but that also became a disadvantage because if you were able to speak English well the locals would start asking; where do you come from?, while you are serving them and then you become afraid to tell them that you are from Zimbabwe because of the negative reaction you will receive [...]”.

Research participants believed that the preference for Zimbabwean migrants above all other groups was also because they could be exploited easily by employers without them suffering any financial and legal consequences. This was linked to the images and information that was conveyed by the mass media which portrayed Zimbabweans as desperate and willing to do anything for low wages. The images portrayed conveyed the message of a fortress South Africa that Zimbabweans desperately wanted to enter. Morgan expressed the following sentiments:

“[...] we don't have as many opportunities as locals. Foreigners are perceived as desperate. They see films of desperate foreigners jumping the fence and think we are desperate... The employer can sack you at any time thinking you are not going to take action and it's mostly true”.

Farai also argued:

“We are desperate and stranded. They prefer us and at the same time mistreat us because they think we are so desperate”.

The willingness of Zimbabweans to accept any job and impress employers was, on its own, dangerous, because regulations could be ignored and flouted to the benefit of the employer. This meant that Zimbabwean workers could be exposed to dangerous working conditions endangering their health in the process of securing employment. A good example was my key informant Tatenda, who worked as a waitress at a food outlet. Almost every day she had nosebleeds which she attributed to chemicals they used to clean the cooking space. However, she has no better option but to continue enduring these as the other option of leaving the employer and finding another job, was a mammoth task for a migrant using an Asylum Seeker's permit. The employer pointed out to her that she would not receive any assistance from the organisation in addressing her regular nose-bleeding. She was told to “either take it or leave it” and she preferred to “take it”. Since there were many Zimbabweans in her position, it can be assumed that many rationalised to keep such jobs than risk unemployment. This situation renders support to Sassen-Koob's (1985) assertion that the willingness to staff these undesirable jobs created a constantly suitable source of labour for employers.

Zimbabweans also argued that they had limited choices because good jobs were out of their reach, reserved for locals. These migrants reasoned that they had to make good with the “bad” jobs available to them. For those that were lucky to have found better jobs, migrants perceived that they were side-lined or considered last for promotion. The following sentiments were expressed:

“Some jobs are reserved for South African locals. They don’t want foreigners, for example, I discovered that they wanted drivers in Pretoria. I went there but we were told they don’t want Zimbabweans” (Edgar).

“I attended and passed an interview at Tembisa hospital but they said that they were told not to employ Zimbabwean nurses and doctors... They said if I had a South African ID they would take me” (Hillary – a qualified nurse).

“[...] currently I feel I deserve a managerial position but I don’t have it simply because I am a foreigner, yet I have achieved the educational levels required for management... For some jobs, it is out-rightly written that foreigners should not apply... even if you qualify, for example in financial management and accounting. In some websites when you register for employment they ask for a South African identity book and if you don’t have but you possess a work permit the minute you write passport and permit then you don’t get a response... In some cases it’s stated that in this job we are not considering anyone with a work permit” (Trish).

“They preferred South Africans there. I was the only Zimbabwean and I worked as a receptionist... I would be the last to get paid. They would say they forgot to pay me. They would start by paying whites, then local blacks and then me. If I didn’t ask I would not get paid” (Hillary).

High skilled migrants reported social exclusion in the form of blocked opportunities for career growth. Migrants alluded to the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act of 2003 which encouraged employers to promote blacks (South African citizens) into management positions. However, what migrants were experiencing could also have been the implementation of the Employment Equity Act of 1998 which advocates for affirmative action towards historically disadvantaged groups, defined as designated groups, which are the blacks, women and the disabled South African citizens.

“Government policies are quite clear. They are encouraging South Africans to take managerial posts. Employers love Zimbabweans but government policies are constraining. They give you permits but they change policies in the workplace, you end up without a job. Now they want to employ people with permanent residence and citizenship” (Barbara).

The above quotation from Barbara reveals how migrants also perceived the government as shifting goal posts - where migrants with work permits could not access employment.

Sectors dominated by Zimbabwean migrants

Migrants gained entry into private organisations that did not strictly require identity documents. These organisations provided access to employment to migrants using Asylum Seeker's permits. Migrants who did have any permits still found employment in these private companies where both entry and exit tended to be easy. In some cases, there were interviews that migrants attended (especially waitresses) which they passed easily after being coached by their relatives who would have found them these jobs in the first place. In other cases, there are no interviews, the curriculum vitae was adequate to get one employed.

Table 2: Current Job of Participant

Job	Frequency	Percent
Food service	9	16%
Welding	2	3%
Driving/transport industry	8	14%
Hairdressing	3	5%
Domestic	4	7%
Unemployed	4	7%
Retail	4	7%
Construction	1	2%
Security	3	5%
Teaching	3	5%
Training	1	2%
Accounts and finance	2	3%
IT and computers	8	14%
Other	6	10%
Total	58	100%

Source: author's own representation

Females dominated in domestic services (as domestic workers), hairdressing and hospitality industry (as waitresses), teaching and training, while males were predominantly found in the hospitality (as waiters and drivers), information technology and computers, motor mechanics, transport and security industries. Recruitment via referrals allowed the employers to avoid costs of recruitment and selection because the employees were careful enough to refer migrants of 'good standing' to their employers. The table below shows the various areas of employment for Zimbabweans. These areas tended to be mainly in the low end and a few in the high end service sector such as waitressing, driving, domestic services and information technology.

While migrants could switch jobs and positions, they rarely moved out of their industry sector. The table below shows the jobs that migrants did when they first arrived in Johannesburg. It is clear that these were still the same sectors receptive to migrants. However, there were clear cases of upward movement where one moved from domestic work to office work. This shift tended to be facilitated by sympathetic/paternalistic employers. This was certainly true for female migrants with recognised professional qualifications such as a Diploma in teaching, who started off as domestic maids. The same argument could be made for former employers of self-employed migrants who facilitated migrants' acquisition of human and social capital. Such employers defied the stereotype that employers exploited their migrant workers.

Table 3: The First Job of Participant

First Job	Frequency	Percent
Construction	10	17%
Domestic	11	19%
Security	5	9%
Hairdressing	4	67%
Office	8	14%
Other	13	22%
Waitressing	7	12%
Total	58	100%

Source: author's own representation

Most men started by working in the construction and security industries as well as office work, while most women started in the domestic, office, waitressing and hairdressing sectors. The category of 'other' includes jobs in the retail, motor mechanics and service industries. Migrants worked as drivers, motor mechanics, graphic designers, engineers, teachers and sales agents.

Rights and benefits at work

There were generally few or no workers' rights for most Zimbabwean migrants. The worst areas were security and waitressing where migrants endured long working hours that were not considered in the calculation of wages. Workers worked up to 12 hours a day but still got less than R2000 per month with one day off per week. They usually knocked off well into the night (between 11pm and 3am). In some cases transport was not provided (thus making it dangerous to travel at night) and contracts were verbal agreements. While this situation also affected locals who were in the same industry, it was serious for migrants who were the majority in these sectors, which in any case, tended to be shunned by locals.

A worker could be dismissed without notice in the same way that he/she could also disappear without notice. Absence for more than two days was interpreted as loss of interest in the job and the worker was easily replaced. This is what happened with Pauline when she went to process her Asylum seeker's documents for two days. She found that her employer had replaced her with another domestic worker.

Most Zimbabwean migrants did not belong to any worker associations. They shunned union activities. While the Immigration Act of 2002 (as amended in 2004) states that it is up to the employer to ensure that migrant workers with permits received fair salaries and enjoyed the same rights as their local counterparts, employers usually did not bother. Since enforcement was left to employers, there were chances of exploitation of migrant workers. Furthermore, ignorance, combined with "reluctance to cause trouble" caused migrants to accept unfair situations. That is why Alex argued that "foreigners have no rights. The moment you express yourself you expose yourself".

The type of contracts migrants got tended to be tied to their legal status. Those whose presence in the country was deemed illegal or used Asylum Seeker's permits tended to have verbal contracts, while those whose stay was legal or who had acquired South African documents, had formal written contracts and got payslips. On verbal contracts, Scott describes how he was engaged:

"When I first joined the job I did not know whether it was permanent or not. I just heard workmates saying they would be working with me permanently. I never signed any contract... But my white boss showed interest in me".

Norbert also started the same way:

"When I started (in 2009) I just worked for months without signing a contract even though I knew I was entitled to one. I could not ask for fear of jeopardising my job. The employer formalised the situation and gave me contract this year (2012)."

Norbert signed a contract in 2012 after almost four years of not knowing how long he was going to be at that organisation. This was also complicated by the fact that he was employed as an Asylum Seeker's permit holder. He only got a general work permit in 2010. The problem of a verbal agreement is that it is not binding and enforceable. In Scott's case there was no agreement at all. Scott had been brought by his brother to the job and negotiations had been done on his behalf, by the brother. Unfortunately, he did not last at the job as he was sacked at the end of the month for lack of identity documents after locals had complained of favouritism on the part of the employer.

Paradzayi had this to say about his experiences prior to acquiring a passport and a general work permit:

“I used to work for a South African white man. After I told him the truth that I am a Zimbabwean he would shout at me saying you are Zimbabwean and you don’t have identity papers, I can call home affairs people any time. He always did this at month-ends, so every time I lived in fear of being deported...”.

Morgan also had this to say:

“The employer can sack you anytime thinking you are not going to take any action and it’s mostly true. People don’t fight, unlike the locals who are very union conscious. I have a cousin who is working 18 hours a day in a restaurant. There is no (payment for) over-time. Last month, he was paid R500. I told him to record all the hours he had worked so that the day he is fired he can demand his money... he uses an Asylum Seekers permit”.

Desperation made undocumented Zimbabwean migrants to accept almost any kind of contract and endure quietly. While they were aware of exploitation and abuse they had no better choice than to accept the terms and consider themselves lucky to have the jobs in the first place. They only changed jobs or became vocal about their conditions once their status was legalised. Those who were documented, found that their educational qualifications did not matter as they occupied low status, unskilled jobs. That is why many Zimbabweans in South Africa argued that education does not really matter (Maphosa, 2010).

Whether documented or undocumented, Zimbabweans largely did not participate in union activities. This was either out of “not wanting to create trouble” or because they were simply ignored. For example, Ruth had a passport and work permit but she was not a member of the union at her workplace. She said every time there were union meetings at her workplace, Zimbabweans were left outside. They were only told afterwards what transpired at the meetings. It is possible that Ruth did not actively seek participation and therefore waiting to be invited was simply an excuse for unwillingness to participate.

There were cases of migrants who were lucky to work in organisations that were dominated by migrants to the extent that they could enforce their rights informally, even though these rights were not written down. This was facilitated by their influence in middle management that was dominated by Zimbabweans. Kevin explained that:

“We have rights here. Our managers are Zimbabwean.... (and) the South Africans cannot complain against us because all the management is Shona”.

The clustering of Zimbabweans in this particular trucking company shielded them from discrimination by locals and actually threatened the locals who were the minority in this organisation. In such situations, locals were afraid to express themselves and could not be xenophobic for lack of support from management. Lower level migrant employees

(the truck drivers and mechanics) could enforce informal norms on their Shona managers by reminding them that they come from the same country. In a related case, Norbert explained how Zimbabweans dominated a steel and engineering department of a company to the extent that they felt safe from local competition:

“South Africans have no option but to like us since our department is very powerful. We earn more money than them and recruit each other as Zimbabweans”.

Karen also explained how they related with the Pedi woman they worked with at her workplace where she was employed as a tailor:

[...] the white woman says she wants Zimbabweans only. There are four (three Shona and one Ndebele, [Karen]) Zimbabweans and one South African. The Shona women and I are united. We understand each other. The Pedi woman doesn't like us”.

All the cases narrated above reveal how migrants could enforce certain norms (even when they are not written down) by virtue of being a majority in a department and also by having some level of support from management.

In terms of benefits available on the job it was clear that the majority of migrant workers (60%) had nothing offered to them except their monthly salary. Most benefits depended on contributions by members and because migrants did not contribute to social insurance, they could not expect to benefit either. In the absence of medical insurance, protection from injury and pension this meant that when migrants got sick they forked out their own money and upon injury or death there was no compensation. The following table displays this information.

Table 4: Benefits Available at Work

Benefits at work	Frequency	Percent
Funeral fund	5	9%
All benefits are there	2	3%
None	35	60%
Not applicable	11	19%
UIF	5	9%
Total	58	100%

Source: author's own representation

A few individuals (9%) stated that they contributed to the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) which would cushion them in case they lost their jobs. There were two individuals who stated that they have all benefits including UIF, medical aid and

funeral fund. These individuals were among those that had gone through the naturalisation process and were now viewed as citizens in South Africa. They had parents who were already in South Africa. Sections 26 and 27 of the application for permanent residence permit allows for a child (without age restriction) of a South African citizen or a relative 'within the first step of kinship' to apply for permanent residency and naturalisation.

The category labelled 'not applicable' reflects those that were either unemployed or self-employed. It was worrisome that the self-employed could not afford to pay for their own social insurance. But even among those that could afford to pay (e.g. the security company owner and training company owner) migrants thought that having medical insurance was a waste of money, preferring to pay cash whenever medical attention was needed.

Conclusions

This paper chronicles the lives of Zimbabwean migrants in the South African labour market based on an in-depth study of fifty eight migrants, showing their experiences and perceptions of these experiences. As they compared their country of origin and South Africa, Zimbabweans perceived that South Africa had better and more opportunities for work and survival. Clearly Zimbabweans thought that they were far much desirable to the employers than the South African locals. They were, however, not naive to the fact that the employer preferences were based not on 'good' intentions but on the willingness to exploit the disadvantaged state of the migrants.

However, in the process some migrants fared very well and actually managed to create enclaves for their migrant group which monopolised certain industry sectors. A few Zimbabweans experienced upward social mobility while others managed just to get by and not necessarily get ahead. Whether in the formal or informal sector, almost all migrants experience varying levels of precariousness, including those that have ventured into self-employment. It is critical to note that Zimbabwean migrants were confronted with many challenges that largely stemmed from their migrant status which was devalued on the labour market. This factor, combined with others such as low skills, employer interests, race and poverty, exposed Zimbabweans to precarity on the South African labour market in a much defined manner as has been discussed in this paper. It is recommended that the South African government recognises the pivotal role played by migrants and define the minimum standards of work for documented migrants. The Zimbabwean government should begin to take a keen interest in the welfare of its citizens by engaging in bilateral agreements with destination countries such as South Africa and Botswana. Instead of looking at migrants as traitors or sell-outs, migrants could be perceived as a conduit for remittances that could assist rebuild the Zimbabwean economy. The new government of Emmerson Mnangagwa has chanted a

slogan that “Zimbabwe is open for business” and Mnangagwa himself has visited migrants in selected African, Asian and European countries. It remains to be seen whether there are clear, genuine moves to improve the situation of Zimbabwean migrant workers in these countries. For now, the majority of Zimbabweans survive as the ‘precariat’ in the South African labour market, and as long as the Zimbabwean economic and political situation is not improved, Zimbabweans will continue making comparisons and rationalising that the South African labour market is better.

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BOOK REVIEW

Cace Sorin, Fitzek Sebastian (Eds.): ICCV 2020 SOCIAL REPORT. COVID19 IN ROMANIA, DATA, ANALYSIS, EVOLUTIONS AND STATISTICS, Bucharest: Romanian Academy, 2020, p.273

Sebastian FITZEK⁴

In less than six months of laborious research, the Quality of Life Research Institute has managed to print a complex and interesting collective volume, with latest data, analysis, evolutions and statistics that focused on Romania in 2020. The shock of its massive spread and the unexpected rise of the Covid19 virus around the world have generated a number of fundamental questions and analysis for the entire world of scientific community. Through dedication to the subject, the Quality of Life Research Institute team retaliates via 6 chapters the quality of life evolution during the first months of the year, the social policies of health elaboration and social protection, the demographic changes and the standard of living for the Romanian citizens which has undergone sudden changes, unpredictable for any scientific forecast. The demeanour of the whole phenomenon and its evolutionary stages are abundantly reflected in the 6 studies elaborated in a structure determined by the broad preoccupations of the institute, but also by the reason of some reactions in fields such as health, economy, education, demography and social assistance. Numerous fastidious important aspects are missing today from the Romanian public debate. In this account, the volume offers a refined picture of a series of analysis, arguments and specialized statistics that scientifically substantiate the authors' statements.

From the very beginning, in the first chapter, the authors Cătălin Zamfir (Scientific Researcher 1 and Director of the Quality of Life Research Institute) and Elena Zamfir

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(Scientific Researcher 1) display the issue of the pandemic, from a synthetic perspective, regarding to its imminent impact on the quality of life over an especially short, irreversible and surprising period of time in its exponential motion and evolution. In order to ascertain this exponential growth rate, the two authors capture the entire phenomenon in four successive hypostases of time: the pre-crisis period with all the anxieties reported, then, only throughout the press, the period of emergency and the relaxation period. The debated charts and data compare the situation from Romania with the situation from other European countries, noting behind these figures, the distinct immediate social effects of the crisis, but also the significant changes in human relations and quality of life. From the same perspective, the immediate effects that unfolded in society through physical distancing, home office, isolation, solidarity and defiance to the recommendations of the authorities are analysed along with major processes that have decisively changed relations either socially, interpersonally, institutionally or professionally.

The message of the authorities to stay at home for as long as possible was differently perceived by the population. Also the constraint of the fundamental right to move during the emergency state, especially for the elderly, generated a series of measures unprecedented throughout post-December history. The impact of the crisis on the quality of life paradigm is another important segment that the authors assess in a sociological analysis extended to the development of social uncertainty, of hereafter increasing insecurity and especially by declining of confidence in state authorities, effects that were complied with the professional level of Romanian citizens. The population's reaction to the crisis was analysed by monitoring the main institutes of national statistics. Thus, the data presented show a series of communication issues and dilemmas that the Romanian State has managed with difficulty.

The second chapter brings in the essence of quality of life as main subject for the standard of living in Romania under the siege of COVID19. The researchers: Daniel Arpinte, Sorin Căce, Simona Mihaiu, Iulian Stănescu, Simona Maria Stănescu and Sebastian Țoc display an X-ray of the field data in relation to the social protection measures and policies bore by the Government through the Emergency Ordinances. The accuracy and collection of data in record time, exposed this chapter to a series of analysis and number crunching that apparently have no direct links, but the authors were able to consequentially mount and unravel them in a facile manner. Along with other countries, the "lockdown" effect pushes Romania towards a record of negative figures, and the most vulnerable become the Romanian citizens who want a working place to return home from. Presenting these data and situations compared to other states, the authors propose a series of policies that guide and improve the standard of living of individuals. Research shows how economic and health problems directly affect all other aspects of life. The lessons of the crises that Romania went through with an impact on the population's income indicate the urgent need for state intervention and,

implicitly, the increase of the costs related to social protection. The issues raised are worrying, but do not go unanswered, with the authors bringing a number of viable recommendations and options to possible directions for action. The lessons of the crises that Romania went through with an impact on the population's income indicate the urgent need for state intervention and, implicitly, the increase of the costs related to social protection. The issues raised are worrying, but do not go unanswered, with the authors bringing a number of viable recommendations and options to feasible directions for action.

In the third chapter, the authors Mălina Voicu, Daniel Arpinte, Delia Bădoi, Alexandra Deliu, Simona Mihaiu, Simona Maria Stănescu and Cristina Tomescu analysed the evolution and demographic trends in Romania during the pandemic. The health crisis has severely affected all age groups, especially areas with social and economic vulnerability. Mortality dynamics, fertility and migration have generated a series of state measures nonetheless insufficient to fight the negative effects at the national level. The stated hypotheses were built on what happened, in the same domains at European level. Thus, the authors offer a series of answers and corrective actions in the hope of better results to those currently found. The merit of this chapter is also found in the dissemination of valuable information, which the authors extracted from a huge volume of data collected during months of research.

In the fourth chapter, the authors Bogdan Florian and Sebastian Țoc evaluate the education system in Romania during the pandemic. The authors' answers provide clarity, vision and qualitative information in the field of reform policies. The consistency of the included analysis was prioritized on the following dimensions of the current challenges of Romanian education: inequality of opportunities in education; digital skills and the transition to the online teaching-learning system; sanitary conditions in schools; recommencement or completion of the school year at European level. The identification of the most sensitive issues is followed by an interesting series of public policies, which the authors propose as active measures to resolve crises in the education system.

In the fifth chapter, the authors Mariana Stanciu, Adina Mihăilescu and Cristina Humă analysed the risks of the food crisis due to the pandemic at both national and international level. The medical crisis has spawned the food crisis, but there are other factors, as the authors point out, that are exacerbating the global food crisis. Drought, some inappropriate government policies, fragility of supply chains due to traffic restrictions, export bans and, above all border closure policies have had a major impact on this sector, implicitly on the quality of life of each individual. Having this background, the food crisis is confirmed by key indicators that have influenced the consumption of the population before and after the onset of the pandemic. The recording of differences in figures between 2019 and 2020 shows why incomes and

purchasing power are uncertain, favoring social inequality between high and low incomes. Rising unemployment is another key factor in lowering living standards, especially in the field of private employers. Emigrants' return, the reduction of population mobility, poverty, the evolution of household incomes and the food consumption basket are some of the indicators brought out by the figures in a unitary photograph in which we find an everyday reality with many unsettled problems.

In the sixth chapter, Professor Vasile Morar contributes with a philosophical vision on the moral and ethical impact that pandemics have had in human history compared to the current situation. The necessity to rethink the entire education project is, in the author's opinion, the cornerstone for changing attitudes and behaviours in crisis situations, and in their absence, humanity could go through the most acute crisis, the moral one.

Interpersonal friendship is the path that saved man from the most difficult situations and made him survive any weather, wars, plagues and cataclysms. Natural selection is also a selection of friendships, where man chooses a correct system, true or false or based on deceit. Restoring the links between man and nature is a correct choice, but it must be rethought by each individual, community and state, otherwise the preservation of humanity as a natural element can be endangered.

The entire volume has a wide addressability and is not limited to the academic environment. Its structure was organized in a series of topics, problems and solutions in the form of a handbook, a guide for how to avoid in such a period the risks of poor decisions. Beyond its sententious side, the most informed public of this study is represented by the political decision makers who have the power to manage either effectively or inappropriately. The social, economic and especially human radiography of this book will soon be found in a new historical lesson, important for those responsible for decisions, but also a guide to remember for future generations of tomorrow's Romania.



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