Sustainable Development and Resilience of Local Communities and Public Sector Organizations

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Foreword

Public Administration and Management Department (PAMD) at Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania has been since its establishment in the mid-1990s at the forefront of the movement to reinstate and redevelop higher education programs and research in public administration in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). In most of the CEE countries, public administration education during the communist regimes was done by party schools and was clearly subordinated to political influences and political doctrine. After the collapse of the communist regime in Romania, PAMD, with the support of Western European and American partner universities, has been instrumental in the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum for public administration programs and for supporting empirical research as an important component of their mission. PAMD at Babeș-Bolyai University is currently recognized at both national and international level as a leading teaching, research, and training entity in public administration. For two consecutive years, 2018 and 2019, PAMD was ranked in the quartile 150-200 in the Shanghai academic ranking, surpassing many other similar PA programs from other countries in the CEE region.

Cluj-Napoca, the city which houses Babeș-Bolyai University, is currently experiencing tremendous economic and social growth. Universities are a key engine for the growth of the city, together with the IT sector and creative industries. Cluj-Napoca is currently regarded at both national and regional level as a positive example of urban growth which is the result of cooperation among the city on the one hand and other relevant stakeholders on the other hand. The city is praised for implementing participatory mechanisms which allow citizens and interest groups to have a saying in how the city develops and in how decides its strategy for the years to come. PAMD has provided pro-bono consultancy for the city regarding the drafting of local master plans and sectorial comprehensive plans since mid-2000s. Currently, PAMD is deeply involved in conducting different analyses and studies for the city and its metropolitan area regarding quality of life and moreover factors which make the city of Cluj-Napoca more resilient and sustainable in how it develops compared to other cities.

Due to its leading role in the CEE region in the area of public administration higher education, PAMD organizes dissemination and networking events for PA scholars and practitioners. One important tool for bringing together academics,

researchers, and practitioners in public administration is the *Transylvanian International Conference in Public Administration*, held annually in Cluj-Napoca, Romania in the first days of November. The conference allows DAMP to use the city of Cluj-Napoca as a living lab for illustrating different practical implications of relevant scientific topics and paradigms. This is why, the conference is organized in partnership with the City Hall of Cluj-Napoca and the mayor of the city usually offers in his welcoming message the municipality's vision on the topic of the conference.

In 2018, the *Transylvanian International Conference in Public Administration* took place from 16 to 18 November. This event was envisioned to bring together academics, researchers and practitioners in the field of public administration from all over the world and to create the framework in which they can exchange ideas, disseminate best practices and develop networking opportunities for future teaching, research, and capacity building projects.

The overarching topic for 2018 was sustainable development and resilience of local communities and public sector organizations. In recent years, there have been many disparate uses of the terms sustainability and resilience, with some framing sustainability and resilience as the same concept, and others claiming them to be entirely different and unrelated. Sustainability is commonly defined through the triple bottom line of environmental, social and economic system considerations. Resilience on the other hand is viewed as the ability of a system to prepare for threats, absorb impacts, recover and adapt following persistent stress or a disruptive event. An ideal community, economy or business will be both sustainable and resilient. Our approach is that sustainability and resilience can and should work together, reinforcing each other. Every local community has a different set of geographical, social, economic and demographic set of circumstances which means that a local approach is needed to support communities to thrive, be more sustainable, resilient and healthy in changing times and climates. This is not to say that certain challenges are not common, such as climate change for example, and communities can learn from each other. Public administration (defined broadly to include also all service providers, health care agencies, environmental agencies, emergency services, etc.) plays a significant role in working with communities toward defining local priorities, expectations and monitoring criteria for local quality of life and wellbeing, thus helping their communities to be a better place to work in, to live in and invest in.

An impressive body of well renowned academics and practitioners took part in the conference. Their expertise in shaping policies and enhancing the quality of governance both in their home countries and worldwide is significant.

During the conference, Public Administration and Management Department together with the City Hall of Cluj-Napoca disseminated in a plenary presentation

the results of several studies conducted by faculty members on quality of life in Cluj-Napoca and on how universities contribute financially to the growth of the city. The overall goal of these plenary presentations was to offer a practical example of how governance at the local level, including leadership, transparency and participation, and interesectoral cooperation, can increase sustainability and resilience of a local community.

As part of this conference, two separate workshops, one for PhD students, and one for practitioners were organized. The main aim was to provide these two categories with opportunities to present their research and to interact with the members of the academic community. The workshops were run in a very interactive way, with presentations by the practitioners and PhDs being followed by ample debates.

The present book includes a selection of the papers presented in all sections of the conference. The intention of the conference organizers is to disseminate the materials discussed during the conference and to generate scientific debates beyond the two days event. Papers presented by the PhD students are included, as an opportunity given to young researchers to publish the results of their work, even if it is still work in progress.

Our hope is to be able to increase the visibility and reputation of international conferences organized by universities/departments. While we acknowledge that big and well known conferences such as EGPA (European Group in Public Administration) and NISPAcee The Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe) play an important role, smaller conferences are also crucial for not only their scientific value but also for providing venues for interaction between academia and practice, between practice and PhD students, and among a variety of scholars who call public administration their area of interest. The book is a natural extension of the conference and serves similar purposes. Moreover, PAMD has significant experience in publication of scientific papers. The Department publishes independently a prestigious journal in PA, namely, Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, a publication indexed by Thompson Reuters in Web of Science since 2008.

We would like to thank all conference participants for attending *Transylvanian International Conference in Public Administration*, 2018 edition, and for their contribution to this book.

Local conference organizers

Cluj-Napoca,
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The Digitalization
of Public Services in Cluj-Napoca[*]

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Abstract. Cluj-Napoca is one of the most suitable places for one to develop digitalization processes due to the high number of IT&C companies and to the openness of the Municipality to these types of services. But when actually starting to implement them and start collaborative processes between the two, one must be aware of the challenges they face and find proper solutions to reduce shocks.

The main challenges perceived by some of the representatives of the digitalization process were related to miscommunications, language blocks (legal language vs. technical one) and the different type of technology used – when trying to combine old technology with the new one, the system failed most of the time. Resistance to change was another issue felt by the respondents from the IT companies but fortunately, not a major one. Moreover, discrimination against those not used with technology was not seen as a problem but rather a way to better monitor the usage of services by providing them both online and offline.

The main conclusion is that Cluj-Napoca has an advantageous position in respect with other cities and that the Municipality must remain the initiator of digitalization if the process wants to be further developed.

Keywords: digital public services, innovation, digital resilience, Quintuple Helix model, digitalization.

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1. Introduction

This paper will present a qualitative analysis on Cluj-Napoca and on its levels of digitalization in the public sector and will present the main challenges faced by civil servants, private companies, Universities and IT associations clusters, when collaborating to develop e-public services.

The paper will contain a qualitative analysis to present the main issues when trying to adopt or implement digitalization, issues encountered by Cluj-Napoca City Hall representatives and the relevant stakeholders involved. Despite the efforts made by the Municipality and national institutions, Romania is still in the last place in digital public services but it made progress in promoting Open Data policies and it's making day-to-day steps, as shown in the European Commission's Digital Progress Report (2017), regarding the implementation of innovative mechanism to develop a better connectivity between citizens and services.

The main issue here is that public servants, private companies, NGOs and the other stakeholders lack knowledge regarding the proper ways of creating digital services, to facilitate the access and likeability of the service, thus increase the image of public institutions. Moreover, the lack of proper collaboration between relevant stakeholders that can support the development of such services, can be a great impediment in moving things towards the right direction.

The paper will develop a document analysis regarding national and European policies in the aforementioned field, progress reports and best-practice models, and also apply interviews to those who are working at the digitalization of Cluj-Napoca's public services (representatives of IT clusters, Universities, private companies and public servants). The main questions that I want to address are related to the level of cooperation and openness, the progress they believe they have made, how they see the development of it and which are, from their perspective, the main challenges they face in the digitalization process. Therefore, we have as main questions: 'Which are the main challenges faced in the digitalization process?' and 'Will digitalization create a sense of discrimination against those who do not know how to use/ do not have access to internet?'

The issue of available and competent human resource must be discussed, along with the fact that approximately 61% of Romania's population is composed out of internet users, thus by digitalizing services, you can risk to discriminate others at participating (participatory budgeting is only online).

The purpose of this paper is to generate a general overview of the current situation to see where we stand as a city, a list of main challenges faced by the Municipality with regards to the subject and also, some recommendation and possible solutions in order to promote digitalization in the major fields of activity and not only.

2. Theoretical framework

Due to the fact that we live a very dynamic and fast-forward society, we must adapt rapidly to changes with minimum losses and at the same time, increase productivity and accessibility to different services, especially when talking about public services.

When talking about digitalization, we must take into account the various connotations and meanings that the word has, and its adaptability to describe technological change and development, so it will not be confused with other types of technological development. Moreover, we must take notice of the difference between digitization, digitalization and digital transformation. While the first refers to merely transform information from physical form to a digital one (a website for example), the second integrates the first but has the attribution of simplifying certain operations (Irniger, 2017), to make them more efficient, user-friendly and more accessible than in other form. Therefore, when talking about digitalization we must take into account the implications that are to be done, for the specific service to be simplified and opened to the target group. Otherwise, we speak merely of digitization.

Furthermore, the discussion is taking another level when introducing the concept of resilience along with the first, because the concept is defined at a general level, the ability of a system to absorb, adapt and transform after a certain shock and to be able to suffer as little losses as possible. In the context of resilient types of digitalization, we can define it as 'the organizational capability to sense, resist and react to disruptive cyber events and to recover from them in a timely fashion' (Ayoub, Firth and Nayaz, 2017, p. 3). The aforementioned definition raises the question of how can we recover in such a way that we can avert future shocks and to better our way of recovering from them. This is why governmental support is necessary, especially in the optimization and digitalization of public services, if we want to maintain a certain equilibrium and the ability to return to a previous state if perturbation is encountered, especially if we take into consideration the various cyber-attacks and the level of vulnerability of some systems, mobile applications and online services. This is another urgent reason for building resilient digitalized public services, that will not be disrupted or only at a minimum level, to ensure citizen's security, availability of the systems and even more relevant, their trust in the institution and in the digital services it's providing.

Moreover, we must admit the difficulty to adapt to the fast-changing technology, which can create a discrepancy between the users of those services, meaning that only a certain group will be more opened to the digitalization of public services, while another group, will use the traditional methods (staying in line, filling documents on paper, and other) only because they cannot understand the technological methods, nor they have received training for doing so. Hence, we can see

already a problem and why we need to apply resilient processes to prevent potential discrimination when making the digital transfer, along with the other shocks that the system may encounter: cyber-attacks, breakdowns, data destruction and other possibilities of negative encounters that can disturb the equilibrium.

In the same line of thoughts, regarding resilience and digitalization, we must admit and recognize that digitalization and technology has a great influence on the way administration and private companies, along with other catalyzers and relevant actors collaborate to develop these kind of public services that support quality of life, offer great accessibility and are user-friendly. The knowledge and know-how exchange and mixed collaborations and partnerships, supported resilience in the sense that more diverse risks and possible shocks are taken into consideration when developing a digital public service, therefore vulnerability is limited and involvement and inclusion are taken into account, having the citizen in the middle of the decision-making process.

Furthermore, the impact that digitalization has in making a community resilient to shocks is also an indirect one, when talking about economic and non-economic factors (Billon, Lera-Lopez and Marco, 2010, p. 40), such as level of education, types of industries present and evolving within the community and quality of life, which sustain the development of the aforementioned and shapes its ability to minimize losses when encountered with shock.

For digitalization to support the resilience of a community at a regional, national or international level, it has to have the support and openness of the government and public institutions for it to thrive. Thus, the initiators of digitalization must provide a proper framework of development and set the foundation of collaborative platforms for stakeholders to create partnerships which will conclude into digitalized public services, through strategic policy initiatives and actions (Ayoub, Firth and Nayaz, 2017, p. 20).

3. Cluj-Napoca and digitalization

When talking about Cluj-Napoca and its level of digitalization, we must first understand the context in which it is positioned and how it influenced its ability to develop towards having digital public services.

Firstly, we must observe and analyze where we stand as a country in this respect, by looking at the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) report done by the European Commission (2017 and 2018). There we can clearly see that Romania is on the last place when talking about digitalization. Even though we have done a lot since 2014, when the Ministry of Informational Society launched the strategy of digitalizing the public services in Romania (2014), we still have to further develop and at a rapid pace to place ourselves higher on the hierarchy at the European level.

The DESI report is built on 5 main dimensions to measure the level of digitalization of an European country, and here we have:

> 'connectivity – fixed broadband, mobile broadband and prices, human capital – internet use, basic and advanced digital skills, use of internet services – citizens' use of content, communication and online transactions, integration of digital technology – business digitalization and e-commerce and last but not least, digital public services – eGovernment and eHealth' (European Commission, 2018).

With regards to Romania and its level of development based on the aforementioned indicators, we can state that we developed with 3.8% in comparison with 2017 but still, in a very slow and almost insignificant way, connectivity being the indicator that raised the most, in contrast with the others, where there was no significant increase (European Commission, 2018).

The indicator on digital public services prove a very modest development but not in eGovernment users but mostly in open data, digital public services for businesses and online services completion (European Commission, 2018), observation that can be translated not only in the slow adaptation of public institutions to integrate and establish digital services but concomitantly, the inability and lack of expertise of people to adapt to the digital changes.

Therefore, lack of proper know-how can be observed in both institutions and citizens and due to this, there are delays in properly implementing and establishing a strategy that will serve the community's needs.

Due to the massive ITC poll that Cluj-Napoca has become, we can see the rising of specialized human resource in the industry, starting from young ages, coding and programming being the first steps in the development of a digitalized community, along with the Municipality that supports them.

We made progress in the field since the implementation of the 'National Strategy on Digital Agenda for Romania' (Ministry of Informational Society, 2014) because we understood that 'ICT play an important role in improving business efficiency and extending market reach and the social impact of ICT has become significant' (Ministry of Informational Society, 2014, p. 7).

Furthermore 'ICT development is a key area to improve the competitiveness of the business environment, to increase public sector efficiency and to reduce bureaucracy' (Ministry of Informational Society, 2014, p. 7) meaning that public services must adapt it to non-IT fields such as health, education, transport and others to facilitate accessibility.

I emphasize on this because digitalization can change the users' experience, developing a positive image towards public institutions and also, this change will ensure a better quality of the services provided and an increase in satisfaction.

When talking about Cluj-Napoca, the city made a lot of progress during the years, in terms of digital services, due to the ITC poll that it became. Between 2011-2016, the industry has grown with 1.9% (from 794 IT companies in 2011, to 1,439, representing 10% of the total amount of IT companies at a national level), showing a major interest in the quality of services and human resource of Cluj-Napoca, out of which 8.7% works in IT (ARIES Transilvania, 2017, pp. 7-9). At the same time, even though a considerable amount of people work in the field, there are still issues with specialized workforce, therefore, the need of trainings to make it more adapted with the digitalization process that is starting to grow, is a necessity if we want the industry to develop.

'Digitization remains one of the key contributors to a strengthened economic growth, on the business side. In order to reduce costs, increase efficiency, build strong engagement with collaborators, customers or business partners, the adoption of digital technology became a necessary condition for enhancing the competitiveness' (Stoica and Bogoslov, 2017, pp. 2-3). Cluj-Napoca has shown its ability to use its competitive advantage and used it to develop digitalized services for its citizens, to increase their quality, usability, the quality of life and mobility. The fact that people have the possibility to access different services on-line or through phone applications, is a first step towards a Digital Cluj-Napoca.

Due to this need of synergetic partnerships, the Municipality, along with other relevant actors have come to a common conclusion, to develop a consortium using the Quintuple Helix Model, where public administration, citizens, private companies, NGOs / Clusters and Universities will collaborate and develop common projects that will benefit the community as a whole and putting a great importance on their assets.

'All systems in a Quintuple Helix influence each other with knowledge in order to promote sustainability through new, advanced and pioneering innovations' (Carayannis, Barth and Campbell, 2012, p. 7), having a common goal and developing inter-sectorial projects, for example, supporting digitalization and innovation by introducing them in non-IT industries (IT and health, IT and education, commerce, mobility, infrastructure and others).

Cluj-Napoca, being characterized by the IT industry and Universities, being a young and vibrant city, had the capacity and Municipal support to introduce the concept and in an incremental way, implementing it within the community, making it more inclusive, by introducing all relevant actors from the community in the decision-making process (thus, using the Quintuple Helix Model).

By using the aforementioned model, the Municipality in collaboration with the others, has managed to develop approximately '6 operational apps – 3 owned by the City Hall in the fields of civic engagement, informing citizens and urban mobility. The other two are urban mobility applications for the purpose of public

transport and alternative transport (bicycles) and one tourism application have been developed by other stakeholders with a civic spirit' (Alexe, 2018). Hence, a first step in increasing connectivity between public authorities and citizens, using digitalization as a main process has been done, but the reality is that there is much to be done, to raise our position on the European Commission's DESI Index.

'The IT industry is focused on helping develop mature models of e-commerce and e-business. This primary dimension is followed by the digital services or products offered to accelerate the development of new products/ services, securing the use of devices, or developing data-driven decisions' (ARIES Transilvania, 2018, p. 10).

The Quintuple Helix Model is an important process if it is to develop in a sustainable way, using innovation, knowledge-transfer and interconnectivity, the digital and smart Cluj-Napoca, thus, the model must be very well analyzed and applied so it will create benefits and positive outcomes.

An acknowledgement that we must take and be aware of, to support digitalization, is related to the current challenges faces by the ITC companies in Cluj. Based on the IT study developed by ARIES Transilvania (2017), some of the main challenges faced in the sector are related to the level of experience and expertise of management, the competition over highly specialized and qualified human resource, financial, time consuming, and others (p. 34).

When talking mainly about digitalization, Cluj-Napoca has the competitive advantage related to increase in communication with relevant actors and stakeholders and increase in productivity (ARIES Transilvania, 2018, p. 17) and also, the ITC companies have registered a simplification of processes, an improvement in the decision-making processes, increase in innovativeness and reduce in outsourcing (ARIES Transilvania, 2018, p. 11).

Therefore, digitalization is growing incrementally but it already has some results and shows improvement because citizens, public authorities, and the other actors from the Quintuple Helix Model are embracing the benefits and they have understood its importance in adapting it in different fields such as health, education, mobility, to support the digitalization of public services.

4. Presenting the problem

Digitalization still presents major issues in terms of know-how, expertise and some related to higher costs. Even if the process is created to reduce costs overall, the initial investments are high, therefore the embrace of digitalization of public services is difficult because of this reason. Not only the initial cost is a major impediment, but also, the inability to have an open collaboration and an interconnected approach that has as main intention to support the collaboration between

sectors and industries in order to create digitalized services for the community. This red tape is due to the ability, still, for stakeholders to clearly see the advantages of binding industries and the innovation that can result from it.

Public servants are slowly adapting to new technologies and a certain degree of resistance to change is obvious due to the habit of doing everything on paper, the same as citizens (Tripon and Urs, 2009, pp. 260-261). Nonetheless, we have shown a lot of progress in recent years, but still, the cracks are yet to be filled for a system, a public system to be fully digitalized and functioning properly so it will ease its usage and not the other way around.

The negative perceptions towards the capability of the Municipality can be a downer with regards to digitalizing public services. Here we can mention the still present rigidity of citizens when thinking about public services (examples may relate to lack of openness, vision and understanding of innovation and digitalization, bureaucracy which is limiting the process in terms of time and limited training among public servants), perception that can aggravate the reality, thus making it difficult for the technology implementation.

Not only the Municipality is perplexed in adapting and implementing to digitalization, but the IT companies in Cluj as well. Outsourcing is seen as a sure method to develop new software, new technology, whereas digitalization and innovation are a challenge for some within the aforementioned industry. Some of the main reasons are related to the limited number of experts in the field of digitalization, the initial investment which is over the ability of some companies to pay due to limited financial resources which are going into outsourcing or trainings and also, limited number of clients which do not understand the relevance of the process nor have a need for their service. Due to the reluctance of potential clients (ARIES Transilvania, 2018, pp. 11-12), some of the IT companies do not feel a need for digitalization, shifting their attention towards red waters instead of blue ones.

Therefore, the lack of communication, distortion in perceptions and limited know-how sharing can be presented as main challenges, along with limited expertise – in IT companies, public institutions and citizens as well, because the proper recipes for the current situation hasn't been found yet, even though advancements has been made.

If it is to overcome the aforementioned challenges, we must clearly understand the needs of the community, its assets, the available technology and what types of synergies should be created for the current situation (but thinking on the long-term, so we will have the element of readiness and be more resilient at the same time), adaptable and user-friendly, thus having a positive response from citizens, increasing the number of users.

5. Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to answer to the following questions 'Which are the main challenges faced in the digitalization process?' and 'Will digitalization create a sense of discrimination against those who do not know how to use/ do not have access to internet?', from the perspective of the main representatives in charge with the digitalization of public services. They are part of the Quintuple Helix Model, thus 1. public administration, 2. private companies, 3. Universities, 4. NGOs/ Clusters and last but not least, 5. citizens.

In Cluj-Napoca, the most visible digital service with regards to eGovernance is the online platform for participatory budgeting. The platform was developed through the collaboration of private, public and clusters, having in the middle of the decision-making process the needs of the citizens. By using their unique assets, citizens were able to write and design projects for their community, bringing them a true advantage due to the fact that they know specific problems that affect them at a general level and also, the common solutions, in trend with today's dynamic activity. Other digitalized services relevant for this notion are: online payment of fees, taxes and fines, online monitoring of requests, online marriage scheduling, online payments for fines and other taxes for the local police, online payment of taxes without debit concerning civil status and people's registry, online scheduling of transcripts of civil documents and others (Cluj-Napoca City Hall Online Services, accessed November 2018).

One of the main achievements in terms of eGovernance in Cluj-Napoca, is AN-TONIA, the first virtual public servant that can answer to approximatively sixty types of requests (Cluj News, 2018) and will become an active and very important part for the activity of the Municipality, easing the workflow and hopefully, reducing the amount of paperwork.

Furthermore, Cluj-Napoca has done tremendous work on developing smart mobility to facilitate and better this service for the population. Relevant examples in this case, on which some of the respondents worked on, are MyCluj and Cluj Parking applications, both being 'available to all citizens that have a smartphone, it is free of charge and allows citizens to interact directly with the city administration. If citizens see a problem around the city then they can report it, (e.g., a pothole that needs fixing or some vandalism that needs to be repaired) and then the administration can make sure that the problem is fixed' (Cities Digest – The Latest News in City Development, 2017).

In order to answer to the aforementioned research questions, I have used as instrument a structured interview, applied on the main actors, involved in the digitalization process, formed out of IT companies, public institutions and an IT cluster, thus gathering 7 interviews which will help answering the two questions of this research. The actors were from the public sector (three respondents), the

private one (three respondents) and from an IT cluster (one respondent). I have chosen them because they are actively involved in the digitalization process of Cluj-Napoca and they have collaborated and worked together to develop some of the digital public services presented above and also are deeply involved in creating 'Digital Cluj'.

The interviews were applied using two methods: on e-mail and face-to-face on a period of 3 weeks (November 5th – November 25th).

6. Results

After interviewing my target group and analyzing their answers, a first observation is that there is a visible discrepancy of perspective between the representatives of the public and private sector and cluster, even though they are members of the same working group responsible or involved in the digitalization of public services. Moreover, the difference in language and terminology is also a major impediment faced within the group, as one of the respondents mentioned: 'I see my activity having also a role of educating the public servants' (respondent from private IT company no. 1). These types of communication problems, can lead to prolonged deadlines or even missed if not solved in proper time, as confirmed by a public servant from the target group mentioned 'Some collaborations were unsuccessful due to delays or miscommunications and the companies preferred to pay the fines instead of delivering the service'.

Furthermore, regarding the openness of citizens towards digitalization, all respondents confirmed that citizens are not only ready but they are demanding it, whereas there are some major issues in implementing it in public institutions due to 'not invented here syndrome' and because it's a 'disruption of old habits and status quo' (IT company representative no. 1) being some of the reasons why we have difficulties in adopting digitalization, besides the reasons of 'resistance to change', 'public procurement of the services and digital solutions (…) being so tailor made' (public servant) and 'legislative rigidity' (IT company representative no. 3).

The observations above were made only to show that public servants also feel incapacitated and blocked by regulations when trying to apply digitalization because the system and process in itself requires a lot of documentation to be able to reduce it afterwards.

As mentioned, the two main questions that this paper wants to answer are 'Which are the main challenges faced in the digitalization process?' and 'Will digitalization create a sense of discrimination against those who do not know how to use/ do not have access to internet?'.

For the first question, the main challenges faced in the digitalization process, from the perspective of all respondents, are related to time, high initial costs, le-

gal issue and the rigidity of procedures – 'Even digital signatures are not always accepted by institutions, whilst many documents can only be provided in electric formats' (IT company no. 2). 'However, the most important issue is lack of DATA. Institutions regard their databases as their private property and are resistant to data exchange, even among themselves' (IT company no. 3). Besides the lack of data-sharing and the difficulties encountered due to a difficult legislator system, the interviewed representatives from the private sector also mentioned the problem of solution integration – related to the lack of data sharing – the fact that institution use different software, providers must integrate their solutions, which sometimes will work and sometimes will not, missing the opportunity to develop digital public services due to uncorrelated products. Thus, from this affirmations one can see that another challenge is the different types of technologies used that cannot be interconnected to support the digitalization process.

Needless to say that 'lack of communication and lack of interconnectivity are influencing the way projects are being developed and shared because we do not use an open approach, but keep everything within the organizational borders and do not see the possibility and the innovativeness behind creating inter-sectorial synergies, hence creating a barrier in front of digitalization and also, slowing down the process' (IT cluster representative). Lack of communication has its major role when trying to collaborate with companies/ suppliers from another city. As one public servant replied, 'they missed a lot of deadlines, there were a lot of miss-communications and they preferred to pay fines than to deliver their part of the contract' (public servant no. 2).

From the discussions I have had with representatives from the cluster, public and private sector, I have reached the conclusion that the main challenges are the low levels of computer literacy, the differences in languages between the beneficiaries and providers of digitalization, which can create delays, malfunctions or deliver a services that does not fit the requirements and also the legal system which still, hasn't been adopted to this growing need.

Moreover, the 'lack of inter-sectorial culture and by acting in an individualistic way (…) not seeing the connections' (public servant no. 3) that can be developed, can stand in front of digital progress in the public sector, thus limit the possibilities to increase the quality and quantity of digital public services used.

The major impact is to create and generate innovation by gathering competences into a point and create an ecosystem that can harvest them. Finding the commons in all fields, we can develop an ORGANICzation where resilient digitalization will come by itself, due to the combined know-how – creating it at a massive level.

For the second research question, 'will digitalization create a sense of discrimination against those who do not know how to use/ do not have access to internet?',

I was quite surprised to see the answers and the respondents' approach on it. I mention this because they do not see this as an issue that needs immediate attention, but rather as a small impediment in the system which is not relevant (by the number of people that do not understand or cannot use digital public services). 'The discrepancy already exists and will remain there. Technological advancement happens, and we should not stop it unless severe ethical issues arise' (IT company no. 2), thus, we should not stop the progress but rather 'make them user-friendly, intuitive and communicate and advertise them properly' (public servant no. 1) to ensure a high number of positive responses towards it and towards the initiative to develop services adapted to the needs of today's dynamic spirit.

The fact that off-line public services will not be completely eradicated but only reduced, raises the issue of doing the same thing twice, from the perspective of the public institution but the answer I received was negative 'even if we have the same service in both forms, it does not harden our work but rather makes us more focused on the demands of that service. We can't nor we will offer a service only on-line or off-line because not everybody can have access to them so we must think for the whole community, not only for the most active part' (public servant no. 1). Hence, the duplication of a public service is not a burden as considered at the beginning of this paper, but rather a mean of monitoring its usage.

Hence, the discrimination is at a low and rather insignificant rate, and progress is still made because digitalization brings a new level of transparency and provides the tools for democracy and citizen engagement in local administration and management, co-creation of modern cities and a better use of public money and infrastructure.

7. Discussions and conclusions

We must think of digital Cluj-Napoca and take into consideration the real values of the community and how they can be explored in order to bring added value and innovation. But for this, we need to be resilient and connect those who want to innovate and improve the quality of life in Cluj-Napoca, regardless if we are talking about public services, entertaining & cultural events, digitalization and others, and we can do this because we have a good network of experts that can support us in reaching the aforementioned goal.

The main results of this research can be summed up in the following: the challenges faced when trying to introduce digitalization, are mostly related to miscommunications, differences in languages (legal vs. technical), legal procedures, initial costs and deadlines – due to providers or due to lack of an 'adaptive technology' to integrate the digital service – as perceived by the 7 respondents. Furthermore, the sense of discrimination or discrepancy is at its lowest level from the perspective of

the target group and it is not a reason to stop or harden the process of developing digital public services.

Hence, if we put different people, from different environments, give them different challenges and identify community leaders, we can transform Cluj-Napoca into a platform for digital projects. Thus, a further step in this research is to gather more answers from the representatives of the digitalization process and especially from citizens, to find out how they perceive the process and also, how involved were in it and how. This way, we can have a brighter image of the complexity of the process and all its involvements.

The City Hall must be the main facilitator, by offering meeting places for digital innovators and furthermore, after every meeting, we should have story-telling sessions, where everyone presents their conclusions, potential changes and what other actions can be included in the projects.

Last but not least, we must provide both on-line and off-line means of digital public services in order to maintain a low level of discrimination towards those who are not used with technology, therefore increase the levels of participating in innovative creation.

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Moral and Social Responsibility of Auditors Enhanced by a Code of Ethics

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Abstract. Both in the public sector as in the private sector, a high level of ethicality is required, and responsibility to the public interest constitutes the rule in order to fulfil added value to society. A professional code of ethics establishes norms and values which guide the activity of its members. Given that concern for the public interest is a highlight of the Code of Ethics, the ethical values it promotes are fundamental in order to warrant ethical conduct. We endeavor to show how a code of ethics consolidates the status of the auditors, all the while holding an upstanding role to define ethical conduct.

Adherence to a Code of Ethics implies that ethical values are upheld and that the moral responsibility the profession has towards the public interest is recognized. To encourage ethical conduct implies acknowledgement for the social responsibility of auditors. In this paper, we plead that trust in the profession is maintained by the display of the ethical behavior expected by the broad public. We show that a Code of Ethics has a positive influence upon behavior and favors ethical reasoning. Ultimately, the observance of the ethical principles is likely to strengthen the legitimacy of auditors.

Keywords: social responsibility, Code of Ethics, ethical principles, trust, ethical behavior.

1. Introduction

A code of ethics defines a set of values, principles and ethical norms. It is based on the moral values of the society and very likely it will incur the changes guiding the society. In history, the first established code is the Code of Hammurabi of Babylon, Mesopotamia (2003-1961 B.C) which addresses matters like justice, morality or accountability.

All professions have in common the following characteristics: a set of complex knowledge, professional standards on admission, along with the need to receive the public trust. The auditing profession is guided by the Code of Ethics issued by IFAC and the commitment to the public trust is a highlight of it. Besides stating the fundamental ethical principles which guide the auditors' conduct, the code of ethics establishes high ethical standards in order to provide a milestone for auditors. It communicates about the values system which does not admit deviations. Both the chartered auditors code of ethics established by INTOSAI and the IFAC Code of Ethics have in common the fact that values and principles such as integrity and objectivity are highly emphasized, along with the auditing standards that are to be observed.

Ethical conduct holds key importance both to the auditing profession in the private sector, as to the SAIs (Supreme Audit Institutions). Without clear guidance, dysfunctional conducts will very likely lead to professional conflicts. Trust and reputation need to be established on the respect of values, and thus a code of ethics encompasses the ethical values that guide the profession. Even if the IFAC Code of Ethics is widely adopted by profession, the INTOSAI Code of Ethics was intended to cover the circumstance of public sector auditing.

2. Methodological aspects

From a methodological point of view, our demarche is constructivist because it begins by stating the importance of a code of ethics and the manner it influences both the public and the auditors. Then, we present the structure of the IFAC Code of Ethics and we compare it to the one elaborated by INTOSAI. In the end, we conclude upon the similarities and the differences between the two codes of ethics. Also, it is analytical because we have strived to show that there are apparent similarities between the INTOSAI Code of Ethics and the IFAC Code of Ethics. Notwithstanding the apparent similarities which we emphasize, we determine that there are differences too.

The approach used in this paper was content analysis regarding the importance and the impact of a code of ethics. Therefore, we proceeded to show how the filed literature perceives the existence of a code of ethics, in a positive or a negative optics. We found out that the code of ethics impacts the auditing profession positively, not only in terms of projected image but also with regards to actual behavior.

This research article was motivated by the importance of a code of ethics in order to enhance the credibility of the auditing profession and at the same time, to offer guidance on ethical conduct. The code of ethics guiding the auditing profession provides real grounds for the enhancement of moral responsibility and confers legitimacy to the profession. Since the IFAC Code of Ethics generally adopted by the auditing profession and the INTOSAI Code of Ethics adopted by chartered accountants are similar in stating the values and the auditing standards, we conclude that the observance of guidelines is essential to achieve public trust. Ethics are fundamental for the perception of auditors' integrity and objectivity; thus, the present paper pleads for reinforcement of ethics and morality among auditors and for stronger consideration of the public interest.

3. The importance of a Code of Ethics

A Code of Ethics is associated, in Frankel's (1989) vision, to a clear statement that the profession acknowledges the moral obligation towards the public. By adopting a Code of Ethics, the profession meant to bridge the expectation gap between the public's expectations and the goals of auditing. Likewise, Preston *et al.* (1995) pleaded for the search of legitimacy from the profession and noticed that the competence of the profession to provide attest services came first.

The adoption of a code of ethics is appreciated to have contributory value for the profession given that it represents a modality to maintain a good reputation, to legitimize the public image of the profession and to avoid critics (Bondy, Matten and Moon, 2004). On the same note, Dillard and Yuthas (2001) agree that a code of ethics is a marketing tool whose purpose is to legitimize the profession, without having a significant influence on the conduct of auditors. Likewise, Wood and Rimmer (2003) believe that a code of ethics is a marketing tool instead of one which improves the ethical climate of the profession.

By contrast, the objective of a code of ethics is to prevent less honest practices. In this regard, Adam and Rachman-Moore (2004) showed that the presence of ethical norms influences the perception regarding ethical behavior positively. Previous studies regarding codes of ethics established that they influence the ethical reasoning of auditors (Jones, Massey and Thorne, 2003; Herron and Gilbertson, 2004) and that the positive impact upon the members of the profession results in the adoption of ethical decisions that are more qualitative (Booth and Schulz, 2004).

We have summarized these opinions (Table 1) regarding the role of a code of ethics.

We remind here that the study conducted by Adams, Malone and James (1995) regarding the ethical conduct of auditors showed that the presence of a code of ethics has a positive impact on their conduct. In short, the auditors were presented with three scenarios concerning confidentiality, and the aim was to test their ethical

Table 1: A Summary regarding opinions on the role of the code of ethics

The type of perception regarding the role of the code of ethics	The description of opinions relative to the role of the code of ethics
Positive regard	✓ It has a positive influence on ethical conduct. ✓ It prevents the adoption of inadequate decisions ✓ It favors ethical reasoning ✓ It promotes ethical conduct according to a pre-determined set of values ✓ It offers a framework for ethics to be observed
Negative regard	✓ It is a tool to maintain the reputation and to legitimize the profession ✓ It represents a manner to avoid critics ✓ It does not hold a significant influence on the conduct ✓ It limits the development of an ethical reasoning

Source: The author

beliefs and actions. The study results confirmed that the majority of auditors are inclined to follow the code of ethics once they are presented with ethical dilemmas even when the values promoted by the code do not reflect personal beliefs. This result prompted Jones, Massey and Thorne (2003) to point out that the potential restraints of a code of ethics are to limit the development of the ethical reasoning of auditors.

The arguments presented above call attention to the fact that the role of a code of ethics is to promote ethical and honest conduct per the norms in force, along with advancing greater social responsibility:
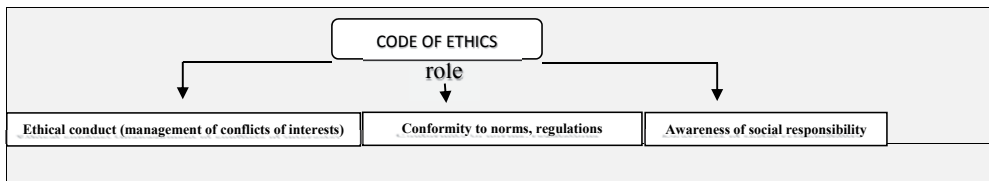
Figure 1: The role of a code of ethics
Source: The author

The Code of Ethics projects a positive image upon the profession and values such as integrity and trust are upheld. Given that the auditors need to comply with the fundamental ethical principles stated by the Code of Ethics, it is anticipated that professional values and attitudes are adopted as the landmark that permits the appreciation of ethical conduct. A significant role of the Code of Ethics is to neutralize the conflicts of interests which are susceptible to arise. Perhaps the most important goal of a code of ethics is to prevent unethical behavior. Consequently, a Code of Ethics is issued with the view to communicate on values and it is associated with 'the moral views of the public' (Jamal and Bowie, 1995, p. 703).

O'Dwyer and Madden (2006) summarize the ambitions that the observance of Code of Ethics intends to achieve: the ethical values are brought forward, the ethical reputation is supported on the grounds of promoted ethical climate to be installed among members of the profession, and finally, ethical conduct is positively influenced. Ethical conduct is adopted when auditors embrace and follow the ethical values and when compliance with the ethical and professional principles is enacted.

The impact of a code of ethics needs to be considered at the level of the individual auditor. Unquestionably, a code of ethics that is followed unanimously by profession promotes ethical conduct which is socially responsible (Caza, Barker and Cameron, 2004). Nevertheless, a code of ethics can hardly encompass all moral dilemmas that an auditor may encounter. On this note, Cheffers and Pakaluk (2007) remark upon the fact that ethical regulation will not be able to cover absolutely all situations susceptible to occur in the audit practice. Thus, there is skepticism that ethical norms can form professionals of an irreproachable morality in order to consolidate trust in the profession. This skepticism is nourished by the fact that ethical norms are imposed by external authorities. It is likely that such a presumption will maintain doubt that the Code of Ethics can instill morality.

Nonetheless, Bertland (2009) considers that to encourage the adoption of ethical values is a pre-condition for reasonable expectations that rules are to be respected on the extent of minimal ethical standards. In this vision, a code of ethics has a positive influence on the conduct of the auditors because non-ethical actions are excluded. Thus, Stevens (2008) agrees that a code of ethics is issued primarily to avoid misconduct. Its content is expected to offer ethical guidance to channel conduct according to the expectations of the public with regards to the profession.

Three types of codes of ethics were identified by Helin and Sandström (2007). These may be divided into codes oriented towards content, towards results and respectively, towards the transformation of the organizational framework:
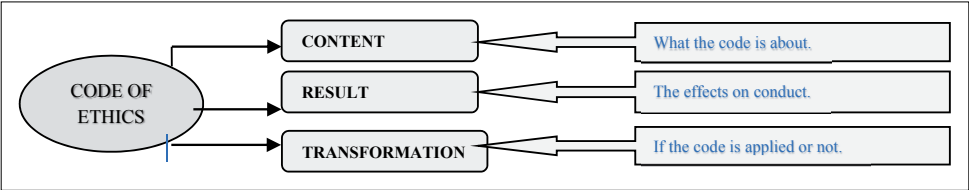
Figure 2: Types of codes of ethics, as identified by Helin and Sandström (2007)
Source: Author's projection, as adapted from Helin and Sandström (2007)

Both the IFAC Code of Ethics and the INTOSAI Code of Ethics encompass these three aspects (content, result and transformation). They are content-oriented because they communicate the values and principles which guide the profession,

along with the professional standards. Both codes are result-oriented because they aim to enforce ethical conduct based on moral values such as integrity and honesty. Moreover, since these codes are widely adopted by profession globally, they are expected to produce transformation, to be applied and complied with so that the ethicality of auditors is reinforced.

The importance of a code of ethics resides in that it establishes limits for conducts opposed to ethics and in that it offers guidance in equivocal situations. Since the auditors need to behave and be perceived to behave irreproachably, a code of ethics is intended to support their morality, based on the two pillars which are the independence and the objectivity. Taking into account that the auditing profession activates globally, adherence to a code of ethics permits to harmonize the cultural differences regarding ethics. Consequently, the Code of Ethics states the values of the profession explicitly, all the while notifying members that non-ethical behavior is prohibited.

We believe that adherence to a code of ethics needs to be perceived positively given that its goal is to encourage ethical conduct according to a pre-established set of values. Moreover, a code of ethics proposes an ethical framework to the members of the profession, urging them to exhibit the conduct that the broad public expects them to embrace.

4. The INTOSAI Code of Ethics

The International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) is the international authority which regulates the audit institutions in the public sector. The INTOSAI Code of Ethics states in its preamble that it is addressed to 'the individual auditor, the head of the SAI, executive officers and all individuals working for or on behalf of the SAI who are involved in audit work' (INTOSAI Code of Ethics, p. 10). The INTOSAI Code of Ethics is divided into two main parts: Code of Ethics and the Auditing Principles.

Similar to the IFAC Code of Ethics, the INTOSAI Code of Ethics presents the values and principles that guide the auditing profession: integrity, independence, objectivity, confidentiality, competence. The INTOSAI Code of Ethics provides as well some recommendations regarding the compliance with standards in Government Auditing which are divided as follows: basic principles, general standards, standards with ethical significance, field standards and reporting standards. The public accountability is also a matter approached by the Code of Ethics. The basic principles used in Government Auditing are:
  – the compliance with the INTOSAI auditing standards,
  – the SAI (Supreme Audit Institution) will apply its own judgment,
  – public accountability needs an effective accountability process,

– the development of adequate information, control, evaluation and reporting systems,
– the appropriate authorities should promulgate acceptable accounting standards,
– fair presentation of the financial position and the results of operations,
– the internal control system minimizes the risk of errors and irregularities,
– the legislative enactments facilitate the co-operation of audited entities for a comprehensive assessment,
– the audit activities to be within the SAI's audit mandate,
– improving techniques for auditing the validity of performance measures (IN-TOSAI Code of Ethics, pp. 26-27).

The auditing standards are mostly related to quality control, risk assessment, risk management, fraud and corporate governance. These standards received much attention from standard-setters in order to improve credibility in the auditing profession.

The INTOSAI Code of Ethics refers in detail to the issue of auditor independence. Independence of SAIs is viewed as the core principle among the other ethical principles. In order to carry out their activities, SAIs need to be independent of political bodies such as the government and the audited entity. Interferences are not admitted because they will very probably lead to the audit being compromised.

It is clearly established that the auditor should be objective, independent as well as impartial, both in fact and in appearance. In particular, the auditor should 'maintain both actual and perceived political neutrality, and bear in mind the impact of being involved in political or other activities that create professional conflicts' (Clark *et al*., 2007). If these recommendations are not respected, the auditor will very likely face professional conflicts.

The INTOSAI Code of Ethics is formed of five chapters where the ethical principles governing the ethical conduct are stated. In Introduction, the Code begins by declaring that 'It is of fundamental importance that the SAI is looked upon with trust, confidence and credibility'. To achieve this, the SAI will need to conform to requirements regarding Integrity, Independence, Objectivity and Impartiality, observe the Professional Secrecy and the requirements of Competence:
– Chapter One, 'Integrity' holds this principle as the core value. By observing integrity, the SAI will endorse values of rightness and justice. The respect of irreproachable standards of conduct equates to commitment towards the public interest, the auditors will 'make decisions with the public interest in mind and apply absolute honesty in carrying out their work'.
– Chapter 3 addresses Independence, Objectivity and Impartiality, principles which are essential for an ethical conduct. By observing independence, the SAI will maintain an unbiased attitude while performing the audit, because

'the independence of auditors should not be impaired by personal and external issues … external pressure or influence on auditors'. Conflicts of loyalties or conflicts of interests need to be avoided. Also, issues of political activity are approached since auditors need to retain their independence in front of political influence.

– Chapter 4 addresses Professional Secrecy which states that auditors will not disclose information to third parties, but when the law requires it.
– Chapter 5 addresses Competence which claims the compliance with high professional standards. Also, quality control processes are to be establish.

The INTOSAI Code of Ethics established, by the ethical guidelines provided, a positive approach to ethical conduct of auditors.

5. The Code of Ethics issued by IFAC

IFAC (the International Federation of Accountants)[1] is the international authority entrusted with the regulation of ethics of the auditing profession. The highlight objective is to serve the public interest and therefore the Code of Ethics emphasizes that auditors should serve foremost the interest of all audit beneficiaries. The ethical requirements to be observed are designated within the Code of Ethics where it is stipulated that a member body will not apply standards less rigorous than the ones specified by the IFAC Code of Ethics.

It is clear that the advantages presented by a Code of Ethics are numerous as much for the regulatory body which had the initiative of its implementation (IFAC), as for those who have to observe it (the auditors). Notably, a code of ethics promotes a more significant social responsibility, advocates conduct according to the ethical norms of the profession and very important, the image of the profession knows a positive evolution among the public. On the same note, we highlight that for Frankel (1989) the highest quality of a code of ethics is that it contributes significantly to the increase of reputation and trust in the profession.

The IFAC Code of Ethics names the fundamental principles the members of the profession need to comply with, and they are: integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional conduct. Therefore, integrity supposes that the auditor will be honest while performing the audit, objectivity refers to the lack of any conflict of interest which could disturb his or her reasoning, professional competence implies an ongoing education, due care pre-

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1 IFAC was created in 1977 and has its headquarters in New York. The institution includes 158 accounting organisations in 123 countries and jurisdictions in the world. IFAC represents more than 2.5 million professionals from private auditing and accounting, from the private sector, business and the higher education.

sumes that the auditor will conform to the auditing standards, while the principle of confidentiality refers to the fact that the auditor will not divulge legal information that he came across during his activity. Finally, according to the requirement of maintaining professional conduct, the auditor will avoid all biased circumstances which might stain the reputation of the entire profession, by adopting a behavior which is according to rules. IFAC, along with FEE (the Federation of European Accountants), issued clear guidance regarding the auditing procedure and emphasized the accountability of auditors towards the public interest.

The structure of the Code of Ethics presents three parts. Part A establishes the fundamental ethical principles[2], and it determines a conceptual framework which the members of the profession need to apply in order to identify and evaluate the seriousness of threats to the conformity with the fundamental principles, by applying safeguards to eliminate or reduce them. Parts B and C describe the manner in which the conceptual framework may be applied in certain circumstances, providing examples with regards to the safeguards to be applied.

Furthermore, the IFAC Code of Ethics presents the categories of threats which are separated into threats of self-interest, threats of self-review, threats of advocacy, threats of familiarity and threats of intimidation. The threats of self-interest refer to inadequate influences of financial type or of another nature on the attitude or on the auditing reasoning. The threats of self-review occur when an accountant does not evaluate correspondingly the work done beforehand to the current engagement. The threats of advocacy presuppose to promote the client position and that the consequences revolve on compromising the objectivity. The threats of familiarity occur when there is a close relationship with the client. Finally, the threats of intimidation prevent the auditor to act objectively because of pressures, either real or understood as such.

A code of ethics is a formal authority to determine boundaries between acceptable or unacceptable behavior and therefore, the focus on the fundamental principles is meant to guide the auditors in their activity. Even if a code of ethics does not represent a dissuasive factor for a non-ethical behavior of auditors (Somers, 2001), it provides the guidance for impartial conduct.

The Code of Ethics, which established high ethical standards, had suffered various adjustments with the view to reflect the changes in norms and values in society. Mainly, the Code of Ethics serves to exemplify the conduct required of auditors, and by its adoption, it ensures that the profession will embrace the ethical

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2   The fundamental principles are structured within the IFAC Code of Ethics in five distinct sections: Section 100 Integrity, Section 120 Objectivity, Section 130 Professional competence and Due care, Section 140 Confidentiality and Section 150 Professional conduct. Part of the Code as well, Sections 290 and 291 discuss the rules for professional accountants in their activity.

principles within it. At the same time, the Code has become a tool of legitimizing the profession due to, allegedly, their image improvement and the increase in the auditing quality.

6. Similarities between the INTOSAI Code of Ethics and the IFAC Code of Ethics

There are definite similarities between the INTOSAI Code of Ethics and the IFAC Code of Ethics because, first of all, both regulate the auditing profession. The difference is that the INTOSAI Code of Ethics applies particularly to SAIs, while the IFAC Code of Ethics is adopted by the auditing profession in general.

Both Codes state from the beginning the ethical values and principles. Integrity and objectivity are necessary for the accomplishment of the auditor activity. Likewise, independence appears as the corollary of the ethical conduct, because if independence is lacking, compromise is very probable and the audit is biased.

Figure 3 shows that the IFAC Code of Ethics highlights in Part A the fundamental principles which are the Integrity (Section 110), the Objectivity (Section 120), the Professional Competence and Due Care (Section 130), the Confidentiality (Section 140) and the Professional Behaviour (Section 150). Similarly, the INTOSAI Code of Ethics is structured into Chapter 2 Integrity, Chapter 3 Independence, Objectivity and Impartiality, Chapter 4 Professional Secrecy, Chapter 5 Competence. It is clear that between the two there are clear similarities.

Between the two Codes, clear similarities may be outlined. Specifically, the INTOSAI Code of Ethics retraces the fundamental principles set out by the IFAC Code of Ethics, except that it admits that independence stands among the fundamental principles, alongside objectivity and impartiality. The IFAC Code of Ethics considers impartiality as a determinant of objectivity, but the INTOSAI Code of Ethics establishes in a distinct manner that impartiality is a fundamental principle, which heightens the importance of the attitude of equity among the SAIs. Furthermore, the professional conduct, which is the fifth fundamental ethical principle of the IFAC Code of Ethics, does not appear to be mentioned as a fundamental ethical principle within the INTOSAI Code of Ethics precisely because the respect of the expressed ethical principles results in the ethical professional conduct of the SAI. The ethical conduct is conditioned by the simultaneous fulfilment of the ethical principles regarding integrity, independence, objectivity and impartiality, professional secret and competency.

As a summary, the auditor independence represents a fundamental principle both for the private sector audit as for the public sector. If independence is impaired, the credibility of the audit opinion will automatically be affected. Other fundamental values that the auditors and the SAIs have to respect are the integrity, objectivity and honesty. Independence is the first principle to maintain, and the

IFAC CODE OF ETHICS – STRUCTURE	INTOSAI CODE OF ETHICS – STRUCTURE

Table 19–1 Content of Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants

Part A: General Application of the Code
Section 100 Introduction and Fundamental Principles
Section 110 Integrity
Section 120 Objectivity
Section 130 Professional Competence and Due Care
Section 140 Confidentiality
Section 150 Professional Behaviour

Part B: Professional Accountants in Public Practice
Section 200 Introduction
Section 210 Professional Appointment
Section 220 Conflicts of Interest
Section 230 Second Opinions
Section 240 Fees and Other Types of Remuneration
Section 250 Marketing Professional Services
Section 260 Gifts and Hospitality
Section 270 Custody of Clients Assets
Section 280 Objectivity – All Services
Section 290 Independence – Audit and Review Engagements
Section 291 Independence – Other Assurance Engagements

Part C: Professional Accountants in Business
Section 300 Introduction
Section 310 Potential Conflicts
Section 320 Preparation and Reporting of Information
Section 330 Acting with Sufficient Expertise
Section 340 Financial Interests
Section 350 Inducements

Definitions
Source: Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants, IESBA (2009).

*C*ode of Ethics

*A*uditing Standards

Figure 3: The Structure of the IFAC Code of Ethics as compared to the INTOSAI Code of Ethics
Source: IFAC Code: McGraw-Hill companies 2010 website; INTOSAI Code: INTOSAI Code of Ethics

INTOSAI CODE		IFAC CODE	
Ethical professional behavior	Integrity Independence, Objectivity and Impartiality Professional Secrecy Competence	**Ethical behavior**	Integrity Objectivity Professional competence and Due Care Confidentiality Professional behavior
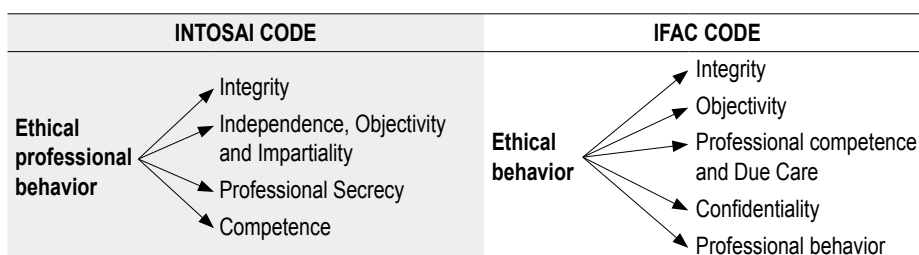
Figure 4: Determinant factors influencing the ethical behavior
for the IFAC Code of Ethics and for the INTOSAI Code of Ethics
Source: The author

other ethical principles will be observed consequently. The ethical principles are to be complied with in order that accountability is enhanced. Accountability and social responsibility are the subsequent determinants leading the audit opinion.

The highlight within the IFAC Code of Ethics that auditors need to serve foremost the public interest, sometimes to the detriment of the private interests, conveys the concern to encourage the ethical conduct of auditors. The accountability concept within the INTOSAI Code of Ethics holds the same purpose, although in the public sector accountability is realized towards supervisory bodies. Such attention to the public interest represents willingness that the auditors conform to their social responsibility. The commitment to the social good, besides creating a positive image, also confers a landmark for ethical conduct especially when auditors are confronted with ethical conflicts.

Given that the auditors play a major role in denouncing irregularities, the first condition to perform qualitative audits is that they are independent and perceived to display ethical conduct. Lack of independence questions seriously the ability of auditors to conduct high-quality audits. The risk of dysfunctional auditor conduct stems foremost from actual or perceived unethical conduct. Practitioners need to comply with the ethical auditing standards, to address conflicts by applying ethical and professional standards.

7. Conclusions

The profession aimed to consolidate its status, and accordingly, a code of ethics was intended to warrant this purpose. The code of ethics states that ethical values and principles representing the foundation for ethical conduct. To advocate a code of ethics means essentially to formalize and promote responsible conduct among the auditors (Bondy, Matten and Moon, 2004).

Moreover, we point out that there might be a difference between adopting a code of ethics and adhering to it. In the first situation, the auditors will conform to the values and rules stated by a code of ethics, while in the second situation the auditors will embrace the values of the code as their own. The ethical climate is essential in order that ethical conduct is performed and therefore, the advancement of a code of ethics comes to support ethical conduct.

Just like Kaptein and Schwartz (2008) pointed out, the efficiency of a code of ethics leads to controversies with regards to the consequences of its application aimed at supporting higher ethical conduct. These controversies are encouraged by those who defend the thesis regarding the influence that an ethical code diffuses over the ethical conduct, as well as those who deny that a code of ethics produces a notable difference on conduct. However, the pursuit of wealth should not sacrifice the ethical values and the profession understood this issue and attempted to regulate dysfunctional conduct by establishing clear Codes of Ethics which set boundaries to enact proper ethicality.

We support that the Code of Ethics provides a guiding framework for auditors which is necessary in order that adequate conduct is emphasized. Assuredly, the

presence of a Code of Ethics does not prevent deviations of right conduct completely, but it will at least narrow these deviations. The fact that the IFAC Code of Ethics states clearly that the goal of the profession is to serve the public interest communicates on its volition to prohibit unethical conduct. Finally, by adopting the code of ethics, the profession states its values and undertakes to abide by these ethical values in order to contribute to its moral and social responsibility.

The similarities between the INTOSAI Code of Ethics and the IFAC Code of Ethics revolve around establishing common values and principles necessary to enhance the quality of guidelines and standards. The development of comparable international auditing standards contributed to a regain of credibility for the auditing profession, and concentrated efforts were deployed in order to rebuild confidence. Unequivocally, best practices benefit both the private and the public sector. We end by stating that commitment to ethics should reinforce ethical conduct both in the private sector as in the public sector.

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Child Friendly Cities (CFCs) – A Case Study of Cluj-Napoca, Romania[*]

Georgiana AVRAM

Abstract. Nowadays cities tend to be designed for cars and not for pedestrians, children or bicyclists. This goes against the fact that over 1 billion children are brought up in cities and around 70 percent of people (the majority being under 18) will live in urban areas by 2050. Car accidents are the most frequent cause of death among children in the entire world and according to World Health Organization (2017), in 2015, road accidents were the main cause of adolescents' death in middle income countries.

This paper assesses how child friendly streets in Cluj-Napoca are, in order to establish the level of safety, accessibility, and playing facilities for children. This paper uses an observation grid in order to collect data on the appearance of the streets in Cluj-Napoca and interviews with children with visual disabilities in order to identify their activity in the street. In order to interpret the data, this study uses descriptive analysis. In the end, the paper offers best practices of how to plan cities, by focusing on children's direct interests: freedom, safety and access to playing grounds.

Keywords: urban design, child friendly city, playing streets, child independent mobility, everyday freedom.

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1. Introduction

The vitality and the friendliness of cities have been brought to the fore for the first time by Jane Jacobs in the 1960s. Since then, various authors have investigated and concluded that pedestrian-friendly city streets are necessary for social and leisure activities (Gehl, 1987; Hass-Klau *et al.*, 1999; Jacobs, 1961; Kim, Choi and Kim, 2013; Mehta, 2007; Moudon, 1991; Park *et al.*, 2013; Southworth and Ben-Joseph, 1996 *apud* Sung, Lee and Cheon, 2015). However, much of the existent research is focused on the impact pedestrian-friendly city streets have on adults, while their impact on children has only recently been investigated.

There are multiple reasons why it is necessary to investigate children's needs regarding the design of streets. Firstly, since The United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted, children are considered to be full-rights citizens (Giraldi, 2017). As such, it is important to identify the extent to which the streets are in accordance with their needs. Secondly, the needs adults and children have are by definition different. Therefore, satisfying the needs of adults does not imply that the needs of children will also be met. However, the reverse could be true, as some authors (Ekawati, 2015; Islam, Moore and Cosco, 2016; Li and Li, 2017) consider that child friendly cities are beneficial to all citizens, regardless of their age, gender or disability. Moreover, not adapting the streets to the needs of children can have serious consequences. According to World Health Organization (2017), in 2015, road accidents were the main cause of adolescents' death in middle income countries.

Aside from academic exploratory researches, the topic of child friendly cities started to be of interest, first, for public authorities from Canada and USA (van Vliet and Karsten, 2015; McAllister, 2008), then for those in Asia (Ekawait, 2015; Gilbert *et al.*, 2018). Lately, this topic started to be of interest for urban planners in Western Europe (Jansson, Sundevall and Wales, 2016; Shaw *et al.*, 2015). The aforementioned articles have concluded that child friendly urban design contributes to everyday freedom, autonomy of mobility, safety, security and fun for children. To the knowledge of the author, no research regarding child friendly city (hereafter CFC) has been conducted in Eastern Europe let alone in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Cluj-Napoca was selected as a case study because it is one of the most attractive cities from Romania, with a rich cultural and educational life (Cristea, 2017), where the number of children (aged between 0 and 19) has been on the rise from 2008–to 2018 (with 7048 children) (Romania National Institute of Statistics), while in Romania the birth rate has fallen (Romania National Institute of Statistics). The city also faced issues related to fast urbanization such as urban sprawl, which has resulted in serious traffic problems leading to road accidents, sound and air pollution and stress among the population. In Cluj-Napoca just from 2008 to 2018 5601 roads

accidents took place, involving 2431 pedestrian victims, from which 511 were children. This is important in the context in which cars represent the most significant barrier towards building a child friendly city (Shaw *et al.*, 2015).

Therefore, this research is trying to identify the quality of urban design in Cluj-Napoca and to determine its friendliness towards children with visual disabilities, considering that playing in public spaces has a positive impact on child's physical and mental health (Sallis and Glanz, 2006; Islam, Moore and Cosco, 2016). Moreover, this research is trying to offer solutions in order to protect children from Cluj-Napoca's traffic issues (road accidents) and to create safety and friendly streets for them.

The paper is structured as follows: the second part of the paper provides a short description of what is considered to be child friendly design; the third part presents the case study of Cluj-Napoca – a city from Romania; the fourth part presents the methodology; the fifth part presents the interpretation of the results and the needs analysis for children with visual disabilities related to child friendly urban design.

2. Characteristics of a child friendly city

CFC does not have universally accepted characteristics. Some CFC's characteristics are about the needs or the rights of children, some of them are related to social protection, while others are regarding physical and environmental security. Some of the characteristics pay particular attention to children's needs and rights in the urban design of the city (top down approach), while others in urban design of neighborhoods or streets (bottom-up approach) (van Vliet and Karsten, 2015). Based on these, this research is concerned with the children's needs vis-a-vis the urban design of streets, a bottom-up approach from the perspective of mobility and their ability to play in public spaces. In an urban context, streets themselves become a playing space for children and researchers concluded that urban design influences the outdoor children's physical activities (Chawla, 2002; Moore and Young, 1978, *apud* Islam, Moore and Cosco, 2016). In order to analyze the cities' urban vitality, the small scale analysis is recommended (Delclòs-Alió and Miralles-Guasch, 2018). The small scale analysis, bottom-up approach is specific for tactical urbanism. Tactical urbanism is described as a 'sort – quick, often temporary, cheap projects that aim to make a small part of a city more lively or enjoyable' (Lydon and Garcia, 2015, p. 2). This type of process permits to redesign or rearrange a public space into a slow and conventional city building process. In the following section, the child friendly city indicators will be described.

3. Features of child friendly design (CFD)

Mixed land use is represented by spaces where one can find offices, small shops and warehouses, among other buildings serving different functions. Having a location of residence and a work place near destinations such as parks, walking paths, trails, and waterfront recreation areas will foster physical activity (Sung, Lee and Cheon, 2015). This will contribute to the local economic development of the city and to a higher social interaction among people (Delclòs-Alió and Miralles-Guasch, 2018), but also to a secure and safe environment – 'putting more eyes on the street' (Jacobs, 1961), which implies a higher security for children. A safe environment however implies also physical accessibility.

A safe urban design will succeed in creating an accessible space for everyone, regardless of their age, gender and disability. The lack of physical accessibility is associated with architectural disability, which is described as physically built environment (buildings, places, public transport) which puts people at risk, due to architectural barriers, transforming it into an unsafe and uncomfortable environment (Goldsmith, 2012). Many of the city's architectural constructions are designed to fit only the abilities of young people and people without special needs and fail at meeting all the needs of the individuals in the society: elderly people, cyclists and wheelchair users, to name just a few. The failure of adapting the environment to the diverse individuals' needs transforms them into victims of architectural discrimination. Therefore, based on this, it is important to adapt the urban design to the needs of children, as a child friendly urban design will satisfy also the needs of all citizens.

The road accidents were the main cause of adolescents' death in middle income countries, according to World Health Organization (2017). Nowadays, streets are mostly designed for cars and not for pedestrians. Traffic calming is very important for citizens in order to ensure silence and to reduce the possibility of accidents. Ekawait (2015) describes traffic calming as less traffic volume. Accidents are not the only cost associated with the use of cars, air and sound pollution also represent a cost. Nowadays the most discussed subject at international level, after military-political confrontation, is the climate change and its impact on our planet. Green spaces have a lot of benefits like reducing: air pollution, sound pollution and the island effect. The green zones in cities (vegetation, especially trees) determine people to use more public spaces (Whyte, 2001). According to Croucher, Myers and Bretherton (2007), the presence of green areas also has positive impact on the physical health of citizens, as it encourages an active lifestyle which includes activities such as walking, running, exercise and cycling.

Regarding playing spaces, in literature it is highlighted the fact that it is very important to have various playgrounds for children, but Karsten and van Vliet (2015), based on their study, claim that children need to have a play space in front

of their houses, roof tierces, courtyard gardens or sidewalks, in order to be able to continue their activities. A playing street is considered to represent an example of mixed land use, because this attracts a lot of eyes on the street for children (Jacobs, 1961).

Size of the street: 'Great streets, it seems, come in all lengths' (Jacob, 1993 *apud* Ekawati, 2015); this means that the maximum tolerable walk distance is approximately 5 to 7 minutes, so if a street is too long, it is recommended to have a space where people can rest. Jacob said also that other variables that need to be considered are boundaries, which mark the difference between the street and the sidewalk.

Increasing the ability to walk, to spend time in the city without sound and air pollution caused by cars, in an accessible, safe and secure space for these features transform an unfriendly city in a friendly one.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

This research tried to identify solutions and good practices in order to increase the streets' safety and friendliness towards children in Cluj-Napoca by: identifying the quality of urban elements which can stimulate their desire to play in the streets and by identifying the needs of children with visual disabilities vis-à-vis urban design and urban planning in order to give them more 'everyday freedom'.

According to Berta *et al.* (2018) mixt research design is the best method for collecting data for urban design analysis, because the urban design is a complex decision making process which involves social, economic, ethical, technological, etc. indicators. In order to identify the quality of the urban elements, a quantitative method was employed, having as data collection technique the observation grid. In order to identify the children's needs regarding a friendly street, a qualitative method was used, having as data collection technique the focus group.

4.2. Case study area

Cluj-Napoca is located in the North-Western part of Romania and it is a very dynamic city from the perspective of business, educational, research and cultural activities (Cristea, 2017). During the last 10 years (2008-2018) the population has increased from 316,715 to 323,484 and the number of children between 0 and 19 increased with 7,048 (National Institute of Statistics).

This paper endeavors to evaluate the friendliness of Dorobanților Street (and its adjacent streets: Năvodari Street, Pavel Roșca Street, Pitești Street, Rubin Patiția Street) from Cluj-Napoca, in order to establish the level of safety, accessibility and playing facilities for children.
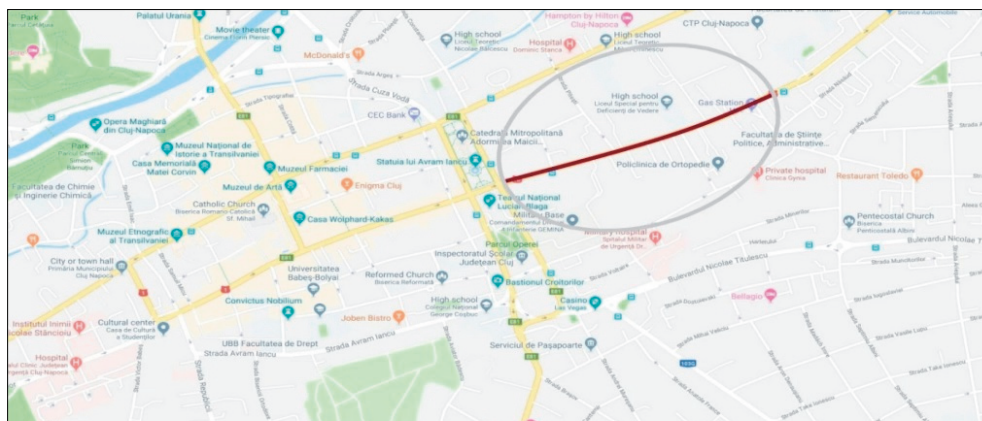
Figure 1: Study area location
Source: (Google maps)

Dorobanțiilor Street was chosen to be analyzed because: it is one of the largest and the busiest streets from Cluj-Napoca, with a high traffic volume, which links the city center with two important neighborhoods: Mărăști and Gheorgheni. There are two schools for children with disability (Special School for the Visually Impaired Cluj-Napoca and High School for Hearing Impaired). Also, big business offices are located along it.

4.3. Variables and data calculation: Urban design evaluation

The observation grid used is represented by an adapted version of Ekawait's instrument (2015). The observation grid is composed of 7 indicators: size and layout of the outdoor space, accessibility, green spaces, playing spaces and traffic calming. To those were added the mixed land use from Jane Jacob's theory and the street's pollution level (air and sound pollution). There are two types of streets which were analyzed: the main street Dorobanților and the adjacent streets: Năvodari Street, Pavel Roșca Street, Pitești Street, Rubin Patiția Street.

Accessibility of the public space, associated with safety, was selected based on the importance of giving people the right to use public space and to eliminate the architectural disability. It was measured through the variables from the Normative regarding civil buildings adaptation and urban environment on disable people needs, indicative NP 051-2012 – Revision NP 051/2000 ('Normativ privind adaptarea clădirilor civile și spațiului urban la nevoile individuale ale persoanelor cu handicap, indicativ NP 051-2012 – Revizuire NP 051/2000' (NP51/2012)) more exactly: the presence of access ramp between the sidewalk and the road, tactile guidance and warning tapes, the position of urban elements, and the presence of pedestrian cross walking lights.

Green spaces are very important for cities because they provide oxygen, reduce air and sound pollution, increase the eyes comfort (Whyte, 2001). It was measured by the amount of vegetation (the numbers of trees, other types of vegetation, parks, and garden) and its position (green zone delimitates, or not, the sidewalks from the street). The playing spaces indicator was measured by: the number of the playgrounds, the ease of parent, the cleanness and the safety of playgrounds.

Traffic calming is very important for citizens in order to reduce the speed of cars and the risk of accidents. This indicator was measured by: less traffic volume, the number of parking spaces, noise pollution, and the presence of items on the road surface that reduce cars' speed (Ekawait, 2015). A playing street is considered to be a type of mixed land use, because it has the capacity to attract a lot of eyes on the street for children. Mixed land use is a mixture of buildings with different functions, for example, houses or residential building located near parks, shops, cinemas, schools, coffee shops, markets and transport stations (Nabil and Eldayem, 2015, p. 286). The research involved an analysis of the horizontal mixed land use using as variables: the number of commercial shops, playing spaces, restaurants/ coffee shops, markets and bicycle lines.

Each of these elements were evaluated using a Likert scale, where 1 represents the worst quality and 3 represents the best quality. Through this type of evaluation was created a hierarchy of the streets and alleys based on the variables of each of the indicators.

$$\text{Index (\%)} = \frac{\text{total score}}{Y} \times 100\%$$

Y = the highest Likert score x number of sample

Table 1.Index of Quality of Street Elements

Qualitative Level	Quantitative Level	Quality Score
1. Poor	0-35%	1
2. Sufficient	36-70%	2
3. Excellent	71-100%	3

Figure 2: Index of quality of street elements
Source: Ekawait (2014)

The index is calculated based on the total score for quality of alleys or streets multiplied by 100% and all this is divided to the highest score they could get, multiplied by the number of alleys or streets. This index is calculated for each indicator which describes a good quality street.

4.4. The evaluation of the children's needs

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, public authorities have the obligation to take into consideration the children's needs in the decision-making process as it is stated that children 'have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account' (Unicef, 1989). Based on this, a focus group with seven visually impaired children (aged 7 to 9) from LDV was conducted. They were asked about their opinion regarding what a friendly street should look like, how often they are playing outside, and what kind of game they prefer. The best way of discovering what children like is to ask them to paint or to take photos (Ghanbari-Azarneir *et al.*, 2015). As such, children were asked to place various urban elements on a map that represented the Dorobantilor Street, thus being able to identify their preferences.

5. Main findings and discussions

5.1. Findings derived from observation

The observation was conducted on Dorobantilor Street, where the high school for visually impaired children and the high school for children with hearing impairment are located.
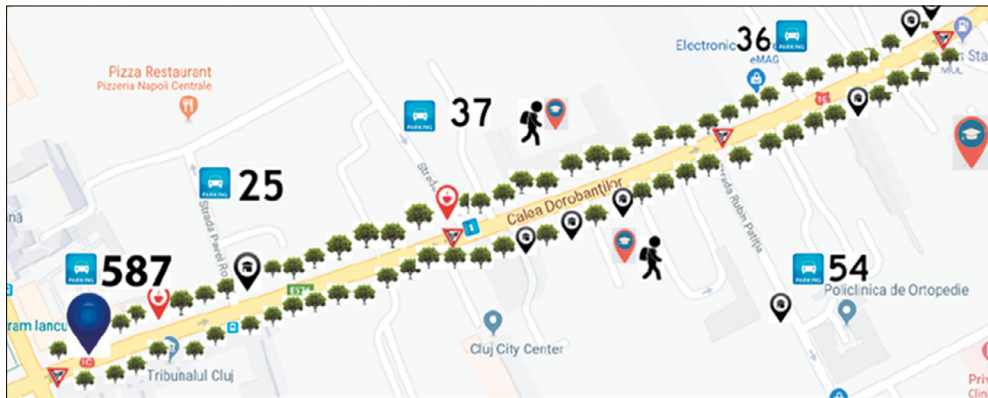
Figure 3: Calea Dorobantilor Street, Cluj-Napoca
Source: Compiled by the author

The urban elements of the street were calculated in order to obtain an index expressed as %. This index is calculated for each indicator describing a street with good quality. For a better understanding of the research findings, we created an overall score for all the urban quality indicators analyzed.

Table 1: The quality of the streets – overall score

Indicator of urban quality	Overall score	
	INDEX	Quality
layout of quality streets	80%	3– excellent
safety and accessibility of the streets	40%	2– sufficient
green space	40%	2– sufficient
traffic calming	33%	1– poor
playing space	33 %	1– poor
mixed land use	47%	2– sufficient
Overall score of the streets	46%	2– sufficient

Source: Compiled by the author

As it can be seen in Table 1 above, the highest score was obtained only by the layout of streets. This indicator was given a high score because there were large sidewalks and the pedestrian part of the street had clear boundaries, which clearly separate the road from the pedestrian zone. Although, the indicators green space; safety and accessibility of the streets; obtained a lower score (2 – considered sufficient as an overall score), the index indicates that the quality of these indicators is only 40%. A good explanation for this low index score is the fact that even if the main street had sufficient green space (there are a lot of trees, and their position is very good because they create a natural boundary between the sidewalk and the road) in the adjacent streets no vegetation or trees were found.

In the case of safety and accessibility of the streets the index indicates a low quality at 40%, even if the main street is quite adapted to people who are using wheelchairs or bicycles. There are pedestrian crossing lights, pram ramp with tactile paving and the sidewalks are well delimited from the road. But, the secondary streets do not have any accessibility features, and this reduces the accessibility quality for the entire area.

The worst quality was registered for the traffic calming and playing space indicators. In the middle-income countries, over the years, the lack of traffic calming generates the most cases of deaths among children (Adriazola, Li and Welle, 2015). The explanation for the low quality of playing space is the absence of playing zone or playing facilities for children in the case study area. In the case of traffic calming the low score was obtained because there are parking lots on both sides of the streets, the speed of the cars is 50 km/h and there are not any kinds of speed bumps. Various studies have demonstrated that slow car speeds is associated with children's free movement in public areas (Wright *et al.*, 2017; Warner and Rukus, 2014; van Loon, Nettelfold and Naylor, 2014, *apud* Gilbert *et al.*, 2018).

Taking into consideration all these and the fact that 'heavy traffic', 'lack of gathering places' and 'varied activity settings' indicate low environmental quality for

children (Gilbert *et al.*, 2018) it can be said that the street is designed for the cars and not for pedestrians, let alone for children's needs. However, the overall score of the entire area is sufficient, but the index indicates only 46% which represents, in our opinion, a very poor quality of the elements that offer safety for children and stimulate their playing activity on the street.

5.2. Findings derived from interviews

'Grandma doesn't like for us play outside, because there are cars' (Ştefan, nine years old) – It was one of the answers given by a child in the focus group. Children's mobility in public spaces is conditioned by the parents' fear and the presence of cars (Björklid and Nordström, 2007; Prezza, 2007; Björklid and Gummesson, 2013, *apud* Jansson, Sundevall and Wales, 2016). Cars were one of the most common barriers mentioned in the interviews, which have a negative impact on children's activity in the street. In the main street, there are a lot of park lots, and the main street had the worst quality in terms of traffic calming, and it had a direct effect on the level of outdoor children activity.

Table 2 summarizes some of the main findings obtained from the interviews with children and from the maps that represented the Dorobanţilor Street made by children.

It can be seen in Table 2 that visually impaired children spend too little time playing in public spaces. Playing outside with other children and socializing with them have an important impact on how they develop their autonomy, social skills, orientation skills, independent mobility, creativity, and intelligence (Sallis and Glanz, 2006). The explanation for the insufficient time spent playing outside is the absence of playgrounds near their school, the architectural disability and the presence of cars, which create a feeling of insecurity.

Another interesting point is the children's need described by the concept of biophilia design. 'I like to go to the botanical garden, I like flowers' (Petronela, a nine years old child argued. Children like to go outside, to play in nature, to have contact with plants. The natural areas help children to develop appropriate independent mobility skills and freedom of movement leads to increased socialization (McAllister, 2008). Also, spending time in nature has a positive impact on the orientation skill of visually impaired children, on their adaptation to real situations.

Even if children mentioned that they are playing more passive games than active ones, they expressed their interest in spending more time outdoor and for outdoor playing elements as slides and rocking chairs. The main cause for their reluctance to play in the street is the presence of cars and the anxiety of their parents concerning the risk of accidents – 'I am not playing in the street, there are cars and my mother doesn't let me', argued Sara, a seven years old girl.

Table 2: Summary of findings from interviews and maps of Dorobanților Street made by children

Interview results		
Categories	*Subcategories*	*How frequent these spaces are used*
What type of playing space children like to be in?	botanical garden	once per week – 5 children
	parks	once per month – 5 children
	Indoor space of the school	every day – all the children
Types of games (active game, passive game)	Active play (for example bike riding within the school court yard)	every day – 1 child
	Passive play (with dolls or toys)	every day – all the children
Barriers	Cars	all the children
	Lack of accessibility	1 child
	Lack of playing space	2 children
Maps of Dorobanților Street results		
Categories	*Subcategories*	*How frequent children mentioned them?*
green elements	flowers	all the children
	trees	all the children
playing elements	slides	all the children
	swings	3 children
	rocking chairs	5 children
cars	-	2 children
urban elements	cross walking	1 child
	traffic lights	1 child
	benches	all the children

Source: Compiled by the author

The interviews' results, on the one hand, show how the parents' perception regarding the safety of the environment influences the children's activities in outdoor public spaces. Even if children like to spend time and play in nature, their mobility freedom is restricted by the parents' anxiety related to road accidents. On the other hand, these results suggest the needs of children with visual impairment such as more green and playing places, resting zones, road safety elements as cross walking and traffic lights (data collected from their maps) and all these support socialization and free mobility.

6. Conclusions

A child friendly city is a car free city, where the children's needs and their safety have to be a priority, in order to avoid to transform children into victims of road accidents. The urban elements suggested in the literature, in order to create a safe and active space for children, are:

– Orientation and mobility: clear boundaries of the sidewalk, tactical guide orientation, highlighting the pedestrian crossing;

- Physical and psychological safety: larger pedestrian areas, a clear delimitation between the sidewalk and bicycle tracks, lighted streets;
- Mixed land uses – eyes on the streets: Commercial shops, restaurants, coffee shops, libraries; green space (trees, vegetation, guerilla garden, fountains); resting areas;
- Limited sound pollution and air pollutions, increasing the traffic calming quality, a good example being to eliminate two traffic lines and to place the bicycle track on the road. Transforming public spaces into playgrounds or increasing the playful interventions can stimulate the urban vitality, to transform a badly used public space into a vibrant and fun destination.

As an overall conclusion of the research, the main street and secondary streets observed are not currently, proper places for playing, and the main cause registered is the presence of cars and the fact that all the observed streets have been managed for cars, ignoring the needs of children for spending time in public space and the great benefits of vital urban area's impact on public health. In the context of Cluj-Napoca urbanization, urban planners should provide a child-friendly environment in order to meet children's needs for outdoor playing and everyday freedom. Also, it is recommended to draft future public policies interventions in order to change the parents' anxiety and fears of road accidents.

Therefore, I want to propose a public playing area, in order to provide safety and freedom mobility for disabled children and adults, but also to contribute to public health, to decrease the sound and air pollution, to increase physical activity for people, and to give children more autonomy, mobility and freedom to play in public areas.

7. Recommendations

'A car for a tree – Pop-up Parks': these are identified in literature as tactical urbanism. The first recommendation is to eliminate some parking lots from the streets under observation and to create green spaces with different types of vegetation, resting areas, and urban playing elements. In the literature this type of projects are called Pop-up Parks and they are perfect for small-scale neighborhood projects, because they offer a cheap and immediate solution (Wright *et al.*, 2017). This type of project is aimed at making a small part of the city greener, more active and more enjoyable.

'Playing street for a day' is aimed at closing a street for cars and transforming it for one day into a playing ground for children. This will be organized as an event, and there will be music, street artists, playing tools for children and an ecological food zone. We recommend to organize this activity twice per month, and to close one of the secondary streets in the proximity of the schools for disabled children.

'Bye, Bye cars' / 'Hello children friendly city': this project is the most complex option and attempts to transform a difficult street into a new vital urban area based on Jane Jacob's theory, Universal Design principles combined with the tactical urbanism principles. The aim is to increase the time spent by disabled children playing in the street and the urban vitality of the Dorobanților Street. Activities:

– To eliminate the bicycle lanes from the sidewalks, this should be placed on the road, because the bicycle lanes represent an obstacle for people who have mobility problems. Increasing the quality of traffic calming elements by decreasing the car speed limit, eliminating the parking spots and transforming it into spaces for recreation. Traffic pollution and traffic congestion are some of the problems Cluj-Napoca faces from the perspective of urbanization. The traffic quality can be increased through placing speed bumpers, ban parking on the streets near schools, and speed limits.

– Creating more green spaces, such as parklets, in front of the schools. We propose the creation of more parklets and guerilla gardens, so as to increase the walkability of the street and to decrease the dominance of cars. According to Jane Jacob's theory, people tend to walk more in areas with more green and active space, such as terraces, coffee shops and parks. In general, parklets have the dimension of 2 or 3 parking spaces and they represent a quick and temporary solution for increasing vitality in public spaces.

– Transforming streets into playing streets. Through this we suggest to transform Pavel Rosca Street into a playing street, in other words we suggest to close the street for cars and to cover the entire perimeter with green elements (trees, flowers, grass), and playing elements.

– Accessibility. Increasing the level of street accessibility by adapting the streets to the needs of children, disabled people, old people and people which are using bicycle by implementing the legal norms of NP51/2012. More specifically, our proposal is to create an access ramp between the roads and the sidewalks in order to facilitate the access of bicycles, to put tactile guidance on sidewalks, and to adapt the traffic lights with shift button to change the color.

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How Much 'Social' Can Public Procurement Take?

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Abstract. The Treaty of Lisbon has brought, after a sinuous evolution and long hesitations, significant change in the EU's internal market chart, bringing fundamental economic and social values on a par. With purpose to protect a fundamental human right or where other overriding public interests require so, Member States may, as repeatedly affirmed by the Court of Justice of the Union, occasionally depart from the principles enshrined in the Treaties and adopt restrictive measures which may eventually distort competition across the internal market. One of the areas where the conflict between the internal market and competition rules, on the one hand, and possible derogations therefrom, on the other hand, has reached some dramatic notes is public procurement. Here, the line between 'conformity' and 'non-conformity' is still very volatile, especially where contracts are used to pursue external strategic social goals, since social values customarily carry a quite heavy 'national' load that collides in its very fundamentals with the 'economic jurisprudence' of the Union yet neither the primary nor the secondary dedicated legislation are sufficiently comprehensive and clear in determining the boundaries between the two zones – whence an incongruous practice at the Member States' level. Moreover, the CJEU has continuously extended the scope of the internal market and competition rules, censuring many national 'derogatory' initiatives, but so far avoided to elaborate much on how or to what extent contracting authorities may legally circumvent them in the pursuit of social objectives.

Keywords: internal market, competition, social market economy, public procurement, social procurement.

1. Introduction

More than ever before, the latest EU legal package on public procurement (Directive 2014/24/EU, p. 65; Directive 2014/25/EU, p. 243; and Directive 2014/23/EU, p. 1) contains a significant number of references to how Member States and contracting authorities may use public procurement to pursue key goals set in various social policies crafted at either the EU or the national levels (Barnard, 2017, p. 210).

Unfortunately, one way or another, all these provisions have the potential to discriminate: in favour of the entities meeting the minimum social standards imposed by contracting authorities based thereon in the relevant tender documentations, and against all the other undertakings that may have an interest in the contract put out to tender and, at least from an economic and technical point of view, could deliver it at the same quality standards or even better and cheaper, but which do not meet the same social standards. This makes these provisions, in terms of the functioning of the internal market and free competition, restrictive in their very essence.

This aspect is even more problematic as it creates serious tensions between the traditionally economic dimension of the EU's internal market (dominated by the principle of free competition) and the social dimension thereof (which gained traction only at a later stage of its evolution).

Against this backdrop, we will try to see how, over the years, and owing to a dramatic change in the social configuration of our continent, the initial arrangement consecrated by the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community of 1957 has evolved, from an essentially economic structure, to an amazingly complex edifice defined by the 'social market economy' where the internal market means not just a mere economic integration but also the full protection of the fundamental (social) rights, the ensuring of a high level of employment across the Union, the crafting and the implementation of a coherent inclusion policy or, last but not least, social cohesion. In this environment, the rigorous rules that first governed the internal market and postulated free competition as the most important guarantee of the effectiveness of the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Treaties have been gradually honed, distorted and adapted to correspond to the new reality, opening up a generous leeway for other values, traditionally placed outside the internal market. Thus, while the basic internal market rules remained the same, they received new connotations, in a somewhat overturned arrangement where the 'value for money' principle (still promoting an open economy and free competition, but now not at any costs) has been redefined to be given a leading role.

This shift has been firmly endorsed by the Court of Justice of the European Union through several milestone decisions, and the pursuing of various social objectives has become a fundamental obligation for all EU institutions.

These institutions have, to this purpose, been armed with several efficient tools meant to secure it and make it effective. The close monitoring, the coordination and the harmonization of the relevant national legislations adopted in the areas left in the competence of the Member States is just one of these valuable mechanisms. Another one is the complex bundle of financing mechanisms which the Union puts (directly or indirectly – by for example encouraging private financing) at the disposal of various actors involved in the delivery of various social objectives (European Commission, 2016; Gallo, 2018, pp. 275-283). Additionally, but maybe even more importantly, according to several explicit provisions of the Treaties, fundamental social values and concrete social objectives must be integrated into the definition and implementation of all Union's policies and activities (Articles 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – TFEU (consolidated version 2016)).

All these may, in our opinion, offer valuable indications on how and, even more importantly, to what possible extent, may contracting authorities employ, in a public procurement context, various instruments and mechanisms by which to pursue values stemming from concurrent social policies.

2. Is the EU's 'internal market' social? A diachronic assessment

As for the fathers of the European integration the freedom of movement of persons, goods and money and the freedom to provide services across the then European Community had necessarily to be secured through an as open an economy as possible, they took a number of measures to ensure that all barriers to the free trade based on national discrimination and an unfair treatment of the persons or economic entities coming from another Member State were abolished, or at least rendered inefficient. Article 7 TEEC stated, in very clear and imperative terms, that, in all areas falling within the ambit of that Treaty, any forms of discrimination based on nationality grounds were strictly forbidden. The footprint left by Article 7 was deep throughout the entire text of the Treaty. It was acknowledged to be the first notable milestone in the evolution of the internal market. According to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community of 1957 (the 'TEEC'), the very existence of the Community lied on four fundamental sets of (economic) values. The economic policy (including transports and competition) constituted the core thereof, whereas the social policy occupied a barely marginal place. In fact the two only met, exceptionally, in the area which concerned the rights of migrant workers. With regard to the seven policy areas listed in Article 118 TEEC, the Commission had just a general obligation to monitor the relevant national legal frameworks and promote collaboration between Member States.

Nonetheless, the whole integration project was soon challenged by a surging number of serious social issues burgeoning across the whole European area, the

overcoming of which seemed rather impossible, owing in particular to the allegedly insurmountable dichotomy between the sacred free movement and competition rules (which felled into the competence of the EC institutions) and those to do with social policies (placed in the Member States' realm) on which the Commission had a too weak influence.

Against this backdrop, the absolute economic openness and free trade postulated by the TEEC started to be countered, especially in the social services area, by bulk sets of measures adopted at national level with purpose to secure the free and equal access for all nationals to social services and adequate welfare for those in need. It is actually in this context that the concept of 'welfare state' grew to become a concrete reality, as the Member States were determined to protect the delivery of such services (even if liberalised) from the full market rules (Neergaard *et al.*, 2013, p. 5).

Fortunately, instead of stifling such national restrictions, the European legislature went for a shift in the balance of these values at the EU primary law level itself, as the EU's economy became more and more people-oriented and, building on the idea of promoting a 'socially just model of European integration wherein the European citizen stands as the key actor' (Calleja, 2017, p. 54), the social aspects thereof continued to gain terrain in the internal market. It therefore soon decided, probably encouraged by the solutions rendered by the European Court of Justice in Defrenne[1] and, later but even more emphatically, in Deutsche Telekom[2], that it is essential that, limitedly and under a strict control, to give occasional priority to social aspects of particular importance and interest (to the detriment of economic ones), even if such a particular approach may allegedly create restriction in the market, thus hindering the competition hence the very freedom of movement.

The Single European Act of 1987 (p. 1) had already brought substantial changes[3] to the TEEC, especially by adding new substantive areas of Community com-

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[1] Case C-43/75 *Gabrielle Defrenne* [1976] ECR 00455.

[2] Case C-50/96 *Deutsche Telekom AG* [2000], ECR I-00743. The conclusions set forth in para. 55 of the decision are crucial in this context.

[3] The most important one referred to the Council, which could thenceforth adopt its decisions with a qualified majority, as opposed to the unanimity rule that governed its functioning until then. The reform went even further, and, in 1992, the debates of the Council (in particular those referring to legislative acts) became public. This change proved crucial for the evolution of the Community and the consolidation of its internal market. As J. H. H. Weiler concluded in the wake of the 1992 European Council of Edinburgh – which actually launched the practice of public debates: '1992 changes this in two ways. The first is a direct derivation from the turn to majority voting. Policies can be adopted now within the Council that run counter not simply to the perceived interests of a Member State, but more specifically to the ideology of a government in power. The debates about the European Social Charter and the shrill cries

petence of which some already 'asserted by the European institutions and supported by the Court without any express Treaty basis' (Craig and de Búrca, 2011, p. 12). The Single European Act was the first major revision of the 1957 Treaty of Rome after a long period of political stagnation and bickers among the members of the Community due to the artificiality of the free-trade postulated by the TEEC. It set an objective for the Community to establish, by no longer than 31 December 1992, a single market which it defined as 'an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured (…)' (Article 13).

But the first major step in this direction was taken by the Treaty on European Union (TEC) signed at Maastricht in 1992 which hinted to the importance of the social factor in the economy of the Community integration and proposed a set of measures aiming to strengthen the role of the Community in this area. Starting with 1992, the 'single market' concept started to gain substantial traction as the integration process that characterizes the internal market moved to engulf other areas than those of a purely economic nature. Piece by piece, this process ranged on specific non-economic objectives, such as the promotion of fundamental social rights and labour policies (Craig and de Búrca, 2011, pp. 605-609). Moreover, building on the principles already set forth in the Single European Act, the TEC came with an entire new chapter on the European economic and social cohesion (which actually constituted the foundation of the entire Cohesion Policy) and another one on the citizenship of the Union (where the right to move and reside freely within the territories of the Member States occupied a central place). The TEC came with also two new Titles (VIII and X) dedicated respectively to 'Social Policy, Education, Vocational Training and Youth' (which strengthened to a certain extent the role of the Community by allowing the Council to set, by the means of a Directive, minimum standards and requirements which all Member States ought to have observed) and 'Public Health'. Meanwhile, the Protocol on Social Policy and the Agreement on Social Policy, as well as the Protocol on Economic and Social Cohesion which accompanied the Treaty of Maastricht, provided, in clear terms, for the active implication of the Community in several areas of social interest. However, under the TEC, the principle of an open market economy with free competition remained dominant (see Article 3a and all the references to it in the text of that Treaty) while the core social policies remained an internal matter of the Member States.

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of 'Socialism through the backdoor', as well as the emerging debate about Community adherence to the European Convention on Human Rights and abortion rights are harbingers of things to come. In many respects this is a healthy development, since the real change from the past is evidenced by the ability to make difficult social choices and particularly by the increased transparency of the implications of the choice' (Weiler, 1991, p. 2477).

Once the Treaty of Amsterdam (p. 1) was adopted, the social initiative postulated by the Treaty of Maastricht and the accompanying Protocols became a concrete full objective of the Community while employment, culture and health, areas of concern for all Community policies and actions. The Treaty of Amsterdam made explicit reference to the European Social Charter of 1961 but also to the Charter of Fundamental Social Rights of Workers of 1989. This only anticipated the future even stronger changes in the initial paradigm by hinting at the idea of an integration that goes beyond the purely economic zone to engulf also social policy aspects and environmental issues. Unfortunately, this was not accompanied by a much needed clarification as to the meaning of 'sustainable development' while the economic and social progress seemed to still be 'parallel'. Anyway, according to the Treaty of Amsterdam, one of the new main objectives of the Union was '[the promotion of an] economic and social progress and [of] a high level of employment and [the achievement of a] balanced and sustainable development, in particular through the creation of an area without internal frontiers, through the strengthening of economic and social cohesion (…)'. The evolution is obvious, social progress and social protection and cohesion walking now hand in hand with the economic development towards full integration. More importantly, Part I of the TEEC was added a new Article, 7d, of an evident import in the equation of the single market: 'Without prejudice to Articles 77, 90 and 92, and given the place occupied by services of general economic interest in the shared values of the Union as well as their role in promoting social and territorial cohesion, the Community and the Member States, each within their respective powers and within the scope of application of this Treaty, shall take care that such services operate on the basis of principles and conditions which enable them to fulfil their missions'. Basically, the Treaty of Amsterdam made, in and through this Article, for the first time, reference (at least at this level) to a possible shift in the balance between economic and social aspects caught in the functioning of the common market stating that, inasmuch as the services of general economic interest are concerned, their mission should take precedence over any other purposes and principles, including, for example, the internal market and competition rules. This idea has been perpetuated throughout all the ensuing stages of the EU's evolution, to be carried over to Article 16 TEC and now included as such in Article 14 TFEU. What's even more, the Treaty of Amsterdam introduced a whole new chapter (Title VIa), dedicated to 'Employment' as a distinctive policy at the Union level. So, although the substance of the social policies was still left on the shoulders of the Member States, the Community was now effectively empowered to intervene and support national initiatives and measures by, for example, facilitating an active cooperation between Member States and the exchange of good practices, by issuing guidelines or setting minimum standards and requirements or, more importantly, by intervening directly

via secondary laws issued in those areas falling into its direct competence (such as the functioning of the common market and competition). To this extent, the Treaty of Amsterdam not only encouraged, but even obliged the European institutions to shape their policies and actions in line with this particular desiderate.

In the same year (1997) the Commission released a comprehensive Single Market Action Plan in which the delivering of a single market for the benefit of all citizens was one of the four main goals defined thereunder. This strategic target was to be achieved through actions directed towards protection of social rights, consumer rights, health and environment, and the right of residence (pp. 9-11).

The Treaty of Nice (p. 1) came, in turn, with an updated Social Policy Chapter where the 'modernisation of social protection systems' and 'the combating of social exclusion' were added to the list of measures which the Council could have adopted in order to encourage the cooperation between Member States (under Article 118 TEEC). Its revamped Article 137 TEEC however once more underlined that the core social values and, in particular, those pertaining to the social security systems, were still in the competence of the Member States, the Community having just the role of a coordinator.

Not much later, in 2000, the Lisbon European Council insisted on the fact that 'the European Social model, characterized in particular by systems that offer a high level of social protection, by the importance of the social dialogue and by services of general interest covering activities vital for social cohesion, is today based, beyond the diversity of the Member States' social systems, on a common core of values'. It also stressed the need to modernize the European social model through an 'active welfare state' as a measure to ensure that 'the emergence of this new economy does not compound the existing social problems of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty'. Scholars define the set of principles launched during the Council of Lisbon, and which marked the future evolution of the single market, the 'social-investment approach', a shift which practically ended the supremacy of the 'neo-liberal regime' that dominated hitherto the EU's political environment and brought about the re-instauration of the social policy values at the highest EU level (Martinelli, 2017, p. 19).

Meanwhile, a long array of Council meetings averred the importance of social values and social cohesion in the economy of the single market[4]. This was doubled

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4 See for example the Feira European Council – 19-20 June 2000, or the Nice European Council – 7-9 December 2000 (which unveiled a 'New Impetus for an Economic and Social Europe' and endorsed the European Social Agenda crafted by the Commission that pointed to an 'indissoluble link between economic performance and social progress' where economic growth and social cohesion were seen as 'mutually reinforcing'), or, finally, the Stockholm European Council – 23-24 March 2001 which addressed the same issues and restated that there was 'full

by a sustained effort from the European Commission which, during a short period of time, gathered together a coherent set of ideas which were further concretised in several materials of great import for the future development of the new European social-economic order. Among them, we can mention the Social Agenda of 2005 and the Community Lisbon programme (issued in the same year).

It is only natural that the Treaty of Lisbon (p. 1) picked up on all these ideas and, building on the actions already mentioned, took the reform to a new, much deeper level, changing the original paradigm in its very substance. It actually capsized the rapport between economic and social values (Article 5a, which has later become Article 9 TFEU) (departing thus from the traditional liberal constitutionalism postulated by the Treaty of Maastricht), referring *in concreto* to a 'highly competitive social market economy' (Article 2(3) TEU) and insisting on the role of solidarity in the new EU context. And, as a proof of the importance of the social policies in the context of the internal market and the economic structure that it entails, the Treaty of Lisbon was accompanied, and soon followed, by a number of highly important Protocols, of which it is worth mentioning Protocol (No 26) on services of general interest (SGIs) and Protocol No. 28 on economic, social and territorial cohesion. All these texts are ordained to give substance to the coherent social policy consecrated at the primary law level and to offer a powerful tool for the promotion of a well-defined set of fundamental social values across all areas of action and on all tiers, ensuring a proper implementation of this policy (even if to the detriment of other fundamental values that sit at the foundation of the functioning of the Single Market and bear an economic nature).

These provisions have been complemented by a set of other functional considerations later gathered into what today is the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ('TFEU'). According to Article 7 TFEU, 'The Union shall ensure consistency between its policies and activities, taking all of its objectives into account and in accordance with the principle of conferral of powers'. In the light of this text, Article 8 TFEU explains that 'In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women', while, according to Article 9 TFEU, 'In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health'. Moreover, according to Article 10 TFEU, 'In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation'.

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agreement that economic reform, employment and social policies were mutually reinforcing' while 'a dynamic Union should consist of active welfare states'.

However, forged during the political negotiations that took place around the Treaty of Lisbon and born as an alleged alternative to the 'social state' consecrated by Article 20 of the German Constitution (Joerges and Rödl, 2004, p. 10), neither the TEU nor the TFEU offer a proper definition of the concept of 'social market economy' or at least leave sufficient indications on how to construe and apply it. Nor has the CJEU touched so far on this issue throughout its case law. Yet it continues to be heavily used in the official documents coming from the EU institutions and assumed as such by academia and practitioners.

According to the 'Social economy and social entrepreneurship – Social Europe Guide' (the 'Social Europe Guide') elaborated by the European Commission in 2013, the term 'social market economy' used in the Treaties has deep roots in the specific 'socially just' model (Heise and Heise, 2013, p. 11) of German origin born after WWII to respond to a stringent need for trust in the new democratic regime built on the ashes of the former National Socialism structure. Recent studies show that 'the "Social Market Economy" as it actually exists is 'based on free markets but, at the same time, includes elements of social balancing' (John, 2007), as it 'has drawn more on social democratic than ordoliberal influences' (Heise and Heise, 2013, p. 10). That system was originally devised to appease the clash of two fundamentally antagonistic principles, i.e., that of free competition (of a clear economic nature – and *sine-qua-non* in a young democratic economy that was about to burgeon, especially owing to the trade and procurement rules imposed by the U.S. under the Marshall Plan) and that of social security (so much needed after the war). The harmonization of the two principles in the original social market economy scenario should have taken place by an active involvement of the State (a particular form of interventionism) both in the promotion of a free trade (i.e., competition) and in the insurance of a well-balanced social development (for more on this topic see John, 2007; Ferri and Cortese, 2018).

Most of the principles that characterize and define social market economy have become an integral part of the European social model which, in turn, sits on the idea of 'social cohesion' and lays at the foundation of the new Treaty on European Union. Over time, this concept evolved (together with the European social model itself) to a much comprehensive meaning and a much larger ambit, decisively influenced by the recent economic crisis and its severe consequences which necessitated the ambitious recovery (not just economic, but also – to at least the same extent – social) plan laid down in the Europe 2020 Strategy[5].

To conclude, one may say that a structural feature of the social market economy postulated by the Treaty of Lisbon is the fact that it pursues economic development by promoting open economy and free competition, but not at any costs (or, at least, only to the extent where fundamental social values are not harmed). And vice-versa, the economic development entailed by the social market economy is bound to be nurtured and reached on an essentially social basis, i.e., social policy objectives are an intrinsic part thereof so that the shared value of economic relationships to be effectively reflected in palpable community benefits. In other words, social aspects are no longer 'exceptions' to the internal market rules (to the contrary, they have become, in the post-Lisbon era, an element placed on a par with the competition values). Moreover, national rules and practices have thus become measurable against the 'social' elements that defined the social market economy just as much as they are measurable against the specific market liberalisation criteria (Ross, 2013, p. 99).

Nevertheless, the pursue of such intrepid goals at the EU level has remained, due to the still small room for action reserved for the Union in the social policy field, limited to either the soft law or some specific pieces of hard law (harmonization instruments or just isolated provisions interspersed in laws adopted in areas of direct competence, owing to an explicit obligation deriving from the Treaties (in particular, Article 9 TFEU) to pursue core social goals throughout all its policies).

Meanwhile, the concrete weight to be attached to social values and how the 'social' and 'economic' elements (in terms of competition within the internal market) are to be balanced and prioritized in specific cases remains to be further tested and eventually assessed by the CJEU.

3. How much 'social' can public procurement take in the EU's internal market context?

Traditionally public procurement has been assumed as an essential component of the internal market. According to some authors, 'EU public procurement legislation has been classified within Internal Market legislation. This means that the rights which the judiciary should 'take seriously' seem to grow from the basic freedoms of the Internal Market (Ukkola, 2018, p. 42). Therefore, it has always been directly linked to the freedoms enshrined in the EU Treaties, the promotion of free competition among traders and, ultimately, the efficient spending of public funds.

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developments. The new Europe 2020 strategy originated from this need and recognised that, in order to overcome the current economic crisis, the recovery cannot be based on a 'business as usual' approach, as simply going back to the way things worked before the crisis is not possible'.

Although its legal justification is strongly contested (Arrowsmith and Kunzlik, 2009, pp. 36-38), this particular purpose still constitutes one of the main procurement drivers in many Member States (Knight *et al.*, 2007, p. 20; Kunzlik, 2013, p. 324; Kunzlik, 2016). The latter points to the neo-liberal strain promoting the idea that public procurement's main role would rather be to ensure 'efficiency' similar to that pursued by private players. Consequently, starting with 1971 – when the first secondary legislation was adopted in this field (Council Directive 71/305/EEC, p. 5; Council Directive 77/62/EEC, p. 1), the European legislature crafted and released a set of mechanisms and instruments to ensure that all principles that governed the functioning thereof applied as such to also public procurement. The explanation for such a late intervention in this sector appears to reside in the fact that, until the early '70s, the Community's economic growth was full of vigour and there was no interest in addressing the preferential practices that characterized the European public procurement. However, starting with 1970, the European continent entered a period of economic recession which made even more serious the commercial threat posed on the international markets by the US and Japan. These (essentially economic) shortages encouraged the Europe's shift to an outright neo-liberal approach. Its promotors were thus determined to break the last non-tariff barriers that blocked the road to a competitive Europe. Among them, the most serious was considered to be protectionism and market closure in public procurement (Calleja, 2017, pp. 50-53).

At the national level, 'social procurement' allegedly sprouted as early as the nineteenth century, 'when governments in the UK, France and the US started to use their purchasing power to address the under-representation of marginalized groups in the workforce' (Halloran, 2017, p. 2; see also McCrudden, 2004). In the EU law, however, the possibility to use specific public procurement mechanisms with the explicit purpose to support the implementation of concrete social objectives appeared much later, especially owing to a constant case law coming from the CJEU. It actually became fully fledged only after the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, when it was included in a larger strategy assumed at the Union's level, with the declared purpose to transform public procurement into a powerful, strategic tool and a 'convergence' vector in the attainment of various general community benefits purported to give substance and meaning to the EU's whole integration process has become vital. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the key role of public procurement for the European integration process has for the first time been vigorously acknowledged in the 2011 Single Market Act – i.e., Communication from the European Commission, 'Europe 2020: A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth', COM(2010)2020, which placed public procurement at the very core of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Thus, '[a]fter 2011, the importance of a liberalised and integrated public procurement as an essential component of the single market has been clearly established' (Bovis, 2018, p. 157).

Notwithstanding these auspices, the opinion that social or green objectives directly harm the effective outcome of a public procurement process, which should be based on value for money through an efficient spending of public funds, is still widely spread not only among practitioners but especially across the political sector (Trybus, 2016, p. 10). The author adduces the Germany's case and cites the (post-) communists, socialists, social democrats (labour, democrats) and greens as open supporters of the use of social considerations versus conservatives (republicans), Christian democrats and liberals which appear to militate against it. Moreover, as opposed to environmental objectives and those to do with the promotion of SMEs (which now occupy a central place in the public procurement context), social objectives are still being put in the shade (Trybus, 2016, p. 11).

The reluctance in bringing social aspects on the same level with other 'strategic' ones is only natural since, as a matter of principle, social values carry a quite heavy 'national' load that collides in its very fundamentals with the 'economic jurisprudence' of the Union (Barnard and Deakin, 2000, p. 331). This tension exists since the prime years of European Community and, despite the substantial concessions made so far, it still rattles the EU's political and policy environment. Anyway, along the integration process and given the hesitations – due to repeated stalemates in the political negotiations – in dealing with it at the legislative level, Member States (and their contracting authorities) decided occasionally to take the problem in their own hands and resolve it locally, by putting in place *ad-hoc* arrangements. This practice engendered long debates (on both political and legal tiers) and a very complex case law from the European Courts of Justice[6].

According to this case law, contracting authorities may in fact go beyond the limits entailed by the primary objectives of public procurement and resort to the instrumental nature thereof by pursuing additional objectives (in particular social ones: Furneaux and Barraket (2014), define 'social procurement' as 'the acquisition of a range of assets and services, with the aim of intentionally creating social outcomes (both directly and indirectly)' (p. 269) (emphasis added) and identify four concrete types thereof: (i) procurement of social services (ie., a direct form of social procurement); (ii) procurement of public works (with indirect social outcomes); (iii) allocation of a percentage of work to a social enterprise (i.e., the 'reserve of contracts' in the EU Public Sector Directive 2014) and (iv) 'corporate social responsibility (management of supply chains)' (pp. 267-269)), provided however that they manage to justify their decision by resorting to one or more formally permitted

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6   See for ex the cases C-31/87 Beentjes [1988] ECR-04635, C-225/98 Nord – Pas de Calais [2000] ECR I-07445, C-513/99 Concordia Bus [2002] ECR I-07213, C-368/10 Max Havelaar [2012] ECLI:EU:C:2012:284 or, more recently (but of crucial import for this discussion), C-346/06 Ruffert [2008] ECR I-01989 and C-115/14 Regio Post [2015] ECLI:EU:C:2015:760.

derogations from the internal market and competition rules and principles (which have instead been constantly assumed by the same Courts as the cornerstone of the entire EU edifice). Once such a justification is found, the concrete use of social criteria in a public procurement equation is, in the light of the cited case law, possible inasmuch as they 'are linked to the subject-matter of the contract, do not confer an unrestricted freedom of choice on the authority, are expressly mentioned in the relevant tender documents and comply with all the fundamental principles of Community law, in particular the principle of non-discrimination' (Concordia Bus, para. [69]). With regard to the requirement of a link between the use of social criteria and the subject matter, based on Concordia bus, the EU law itself now makes a clear distinction between (contractual) social clauses 'that pertain to performance of the contract and are therefore permitted and all other types, which are not' (Halloran, 2017, p. 3). In this arrangement, social clauses may be used as a selection criterion or otherwise as an award criterion, or in the technical specifications or, finally, as a performance conditionality (European Commission, 2011).

Such derogations may either be founded on a provision contained directly in the primary law of the Union or, in the silence of the Treaties, on a EU secondary legislation aimed at interpreting, explaining and facilitating the application of the general rules postulated by the Treaties (Arrowsmith and Kunzlik, 2009; McCrudden, 2009; McCrudden, 2011; Barnard, 2017). Of course that, where a justification for derogation from the general internal market and/or competition rules stems from a national norm, the derogatory provision contained in that norm must inevitably be further permitted by EU's primary or at least secondary law (Arrowsmith and Kunzlik, 2009, p. 38) – see for ex Article 106(2) TFEU.

Where the EU law is silent, such exceptional considerations may be justified on other grounds (substantially developed by the CJEU's case law and generically captioned as 'rules of reason') which, measured against the proportionality standards set by the same Court, may allow Member States to innovate and go beyond the usual rigours of the EU's internal market framework. Apparently, the rule of reason in the public procurement context appeared in close relation to the application of the MEAT criterion, the flexibility of interpretation and application of which has constantly been affirmed and encouraged by the CJEU up to the point where, in the social market economy environment postulated by the Treaty of Lisbon, the rule of reason has become 'an essential tool to convey effectively rights and obligations of EU law' (Bovis, 2018, p. 170).

Inevitably, the prime years of integration were marked by a resolute accent on economic values and the Treaties remained – at least until very recently – reluctant when it came to open the door to exceptions to the rules aimed at safeguarding the sacred liberties that they undertook to protect. Over the years though, some derogations have indeed been enacted, but only after long negotiations among the

European political actors (expressing practically a political bargain) and only with the limited purpose to strike a tight balance between the need to protect these liberties and other values which, due to concrete political and social contexts, have grown to occupy a central place in the evolution of the European Union and the integration process, on a par with the economic ones. Unfortunately, many of these exceptions– which have in the end fundamentally transformed the structure of the initial arrangement captured by the Treaties – have been marked by a wide degree of generality. This prompted a frantic search for additional support in the secondary legislation.

Weirdly though, even if the Treaties had evolved decisively, as shown above, so to bring the 'social' dimension of the internal market to the same level with the economic one, the secondary legislation dedicated to public procurement failed to advance at the same pace. Basically, until 2004 it contained not even a single reference to the 'social' potential of public procurement (although the Court of Justice of the Union had cracked the door open for this since 1988) while the 2004 package (i.e., pre-Lisbon!) merely transposed the punctual solutions consecrated by the CJEU through its previous case law. Nor has the 2014 package taken sufficient advantage of the huge potential of the post-Lisbon chart. In fact, although it steps a little further from the safe harbours offered by the CJEU, the Public Sector Directive 2014 offers a quite limited number of opportunities in this regard (such as the possibility to reserve public contracts for certain social enterprises, that of using social labels, or the requirement to take into account certain accessibility criteria, etc.), while barely pointing out to some mandatory rules and regulations applicable 'in the fields of (…) social and labour law' (Article 18 from the Public Sector Directive 2014) (adopted, *nota bene*, in areas placed outside the ambit of public procurement and which, given their specific purpose, allow of certain punctual relaxations from the internal market and competition rules!).

A good explanation for this legislative hesitation is that public procurement pertains, essentially, to the internal market (and competition) policy – which, pursuant to the principle of conferral consecrated by Articles 2 to 6 TFEU, is in the EU's full competence. Consequently, the traditional competition principles had to keep their central place while the rules with a social value remained, due to their discriminatory potential, only marginal. And, in spite of the new internal market structure, the EU legislature didn't know how to strike, at least at a regulatory level, a better balance between the two sets of values. On the other hand, it is worth observing that, in the public procurement area, the regulatory process is, regardless of its precise scope (the true scope of the EU public procurement law have been extensively questioned, debated and systematized, yet with rather inconsistent, if not divergent, conclusions – see Whelan and Pearson, 1961; Trepte, 2005; Arrowsmith, Linarelli and Wallace, 2000; Arrowsmith and Kunzlik, 2009; Sanchez-Graells, 2011;

Semple, 2012, Kunzlik, 2013 or Kunzlik, 2016; Comba, 2016), essentially based on harmonization (Recital (1) of the Public Sector Directive 2014), which further implies a necessary degree of discretion in the implementation process (Bovis, 2018, p. 158) – hence the possibility for Member States (and their contracting authorities) to innovate. Moreover, the harmonization process in this particular field – marked, at least in the post-Lisbon 'social market economy' constitutional structure, by the need for ensuring a minimum necessary level of consistency and coherence, at the national level, between fundamental economic and social values – has created an excellent opportunity for the European Commission to operate directly on the substance of the rules in question and thus make deep forays into a territory constitutionally falling into the ambit of Member States (Weatherill, 2006).

In practice, the problem became acute when, confronted with a systemic net of policy goals which they pledged to pursue, and in the silence of either the primary or the dedicated secondary legislation, contracting authorities started to resort to the opportunities offered by other instruments not related to public procurement (such as the Poster Workers Directives or the Equal Treatment and Equal Pay Directives, etc.) the main goal of which was (it still is!) to protect national/local social values placed in an open conflict with those defining the EU's internal market (and, thus, indirectly, with the rules on public procurement). As the CJEU itself has ascertained, the use of such instruments in public procurement is anomalous hence should be done with great rigor (McCrudden, 2011).

The European Commission tried to fill the legislative gap with some pieces of soft law such as the Buying Social Guide of 2011 or the Social Europe Guide of 2013. In parallel, intensified its efforts to adapt the Single Market to the new realities so, in 2015 (after long consultations with the Member States, public authorities and stakeholders), it came out with a comprehensive Single Market Strategy – 'Upgrading the Single Market: more opportunities for people and business' which was soon followed up by many other related actions and legislative packages, such as the recent Action Plan on Public Procurement and the thick package released in October 2017 (containing the Communication 'Making Public Procurement work in and for Europe' where the Commission explained that it has identified 'six priority areas, where clear and concrete action can transform public procurement into a powerful instrument in each Member State's economic policy toolbox' – p. 7), or those on the Circular Economy, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Labour Mobility and the more recent proposal to review the Posted Workers Directive. The Commission accompanied all these measures with a new Investment Plan for Europe which took the Cohesion Policy beyond its initial scope while changing the focus on a number of sensitive social objectives.

All these show that the instrumentality of public procurement in the pursuing of social policy objectives is now openly acknowledged and widely promoted, but

mainly at a declarative level, while the EU both primary and secondary legislation is still meagre in offering concrete solutions, leaving the burden on the shoulders of Member States and contracting authorities.

4. Conclusions

Public procurement has long passed the era where it was seen as a mere technical instrument which helped governments find the cheapest solution that fitted their needs, in a continuous struggle to make economies of scale. In recent times, public procurement has evolved to reach the highest degree of complexity, being placed on the seventh (and last) stage of development on a scale where sourcing and delivering goods and services is the roughest way of using public procurement and at the bottom of it while the deliverance of broader government policy objectives is the most refined form thereof.

Public procurement has thus become not only a strategic instrument in the implementation of various policy goals but a policy in itself and by itself.

On the other hand, Europe is witnessing some dramatic changes in the social context, where poverty and unemployment have reached a tipping point whereas migration and the need to integrate and find a form of inclusion for the newcomers, frequently associated – due to the recent attacks – with terrorism, generated a surging waive of nationalism. In this environment, it is decisively important to identify the accurate place of public procurement on the map of the relevant (social) public policies crafted at the Union's level.

Given its instrumental nature, public procurement is inevitably caught in the clash between the traditional internal market and competition policy rules, on the one hand, and those accompanying the new approach set forth in the Treaty of Lisbon, in particular the ones pertaining to the social policy, on the other hand (Barnard, 2011, p. 641; Ross, 2013, p. 99). But, as some stakeholders have justly observed, free market is a 'neutral and timeless notion' which rather needs to be construed as 'a means to increase welfare' (Manunza and Berends, 2013, p. 380).

The TFEU made (after a long but constant evolution) room to social considerations in the traditional arrangement of the internal market. On the other hand, the fragile balance that now exists between the competition policy rules and principles and those born in connection with the social component of the same internal market cannot be infringed to the detriment of either one of them. In other words, the promotion of social values cannot infringe the traditional, economic rules of the internal market than only where a superior interest is at stake, just like the latter cannot exclude the pursue of other fundamental (external) values deriving from other horizontal policies, like the social ones.

To this end, public procurement cannot or should not be used beyond its real purpose, and in any case not outside a very well defined social policy (crafted – in

the context of the social market economy, i.e., directly under the Treaties or just under the umbrella of various pieces of secondary legislation) at either the national, or a regional or even a local level, which to indicate some palpable objectives that may be transposed into a public procurement equation. Each contracting authority should thus be able to justify its choice and explain how, by choosing to pursue concrete social-policy objectives, the rapport between value and money – assessed in the social market economy context – remains positive.

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Green Mobility and Quality of Life: Cluj-Napoca Case Study

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Abstract. The mobility paradigm on which the 20th century urbanization is founded on, reached its social, economic, and environmental limits leading to a decay of the quality of public spaces. Today, there is a technological and cultural transformation that aims at an efficient and eco-friendly public transportation, spaces for pedestrians and cyclists, the use of digital transformation, the change of behavior and life style in relation to transportation.

This paper presents the main actions and public policies concerning the achieving of a green mobility in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Keywords: new mobility paradigm, quality of life, public policy.

1. Introductory remarks

More than half of the world's population lives in urban areas and the pace of urbanization continues to accelerate. In 1800, the only city in the world with a population greater than one million was Beijing. In 1950, just New York had more than 10 million people. In 1962, Tokyo passed 10 million. 50 years later, 21 cities have more than 10 million people and there are more than 450 cities with at least 1 million citizens (Neckermann, 2015, p. 26). It is estimated that by 2050 there will be a global population between 9.4 and 10.2 billion and it is highly likely (0.95 chance) that at least 6.2 billion people will live in urban areas (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, 2017, p. 3). Considering these developments, in a declaration published in Financial Times (the 26 June 2016 edition), the mayors of Paris and London, Anne Hidalgo and Sadiq Khan stated that 'If the 19th century was defined by empires and the 20th century by nation-states, the 21st century belongs to cities' (Neckermann, 2017, p. 16).

The urbanization process brings significant challenges and risks. Although cities occupy only 2% of the globe's surface, they are responsible for 60-80% of the energy consumption and 75% of the carbon emissions (Sustainable Development Goals: Fact Sheet, 2015, p. 6). Urban planning and urban mobility have developed based on both public and personal transport, but the continuous increase in the number of personal cars has had two effects: it influenced urban planning, until relatively recently, in favor of the drivers, which subsequently led to a decay of the quality of the public space, and, subsequently, a decay of the quality of life in cities (Tira, 2018, pp. 201-202; also see Papa, Pistola and Gargiulo, 2018).

2. A new mobility paradigm

In response to the problems brought by the increasing of the urban area after the classic model which implies the use of the personal automobile and brings with it the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, traffic congestion, and along with these economic, social and environmental problems, the concept of 'sustainable mobility' has been proposed, which has at its core three priorities: pedestrians, cyclists and efficient public transport and with the lowest CO_2 emissions. Walking and cycling are the most sustainable means of transport and meet the needs of the environment, but also some social needs. A city of pedestrians and cyclists is a healthier city and one where it is more enjoyable to live (Conticelli, 2018, pp. 252-253).

The City of Copenhagen, one of the urban planning patterns currently valued globally, uses the 'green mobility' concept as a form of sustainable mobility which proposes a good quality of life in a city with a low carbon footprint. Green mobility means taking into account simultaneously several conditions: the need to move

easily and quickly in the city, the need to reduce the CO2 level, the need to protect the environment, and also the need to meet certain economic growth conditions. Green mobility considers the need to make the transport of people and goods more efficient, while also aiming at ensuring efficiency in environment-friendly conditions (City of Copenhagen, 2014, pp. 3-5).

The paradigm of mobility that dominated the 20th century, based on cheap fossil fuels and high CO2 emissions reached its social, economic, and environmental limits due to pollution, climate change, noise, and traffic congestion costs. Today, mobility solutions come with new vehicles and services, new materials, new energy sources, and new companies (Fournier, 2017, p. 21). We can talk about the emergence of a new ecosystem, of a new paradigm of mobility (Attias, 2017, p. 7). An 'industrial and cultural revolution' (Attias, 2017, pp. 147-148) is under way, rethinking the future of mobility, rethinking the future of cars, rethinking the future of cities and lifestyles in cities.

The change is not only an industrial (technological) one with major economic implications, but also a cultural one, because the way we relate to mobility changes. The main ways in which the new paradigm is manifested are (Lennert *et al.*, 2017, pp. 6-10): decarbonizing transport and mobility systems, which brings to the fore the use of electric power and involves many challenges regarding renewable energy, smart grid and energy storage systems; the digital transformation that opens remarkable possibilities in connection with apps ranging from bus schedules to fully automated electric cars (which would mean 1 million lives saved every year from car accidents and other 7 million lives saved by reducing pollution – Neckerman, 2015, p. 10); changing behaviors and lifestyle in relation to transport moving towards a multimodal transport (which combines several means depending on specific needs) and changing the focus from 'having' to 'using' (hence the development of carpooling and ride sharing services).

Below, I will present the main actions and public policies concerning the development of green mobility in the city of Cluj-Napoca, a city with 324,576 inhabitants (according to the 2011 census) and where, every day, there is the potential of approximately 197,000 cars on the roads (157,000 cars owned by locals, and about 40,000 cars belonging to people who work in the city, students, or tourists who are passing through, according to the local police estimations).

3. Case study: Cluj-Napoca

3.1. Cluj-Napoca – the most attractive secondary city in Romania

Today, Cluj-Napoca is a strong university center and a dynamic and balanced economic center, IT being one of its important engines. According to a study made by World Bank experts, Cluj-Napoca is the most attractive secondary city in Ro-

mania according to the Magnet Index, which takes into account the revenue of companies per capita, the average salary, the number of students, and investment per capita (Cristea *et al.*, 2017, pp. 108-109).

The development strategy of Cluj-Napoca for 2014-2020 has a vision of sustainable community development in the context of a participatory governance system. More specifically, the development of the city is defined in terms of 'the quality of life of its citizens, aiming 'to obtain a balance between economic growth and social cohesion, a city that is more energy efficient, more accessible, with greater urban mobility, and an inclusive and safe city' (Boc, 2017, p. 7). The participatory governance system developed by the municipality in the last years is a 'Quintuple Helix' system, its participants being the public administration, the universities, the private economic sector, NGOs and the citizens of the city.

In Cluj-Napoca, the local authorities grant a privileged place to public participation. Here, for the first time in Romania, participatory budgeting processes have been initiated and here were established instruments of governance such as The Center for Innovation and Civic Imagination (CIIC). CIIC is a laboratory of ideas in which different forms of collaboration between actors in the city are being developed and tested; it coordinates and guides complex participatory governance networks and it allows the use of social actors' capacity to formulate and solve public problems; it supports participatory practices by promoting a dialog on urban innovation projects; it encourages the involvement of citizens in the community development projects; it creates a place for debate and collaboration to find innovative solutions to the challenges faced by the city (Boc, 2018, pp. 61-62; also see Hintea *et al.*, 2018).

The great projects started in the last two years centered upon increasing the quality of public spaces and assuring sustainable mobility have been brought into the attention of specialists and the public through the Center for Innovation and Civic Imagination.

According to the terms used by Richard Florida (2002 and 2005), the city of Cluj-Napoca has the 3 Ts of economic development: technology, talent, and tolerance, to which we add a fourth, 'trust', the trust developed by social partners and inclusively, where the local governance system is being built.

3.2. Actions and public policies for green mobility

In the last years, there has been a constant preoccupation for a change in the way in which public transport in the city is being managed and provided, towards creating pedestrian areas, shared areas, and cycling tracks, developing electric transport and to use the resources offered by the digital transformation. Below are the main directions in which the actions and public policies of the municipality of Cluj-Napoca, that can be included in the sphere of sustainable mobility, are developed.

3.2.1. Green means of transport and the optimization of the transport system

- Public transport based on electricity.

  Cluj-Napoca is the first city in Romania to introduce electric buses into the public transport system. In 2018, the City Hall has put into circulation 11 electric buses. During the last two years, 20 new trolley buses were also bought. One third of the public transport fleet is electric. During the next two years, the transport fleet will be rounded out with 30 electric buses, 50 trolley buses and 24 trams. The local administration has announced its intention to make a full transition to a public transport based on electricity between 2025 and 2030.

- Prioritizing the public transportation through dedicated lanes (an ongoing process). Dedicated lanes were made on an important segment of the East-West axis, the busiest in the city, as widening roads is not a possible option (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2015, p. 20). In the future, these dedicated lanes will be extended on the East-West axis, as well as in other areas of the city.

- The rehabilitation of the tram line (over 25 km of tram tracks through a European project).

- Modernizing the public transportation stations and the ticketing system. The ticketing system provides flexibility in using the public transportation means (both tickets/journey and tickets/time frame). Through a European project, 87 public transportation stops have been modernized, and in 61 of these there are automatic machines which issue travel cards 24/7.

- Digital displays in the public transportation stations – electronic boards indicating the estimated arrival time of the public transportation means in the stations.

- Support for expanding the use of electric cars – the municipality is building charging stations for electric cars, the first 4 have already been set in the city center, and others will be set in the 10 parking buildings of the municipality (which are in different implementation phases).

  The municipality is also partnering with the TREC Cluster – Transylvania Energy Cluster in a European project targeting an innovative energy testing laboratory/center for energy solutions that also target two free charging points for buses and electric cars.

  In September 2018, the municipality has publicly debated a public policy on the free supply of electric cars through points made by the City Hall. This aspect is important because the procurement policies concerning electric means of transport must be supported by policies related to charging points (Van der Steen *et al.*, 2015, p. 49; also see Leal Filho and Kotter, 2015).

- Increasing the urban mobility through the bike-sharing system. There are 43 self-service bike stations in Cluj-Napoca, and 7 in the metropolitan area. The 470 bicycles can be used for free for an hour. The infrastructure of the bike-sharing project is under development.

3.2.2. Urban development and ensuring quality of life

- Making new pedestrian areas and shared areas in both the central area and in neighborhoods. Changing the focus on the need to reshape pedestrian, cyclist and green areas in urban planning to improve the quality of life of the citizens was noticed 12-14 years ago, when the first pedestrian projects on Eroilor Boulevard and Unirii Square were started. Today what has been done and exists in numerous other projects in various phases of implementation seems natural, but the debates were ignited at the time because the paradigm shift was not as noticeable as today.

  The concern about the creation of quality public spaces has continued with the rehabilitation of streets and major infrastructure works over the past 10 years. Thus, the following have been rehabilitated: Train Station Square, the Hungarian Opera House area, Avram Iancu street, the multipurpose hall area, and others. New green and recreational areas have been created.

  Currently, there are ongoing projects aimed at rehabilitating areas for pedestrians and cyclists with priority and increasing green areas on several streets in the city, including: Lucian Blaga Square, Napoca street, Petru Maior street, Molnar Piuariu street, Regele Ferdinand street, Tipografiei street, Cuza Vodă street, Emile Zola, 21 Decembrie 1989 Boulevard, the 'Horia Demian' Sports Hall area, and so on.
- Public spaces solutions contests. It is worth noticing that Cluj-Napoca City Hall, in partnership with the Romanian Chamber of Architects, started organizing international contests for solutions to revitalize public spaces. This is how the winning projects for the rehabilitation of the Firefighters Tower, the Someş river banks and Railroaders Park and Mihail Kogalniceanu street were established. In all of these projects, as in future contests aimed at the construction of a new neighborhood (Sopor) and the rehabilitation of the historic area of Cetatuia, the citizens' quality of life and ensuring sustainable mobility are the key elements.
- In June 2017, the Cluj-Napoca City Hall addressed the matter of sustainable mobility in the first innovation camp in Cluj (part of the Open Innovation 2.0 Conference), using the European Commission methodology for open innovation.

3.2.3. Apps and digital solutions for urban mobility

- Interconnected and smart traffic lights (the existing system will be extended).
- Traffic monitoring systems – the existing system will be extended and modernized to be capable of making predictions regarding traffic in real-time. In order to achieve efficient traffic management, it is necessary to collect information via cameras, sensors and GPS systems on public transport. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the municipality is considering the development of an open

data system at the city level, which is a policy that facilitates the emergence of innovative solutions (Lennert *et al.*, 2017, p. 17).

- Cluj Parking – a mobile app that provides real-time data about available parking places in restricted access parking spaces in the city. The app regarding the available parking places will continue to be developed by installing sensors in the central area of the city.
- Cluj Bike – an app for the 50 self-service bicycle rental station network. Bicycles are likely to be present in the mobility mix of the future and specific infrastructure is the key to their success. They are also expected to become hybrid models equipped with electric motors for riding up hills.
- Parking fees via text messages.
- An app for paying parking fees using a credit card is being tested.
- Payment of public transport tickets via text message.
- Payment of public transport tickets via the mobilPay Wallet app.
- Equipping the entire CTP fleet of buses, trolleybuses and trams with GPS systems.
- An app showing the arrival times of public transport.
- The schedule of the entire CTP fleet is updated on Google in partnership with this company, so there is a prediction of public transport departures from each stop.
- Monitoring the quality of the air – 10 buses in the city have sensors for monitoring the quality of the air and the data can be accessed in real time on www.uradmonitor.ro. In the future, the municipality is considering developing a monitoring system throughout the city. The need to reduce urban pollution is one of the elements which sustain the transformation towards sustainable mobility (Geoffron, 2017, p. 88).

4. Conclusions

The change of paradigm regarding mobility is clearly notable in the actions and public policies that have been promoted in the city of Cluj-Napoca in the last years with respect to the modernization of the public transport system as well as urban planning and the digital solutions proposed for the increase of urban mobility.

The citizens' quality of life and the insurance of sustainable mobility are the central elements behind the practice of solution contests and the setting up or rehabilitation of certain public spaces. Although this practice of holding solution contests requires a longer implementation time, it has the advantage that the solutions offered are of high quality and are sustainable.

The Mobility Revolution is an ongoing process in Cluj-Napoca, just as it is in urban agglomerations globally, and it is a process that needs the continuity of public policies in the coming years in order to feel its positive effects on the quality of life of the citizens of the city.

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Funds Synergy – A Model for Sustainable Development of the Administrative-Territorial Units in Romania

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Abstract. Through this article, we aim to draw attention to the process of creating synergies between European funds, a process that involves correlating the support provided by the Union's cohesion policy, acting on various levels, such as modernizing the transport infrastructure, creating jobs and encouraging the economic growth and the sustainable development, with other forms of sectoral policies, such as the common agricultural policy.

More specifically, the synergy of European funds is based on the use of more funds from different EU funding programs. Thus, as an example, as part of the development process of a community that targets infrastructure, it can be used funds from both the cohesion policy and from the pillar II, more precisely from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Unfortunately, the national authorities do not resort to the synergy of funds, which makes it impossible in practice to make effective use of the funds. There are numerous cases in which the money allocated to funding axes was exhausted, the projects remaining only at the stage of ideas, while the resources granted through other axes were not accessed. By combining the funds, funding could be obtained through several axes ensuring a successful implementation of EU support.

Keywords: European funds, synergy of European funds, national authorities, cohesion policy, sectoral policies.

1. Introduction

One of EU's primordial objective nowadays envisages strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion, so as to reduce development disparities among regions. To this extent, further focus is directed towards supporting long-term sustainable development in member states on the basis of common policies in various domains.

Europe 2020 Strategy introduced priorities governing EU's global activity, namely smart growth by developing a knowledge and innovation based economy, sustainable growth by promoting a more resource efficient economy, more ecological and more competitive and inclusive growth by advocating for a higher employment rate, all designed to ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion (European Commission, 2010).[1] The EU has reached significant milestones in order to achieve these priorities by designing reformatory guidelines for the regional development policy, by launching new financial instruments for 2014-2020 which, together with improving EU policies in other sectors, represent a public indicator for growth, thus improving competitiveness and providing better living standards for EU citizens.

The reformatory guidelines in EU member states and their regions are implemented through the structural and investment funds ('ESI' funds) which include: The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund, the Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Common provisions that regulate the areas of intervention for these main financial instruments are to be found in Regulation (EU) no. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on these funds. In addition to this Regulation, each of the above instruments is regulated by a specific legal framework (European Parliament, 2013).

It must be noted that although the Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund are not part of EU's cohesion policy, regulating common provisions was nonetheless necessary in order to improve coordination and align the legal framework of the cohesion policy (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund) with implementing EAFRD and EMFF.[2] Such actions became even more necessary since improving elements that could create synergies between EU funds and EU financial instruments are at the core of reaching specific objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy.

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1 For further information, please check Communication from the Commission 'Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', COM/2010/2020 final, Brussels, 3 March 2010.

2 For further information, please check Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, Recital (2).

2. Funds synergy during 2007-2013 programming period

Unlike the present regulatory framework, during 2007-2013 synergetic approaches between EU funds and financial instruments used to rely upon clearly separating EU policy areas and management and implementation structures, implying that the regulatory system was defined as a deterrent against double-financing or administrative overlaps that might generate extra costs.

A European Parliament study (Ferry, Kah and Bachtle, 2016, pp. 23-25) showed that for 2007-2013, the regulatory framework acted as a barrier against synergies by issuing separate regulations and occasionally contradictory for various funds and instruments, thus confusing both beneficiaries and authorities. Unfortunately, contradictions and unaddressed aspects regarding common policy objectives together with the need to coordinate fund actions have persisted, despite issuing Lisbon Agenda and Europe 2020 Strategy. As a result, the previous programming period has scarce examples of specific synergies between implementing cohesion policy funds and providing support using other EU financial instruments.

Lithuania represents a public national example of successfully using synergies during 2014-2015 when PRIP 'Developing broadband infrastructure in rural areas' project was implemented which had been designed during 2007-2013 programming period. The project showed how EAFRD and ERDF can mutually reach a strategic goal in order to expand national programs in remote rural areas (European Network for Rural Development, 2018).[3] Specifically, the complementarity of these two funds had been achieved in two stages, during two different programming periods.

Ever since 2005, Lithuania issued an ambitious programme to create a national fiber optic broadband network named 'Rural Area Information Technology Broadband Network' (RAIN). This project received ERDF support in two stages when 9000 km fiber optic reached one million inhabitants. However, it was not possible to connect all rural areas to this network, therefore it was necessary to wait for the next programming period. Promotors of RAIN project have attempted to use EAFRD support to succeed in expanding Lithuania's optical fiber network in rural areas which did not have broadband connection. The project aimed at the Development of broadband connection infrastructure in rural areas (PRIP), tried to implement specific interventions to reach more remote rural communities, despite being undersized and under budgeted compared to RAIN. As a result, PRIP succeeded in providing 426 new Internet access points for approximately 100.000 inhabitants of Lithuanian rural areas who previously did not have access to broad-

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3 To see full project description, please check https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/prip-development-broadband-connection-infrastructure_en, accessed on November 5, 2018.

band Internet infrastructure. Thus, by bringing together RAIN and PRIP, by the year of 2015, a percentage of 58.4% Lithuanian households have received Internet access, twelve times more that in 2005. The project was among the first to win the European Broadband Award in 2015.

It is interesting that in Romania, for the 2007-2013 programming period, we do not have concrete examples of projects realized on the basis of synergies between EAFRD and other European funds and/or instruments. However, Romania had a high value of payments made under the National Rural Development Programme, which amounts 8,457,435,930 EUR, representing 90.97% of the total amount available (9,296,460,216 EUR) for the 2007-2013 programming period.

3. Funds synergy during 2014-2020 programming period

Nowadays, in order to pursue an integrated approach for development, the coordination of ESI funds with other EU instruments and policies is emphasized so as to reach an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth all across the EU, considering specific territorial challenges at a national, regional and local scale[4]. Moreover, the Common Provisions Regulations states a general rule according to which an initiative may be financed under various ESI grants or other EU programmes and/or instruments under the condition that certain expenses from a reimbursement request will not receive double financing, as well as not to have 'contributions from the same fund in the framework of another program'[5]. Therefore, member states and management authorities responsible with implementing ESI grants are assigned to identify those areas of intervention where grants can be used together complementary in order to achieve thematic objectives, thus ensuring coordination and synergies as well as avoiding overlapping.

3.1. Funds synergy during 2014-2020 programming period in Romania

In Romania, The Partnership Agreement for 2014-2020 states, among others, the areas of interest that allow a complementary approach for ESI grants, namely competitiveness, employment, social inclusion, education, environment, resource efficiency and climate change (European Commission, 2014)[6]. Furthermore, the Partnership Agreement underlines that for 2014-2020, the main area of intervention to achieve synergy of ESI funds is increasing competitiveness and innovation,

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4   For further information, please check Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Annex I.
5   Excerpt from Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Article 65, Paragraph 11.
6   For further information, please check Romanian Partnership Agreement for 2014-2020 programming period, at http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/acord-parteneriat, pp. 220-221.

encompassing all measures to support enterprises and investments in research, development and innovation.

According to the Partnership Agreement provisions, the support measures presented above, as well as those promoting communication and information technology (IT&C) as understood in ERDF can be complementary with certain support activities for reshaping and consolidation of agricultural enterprises with the support of EAFRD and EMFF, complementary with ESF which will provide support in education and transfer of know-how.

EAFRD initiatives for improving living standards and rural areas attractiveness show other domains where ESI funds can be combined, namely with ESF initiatives to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion, as well as with the ERDF support in social services infrastructure and public health infrastructure. In order to encourage employment and support workforce mobility, particularly in rural areas, EAFRD initiatives aimed at diversifying rural economy are to be accompanied by ESF actions representing investments in human resources.

Since Europe 2020 Strategy emphasizes the sustainable use of resources so as to counter the effects of climate change connected to safeguarding the environment and a much more efficient use of resources, Romania's Partnership Agreements envisages connected actions financed by the ERDF, the Cohesion Fund and EAFRD (particularly for protecting and preserving the biodiversity of farming and forestry lands, adjustment to climate change and reducing greenhouse effects in agriculture and forestry)[7]. For instance, the National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) is financing various investments in agricultural holdings producing bio fuel and bioenergy for own use, while such measures are complementary with the Operational Programme for Large Infrastructure actions in the area of effective energy consumption.

As far as transport infrastructure is concerned, NRDP can finance investments in rural road infrastructure of local interest, closely connected to the initiative under Regional Operational Programme (ROP) of upgrading and modernizing the network of county roads. For 2014-2020 programming period, NRDP benefits from a total allocation of EUR 9,441,634,847, which could be invested in sustaining large investment projects in rural areas, alongside other ESI Funds. Up to now, the total of payments made is 42.52% of the amount allocated and there are still no clear examples of synergies between NRDP funding and other instruments / funds.

Another relevant example shows the complementarity between ROP programme and HCOP (Human Capital Operational Programme): a school may re-

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7 For further details, please check Romanian Partnership Agreement for 2014-2020 programming period, online at http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/acord-parteneriat, p. 221.

ceive HCOP financing for interventions to prevent school dropout, together with grants covering fees of counsellors, therapists or school psychologists, as well as after school activities, while at the same time, the same school may benefit from ROP investments to modernize the school building or to set up the necessary infrastructure for after school activities (setting up new classrooms, kitchen, eating halls, etc.). Such projects may occur simultaneously or separately.

Romania has set up a three-level coordination mechanism in order to provide efficient monitoring while implementing complementarity of interventions in the framework of the programmes financed under ESI grants: strategic, inter-institutional and operational. This mechanism brings together the following: The Coordination Committee managing the Partnership Agreement (CCMPA) under the Ministry for European Funds, 5 subcommittees for thematic coordination (under the Ministry for European Funds and under the Coordination Committee managing the Partnership Agreement) and 4 functional Work Groups (under the Ministry for European Funds and under the subcommittees for thematic coordination)[8].

Additionally, we must look closely at the novelties brought by the programming period of 2014-2020 connected to integrated approaches and based on specific territorial realities, namely integrated territorial investment (ITI) and community-led local development (CLLD) which can contribute to customized solutions for specific territorial needs, thus enhancing their economic potential and the efficiency of public interventions. Furthermore, such innovative instruments may play an essential part in adjusting to demographic changes and combating inter-regional development imbalances.

Integrated territorial investments bring together actions defined either in urban development strategies, territorial strategies or territorial pacts whose implementation require an integrated approach, namely investments from funds such as ESF, ERDF, Cohesion Fund (using more priority axis or one or more operational programmes) that can receive an added value from EAFRD or EMFF[9].

Regarding Romania, according to the Partnership Agreement, the only Integrated Territorial Investment for 2014-2020 is Integrated Territorial Investment Danube Delta which is about to obtain an integrated financing from all operational programmes, including support from the Cohesion Fund, ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF. The total estimated budget amounts to 1,114 billion euro from European grants, plus national financing (ITI Delta Dunării, 2018)[10].

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8 For further details, please check Romanian Partnership Agreement for 2014-2020 programming period, online at http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/acord-parteneriat, pp. 221-224.

9 Excerpt from Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Article 36 and Annex I, point 3.

10 Total estimated project value is presented at http://www.itideltadunarii.com/finantare.

Table 1: Source of funds for Integrated Territorial Investment Danube Delta

Operational Programme	Financing presented in million euros
LIOP (Large Infrastructure Operational Programme)	407,64
ROP (Regional Development Operational Programme)	358,1
NRDR (National Rural Development Programme)	168 (including national financing)
EMFF OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME (Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Operational Programme)	37
COP (Competitiveness Operational Programme)	60
Operational Programme 'Human Capital'	60
Operational Programme 'Administrative Capacity'	16
Operational Programme on Technical Assistance	5

Source: This chart is drafted upon official information, available at http://www.itideltadunarii.com/finantare/

During June 2013–December 2015, the Ministry for Regional Development and Public Administration implemented the project 'The integrated strategy for sustainable development of the Danube Delta and its implementation using an integrated territorial investment' which was co-financed by ERDF through the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2017-2013 in cooperation with the World Bank under a Service Agreement signed in September 2013[11]. As a result, the Danube Delta Integrated Development Strategy (DDIDS) was established together with the Integrated Territorial Investment for 2014-2020.

DDIDS aims to accomplish a proper balance between safeguarding the unique natural heritage of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, on the one hand, and to achieve social and economic development by measures to improve living standards for the inhabitants, foster economic opportunities, promote and strengthen cultural and natural heritage, on the other hand, all designed to ensure safeguarding and sustainable development of the Danube Delta. The Strategy includes the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Tulcea municipality, the cities of Babadag, Isaccea, Măcin and Sulina, 29 rural municipalities from Tulcea County and 4 rural municipalities from Constanța County.

Up to present, The Association for Inter Community Development ITI Danube Delta implements the project: Technical assistance to ensure proper functionality of ITI mechanism connected to DDIDS and ADI-ITI Danube Delta from an executive and partnership point of view, co-financed by ERDF through Operational Programme on Technical Assistance (OPTA) 2014-2020. The project is im-

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11 For further details, please check http://www.itideltadunarii.com/scurt-istoric.

plemented during 01 January 2016-31 December 2018 with a public eligible value of 9,607,491.12 Lei, out of which 8,137,064.60 Lei represents non-refundable EU financial assistance and 1,470,426.52 Lei represents public national contribution.

As general objective, the project aims to provide coordination, preparation, updating, implementing and monitoring of the DDIDS, of the Action Plan and of the mechanism to implement ITI Danube Delta, so as to improve local living standards and support a sustainable development and economic growth, both intelligent and inclusive in the Danube Delta[12]. Regarding contracts signed under ITI Danube Delta financial mechanism, official data shows that, for instance, under ROP 2014-2020, during the last 7 months, 52 financing contracts worth more than 246 million lei have been signed. The types of investments supported under these contracts refer to both the public and private sector and focus mainly on areas such as promoting northern Dobrogea heritage, upgrading county roads, as well as encouraging business competitiveness.

As previously mentioned, another innovative instrument of 2014-2020 is community-led local development (CLLD) which focuses on specific micro-regional areas and is implemented based on strategies issued by member states local action groups and benefits from financial support under EAFRD (LEADER local development), as well as ERDF, ESF or EMFF.

A study conducted for the European Commission (Van der Zwet *et al.*, 2017) shows that member states have chosen to implement CLLD, both for rural and urban areas. Likewise, it stresses that CLLD is included in only a few of the sustainable urban development strategies implemented by member states; for instance, Lithuania, Netherlands, Bulgaria and France have enclosed community-led local development in national sustainable urban development strategies. Other member states have not deemed necessary to include CLLD in their urban development strategies, but they shall implement this instrument complementarily in those territories for which such strategies have been conceived initially. For instance, Slovakia regards CLLD as a complementary instrument for its existing urban and rural strategies. Greece foresees to implement CLLD in those areas where there are intense development gaps between urban centers and rural surrounding (Van der Zwet *et al.*, 2017, pp. 22-23).

For Romania, The Partnership Agreement states that, using CLLD, one can reduce territorial gaps from urban and rural areas by actively involving local communities in implementing actions meant to support economic development and to foster innovation regarding the local context, needs and potential[13]. Financing

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12 For further details, please check http://www.itideltadunarii.com/finantari-accesate.

13 For further details, please check Romanian Partnership Agreement for 2014-2020 programming period, online at http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/acord-parteneria, pp. 251-255.

urban CLLD strategies will be possible using ROP (ERDF support for 'hard' type investments, infrastructure and equipment) and the Romanian Operational Programme 'Human Capital' (ESF support for 'soft' type of investments in services) aiming to promote social inclusion and to fight poverty in marginalized communities (ADR Centru)[14].

It must be noted that rural areas strategies rely on integrated investments in agriculture, environment, health, counteracting limited access to the labor market, lack of educational resources, improving social services and the necessary infrastructure. Such action is supported by 5.2 Specific Objective, Priority Axis 5 of The Romanian Operational Programme Human Capital 'Reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion from marginalized communities in rural and urban areas under 20.000 inhabitants by implementing integrated measures in the CLLD framework' (ROPHC 2014-2020)[15], as well as by LEADER from NRDP (supported through EAFRD) (MARD, LEADER Program)[16].

4. Conclusions

Following an analysis on the implementation of ITI and CLLD in member states, the European Parliament has adopted its Resolution concerning the new instruments for territorial development in the framework of the cohesion policy 2014-2020: integrated territorial investment (ITI) and community-led local development (CLLD)[17] during which it strengthened the importance of such instruments in the process of combining such grants with well thought local initiatives, as well as the interest that member states should show for the main challenges in implementing ITI and CLLD.

Therefore, it was emphasized the need to simplify procedures at a local, regional and national extent and to counterweight national overregulation that could represent considerable obstacles at a local, regional and national level, as well as avoiding overlapping of administrative duties. Moreover, this resolution of European Parliament highlights that member states authorities should implement efficient and appropriate mechanisms to prevent and deter potential issues that might

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14 For further information, http://regio-adrcentru.ro/9-1-dezvoltare-locala-plasata-sub-respon sabilitatea-comunitatii.

15 For further information, https://www.fonduri-structurale.ro/program-operational/2/progra mul-operational-capital-uman.

16 For further information, please check http://www.madr.ro/axa-leader/leader-2014-2020.html.

17 For further information, please check European Parliament, resolution of 10 May 2016 on new territorial development tools in cohesion policy 2014-2020: Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), (2015/2224(INI)), P8_TA(2016)0211.

occur between managing authorities and private partnerships, thus emphasizing an additional protection for private beneficiaries. Additionally, the European Parliament states in its Resolution 'The right funding mix for Europe's regions: balancing financial instruments and grants in EU cohesion policy' the necessity for a further simplification and harmonization of the existing legal framework in reference to mixing different ESI funds, as well as of the norms that regulate combining structural and investment funds with other instruments, such as Horizon 2020 or European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI). Simultaneously, the European Parliament considers that improving the extent to which financial instruments are being used is attainable through investment partnerships, thus encouraging public-private partnerships so as to ensure synergies between financing sources, while at the same time preserving an appropriate balance between public and private interests (European Parliament, 2017)[18].

Although the EU has tried a new approach regarding synergies by a strategic alignment of ESI funds with other EU financed instruments so as to reach the objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy, considerable challenges in this matter continue to exist, due to, among others, specific complex and contradictory regulations of various funds and instruments and the separate management according to their specific activities or themes.

Research shows that details regarding the implementation stage play a very important part in the process of achieving synergies; consequently we must stress the importance to comprehend the principles and mechanisms of EU funds and financing instruments by those who implement various programs, to have access to updated information regarding their evolution and to synchronize project design and project implementation. Simultaneously, beneficiaries may play a very important part, as long as implementation norms are transparent, accessible and unchallengeable so that beneficiaries could themselves request combined funds and/or instruments (Ferry, Kah and Bachtle, 2016, pp. 37-61).

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Toward Data-Driven Learning Systems in Higher Education. Insights into Using Online Courses in Public Administration

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Abstract. Education is a lifelong process and the online courses promote the sustainable way of thinking to everybody, regardless of age. Education is not being assessed based solely on the direct result of the learners; other factors are influencing the process, and lately is more dependent on the new technologies. The main research question is about the readiness of the Romanian public education system (professors and students) for Massive Open Online Courses. Data-driven and student-driven education are complementary approaches and can be used jointly for better decisions. The study is built on two systems data: a distance learning department and an open access online courses platform. The hypotheses of our research are: 1. even when Universities have the technology and trained professors, students' participation is not increased; 2. open and free access online courses do not stimulate the learners' willingness to study. Education technologies do not transform themselves the knowledge into learning outcomes, universities have to provide staff with adequate training and support, must have tools that are fit for purpose, and have to do smarter investments. Data is used to help professors and managers to take better decisions, and become invaluable in good hands.

Keywords: students' participation, online platforms, professional evaluation, experiential learning.

1. Introduction

In the last decade there has been a rapid increase of online courses, especially at higher education level due to technological innovation. The growth of World Wide Web and the home access to it increased the development of online courses (Goodyear *et al.*, 2001). Universities invest more in the online classes for different reasons, either to attract more students or as an answer to the labor market requirements. The result is different most of the time, because the instructors/professors who teach face-to-face classes are often forced to teach online classes, even if they are not qualified (Smith, Ferguson and Caris, 2002). They do not have the technical abilities or possess specific teaching methods required for quality online courses (Goodyear *et al.*, 2001; Smith, 2005).

In order to reach a better and quality result of the classes, universities created a new system, the blended learning (b-learning), one where students benefit from online and offline tools. In Romania and all over the world the integration of the two systems has become common practice (Zhang, Wang and Zhang, 2012).

Openness and dynamism are the main characteristics of the online and b-learning classes, and their practice cultivate productive technology-based teaching and learning along with the fulfillment of other responsibilities. The amount of data generated by online learning systems sometimes overwhelms instructors/professors, who are unable to process the information without the support of special tools and techniques specific to large data analysis. Only if data analysis helps many institutions improve their performance and track the grades increase or predict the drop-out rate of students, we will try to use them in a different way, mainly to prove that Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are not for the Romanian education system, at least not for the moment. All the systems (face-to-face, online or b-learning) are necessary as part of the lifelong learning for individuals and organizations (Punie, 2007). They answer to different necessities, young graduates prefer to follow a face-to-face program, while the employees are more attracted by the online systems because they give them the possibility to attend their social and domestic responsibilities, and save costs. Moreover, some public and private organizations encourage their employees to follow a university program, in order to reach a better job or to better perform their current tasks (Conci and Bramati, 2007; Talbot, 2009).

Online classes in Romania started slowly with few resources, like online guides and manuals on few subjects, most of them imported from the face-to-face system to the online one, but without any improvement or specific requirements. Over time, the online platforms offered textual e-resources such as case studies and linked data, as well as interactive forums, chats and online tests. Nowadays, even

if 9.7% of students are enrolled in an online program[1] we will never reach the level from 13 years ago – 23%.[2] According to Langford and Seaborne (2003, p. 52), Romania confirms that the promises on online learning were accepted without a thorough assessment.

The on-campus lack of presence is a very important specific feature of online education. The independence given by the absence of fixed schedule and physical location allows learners flexibility and accessibility (Bower *et al.*, 2015), but the absence of social environment may become an issue related to aloofness (Kruger-Ross and Waters, 2013; Wei, Chen and Kinshuk, 2012). Both phenomena are detrimental to the cognitive development of students (Cunningham, 2015; Ellwardt *et al.*, 2013).

Like any other success in education the online learning has some limitation which was emphasized by different authors, such as: students are largely responsible for their own success in education, professors have a principal role in shaping students learning experience and ultimately their persistence in learning (Dewan and Dewan, 2010), poor student-professor interaction in a course can lead to a decreased sense of belonging (Miller, McKenna and Ramsey, 1993), and disengagement of teachers is one of the causes of attrition of a course (Rovai and Wighting, 2005; Hipp, 1997; Peters, 1992). Moreover, learning and exchanging knowledge online appears to be impersonal and raises concerns about norms for disclosing information (Stefanick and LeSage, 2005).

Further challenges relate to introducing digital platforms, which requires institutional changes and resources that most of the time are inadequate, and non-user-friendly. Often, there are neither a dedicated process nor established routines for transferring knowledge (Butler *et al.*, 2008, p. 264). Since the online learning process is done along with other responsibilities, students have difficulties in balancing all of them and spending time for learning or knowledge sharing. Also, the role of national and European policies should not be neglected, for the moment online programs and MOOCs were and are developed based on the needs of the labor market and learners willingness to evolve, then on clear educational policies. Other dimensions are constitute by technology characteristics, focus on artifacts and entities with digital features, and address or require digital and electronic processes, and by good knowledge of instructors and learners in using online platforms.

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1 In the academic year 2015-2016, 5.9% students in distance learning programs and 3.8% in part-time learning were registered in Romania (Ministry of National Education, 2016).
2 At the beginning of the online system in Romania only 2% of the students where registered and in 6 years their number increased 12 times to more than 23%, according to the Report of the Quality of Higher Education System – Quality Barometer, Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2009).

This study sheds some light on the range of barriers to online learning, but it focuses more on the results obtained in a comparative analysis of two different platforms in order to emphasize the readiness of the Romanian higher education system for MOOCs.

2. Data-driven and student-driven complementary approaches

Online learning research goes back to earlier distance education and telecommunication endeavors (Moore and Anderson, 2003). Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2003) stated that interactive and collaborative learning experiences enabled by recent developments in communication technologies are what distinguish online learning from previous paradigms of distance education prior to the emergence of web-based social media tools. For online learning to be successful, building up a supportive learning community is essential (Garrison and Akyol, 2013) and no matter how it is organized, it has to comprise three core elements: teaching presence, social presence and cognitive presence (Garrison and Arbaugh, 2007).

High-quality data and evidence were pursued by parents, professors, policy-makers, and school/universities administrators for better diagnose of 'why' and 'where' learning gaps exist or for the assessment of strategies improving the learning process. Many private and public institutions took up these challenges and are generating copious amounts of data and analysis to support educational decision-making, and to realize the promise of education for all (UNESCO, 2017). The 'Learning Generation' report of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity argues that 'setting clear priorities and high standards, collecting reliable performance data to track system and student progress and using data to drive accountability are consistent features of the world's most improved education systems' (2016, p. 52). The first World Development Report on education, 'Learning to Realize Education's Promise', reiterates the need to measure learning to catalyze action: 'Lack of data on learning means that governments can ignore or obscure the poor quality of education, especially for disadvantaged groups' (World Bank, 2018, p. 91).

The path from data generation to use, however, is not simple, automatic, or quick and it must take into account different institutional operating environments (i.e., political context, legal requirements) that may incentivize or dampen efforts to make decisions based upon evidence (Custer *et al.*, 2018, p. 3). Empirical data and analysis can also arm policymakers with information they can use to counter vested interests and make an evidence-based case to mobilize support for better functioning of the education system. Consistent assessments of functioning of the education system – students, professors, schools/universities, and policies – are possible only if they are data-based. Any change in the system targeted at strength-

ening accountability may be limited if the stakeholders' feedback is not integrated into decision-making processes (Read and Atinc, 2017).

Use
- Design, implement & adapt reforms and policies
- Target resources based on need or return
- Mobilize public and political support
- Set standards and priorities
- Hold actors accountable for students

Institutional context
- Role and decision-making capabilities
- Power relationships
- Data culture in bureaucracy and civil society
- Capacity and resources

Generation
- Monitor and collect
- Research, analyze and evaluate
- Curate and communicate

Impact
- Improved students learning
- Increased equity
- Stronger accountability relationships

Figure 1: Data and evidence – from generation to use and impact

Source: Custer *et al.*, 2018, p. 4

Data must be used only inside an integrative system, where stakeholders and institutional requirements are reflected even with differences, because the education process is not seen any more just as a formal one, informal and non-formal tools are used, practitioners are involved together with professors, and new communication technology are developed and used in the education process. Despite broader transparency commitments[3] in many low- and middle-income countries, government data is still its proprietary or hidden behind paywalls (Custer and Sethi, 2017), and actual comparative researches are not possible. As expected, when data are available and accurate, relevant and timely, researchers are using them in order to improve and develop the system or to confirm some assumptions. Our research is focused more on understanding the online phenomenon and the users' willingness to study in order to improve their public administration knowledge and other associated studies, such as IT.

In Europe, over the last 30 years, the use of performance indicators in higher education was widely associated with the emergence of 'new public manage-

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3 The lack of freedom of information laws is an additional constraint in many countries, though their existence do not necessarily guarantee freely accessible information.

ment' or 'new managerialism' (Taylor, 2014, p. 8) and the notions of 'the evaluative state' (Neave, 1988) ideas and 'the audit society' (Power, 1997). According to Bleiklie (1998), in the 1980s and 1990s higher education reforms were determined by the economic progress and by the efforts to increase the number of students and graduates.

The performance indicators aspiration in the public system was imported from the private sector 'on the assumption that the former is inferior to the latter' (Deem and Brehony, 2005, p. 220). In this way the data collected from the performance measurements started to be used. At the beginning, by comparing it with the ones from the private sector and lately with the public ones, but it was obtained in different stages of development or in different national systems. Performance measures have been important in underpinning further accountability and transparency within and between institutions, they provide access to important, useful information that, used properly, can add value to university management (Taylor, 2014, p. 19). Anyhow, some important issues influence them: data quality, types of data, methods used for collection, quantity of data, data transparency, performance culture and user perspectives.

Moreover, at the European level performance indicators were recommended (through directives) to be used by public administration, even more 'bureaucracy' started to be evaluated based on them. In the higher education system, the public universities were compared to the private ones, the better ranked ones, and the programs were evaluated and accredited based on performance indicators, which most of the time are imposed and not developed according to the institutions' necessities or for the assessment of national policies.

Performance indicators are fundamental for quality upgrading and lie at the heart of ideas such as Total Quality Management (Carausan, 2001), many of them have been permeated in higher education and endorsed the collection of data, but more for 'administration and not for management' (Jarratt Report, 1985, para. 3.33). One of the important factors that has contributed to the growing availability and use of data collected from performance indicators is the use of new technology (Taylor, 2014, p. 19). Two imperatives for better use of data confront higher education: the first is driven by external factors, while the second is driven internally by continuous quality improvement (Voorhees and Cooper, 2014, p. 25).

Data-driven and student-driven education have the same goal to better prepare students for life and for their future careers. For this higher education collects more data than ever before, even most of the times are just for complying reports and not for the better future of students. Nowadays, when technology advances rapidly, urbanization is in full swing, and migration is seen as the solution for a better life, higher education has to invest more resources in planning and developing new academic strategies.

Data-driven education are the result of the performance assessment used to inform teachers and to focus learning on student needs. The student is not forgotten and his/her personal experience, interests and strengths are defined in the student-driven education. Both present the same spectrum of higher education, they cannot and should not be separated, the mechanical collection of data has to be evaluated by considering the personal interests of the student. The accreditation paradigm based only on performance indicators and the resulted data have to be abandoned and the student's future should prevail. We should think of the future of public administration, in our case, through the interests of today's students, and tomorrow's civil servants. Each individual is different and teaching is a very personal task. Student-driven education helps professors to empower students in their educational journey, while data-driven triggers the changes in the system to support their educational journey. 'Data don't drive' (Dowd, 2005) by themselves, faculty, universities – administrative and management staff and professors should be engaged in their interpretation in order to comprehend the 'why' of their work.

Digital education technologies collect an unprecedented amount of information about students' behavior and progress during the educational process (Zeide, 2017, p. 165). Massive Open Online Courses is the most advertised online education system, which evolved since 2012, from 160,000 learners enrolled in one course provided by two universities, to 101 million learners and 11,400 courses provided by over 900+ universities in 2018 (Shah, 2019). The course distribution by subject is in favor of technology courses, which grew by two and a half percent to 19.9% only in one year (from 2016 to 2017). Furthermore, almost 38.4% of the courses are provided in the areas of business and technology to the so-called 'professional lifelong learners' (Levin, R. former CEO of Coursera). Besides courses many providers offer degree programs, most of them online masters, and rarely bachelor degrees (Shah, 2018).

This hyped development of MOOC all over the world determined us to find out if Romania, an East European country, which is in full process of adapting to the Western European models of education, is ready to implement massive open online courses and degree programs. Through the data collected from two online platforms and the students' questionnaires we will attempt to find an appropriate answer for the future development of the Romanian education system. For this, we believe that all the Romanian universities that provide online courses should pursue innovation in the use of data, and foster deeper conversations about students' success. As Dowd's (2005) observed before data can drive, they must be shared and explored with openness to discovery, and to overcome the barriers, especially when the data have not been the currency of higher education (Voorhees and Cooper, 2014, p. 28). Besides the institutional barriers, we can also include: inadequate

and outdated data management systems, heavy workloads and broad demands on IT staff resources, compliance-driven institutional research staff and inadequate capacity among personnel to navigate the organizational dynamics, as well as a limited capacity to retrieve, review, manipulate, and analyze data.

3. Research logic and design

In the previous section we distilled insights from the available literature to understand how data-driven and student-driven can help us in giving an answer to our research question: Is Romanian education system ready to embrace MOOCs? We explored the pathway from performance indicators to data-driven and in the end to student-driven education to create a culture of inquire that can increase the use of data, and overcome the institutional inertia.

An exploratory mixed methods design was used in the current study, in which this design prioritizes quantitative data. The prevalence of quantitative over qualitative methods lies in the exploratory nature of the research question. In the current article, the quantitative portion includes data from self-reported questionnaires on courses efficiency, and students' logs/participation on two platforms. The study is built on two systems-data: a distance learning department and an open access online courses platform. The quantitative data aimed to illustrate the changes in student engagement in online courses throughout two semesters in both platforms. The qualitative quota focuses on the information gathered within the interviews conducted with the learners/students, and aimed to complement the quantitative data. The qualitative data was used to validate the results of the quantitative methods, and also investigate a deeper understanding of why and how online education influences students' engagement. Interviews were also used to explain why there was a difference among the users of the two platforms. Descriptive statistics were used to present students' involvement in online activities, such as numbers of actions registered, and the frequency of them by student, and by class.

An observable limitation of this study is the correlation of activities done in the platforms with the grades/scores obtained. The goal of any educational program is to promote learning, and in online programs engagement is perceived as the precursor of learning, but inferential analysis was not carried out to test the connection. Also, the current study did not take into account direct students' motivation; it is extracted only as a result of the interest expressed in the mandatory activities of the platforms. Additionally, working with two different online platforms, each providing different data sets and performance measures, involved considerable effort to harmonize or alternatively contrast different measures.

Our paper aims to find out if, when universities have the technology and trained professors, students' participation is increased or not, and if in Romania open and

free access online courses increase the students' willingness to study. This assessment of the students' actions and involvement in the online courses featured the development of MOOCs in Romania.

The strategy presented in this paper is one attempt to describe the limits and challenges for MOOCs initiative in Romania. Our framework might therefore be useful to other institutions that are seeking to implement MOOCs. As we apply our strategy, a number of outstanding challenges remain.

Table 1: Research plan

Stage One: Establishing the hypotheses and the research utility	Research tasks: The hypotheses of our research are: 1. even when universities have the technology, and trained professors, students' participation is not increased; 2. open and free access online courses do not stimulate the students' willingness to study.
	Approach and methodology: literature review.
	Deliverables: a) describe the strengths and the direction in online education; b) limitations of the study.
Stage Two: Development of the comparative research between the two platforms chosen	Research tasks: 1. compare the students' participation on both platforms; 2. emphasize students' productivity in online classes; 3. review the students' perception on course organization; 4. examine students' professional development based on Guskey's evaluation scale.
	Approach and methodology: a) databases review and questionnaires analysis; b) apply the data-driven and student-driven evaluations.
	Deliverables: pro and cons for online education programs in public administration in Romania.
Stage Three: Answering the hypotheses	Research tasks: exploring the future development of MOOCs in Romania.
	Approach and methodology: correlation between the obtained results and the future implementation of MOOCs.
	Deliverables: recommendations for better development of online programs in public administration.

Currently, numerous studies have compared online vs. face-to-face instruction (Broadbent, 2017; Callister and Love, 2016; Ganesh, Paswan and Sun, 2015), but only few studies have focused on the difference in interactions between diverse settings (Prohorets and Plekhanova, 2015). Moreover, even if both platforms are available for Romanian students, there is a need to better understand various instructional activities, by looking at their results. The purpose of this study is to determine the differences between the interactions in two online platforms which provide different outcomes: IT platform – lifelong learning courses, and PA platform – bachelor degree.

4. Online courses in public administration studies: the present study

The IT platform was opened[4] in 2017 with the main objectives: to upgrade young people with knowledge in programming and entrepreneurship, and to increase their chances to become employed in the IT industry or to start their own business. The program was designed to offer free access to the best practices of seven European organizations from different sectors in coding and entrepreneurship.

The program was developed on two pillars: the educational one consisted of four modules and the mentorship platform, based on reality experience and practical exercise. Students had to set their own pace for following the program, there was no need to attend formal classes. Each module of the Bootcamp was released in one month after the previous one, in this way the consortium considered to keep the interest alive in the program. Each module had literature materials and web based learning tools recommended for individual study and exercises based on them. Moreover, before the end of each module an evaluation quiz was given, everyone who passed the quiz with 60% (each quiz could be retaken for three times), and complete the lessons of that module received the certificate. At the end of the program, the final quiz was released and completing it allowed the users to get the program certificate.

The PA platform was developed for online learning and is being used in distance learning and part time frequency courses within a public administration program. Each subject of the program was organized in two themes with literature materials and web based learning tools, two homework and two online conversations for the homework, and a final evaluation – online or face-to-face. Regarding the assigned readings and materials that were used in the courses, they came from a variety of sources, such as journals, books, videos, and websites. Although many of these reference materials were not peer reviewed, the nature of the course required the professors to find the most up-to-date and relevant information for each topic.

Even both platforms were developed differently based on the desired outcome, we considered that the way they were structured and the organization of modules and subjects could help us demonstrate our hypotheses. We intentionally wanted to have the results of the two platforms which are separated and provided in two different systems – the formal-educational system and the open and free lifelong learning system (Table 2). Our main purpose was to find out if the students' be-

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4   The IT platform was developed by a project consortium from 7 European countries (Romania as leader, Greece, Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain) within the European Union Erasmus + Program, Key action 2 – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices – Strategic partnerships for youth, with a timeline between 01 November 2016 and 30 April 2018.

havior changes in different learning environment, and also to find an answer to our research question about the introduction of MOOCs in Romanian universities. Furthermore, the IT platform was promoted among the students of the PA program and more than 50% of Romanian participants in the platform were from the program. In order to better emphasize the comparison between the two platforms, we selected from the PA platform only the IT subjects taught in the same period of time with the implementation of the IT platform.

Table 2: Short review of the online platforms

Descriptors	IT platform	PA platform
Age – average	22 years old	28 years old (only for the 1st year students)
Registration	Login/password establish by the participant	Admission exam – login/password given by the university
Content	2 components: a) the educational: 5 modules (4 on IT and one on entrepreneurship) of 1 month – 20 hours; b) the reality experience: practical exercises assisted by practitioners. A final exam of the program: quiz and practical project (2 months – 30 hours).	6 semesters of 14 weeks. Each semester has an average of 6 subjects of 21 hours and an evaluation. 2 internships of 84 hours after the 2nd and 4th semesters under the supervision of a tutor (practitioner). A final exam of the program: quiz and thesis presentation.
Barriers (according to students)	a) no direct interactions with the trainer; b) no face to face meetings; c) no live chat and help desk.	a) too much independence in homework; b) no social media; c) on campus presence.
Recognition	Certificate for each module – Bootcamp certificate	Bachelor diploma

The IT platform was a free access one and even the number of visitors exceeded the expectations, 10,975 users in just one year, the retention of them in the platform and the accomplishment of the modules was at 5.66%, and only 0.45% were from Romania. The highest number of participants was reached in Poland, with 2.09% out of the total retention number. Because of the low participation rate from Romania, the average participation in the entire platform was not affected. Also, the modules on IT (Algorithms, HTML, CSS and JAVA) reached a better level (85.23%) than the one for entrepreneurship which 'was more theoretical' according to users. By this analysis we have confirmed one of the literature observation that even if the number of available MOOCs has grown dramatically in the last few years, the increase of users' numbers was not maintained in the same way (Shah, 2019). Unfortunately, the hypothesis that an open and free online course will not stimulate the students' willingness to study is confirmed for Romania. These results positioned Romania on the fourth place, together with Portugal.
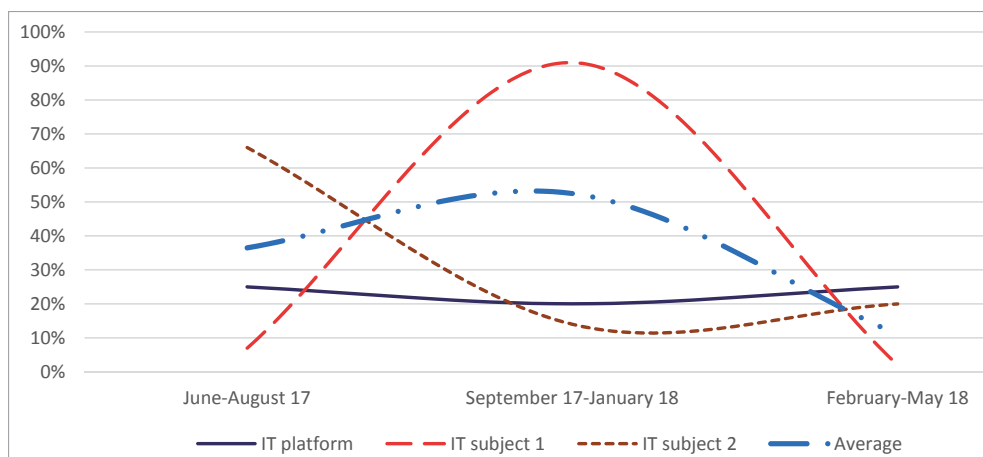
Figure 2: Comparison of the users' activity within the two platforms

The PA platform does not have the same challenges on users' retention, but after three years of studies (bachelor's degree) the drop off rate is almost 10%, even if it's a paid university program. As we can notice in Figure 2, the actions performed by users on the IT platform are maintained for the entire period of time, between 20%-30%. As consortium considered, they managed to maintain the same level of interest for all the participants by releasing the modules one by one, at a one month-distance. Even if the enrolment had ups and downs during the entire period of time the willingness of those who really wanted to go through the program was maintained. Another cause could also be the fact that the mentorship program began only after last module had ended, and to gain access, the user had to pass the final quiz.

For the IT subjects offered within the PA platform the interest is maintained only within a semester time-frame, even if we discuss here about two subjects which are related to each other. For a better understanding of the second part, students might want to review what they had been studying in the first part. Nevertheless, from the platform analysis a very small percentage of people returns (0.3%), most of the time the students who did not pass the exam the first time.

A better understanding of the movements observed in the IT subjects is given by the analysis of the students' productivity day-by-day in each semester. We have selected five students from the entire class based on their actions in the platform, two of them being the most active in the first semester, the other two in the second semester, and one being at the bottom of the class average.

We studied the same students' participation to the activities in the second semester in order to see if their behavior changed once they better knew the system. Much to our surprise we noticed that if the 1st and 2nd students were very active
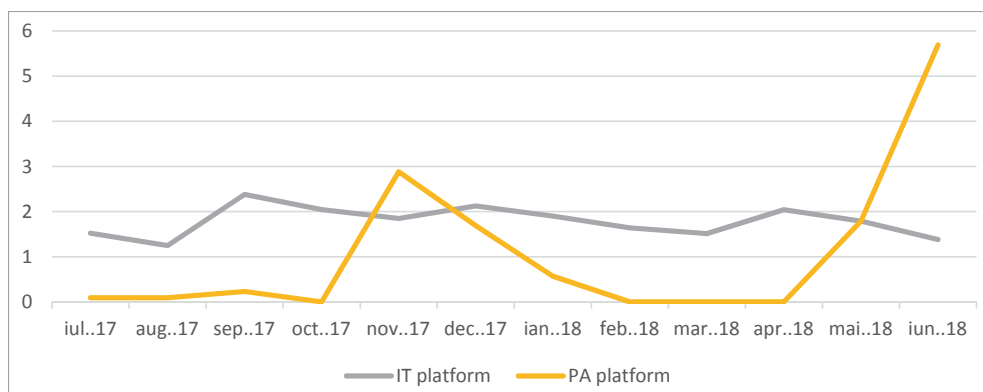
Figure 3: Comparison of the average participation in both platforms
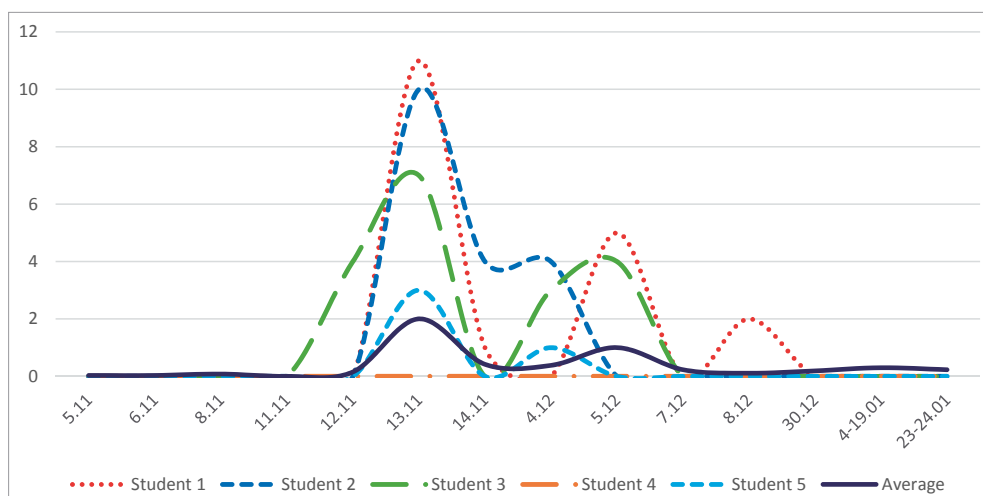
Figure 4: Students' day-by-day productivity at the IT subject in the 1st semester

(with an average of 4% participation) in the first semester, for the second semester their average dropped at half. The most active days were the ones in which the online discussions were organized – 13th and 14th of November, and 4th and 5th of December. All the other students who have not been so active during the online discussions influenced the average participation before the exam by increasing it with 0.10%. Because of the decrease of participation after the online discussions (with 0.15%), and based on the interviews we can conclude that they 'extracted the necessary data for the exam and subsequently they left the platform'.

Students' behavior for the second semester changed, unfortunately not in the way we expected them to, the ones who were very active in the first one gave up. They ceased to participate even at the online discussions (at the end of May). But

the one who did not participate in the first semester – student 4, became the most active one in the second semester, even after the exam and until announcing and in the day of the exam – 2nd of June (it was a two-part exam, one in the morning and one in the afternoon). During the interviews it was revealed that they already knew the professor and his demands from the 1st semester, and because most of them were present at the face-to-face meetings – 'why access the platform again'.
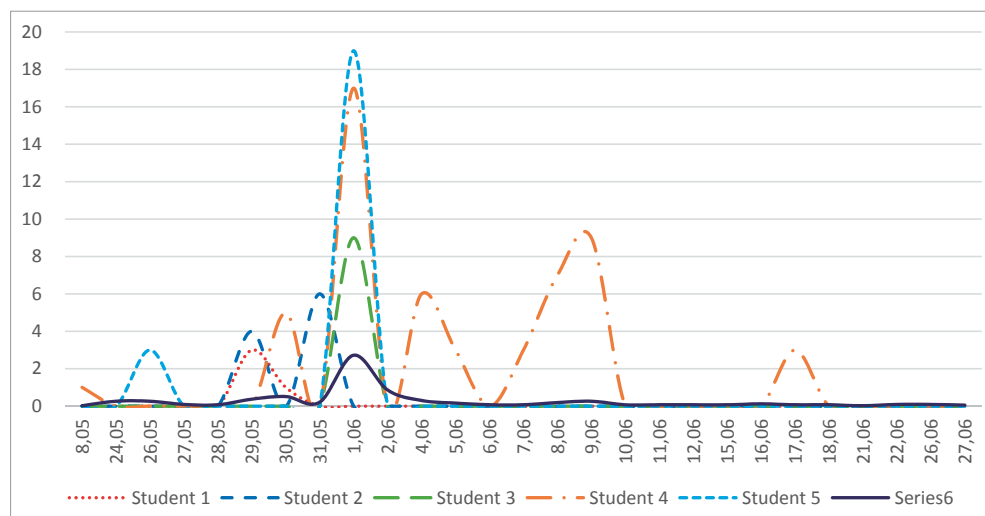
Figure 5: Students' everyday productivity at the IT subject in the 2nd semester

When we had a look at the students' everyday productivity in the first semester of their first academic year, the willingness to learn and to use the platform was at a higher level than the one for the second semester, although the actions performed are at a higher level during the latter one. One of the reasons mentioned in the interviews was that 'starting with the second semester they already knew each other and have established their own network of information on social media', meaning that some of them are more active on the platform and inform the others on different channels, which are not controlled by the university.

With fee or free, the Romanian students' willingness to learn was not influenced. Furthermore, only because in PA platform participation and actions within the online discussions are evaluated and influence the final grade of the subject increased the average of participation. So, the assumption that if we start to offer free programs, or at a lower fee we will increase the number of participants or the willingness to study is false, at least for Romania. Regrettably, the conclusion drawn by a student 'If learning or reading are not compulsory why should I bother … I have other things to do' it is confirmed by their actions and participation in the platform. In this regard, our second hypothesis is confirmed – even when the uni-

versities have the technology and trained professors, students' participation does not increase.

5. Romanian higher education readiness for MOOCs

Our assessment of the online delivery of IT matter in two different online platforms revealed that the majority of learners agreed or strongly agreed that simple is better and the call to action will increase their engagement. The assessment of the IT platform revealed that it should provide simple courses, practical ones, with clear actions and less literature materials. Regarding the PA platform courses, learners emphasized that they should focus on call to action – to be simple, descriptive, synthetic and without or with less professional terminology. Besides, the homework should call to experience and collective actions, they would prefer to be monitored continuously and have a percentage in the final evaluation of the subjects.

Suggestions from the literature were that online learning requires new approaches in knowledge transfer and skills delivery (Palloff and Pratt, 1999), new ways to discuss and reflect together with learners (Gustafson and Gibbs, 2000). All this means that a shift in the role of the instructor/professor is necessary. The old paradigm that he/she has to accomplish the roles of manager, content expert, researcher, facilitator must be overcome, they have to become experiential designer, coacher, career counselor, ITandC user, communicator, monitor and evaluator.

Because a larger number of universities offer MOOCs to inside and outside campus learners, the online attrition problem has come to the forefront as a potential on-campus issue. More graduate programs are included and students prefer them instead of face-to-face ones, although higher withdrawal and non-completion rates could negatively impact the retention and graduation performance indicators, which are valued for accreditation.

Public administration programs' main aim is to educate the future professionals of Romania, to develop their cognitive and professional competences. Much more than ever, employability of graduates in the public and private sectors in areas related to public administration calls on for an efficient assessment of professional development of the programs. Universities have not paid much attention to the evaluation of their professional development efforts. Monitoring and evaluation are seen as time consuming processes and costly ones, which diverts the attention from other more important activities, such as project development and implementation, and research.

Efficient professional development evaluations require collecting and analyzing five critical levels of information shown in Figure 1 (Guskey, 2002, pp. 48-49). With each succeeding level, the process of gathering evaluation information gets a bit more complex, furthermore each level is built on the former one (Guskey, 2002, p. 45).

Table 3: Levels of professional development evaluation

Evaluation level	What questions are addressed?	How will information be gathered?	What is measured or assessed?	How will information be used?
Participants' reaction	Did they like it? Was their time well spent? Did the material make sense? Will it be useful? Was the leader/registrar knowledgeable and helpful? Were the classrooms comfortable? Was the room well equipped for courses? Was the online platform user-friendly?	Questionnaires administered at the end of the session/semester	Initial satisfaction with the experience	To improve program design and delivery
Participants' learning	Did the participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills?	Paper and pencil instruments Simulations Demonstrations Participants reflections (oral and/ or written) Participant portfolios	New knowledge and skills of participants	To improve program content, format, organization
Organization, Support and Change	Was participation advocated, facilitated, and supported? Was the support public and overt? Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently? Were sufficient resources made available? Were successes recognized and shared? What was the impact on the organization? Did it affect the organization's climate and procedure?	University records Minutes from follow-up meetings Questionnaires Structured interviews with participants and university/ faculty administrators Participant portfolios	The organization's advocacy, support, accommodation, facilitation, and recognition	To document and improve organization support To inform future change efforts

Evaluation level	Questions addressed	Information gathered	What is measured or assessed	How information is used
Participants' use of new knowledge	Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skills?	Questionnaires Structured interview with participants and their instructors/ professors Participant reflections (oral and/or written) Participant portfolios Direct observations Video or audio records	Degree and quality of implementation	To document and improve the implementation of program content
Student learning outcomes	What was the impact on the students? Did it affect student performance or achievement? Are students more confident as learners? Is student attendance improving? Are dropouts decreasing?	Student records University records Questionnaires Structured interview with participants and their instructors/ professors Participant portfolios	Student learning outcomes Cognitive (performance and achievement) Affective (attitudes and dispositions) Psychomotor (skills and behaviors)	To focus and improve all aspects of program design, implementation, and follow-up To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development

Source: Adapted after Guskey, 2002, pp. 48-49

Shifting the public administration programs from one oriented to knowledge transfer to the one based on professional evaluation is a long process. Improvement of program design, content, format and delivery is a call to action for all stakeholders (learners, professors, administrators, managers, etc.). All the above mentioned results helped us accomplish the first two levels – learners' reaction and learning. At the end of each semester, questionnaires were administered and interviews with alumni were held. The questionnaires were self-reported and they emphasized what students appreciated at the online program. Based on their evaluation, even if it is a program focused on online activities, they still appreciate face-to-face meetings (96%), the same issue was determined by the IT platform learners as a barrier in their learning process.

As Guskey mentioned in his scale of evaluation, the utility of study and whether they liked it or not and returned to it are very important factors for the program improvement. According to students' evaluation, 88% considered the program and courses useful, and 86% will return to the same decision – to go through the program. As we can see, there is a very small difference in the usefulness of the courses and the return decision, which means a considerable high level of satisfaction about the program. 94% of them considered that the knowledge provided within the courses are considerably above the average ones, provided by the Romanian education market in this area. The lowest level (32%) reached refers to the homework independence, because as we mentioned before (according to the interviews held and the data analysis) students prefer collective ones and those based on experience. Besides, the analysis of the questionnaires revealed that more than 80% chose to discuss and work together with their peers. Surprisingly to us, but not after we presented the participation in the PA platform, is the low level of participation in the platform – 79% (see Figure 6).
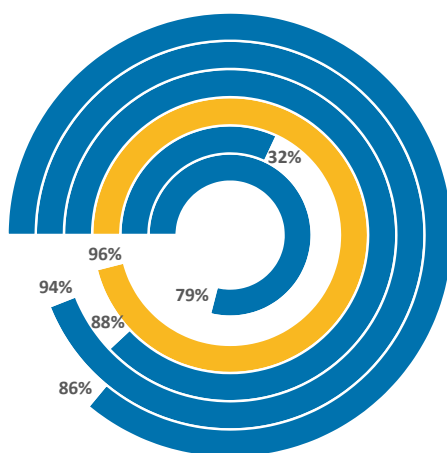
Figure 6: Students' evaluation of the PA program

Administrative questions were also addressed, but the obtained resulting data do not fall in the area of our concerns for the present study. Nevertheless, in order to follow the professional development evaluation of the PA program, 20% of the questions were organizational ones.

Online courses have quickly become a mainstay in higher education, but the transition to MOOCs is a challenging one. Although PA program has more than 20 years of experience, the students' preferences have changed and professors' role should adjust. The future development of MOOCs should be done based on the lessons learned in the online programs. In MOOCs, not only do learners pursue a knowledge transfer, as in the formal education, they also look for an experiential learning. The MOOCs' image should be changed, too; they are not just easy providers of a diploma. In a time when the graduate programs are more and more provided through MOOC, evaluating the results obtained in seven years of existence is very important for its future development. When more than 2000 courses are created annually (Shah, 2019), we can consider our concerns firmly grounded.

According to our results, the commitment of the Romanian students to a free, massive open online course would be very low, and will not be welcomed without a systemic approach. The Romanian learners are not ready for MOOC, as we managed to prove throughout the comparison of the two platforms, they still prefer and desire face-to-face interactions. Online platforms are perceived just as information providers and not as skills creator. The learner's inner desire to know more about a specific area without the social incentives (a diploma from a very well-recognized university) or professional ones (a better salary or higher position in the organization) does not produce any results. Besides, the universities should invest more in the administrative part, considering that the monitoring system and experiential learning actions are mandatory. Additionally, the universities should change their way of thinking and designing the programs, and also rethink the professors' role.

6. Conclusions

Massive open online education is an emerging phenomenon all over the world. The development and use of technology in education meets several challenges, which this study managed to emphasize. The study comprises data from the analysis of two online platforms – one open and free and the other one formal and fee-based. MOOC and comparative studies on online platforms are spare, but this study adds insight into the poor participation of online learners. This study additionally informs the universities on their relative efficiency in providing online programs.

While MOOC is a stand-alone course that combines synchronous and asynchronous elements, part-time and full-time online degree, the online IT and PA

programs had more synchronous elements and were provided either full-time or part-time online. The commitment of learners in IT program could be different, because its recipients were likely enrolled in multiple courses and take formal education courses.

One reason to be cautious in generalizing the results is that the research was designed based on the Romanian educational system, and by taking into account the particular social and professional movements specific to an East European country. The student performance and the reflection of their actions within the platform upon their grade were not examined. Moreover, research perspectives need to monitor how participating in other subjects or activities influences the students' willingness to continue and graduate the program. For this reason, in the near future we will continue the study, in order to provide a complete image of the Guskey professional evaluation of the PA program. Clear implications for future studies derive from the novelty of the online learning system through the MOOCs. Furthermore, other approaches, such as the gamification and experiential learning tools used in online programs, are also in our attention. However, there are still more things that we do not know about the data used in MOOCs. Data makes a difference, but in what way it does depends only on taken decision.

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Strategic Directions
of Urban Development.
A Case Study: Craiova Growth Pole

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Abstract. Urban development is an essential component of any civilized society. The way it is achieved depends on the objectives of public policies in each country. At present, Romania lacks a unified and coherent policy at national level on the development of cities but the urbanization process in our country has two important stages of historical evolution: (a) between 1970 and 1989, and (b) after 1990, when it was associated with the massive external migration of Romanians. More than half of the population of Romania currently lives in cities, which requires a national strategy for urban development in order to avoid a chaotic evolution of the enlargement of dwellings in major cities.

The preparation of public policies based on scientific knowledge data enables the elaboration of urban development strategies applicable in practice. So, for example, the city can be approached from five theoretical perspectives: modern changes, social organization, ecological protection, social problems of the population and effectiveness of the local public administration policy. Our article presents the development strategy of Craiova as a model of best practice, which can serve as a model for other local public administrators as it has a compelling scientific basis and practical purpose.

Keywords: population, strategy, urban development, public policies, development strategy.

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1. Introduction

Urban development appears as a characteristic dimension of modern societies and, at the same time, as a complex process of socio-human evolution. In fact, the degree of urbanization of a society is a relevant indicator of its level of progress, which reflects the ability of the administrative fora to manage consistent material, financial and human resources, in order to apply certain models of organization and action for the benefit of large communities of people living on the same territory with a high density of inhabitants.

Since antiquity, mankind has had two main forms of organizing collective life: on the one hand, in rural communities, villages of different dimensions, which has been a widespread form of existence all over the globe, as long as around the year 2000 half of the world population still lived in villages, and, on the other hand, in urban communities, larger or smaller cities. As a result, urban development reveals itself as a social and historical process of a certain complexity, irreversible in nature, and with a long tradition.

Its specificity is known in the ancient world, during the medieval period and the modern period. We also notice a great difference between the European and the American or Australian cities; the cities that were founded in the modern era on our continent, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, developed under the strong influence of the processes of industrialization and organization of the European economy on a capitalist basis.

There is a close relation between human development, in general, and the processes of urban development, industrial development (technical progress), and demographic expansion, in particular. The rapid growth of the population and its wide spread or territorial mobility, the overcrowding of some settlements, etc. have imposed a new perspective on the construction of cities that have gradually developed vertically, as far as residential and public buildings, or buildings hosting a series of institutions (administrative, financial, educational, etc.) are concerned.

After 1989, public administration has undergone a continuous reform process; Hințea (2011, pp. 180-181) considers that there are four stages and two of them have been analyzed by Dragoş and Neamțu (2007).

Statistical data, published by UN specialized bodies, shows that the population from all over the globe is reaching approx. 7,628,244,000 inhabitants. It is estimated that in 2050, the world population will get close to 9.8 billion people (according to estimates from worldmeters.info). The trend of the population, in general, and urban population, in particular, has been accelerated over the past two centuries. Thus, around 950 million people lived on the globe in 1800, their number reached 1.650 billion people in 1900; there were 2.5 billion people in 1950, whereas in 2000 the world population already exceeded 6 billion people (Otovescu *et al.*, 2011, p. 23).

The demographic explosion factor has left its mark on the quality of human life and on the possibilities of meeting the needs of urban residents on all the continents of the world.

If, at the beginning of the 20th century, only 10% of the world population lived in cities, at the end of this century the percentage of people living in cities reached 50%, which demonstrates the rapid pace of demographic processes in urban communities, some even surpassing the population of some countries (for instance, Tokyo, with 34 million inhabitants, is the largest city in the world). Urban environment is constantly expanding in almost all countries, to the detriment of rural environment; at present, approximatively 54% of Romania's population is domiciled in cities, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), while the average in the European Union is approximatively 75%. Along the same line, 52% of the Dolj county inhabitants live in cities and the remaining 48% live in the villages which form the 101 communes (administrative units) of the county.

The socio-urban environment concentrates a multitude of political, economic, administrative, cultural, educational, sports, justice management activities, etc. Their diversity and complexity, the organization and functioning of the institutional structures corresponding to each type of activity, involve the elaboration of urban development strategies, scientifically based and compatible with the interests and expectations of the people. This responsibility lies, in particular, with governmental authorities, at central or national level, through the public policies they promote, as well as with local or regional authorities or decision-makers.

The primary objective of this paper is to reveal the main directions of integrated urban development of the Craiova Metropolitan Area and, in general, of the Functional Area of the Craiova Urban Growth Pole. These directions were formulated, on the basis of rigorous analyses, in the paper Craiova Growth Pole. Integrated Urban Development Strategy (IUDS from here on), drafted by a team of specialists and submitted to public debate (Craiova City Hall, 2017). Within IUDS, we find a list of local projects whose funding, through various operational programs in 2014-2020, can contribute to achieving strategic goals during the 2014-2023 implementation period.

The essential premise we started from is that cities, especially those with a large population, play a key part in developing a country or certain regions, because they provide the necessary workforce and skills for economic activities and public services, they represent a generous consumer market for the goods produced and, at the same time, the main institutions of education, culture and scientific research, which ensure the conditions for the application of innovative technologies, can function here. We also find here the resources necessary for the creative process, innovation, change and development, in a broad sense.

2. Theoretical and methodological framework

There are currently 36,722 cities in the world, from which 320 (0.9%) are in Romania and 5 of them are located on the territory of Dolj county. City life and urbanization as a global social phenomenon constitute the subject of study for specialists from the most diverse fields of activity: historians, sociologists, urbanists, politologists, and so on. The issues of current scientific research concern: the genesis of the city and the stages of its evolution (from the ancient city to the present-day megalopolis or the city of the future and the globalization trends around the world); the essence and dynamics of urban life; types of cities; the particularities of urbanization in developed and developing or underdeveloped countries; the effects of pollution and indicators on the quality of urban life; social, economic and environmental issues of life in the large urban agglomeration; the consequences and dimensions of urbanization at regional, national and continental levels; people's adaptation to the urban environment and their social integration, and crime reduction in major cities, etc.

In the history of sociological thought, two important schools emerged and were concerned with the research of urban phenomena: the German School and the Chicago School. From German sociology, we may note the theoretical contributions of the following authors:

- Max Weber, whose book 'The City' was posthumously published in 1921, in which he 'defines the city as a human unit characterized by complex social actions, relationships and institutions' and, with regard to 'lifestyle, he sees the city as a structure producing life styles and social change' (Abraham, 1991, p. 144); and
- Oswald Spengler, the author of the book in two volumes 'The Decline of the West' (published in 1928), who 'explains the evolution of the city through the development of civilization' (Abraham, 1991, p. 144), while culture has, in his opinion, both brilliant and decadent epochs. At the beginning of the second chapter, entitled 'Cities and Peoples', the German thinker dealt with the 'soul of the city', which he identified with the spirit/culture, which signifies human progress, history being an alternation of cultural epochs (brilliance) and civilization (when people are tempted by material values) (Spengler, 1996, p. 104).

The Chicago School became known in the interwar period in the USA mostly due to the works of Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Louis Wirth, and Robert Redfield. 'In the research of the first two, the city was used as a laboratory of scientific study, aiming to describe the spatial distribution patterns of all categories of social problems, including juvenile delinquency, mental illness, prostitution, etc. The basic idea was that the social organization and way of life of the city was different from that of rural communities' (Abraham, 1991, p. 145).

In a paper published in London, in 1982, and entitled '*The Sociology of Urban Life*', the author Harry Gold considered that the problems of the city were so complex that they required more theoretical models or perspectives of approach, in relation to the dimensions of urban realities and interest in one reality or another. Among these, we note the following:

- The perspective of social change – which 'is mainly reflected by the analysis of the urbanization process. According to this approach, the rapid pace of urbanization in certain historical periods would bring about transformations, revolutions in urban society';
- The perspective of social organization – which 'is a direction of analysis of social relations in the urban environment (individuals, groups, bureaucratic structures, social institutions). Individuals are described, in this context, starting from their personality patterns and their individual lifestyle, based on the idea that the city produces distinct types of personality and behavior, as well as patterns of urban adaptation or specific values' (Abraham, 2010, p. 781);
- The ecological perspective – is focused on the knowledge of 'the processes and forms of adaptation of the population to the environment in which they live'. 'The dynamizing factor in urban development is considered to be technology' (Abraham, 2010, p. 782);
- The perspective of social problems – which associates almost all the problems of contemporary society with the existence of cities. 'Social issues, such as criminality, delinquency, divorce rate, housing crisis, poverty, unemployment, class, racial and ethnic conflicts, pollution, etc. make an object of analysis in urban sociology. They are often grouped under the name of urban crisis', and it is obvious that the city does not exist only through pathological phenomena (Abraham, 2010, p. 783); and
- The social policy perspective – is focused on deciphering the contribution of sociologists and other specialists to identifying and solving the problems faced by cities. 'They emphasize the knowledge of the population's opinions and their involvement in the implementation of urban planning actions (...). According to Ledruț, urban planning can be considered a sort of social control of urban order' (Abraham, 2010, p. 783).

These theoretical perspectives of research and explanation of the city are complemented by others, such as the perspective of the quality of life (analyzing the urban phenomenon in terms of social indicators reflecting the welfare or poverty of the population) and the internationalist perspective (concerned with the investigation of the city in national and international contexts) (Abraham, 2010, p. 783).

In the language of current political programs and strategic documents, of certain scientific research reports, one can also find other concepts, which are frequently used on the topic of urban development, such as: integrated urban devel-

opment, sustainable urban development, urban functional area, integrated urban development strategy, urban growth pole, metropolitan area, etc. They have a certain correspondence in the social reality. Thus, among the terms of the new administrative organization of Craiova we can see the following syntagms:

- The Functional Area of the Craiova Urban Growth Pole: comprising 29 localities, with a surface of 24.2% of the territory of Dolj county, ie: a municipality (Craiova), two towns (Segarcea and Filiaşi), and 26 communes, having together a population of over 410,000 inhabitants, which represented approx. 59% of the population of Dolj county on 1 January 2016; and
- The Craiova Metropolitan Area: which is integrated within the first one, consisting of 24 localities, covering 20.4% of the territory of the county, ie: a municipality (Craiova), two towns (Segarcea and Filiaşi), and 21 communes, with a total population of over 394,600 persons (56.4% of the population of the county), over three-quarters of it, 77.5%, having their domicile in Craiova.

The urban growth pole, represented by Craiova, has a wide area of influence in Dolj County and in the South-West Oltenia Region, as resulting from the Integrated Urban Development Strategy of the Craiova Growth Pole, adopted by the Local Council in August 2017.

The research methods that were frequently used in this paper are the historical method, statistical analysis, comparative analysis, and analysis of official documents.

We mention that the Craiova pole correlates, at national level, with other 6 growth poles, from the other development regions of Romania, represented by the following cities: Ploiești, Brașov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Timișoara and Iași.

The South-West Oltenia Regional Development Strategy, for the period 2014-2020, is characterized by the following priority objectives: (1) enhancement of economic competitiveness; (2) modernization of regional infrastructure; (3) development of tourism and valorization of the cultural and historical heritage; (4) sustainable development of the rural environment, especially through the modernization of agriculture; (5) development of human resources, by increasing the employment of active population and social inclusion; and (6) protection of the natural environment and diversification of energy resources (by using renewable resources).

3. The main urban development strategic directions of the Craiova Growth Pole

Historically, urban development was a distinct objective and a strategic coordinate in the policy of the former communist regime in Romania (1945-1989), which led to an appreciable increase in the number of urban localities and, implicitly, of the population, especially after the 1970s, which could benefit from the specif-

ic socio-urban facilities. On 1 July 1989, more than half of the population of Dolj County lived in rural areas (52.4%), and 47.6% in one of the five Dolj County towns (Craiova, Filiași, Segarcea, Băilești, Calafat). The figures presented in Table 1 clearly express the rhythm of urban evolution in the Romanian society.

Table 1: Romania's population depending on the environment

No.	Reference years	Total number of the population	Share of the population depending on the environment (%)	
			Urban	Rural
1.	29 December 1930	14,280,729	21.4	78.6
2.	25 January 1948	15,872,624	23.4	76.6
3.	1 July 1970	20,252,541	36.9	63.1
4.	1 July 1980	22,201,387	45.8	54.2
5.	1 July 1985	22,724,836	50.0	50.0
6.	1 July 1989	23,151,564	53.2	46.8
7.	1 January 2018	19,523,621	53.8	46.2

Source: National Commission for Statistics (Statistical Yearbook of Romania 1990, p. 51) for the period 1930-1989) and National Institute of Statistics (for 2018)

It can be noticed that the rhythm of urbanization was much higher until 1989 (Table 1), with the share of urban population steadily rising, attracted by the cities undergoing industrialization. After 1990, the ratio of the rural population to the urban population remained relatively stable, against the background of a general decline in the population of Romania. Although there have been significant changes in the life of the main cities of the country (Craiova ranked 6th in terms of population, after Bucharest, Iași, Timișoara, Cluj-Napoca, and Constanța), the Romanians' migration abroad equally affected the rural and urban population (it is estimated that over 5 million Romanians are located beyond the borders of the country).

If, in the old political system in Romania, urban development was socially and politically motivated by the need to reduce the gaps between villages and cities in order to improve the living conditions of rural people and transform localities into urban centers, urban development is now conceived as a driver of growth for the national economy. This is the goal of reducing the gaps between Romania and other advanced states in the EU-28, of sustainable integration at multiple levels, in the context of increasing the competitiveness of the world countries and the manifestation of globalization processes. Consequently, Romania has built a National Strategy for Sustainable Development for the years 2013-2020-2030, as part of the Sustainable Development Strategy of the European Union. The objectives set for the three horizons concern seven major areas related to climate change and renew-

able energy production, transport, production and consumption, conservation and management of natural resources, public health, social inclusion, migration and global poverty. This has resulted in a National Strategy for Regional Development of Romania (2014-2020), which is logical and adequate in relation to the current challenges of contemporary society, but it is important to implement all these in our country.

Integrated urban development has become a concept and a principle of wide interest in the European Union after the adoption, in May 2007, of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities. It was a principle of urban planning policy, common to all EU Member States and valid for each of them. It was followed by the Toledo Declaration of EU Ministers in July 2010, which highlighted the requirement for smart, sustainable and inclusive social urban development that can only be achieved through a global and comprehensive vision of the city issues.

The EU's Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 supports sustainable urban development in Romania by allocating 5% of the European Regional Development Fund, intended to meet the economic, social, demographic, climate and environmental challenges that come from some cities. In this sense, urban development projects in each city are funded, if Integrated Urban Development Strategies (IUDS) are developed. Thus, the Regional Operational Program 2014-2020 (ROP) includes Priority Axis 4, whose purpose is the Sustainable Urban Development Support.

The current IUDS of Craiova highlights the main directions of action, as well as the conclusions of a SWOT analysis, based on a scientific diagnosis of socio-economic realities and those concerning administrative organization, all of which are included in Craiova Growth Pole. Integrated Urban Development Strategy (Craiova City Hall, 2017).

In the last decade, but especially after 2012, Craiova has registered a trend of constant revival of the urban life and of the local economy, as a result of invest-

Old Center
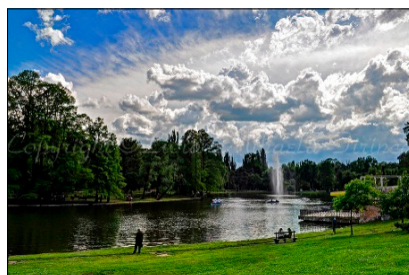
'N. Romanescu' Park

Botanical Garden

Figure 1: Craiova's historic center (1)

ments and initiatives inspired by the development of the local community. The city's Historic Center, the 'Nicolae Romanescu' Park, the Botanical Garden and the tramway network were rehabilitated (see Figure 1). An impressive Municipal Stadium, a Multifunctional Center, a new Municipal Hospital – Filantropia, a Youth Park, and an Aquapark (see Figure 2), an underpass and an overpass (see Figure 4), an underground car park for 600 cars were also built. The production of cars by the Ford automobile manufacturing company in Craiova and resumption of electric locomotives production (started in 1948 at Electroputere), the establishment of some industrial parks, etc. have boosted the local economy, minimizing unemployment and enhancing living standards for the people. Public life has been revived, by organizing periodical artistic performances and cultural events, fairs for traditional occupations, etc.

We will summarize below the main directions of urban development in relation to the main areas of organization and functioning of the Craiova Growth Pole, based on the data included in the Integrated Urban Development Strategy. We mention that a first diagnosis of the economic, social, administrative and

Multifunctional Center

'Filantropia' Hospital

Aquapark

Figure 2: Craiova's historic center (2)

environmental domains was achieved, then a SWOT analysis (which highlighted strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats) was presented, which was accompanied by the anticipation of development perspectives (with strategic and specific objectives) based on the establishment of a schedule for the implementation of IUDS. From the extensive documentation, we briefly note the following significant data.

3.1. Economic data

Half of the economy of Dolj County and the value of its exports in 2015 benefit from the activity of the Ford factory in Craiova (Figure 3) and other means of transport produced here (locomotives, etc.).

Ford Factories

Electric locomotive

Figure 3: Craiova's economy

The 24 localities of the Craiova Metropolitan Area have a competitive advantage at level 3 (agriculture, industry, tourism) among the 4 major branches of the economy. The IT sector has a strong local concentration that demonstrates the level of qualification of the human resource in fields of intelligent specialization, thanks to the 3 universities and IT units, Craiova does not seem to have significant competitors throughout the South-West Oltenia Region.

'Ion Oblemenco' Stadium
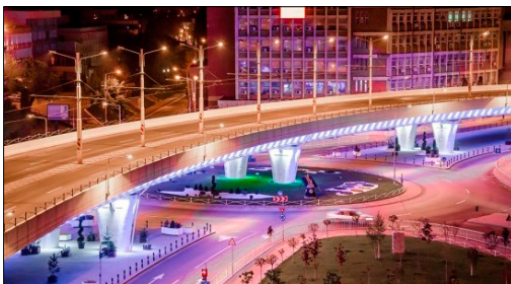
Overpass
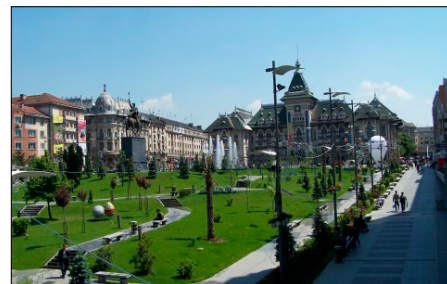
'Mihai Viteazul' Square

Figure 4: Craiova's public venues

The Functional Urban Area of Craiova municipality concentrates approximately 86% of the urban population of Dolj County, being the pole of most social, economic and educational activities, with notable influences on the other 4 counties of Oltenia.

In terms of GDP, the South-West Oltenia Region ranks last among the eighth development regions in 2008-2014. Dolj county economy contributes 34.3% to the formation of regional GDP and 2.5% to the formation of national GDP. This economy recorded the highest growth rate in Oltenia, 21.7% in the analyzed period (2010-2014), and the economy of Gorj had the lowest growth rate (2.3%) (Craiova City Hall, 2017, pp. 19-120).

3.2. Social data

The diagnosis made on demographic statistics shows that the population of the Functional Area of the Craiova Growth Pole declined steadily between 1992 and 2016 (with an annual rate of 2.4% between 2004 and 2016), due to low birth rates and high mortality. The IUDS authors believe that maintaining this downward trend can lead to 'a real social crisis' (inability to provide pensions, labor requirements, etc.). Also, the aging tendency of the population seems to be a negative phenomenon with long-term socio-economic effects. However, the Urban Functional Area of the Craiova Growth Pole includes more than half of the population of Dolj County (401,801 persons, or 58.7% out of 700,717 inhabitants) and is a coordinating center for the entire South-West Oltenia Region. Craiova is the growth pole around which the metropolitan area has been concentrically articulated, with over 300,000 inhabitants.

The average life expectancy of the inhabitants of Dolj was in 2015, according to NIS, 74.5 years of age (male – 71.0 years, female – 78.2 years), increasing as compared with the year 2000, when the average life expectancy was 70.2 years. In the South-West Oltenia Region, the average life expectancy reached 75 years of age, being close to the average life expectancy at national level – 75.4 years. Village inhabitants generally have a lower average life expectancy than those living in cities.

There is a tendency of the population to migrate from Craiova to the neighboring rural localities, which leads to an accentuation of the periurbanization process, in parallel with the constant decrease in the number of inhabitants in the west and north Urban Functional Zone (UFZ). In the UFZ, the inactive population exerts permanent pressure on the active population, affecting the quality of life of all (in 2016, for instance, 1,000 adults were supposed to financially support about 389 young and elderly people). Also, the demographic dependency rate correlates with the labor force replacement rate: 'it can be said that in 15 years there will be a labor force shortage of 448 people, ie 1,000 active persons on the labor market

will be replaced with only 552 persons. Similarly, the population aged 65 and over has seen a significant and steady growth over the last 15 years' (Craiova City Hall, 2017, p. 131).

The representatives of the UFZ town halls have revealed that the negative social phenomena in their area are mainly the aging of the population, poverty and migration, to which, to a lesser extent, alcoholism and violence are added.

In 2015, the birth rate was lower in Craiova (8.6 per thousand), Craiova Metropolitan Area (8.8 per thousand), UFZ (8.7 per thousand), Dolj county (8.8 per thousand) and in the South-West Oltenia Region (7.8 per thousand), than in Romania (9 per thousand). The mortality rate was higher in Dolj County (14.2 per thousand) and in the South-West Oltenia Region (12.9 per thousand) than at national level (11.7 per thousand).

As a result of the 2011 Census, 77.6% of the dwellings have drinking water and 65% have central heating, 77.6% of the dwellings have a sewerage network, and 99.1% are connected to electricity in the UFZ of the Craiova Growth Pole, which means a high degree of utilities for the population (those indicators having values higher than the national level). Furthermore, major investments are required to ensure that the entire population of the area enjoys the modern attributes of urban life.

The Craiova Growth Pole benefits from many medical units, such as: County Emergency Clinical Hospital of Craiova – 1,398 beds, addressing the more than 600,000 inhabitants of the county; hospitals in Filiaşi, Segarcea, Calafat, as well as other modern medical units in Craiova, the most recent being the Craiova Cardiology Center (2018), etc.

There are 3 universities and numerous cultural institutions in Craiova, and Oltenia has an exceptional cultural heritage (Horezu ceramics and Căluşul are included in the heritage of UNESCO). In the UFZ there are also 145 libraries, of which 84 in Craiova, 9 museums and public collections, exhibition halls, 446 historical monuments and 116 school units (of which 25.9% are high schools and 1.7% higher education institutions) in which over 85,000 young people were studying (the school population of the area declining by almost 20% as compared with 2008). The students represent approximatively 25.5% of the school population of the UFZ Craiova (94% in the public system and 6% in the private one). Craiova is the most important academic center in the South-West Oltenia Region, although universities or branches of some universities are also located in the other Oltenia county residences (for example: 'Constantin Brâncuşi' University of Târgu Jiu, Drobeta Tr.-Severin Academic Center within the University of Craiova, etc.). The activity of the 116 schools in the UFZ Craiova is provided by 5,524 teachers (2015), 89.6% working in the urban area and 10.4% in the rural area (averaging 15.4 students/teacher). The dropout rate is slightly higher in Dolj County than the national average in 2014 – 2.9% in primary and secondary education as compared with 2%

at national level; 3.6% in high school and vocational education, as compared with 3.5% at national level. School population in the UFZ declined by 19.6% in 2015 as compared with 2008 (from 105,883 to 85,053 students).

Although most of the population in Craiova (83.9%) do not live in disadvantaged areas, however, the representatives of the Local Public Administration identified 7 residential areas where many poor families live (1.1% of the city population). Marginalized communities also exist on the territory of Filiaşi (4.4% of the inhabitants) and Segarcea (19.5% of the inhabitants). Also, out of the 29 UFZ localities of the Craiova Growth Pole, 9 include villages that can be considered marginalized (Coțofenii din Faţă, Calopăr, Vela, etc.). In the villages of Cârcea, Malu Mare, Şimnicul de Sus and Filiaşi there is a high rate of local human development, according to the assessments of the World Bank (Craiova City Hall, 2017, pp. 122-189).

3.3. Natural environmental conditions

The Functional Area of the Craiova Urban Growth Pole benefits from multiple renewable and non-renewable natural resources. It has a total area of 1,791.25 km^2, of which 78% are agricultural land, and 12.4% are forests and forest vegetation; it has a temperate climate with Mediterranean influences, and three permanent water sources: the Danube (150 km on the territory of Dolj County), Jiu (140 km) and Fântânele Lake (Vîrvoru de Jos commune). In Dolj County there are 19 protected natural areas of national interest, most of them located in the Functional Area of the Craiova Growth Pole.

An analysis of environmental factors shows that there is urban pollution around frequently circulated road arteries, industrial waste dumps and landfills. The critical points of pollution (atmospheric, acoustic) of the environment in the UFZ of the Craiova Growth Pole are: Işalniţa Industrial Platform, South-East Platform (Electroputere, Ford, Reloc, etc.), Calea Bucureşti – Titulescu Boulevard and the railway station area. An assessment of the quality of life of UFZ residents shows that it has risks related to natural phenomena, such as floods, landslides, earthquakes, and droughts.

The analysis of the development needs of the 24 localities in the Craiova Metropolitan Area reveals that 19 of them are likely to be affected by floods, 10 by landslides, 16 by droughts, and 9 by earthquakes. The Dolj Environmental Protection Agency estimated that 3.5% (20,707 ha) of agricultural land in Dolj was affected by erosion, 3.5% by desertification – in the area of Sadova-Bechet-Corabia (14,650 ha), 39.5 % are lands with acid soils (233,381 ha), and 0.9% are lands without vegetation or degraded vegetation (5,200 ha).

An urgent problem is the recovery and management of waste, which must be immediately addressed, as its volume is growing and environmentally friendly

waste collection platforms are needed. The southern part of the UFZ of the Craiova Growth Pole has a special wind potential that can be exploited rapidly. A study on our country's wind potential shows that it is the largest in South-Eastern Europe and the second largest in Europe. Afforestation of areas that have been deforested and extension of green areas in all residential environments represents another important issue (Craiova City Hall, 2017, pp. 193-211).

3.4. Administrative data

The Intercommunity Development Association 'Craiova Metropolitan Area' was established in 2008, and the Functional Area of the Craiova Urban Growth Pole was created later, consisting of 29 localities, of which 3 are cities, and the rest are communes. The main objectives are related to the sustainable development of all the administrative-territorial units that make up the Association, by using its own capital, by initiating and running joint projects, developing transport infrastructure, modernizing public services, developing human resources, improving the quality of life and the environment, etc. The analysis shows that 15 localities need investments for the development of human resources, 18 localities for the development of IT equipment, 14 localities for the modernization of the headquarters, 18 for the development of consultancy services and so on.

The holistic (overall) vision of the area contributes to the development of the administrative capacity of town halls in the component localities, by initiating specific measures related to: modernization of the Local Public Administration (LPA) buildings and facilities; development of the strategic planning capacity and human resource utilization, and simplification of communication procedures with the citizens, etc.

4. Conclusions

In Romania there are 7 growth poles nominated by the Government Decision no. 998/2008, which have the status of municipality: Braşov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanţa, Craiova, Iaşi, Ploieşti, and Timişoara. Each pole of growth is critically important for a certain development region in our country. The Craiova Growth Pole is decisive for the South-West Oltenia Region and overlaps the Craiova Metropolitan Area.

During the 1992–2016 period there was a visible decrease of the population throughout the country, except for the growth poles represented by Iaşi and Cluj-Napoca. In 2016, the South-West Oltenia Region recorded the highest demographic aging rate, with the oldest population in Romania: 1,000 young people corresponding to 1,273 elderly people, a higher value than the national average (1,064.4 per thousand). In Craiova, for example, there were 19,578 young people

fewer in 2016 than in 2002. Large imbalances occurred not only between young and old age groups, but also between sexes, the male population being more limited in number than the female population, which became predominant (+16,726 persons) (Otovescu and Otovescu, 2018, p. 131).

The unemployment phenomenon affects over 24,000 people, especially the rural population of Dolj, while in the urban area there were 3,779 unemployed persons in 2017, or 15.5% of the total number of the unemployed. In Craiova, the unemployment rate was lower than the county average, reaching 0.81% in May 2017, while the national average was 5.2% (Otovescu and Otovescu, 2018, p. 325). It is estimated that the labor market in Craiova will have a workforce shortage in 15 years, estimated at 472 persons, the same as Braşov (which will need 500 people) and Timişoara (with a shortage of 490 people).

The South-West Oltenia Region recorded the lowest GDP value in 2014 as compared with the other regions of Romania. The transport means and materials are the most important economic sectors of Craiova, being represented, in particular, by the production of electric cars and electric locomotives, which can become the defining marks of this economic growth pole.

If most of the foreign investments were made in 2015 in the regions of Bucharest-Ilfov (59.3% of all), Center (9%) and West (8.1%), the fewest investments were made instead in the regions of North-East (2.6%), South-West Oltenia (3.4%) and South-East (4.5%). This situation was also reflected in the employment rate of labor resources, which was lower in the counties with the growth poles Iași (-8.1%) and Dolj (-7.9%) during the period 2000-2015. The employment rate of labor resources was 53.9% in Iași, in 2015, 61.2% in Dolj, 61.3% in Prahova, 65.3% in Constanța, 68.4% in Brașov, 72.3% in Timiș, and 74.3% in Cluj.

The SWOT diagnosis and analysis of the Craiova Growth Pole highlights, as strong economic points, the following: easy access for investors; the concentration of over 80% of the economic agents of Dolj County in this pole; the fact that industry ranks first in terms of turnover and people employed; labor productivity is superior to the regional average; the existence of a solid tourism potential, and the economic variety of the area. A number of opportunities are added to these, such as: developing the business environment by accessing non-reimbursable funds during the period 2014-2020; proximity to the border with Bulgaria and Serbia, for various cooperative and partnership relations, and so on. As for the weak points, they include: structural imbalance – 42.2% of the companies in the UFZ deal with trade; in rural areas there is poor economic diversity and an anemic entrepreneurial spirit; the low capacity of the local business environment to support development investments; the lack of professionals in the workforce, and so on. The threats identified include: insufficient financial resources to support European projects; high taxation and excessive bureaucracy; lack of liquidities; lack of information for

the population to set up business; the migration of skilled labor resources outside the county and the country, etc.

Along the same line, in close connection with the social, environmental and administrative domains, there are specific strong points, weak points, threats, and opportunities, the details of which are the subject-matter of a separate chapter in the Urban Development Strategy of the Craiova Growth Pole.

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Arbitrability of Disputes Arising from the Performance of Public Contracts. The Case of Romania

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Abstract. During the execution of a public procurement contract disputes might appear between the contracting authority and the economic operator. The duration of court proceedings in solving the disputes arising from the execution of public procurement contracts seriously affects the achievement of best value for money and any advantages for both parties involved are nullified. The paper considers the possibility to use arbitration as a method of resolving public procurement contractual disputes in a prompt and professional manner.

Keywords: public procurement, public procurement contract disputes, administrative contract, alternative dispute resolution, arbitration.

1. Introduction

Public procurement refers to the activity of purchasing goods, works and services by public authorities[1]. The remarkable growth of the public procurement sphere has led to a dramatic increase in the number of public-private contracts and, inevitably, in the number of related disputes. Many of these contracts favor arbitration as an alternative form of dispute resolution over the traditional court proceedings. The aim of this article is to provide a critique upon the way arbitration of public procurement contracts is treated under Romanian legislation[2].

2. Legal nature of the public procurement contract

2.1. The history, evolution and legislative framework

Firstly, it is important to discuss the legal nature of the public procurement contract. In order to identify a contract as having an administrative nature a series of criteria must be met. 'The easiest way to identify it is (…) where the law defines a certain contract as clearly administrative, without leaving room for any interpretation of the juridical procedures pertaining to it' (Pascariu, 2010, p. 408).

About the legal nature of the public procurement contract there was an ongoing controversy, i.e. civil/commercial or administrative. One of the reasons for this non-consistent qualification of the procurement contract was the continuous alteration of the legal framework related to public procurement, especially in what concerns the competent courts[3] on solving the disputes related to the procurement contracts.

Before the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 34/2006 (GEO from this point onward) the public procurement legal framework[4] did not include any express mentions related to the legal nature of the public procurement contract. The doctrine considered the contract as being an administrative one[5], even though the 'legislation has never given a clear definition of the concept and of its characteristics' (Dragoș, Neamțu and Velișcu, 2010, p. 213).

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1 Public procurement is an important aspect of the public sector activity as public authorities in the EU spend around 18% of GDP on the purchase of services, works and goods. For further details see European Commission (2017a). The figure for Romania is over 11% (European Commission, 2017b).

2 For a paper that discusses arbitration in public contracts under English law see Brekoulakis and Devaney (2016).

3 For a research regarding the competence of the contentious administrative courts for direct actions or the illegality plea, and remedies in administrative litigations see Fodor (2014).

4 Government Ordinance no. 12/1993 and GEO no. 60/2001 with the subsequent amendments.

5 For a study that considers the contract as administrative see Dragoș and Buda (2002).

This perception continued after the adoption of GEO no. 34/2006. If we were to look at the evolution of the legal framework starting from 2006, the Romanian legislator was not constant in what concerns the legal nature of the public procurement contract: it was changed from an administrative one into a commercial one.

The strangest situation appeared after 2010[6] when the legislator has established a mixed character of the discussed contract: an administrative contract for the pre-contractual phase and a commercial one for the execution phase of the contract. A new definition of the public procurement contract was introduced. The only element of novelty was represented by the qualification of the said contract as a commercial one. The legislator explained this change as a need for an improved matching of the legislative framework[7]. It can be considered anything but for sure not a correlation with the legislation in force. According to article 2, par. 1, letter c form Law no. 554/2004 on administrative litigation[8] the administrative decision is 'a unilateral decision issued for specific purposes or for regulatory purposes by a public authority with a view to enforcing or ensuring the enforcement of the law, thereby generating, modifying or extinguishing legal relationships; for the purposes hereof, on a par with administrative decisions shall be those contracts entered into by public authorities and having for an object: to capitalize on public property items; to perform works of public interest; to provide public services; public procurement. Special laws may establish other categories of administrative contracts that come under the jurisdiction of Administrative Litigations courts. As Law no. 554/2004 (organic law) considers the public procurement contract as administrative we cannot help wondering where the correlation with the legal framework is. As for a correlation with the European regulation[9] on public procurement contract, again, it is not a solid argument. Directive 2004/18/EC considered public contracts as 'contracts for pecuniary interest concluded in writing between one or more economic operators and one or more contracting authorities and having as their object the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services within the meaning of this Directive' (Art. 1 par. 2 letter a). It is clear from the wording of the Directive that the European legislation does not impose the legal nature of the public procurement contract. It is the member states' duty to transpose the Directive at a national level and they have

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6 GEO no. 34/2006 was changed through GEO no. 76/2010 and Law no. 278/2010, published in the Official Journal of Romania no. 898 from 31.12.2010.

7 The commercial character of the public procurement contract was an amendment brought by the Deputies Chamber, as the decisional chamber.

8 Law no. 554/2004 on administrative litigation published in the Official Journal of Romania no. 1154 from 7.12.2004.

9 Where it detects a failure to comply with Community law, the Commission may initiate the infringement procedure against a member state for failing to implement EU legislation.

the possibility to consider the public procurement contract either as a private one or an administrative one[10]. The only correlation that the legislator had the possibility to consider was the one with the regulation from GEO no. 76/2010[11] which stated the competence of the commercial tribunal as a first instance court[12] for disputes related to public procurement contracts. The qualification of the public procurement contract as a commercial one raised serious problems as the rules of civil law were applicable instead of special regime of administrative contracts, i.e., there is no sub-ordination towards the public authority, but a equality of the contract parties, the contracting authority does not have the right to invoke the public interest in order to adapt the terms of the existing contract to the actual needs[13], the applicability of the exception *non adimpleti contractus*[14], the contracting authority does not have the right for unilateral termination of the contract and the list may continue.

As of 1 January 2013, the public procurement contract was re-qualified as an administrative contract[15], as opposed to a commercial one. Starting from that moment the legal provisions applicable to administrative contracts were applicable (again) to public procurement contracts. The administrative courts gained back the competence for handling complaints against public procurement contract that were already concluded.

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10 Another state that considers the contract as administrative is France. The relevant legislation in France is Ordinance no. 2015-899 of 23 July 2015 on public contracts and Implementation Decree no. 2016-360 of 25 March 2016 on public contracts that transposed the European directives on public procurement and entered into force on 1 April 2016.

11 GEO no. 76/2010 for amending and supplementing GEO no. 34/2006 regarding the award of public procurement contracts works concession contracts and services concession contracts, published in the Official Journal of Romania no. 453 from 2.07.2010.

12 According to art. 286 from GEO no. 34/2006 amended by GEO no. 76/2010 'The trials and applications for granting compensations for reparation of damages caused in the awarding procedure, as well as those concerning the execution, the nullity, cancellation, resolution, termination or unilateral termination of public contracts are settled in the first instance by the commercial department of the tribunal in the jurisdiction of which the contracting authority is headquartered'.

13 According to the principle of *Fait du prince* the unilateral and unpredictable power of the public authority to modify the existing contract is mitigated by the requirement that the contractual equilibrium should be maintained and that any change imposed by the administration should be compensated appropriately. It will not apply when the loss by general legislation affects all people equally. See Bell, Boyron and Wittaker (2008).

14 One party (in this case the economic operator) has the possibility to invoke this exception and to withhold his own performance until the other party duly performed his obligations under the contract.

15 By GEO no. 77/2012 published in the Official Journal of Romania, Part I, no. 827 from 10.12.2012 amending Government Emergency Ordinance no. 34/2006.

2.2. Current legal framework

From the definition found in Law no. 98/2016[16] it is obvious that the legislator decided to keep the legal provision according to which the public procurement contract[17] is assimilated to the administrative[18] act. According to the wording of Law no. 98/2016 public procurement contract is 'the contract having an onerous title, assimilated by law with an administrative act, concluded in writing by and between one or more economic operators and one or more contracting authorities, having as its object the execution of works, supply of products or services' (Art. 3, par. 1, letter l).

3. Arbitrability of an administrative contract

Now we have to consider whether it is appropriate to discuss arbitration as a possible mean of solving disputes that appear in the execution of an administrative contract[19]. But first we have to address the issue of arbitrability[20]. A dispute may only be submitted to arbitration when it is arbitrable. National legislators 'must decide under which conditions a dispute may be referred to and decided by arbitration' (Ching-Lang, 2014, p. 19).

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16 Law no. 98/2016 is part of a legislative package that includes four new laws that have implemented the Directives form 2014 on Public Procurement: (1) Law no. 98/2016 on public procurement; (2) Law no. 99/2016 on sector procurement; (3) Law no. 100/2016 on works concessions and services concessions; and (4) Law no. 101/2016 regarding remedies and appeals concerning the award of public procurement contracts and concession agreements and for the organization and functioning of the National Council for Solving Complaints.

17 In general, in common law jurisdiction there is no formal divide between public and private contracts. In USA, England, Wales there are specific statutory rules that govern public procurement contracts, but there are different standard terms elaborated by the government. In other countries such as Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Poland, Sweden, Germany, Italy there are no specific set of rules for all public procurement contracts. In these countries the public contracts are governed by the general principles of contract law, certain principles drawn from administrative law, maybe some particular rules applicable to public contracts, terms of the contract. There is another category of jurisdictions that recognizes the public procurement contracts as a distinct category, as administrative contracts. This category includes France, Belgium, Spain, Finland, Portugal, and Romania (see Craig, 2010, p. 173).

18 For a paper that seeks to reframe the comparative administrative law as an accountability network of rules and procedures designed to embed public administration and civil servants in their liberal democratic societies, see Bignami (2011).

19 For an interesting paper on the difference between contract-based arbitration of individual claims against the state and arbitration pursuant to international treaties, see Gus Van Harten (2007).

20 For a study that analyzes the validity and the effectiveness of the arbitration clauses concluded by the state, public authorities and other public legal entities, see Oglindă (2014).

Arbitration is a form of alternative jurisdiction to state courts[21]. According to art. 542 of the Civil Procedure Code, 'persons with full capacity to exercise their rights may agree to settle by arbitration the disputes between them, apart from those concerning the civil status, the capacity of persons, succession debates, family relations, as well as the rights over which they cannot dispose of'. In its usual meaning, 'arbitrability can be challenged in two different ways: (a) by reason of the quality of the persons (*ratione materie)*, and (b) by reason of the subject matter of the dispute (*ratione materiae)*' (Hanotiau, 2014, p. 875).

For a long period of time arbitration and administrative law seemed to live on two different planets that had nothing to do with each other. Nevertheless, nowadays, taking into consideration the intensification of various forms of cooperation between public and private entities, the old principle according to which all disputes in which one part is the State, public authorities, or other persons governed by public law have to be resolved on the merits by judges in courts becomes less and less powerful. There is a continuous pressure from companies involved in public contracts to obtain a court or an arbitration ruling within reasonable time and expenses. 'A legislative policy that favors procurement arbitration has very important practical consequences' (Șandru, 2017, p. 72).

According to the Romanian legislation the state and public authorities have the option to sign arbitration agreements only if the law or international conventions to which our country is part[22] permits them. The Civil Procedure Code[23] that entered into force in 2013 explicitly considers the possibility of legal persons that are governed by public law, but also have economic activities added to their main activity object to sign arbitration agreements[24]. The submission of their dispute to arbitration is excluded in case the law or their articles of incorporation/ organization forbid it. So, arbitration is allowed in the majority of cases, non-arbitrability being an exception.

Besides these conditions, related to the subjective eligibility for arbitration (*ratione personae*), for the dispute to be eligible, the conditions concerning the objective eligibility (*ratione materiae*), and, respectively, the patrimonial nature of the dispute and the tradeability of the right that makes the object of the dispute, must also be fulfilled. Currently, in our country, the main area in which generally the arbitration is allowed is that of public procurement. The main reasons for parties to use this alternative method to solve their disagreements are the quickness of the

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21 According to the Court of International Commercial Arbitration of Romania.

22 Art. 542 para. 2 of Law no. 134/2010 concerning the Civil Procedure Code.

23 Law no. 134/2010 on the Code of Civil Procedure, published in the Official Journal of Romania, no. 485 from 15.07.2010.

24 Art. 542 para. 3 of Law no. 134/2010 concerning the Civil Procedure Code.

procedure (an extremely important aspect, especially in trade relations), expertise (the parties may appoint arbitrators who are specialists in the field), the fact that the judgment is mandatory for the parties and it can be rendered enforceable if it is not executed voluntarily. Such arbitral decision can be annulled by the court for the reasons listed in the Civil Procedural Code.

4. Arbitrability of a public procurement contract

4.1. General law

Law no. 101/2016 on remedies and appeals concerning the awarding of public procurement contracts, of sectorial contracts and concessions and for the organization and functioning of the National Council for Solving Complaints[25] includes provisions regarding the possibility that disputes concerning the interpretation, conclusion, execution, amendment and termination of a public procurement contract to be settled by arbitration[26]. 'As a requirement of the EC Public Procurement Directives, and as a matter of international best practice a public procurement system needs to provide a framework for enforcement and remedies' (Trybus, 2006, p. 423).

Law no. 101/2016 allows the parties in a public procurement contract to include an arbitration agreement in the contract[27]. According to art. 57 from the said bill 'the parties may agree *that* the disputes related to interpretation, conclusion, performance, amendment and termination of contracts to be settled by arbitration'. The arbitration agreement indicates that 'the parties intended for a tribunal to hear and decide disputes arising out of or in connection with the underlying contract' (Gusy, Hosking and Schwarz, 2011, p. 153).

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25 Published in Official Journal of Romania, on May 23, 2016.

Law no. 101/2016 is part of a legislative package that includes four new laws that have implemented the Directives form 2014 on Public Procurement: (1) Law no. 98/2016 on public procurement; (2) Law no. 99/2016 on sector procurement; (3) Law no. 100/2016 on works concessions and services concessions; and (4) Law no. 101/2016 regarding remedies and appeals concerning the award of public procurement contracts and concession agreements and for the organization and functioning of the National Council for Solving Complaints. For further details related to legal procedure that has to be followed for solving complaints filed under the provisions of Law no. 101/2016, see Negrut (2017).

26 Art. 57 of Law no. 101/2016. For a paper that considers the possibility of solving the disputes from a public procurement contract by arbitration in Bulgaria, see Ivanov (2015).

27 For a paper that analyzes the arbitrability of public procurement contracts under GEO no. 34/2006, see Voicu (2014).

4.2. Government Decision no. 1/2018

In addition to the general norms[28] applicable for public procurement contracts, Romanian Government created the new conditions of public procurement contract. Starting with 11 January, 2018 the Government Decision no. 1/2018 for the approval of general and particular conditions of contract for certain categories of public procurement contracts related to the investment objectives financed by public funds entered into force. With this decision the Romanian Government created two contract templates: one for works designed by the Employer and executed by the Contractor and the other to be used for the works designed and built by the Contractor. These two contract templates replaced the former standardized public procurement contracts based on FIDIC Books[29], previously mandatory only for the road and railway infrastructure works. Just like the old procurement contract template, the new templates are heavily inspired by FIDIC Books.

Basically, the authorities extended their applicability to all the investment objectives that fulfill the following conditions: (i) financed from public funds, (ii) valued at or over RON 24,977,096.00 (approx. EUR 5,540,000.00), and (iii) tendered after 11 January 2018.

According to the Government Decision no. 1/2018 the General Conditions of the public procurement contract set by the government are mandatory. The same decision indicates the limited number of Sub-Clauses to which the employers are entitled to bring modifications and to issue particular conditions: The duties of the Supervisor[30], Calendar for submission of a complete copy of the technical project and of all the Employer's Documents[31], Deadlines and sectors for giving access to the Site[32], Access on the Site of other persons[33], Duties regarding building permits[34], Modalities and the calendar for approval of the design created by the Contractor[35], The extent to which the traffic and communications may be affected[36] and

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28 Law no. 101/2016.

29 The fundamental principle behind the FIDIC contracts is the use of General Conditions of Contract, deemed to be suitable in all cases, based on thousands of successful projects around the world. However, given that no two projects are the same, FIDIC does acknowledge that special conditions will be required for project specific issues, on a case by case basis (FIDIC, no date).

30 Sub-Clause 5.1 from the Conditions of Contract set by Government Decision 1/2018.

31 Sub-Clause 8.1 from the Conditions of Contract set by Government Decision 1/2018.

32 Sub-Clause 9.1 from the Conditions of Contract set by Government Decision 1/2018.

33 Sub-Clause 9.2 from the Conditions of Contract set by Government Decision 1/2018.

34 Sub-Clause 10.1 from the Conditions of Contract set by Government Decision 1/2018.

35 Sub-Clause 19.2 from the Conditions of Contract set by Government Decision 1/2018.

36 Sub-Clause 24.1 from the Conditions of Contract set by Government Decision 1/2018.

The currency or currencies of the Contract[37]. Any modifications brought to other clause/ sub-clause than the ones mentioned are considered null.

The new conditions of contract mandatory for public works are 'excessively standardized' (Rugina, 2018) and do not allow the employers to adjust the contract to the specific needs and requirements of the project. One of the clauses that are considered to be part of the general provisions and the contracting authorities are not allowed to bring amendments to the one related to the dispute resolution mechanisms. According to Clause no. 70 'the disputes resulted from or related to the new conditions of contract shall be settled by the Court of International Commercial Arbitration attached to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania'. The parties may submit their claims solely to arbitration and solely to the Court of International Commercial Arbitration attached to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania.

It is true that the economic operators tend to sign arbitration agreements or to include arbitration clauses in their contracts in order to ensure that 'any dispute arising from the contract will be settled by an unbiased and neutral forum' (Daujotas and Audzevičius, 2012, pp. 1-2). But this does not justify or legalize the way the Romania Government has transformed arbitration into a mandatory[38] way of solving the disputes that might appear in a public procurement contract.

'The principal characteristic of arbitration is that it is chosen by the parties' (Lew, Mistelis and Kröll, 2003, p. 3). Arbitration is defined as a 'conflict solving instrument where the parts, by common agreement, decide that a third party, which is not the judiciary (Guasp), will decide on a controversy' (Dimitrijevich, p. 3). We have to wonder where is the common agreement, the voluntary aspect of arbitration as long as the parties of the contract are not the ones that choose to use this alternative method of solving disputes that might arise between them, but the Government compels them to resort to arbitration and goes even further and sets the arbitral institution that will solve the dispute.

5. Final thoughts

In conclusion it can be stated that considering the disputes that arise from public procurement contracts as arbitrable is a step forward in the evolution of arbitration

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37 Sub-Clause 44.1 from the Conditions of Contract set by Government Decision 1/2018.

38 For an example of a mandatory arbitration clause introduced by Dell Company in consumer contracts see Lawson and Rosa de Lima (2007). Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC) intervened in the Dell Computer case before the Supreme Court of Canada, arguing that pre-dispute mandatory arbitration clauses in consumer contracts are contrary to public order under Québec law, and that the arbitration clause was not in this case adequately brought to the attention of Dell customers.

practice in Romania. Still, we have to wait and see if arbitration, as seen by Romanian government (mandatory and performed solely by the Court of International Commercial Arbitration attached to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania) shall be received with the same degree of enthusiasm by all contracting authorities and economic operators involved in Romanian public procurement.

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Breaking the Cycle of Gender-Based Violence in Romania. How Integrated Victim Support Services Lead to a More Sustainable Society

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Abstract. The paper explores the link between gender-based violence, understood as an essential barrier in achieving gender equality, and the development of sustainable and prosperous societies, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More precisely, it provides an overview of the legal framework and the status of support services for victims of gender-based violence in Romania, emphasising gaps and challenges in ensuring adequate support and protection to victims. It then applies a management framework for increasing sustainability and resilience by drawing from previous research on the psychological and economic costs of violence at an individual, as well as societal level. The paper concludes with practical recommendations for stakeholders which, if implemented, would lead to an improved short-term response to violence, as well as to a more efficient long-term recovery and social reintegration of victims. This would, in turn, positively impact the country's development and sustainability.

Keywords: gender-based violence (GBV), violence against women and girls (VAWG), sustainability, resilience, costs of violence, Romania.

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1. Defining gender-based violence. A legal approach

The past decades have undoubtedly witnessed substantial progress in achieving gender equality on a global level and Romania is no exception. Nevertheless, advancements have oftentimes stalled or have been disrupted by set-backs caused by social, economic, political or cultural aspects. Today, as much as ever, there is a need for concerted efforts on behalf of governments and civil societies worldwide to design and implement policies that guarantee that women and men, as well as girls and boys enjoy their fundamental rights equally and reach their full potential. This is not only a moral and legal obligation stemming from legally binding international treaties and conventions, but also an essential tool in developing sustainable and prosperous societies, as the current paper argues.

There is an increasing global focus on gender equality, as more governments around the world show growing commitment to ensuring equality between men and women, by creating policies, mechanisms, and legislative acts tailored for this specific purpose, which are enacted both on a national level and in global partnerships by, for instance, UN Women, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the EU Strategy on Gender Equality, or the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy.

From the numerous dimensions of gender equality – from equal pay, to access to education and healthcare, elimination of discrimination and other harmful practices such as forced marriages and female genital mutilation – the paper focuses on gender-based violence, understood as one of the most salient and harmful violations of women's fundamental rights and a major barrier in achieving gender equality.

State obligations related to gender-based violence in Romania – prevention, adequate investigation and sanctions, as well as support and protection for survivors of such acts – are regulated by a set of distinct national laws, European directives and international treaties and conventions. Table 1 below contains a list of the most important binding legislative acts directly tackling gender-based violence.

Even in the absence of a detailed study of the aforementioned legislative acts, it is apparent that gender-based violence is not treated as a compact phenomenon, but rather as a diverse manifestation of – oftentimes gender-blind – power relations in different settings (family, workplace, access to the labour market) or of circumstantial status (victims of crime, victims of human trafficking). While some of these legislative acts implicitly acknowledge the underlying goal of promoting gender equality, many, particularly those related to Romanian legislation, do not, which suggests a lack of awareness on the connection between gender equality and gender-based violence on the part of Romanian lawmakers.

Table 1: Legal framework for GBV applicable to Romania

National legislation	• Law 217/2003 for the prevention and combatting of family violence • Law 202/2002 regarding equal opportunities between men and women (updated 2013) • Law no. 211/2004 regarding some measures for the protection of victims of crime (updated several times, most recently in May 2018) • Law 272/2004 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of the child (updated 2014) • The Criminal Code (updated in 2018) • The Code of Criminal Procedure (updated in 2018) • Law no. 678/2001 regarding the prevention and combatting of trafficking of human beings • Law 302/2004 regarding the international judiciary cooperation in criminal matters • Law no. 192/2006 regarding the functioning and organization of mediators
European Union legislation*	• Directive 2012/29/EU of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime • Directive 2011/99/EU of 13 December 2011 on the European protection order • Directive 2011/36/EU of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking of human beings and protecting its victims • Regulation (EU) No 606/2013 of 12 June 2013 on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters • Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity • Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) • Directive 2004/113/EC on implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services
International legislation	• UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979, ratified by Romania in 1982**. With the non-binding General Recommendations 12 and 19 on Violence against Women • Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), 2011, ratified by Romania in 2016. • Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2005, ratified by Romania in 2006.

* Adapted partially after European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), 'Regulatory and legal framework' (n.d.) [Online] at https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/regulatory-and-legal-framework, accessed on November 10, 2018.

** UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 'Ratification Status for Romania', (n.d.). [Online] at https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=143&Lang=EN, accessed on November 10, 2018.

One of the first internationally prominent definitions of gender-based violence as seen from a human rights and gender equality perspective may be traced back to General Recommendations 12 and 19 of UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):

> 'Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men' and it is defined as 'violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women dis-

proportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.' (Gen. rec. 19)

CEDAW also acknowledges the 'unequal power relationships between women and men in the home and workplace' (Gen. rec. 24), as well as '[t]raditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men or as having stereotyped roles' (Gen. rec. 19) which may perpetuate violence, coercion, control over women and even so-called honour crimes.

Building on CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention provides comprehensive definitions of gender-based violence, violence against women and even gender, which incorporates socially constructed roles and norms[1]. With regard to national legislation, Romania does not have a definition of gender-based violence or of violence against women, as Law 202/ 2002 – the only one with a focus on gender equality – mostly regulates work relations and the equal access of men and women to the labour market. However, it includes definitions of harassment and sexual harassment[2]. Gender-blind definitions of various forms of violence are found in the Criminal Code, as well as in Law 217/2003, which explains the various forms of family violence: verbal, psychological, physical, sexual, economic, social and spiritual[3].

2. Gender, sustainability, and resilience

The connection between gender equality and sustainability is explicitly acknowledged by the former's inclusion in the United Nations' Sustainable Develop-

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1 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), Art. 3: 'a. 'violence against women' is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life;
 b. 'domestic violence' shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim;
 c. 'gender' shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men;
 d. 'gender-based violence against women' shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately'.
2 Law 202/2002 regarding equal opportunities between men and women [Legea nr. 202/2002 privind egalitatea de sanse intre femei si barbati, republicata 2013], Art. 4, letter (c) and (d).
3 Law 217/2003 for the prevention and combatting of family violence [Legea 217/2003 pentru prevenirea si combaterea violentei in familie, republicata 2014], Art. 4.

ment Goals (SDGs). A result of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the 17 goals, 169 targets and 252 indicators of the SDGs seek to continue the advancement made by the Millennium Development Goals and to create a more peaceful and sustainable world by 2030. Gender equality, Goal 5, is also an overarching objective and common denominator throughout all the SDGs: 'The 2030 Agenda is clear that achieving gender equality is not only an important goal in and of itself but also a catalyst for achieving a sustainable future for all.' (UN Women, 2018, p. 24).

In contrast to the Millennium Development Goals which did not include explicit targets for combating gender-based violence, the SDGs pay special attention to it, demonstrating an increased awareness of the link between violence and sustainability, but also the need to intensify efforts to eradicate this global plague.

From the 22 goals and targets tackling gender-based violence directly and indirectly, Table 2 below contains a selection of the 13 that the authors have identified as being most relevant in a Romanian context.

Table 2: SDGs and targets related to the elimination and prevention of GBV, applicable to Romania[4]

SDG/ Target <u>directly</u> focusing on preventing and eliminating GBV	
SDG/Target	**Description**
SDG 5	Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls
Target 5.2	Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls including trafficking and sexual and other forms of exploitation
Target 5.3	Eliminating all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation
SDG 16	Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development
Target 16.2	Ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
Target 16.1	Reducing all forms of violence and related deaths to attain peaceful and inclusive societies
SDG/ Target <u>indirectly</u> focusing on preventing and eliminating GBV	
SDG/ Target	**Description**
Target 1b	Creating policy frameworks based on gender-sensitive developmental strategies
Target 3.7	Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health care and related services
Target 5.1	Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere
Target 5.5	Ensuring women's participation/leadership in decision making in all spheres
Target 5.6	Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
SDG 5a	Undertaking reforms to give women equal rights and access to economic resources
SDG 5c	Adopting and strengthening policies and enforceable legislation towards gender equality and women empowerment

Source: Adapted after Babu and Kusuma (2017, p. 2).

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4 The targets and goals related to equal access to education, land and agricultural resources have not been included in the table, as these are not systematic problems in Romania, although to some extent they affect minority groups, particularly Roma women.

Defining sustainability and resilience is slightly more challenging, as there is less consensus on what the terms mean and to what degree they overlap. Nevertheless, an analysis of literature on the topic has identified the common denominator to be the following:

> 'sustainability is focused on increasing the quality of life with respect to environmental, social and economic considerations, both in the present and for future generations[…]. Resilience, on the other hand, focuses on the response of systems (including environmental, social, and economic systems) to both extreme disturbances […] and persistent stress […].' (Marchese *et al.*, 2018)

In addition, the objective of sustainability is to enhance human well-being, to advance social equity, and to protect environmental integrity, whereas that of resilience is 'to enhance the adaptive capacity of the system to weather a wide range of potential shocks and stresses' (Redman, 2014). Moreover, both concepts are not autonomous, but rather 'descriptors of *something else*' and are used to assess any type of system, be it macroeconomics or an individual's psychological health (Marchese *et al.*, 2018).

Drawing from these distinctions, as well as from prior research on the importance of long-term economic investment in health and mental health services for increased societal sustainability and of support services for victims of gender-based violence, the current paper applies a customised *resilience-sustainability framework to analyse the overall wellbeing of victims (microscale) and its impact on society as a whole (macroscale).*

For practical purposes, the paper limits victims' wellbeing to four dimensions: physical, psychological, economic, and social, which only roughly correspond to the forms of violence which may be inflicted on them. In addition, in an attempt to avoid subjectivity or arbitrariness, the impact of gender-based violence on society is quantified in terms of economic costs for the state: medical costs, losses of labour productivity and so on. Consequently, resilience is understood as the individual's short to mid-term capacity to resist and recover from stress and trauma and to return to the balanced state that characterised her pre-aggression state. Sustainability, on the other hand, is defined as society's long-term ability to make use of each individual's potential in order to maintain and even improve the economic and social status quo.

Table 3: The resilience-sustainability framework applied to gender-based violence

Resilience	Sustainability
▪ victims' wellbeing	▪ impact on society/ costs of violence
▪ individual/ microscale	▪ societal/ macroscale
▪ short to mid-term focus	▪ mid to long-term focus
▪ focus on adapting to trauma and stress, to improving personal wellbeing (physical and mental health, employment and economic resources)	▪ focus on preserving and improving traditional resources and economic outcomes
▪ preparedness in the face of disruptions	▪ continuity and development
▪ emphasis on process	▪ emphasis on outcomes

3. Prevalence and effects of gender-based violence on individual victims

It is estimated that roughly one in three women worldwide have experienced physical and/ or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime and that one in two women killed in 2012 were killed by a partner or family member, compared to one in twenty men[5]. In Romania, 28.5% of women have experienced physical and/ or sexual violence after the age of 15 and 6% of women have been victims of sexual violence (EU FRA, 2015, p. 172). Given that women constitute 51.4% of the Romanian population (National Institute for Statistics, 2011, p. 1), almost 3 million women and girls will experience physical and/ or sexual violence at one point in their lives. Nevertheless, across EU Member States, only 14% of women reported their most serious incident of violence to the police (EU FRA, 2015, p. 3). In fact, in 2015, the Romanian Police recorded 33,317 criminal complaints related to family violence, made by 34,602 victims – 17,537 women, 6,307 boys and 5,270 girls (National Agency for Gender Equality, 2016, p. 7), showing that family violence is severely underreported.

Literature is very clear on the negative short and long-term effects of gender-based violence on women. Although there are no statistical studies conducted in Romania on the effects of gender-based violence, it is safe to assume that Romanian women would experience similar mental and physical consequences and to a similar degree as other women in the West. For instance, a 2002 US study found that women who had been victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) had more 'headaches, back pain, sexually transmitted diseases, vaginal bleeding, vaginal infections, pelvic pain, painful intercourse, urinary tract infections, appetite loss, abdominal pain, and digestive problems. Abused women also had more gynaeco-

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5 UN Women, 'Violence against Women', Infographic [Online] at http://interactive.unwomen. org/multimedia/infographic/violenceagainstwomen/en/index.html#intimate-3, accessed on November 6, 2018.

logical, chronic stress-related, central nervous system, and total health problems' and these problems persisted long after the abuse ended (Coker *et al.*, 2002, p. 265). Additionally, a 2006 Australian study indicated that IPV was responsible for 7.9% of all of women's health problems (women aged 18-44), surpassing health issues related to smoking, illicit drug use and increased body weight (Vos *et al.*, 2006, p. 741). The 1995-1996 US National Violence against Women Survey (NVAWS) indicated that 41.5% of IPV assaults resulted in physical injury, 28.1% of them required medical treatment, and 28% of those who experienced physical assault, rape, and stalking by a partner received some type of psychological counselling (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2017, p. 1).

A series of mental health complications are also fairly common among victims of IPV: depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and low self-esteem, which oftentimes correlate with risky sexual behaviour, self-harm and suicidal tendencies. For instance, studies have indicated that between 40 and 60% of abused women who at one point in their lives resided in shelters for victims suffer from PTSD (Karakurt, Smith and Whiting, 2014, p. 694) and that 31% of them reported attempting suicide at some point in their life (Karakurt, Smith and Whiting, 2014, p. 696).

It is important to note that these studies are limited to IPV, which is a subset of family violence (as defined in Romanian legislation), in turn a subset of gender-based violence, and that some of these symptoms will be applicable to underaged and adult victims of violence, both female and male.

The physical and psychological effects of violence will oftentimes entail social and economic consequences for victims: studies have shown that victims of IPV experience lower work productivity and are more likely to drop out of job training and to be prevented or discouraged from attending work development programs. In fact, a 2005 US national telephone poll indicated that 60% of victims quit their job or were made redundant as a result of the abuse (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2017, p. 3). Violence also leads to fewer days worked: according to NVAWS, victims who were stalked lost an average of 10.1 days of paid work per year, victims of rape lost 8.1 days per year, and those who experienced physical violence lost 7.2 days per year (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, p. 18). Additionally, victims of domestic violence reported a loss of productivity higher than 10% of yearly work hours, compared to non-abused women (Tolman and Wang, 2005, p. 155).

Violence is also extremely costly for victims: research from 2011 from Denmark has shown that the health care costs for victims of violence were approximately €1,800 higher than for non-victims per year (Kruse *et al.*, 2011, p. 3499). In the US, the mean costs for medical treatment for IPV was $4,273 per incident (adjusted to 2017 dollars), and $1,631 for mental health treatment, while for IPV victims of rape

was $3,342 for medical care and $1,568 for mental health care (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2017, p. 2).

4. Economic costs of gender-based violence on a societal level

According to the UN General Assembly, there are three types of costs related to violence against women: firstly, direct costs associated to the provision of health and support services, secondly, indirect costs related to loss of productivity and employment, and, thirdly, 'the value placed on human pain and suffering' (UN General Assembly, 2006, p. 50). Due to the difficulty of estimating the third type of costs, the paper focuses on the first and second category.

There are no studies that have calculated the costs of gender-based violence for the Romanian state, so the paper does not provide any estimate of its economic impact at a macrolevel. Nevertheless, it is evident that the numerous consequences of violence such as absenteeism, interruptions in education and training, and reduced productivity, produce clear effects on the labour market, which translate into economic losses. For instance, a US study has shown that women victims of domestic violence who experience work-related control and abuse earned on average 88 cents per dollar compared to non-abused women (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2017, p. 4). In addition, income loss over the course of a lifetime for adolescent victims of sexual violence was $36,000 in 2000 dollars, which in 2017 would equate to $52,242 (MacMillan, 2000, p. 574).

With regard to the costs of IPV to US society, one study estimated it to be $5.8 billion: $4.1 billion in direct costs of medical and psychological care and almost $1.8 billion in indirect costs of lost productivity and loss of lifetime earnings, in 1995 dollars (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2003, p. 32). In 2017 dollars, this would amount to $9.3 billion (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2017, p. 4). In Canada, these costs were estimated to surpass 1 billion Canadian dollars yearly, while in the United Kingdom they were evaluated at around £23 billion a year – calculations included the costs of justice, health care, social services, housing, legal, lost output and pain and suffering (UN General Assembly, 2006, p. 52). A similar 1998 study in Finland estimated the yearly costs of domestic violence at €101 million (UN General Assembly, 2006, p. 52).

5. Victim support services, individual resilience, and societal sustainability

The positive effects of support services on the general well-being of victims have been documented by a number of quantitative and qualitative studies. A 2018 article, which provides a comprehensive review of literature, indicates that shelters have a decisive impact on victims feeling safer and more helpful; that advocacy services lead to less violence over time, a higher quality of life, as well as facilitate

victims' access to community resources; and that support groups provide victims with a sense of belonging and increase their self-esteem, while also reducing their stress levels. In addition, psychological counselling has proven to decrease depression, anxiety and PTSD symptoms, and to improve victims' general outlook in life (Sullivan, 2018, p. 128).

National qualitative research has reached similar conclusions as demonstrated, for instance, by the project *VICATIS: Improving support services from victims' perspective*, coordinated by the Center for Legal Resources (report to be released[6]). Women victims of domestic violence who accessed shelters and support services reported higher overall wellbeing and oftentimes felt that shelters were their only option of escaping the abusive relationship. Moreover, on average, they reported significantly higher satisfaction with services provided by non-governmental organisations than by the state.

A theoretical framework which may be useful in explaining the connection between overall wellbeing and support services is the *Conservation of Resources* theory, which in turn can be linked to the current paper's resilience-sustainability framework. The theory states that the trauma of violence produces 'resource loss': the victim's health deteriorates, she loses money, interpersonal relations, self-esteem, oftentimes as a result of the fact that she needs to relocate. If this is followed by a stage of 'resource gain' – if the victim feels safe again, if justice is served and she receives adequate support – the trauma will be mitigated and her overall wellbeing will be re-established (Sullivan, 2018, pp. 124-125). It can be argued that the *Conservation of Resources* theory is a different explanatory model for the connection between support services and individual resilience, defined as the victim's capacity to resist and recover from stress and trauma and to return to the balanced state that characterised her pre-aggression state. In turn, as demonstrated above, increased resilience of the individual translates to better physical and mental health, higher educational attainment, better work productivity and higher earnings, which are all contributors to sustainability, which is understood as society's long-term ability to make use of each individual's potential in order to maintain and even improve the economic and social status quo.

6. An overview of support services for victims of gender-based violence in Romania

Currently, victims of gender-based violence in Romania may access support services provided by a number of state institutions and nongovernmental organi-

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6 One of the authors of the present paper, Alexandra Columban, has been directly involved in the project, conducting interviews with victims of domestic violence in Romania. The official report is scheduled to be published in 2019.

sations. The main available services are for children victims of physical and sexual violence, women, and children victims of family violence and victims of human trafficking. However, these services are insufficient, underfunded and oftentimes difficult to access, as they are usually located in cities and are practically absent from rural areas – an alarming fact given that 46% of the Romanian population lives in the countryside (National Institute for Statistics, 2011, p. 8). In addition, partly due to the fact that gender-based violence is not treated as a unitary phenomenon from a legal standpoint, services are not open to all victims of this type of violence. For instance, an adult victim of rape cannot access a state-run shelter even when she is harassed and intimidated by the aggressor or his family or friends (as was the case of the infamous gang rape case in Vaslui, in 2015[7]), unless the rape occurred within the family.

Firstly, there is an insufficient number of shelters for victims of domestic violence: in 2017 there were 58 state-run shelters in the entire country (National Agency for Gender Equality, 2018, p. 44). However, in 2015, Romania was 42% short of the recommended shelter places for women and their children, according to Council of Europe standards of one shelter place for 10,000 inhabitants (WAVE, 2015, p. 92). One explanation is that the Government allocates little funding for domestic violence programmes[8]. In addition, according to a coalition of Romanian NGOs, in 2015 there were 14 counties and 3 districts in Bucharest that did not have functional shelters for victims of family violence. Therefore, it is often the case that public authorities refer victims to NGOs, although they do not receive any funding from the state (Network for Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women, 2015). Victims of family violence may also call the national helpline 0800 500 333, which is free of charge and available 24/7 (National Agency for Gender Equality, 2018)[9].

Secondly, Romania lacks integrated services for victims of sexual violence, as well as for victims of gender-based violence when the aggression occurs outside

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7   In July 2014, an 18-year old girl in Vaslui County was gang raped by 7 men, who approached her when she was returning home after school. Throughout the criminal proceedings, she was repeatedly subjected to intimidation by the aggressors and their families to withdraw her complaint. The case received extensive media coverage in Romania and ended in the conviction of the aggressors and financial compensation for the victim.

8   For example, two applications to the Ministry of Finance for two Programmes of National Interest in the area of domestic violence, submitted by the National Agency for Gender Equality (operating within the Ministry of Labour) in 2015 were denied funding and were, therefore, not implemented. The National Interest Programmes were aimed at creating and developing shelters for victims of domestic violence, as well as two centres for aggressors nationwide (National Agency for Gender Equality, 2016, p. 21).

9   National Agency for Gender Equality, 'Free helpline 0800 500 333', 2018. [Online] at http:// anes.gov.ro/call-center/, accessed on November 1, 2018.

the family unit. Despite the fact that Article 20 of the Istanbul Convention obliges Romania to offer such services – medical and forensic assistance, psychological and legal counselling – the state has made little progress on the issue. In 2015-2016, a coalition of Romanian NGOs, *Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence*, co-ordinated by the Equality and Human Rights Action Centre (ACTEDO)[10], implemented a national advocacy campaign for the creation of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs), which would function within county hospitals and offer victims the aforementioned integrated services (ACTEDO, 2017, p. 3). After two years of discussions and amendments, the National Agency for Gender Equality has announced that it is currently implementing a 36 month-long project, which will include the creation of 10 rape crisis centres[11].

Equally alarming is the reduced number of shelters for victims of human trafficking. A 2015 study indicated that, although the law states that 15 state-run shelters must be running at all times across the country, only 9 were identified, of which merely 5 were functional. In addition, some of the shelters were not hosting any victims at the time the study was conducted (Gradinaru, 2015, pp. 18-23).

In Romania, the most developed services are those offered to children who are victims of abuse, who include female victims of gender-based violence. Shelters (emergency centres), counselling centres and centres for victims of child trafficking are coordinated by the General Directions for Welfare and Child Protection, located in each of the 41 counties and in the 6 districts of Bucharest. Children suffering from abuse, bullying or who need emotional support may also call the special helpline – 116111 – which is free and functions daily between 8:00 and 0:00[12].

Last but not least, support services for victims of gender-based violence are also provided by non-state actors, particularly NGOs. Shelters are run by, for instance, Anais Association, Touched Romania (in Bucharest), Atena Delphi Association (in Cluj-Napoca), and The Eastern European Institute for Reproductive Health (in Târgu Mureș)[13]. NGOs oftentimes offer free legal assistance and representation. A noteworthy example is *The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights*, coordinated by

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10 One of the authors of the article, Alexandra Columban (a member of ACTEDO, a human rights NGO based in Cluj-Napoca), was the coordinator of the network *Breaking the Silence on Sexual Violence.* For more information about ACTEDO, go to http://actedo.org/en/.

11 National Agency for Gender Equality, 'Ongoing projects' [Online] at http://anes.gov.ro/proiecte-in-curs-de-implementare/, accessed on November 4, 2018.

12 The Children's Helpline [Telefonul Copilului]. [Online] at http://www.telefonulcopilului.ro/intrebari-frecvente, accessed on November 12, 2018.

13 For a more comprehensive list of shelters and support services for victims of gender-based violence, visit https://violentaimpotrivafemeilor.ro/la-cine-sa-apelezi-in-caz-de-violenta-in-familie/ (in Romanian only).

the Equality and Human Rights Action Centre (ACTEDO). The Cluj-Napoca-based NGO matches vulnerable individuals whose rights have been violated to pro bono attorneys across the country[14]. Other NGOs also offer free psychological counselling to their beneficiaries. A good practice is the Association for Liberty and Equality of Gender (A.L.E.G.), based in Sibiu, that provides, free of charge, face-to-face and online psychological counselling to victims of gender-based violence[15].

Nevertheless, NGOs are rarely financially supported by the state and usually struggle to secure funding from private sources, so that their outreach and resources are quite limited. In practice, most victims of gender-based violence have no access to any type of support services. In fact, a staggering 74% of Romanian women indicated they were unaware of institutions or organisations providing support services in cases of gender-based violence (EU FRA, 2014, p. 162).

7. Recommendations for preventing and eliminating gender-based violence, and for supporting victims

Logical recommendations addressed to the Romanian state ensue from the identified gaps in victim support services. Primarily, there is a clear need for a larger number of shelters for victims of family violence and of human trafficking, as well as for an increase in the quality of the services provided.

Secondly, all victims of gender-based violence should be eligible to receive specialised support services. From a legal standpoint, there is a need to either amend Law 217/2003 on family violence to expand its scope to all forms of gender-based violence, or to amend Law 202/ 2002 on gender equality (which mainly focuses on non-discrimination, labour relations and access to education and health), so that it includes special provisions for violence against women. With regard to central and local public administration, Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) – or rape crisis centres, how they are alternatively referred to – must be created.

Furthermore, there is a need for specialised and continuous training programmes for all professionals that come in contact with victims of gender-based violence: police officers, attorneys, judges, prosecutors, doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, representatives of victim support organisations, etc. These training programmes should be interdisciplinary, combining elements of victimology, psychology, and legislation, and should bring professionals from different fields together, in order to encourage cooperation, exchange of practices, and im-

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14 For more information about The Pro Bono Network for Human Rights, go to www.probono. actedo.org/en.

15 For the psychological counselling programme of the Association for Liberty and Equality of Gender (ALEG) go to http://aleg-romania.eu/en/consiliere/.

prove cross-sectorial intervention. Equally important for the achievement of the abovementioned recommendations is the allocation of sufficient funding for both state-run services and NGOs providing support to victims. This may be implemented, for instance, through governmental funding programmes and grants and through mid to long-term private-public partnerships. In the absence of adequate funding for NGOs that oftentimes provide services that are under the state's obligation, there is no way to ensure their sustainability.

8. Conclusions

The article provided an overview of the legal framework regulating the protection and services for victims of gender-based violence in Romania, as well as how the term is defined in national legislation. Then, drawing from literature review, the authors connected victim support services to (individual) resilience and (societal) sustainability, demonstrating a strong correlation between the three by analysing the costs of violence on victims and society as a whole.

The article argued that, in addition to ethical, justice and human rights concerns, estimating the economic costs of gender-based violence is crucial in order for authorities to take adequate measures to prevent violence, protect and support victims, and ensure that perpetrators are sanctioned. It also demonstrates the pervasiveness of this phenomenon and the necessity to treat it as a public health issue, and not merely a private concern.

Moreover, an overview of victims support services in Romania was provided, underlying existing gaps and issuing recommendations to competent authorities. The identified gaps and recommendations referred to the insufficient number of shelters, the absence of specialised services for victims of gender-based violence when the violence occurred outside the family (particularly in the case of sexual violence), adequate training for professionals and sufficient funding.

The overarching and conclusive argument called for developing and consolidating specialised support services for victims of gender-based violence in Romania. Support is paramount to increasing the safety and protection of victims, to improving their physical and mental health, as well as their overall wellbeing and resilience, to increasing the reporting rates of violent crimes and, thus, the sanctioning of perpetrators. This in turn creates a safer and more just society for all, where women and girls, as well as men and boys who are victims of family or sexual violence, can fully contribute economically and socially and help build a more sustainable future for all.

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The Introduction of Artificial Intelligence in Practices of Sustainable Development. Theoretical Article

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Abstract. The world placed itself on the brink of a great revolution, along with the introduction of artificial intelligence in the modern system. As for the area concerning sustainable development, the emerging technology can be used as an effective tool, especially when referring to artificial intelligence. Moreover, the United Nations published the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in an effort to provide a roadmap guaranteeing the road for achieving a sustainable future by 2030.

The purpose of the present article is to provide an overview on the practices involving artificial intelligence and their role in sustainable development. The method used in the work is qualitative, as document analysis is employed. The present theoretical article includes a thorough review of the mechanism of artificial intelligence, achieved in an effort to provide a deep understanding of the ongoing phenomena, being the development of AI and its impact for the sustainable development practices.

Keywords: sustainable development, artificial intelligence, sustainability, automation, machine learning.

1. Theoretical aspects. Sustainable development

Sustainable development is considered a concept that has been evolving for the past 30 years. As a result of the 1972 Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, the United Nations contributed to the development of the term, making it a crucial element in the agenda. The UN Environment Program Secretariat was eventually established for the purpose of promoting international environmental cooperation (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007).

The next important step in the evolution of sustainable development took place in 1992 with the occasion of the Conference on Environment and Development that was held in Rio de Janeiro. That event was particularly known as the 'Earth Summit' (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007).

The concept of sustainable development has been adapted to the real world, in order to make sense for the finance ministers, along with economists and other specialists. There are three important aspects to be taken into consideration when it comes to the issue of sustainable development, namely – every development project must be economically and financially viable, must be environmentally sound, and has to take into consideration the social issues within the area of implementation (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007).

Sustainability refers to a healthy, dynamic condition of the Earth's biosphere, along with the productive balance that exists in harmony with the human, social and economic systems, interacting with the non-human elements in the environment (Flint *apud* Hinz, 2013). Moreover, sustainable development is a program of action that has emerged from the most basic human values, from concerns regarding the consequences of the past exploitation, as well as from the scientific demonstration of the long-term inflicted harm on the environmental and social capital (Flint *apud* Hinz, 2013).

Sustainable development does not necessarily refer to certain programs or projects that are implemented within the society, rather to sets of values, being a process that requires common sense and intuition (Flint *apud* Hinz, 2013). Moreover, sustainability calls for the improvement in the quality of life of individuals within the local communities, without the increase in the use of the natural resources that goes beyond the capacities of the Earth to regenerate.

There are nine main ways to achieve sustainable development in any given context. 'Leave everything in a pristine state, or return it to the pristine state; develop so as not to overwhelm carrying capacity of the system'. The first relates to leaving the encountered situations at the level of a pristine state, but that is impossible, because the society is not willing to alter their social and economic status (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007). The second relates to the development of a specific entity, such as a city, in a way in which it will not overwhelm the carrying capacity of the

system (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007). The sustainability will take care of itself as economic growth proceeds (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007 *apud* Kuznets). Moreover, the polluter and victim can arrive at an efficient solution by themselves (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007 *apud* Coase)

The markets have to be involved in the processes in order to achieve sustainability, and the polluter along with the victims will eventually arrive to an efficient solution by themselves (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007 *apud* Coase). The externalities have to be internalized, and great investments have to be made when it comes to renewable resources (Boyd, Jalal and Rogers, 2007 *apud* Coase).

Strong sustainability requires that all of the main types of capital (social, economic and environmental) be increase over time (Blewitt, 2008). Another important aspect of sustainability represents the life cycle of a certain product or service (Blewitt, 2008). Moreover, the three components are often referred to as the triple bottom line, used to gauge the success of a particular program or project dedicated to development (Blewitt, 2008).

With regard to sustainability, the markets will take care of the whole process. The externalities will be internalized, and reinvestments will be made in non-renewable resources. The national economic accounting entities will reflect the defensive nature of expenditures. Last but not least, the future generations will have options for the capacities to continue functioning at the same rate (Boyd, 2007). Sustainability is a very complex matter, due to the fact that the trends and consequences are highly interactive, making it difficult to identify and measure (Carley and Christie, 2000).

2. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is considered to be a science, at the same time being defined as a set of computational technologies that are inspired from the ways people use their nervous systems in order to sense, learn, use reasoning and take action (Report on Accenture Technology Vision, 2016). Artificial intelligence is already triggering significant changes in our lives, concerning the ways to improve health, safety and productivity. Since various AI applications are already used in schools, hospitals and various institutions, great technology companies, such as Google, Facebook, Apple, IBM and Microsoft take advantage of this unique phenomenon in order to explore AI applications that will play a critical role in their future.

The available data states that 'intelligent automation represents the launching pad for new growth and innovation' (Accenture Technology Vision, 2016). Also, the next wave of provided solutions will eventually gather unprecedented amounts of data from disparate systems, derived from weaving systems, data, along with people together, in order to create solutions that will have the potential of bringing

upfront the possibility of a fundamental change in the organization (Accenture Technology Vision, 2016).

The introduction of intelligent automation and the use of artificial intelligence, already started to have a great impact over the workforce (Soltau, 2016, pp. 50-54). Exploiting technology will eventually enable workforce transformation, being a process that will create highly adaptable and change-ready enterprise environments capable of meeting the demands of our digital world (Accenture Technology Vision, 2016).

In order to adapt to the new market demands, it is imperative that most countries gather to make a substantial effort in this direction. Moreover, the growing demand in specialists on the above-mentioned domains will eventually reshape the world, in the sense that the people will be forced to adapt to new sets of skills, enabling them to succeed in the workforce (Accenture Technology Vision, 2016).

The birth of artificial intelligence is placed around 1956, this being also the year when a program written by Newell, Simon and Shaw – later named the Logic Theorist – successfully proved theorems from *Principia Mathematica* (Copeland and Moor, 2003, p. 50). The earliest Artificial Intelligence programs were written around 1950, being the first to run. The process of developing artificial intelligence was described by Alan Turing as one of 'building a brain' (Copeland and Moor, 2003 *apud* Bayley, 1997). The study of artificial intelligence has been influenced by social conditions, such as adaptation, learning and communication within a society, as much attention is focused on capabilities of socio-psychological factors in intelligent systems (Copeland and Moor, 2003).

In comparison to the natural intelligence exhibited by humans, artificial intelligence aims at imitating, extending and augmenting human intelligence through artificial means and techniques to achieve certain machine intelligence (Shi, 2011). This science in particular focuses on computational models of intelligent behaviors within computer systems for activities such as perception, reasoning, learning, association and decision making, to name a few (Shi, 2011). The research in artificial intelligence is based on qualitative reasoning, originating from the study on the physical phenomenon. The early works related to the study of artificial intelligence were focused on physical courses, such as thermodynamics, dynamics, hydrodynamics, thermal currents and so on (Shi, 2011).

Artificial intelligence and neural networks may take everything to a whole new level of understanding, particularly when it comes to the concept of *artificial autonomy* (Turenne, 2013). Artificial autonomy is described as a model of dynamic social network, being a multi-agent system. An agent in this case plays the role of an actor, proving its capacity to perform a certain task. The knowledge of the actor constitutes the self-belief (Turenne, 2013).

The most developed AI materials may also be categorized as multi-agent systems, capable of representing an ecosystem of autonomous cooperative compo-

nents, maintaining constant interaction with the environment (Turenne, 2013). An intelligent agent has to be autonomous, cooperative and capable of adapting to the environment it belongs (Turenne, 2013).

The term of 'self-organized system' appeared for the first time in the field of cybernetics in 1947, being used by W.R. Ashby (Turenne, 2013). The artificial self-organization is related to the emergence of new subfields, studying the various forms of behavior, the technical emergence, in a combinatorial, creative of thermodynamic manner (Turenne, 2013). Self-organization in this case means nothing more than the coordination of various fields within a single systems, so that it will add up further to the autonomy of machines. The concept is largely known as being a social process, as a communication practice and as an event (Turenne, 2013).

In order to be able to understand the way robotics and artificial intelligence work, there is a need to explain the concept of machine learning. For that matter, several works were chosen, in an effort to come up with the most accurate information regarding the topics of interest. Machine learning is defined as a field of computer science that provides computers with the ability to learn without being explicitly programmed (Bishop, 2006). A very important branch of machine learning is constituted by pattern recognition, which is focusing on the recognition of patterns and regularities in data, in such a manner that allows for the programs to work. Although it is often mistaken for data mining, it is known to have its origins in engineering, being connected to the area of computer vision. The field of pattern recognition is connected to that of uncertainty (Bishop, 2006). The probability theory provides in this case a consistent framework for the quantification and manipulation of uncertainty, forming one of the central foundations for pattern recognition (Bishop, 2006).

One of the main theories, which is named Computational Learning Theory (Bishop, 2006) is able to explain the main mechanisms of artificial intelligence. It is described as being a subfield of artificial intelligence, which is devoted to the study of the design and analysis of algorithms that are connected to the machine learning mechanisms. The type of learning that is applied is named supervised learning, where a certain algorithm is assigned several samples that are labelled in such a way that will be able to be used efficiently within a specific program. The computational learning also studies the feasibility and complexity of learning, producing either positive or negative results (Bishop, 2006).

The application of machine learning methods to large databases is named data mining (Alpaydın, 2004). A large volume of data is processed in order to construct a simple model with a valuable use, as an example, the ability to have high predictive accuracy (Alpaydın, 2004). The application areas are abundant – from retail, to banking, fraud detection, all the way to manufacturing, medicine, telecommunications, physics, astronomy and biology (Alpaydın, 2004).

Machine learning is closely related to pattern recognition, speech recognition and robotics. In the field of face recognition, machine learning works by assessing the facial features, the eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, etc. The learning program will capture the specific pattern of that particular person that is analyzed, recognizing the individual by checking for this pattern in a given image (Alpaydın, 2004). The optical recognition in machine learning is the process or recognizing character codes from their images. Also, multiple machine learning processes are involved in learning sequences and model several dependencies (Alpaydın, 2004).

With regard to the speech recognition, the input is acoustic and the classes are words that are uttered as a sequence of speech phonemes and some words that are longer than others. In order to learn a certain rule from a particular data set, the ability of knowledge extraction is necessary. With the help of a simple model explaining the data, looking at the particular model provides an explanation of the underlying processes (Alpaydın, 2004). Machine learning can also be used as an outlier detection, by finding the instances that do not obey the rule and there are exceptions. After learning the rule, there is no interest posed with the exceptions that are not covered by the rule, as the anomalies require attention (Alpaydın, 2004).

Learning also performs compression by fitting a rule to the data, as a simpler explanation is produced, requiring less memory storage capacity and less processing power. Machine learning methods are also used in bioinformatics. The DNA in our genome is equal to the blueprint of life (Alpaydın, 2004).

3. The introduction of Artificial Intelligence in practices of sustainable development

The world is in a stage of a great revolution, along with the increasing use of artificial intelligence. Such technologies as AI (Artificial Intelligence), along with genetic engineering, robotics and 3D printing will eventually trigger a fundamental change in our lives. Artificial intelligence can play a major role in the practices of sustainable development all around the world. The capacities that were developed in the above-mentioned fields, such as NLP (Natural Language Processing), as well as Speech Recognition or Machine Learning and Translation, and everything that relates to Computer Vision, Image Recognition and Classification (Rauch, 2018).

The human activity is the most defining influence in the ecosystem (Rauch, 2018). On the other hand, when it comes to the use of modern technology, it has to be used efficiently, constituting an effective tool in the circumstance when these are applied to a meaningful goal. Technology and innovation will surely be at the heart of the improvement in the living conditions (Rauch, 2018).

In the field of energy, AI is used in order to predict consumption peaks, to connect producers, consumers along with storage and supply energy when needed

(Rauch, 2018). On the other hand, the increasing use of AI technologies need to be controlled up to a certain point in such a way as to avoid various dangers for people. Other concerns are related to the recent development of digital ethics, in an effort to develop guidelines to ensure 'that the autonomous agents will comply with the moral and ethical standards' (Rauch, 2018).

The real evidence shows that the AI drives a major shift in the economy. IBM is an example of the use of artificial intelligence expertise, in order to improve weather forecasting along with renewable energy predictions (Riffle, 2017). The AI applications for sustainability are not widespread, as these are in the early stages. The use of artificial intelligence as it is derived from the CSR reports relate to the opportunities that are created for the companies. The neural networks are able to analyze the data that results from the complex dynamics of coal combustion (Riffle, 2017).

One of the risks that AI poses is related to automated bias. It can happen in the circumstance where the machine learns to identify patterns in data and eventually come up with various recommendations (Riffle, 2017). Another risk is that the sustainability benefits that companies that may not materialize or may be involved in other consequences related to AI.

Artificial Intelligence relies on transfer of big data, along with cloud computing technologies, extensively running on the transfer and use of power and heat, proving unsustainable on the long term (Bughin, 2018). On the other hand, the use of artificial intelligence has the potential of boosting the world output by $13 trillion by 2030, eventually lifting the global GDP by 1.2% a year. Moreover, the implementation of AI technologies will require a shift in skills leading to advanced cognitive, emotional and inter-personal skills to be developed among people (Bughin, 2018).

A major problem related to the use and development of artificial intelligence represents its large-scale implementation, eventually leading to widespread unemployment. According to the report published by The Guardian, automation will replace six percent of all the jobs in the United States by 2021 (Riffle *apud* Solon, 2016).

Eventually, in the near future, the capacities of people to find jobs will decrease along with the implementation of intelligent technologies. The demand for digital skills and non-repetitive tasks have the potential of rising from 40 percent to more than 50 percent (Bughin, 2018).

Machine intelligence will have profound implications for the development sector. Artificial Intelligence represents a means to understand data, and eventually act on information that comes in from the cell phones to satellites without both human and machine intelligence (Cheney, 2017). When it comes to clear examples

of sustainable development practices, AI can be used worldwide in:

- – Climate change: providing clean power, providing means for having smart transport options, sustainable production and consumption, sustainable land use, the construction of smart cities and homes.
- – Biodiversity and conservation: providing habitat protection and restoration, providing sustainable trade, pollution control, invasive species and disease control, realizing natural capital.
- – Fishing sustainability, preventing pollution, protecting habitats and species, impacts derived from climate change (to include acidification).
- – Water supply, catchment control, water efficiency, adequate sanitation, drought planning.
- – Clean air – filtering and capture, monitoring and prevention, early warning, clean fuels, real-time, integrated adaptive urban management.
- – Weather and disaster resilience – prediction and forecasting, early warning systems, resilient infrastructure, financial instruments, resilience planning (Herweijer, 2018).

Based on the examples quoted above, a table will be presented, outlining the potential uses of artificial intelligence, along with the benefits and the risks that might be associated with this particular use.

4. Conclusions

The introduction of Artificial Intelligence in the practices of sustainable development paves the way for new possibilities that are made open for the societies all around the world. AI proves to be an efficient and effective tool in increasing the capacities for sustainability in the modern countries. However, artificial intelligence has to be used wisely, as to increase the possibilities of developing great benefits for the society. Used incorrectly, AI will develop its potential of producing harm for the communities.

Artificial intelligence is used successfully in sustainable development, bringing about a variety of benefits. These benefits include the accurate prediction of consumption peaks with regard to energy, driving a major shift in the overall economy. In the area of climate change, AI can save millions of lives in the incident of a natural disaster. Artificial intelligence can also be a true protector of the wildlife and the biosphere, by monitoring the activities that take place in nature. It can also improve the fishing activities, by eradicating illegal catchment.

With regard to the water systems, AI may improve the processes of treatment, also proving efficient in creating resilient environments. The quality of the air can also be improved by controlling the activities and producing smart air purifiers. As for disaster resilience, AI may improve predictions concerning such events.

Table 1: Potential uses, benefits and risks of AI

POTENTIAL USE OF AI	BENEFITS	RISKS
AI In Climate Change	Predicting future weather events Creating new products Minimizing human impact Increasing chances of improving and saving lives Machine learning could be used to improve the ability to map and understand the value of oil and gas deposits	Creating pollution and waste through the extraction of nickel, cobalt and graphite for lithium ion batteries. This particular use is already causing damage in China, India and Canada, these countries being the greatest producers of technology and raw materials for artificial intelligence. Energy consumption at its highest levels.
AI In Biodiversity and Conservation	Assisting the monitoring of wildlife Detecting infrequencies of complex patterns Assisting law enforcement bodies to pursue illegal wildlife trafficking Browser-based tools, such as the Wildbook.	The materials used to produce artificial intelligence machinery can also prove to be a threat to the wildlife. For example, the plastic waste is producing great damage, as animals swallow pieces of gadgets, along with plastic foils and other materials. On the other hand, all of these materials do not blend with the environment, as plastic does not degrade in time, ultimately polluting waters and soil for years on end.
AI In Fishing Sustainability	Robust optimization of the fishing system by controlling it with programs (e.g. the COmPASS program – an AI program designed to spot illegal fishing)	The overuse of AI, especially if it involves soundwaves, might disturb the marine life, contributing to the killing of fish. Pollution represents another risk.
AI In Water Supply	IoT equipment, collecting data in different phases, in water supply and demand. The instruments are able to draw the previously unattainable information regarding the treatment of water, empowering water-related utilities and predicting operations. Creating more efficient water treatment processes. Artificial Intelligence has the potential to make the water supply and sanitation services more affordable. Creating resilient water systems Water can be used in the processes of optimizing the consumption of energy.	The use of machine parts and oils may lead to the infestation of waters.
AI in the Cleansing of Air	Producing air purifiers to help at the environmental cleaning processes Brise – the first air purifier that uses artificial intelligence to balance the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide emissions for a healthier environment. Using specialized machines to control the quality of air Mapping air pollution	On the downside, the manufacturing facilities producing artificial intelligence are producing air pollution, so when it comes to the issue of clean air, the use of artificial intelligence is more like a circle of events, both aiding at the cleansing of air, and polluting it at the same time.
AI in Weather and Disaster Resilience	Improving predictions by data processing; identifying acoustical sounds that give information about the movement of the tectonic plates.	The systems are relatively new and are not reliable. AI still hinders effective communication in disaster management situations.

Source: Herweijer, 2018

The downsides of using artificial intelligence are related to the contribution to great pollution around the world, along with the fact that it might disturb the natural equilibrium. With regard to the practices involving disaster management, artificial intelligence is still considered a new tool, which did not prove its reliability yet.

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The Political Consultant's Role in Romania. A Politicians' Perspective

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Abstract. The worldwide proliferation of American campaign techniques has transformed political campaigns in a highly professionalized medium. Today, working in political campaigning is dominated by the use of political consultants, seen as well-trained professionals and applauded for their reputation. Based on their relationship to the parties, political consultants can be in-house professionals or external professionals.

From this starting point, we wanted to explore the extent to which Romanian politicians work and collaborate with campaign strategists and professionals, hence with political consultants. Politicians answered to direct and indirect interviews regarding the involvement and the role of professionals in their campaign work. In all, over 50 interviews were conducted with politicians from Romania. The following areas of discussions were included: type of political campaigns, political consultants' personal characteristics and values, examples of collaborations and the work relationship between political candidates and their consultants.

Keywords: political candidates, political consultants, political professionals, campaign, professionalization.

1. Introduction. Political campaigns and consultants

It is said that over the decades, the electoral campaigns have changed drastically. From the concept of campaign professionalization, to the American political campaigns type, to the use of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in the campaign strategy, it is clear that the political environment is constantly changing. Given this highly competitive market, the role of the political consultants and their influence in winning political competition is less studied and clarified. Even if there is no consensus on a common definition of the term 'political consultant', 'campaign professional' or 'political adviser', their role in shaping political campaigns and increasing political competitiveness is worthy of being detailed and researched.

The relationship between a political candidate and a political counselor can be seen as a delegative one, in which the political actor delegates tasks for a better chance to win the seats, but also to obtain professional advice and maybe a higher efficiency in democracies (Falk *et al.*, 2010). In order to get more answers about this professional relationship between the candidate and the political consultant, a qualitative approach based on interviews with the political candidates could shed light on the political consultants' role in the elections.

The worldwide proliferation of American campaign techniques has transformed political campaigns in a highly professionalized medium (Plasser, 2000). The evolution of campaigning has followed three stages, different in their communicative modes, structures, and strategies (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999; Norris, 2000; Gibson and Römmele, 2001; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Plasser and Plasser, 2002): the premodern stage (party and organization-centered), followed by the modern (candidate-centered), and last, the postmodern phase, message – and marketing-driven (Tenscher *et al.*, 2016). These three stages have also been influenced by the 'gradual shift from electioneering as essentially a localist, largely amateur, part-time affair directed at party loyalists to the permanent campaign of today that is personified by a focus on slick presentation, the prominent role of campaign consultants, and an emphasis on marketing of image and campaign issues', as Farell, Kolodny and Medvic (2001) have observed. Farell and Webb (2000; 2002) present briefly the main characteristics of these three stages in the development of election campaigning (as shown in Table 1).

Today's model of campaigning in most countries is a complex one, requiring an intertwined communication between the politicians, media and the audience, each of them with particular specificities (demands, needs, resources, behaviors, etc.). Schmitt-Beck and Pfetsch (1994) show in their model (presented in Figure 1) that political consultants are just a small part in the electoral game.

Table 1: The three stages in the development of election campaigns

Table 1.1 Three stages in the development of election campaigning

	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III
Technical developments			
Campaign preparations	Short-term; *ad hoc*	Long-term; specialist committee established a year or two years in advance of election	'Permanent campaign': establishment of specialist campaign departments
Use of media	'Direct' and 'indirect' Direct: party press, newspaper ads, billboards Indirect: newspaper coverage	Emphasis on 'indirect' Direct: ad campaigns Indirect: public relations, media training, press conferences	Emphasis on 'direct' Direct: targeted ads, direct mail, video-mail, cable television, internet Indirect: as before
Resource developments			
Campaign organization	Decentralized Local party organization Little standardization Staffing: party/candidate-based, voluntary	Nationalization, centralization Staffing: party-based, salaried professional	Decentralization of operation with central scrutiny Staffing: party/candidate-based, professional, contract work; growth of leader's office
Agencies, consultants	Minimal use; 'generalist' role Politicians in charge	Growing prominence of 'specialist' consultants Politicians still in charge	Consultants as campaign personalities International links 'Who's in charge'?
Sources of feedback	Impressionistic, 'feel' Important role of canvassers, group leaders	Large-scale opinion polls More scientific	Greater range of polling techniques Interactive capabilities of cable and internet
Thematic developments			
Campaign events	Public meetings Whistle-stop tours	Television debates; press conferences 'Pseudo-events'	As before; events targeted more locally
Targeting of voters	Social class support base Maintain vote of specific social categories	Catch-all Trying to mobilize voters across all categories	Market segmentation Targeting of specific categories of voters
Campaign communication	Propaganda	Selling concept	Marketing concept

Source: Farrell and Webb (2000: 104).

Source: Farrel and Webb, 2002, pp. 102-128

As modern campaigns demand specialized, technical services that are simply beyond the political parties' institutional capacity to deliver, a political consultant's role has become increasingly significant; 'technology-dependent modern campaigning has indeed exceeded the institutional capacity of parties, [...] requiring a role for political consultants, meeting the demands of a more competitive campaign environment' (Farrell, Kolodny and Medvic, 2001, p. 12). Numerous studies have approached the relationship between politicians and political consultants (Agranoff, 1976; Luntz, 1988; Sabato, 1981; Thurber and Nelson, 2000). Some of them have tried to identify the main roles of political consultants. Especially in representative democracies, where people delegate their authority to politicians for a higher efficiency in the decision-making process (Mitchell, 2000), as politicians do not hold enough expertise for a wide range of tasks, they employ external consultant for their specific knowledge and expertise (Niedereichholz and Niedereichholz, 2006, p. 137).
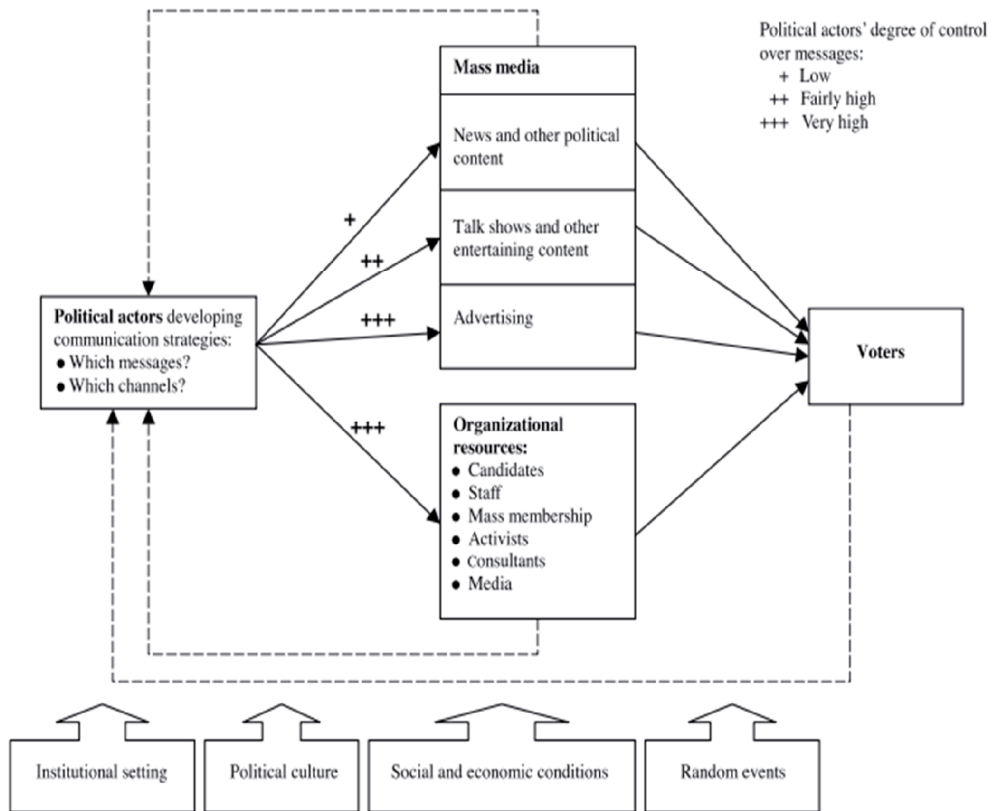
Figure 1: Campaign model
Source: Schmitt-Beck and Pfetsch, 1994, p. 117

Due to the fact that these political consultants come from different areas of expertise, and are employed for a wide array of purposes, although there is a common understanding of political consulting tasks, researchers have not been able to agree upon a common definition of the term. The German Association of Political Consultants provides the following definition: 'Political consulting ideally is a service that provides tailored advice at the right time, in the right amount, at needed quality and in the right place to political actors' (de'ge'pol in Stockklauser and Tomenendal, 2013, p. 5). Political consultants are frequently seen as 'campaign professionals who are engaged primarily in the provision of advice and services (such as polling, media creation and production, and direct mail fundraising) to candidates, their campaigns, and other political committees' (Sabato, 1981, p. 8). Newman (1999, p. 18) argues that political consultants represent 'coaches or managers who determine the outcome, with the media serving as umpires, witty manipulating new marketing techniques to influence voters'; but as Newman (1994,

p. 52) also states, political consultants are just one among the seven players who affect the political process in elections today, along with the candidates, pollsters, media, political action committees and interest groups, political parties, and voters. Karlsen (2010, p. 195 in Webb and Kolodny, 2006) defines the campaign professional as someone who derives part of his or her income from working on campaigns, and possesses specialized knowledge, whether this is acquired through training or experience.

There are several typologies of political consultants in the literature. Based on two distinct dimensions (background and client type) Farrell, Kolodny and Medvic (2001, p. 14) construct a fourfold-typology of political consultants (also see Figure 2) including:

- strategists, who are 'politically bred specialists who take on by outsourcing commercial clients for governmental affair work (such as lobbying) or broad public interest campaigns designed to change public opinion and policy';
- traditional politico, who have started working for the parties, and afterwards have established their own firm in order to work with individual politicians;
- tacticians or vendors, who usually do not have political background, but provide candidates and parties with technical services, like polling, advertising, copywriting, etc.; and
- marketers, with non-governmental training, taking on mostly non-governmental clients.

Some authors (Burton, Miller and Shea, 1996; Guber, 1997; Plaser, 2009) argue that the importance of political consultants in the mechanics of modern campaigning therefore resides in a series of activities, involving: staff organization, polling, fundraising, research, strategy creation, speech writing, media production and placement, volunteer coordination, PR and advertising, social media management, etc. Even though usually individual candidates strive to carry out as many of these activities as possible in a professional manner, they do not always succeed. While some of the parties have the resources to contract full-time consultants, most of them are 'employed for particular services, and once the task is completed, they become dispensable for the candidate or party' (Farrell, Kolodny and Medvic, 2001, p. 22). Depending on the campaign's budget and resources, politicians and parties decide whether to handle in-house advertising activities, PR, research, etc., or to use individual specialists or agencies.

But the advances of modern campaign technology have determined politicians to see the role of consultants as a legitimate professional activity. Still, 'today, consultants are hired and fired by campaigns in the same way that a corporation might hire a consultant, based on word-of-mouth recommendation and relative success in the past' (Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman, 2015, p. 72). The danger in this
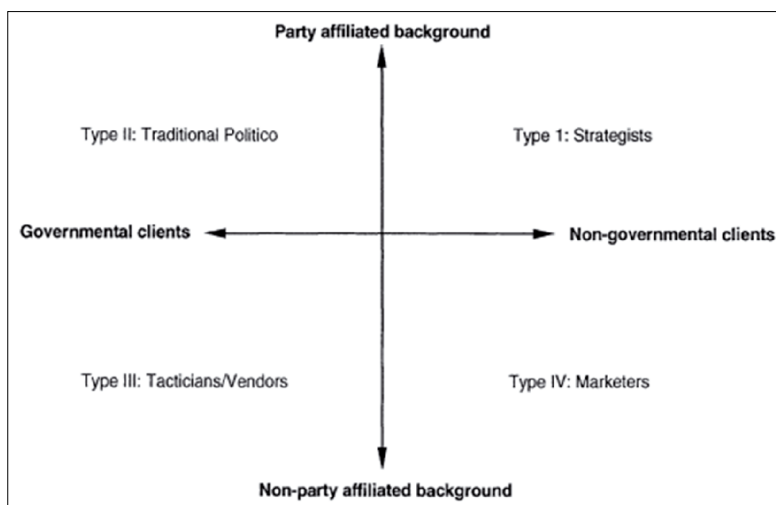
Figure 2: Typology of political consultants including
Source: Farrell, Kolodny, and Medvic, 2001, p. 14

situation is that candidates will be elected based on their resources allowing them to employ the best consultants, which will represent 'a serious issue that will only be perpetuated by the rising costs of running for public office and the need to hire consultants to manufacture images for politicians' (Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman, 2015, p. 71). Anyone running for a relevant office must take into account the necessity to work with professionals with prior experience in political campaigns.

Acting in a highly competitive market, consultants also consider several factors in their decision to work for a politician, including some of the most relevant, such as the candidate's ideology, electability, and personal wealth (Newman, 1994, p. 55). Electability is especially important, as consultants tend to be hired based on their success rate, meaning that they are judged based on their candidates results in the elections. Therefore, one of the main objectives of political consultants is to 'mastermind the linking of popular preferences to specific candidate choices through the use of new technology and also helps raise the money to do it' (Sabato, 1981, in Rubin, 1982). Described by Nicholas O'Shaughnessy (1990, p. 7) as 'the product managers of the political world', political consultants are more and more seen as 'information technology experts who build their political values into the tools and technologies of modern campaigns, with direct implications for the organization and process of campaigning' (Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman, 2015, p. 7).

Based on which criteria do politicians hire political consultants? Few studies have been identified on this topic. Researching expert group members in EU, Robert (2010) has shown that academic background or diplomas are never a prerequisite;

experience usually replaces academic diplomas, as 'they may conversely devalue a candidacy, or even ban recruitment altogether. A successful past experience as an expert is a self-reproducing capital' (Robert, 2010, p. 253), indicating that consultants with prior experience and fruitful projects within groups, are recognized as skilled and rewarded by the possibility of accumulating expert positions.

Most of the studies on political consultants come from US studies, conducted under the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies (Thurber, 1999; Thurber and Nelson, 2000 in Plasser and Plasser, 2002), involving a series of surveys on American political consultants, providing information on their personal background, professional attitudes and ethics. The Global Political Consultancy Survey (Plasser and Plasser, 2002), from 1998-2000, has analyzed, through snowball approach, a number of 43 European countries, with a total of 592 political consultants and campaign managers interviewed, from professional organizations like AAPC (American Association of Political Consultants), IAPC (International Association of Political Consultants) and ALACOP (Asociación Latinoamericana de Consultores Politicos). Even if many post-communist systems from Eastern Europe have turned to American consultants, nonetheless, these consultants had to battle language barriers, cultural and social norms fundamentally different from the American way of life, a diffuse and unpredictable electorate and an infrastructure of campaign headquarters that is often disastrous (Plasser and Plasser, 2002, p. 25). Also, as the study shows, the European political consultants are less professionally organized, more strongly aligned along ideological and programmatic party alliances and more educationally diverse.

Therefore, most of the decisions to hire a political consultant are based on the tasks that these consultants are going to fulfill. Different segmentations of political consulting have been provided in literature (Raffel, 2006; Falk and Römmele, 2009; Stockklauser and Tomenendal, 2013). Based on the fields of political consulting that differ in content, Raffel (2006, pp. 19-20) makes the distinction between: (a) technical-functional political consulting: transferring knowledge from educated experts to political actors; (b) organizational-economical consulting: managing processes and structures in public organizations; (c) programmatic-conceptional consulting: developing programs in various political areas; and (d) strategic-competitive assignments: creating political, competitive advantage.

Falk and Römmele (2009, pp. 29-32) suggest another differentiation according to project contents, including: fundraising; acquiring resources for political actors; image management: strategic creation and maintenance of a public image of persons and institutions; issue management: strategic handling of conflicting topics touched by politics, economy and society; monitoring: systematic observation of topics; and lobbying: representation of interests to influence the process of laws and regulations.

But perhaps one of the most comprehensive models of political consulting is provided by Stockklauser and Tomenendal (2013); based on the evaluation of political consulting assignments that can be either content or goal focused, they have developed a segmentation of the market of political consulting as presented in Table 2:

While for some candidates, there are political consultants managing several of these segments, most of the politicians usually work with a campaign committee, serving two main functions: first, it is a support group, both for itself and for the candidate or issue-based campaign; second, it is the primary source of expertise for the campaign' (Shaw, 2004).

Therefore, as we have seen in the literature, political advisors vary considerably in educational and professional background, in tasks (what they do), how they are organized, what role they play, etc. Also, political advisors, body constitute a highly complex system, defying any easy categorization, as they do not have a well-articulated set of rules to regulate their operations.

2. Research design

With the intention to deepen the topic of the Romanian political consultants, during December 2017-January 2018, we applied 53 individual interviews with politicians from Romania. A qualitative methodology was chosen as it guarantees openness for the results and a high degree of flexibility to adapt to individual situations during the interview (Ernst, 2002, p. 34). Furthermore, it is useful to capture sensitive content and personal opinions, perceptions, and attitudes of the interviewees, although critique is sometimes expressed about lacking representativeness and reproducibility (Foddy, 1993, p. 16). We have used a semi-structured interview guide, which we then applied through direct meetings with politicians or online discussions via Skype or Facebook, but also indirectly via email. The interview guide contained 13 open-ended questions that represented the starting point for the interviews.

We have used the snowball sampling procedure, using a non-representative convenience sample, applying interviews to those who have met the selection criterion to participate at least once in elections. Thus, the research is purely qualitative without the intention of an increased representativeness. At first, the recorded interviews were transcribed according to the answers given to each question, grouped and interpreted according to the categorized responses. Our investigation started from the following research questions:
– What is the extent to which Romanian politicians work and collaborate with political consultants during campaigns?
– Based on what criteria do they recruit political consultants?
– How do politicians describe the political consultants' characteristics?

Table 2: Political consulting market segments

Segmonts	Tasks	Goals	Clients	Suppliers
Scientific political consulting (combined segments: scientific program development (c) + political field advice & scientific political consulting (g))	Studies, expert reports, future forecasts, impact assessment, scientific papers	Providing expertise and support political decision makers in the decision making process (legislative process), provision of expert knowledge in different political areas	Political decision makers (ministries, government, states, municipalities, parties)	Foundations, research institutes, individual experts (e.g. university professors), universities, management consultancies, public and private associations, political consultancies
Strategic political consulting (strategy consulting (c))	Strategic handling of conflicting topics touched by politics, economy and society, strategic planning and concept development	Short and/or long-term strategy concepts, preparation for future challenges, strategic orientation	Political decision makers (ministries, government, states, municipalities, parties), public institutions	Management consultancies, political consultancies and agencies
New public management (c&g)	Developing concepts to change organizational and process structures, introducing new technologies and software programs, introducing monitoring systems	Increase efficiency and effectiveness, save costs, reduce personnel, monitor developments to identify areas for improvement	Public administration bodies (federal and state ministries, municipalities)	Management consultancies, political consultancies
Public relations (c&g)	Campaigning, developing communication and marketing concepts	Increase votes, achieve competitive advantage, sensitize public for topics	Politicians, parties, political institutions, private companies	PR agencies, marketing agencies, communications agencies, political consultancies
Fundraising (c)	Direct communication (via email and mail newsletters, telephoning, personal appearance on events)	Acquiring money	Political and public actors and institutions, NGOs	Management consultancies, political consultancies, PR and PA agencies
Lobbyism (c&g)	Representing the interests of a group of individuals or companies following the same goals	Placing the interests into the legislative process	Private companies, association's members, unions	Public and private associations, PR and PA agencies, private persons
Public affairs (g)	Giving advice to private companies about how politics work, opportunities for companies to establish relations to and influence politics and about political consequences of entrepreneurial actions	Providing information, educate companies	Private companies	Management consultancies, political consultancies, PA agencies

Source: Stockklauser and Tomenendal, 2013

- Which are the tasks and attributions that a political consultant has?
- How do politicians describe the relationship with political consultants?
- To what extent do politicians attribute success in elections to political consultants?

3. Results

We have received 53 full interviews on our topic, during the December 2017–January 2018 period. Of all the interviewed, we find politicians from 19 counties, the majority from the North-West region of Romania, mainly from Cluj county, and from Bistrița-Năsăud, Bihor, Sălaj, Hunedoara, Satu-Mare. Most respondents are male politicians (47), but we also have seven female politicians, all of them with an average of 10.7 years of experience in politics. If we are to consider their political experience (Figure 4), we see that most of the interviewees have played a political role as mayor, followed by party branch president function and local or county counselors (Figure 5). Also, most interviewees are politically affiliated with the liberal party, (Figure 3) followed by social-democrats, liberal-democrats and other affiliations.
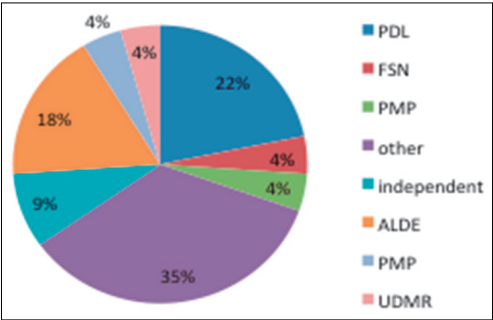
Figure 3: Party affiliation of politicians
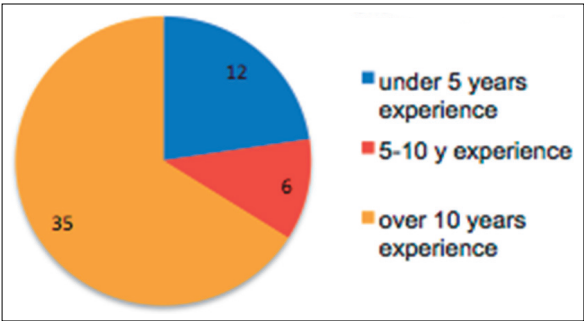
Figure 4: Political experience
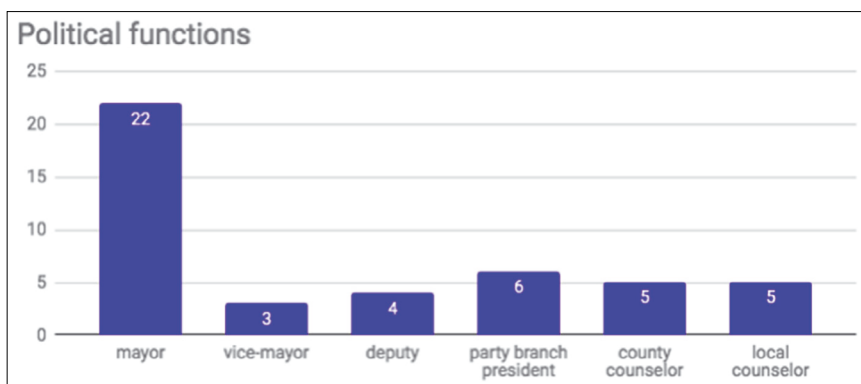
Figure 5: Political offices held by candidates

The first research question concerned how many of the political candidates worked at least once with a political counselor during campaigns. As it results, the majority contracted a political consultant (45 out of the total 53, representing 85% of them). Most respondents turned to the role of a political consultant when they wanted to enter politics: 'being in the beginning of my political role, I needed advice from experienced people'. Once the political consultant has been identified, and if the relationship between the candidate and the consultant is positive, Romanian political candidates tend to hire the same consultants, remaining constant in their preferences: 'I have always worked with the same person since the first election campaign in 2000. Once we were successful together, I think we will still have success. In my first election campaign I was not sure I needed an advisor. Still, I've been running for the town's hall in a not very large village full of elderly people. What could be so complicated to convince them to vote for me especially since they knew me ever since I was a child? But the party affiliation convinced me, and they recommended me a young boy who looked really scared, but it showed that he had knowledge of how the campaign should go. I like to say that we have evolved together and learned together. We have failed, but we have also triumphed most of the time together'. At the opposite, among the candidates who did not turn to political advisers, some of them lack financial resources to hire a political consultant, while other candidates have the necessary skills and knowledge to organize their own campaign: 'I think I know the city's problems better than any consultant, and know better the locals', 'I have consulted with my closest colleagues, I've documented about previous campaigns and considered it to be enough'.

The criteria by which candidates recruit their political advisors are diverse or more subtle. The prevailing answers revolve around the idea that politicians were guided by recommendations from party leaders and friends. The experience of the political consultant is often referred to as a choice factor, followed by popularity,

professionalism and knowledge about politics ('many political consultants are amateurs, but I, representing the young generations, know that politics is a science'). At the same time, the criterion of availability of the consultant and the price/quality of the services ratio is also important.

Asked about what are the important characteristics of a political counselor, most of the respondents refer to two main categories: personal and professional characteristics. On a personal level, a main feature is to be a trustworthy and reliable person, someone with integrity, who has respect for work and for people. Also, it is emphasized the need for honesty: 'if I trust the person next to me, then it all comes by itself'. The trust, fairness and realism are accompanied by the need to identify political counselors that have an innovative, creative personality 'the second feature is to be innovative because we live in a world where it is quite difficult to differentiate yourself from others, everyone is competing with everyone. If you have a person with imagination, you will be able to differentiate yourself from others, and you will prevail', 'my counselor is a person with a rich imagination, always coming up with new ideas, new concepts of electoral campaigns. That's what I like about him, we never get bored, and no campaign looks like other'.

In terms of professional traits, the following features stand out: objectivity, experience, technical abilities and knowledge in the field, steering capacity and compatibility with the political candidate. A political counselor is an equidistant person, who analyzes things from a distance, who 'gives you an objective and professional look', is a person who 'helps you avoid political mistakes and especially who doesn't allow you to overestimate your potential. It keeps you within the limits of reality'.

Another relevant criterion that a political advisor should fulfill is the field expertise and political studies. The experience, the notoriety and professionalism are some of the features that political candidates also take into account when choosing a political counselor. They are looking for a person who is 'professionally trained, experienced, opened to new ideas, spontaneous and attentive to confidentiality'. It seems that the counselor's notoriety, especially among the party, is an important selection criterion. In terms of studies, the political counselor should ideally have previous studies in political marketing, political communication, should know how diplomacy works, provide non-verbal communication advice and image enhancement tips. 'He is a connoisseur of the voters' psychology and is up-to-date with the socio-political-economical information', or as another politician states: 'No one is omniscient and ubiquitous, therefore collaborating with a competent and a professional person, who can have an entire analysis team behind is just one safe way for success, simply because you will benefit from a scientific and objective data analysis, as a result of a study that was based on political, social, economic elements that have been long studied and applied'.

Another feature that a political advisor has to prove is the compatibility of ideas and values with the political candidate, shared values and vision on the community 'the political counselor is like a shadow, always with you and with access to a lot of information. So the most important thing in our relation is compatibility and confidentiality'.

One important aspects of the interview was the attempt to identify the type of activities a political consultant does for the candidate and campaign. We identified a variety of tasks, grouped in one of the following categories: research and analysis (scientific political consulting), political marketing (public relations), strategic political consulting, issue management, event planning and coaching.

However, out of these six dimensions, the most outlined dimension referred by politicians is political marketing. Schematically traced, a political consultant deals with:

– the communication strategy, divided into: (a) mass-media relation and communication – writing press releases and articles fer of the candidate, writing dialogue plans for televised shows, watches the media broadcasts and provides feedback; (b) Social Media communication – manages Facebook and Instagram pages and the site, follows online news and offers feedback, answers to questions; (c) direct communication – participates to audiences and talks to voters, establishes a voter communication plan;
– advertising and copywriting – draws the layouts (electronic format) for tv-screen, banners, posters, mash, simulates and produces promotional videos, creates the posters, promotes the campaign message; and
– image strategy and creation – coordinates the photoshoots, teaches the candidate how to dress accordingly, teaches elements of nonverbal communication, tone, posture, etc.

Regarding the strategic political consulting dimension, consultants should be able to resolve the following tasks: to elaborate the campaign plan; to analyze the political program and establish directions and changes; to develop the party strategy; to establish the overall strategy; to target and sub-target the voters; create the campaign message and slogan; to employ SWOT analysis of candidates and counter-candidates; to give solutions for conflict or crisis situations; and to offer feedback after each political step or decision.

Other tasks that a political consultant should resolve are related to issues management. Therefore, a political consultant should: draft parliamentary questions and interpellations and send them to the parliamentary group; draft legislative proposals; participate in specialized committees and meetings; write addresses to institutions; keep in touch with other politicians, and if needed, to lobby for legislative proposals; and solve administrative problems.

Regarding the research and analysis dimension, a political counselor should have the abilities and instruments to research the public opinion, to identify citizens' preferences and community problems and employ opinion polls before and after the campaign. More so, a political counselor should have planning skills to organize the political agenda, to coordinate the campaign team, the candidate and volunteers, to prepare the daily schedule: TV appearances, community outings, meetings with citizens, key moments of launching attack campaigns.

Some of the rarely mentioned dimensions, but relevant to the political consultant job are: the fundraising dimension and the coaching dimension. Last, the political consultant is seen as a coach that 'teaches me how to interpret certain gestures, facts, events, statements', 'teaches me how to plan and organize my time', is a partner that educates the client, develops with the client and the campaign 'we have helped each other evolve'.

As far as the relationship between the candidate and the political counselor is concerned, this relationship is characterized by sincerity, communication, trust, the same identified personality traits that a counselor should have. This relationship should be honest, correct and loyal to the team; the political counselor should not have hidden interest or 'to sell us', 'not to dig me or work with the opponent'. In order to have a honest relationship, the candidate and the counselor must employ good communication and assimilation skills, 'he needs to know everything about me, otherwise it does not work well. Especially that we are not together all day, and we meet quite rarely, we must maintain a level of communication that allows us to evolve. If we do not communicate, he can't know how to put me in the spotlight'.

Asked if they had conflicting moments with the political consultant, candidates tend to provide socially desirable answers. They did have opinion conflicts, they appealed to a mediator to resolve their situation, or they had well-grounded opinions and communicated effectively until they reached a consensus.

There are some cases when the political candidates had to cancel the services of a political consultant. Some explanations relate to the better instinct of politicians in certain issues 'I felt more the message on a certain area and on certain voters, so I ignored the consultant, and it proved I was right', others are based on the lack of trust in the consultant. If there is a conflict that is not resolved, candidates cancel the collaboration with the consultant 'in this case, I first try to mediate the conflict and reach a consensus and if this is not possible, I sanction the consultant or I am done working with him'.

There are interesting situations when the political advisers have proved to be counter-candidates ('from consultancy he went to NGOs and fought against us'), to work at the same time with the opposition ('he played both ends'), or tried to have hidden financial gains, 'unfortunately, in small towns, these counselors have vicious characters and it all comes down to cursing and lying in social media'.

To what extent do politicians attribute success in elections to political consultants? The majority of politicians consider the political consultant to be a small part in the mechanics of the campaign, alongside with voters' intentions, strategic decisions, crisis management, etc. Some consider that a political consultant cannot influence greatly a campaign, while some state that 'the failure or success of the campaign is due 40% to the political counselor and 60% to the political man', or as one of the interviewees has put it: 'Success is due to the candidate, failure resides in the team'. After all, 'a political counselor has a strong impact in the life of a politician; he is responsible both for your success or failure, so it is very important to choose a political counselor that will help you with all the issues you have to face throughout your political life. Both good and bad things, we are responsible and resolve them together. If we enjoy winning together, the same, together, we encourage ourselves to rise after a defeat'.

4. Conclusions and discussions

We have tried to present the perceptions of Romanian political candidates about the role of political counselors in crafting the campaign strategy; for this we have conducted 53 direct and indirect interviews in 19 counties from Romania, especially in the North-West region. The results show that the majority of the interviewed politicians (85%) have contracted a political consultant, especially at the beginning of their career. When it comes to recruiting campaign professionals, most candidates rely on friends' or party recommendations. The experience of the political consultant is often referred to as a choice factor, followed by popularity, professionalism and knowledge about politics.

In terms of the main features that a political counselor should have, from the candidate's perspective, these are grouped into personal and professional characteristics. A political counselor should be trustworthy, sincere with the candidate. She/he should have an objective view over the political medium and issues, and be compatible with the candidates' values. The counselors' notoriety and professionalization are also relevant factors in choosing to work with a political specialist. As far as the relationship between the candidate and the political counselor is concerned, this relationship is characterized by sincerity, communication, trust, the same identified personality traits that a counselor should have.

When we talk about the tasks and attributions assigned to political advisors, we find three of the main characteristics identified in Stockklauser and Tomenendal (2013) model of technical-functional political consulting: scientific political consulting, strategic political consulting and public relations. Besides these, we have identified also the tasks of issue management, event planning and coaching. We have found mixed opinions on the extent to which politicians attribute success in

elections to political consultants as some candidates say that success is due to the team, and implicit to the counselors, while others are more transgressive and assert that failure is due to the non-fulfillment of the required cooperation conditions imposed to the counselor.

Although Romanian politics had had many years to mature, it is certain that as far as the professionalization of political campaigns is concerned, there is still a great need for specialists and a collaboration between political candidates and political consultants is vital: 'it is absolutely a necessity in Romanian politics, especially now, more than ever, because as it turns out, the mistakes that we make intentionally or unintentionally are only due to lack of experience'.

To conclude, why do politicians need a political counselors? Because 'you can never look objectively at your own person, activity, position, posture and at the link between your competences and what you have achieved. Because you will never get a better feedback than from your political counselor. Because you will never know everything there is to be known in order to cover all the topics, areas and niches.'

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Cross-border Co-operation Tendering: Actors and Activities (Focus: Hungary-Romania Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013)

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Abstract. The paper focuses on two chief aspects of the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013: the nature of partnerships and the range of activities. The partners participating in the cross-border projects within the framework of the program are analyzed from various perspectives, including the type of actors (e.g. local actors, undertakings, educational institutions, healthcare institutions, etc.), the basis of the level of their involvement (lead partners and partners, focusing on the distribution of actors on a territorial basis, etc.), and their activity tendencies. We concentrate on the analysis of more than 50 projects that were implemented in the border region between 2007 and 2013. These cover areas such as tradition-preserving, joint sport events, preservation and exploration of common cultural, religious and historical heritage. Besides, these projects involved the 'most personal' and local approach with the focus on community cooperation. We also looked at these projects from the aspect of how they contributed to the acceptance, sustainability, preservation and functioning of minorities/diasporas. The great variety of actors and the wide range of activities contribute both to the sustainable development and to the resilience of local communities. The research revealed that cross-border regions can be important locations for (local) communities to recover and adapt following persistent stress or a disruptive event, and that the implementation of cross-border projects can be one of the most efficient ways to maintain sustainability and resilience in border regions.

Keywords: cross-border co-operation, cross-border projects, people-to-people actions, cross-border communities, minorities.

1. Introduction

Our research focuses on the direct and indirect effects of the cross-border projects supported by the European Union in the Hungarian-Romanian border region. We use multidimensional methods in the analysis, concentrating on the connections between the human, social, economic and financial aspects mainly on the level of settlements respecting time and geographical distribution. These include the study of the various fields of cross-border co-operation covered by the two priorities during the budgetary period 2007-2013.

The aim of our paper is to give an insight into this research focusing on the importance of the human factor in the building, developing and strengthening of cross-border co-operations. Our theoretical approach relied on models which also rely on the human factor when explaining (potential) border typologies. We attempt to apply these for the Hungarian-Romanian border region with indication of minority situation of the settlements that submitted the projects we analyzed. Then we provide a brief overview of the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 (HU-RO CBC 2007-2013). This is followed by the presentation of our results concentrating on the people-to-people actions which we regard as the most informative with regard to the human factor (Figure 1). This paper mostly focuses on the quantitative side that is expected to be complemented by a questionnaire and interview-based research concentrating on the qualitative components.
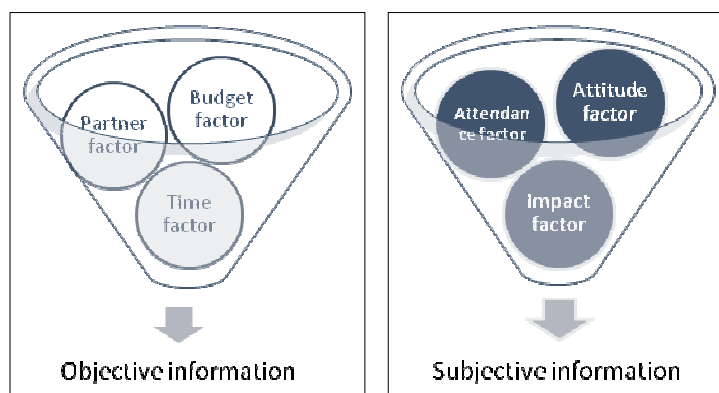
Figure 1: Grouping of the objective and subjective components of the research
Source: Own contribution

Finally, our conclusions evaluate the empirical findings of the cross-border people-to-people projects and their role in promoting cross-border co-operations on the human level, bringing together communities and reducing ethnic tensions on both sides of the border.

2. Theoretical approach to border regions

In Central and Eastern Europe, border regions are often associated with ethnic conflicts. The creation of state borders had a negative impact on the good neighborly relations since the ethnic interests were neglected causing dissonance between the neighboring nations and nation states. In Europe, the emergence of cross-border regions is a result of a long process which ended an era described by separate and often opposing border regions. Therefore, it is necessary to take into consideration the terminology which in a way helps us to understand the discussion of (cross-) border regions. There are differences between the evolution of borders and the treatment of borders. The way we see borders define our attitude towards them. R. Hartshorne in his work *Suggestions on the terminology of political boundaries* in 1936 introduced terms such as antecedent boundary, pioneer boundary, subsequent boundary, consequent boundary, superimposed or discordant boundary, and relict boundary (Hartshorne, 1936, pp. 56-57). These boundary types refer to the circumstances of the creation of the borders reflecting the weight of the natural and cultural landscape factors. These are the basic forms of the existing state borders which were used by many geographers later as a basis for border classification. Peter Haggett (2001) also used some of the above expressions in his model set up in 1979 for visualizing the evolution of boundaries that is on the basis of when they originated in comparison with settlement (Figure 2).
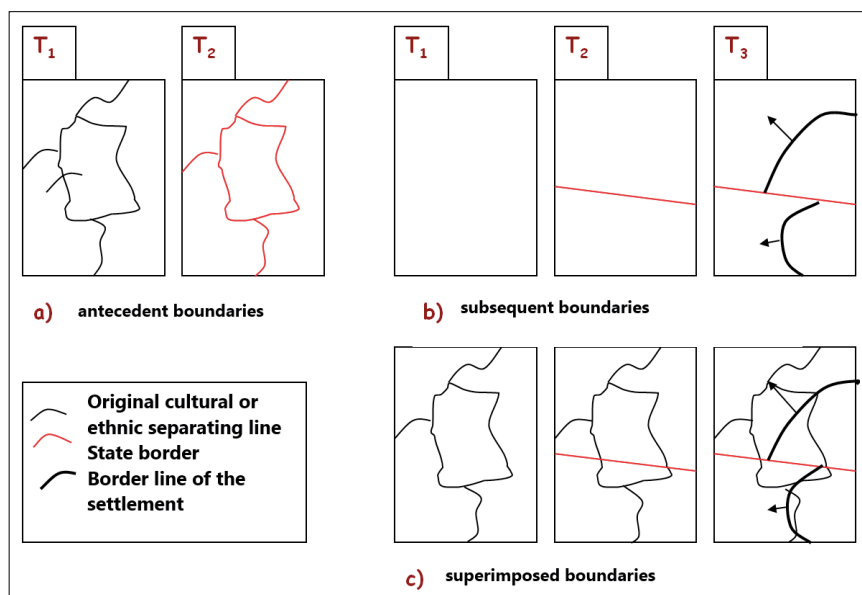
Figure 2: Boundary typology by Haggett
Source: Own composition, based on Haggett (2001)

'*Subsequent boundaries* are those that are drawn after a population has become well established in an area, and the basic map of social and economic differences has been formed. ... By contrast, *antecedent boundaries* precede the close settlement and development of the region they encompass. Groups occupying the area later must acknowledge the existing boundary. ... The third type, *superimposed boundaries*, is the converse of antecedent boundaries, in that they are established after an area has been closely settled. This type of boundary normally reflects existing social and economic patterns' (Haggett, 2001, p. 521).

In addition to the evolution of borders and their current interpretation, our study focuses on the possibility of connections along borders. Is it possible to initiate and maintain cross-border co-operations along all types of borders? What do we need to be able to cross borders? Martinez differentiates between the border regions on the basis of the relationship systems between the two sides of borders. His model is based on the interviews made among the people living along the USA-Mexican border. He studied the impacts of the border milieu on both sides of the order. In his model, he names four basic types of border regions (Figure 3) (Martinez, 1994, p. 3).
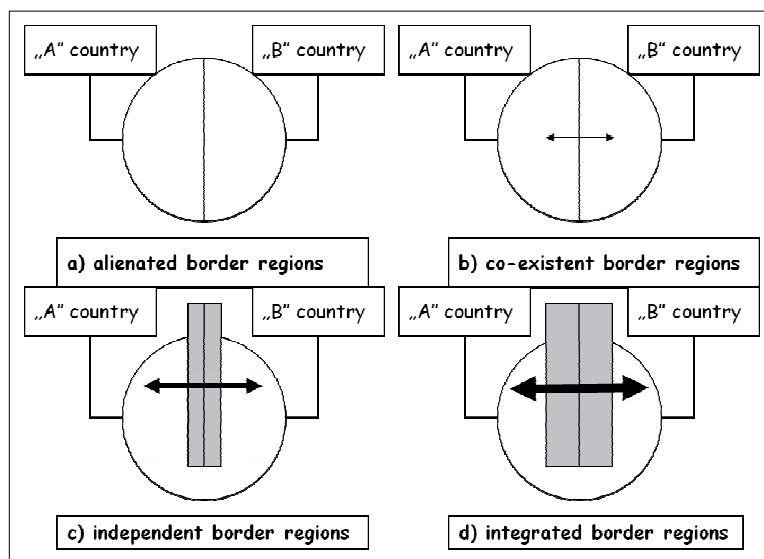
Figure 3: Model for border regions by Oscar Martinez
Source*: Czimre (2006) based on Martinez (1994)

In the case of the alienated (a) and co-existent (b) border regions there is no co-operation between the two sides of the border chiefly because of conflicts (wars, political debates, strong nationalism, ideological or religious discrepancies, cultural differences and ethnic competition). In the alienated border regions these lead

to arming and strict control on the border traffic, while in the co-existent border regions conflicts are on a manageable level.

Co-operation becomes possible in the independent (c) and integrated (d) border regions. In the case of the independent border regions, however, there is strong interdependence (symbiotic co-existence) in the co-operation. The economic interdependence provides enough opportunities for the inhabitants of the border regions to establish cross-border social and cultural relations. Nevertheless, smuggling and illegal migration are also present in these border regions. Consequently, measures are needed for the proper control of the border which means the intensive involvement and presence of the national level (central government). Integrated border regions represent the top of the types defined by the relationship systems. Integrated border regions may come into being if the political differences and all obstacles which inhibit the economic, trade, social and human movements cease to exist between the neighboring countries. The most important characteristic of this type of cross-border co-operations is that both partners are equal on all areas of the relations. The current situation along the Hungarian-Romanian border region reached this category after experiencing the other three categories as a consequence of the border changes during the past centuries.

The human factor playing a decisive role in the Hungarian-Romanian cross-border co-operations can be also approached in various ways. Wilson and Donnan identified three main types of border population resulting from the fact that border communities are dissected by borders in different ways: '(i) those who share ethnic ties across the border as well as with those residing at their own state's geographical core; (ii) those who are differentiated by cross-border ethnic bonds from other residents of their state; and (iii) those who are members of the national majority in their state, and have no ethnic ties across the state's borders' (Wilson and Donnan, 1998, pp. 13-14). The Hungarian-Romanian border region belongs to the first type in this categorization with ethnic minorities living on both sides of the border.

3. Minorities living in the Hungarian-Romanian border region

In Hungary, Romanians constitute the third most populous minority group with a population of 34,680 after the Roma (315,101) and German (184,858) minorities. Since the focus of the study is the Hungarian-Romanian border region, therefore we consider only the Hungarian and Romanian populations of the respected settlements in the two neighboring countries.

The Hungarian-Romanian border region consists of four-four adjacent counties (NUTS 3) on both sides. On the level of counties, in Hungary the highest proportion of the Romanian minority is observed in Békés county (1.73% of the county

population), while the lowest is found in the northernmost part of the Hungarian-Romanian border region, in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county (0.22%). In all four counties the Roma minority constitutes the largest group, and the Romanian minority is either the second (Hajdú-Bihar – 2,592; Békés – 6,240) or fourth (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg – 1,219; Csongrád – 2,022) largest minority groups. Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county neighbors not only Romania but also Ukraine, therefore the Ukrainian minority exceeds the number of the Romanians. The similar tendency can be observed in the case of Csongrád county which neighbors Serbia, and thus the number of the Serbian minority is somewhat higher than that of the Romanian (Hungarian Census, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d).

On the other side of the border, in Romania, the Hungarian population is on the second place, with a number of 1,227,623 of citizens, and the Roma population occupies the third place with a total number of 621,573 (Romanian Census, 2011). Bihor county has the highest representation, from the Hungarian ethnicity point of view, with 138,213 ethnic Hungarians (total number: 575,398) which represents the entire population of the county. In Bihor county there are 6 communities with over 80% Hungarian population (Valealui Mihai, Sălacea, Cherechiu, Buduslău, Borş and Biharia), and 14 settlements with a Hungarian population over 50% (Salonta, Şimian, Curtuişeni, Tarcea, Viişoara, Săcuieni, Diosig, Ciuhoi, Sălard, Roşiori, Tămăşeu, Paleu, Cetariu and Abrămuţ). Satu Mare county follows Bihor county regarding the number of the Hungarian population. Here there are 112,580 Hungarians from a total 344,360 citizens living in the county. Like in Bihor county, Satu Mare county has settlements where the share of Hungarian population is over 80% (Căpleni, Dorolţ, Lazuri and Porumbeşti), and has 8 communities where the share of population is around 50% (Berveni, Ciumeşti, Culciu, Foeini, Hodod, Oraşul-Nou, and PirşiTurnulung). Arad county has a number of 36,568 Hungarians from a total of 430,629 citizens. There are two settlements with more than 80% Hungarian inhabitants (Dorobanţ and Zerind). Timis county has a total of 683,540 citizens with a Hungarian minority of 35,295 inhabitants. Here there is no settlement having Hungarian majority (Romanian Census, 2011).

On the settlement level focusing on the settlements that participated in people-to-people projects, altogether 34 settlements are represented on the Hungarian side with a total population of 788,769. The number and ratio of the Romanian minority on these settlements is relatively low with only 7 settlements having more than 1% Romanian minority. In the case of the settlements of Békés county, we can observe the highest participation activity of those settlements where the ratio of the Romanian minority exceeds 1% (three out of the participating five settlements): Sarkadkeresztúr (4.22%), Elek (5.5%) and Battonya (8.36%). Körösszegapáti (Hajdú-Bihar county) has the highest proportion of Romanian minority (14.06%) of the 34 settlements examined (Appendix 1).

On the Romanian side of the border 27 settlements participated in the projects with a total population of 931,778. The number and ratio of the Hungarian minority on these settlements is relatively high with 9 settlements having a Hungarian minority over 25% of the population. The highest participation activity of those settlements where the ratio of the Hungarian minority exceeds 50% (three out of the participating ten settlements) are located in Bihor county: Ciuhoi (55.5%), Săcueni (74.54%) and Cherechiu (94%). In Satu Mare county the proportion of the Hungarian population exceeds 50% in Pir (Appendix 2).

The settlements which participated in joint people-to-people actions also foster sister settlement relations which form the basis for closer cross-border projects. As far as these project partnerships are concerned, the relevant sister settlement relations include: Nyíregyháza and Satu Mare (10), Újfehértó and Cherechiu, Debrecen and Oradea (9), Berettyóújfalu and Marghita, Körösszegapáti and Vadu Crisului, Tetétlen and Lugasu de Jos, Hajdúdorog and Ştei, Sarkadkeresztúr and Cefa, Elek and Graniceri, Battonya and Pecica, Szeged and Timişoara, Szentes and Dumbrăviţa, Bordány and Deta (2), Algyő and Uivar, Csanádpalota and Jimbolia (2), Makó and Sannicolau Mare, Deszk and Dumbrava. In 36 cases (two-thirds) the projects were actually preceded by existing and functional twin settlement relations. This confirms that people-to-people projects are initiated bottom-up and that is the need for co-operation is rooted in the common will of the communities living on the two sides of the border.

The SWOT analysis prepared for the Hungarian-Romanian border region and cross-border co-operation pointed out that 'multicultural traditions and ethnic diversity, minorities of several backgrounds live along border, especially near Romania' (KPMG, 2013, p. 157), which constitutes one of its strengths (S9), has a high relevance to the HU-RO CBC since it is actually the focus of Action 2.5.1.

4. Aspects of the Hungarian-Romanian Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 (HU-RO CBC 2007-2013)

The HU-RO CBC 2007-2013 was an efficient instrument through fundraising that led to the harmonious cross-border development of the Hungarian-Romanian border region. The total available joint funding of the HU-RO programme for the period 2007-2013 was 224.5 million euro (ERDF) of which 13.5 million euro was allocated for the Technical Assistance of the Programme, and a total of 211 million euro for interventions (Figure 4).

In comparison with the distribution of cross-border funds on the level of counties, we can observe that the most active counties were Bihor (Romania) and Hajdú-Bihar (Hungary) with an absorption of 43% of the total funds allocated through the program (Ţoca, Feier and Radu, 2016, pp. 489-502; Ţoca, 2013, pp. 117-134;
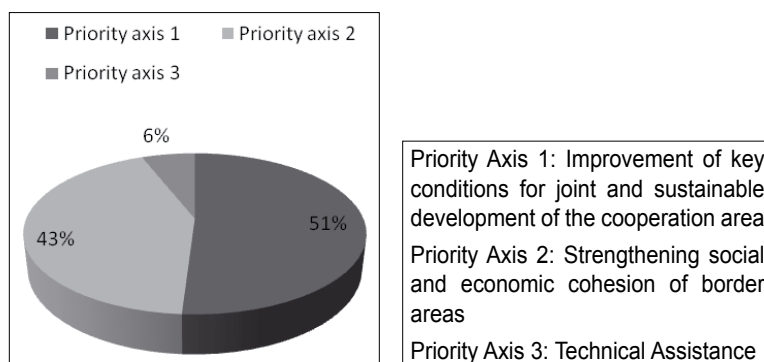
Figure 4: Funding on the three priority axes
Source: Own elaboration based on the Manual for the implementation
of the HU-RO CBC program 2007-2013

Țoca, Horga, and Șoproni, 2017, p. 266; Horga and Țoca, 2013) (Figure 5). This consistency in attracting funds can be explained by the well-defined institutional dimension, the previous experience of the two counties with other European funds, and last but not least the two counties form the Bihor–Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion, a form of cooperation that managed to gather the two cross-border communities of Hungary and Romania.
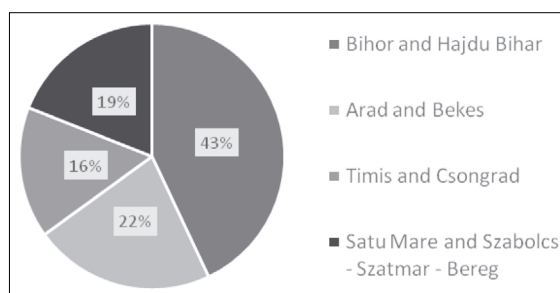
Figure 5: Share of budget allocation by counties
Source: Own elaboration based on http://www.hurocbc.eu/en/financed_projects/

If we take into account the distribution of cross-border funds for all eight counties involved in the program, we can see that 'Strengthening social and economic cohesion of border areas' projects received the highest support in the case of Timiș and Csongrád (70%) and Bihor and Hajdú-Bihar (53%) relations where the ethnic composition of the partner settlements also calls for closer cooperation between the border populations (Figure 6).
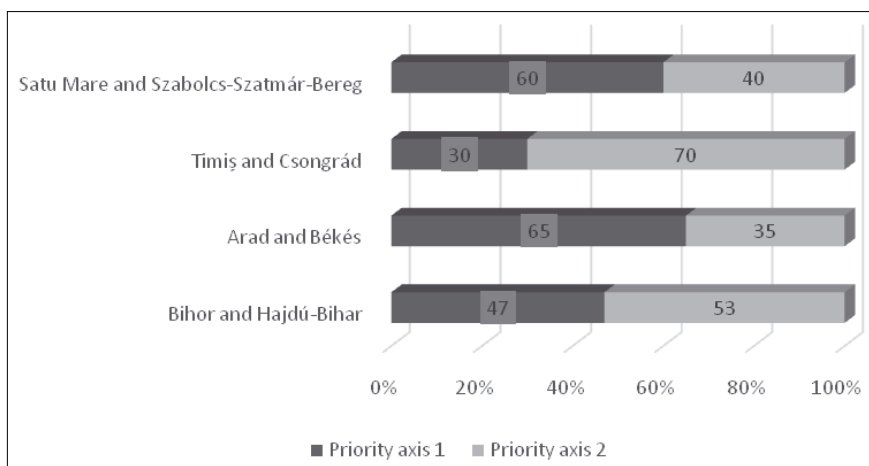
Figure 6: Allocation of funds at the level of the 8 counties for Priority Axes 1 and 2 (%)
Source: Own elaboration based on http://www.hurocbc.eu/en/financed_projects/

In the HU-RO CBC 2007-2013 Programme, county seats 'play a central role in the development of the area, as most public institutions, higher education institutions, and major economic actors are concentrated in these cities', and because their impact reaches beyond the border. Due to their major role, these cities could act as regional factors of cooperation, creating partnerships between border areas, stimulating cross-border co-operation in nearby territories and providing additional momentum for co-operation between Hungary and Romania (VÁTI, 2014).

The main strategy of the HU-RO CBC is to bring the various actors closer together. To achieve this goal, the most significant achievements are partnerships created or consolidated by joint projects.

Table 1: Number of beneficiaries per country

Country	Number of Lead Partners	Number of Beneficiaries
Hungary	150	269
Romania	106	283
Total	256	552

Source: Own elaboration based on http://www.hurocbc.eu/en/financed_projects/

Resources were allocated equally to Hungary and Romania as a result of the project selection process. This is a great achievement and reflects the efforts of the program bodies to maintain a balanced program between the two countries. However, on the level of counties there were differences in terms of the committed funds. Overall, the program supported 552 beneficiaries (Table 1), of which 70%

participated in a project, while several major organizations (especially universities) actually participated in more than one project.

Counties are key players in the development of the area. Thus, the beneficiaries located in the eight counties attracted a significant amount from the ERDF funds (56% of the committed funds). This demonstrates that they can significantly influence progress and act as regional factors, improving the level of cross-border cooperation.

The direct relevant results of the program included, for instance, the establishment of 11 new research centers, improvement of 7 existing research centers, development of 25 tourist attractions, organization of 788 joint trainings, production of 658 studies and plans, and the development of 14 health centers (http://www.hurocbc.eu/en/financed_projects/).

5. Analysis of people-to-people actions (Action 2.5.1)

The projects implemented under the "People to people actions" belong to the key area of intervention with the aim to enhance cooperation between communities (2.5) to strengthen social and economic cohesion of the border areas (Priority 2).

In the HU-RO CBC 2007-2013 programming period people-to-people projects were awarded in the first (Call 0801) and third (Call 0902) calls for proposals (CfPs). The altogether 53 projects received 84% ERDF award that was evenly distributed during the two calls for proposals. Compared to the total ERDF awarded for HU-RO CBC 2007-2013, it constituted 2.5% (Table 2). However, for people-to-people actions the area was left without funds after the 3[rd]CfP which was considered as a shortcoming by the potential beneficiaries (KPMG, 2013, p. 84).

Table 2: Main features of the People-to-people actions in HURO CBC 2007-2013

	Call 0801	Call 0802	Call 0901	Call 1001	Call 1101	Total
Number of projects	27	0	26	0	0	**53**
Total project budget (euro)	3347786.09	0	3193921.16	0	0	**6541707.25**
ERDF awarded (euro)	2812598.45	0	2684056.36	0	0	**5496654.81**
Percentage of total ERDF awarded for HU-RO 2007-2013	21.5%	0	16.4%	0	0	**2.5%**
Number of project partners (HU/RO)	62 (31/31)	0	64 (33/31)	0	0	**126 (64/62)**
Lead partner ratio (HU/RO)	19/8	0	11/15	0	0	**30/23**
Average length of projects (months)	11.8	0	11.65	0	0	**11.7**

Source: Own calculations, based on http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/financed_projects/

5.1. General remarks

The various projects showed great variety with respect to their budgetary aspects having the highest value even 15 times higher than the lowest. The project 'Patrimonium – the cross-border utilization of the common cultural legacy', was managed with the highest total budget (526,648 euro), and the project 'Learn by art – cooperation between educational institutions for preserving cultural identity by teaching traditional art to small children' was implemented with the lowest total budget (34,100 euro).

Usually municipalities, associations, NGOs and churches act as partners in the cross-border projects typically representing the same fields or actor types in both countries. In most cases there were two partners participating in the projects. Nevertheless, in nine cases there were three partners, in four cases four partners and in one case five partners. The project with the highest number of partners ('First cultural and sport event for students of universities of East Hungary and North-West Romanian region') had a Hungarian lead partner (Debrecen) and three Romanian (Oradea) and one Hungarian (Hortobágy) partners.

The distribution of lead partners differed during the two calls. In Call 0801 the number of Hungarian Lead Partners (LPs) was more than double that of the Romanian LPs, while in Call 0901 there were more Romanian LPs (58%). The number of project partners was more evenly represented.

As far as the length of the projects is concerned, it is around 12 months on average in both cases (0801: 11.8; 0901: 11.65), with extreme values being 15 ('Cradle of the folkloric culture Elek-Săntana-Grăniceri') and 4 ('Commanding restorer workshop to establish with centre in Debrecen-Oradea') months (both implemented during Call 0901).

The Report prepared by the KPMG concluded that 'Although, 'people-to-people' projects are very relevant, their complicated administration process during the application and the implementation might cause delays and slow down the absorption' (KPMG, 2013, p. 45). Hopefully, this problem could be overcome if the successes and relevance of the people-to-people projects to preserve the culture, history, traditions and good neighborly relations in the border region are given more emphasis and significance.

5.2. Geographical aspects

In the case of Call 0801, there were 62 project partners for the 27 projects with exactly the same number of Hungarian and Romanian partners. Looking at the Lead Partner (LP) ratio, the number of Hungarian LPs was more than double than that of the Romanian LPs.

In the case of Call 0901, the number of projects was 26 with 64 project partners where the number of Hungarian partners was slightly higher (33) than that of the

Romanian partners (31). Nevertheless, the share of LPs was different than in the case of the previous call with only 11 Hungarian LPs and 15 Romanian LPs.

On the county level, the lowest number of partners was registered in Békés county (5), while the highest number of partners was located in Bihor county (24). The activity of the counties varied by the CfPs. While Hajdú-Bihar and Bihor counties were the most active throughout the project period (23 and 24 respectively) but both counties proved to be more active during CfP1. On the other hand, Timiş and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties acted more actively during CfP2. The northern part of the border region was more active with 64% of all partners coming from settlements in the northern part of the Hungarian-Romanian border region and only 36% from the southern part. This, however, also reflects the geographical distribution of the people-to-people action projects.

In most cases the project partners were located in neighboring counties, although some of the projects (10) covered non-adjacent border areas (as well). In this respect Csongrád and Arad counties were the most active with 4 joint projects, while the biggest distance is observed when Timiş, Csongrád and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg cooperated in organizing a table tennis cup.

5.3. Supported project areas

The projects are mainly soft projects which involve co-operation in learning exchanges, expert advice, economic and trade development and information exchange. In the case of the people-to-people actions projects, these typically mean cross-border events or event series, sport programs and cultural identity, heritage and tradition preserving co-operations. According to former analysis (KPMG, 2013, pp. 40-41), the projects belonging to the 'People-to-people actions' formally belong to four project categories (Table 3).

Table 3: People-to-people action projects by categories

	Name	Number of projects
Category 1	Co-operation in social affairs	20
Category 2	Organizing a 'village-day', preserving traditions	13
Category 3	Organizing joint sport events	8
Category 4	Preserving and exploring common cultural and historical heritage	12

Source: Own contribution

The KPMG Report states that a wide range of projects belong to Category 1, covering areas such as cooperation in the field of public affairs, cooperation between foster care networks, or partnerships for social integration. These are also closely linked to other thematic areas. The other three categories are more rele-

vant from our point of study. For instance, Category 2 more obviously focuses on supporting community events, with specific themes including mostly gastronomy or folkloric culture. Joint sport competitions, championships or training camps in Category 3 help to bring together and closer the minorities living separated from each other. The 12 projects that are listed in Category 4 provide opportunity for the people living in the border region to share their knowledge, ideas and expectations related to culture and history through the organization of exhibitions or thematic conferences (KPMG, 2013, pp. 41-42). The partners in these projects are able to move masses of people and thus can bring closer the people and communities living on both sides of the border. Therefore, it may be established that these projects do not only have a strong cross-border character but one of their strengths is forming bridges between communities.

5.4. Project missions and objectives

The study of the projects revealed that they have common missions and objectives in most cases. One of them is the general aim of preserving common history and traditions which connects the border people. Understanding common history and preserving traditions is indispensable for the sustainability of minorities living on the other sides of the borders since it connects them with their motherlands or nation states (e.g. Cross-border digital common property and the presentation of our mutual history, organizing professional conferences, issuing publications; Two cultures together in symbiosis – joint history – in one European region: Protecting culture and history for a multicolored united Europe; Learning and keeping our traditions near the border; Twin towns' traditionalism, gastronomy, cultural and sport programs along Mures, without borders). The easiest way for preserving the roots of a minority or a diaspora is strongly related to the sustaining of religious and cultural heritages. Many of the project partners initiated projects relying on common religious or cultural folk traditions (e.g. Cradle of the folkloric culture Elek-Săntana-Grăniceri; Learn by art – cooperation between educational institutions for preserving cultural identity by teaching traditional art to small children; Cross-border region common cultural heritage development by workshops, conferences and research). Joint sport events are the most often used tools for connecting people in the Hungarian-Romanian cross-border region with a great variety of sports addressed (e.g. table tennis cup between cross-border teams; sports: the common language that joints; EU-Goal 2009-2010).

In addition to the above, there are also projects which although belong to other Actions but have reference to the significance of minorities. These projects in most cases use the reference to minorities to support and confirm the social and human characteristics of the Hungarian-Romanian border region.

The descriptions of eight projects actually include the word minority or minorities three of which belong to Priority 1, and five belong to Priority 2. Five of the projects are initiated by Hungarian partners, while three of the projects had Romanian lead partners. Two projects belong to the 'Education and employment', two to the 'Communication', two to the 'People-to-people', and one-one to the 'Research and development, innovations' and 'Transport' categories (http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/financed_projects/).

5.5. Case studies

The four Hungarian settlements with the highest Romanian minority (Körösszegapáti – 14.06%, Battonya – 8.36%, Sarkadkeresztúr – 4.22% and Elek – 5.5%) were selected to demonstrate the varying nature, objectives, impacts and results of the projects. For detailed descriptions of the projects discussed in this section, please visit the relevant websites listed at the end of the References section. All four projects were initiated by settlements which have twin settlement relations with their project partners which supports the significance of the existence of relationships regardless their present project. Körösszegapáti is in Hajdú-Bihar county, while Battonya, Sarkadkeresztúr and Elek are situated in Békés county. The partners in the projects were all local governments which shows a strong dominance of the role of local governments to support people-to-people relations with the aim of preserving cross-border traditions. The budgets of the projects were in all cases below the average of the people-to-people project budgets (123,428.44 euro), with an equal share of LPs.

Four Romanian settlements with the highest Hungarian minority (Cherechiu – 94%, Săcueni – 74.54%, Ciuhoi – 55.5% and Pir – 53.34%) were also selected to demonstrate the varying nature, objectives, impacts and results of the projects. Săcueni and Cherechiu were involved in the same project, therefore, only three projects were studied. The importance of twin settlement relations can be also observed here. These projects were also initiated by the local governments of the settlements involved.

The analysis of the above projects exposed the following:

1. The high representation of ethnic minorities does not mean higher activity in cross-border project initiation. Therefore, the connecting role of common language, culture or traditions cannot be regarded as primary motivation. This made us to check the settlements with the highest activity revealing that county seats are the most active in initiating people-to-people action projects.

2. Five of the seven projects specifically targeted the local community level aiming at the development of interpersonal relations. This included the reviving of folkloric traditions, organizing of village days, festivals, and camps.

3. Local governments play a primary role in the project developments. They are the most frequently named beneficiaries or partners in the projects. This can be partly explained by their successful access to EU funds and higher experience with bureaucratic methods. In the case of the smaller settlements it is also true that local governments are the maintainers of most of the institutions, and therefore they constitute the institutional background necessary for all sorts co-operations on any level.
4. The people-to-people cross-border projects are usually short time projects. Nevertheless, they are most often built on twinning relations which implies the former existence of a relationship, and these are the projects where monitoring shows the more or less incessant continuation of the cooperation.
5. People-to-people actions cover a wide range of activities since their primary aim is to reach the people living in the (cross-)border regions. Therefore, there is always a great variety of programs offered and several target groups addressed. The chief merit in this respect is the relationship-building power of the partners and the programs.

In sum, it may be established that people-to-people action projects help to strengthen relationships and co-operations on several levels and they are not exclusively designed for solving ethnic problems potentially occurring in any border region.

6. Conclusions

The Hungarian-Romanian border region is one of those not too many border regions which succeeded in overcoming the problems resulting from the superimposed (Hartshorne, 1936; Haggett 2001) border situation. The EU membership of the two countries opened access to cross-border development funds which helped this area to become a Martinez type integrated border region. The economic, trade, social and human movements are no longer inhibited by political differences (although they still exist on certain levels), and the leaders in the two neighboring countries have common goals and take joint actions. This is actually one of the benefits of the EU accession of the two neighboring countries.

The findings of the research led to drawing several important conclusions with regard to the importance of cross-border projects for the preservation of the cultural, historical and religious traditions of the minorities living in the Hungarian-Romanian border region:

(C1) The number of people-to-people projects with programs and references created for minorities in the Hungarian-Romanian border region should get more emphasis in Békés county where the ratio of the Romanian minority is the highest.

(C2) People-to-people projects have a strong cross-border character offering programs and instruments to form bridges between nations and communities.

(C3) Formerly established twin settlement relations often (two-thirds of all projects) form basis for the initiation of joint projects.

(C4) Cross-border people-to-people projects are expected to promote the birth of new twin settlement relations in the border region.

(C5) The higher representation of the Romanian minority on Hungarian settlements does not necessarily mean more intensive participation in cross-border people-to-people projects.

All in all, it can be concluded that people-to-people projects serve the needs and aims of local border people where there is a strong will to cooperate. These projects in most cases are initiated by historically and traditionally cooperating communities with relatively significant minority population on both sides of the border. It became obvious that the HURO CBC Programme added to the strengthening of the already existing twin settlement or other types of co-operations and partnerships and there is a strong will to initiate more projects in the future on both sides of the border.

The program bodies must ensure themselves that sustainability plays a more important role in the process of the selection of projects for the next period. This could be realized through the improved identification of the potential factors of risk and through the formulation of some more sophisticated criteria. Also, in the next programming period, there should be more concentration on the interventions that are more lasting from the point of view of the character that could contribute to the general length of the program.

Moreover, it is recommended to reduce the complexity of the indicator system, a smaller number of indicators should be selected that would reflect the character of interventions. The indicators that are irrelevant on the level of the program should appear only like specific indicators of the project.

For each of the other indicators and also for the mandatory indicators, including the name and unity, a description and a brief and clearly methodology for the measuring process should be given to the applicants.

In the planning period of 2014-2020 different rules of procedure for the projects with low and high level of complexity, concerning the proportionality, should be introduced. The projects with low level of complexity should pass through a simplified procedure of evaluation of the decisions, in time in which the actual and detailed evaluation should remain for the projects with a high level of complexity.

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Appendix 1

Proportions of Hungarian and Romanian population on the Hungarian settlements participating in people-to-people actions in HURO CBC 2007-2013

Settlement	Total population	Hungarians (number and %)		Romanians (number and %)	
Tarpa	2092	1842	88%	…	…
Nyíregyháza (11)	119746	103126	86.12%	305	0.25%
Csengersima	703	662	94.17%	4	0.57%
Tiszadob	2869	2428	84.63%	9	0.31%
Nyírbátor	12719	11347	89.21%	39	0.31%
Újfehértó	12931	11237	86.9%	13	0.1%
Mátészalka	17195	15065	87.61%	57	0.33%
Szatmárcseke	1473	1337	90.77%	…	…
Apagy	2255	1980	87.8%	5	0.22%
Sárrétudvari	2901	2411	83.11%	-	-
Debrecen (13)	211320	179229	84.81%	739	0.35%
Hortobágy	1481	1313	88.66%	…	…
Balmazújváros	17573	15780	89.79%	10	0.06%
Berettyóújfalu	15472	12945	83.67%	73	0.47%
Körösszegapáti	**974**	**837**	**85.93%**	**137**	**14.06%**
Tetétlen	1382	1108	80.17%	…	…
Hajdúdorog	8843	7511	84.94%	14	0,.16%
Sáránd	2249	1928	85.73%	9	0.4%
Nyíradony	7585	6445	84.97%	9	0.12%
Kismarja	**1312**	**1199**	**91.39%**	**23**	**1.75%**
Békéscsaba	62050	52700	84.93%	396	0.64%
Sarkadkeresztúr	**1563**	**1386**	**88.67%**	**66**	**4.22%**
Orosháza	29081	23734	81.61%	78	0.27%
Elek	**4927**	**4033**	**81.85%**	**271**	**5.5%**
Battonya	**6042**	**4704**	**77.85%**	**505**	**8.36%**
Szeged (3)	168048	140914	83.85%	588	0.35%
Szentes	28509	24460	85.79%	40	0.14%
Bordány (2)	3230	2783	86.16%	13	0.4%
Domaszék	**4862**	**4196**	**86.3%**	**52**	**1.07%**
Algyő	5508	4780	86.78%	16	0.29%
Csanádpalota (3)	**2923**	**2552**	**87.31%**	**39**	**1.33%**
Makó (2)	23683	21161	89.35%	220	0.93%
Tiszasziget	1708	1599	93.62%	15	0.88%
Deszk	3560	3122	87.69%	17	0.48%
Total	**788769**	**671854**	**85.18%**	**3762**	**0.47%**

Source: Calculated by authors, based on data from CSO
(Census 2011 3.4, Census 2011 3.6, Census 2011 3.9 and Census 2011 3.16)

Appendix 2

Proportions of Hungarian and Romanian population on the Romanian settlements participating in people-to-people actions in HURO CBC 2007-2013

Settlement	Total population	Romanians (number and %)		Hungarians (number and %)	
Satu Mare (13)	103441	55509	53.66%	35441	34.26%
Marghita	15770	7789	49.39%	6349	40.25%
Pir	**1614**	**589**	**36.49%**	**861**	**53.34%**
Ciuhoi	**2333**	**855**	**36.64%**	**1295**	**55.50%**
Oradea (14)	196367	132718	67.58%	45305	23.07%
Cefa	2272	1831	80.58%	97	4.26%
VaduCrisului	4009	2753	68.67%	751	18.73%
Lugasu de Jos	3580	1528	42.68%	1024	28.60%
Ştei	6529	5897	90.32%	193	2.95%
Diosig	6816	1758	25.79%	3338	48.97%
Săcueni	**11526**	**734**	**6.36%**	**8592**	**74.54%**
Cherechiu	**2416**	**43**	**1.77%**	**2272**	**94%**
Sânmartin	9572	7672	80.15%	350	3.65%
Arad (4)	159074	125302	78.77%	15398	9.68%
Nadlac	7398	3281	44.35%	178	2.41%
Lipova	10313	8956	86.85%	280	2.72%
Sântana	10725	…	…	…	…
Graniceri	2254	1976	87.71%	16	0.7%
Pecica	12726	7340	57.68%	3306	25.98%
Timişoara (4)	319279	259754	81.35%	15564	4.87%
Dumbrăviţa (2)	7522	5722	76.07%	1057	14.05%
Deta (2)	6260	4247	67.84%	869	13.88%
Uivar	2453	1810	73.78%	394	16.06%
Jimbolia (3)	10808	7856	72.68%	1169	10.81%
Sannicolau Mare	12312	9074	73.7%	890	7.22%
Dumbrava	2659	2088	78.52%	471	17.71%
Fârdea	1750	1649	94.22%	4	0.22%
Total	**931778**	**658731**	**60.45%**	**145464**	**23.40%**

Source: Calculated by authors, based on data from Romanian Census, 2011

Considerations for Euro Adoption
in the European Union's
Three Newest Member States:
From Convergence Indicators
to the Perspective of National Actors

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Abstract. As the European Union is currently under the simultaneous pressure of a wide range of both integration and disintegration driving forces, Euro adoption represents a thorny subject in many of the East Central European Member States. This paper is focusing on the Euro adoption debate in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, aiming to analyze this complex decision from the perspective of economic convergence, encompassing both the examination of relevant indicators and the positions of institutional actors and scholars on the topic.

Keywords: Euro adoption, nominal convergence, real convergence, structural convergence, EU reform.

1. Introduction

In the context of a crossroads in the European project, which is currently under the simultaneous pressure of a wide range of both integration and disintegration driving forces, Euro adoption represents a thorny subject in many of the East Central European Member States. Part of a wider research effort that includes Dan (2019), this paper is focusing on the Euro adoption debate in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, aiming to analyze this complex decision from the perspective of economic convergence. With this in mind, we consider that we should first bring some conceptual clarification to the term of economic convergence. For the purpose of this research, we adhere to the view of Buti and Turrini (2015), who identify three facets of economic convergence: nominal, referring to convergence in nominal variables as stipulated in the Treaty of Maastricht; real, referring to the process of converging *per capita* incomes or, as Varblane and Vahter (2005, p. 8) formulate, the process consisting in poor countries catching up with rich ones; and structural, referring to the association between convergence in *per capita* income and an increased bilateral sector similarity or economic structure (Alexoaei and Robu, 2018). However, regarding the latter, Buti and Turini (2015) emphasize that, contrary to previous expectations, structural convergence is not necessarily a consequence of nominal and real convergence, as evidence from the first decade of Euro Zone (EZ) existence revealed that real convergence largely coincided with structural divergence.

In the process of analyzing economic convergence regarding the EZ accession aspirations of Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, we consider that two other factors occupy a central position, namely (1) the political dimension of Euro adoption and the consequences of EZ membership on the interaction between the effects of monetary and fiscal policies and the fiscal-monetary dichotomy, as discussed in Dan (2014), especially in the context of the (increasing, one might argue) reluctance of national governments to fall in line with EU level fiscal constraints, a phenomenon that is visible in some existing EZ members and (2) the vagueness of requirements regarding convergence indicators and their levels, as nominal convergence criteria expressed in the Maastricht Treaty are unanimously considered to be insufficient for successful EZ membership, a situation that generates debate between economists with respect to the real and structural convergence conditions that need to be fulfilled before giving up monetary sovereignty and implicitly all the monetary adjustment mechanisms that non-EZ Member States currently enjoy. Of course, the cases of Bulgaria and Croatia should be analyzed in the light of their currencies being pegged to the Euro (with all the monetary restrictions that this arrangement imply) and of the advantages for the Euro adoption process that are generated by this situation.

The transfer of monetary sovereignty to the European Central Bank and the subsequent coping with the reality of the one-size fits all monetary policy decided

in Frankfurt is in fact a classical concern regarding the European monetary union and is fueled by several of the last decade's events, such as the sovereign debt crisis in some EZ Member States, coupled with an increased perception that states which do not exert control over their monetary policy will be compelled to rely on lifelines from other countries or supranational entities (and the constraints that such arrangements entail) in order to rescue the domestic financial system from its tendency to self-destruct (Pistor, 2017). Moreover, as Benoit Coeure (2013), a Member in ECB's Executive Board noticed, there are concerns regarding the fact that support for countries under stress and the conditions behind such support (with all the resulting re-distributional intrusion into national economic policies) are decided by the Eurogroup, an informal body operating within the Council of the European Union that is comprised out of EZ Member States finance ministers, thus making them, as members of national governments, subject to various parliamentary controls.

Last but not least, the rise of populism and national discourse creates a rift between EU and national institutions, with an increased frequency of instances in which the latter explain domestic economic and social problems as a direct effect of the policy decisions of the former. Before proceeding, we must point out the particular political context that prompts the analysis to be performed in the light of the debate regarding the reform of the EU, a discussion which began with the signals that EU27 is ready to engage in essential reforms given by European politicians in the weeks and months following the unexpected Brexit referendum result (Naumescu, 2018) and was formally launched in 2017 by the European Commission (EC) which, in its now famous White Paper on the Future of Europe, has proposed five scenarios for the EU27 by 2025. These scenarios range from the highly disintegratory 'Nothing but the single market' scheme, to the federalization scented 'Doing much more together' vision, which, among others, would imply 'greater coordination of fiscal, social and taxation matters, as well as European supervision of financial services' and additional financial support 'made available to boost economic development and respond to shocks at regional, sectoral and national level' (European Commission, 2017). Within this continuum, the middle ground is occupied by the preservation of the *status quo*, as prescribed by the 'Carrying on' scenario, which represents the rejection of any reform option. In line with the initial expectations regarding the unlikeliness of EU27 Member States to embrace one of the two extreme options, and bearing in mind that maintaining the *status quo* is, most of the times and no matter the issue, an outcome that cannot be easily discarded due to the lack of system flexibility, to incapacity to reach consensus on change or simply due to the tendency of any given system to perpetuate itself, the remaining two scenarios have captured the spotlight. Consequently, the focus is currently on the 'Those who want more do more' and the 'Doing less more effi-

ciently' scenarios, both of which treat the EZ as a central pillar. More precisely, the former, which is seen by some a reiteration of the older multi-speed Europe idea, is centered on the EZ as the core of a group of countries who choose to increase cooperation regarding taxation, social matters and the industry, while the latter scenario would impact the economic and monetary environment by stepping up in order to ensure EZ stability, while abandoning current levels of cooperation regarding employment and social policy (European Commission, 2017). As shown by Ciceo (2018), the 'Those who want more, do more' scenario was in the first phase actively promoted by Germany and France, but then failed to increase traction, while the 'Doing less more efficiently' idea gained more and more attention. Moreover, Ciceo (2018) notes that the approach contained in this scenario was initially praised by EC president Jean-Claude Junkers and quickly gained more supporters, starting with Austria's Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, who emphasized the underlying principles of subsidiarity and the differentiation between 'big issues' on one side, where the EU should play an increased role (and among which economic and monetary policy is specifically mentioned), and 'small issues' on the other side, in which the EU should refrain from interfering with national policies, a view embraced also by the four countries forming the Visegrad Group.

2. What does it take for a successful EZ membership?
Exploring convergence in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia

Many of the greatest shortcomings of the EZ's functioning are generated by the insufficient character of the convergence criteria stipulated by the Maastricht Treaty (i.e., the nominal convergence criteria), as well as by the lack of mechanisms that can efficiently and effectively ensure that even those insufficient nominal criteria are being fulfilled after EZ accession, with the Growth and Stability Pact (GSP) not only failing to prevent the last EZ crisis due to the ability of its members to undermine the GSP's provisions (Baerg and Hallerberg, 2016), but also being accused of failing to enforce the prescribed non-compliance sanctions (De Jong and Gilbert, 2019) and even of acting as a catalyst for chaos as it 'generated excessive fiscal austerity during the crisis, thereby contributing to aggravating and prolonging its economic, social, and political consequences' (Darvas, Martin and Ragot, 2018). Moreover, even if, as concluded by De Jong and Gilbert (2018), the recommendations generated by the Excessive Deficit Procedure have a significant impact on both planned and actual fiscal policy in EZ member states, the procyclical character of the SGP's corrective arm, i.e., the mechanism aimed at ensuring the adoption of appropriate policy actions in case of excessive deficits, seems to be inadequately doubled by the preventive arm and its function to ensure sound budgetary policies during periods of economic growth (De Jong and Gilbert, 2019).

In this context, we will first focus on the first set of convergence criteria that are relevant for EZ accession, i.e., nominal criteria, by analyzing the current situation of Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, as the fulfillment of nominal criteria is an un-negotiable condition of Euro adoption. The best positioned country in this respect out of the three considered is Bulgaria, who, according to the 2018 Convergence Report (European Commission, 2018) enjoyed a 1.4% average inflation rate during the twelve months to March 2018 (below the 1.9% reference value) and an HCIP inflation rate of 1.9% in March 2019. The same Convergence Report highlights Bulgaria's fulfilment of the public finance criterion, the Balkan country having in March 2018 a stable positive general government balance between 0.2 and 0.9% of GDP and a low level of government debt (25.4% of GDP in 2017), estimated to drop even further to 21.4% of GDP in 2019. Moreover, the same report recognizes the fact that the country's fiscal framework has been strengthened by a series of legislative steps, a move that is in line with Bulgaria's Euro ambitions. Regarding the convergence of long-term interest rates criterion, the one-year period to March 2018 revealed a level of 1.4%, well below the 3.2% reference value, adding to the positive picture of Bulgaria's nominal criteria fulfilment. The only criterion that remains to be fulfilled refers to the exchange rate, as Bulgaria's currency is not yet part of ERM II, but is however in the final stages of entry, with an outlook (in its optimistic version) of taking part in both the ERM II and the banking union beginning with mid-2019, meaning that, given the fact that the Lev is already pegged to the Euro (a status quo that positively affects capacity to keep exchange rates stable for the required two year period), 2022 seems to be a reasonable term for Bulgaria to complete its Euro quest and become part of the Euro Zone. This term is confirmed by Commission Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue Valdis Dombrovskis, as reported by Francesco Guarascio (2019) for Reuters.

Focusing on the case of Romania's Maastricht criteria fulfilment, we notice the deterioration of the situation in the last year. More precisely, until 2017 Romania fulfilled all the nominal convergence criteria, with the exception of the ERM II participation condition, but the 2018 developments saw Romania drifting away from the EZ related targets. More precisely, the long-term interest rate of 4.1% outlined in the 2018 Convergence Report was well above the 3.2% reference value, while the 2017 general government deficit level of 2.9% is in serious danger of falling below the 3% threshold once the final 2018 figures are published in 2019. The picture is similar in the case of price stability, as the 1.9% level outlined in the 2018 Convergence Report has significantly deteriorated, with a Q3 2018 level of above 5%, as reported by the Romanian National Bank.

The case of Croatia, a country which falls within the group of Member States which were hit hardest by the last financial crisis (Slijepčević, 2018), draws attention regarding nominal requirements mainly because of the 77% of GDP general

government debt (as reported by the Convergence Report 2018), an indicator that would take a relatively longer time to bring below the 60% threshold level even in the case of efficient fiscal policies with such an objective. However, the 2018 Convergence Report is optimist regarding Croatia's outlook of decreasing this debt to accepted levels. Other than this and the fact that it is not yet part of ERM II, Croatia fulfills all other nominal criteria, having a 1.3% inflation rate in the one-year period leading to March 2018, a budget surplus of 0.8% in 2017 and an average long-term interest rate of 2.6% in the year leading to March 2018, data that is highlighted in the same Convergence Report 2018 and/ or in the figures provided by Eurostat. The situation regarding nominal criteria fulfillment in the three countries is depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Nominal convergence criteria fulfilment in Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia (March 2018 snapshot)

	Inflation	Government debt (% of GDP)	General government balance (% of GDP)	Long-term interest rates	ERM II participation
Bulgaria	1.4%	25.4%	0.9%	1.4%	No, but in final stages of entry
Romania	1.9% at the time of the Report, but a sharp increase during 2018	35.1%,	-2.9%, but expected to deteriorate	4.1%	No
Croatia	1.3%	77.5%	0.9%	2.6%	No

Source: European Commission (2018) and Eurostat.

If nominal convergence criteria are clearly outlined in the Treaty of Maastricht, official references to real or structural convergence are scarcer. Nonetheless, the paramount importance of real and structural convergence for an efficient functioning of the EZ is unanimously recognized by both scholars and European institutions. The vast body of papers covering this subject include Franks *et al.* (2018), Diaz del Hoyo *et al.* (2017), Maniu (2018) and European Central Bank (2015).

Focusing on real convergence, we must specify that, although some authors use the term of real convergence as including structural elements, we will, for the purpose of this research, refer to real beta convergence, which, as noted by Dvorokova (2014), derives from the neoclassical theory of economic growth and represents the process by which initially poorer countries are closing the gap between them and richer countries due to the more dynamic growth rate experienced by the former. As noted in Dan (2019), Eurostat data reveals at the end of 2017 levels of *per capita* PPS GDP relative to the Euro Zone of 58.8% in the case of Romania, 57.9% in the case of Croatia and a mere 47.5% in the case of Bulgaria. The question that arises is whether these levels would be enough to ensure a successful EZ membership or, on the contrary, would pose additional hurdles for the new members, exposing

them even further to the loss of monetary independence and endangering their economic growth rates. Such concerns are even more vivid as Bulgaria, which has the lowest *per capita* PPS GDP in the EU, is the most keen to immediately adopt the single currency, a move characterized by Velasco Tamames, an analyst for the Economist Intelligence Unit quoted by Amaro (2018) for CNBC, as stemming from 'both a political and economic aspiration' and constituting a response to 'concerns of being relegated to a second tier of countries in a multi-speed EU given (…) Emmanuel Macron's strong push last year for euro area reform'.

Looking beyond nominal and real beta convergence, the question that arises is what the right indicators and their required levels are so that the loss of monetary independence would not spell disaster for the economy, but on the contrary, the full benefits of EZ membership could be enjoyed. As expected, the issue of structural convergence, as defined in the introductory section of this paper, has been analyzed from various perspectives, making up a body of economic literature from which we highlight the papers of Dolls *et al.* (2018), Maniu (2018), Vandenbroucke (2017), Haynes and Haynes (2016) and auf dem Brinke, Enderlein and Fritz-Vannahme (2015). Additionally, Bulgaria's bid to adopt the single currency revealed a personalized set of conditions for ERM II (and implicitly EZ) membership, most notably referring to the state of the banking system, an increased supervision of the non-banking financial sector, enhanced results in the fight against money laundering and some legislative changes referring to bankruptcy law, as reported by Krasimirov (2018). This approach was applauded by Bulgaria's finance minister, Vladislav Goranov, who, in a statement published by Bloomberg, recognized that 'for the first time since we joined the EU, euro members have engaged with concrete deadlines and concrete decisions for Bulgaria's euro-zone perspective, written in black and white', something that he views as 'a very positive sign' (Okov, 2018).

Last but not least, we introduce as central elements in this analysis several indicators pertaining to structural convergence that are proposed and analyzed by Dan (2019), namely unemployment, economic specialization, business cycle synchronization and the current account structure, showing that EZ membership is, from a structural perspective, feasible for the three Central Eastern European EU Member States, with econometric evidence showing Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia could potentially successfully accommodate ECB's monetary policy. This could indeed be interpreted as an argument to increase efforts to adopt the Euro, but it does not however necessarily indicate the exact moment at which Euro adoption would be most efficient. In fact, scholars and institutions are involved in a wide debate on this topic, as we will detail in the next section of the paper.

3. Euro aspirations – the perspective of national actors

Although EZ membership is openly acknowledged as an objective in all three considered Member States, the exact timing of Euro adoption, understood as the economic parameters that would prompt the debut of ERM II participation (which could be considered as the final step in the adoption process) so that EZ membership would enable reaping maximum benefits while in the same time being able to successfully absorb the loss of nationally controlled monetary policy, may be subject to debate.

From this point of view, Bulgaria has positioned itself in the most clearly defined situation by pushing for immediate ERM II membership and pledging to take all necessary legislative actions so that the Euro adoption process may be completed in 2022, a timeline confirmed by the European Commission as being optimist, but still part of an attainable scenario (Guarascio, 2019). Observing that, out of the three analyzed Member States, Bulgaria is in the weakest position for Euro adoption from a real economic convergence perspective, we appreciate that the political element of EZ membership plays a crucial role in this equation, especially in the context of the EU wide debate regarding the deep reform of the European block. As shown before, such views are shared by the Economist's analyst Velasco Tamames who, in an interview for Amaro (2018), highlights the political aspiration attached to the Bulgarian Euro bid and appreciates this move as an attempt to prevent Bulgaria from being included in the second tier of Member States in the eventuality of a multi-speed EU scenario of reform. Similarly, Maniu (2018) identifies analogous potential regarding the 'unfair' positioning of non-EZ Member States within the EU, which could increase pressure for a faster Euro adoption 'despite the adversities and unforeseen dangers'.

The analysis of the Euro atmosphere in Romania's institutions reveals a somewhat different story, one that is fundamentally different to the Bulgarian approach which was so well summarized by Bulgaria's prime minister, who, responding to arguments against a fast Euro adoption, stated that 'we have to do what is right, whatever happens' (Borisov, cited by the Associated Press news agency, 2019). More precisely, Romania's institutions, led by the National Bank of Romania (NBR), have a much more prudent tone, arguing that, without undermining the country's commitment to adopting the Euro, such a step should not be performed before the economy is fully prepared, meaning the achievement of a high level of convergence that includes real and juridical vectors, doubled by the capacity to continue with structural reforms even after becoming part of the EZ (Isărescu, 2015). This approach was constantly reiterated by the NBR in the last years, emphasizing that responsible, anticyclical economic policymaking needs to be paired with structural reforms aimed at creating a more flexible economic environment that would be instrumental to a smooth and durable convergence in living standards (Isărescu,

2018). One must note however that this desiderate regarding a future approach to policy making is not in line with the fact that, in the last two decades, fiscal policy in Romania has been mostly of a procyclical nature (Croitoru, 2018).

The NBR's position is backed up by academic research, the most prominent being that of Dăianu *et al.* (2017), who identify the insufficient GDP *per capita* (PPP adjusted) and the large structural gaps as the main obstacles for Euro adoption, noting also that hastening EZ accession for geopolitical reasons is an option that needs to be subject to a rationality check based on 'reliable data and sound judgement'. All in all, Dăianu *et al.* (2017) argue that reaching a GDP *per capita* level above 75% of the EZ average and achieving key structural conditions, with the increase in productivity generated by a greater emphasis on human capital and innovation seen as instrumental in this respect. A similar view on Romanian EZ membership is detailed in Iancu (2017), while Cerna (2017) takes an antagonistic (and minoritarian among scholars) stand by arguing that Romania could successfully take part in the Economic and Monetary Union and that benefits of a fast Euro adoption would greatly surpass the disadvantages of such a course of action.

The subject was addressed also by the Romanian Government, with Prime Minister Dăncilă pinning down the objective of a 2024 Euro adoption date, underlining the importance of policies that would increase competitiveness and ensure sustainable economic growth and stating that a national plan for Euro adoption is to be sent (accompanied by a report substantiating it) to the European Commission for analysis (Dăncilă, quoted by Grigore for Mediafax, 2019).

Last but not least, we one can observe that the view of Croatia's decision makers takes a similar path as their Bulgarian counterparts (while Romanian officials express similar objectives, but with a more prudent approach), as Boris Vujcic, the governor of the country's central bank, referred in 2018 to EZ membership as being 'the natural next step' (Vujcic, quoted by Okov for Bloomberg, 2018), with 2020 constituting the desired time to join ERM II (Kuzmanovic, 2019). Vujcic also appreciates that the benefits of joining the EZ are greater than the risks involved and that this situation is determining political will (Vujcic, quoted by Simon and Kuzmanovic for Bloomberg, 2019), an effort that has been recognized and praised by European Commission Vice-President Domobrovskis, according to Croatian media (Domobrovskis cited by Lozancic, 2019). The Euro adoption objective is shared by the Croatian Government and detailed in the 'Strategy for the Adoption of the Euro in the Republic of Croatia', a document co-signed with the Croatian National Bank in April 2018. Before concluding, we must observe that the determination of Croatia's leaders must be interpreted in the context of a peg between the Croatian Kuna and the Euro (just like in the case of the Bulgarian Lev), coupled with the justified optimism regarding the accelerated reduction of the public debt to GDP ratio in the near future.

4. Conclusions

Although, with the exception of Denmark and, at the time of writing these lines, Brexit-tormented Great Britain, EZ membership is a binding condition that all EU Member States are subject to, practice has shown that several countries like Sweden and, at a lesser extent, Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, are reluctant in fulfilling this obligation, as Euro adoption represents a complex decision, with a wide range of economic and political arguments weighing in. This context is especially marked by two factors: (1) the Euro Zone crisis, which has left deep scars in the structure of the EU and (2) the debates surrounding the reform of the European Union and central role that the EZ plays in certain reform scenarios. Against this background, our objective was to analyze the Euro adoption process in the EU's three newest Member States, namely Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia.

It is without doubt that EZ membership revolves around the concept of convergence, with its three dimensions: nominal, real and structural, or what is referred to in Dan (2019) as 'the convergence trinity'. The situation is relatively clearer regarding nominal convergence criteria, as they are straightforwardly specified and more easily managed by EZ aspirants. Bulgaria and Croatia, who are more determined at adopting the single currency as soon as possible, are currently focusing on ERM II admission, with the comfort of solid nominal indicators (with Croatia's debt to GDP ratio being regarded as manageable), as shown in this study. Romania on the other hand, experiences a moderate degradation of a previously strong nominal picture.

The real and structural facets of convergence are however subject to more debate. Ironically or not, Romania, which is the best positioned out of the three regarding real beta convergence with the EZ19 block, is also the most reluctant in hasting Euro adoption, scholars actively involved in the NBR's decision making process indicating a 75% GDP per capita relative to the EZ average as a minimal threshold for successful complete participation in the Economic and Monetary Union (Dăianu *et al.*, 2017), as opposed to the end of 2017 levels of 58.8% in the case of Romania, 57.9% in the case of Croatia and just 47.5% in the case of Bulgaria. This view is not shared however by Bulgarian and Croatian central bankers and politicians, who are currently struggling to convince the European institutions that their economies can fulfill personalized real and structural requirements (as mapped out by the ECB and the EC) and are apt for ERM II participation (starting with 2019 and 2020 respectively) and subsequently for EZ membership.

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Conciliation of Private Interests with the Outlook and Action of Local Authorities in the Field of Organization and Land Management of the Local Community

Carmen Adriana DOMOCOȘ

Abstract. The principle of local autonomy is manifested, among other means, through the enshrinement of the legal and exclusive competence of the local administrative authority to ensure the organization and land management of the territory on the basis of a long- and medium-term outlook that was previously submitted to public debate.

The exercise in practice of this competence entrusted to the local administration by Law no. 350/2001 has led to the occurrence of legal conflicts between private individuals and local administration.

Thus, through the Decision of Oradea Local Council no. 501/2016, the General Urban Plan of Oradea Municipality was approved, by means of which the manner of urban use of large number of lands owned by private law individuals and legal entities has been changed.

This new outlook of the Municipality resulted in a number of litigations that were brought before contentious administrative courts, in which the owners of the lands whose urban status was modified as shown above, requested the court to partially cancel the new General Urban Plan with regard to their lands and to reverse them to their former destination class.

Keywords: local community, full competence, public interest, private interest, legal certainty.

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1. The frame of the issue. The premises of this category of litigations

The principle of local autonomy, which is a fundamental principle of the rule of law implemented in the national legislation subsequent to December 1989, is manifested, among other means, through the enshrinement of the legal and exclusive competence of the local administrative authority to ensure territorial organization and land management on the basis of a long- and medium-term outlook that was previously submitted to public debate.

The exercise in practice of this competence granted to local administration by Law no. 350/2001 has led to the occurrence of legal conflicts between private-law individuals and the local government in connection with the new outlook implemented in terms of the territorial organization and land management of the city/ town concerned. At the level of Oradea Municipality, through Decision of Oradea Local Council no. 501/2016, the General Urban Plan of Oradea Municipality was approved, by means of which the manner of urban use of a large number of plots owned by private law individuals and legal entities has been changed. As a result of this change, the lands which, according to the old General Urban Plan, belonged economically and technically to the R1 a zone – Single-Family Residences, as it was possible to build isolated single-family dwellings on these plots under the concrete conditions established by the Zonal Urban Plan and the Detailed Urban Plan, were transferred to the 'arable land, orchards and vineyards' area, the construction of dwellings on these lands being thus prohibited.

This new outlook of Oradea Municipality resulted in a number of litigations that were brought before contentious administrative courts, in which the owners of the lands whose urban status was modified as shown above, requested the court to partially cancel the new General Urban Plan with regard to their lands and to reverse them to their former use category. Some of these litigations are pending and others have been finally settled, with some courts in the jurisdiction area of Oradea Court of Appeal having pronounced solutions of dismissal of the lawsuits filed by private individuals and other courts having pronounced solutions of admission of such lawsuits.

2. The jurisdiction of the adinistrative courts in these litigations

One of the main issues raised by these lawsuits is the establishment of the nature of the judicial review triggered by these lawsuits, namely whether it is a review of the legality of the local authority's decision or of the opportuneness (suitability) of its decision; the question being raised of whether censorship of the Municipality's outlook falls outside the sphere of contentious administrative review, considering that the Municipality enjoys full decision-making competence for the adoption of the urban planning regulation for the city concerned.

In the opinion of some of the courts that pronounced judgments, it has been held that the legislator expressly empowered the local council to coordinate and implement the urban planning activity carried out throughout the territory of the territorial administrative unit. Also, the council is bound to ensure compliance with the provisions of the approved land management and town planning documentation, for the realization of the urban development programme regarding the component localities of the commune or the city. Therefore, the change of the use category is a legal and exclusive competence granted to the local council.

It is therefore argued that the court cannot oblige the competent authority to issue a specific urban plan (of a predefined nature or content), this constituting an unacceptable interference with the exclusive competence of the administration. According to the current jurisprudence, the court can only oblige the administration to perform its own tasks, but it cannot substitute it, in the absence of an explicit legal text in this respect.

This view, quite seductive at first glance, ignores one of the fundamental competencies of contentious administrative courts, which is to examine the right of assessment of the public authority from the standpoint of the exercise of discretionary power and of whether it falls within the margin of assessment conferred by the law.

The *de jure* rejection of the right of contentious administrative courts to censor decisions made by administrative authorities within the limits of their assigned competences means accepting the excess of power without any control over the administration's activity, a state of affairs which is not acceptable in a state governed by the rule of law (Art. 1 par. 4 of the Romanian Constitution; according to Art. 1 par. 4 of the Romanian Constitution, the rule of law is organized not only according to the principle of the separation of powers, but also that of their balance within constitutional democracy.).

Starting from this premise, it was appreciated (The Court of Appeal of Alba Iulia, Decision no. 2760 of 25.04.2018) that the right of contentious administrative courts to assess the way in which local authorities understand to follow, through the decisions they make, the very principles underlying the legislative acts that grant them their competence, cannot be denied.

The basis for this control is found in the Law on contentious administrative matters no. 554/2004, which, in application of Art. 52 of the Romanian Constitution states that, among the grounds for a contentious administrative lawsuit, is included the 'excess of power', which is defined in Art. 2 letter n) of Law no. 554/2004 as 'the abusive exercise, by public administration bodies, of their right of assessment in violation of their jurisdictional limitations as provided under the law or in violation of citizens' fundamental rights and liberties'.

This provision is the legislative enshrinement of the competence of contentious administrative courts to examine the activity and decisions of administrative authorities, including from the perspective of exercising discretionary power and maintaining it within the limits provided by the law, in response to the imperative of maintaining a reasonable balance between public interest and subjective rights or private interests that may be harmed by administrative acts.

We therefore regard as superficial the solution of dismissing contentious administrative lawsuits of the kind in question, solely by invoking the principle of the separation of state powers and the absolute right of the authorities to exercise their legal powers without any external interference or control.

Numerous opinions have been expressed with regard to the legality-opportuneness dichotomy, ranging from the denial of any possibility for the contentious administrative courts to verify and cancel administrative acts issued on the basis of a decision-making mechanism founded on the discretionary power of its issues (Drăganu, 1992, pp. 186-200; Dragoş, 2004, p. 2) to the claim that legality is a sum of all the conditions for the validity of an administrative act, opportuneness being, from this perspective, an element of legality, which may be analyzed by the contentious administrative courts along with the legality of the act (Iorgovan, 2002, p. 49; Vedinaş, 1999, p. 110).

In our opinion, the sphere of review of contentious administrative courts as set forth by Law no. 554/2004 includes, in addition to the legality/illegality aspects themselves, an evaluation of the decision-making mechanism falling within the competence of the administrative authority in order to determine whether, in relation to the very principles enshrined by the legislative act granting decision-making competence, the rights and freedoms of citizens, the fundamental principles of the rule of law and of Community legislation are respected. Excess of power is a more or less disguised violation of material law. In the analysis of the excess of power, the court must also take into account the fact that, in administrative law relations, public interest prevails, which is aimed at the rule of law and constitutional democracy, at guaranteeing the fundamental rights, freedoms and duties of citizens, meeting the community's needs and fulfilling the competences of public authorities.

To conclude, having established the prerogative of contentious administrative courts of assessing the impact of the Municipality's decision to opt for rethinking, through the new General Urban Plan, the urban outlook regarding some plots that are privately owned by private law subjects, the question arises whether the right of assessment enjoyed by the Municipality in matters of territorial organization might lead to an excess of power in relation to the interests of the affected private individuals.

3. Legal power exclusive of the local authority or an excess of power?

To answer this question, it is necessary to analyze the very principles of territorial organization, as regulated by Law no. 350/2001.

According to this legislative act, the territory of the country is a part of the national wealth benefiting all the citizens of the country, including through the management of development processes, by means of activities of land management, urban planning or sustainable urban development carried out by central and local public authorities.

The public administration authorities are the manager and the guarantor of this wealth, within the limits of their legal powers. In order to ensure a balanced, coherent and sustainable development of the national territory, local public administration authorities harmonize their land-use decisions on the basis of the principles of decentralization, local autonomy and deconcentration of public services. Through public authorities, the state has the right and the duty to ensure conditions for sustainable development and respect for the general interest, under the law, through urban planning and land management activities.

The spatial management of the territory aims to provide individuals and communities with the right to fair use and responsibility for efficient land use, appropriate housing conditions, quality of architecture, protection of the architectural, urban and cultural identity of urban and rural localities, working conditions, services and transport that respond to the diversity of the needs and resources of the population, reduction of energy consumption, ensuring the protection of natural and built landscapes, preserving biodiversity and creating ecological continuity, public security and sanitation, streamlining the demand for transport.

The spatial management of the territory of the country is a mandatory, ongoing and prospective activity, carried out in the interest of the communities that use it, in accordance with the values and aspirations of society and with the requirements of integration into the European space. The spatial management of the territory provides individuals and communities with the right to fair use and responsibility for efficient land use.

Management is achieved through land management and urban planning, which are assemblies of complex activities of general interest that contribute to balanced spatial development, the protection of the natural and built heritage, the improvement of living conditions in urban and rural areas, as well as ensuring territorial cohesion at regional, national and European level.

The land management activity should be: global, aiming to coordinate the various sectoral policies into an integrated ensemble; functional, having to take into account the natural and built framework based on common cultural values and interests; prospective, having to analyze the long-term development trends of economic, ecological, social and cultural phenomena and interventions, and to take

them into account during application; democratic, ensuring the participation of the population and of its political representatives in the decision-making process.

The conclusion of the analysis of these regulations is that, in the complex process of land management and urban planning, one must also take into consideration the interest of the individuals and of the community using the territory. Law no. 350/2001 does not confer on local authorities absolute discretionary power in establishing the outlook on the territorial organization of the city concerned. On the contrary, the principles outlined above are benchmarks that ought to be taken into consideration by local authorities in the drafting of a strategy for territorial development and organization, and in light of which contentious administrative courts may conclude whether the change of outlook implemented in the territorial organization and land management of the city concerned constitutes an abuse of power susceptible of being removed judicially.

Without denying the right of the administrative authority to change the use category of the land through a new general urban plan, the arguments for such a change must be thoroughly motivated by reasons corresponding to the interests of individuals or the community, and which must also take into account the fundamental principles of Community law.

The complex process of designing the general urban plan must be based on a clear, global outlook and long-term perspective. The obligation to draw up a general urban plan every 10 years does not mean that the long-term outlook of urbanization as set out in the previous general urban plan should not be taken into account, because the outlook of the new plan should have as its starting point the existing concrete situation (on the basis of the previous plan's outlook) given that it concerns an assembly of elements of the same kind. Any major change, which will cause a different situation for some elements of the same assembly, must be thoroughly justified, as stipulated by Law no. 350/2001.

4. The effects of the community principles upon decision-making activity of local public administration

Such a change must respect the principle of predictability, clarity, stability and legitimate expectations, the principle of legality requiring public authorities to protect the legitimate expectations of individuals, principles which are clearly enshrined by the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights or of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Having been consolidated in the sphere of European Law, through the constant jurisprudence of the Courts in Luxembourg and Strasbourg, the principle of legal certainty could be defined as 'the recognized opportunity for any citizen to evolve in a secure legal environment, sheltered from lack of clarity and

from the unexpected changes that affect legal rules'. Faced with a multitude of particular situations, the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights paid particular attention to the principle of legal certainty, assuming that, in its absence, the proper operation of a legal system would be seriously disturbed. In Romania, the existence and applicability of this principle results from the analysis of the provisions of Art. 1 par. 3 of the Romanian Constitution (Trăilescu, 2011, p. 112).

The principle of legitimate expectations, a component of the legality of administrative acts, is tightly connected to the above principle, establishing the obligation of public authorities to protect the legitimate expectations of individuals by establishing their right to evolve in a stable and predictable legal framework which they can trust, sheltered from its brutal changes.

The principle of legitimate expectations stems from the existence of fair administrative legal relations, where the dominant position of public authorities is moderate, not excessive, taking into account not only public interest, but also the legitimate interests and legitimate expectations of the nationals.

The main argument put forward by the municipality in support of the decision to restrict the buildable area by changing the use category of certain plots through the new general urban plan is the principle of rational management and land resource economy, by limiting the extension of cities and by using primarily urban areas that have already been built and equipped. This principle is stated in various Community documents: the Leipzig Charter (EU member states, 2007), the Toledo Declaration (EU member states, 2010), the Europe 2020 Strategy (EU member states, 2017) and it has been taken over, after 2007, in the framework of national urban planning legislation.

However, all these Community documents speak of the need to develop a coherent and long-term outlook on urban development policies.

Thus, the Leipzig Charter recommends the drawing up of realistic urban development programmes, as well as the development of a coherent outlook of the city (Point I, subparagraph 3, paragraph 2), while the Toledo Declaration focuses on 'integrated urban regeneration' in the context of the global financial, economic and social crisis, and also refers to the need of elaborating a global outlook of urban development, both in terms of the new developments and of existing ones (Point A. 2 paragraph 2).

Pointing out that a city means time and space, the Toledo Declaration mentions that, in terms of time, it is best to avoid short-term urban management methods. An integrated outlook or urban plan should contain clear objectives and commitments, combining long-term framework outlooks.

Another European Convention invoked by the Municipality to support the right to restrict the city's buildable area is the European Landscape Convention of

Florence, (Council of Europe, 2002), which imposed on each signatory party the obligation to legally recognize landscapes as an essential component of the living environment for the population, an expression of the diversity of the common cultural and natural heritage and the foundation of its identity, to establish and implement landscape policies which aim at protecting, managing and planning it, by adopting specific measures referred to in this Convention, to establish participation procedures for the general public, regional and local authorities, as well as for other stakeholders interested in defining and implementing landscape policies, to integrate the landscape into land management, urban planning and cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as into other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on the landscape.

5. Conclusions

Without neglecting the need to implement these obligations, it cannot be held that the consideration of this Convention might justify the breach of the principles of consistency, predictability, clarity, stability and legitimate expectation set out above.

As a conclusion, the legislative framework and the fundamental principles of Romanian and European law may be the benchmarks in relation to which the contentious administrative courts before which actions were brought by the owners of the lands whose urban planning status has been radically changed through the new outlook of the municipality on territorial organization, could analyze, on a case-by-case basis, to what extent administrative decision-making acts fall within the limits of legality and legal normality or have slipped into the sphere of the abuse of power, which ought to be sanctioned.

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Social Entrepreneurship
and the Challenge of
Urban Economic Development

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Abstract. This paper explores the concept of social entrepreneurship and its potential to address the condition of urban poverty in the United States. To this end, it first looks at the parameters of social entrepreneurship, what it is and how it works, as well as the conditions that make poverty a cyclical and self-reinforcing issue. These two sets of concepts are then combined to examine how the process of social entrepreneurship does or does not apply to the circumstances of poverty as well as particular challenges to its application in an urban American context. To examine these challenges in more detail to specific cases, the Chicago West Side Xcelerator and Pittsburgh's 412 Food Rescue, are considered. These two organizations have taken very different approaches to the use of entrepreneurship to provide relief to inner-city poor, so that by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, some conclusions can be draw regarding what an effective model for urban social entrepreneurship might look like.

Keywords: social entrepreneurship, poverty, inner-city economic development, accelerator, food insecurity.

1. What is social entrepreneurship?

According to the United States census bureau 12.3% of the population or 39.7 million individuals live in poverty (Center for Poverty Research, 2018). Poverty is a particularly pressing concern in urban centers where its concentration can contribute to the formation of slums, gang violence, economic stagnation or deterioration, reduction of tax revenues and the attendant under-funding of government services such as education and law enforcement, and a host of other problems. The practice of social entrepreneurship has a history of being used to address poverty and economic stagnation in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries and among Native populations (Tingey *et al.*, 2016; Meguirre *et al.*, 2016). However, it has a low rate of implementation in urban centers in the United States and an even lower rate of success in those situations. By comparing two organizations, the Chicago West Side Accelerator and Pittsburgh's 412 Food Rescue each of which has taken a radically different approach to addressing the needs of poor inner-city areas it is possible to shed light on some of the challenges, both physical and conceptual, facing efforts at poverty relief and economic development in urban America.

In a general sense, social entrepreneurship is a frame work for approaching business growth and economic development where the intention is both to generate wealth and to provide benefits, monetary and otherwise, to those who lack them, especially in the form of community building, and operates on the assumption that this is not just a moral way of doing things but may actually be the most effective approach as the two arms of social entrepreneurship profit and social improvement, frequently build off of and enhance one another. According to Thomas Lyons, Professor of Agriculture Food and Resource Economics at Michigan State University 'We can choose either free markets *or* socialism. We must serve either shareholders *or* stakeholders. We can serve the interests of the few *or* the many… Why can't we use markets to solve social problems? What prevents us from serving shareholders and stakeholders (doing well and good) at the same time?... The ultimate manifestation of the 'sweet spot' where the market meets social responsibility is the work of social entrepreneurs, who employ the mindset, skills, tools, techniques and processes of commercial entrepreneurship in pursuit of a social mission. Whether they structure their social enterprises as nonprofits, for-profits or hybrids of the two, social entrepreneurs hold the key' (Lyons, 2016, pp. 2-3). The hope is often that social entrepreneurship will create a 'virtuous cycle' in which the wealth generated is funneled back into the community. This may happen directly, through the business using some of its profits to pay for community improvement but is often indirect in the form of wages paid to local employees and the purchase of supplies from local businesses, which is seen as ultimately having greater and more sustainable benefits as this raises the wealth of the community as whole and

those who receive it can then spread it further through their own payment of wages or purchases. As the community as a whole becomes wealthier, it would be able to invest in infrastructure features that benefit all members, such as schools, roads, and hospitals, which may play an important role in disrupting the cycle of poverty as explained below. Ideally, social enterprises would also benefit the community in other, intangible, ways as well as the growth of businesses and increased job opportunities would facilitate skill building as well as providing mentors and role models, giving those effected tools to improve their situation beyond the purely financial.

2. The vicious cycle of urban poverty in America

In contrast to the virtuous cycle proposed by social entrepreneurship the condition of poverty often constitutes a vicious cycle in which the very conditions of poverty render it increasingly difficult for those afflicted to free either themselves or future generations from the condition. This vicious cycle of poverty is particularly prevalent in urban areas in the United States for a number of reasons. On the most basic level there is a lack of investment, financial, logistical, etc., in poor urban areas. According to 'Identifying the unique needs of urban entrepreneurs: African American skill set development' by Durr, Lyons, and Lichtenstien 'The massive disinvestment in the city's urban core has left that part of the metropolitan region a wasteland (e.g., dilapidated business storefronts, ghost-like business areas with high rates of unemployment, deteriorating housing stock, high rates of crime, and staggering social problems). The inner-cities became a location in which few if any investors with capital sought to launch new enterprises because the people who live in these areas are those who literally cannot afford to escape, and are typically members of minority groups' (Durr, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2000, p. 76).

One of the reasons poor urban areas are seen as a bad investment is because of the perception that they are associated with crime. Because of the perceived risks to employees and property, as well as the additional cost logistical headache of maintaining heightened security, business owners may be reluctant to set up shop in poorer areas, and quick to move out if they encounter difficulties. This causes such areas to have a higher than normal rate of business failure, encouraging investors to shun them. Even government personnel such as teachers or law enforcement may be less willing to service such areas. The irony is that, while studies such as the one in the work 'Poverty and crime' by Sharkey, Besbris, and Friedson do report a higher than normal incidence of crime in poor areas, they indicate the very lack of investment is a significant cause of this. Not only to such areas lack sufficient options for legal employment, leading residence to seek illegal forms of income by necessity, but also the lack of both community role models and law

enforcement, lessens deterrents to crime, while failing to provide positive alternatives (Sharkey, Besbris and Friedson, 2016).

The perception of those from poor areas as potential criminals also leads, to those outside the community to be reluctant to hire people from poor areas, or to engage in business dealings with them. This leads to another major component in the vicious cycle of poverty, the isolation of poor areas. One of the components in the isolation of poor areas is what is referred to as the spatial mismatch hypothesis. In simplified form, the spatial mismatch hypothesis addresses the tendency above for various essential institutions, especially sources of employment to not locate themselves in poor urban areas, preferring wealthier, often suburban locations. This combined with the fact that people in these areas often lack the means to own their own automobiles or regularly pay cab fares means that they are left without a way to access these institutions (Hu, 2015, p. 33). The spatial mismatch can also be extrapolated into theories on skill and information mismatch which state that 'cities have plenty of job opportunities, but these jobs require high-level skills that many inner-city job seekers do not have' and the information mismatch hypothesis which claims 'living in segregated inner-city neighborhoods limits the social contacts of poor job seekers with the mainstream society that could supply relevant information about job openings' (Hu, 2015, p. 34). The spatial mismatch is part of a larger concern with poverty centers, namely the idea of a 'transit desert' where residences are too poor to own cars but which is also not located near public transit routes that will give them access to the services and resources they need. According to Leah Lizarondo, in 'Food Insecurity and Resource Access in Allegheny County: using GIS to Identify High Need Communities and Access Food Recovery and Redistribution Efforts', 'Immobility could prevent families from accessing vital resources that may be relatively nearby, and lack of transit is known to compound the difficulties of poverty' (Lizarondo, 2018, p. 1). This can contribute to the food deserts and lack of other basic necessities and 'This is likely even more relevant when food assistance programs have inconvenient hours or when household providers have multiple jobs with odd hours' (Lizarondo, 2018, p. 1).

These theories also point to other crucial components of the isolation and lack of investment in urban poverty centers, namely lack of skills, lack of resources, and lack of networking opportunities, all of which contribute to the inability of inner-city residents to improve their situation. On a foundational level, schools in poor areas tend to be under-funded and less competently staffed than schools in other areas. Zhao in 'From deficiency to strength: shifting the mindset about education inequality' notes that a 'vast chasm in academic achievement has long existed along racial and poverty lines. Children of color and from low-income families have, on average, performed worse on virtually all indicators of academic success: standardized test scores, high school graduation rates, and college matriculation

rates' (Zhao, 2016, p. 723). Further Zhao makes clear that these conditions have a direct these students' prospects later in life.

> '... the disadvantaged children are put into remediation in reading and math and suffer from the pedagogy of poverty, the more advantaged children are enjoying a much broader curriculum and developing qualities that may be of greater value for admissions to colleges or finding employment. Such skills have generally been referred to as 21st century skills or noncognitive qualities. They have gained more value in the new work place. In other words, even if we fixed the educational achievement gap so disadvantaged children had the similar test scores and even went to college, they face the challenge of credential inflation. When everyone has a college degree, employers look for something else' (Zhao, 2016, p. 726)

She concludes that 'Children of the wealthy and dominant social group is[sic] able to produce higher test scores, thanks to their resources, they have access to more rewarding opportunities in life. They then can create better opportunities for their children to have more merit and thus perpetuate their dominance, while the poor and underprivileged can only stay in their cycle of poverty' (Zhao, 2016, p. 730).

These educational conditions set the state for a lifelong skill deficit that makes attempts at economic improvement extremely difficult. Durr and colleges note that 'The limited skills of many inner-city minority employees make them vulnerable to cyclical fluctuations in hiring and to the down-sizing that has characterized the globalization of the economy. They are often the 'last hired and first fired', as one incubation program manager put it. Many find that their only option is to start a business; however, they're not necessarily equipped to do so, nor are they necessarily so inclined' (Durr, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2000, p. 87). In addition 'The second most frequently identified obstacle to entrepreneurship in the inner-city was the fact that would-be entrepreneurs are highly deficient in the business and technical skills necessary for innovation, business formation, and business development over the long term...While the list of needed skills...covers a wide variety of competencies, a lack of skills in decision making, business planning and general business acumen were featured' (Durr, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2000, p. 84). All of this indicates how the poor education and subsequent lack of opportunities for skill development creates a chain reaction that leave inner-city residents trapped in poverty.

These financial difficulties and attendant living conditions faced by inner-city residents lead to another important issue, the lack of resources as Durr explains 'Because inner-city minority entrepreneurs are often low-income and are many times caught up in the social problems that are common to their communities,

they are inclined to have more personal problems than do other entrepreneurs. This tends to interfere with their ability to successfully start and sustain a business. These problems may range from poor health to single parents with the need for childcare assistance' (Durr, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2000, p. 85). Finally, the lack of contacts between those in poverty centers and the outside world contributes to a whole host of factors that make it more difficult to improve their economic conditions.

> 'The relative isolation from the rest of the metropolitan area in which inner-city minority residents tend to live is said to act as a barrier to entrepreneurship as well. This condition serves to make it more difficult to stay abreast of new developments, access resources, and develop markets, among other things. The isolation scenario embodies business concept, physical, core competencies/skills, and market resources. Isolation can yield a lack of visibility and capability regarded new ideas, technologies, sources of information, etc. It can also make resources less available and less affordable. Finally, isolation, itself, is a transaction barrier to the acquisition of resources.' (Durr, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2000, p. 87)

This shows how all the different elements of the vicious cycle of poverty interact with and reinforce each other, especially how isolation, both geographical and social, can make other issues much harder to address.

Given these challenges, it is not surprising that attempting to improve conditions in poverty areas has proved highly difficult. Durr and colleges describe the two main strategies for attempting to stimulate the economy of inner-city zones.

> 'The first is an effort to attract outside investment. This has generally focused on initiatives to encourage major corporations to locate facilities in the urban core to create jobs for local residents and provide needed services. Examples of this strategy are many and include programs to bring major chain supermarkets into the inner-city or to provide financial incentives to encourage manufactures to build new plants in these communities... The second general urban economic development strategy has been an attempt to foster local, community-based economic activity and investment. Its focus is on enterprise development, as opposed to business attraction. This strategy includes a host of programs that are presently in good currency, among them enterprise and empowerment zones, empowerment business incubation programs, micro-lending programs, community banking, cooperatives, minority business development centers, etc.' (Durr, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2000, pp. 77-78)

However, such endeavors have achieved only limited success. Parallels can be seen between these strategies and the virtuous cycle that is the aim of social entrepreneurship, though the focus and slant of the programs in question might be slightly different. However, even with the more direct community focus of social entrepreneurship, many barriers, both practical and ideological exist to the economic development of inner-city areas.

3. Barriers to urban social entrepreneurship

Despite the potential of social entrepreneurship to address some of the components of the vicious cycle of poverty, a number of barriers exist towards the realization of this goal. Perhaps the greatest barrier to social entrepreneurship in inner-city areas is the perception of how extensive the barriers to its success are. This perception of the degree of difficulty involved can lead potential investors to not contribute as much as they would in other circumstances or even to avoid starting such programs entirely. One of the reasons for seeing urban social entrepreneurship as prone to failure relate to the difficulties both real and projected regarding any economic undertaking in an inner-city poverty center as explained in the preceding section.

For one thing, such enterprises frequently suffer from a lack of funding. This is partly because 'Banks are highly reluctant to make loans to this latter group. Chief among the reasons given for turning down minority business loan applicants are lack of collateral and a bad credit history. Furthermore, inner-city entrepreneurs tend to lack sufficient personal savings, family backing, or friends who are capable of helping them financially – all of which are resources commonly used by majority entrepreneurs' (Durr, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2000, p. 83). This barrier involves the fact that poor people, by definition, lack money but in also, their lack of access to funding channels open to other because of the perception of them as untrustworthy and unable to handle money properly due to ignorance and inexperience. Likewise, 'Minority entrepreneurs have difficulty finding markets for their goods or services, especially outside of their own communities. In some cases, they do not have the necessary contacts. In most cases, however, it is difficult for them to become suppliers to majority-owned corporations because they are often not taken seriously as business people' (Durr, Lyons and Lichtenstein, 2000, pp. 84–85).

However, there is also the perception that the concept of social entrepreneurship is not appropriate to the developed world, especially the United States because of aspects of mutualism and community building embedded in the concept, the idea being that Americans are "too individualistic" to participate fully and effectively in such undertakings. This can be seen from comments regarding social enterprises involving Native peoples in the United States and in Mexico respectively.

In 'Entrepreneurship education: A strength-based approach to substance use and suicide prevention for American Indian adolescents' Tingey, Larzelere-Hinton, Goklish, Ingalls, Craft, Sprengeler, McGuire, and Barlow explain that 'we adapted conventional entrepreneurial concepts for the Apache cultural context. Many existing youth entrepreneurship models we explored valued an individual approach to business development. However, in the participating and other AI communities, a collective approach is more appropriate. Thus, the ABG curriculum was designed to promote a cooperative methodology to entrepreneurship and to teach youth how the entire community benefits from business creation' (Tingey *et al.*, 2016, p. 260) and in 'Women empowerment through social innovation in indigenous social enterprises' Maguirre, Ruelas, and De La Torre say 'Social enterprises in indigenous communities are recognized as highly effective, because the cultural characteristics of this type of communities facilitate the establishment of this type of enterprises' (Maguirre, Ruelas and De La Torre, 2016, p. 167). Both statements stress how these Native communities are seen as unusual in their focus on cooperation and community and how accommodating this difference involves deviating from the 'normal' trajectory of Western economics. The implication being that the mutualistic qualities that would make social entrepreneurship successful are lacking or diminished outside of such 'traditional' societies, rendering urban communities a poor choice for this type of intervention. The pressures described here impact both the way enterprises aiming to mitigate urban poverty design and orient themselves and the measure of success that they are able to achieve as can be seen in the following two cases.

4. The case of the West Side Xcelerator

The West Side Xcelerator was a program designed to mitigate poverty in the Chicago area by providing resources to help people from poor neighborhoods to turn innovative business and product ideas into reality by helping to facilitate access to resources, distributing, marketing and other vital components of business initiation and growth as outlined above. This process was intended to jump start the virtuous cycle of social entrepreneurship by bringing more wealth and employment opportunities into poor communities via local innovations. However, due to lack of investment, the West Side Xcelerator was unable to provide sufficient support to overcome they many barriers faced by its participants and, eventually had to downsize to the point where it can no longer be considered a true business accelerator, as it focuses almost exclusively on building technological skill rather than complementing the full range of requirements for urban economic development. While specializing in a specific aspect of this range is certainly not a bad idea, as will be explained below, this course of events does indicate that

the West Side Xcelerator lacked the support needed to pursue its original, more ambitious plan.

Marvin Austin, Senior Director of Economic Development Strategy of the West Side Xcelerator and still employed by Bethel New Life, the parent organization under which the Xcelerator operated, explained the many challenges faced by the Xcelerator during an interview in 2016. To begin with he expressed the one of the most basic problems with inner-city economic development, that funds for such development are simply not available. Nor is there an issue with there simply being a general lack of funds for economic development in America as Austin contrasted the high level of funding and development taking place in Chicago's downtown area with the almost complete lack of same in less affluent and more peripheral areas of the city (Austin, 2016), reinforcing the idea expressed above regarding the shunning or poorer areas as a 'bad investment.' The stereotypical lack of trust towards poor people was also reflected in the fact that, on the occasions when outside developers did start a new business in the West Side neighborhoods, they would avoid hiring locals and, instead bring in employees from other, more 'reputable' areas (Austin, 2016). As predicted by the theory above, this practice had the effect of strangling the virtuous cycle of entrepreneurship as none of the wealth generated by these businesses as integrated back into the community, nor were community member able to obtain skills or role models for gainful employment and future business growth.

However, Austin admitted that the challenges facing the Xcelerator were not simply the result of baseless prejudice. Clients came into the program with very little in the way of skills or understanding of how to identify market needs or to run and grow a business and their lack of access to resources and business contacts made it difficult for them to act on the abilities and knowledge they did have. As expressed above, Austin confirmed that potential inner-city entrepreneurs were lacking, not just in specific areas needed for economic growth but in all areas. On the basic level of business innovation, Austin observed that many of the members in the program lacked an understanding of how to identify market needs or develop products with growth potential, instead falling back on the 'standard' businesses for necessity entrepreneurs such as beauty salons and convenience stores (Austin, 2016). Because such businesses lack sufficient growth potential and do not generate much wealth, they frequently fail to initiate the virtuous cycle of social entrepreneurship.

Another issue that Austin identified was a lack of resources, meaning that inner-city entrepreneurs do not receive the necessary funding to develop sufficient infrastructure for their business. Austin explained that members of the West Side Xcelerator often lacked the means to hire employees so they had to perform all business tasks themselves or the means to purchases business equipment such as

vehicles so they would use their personal possessions instead. Even when such businesses were initially successful, they were incredibly precarious and usually unsustainable as simple accidents such as the entrepreneur becoming ill or their vehicle malfunctioning could result in an interruption of service it was often impossible to recover from (Austin, 2016).

A further concern involved the ability of the members to interact with the larger business world. Even when potential entrepreneurs were able to produce market innovations, they often struggled to generate business growth due to the inability to connect with marketers and distributors outside the community. Conversely, even when such connections were made, mutual mistrust born from the stereotypes about people living in poverty explained above combined with the participants' very real lack of knowledge regarding the conventions of the larger business world could make successful dealing impossible. Austin described one Xcelerator participant who had created a product of sufficient caliber that a large distributor wanted to take it on board, however, the entrepreneur rejected the offer because he did not think he was being offered enough money and was certain the distributor was attempting to rip him off. Although, based on his experience in the business world, Austin believed the man was being offered a fair deal, an exchange that had the potential to be mutually beneficial fell through due to mistrust and lack of information (Austin, 2016).

The important thing to note here is the sheer range of different obstacles faced by the Xcelerator. As Austin pointed out, the enterprise might have been able to address one or two the issues facing their members. They might have been able to help them acquire the skills to better assess market needs, to obtain to resources to build business infrastructure, or to better understand and navigate business negotiations. However, especially with the limited support the project received, fully addressing all of these concerns was simply not possible. Austin explained how this forced the West Side Xcelerator program itself to become part of the vicious cycle of poverty in that assumptions about the program's inability to succeed, as shown by the material above regarding general perceptions towards inner-city economic development contributed to the program being under funded. This in turn contributed to the poor performance of its undertakings, which could be seen as justification for continued under funding (Austin, 2016).

5. The Case of 412 Food Rescue

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a very different form of social enterprise can be seen in the form of the 412 Food Rescue program. This is an organization aimed at eliminating food waste. Its primary function is locating food that is no longer legally saleable but is still edible and arranging its distribution to those who can-

not afford to purchase food. It does this by serving as a bridge between donor institutions, such as restaurants or supermarkets which often have surplus food and non-profit organizations that serve the needy. While these groups possess the ability to compliment and mutually benefit each other, they often lack the infrastructure to connect with each other directly. 412 Food Rescue provides this by means of an app which donor institutions can us to inform the organization when they have such food available. 412 Food Rescue then dispatches one of its fleet of, mostly volunteer, delivery to collect the food and take it to one of its non-profit partners. This can be seen as an attempt to address issues related to the spatial mismatch issues presented above as 14% of the households in the area the program serves do not have cars and of that 14%, 75% are also not located near sources of public transit (412 Food Rescue, 2018).

In addition, the organization also runs a number of other programs, including teaching classes on more efficient and economical use of food, the sale of "ugly" or cosmetically undesirable produce collected from farmers, organizing the harvest and distribution of edible food that has been left ungathered through lack of commercial viability, and product innovations utilizing that would otherwise be discarded, for example LOAF, a line of craft beer made from old bread (412 Food Rescue, 2018). Since its founding in 2015 the company has redistributed over 3,000,000 pounds of food worth more than $7,000,000. In addition, 90% percent of residences on the receiving end of rescued food report increased food security and 92% greater economic stability. 47% of the food the company redistributes is fresh produce which has led to improved nutrition for 86% of recipients (412 Food Rescue, 2018). Of especial significance is the fact many programs designed to help the food insecure success is undercut by the fact that, although the target population receives food, it often consumes only a small portion of that food, due to the food in question being unappealing, unhealthy, or too complex and time consuming for recipients to prepare. However, statistics show that 88% of recipients used the majority of the food received through 412 Food Rescue (Greeno, 2018, p. 1), all of which show its potential to impact important elements of the vicious cycle of poverty.

The program has been so successful that by 2018 it was able to not only cover the Pittsburgh area, but also to expand in to nearby Washington county. However, one of the reasons for this is because it received a sizable donation from Uber and another from Farm Aid (Varine, 2018). Currently, the company is preparing to start leasing its app for use by organizations in other parts of the country, and already as prospective clients in San Francisco and Cleveland (Aupperlee, 2018). This economic growth and expansion as well as the willingness of other organizations to fund or patronize 412 Food Rescue show that the reluctance of outside organizations to invest, which severely undercut the West Side Xcelerator, has not been an

issue for 412 Food Rescue and it is worth taking a look at the specifics of the two organizations to untangle what may account for the differences in their trajectories.

6. Conclusions

The difference between the two cases is striking in that one has experienced significant success while the other struggled and had to downsize to the point of no longer being the same entity. This begs the question of what accounts for this difference. First and foremost is the question of focus. Although 412 Food Rescue uses several different methods to obtain its goal, it remains solely focused on the productive redistribution of food and does not attempt to address the cycle of poverty in the areas it serves in any other ways. This is not to say that this approach lacks the potential for change. The organizations with which 412 Food Rescue partners do attempt to address the vicious cycle of poverty on a broader scale and by relieving them of the need to devote time, money, and brain power to obtaining food for those who rely on them 412 Food Rescue allows them to instead reallocate these resources to more effectively address other aspects of poverty. Likewise, the freeing up of these resources is then passed on to the residents in the areas they serve, who can then utilize them to improve their lives in other ways. In addition, because it also offers classes on nutrition and efficient food use, 412 Food Rescue provides an element direct skill building and empowerment, which is an essential component to social enterprise and community development.

While, due to its narrow focus, 412 Food Rescue does not produce the scope of change in poor communities that a program like the West Side Xcelerator would have if successful, Its focus has allowed it to be successful and to foster gradual change that may, eventually produce a ripple effect as the statistics about increased health and economic stability. In addition, by freeing up resources 412 Food Rescue has the potential to enhance other social enterprises that operate simultaneously. For example, the existence of such a program could have removed some pressure on participants in the West Side Xcelerator, allowing them to allocate more resources to overcoming some of many barriers to the success of their enterprises as explained above. It is worth noting that, after the original plan for the Xcelerator proved unsustainable, the parent organization opted to scale the program back to the much narrower focus of technology skill training. While this program also has the potential to create a ripple effect, it is worth noting that the West Side Xcelerator ultimately resorted to focusing on a single aspect of the poverty cycle, similar to 412 Food Rescue, suggesting that many and complex barriers to breaking the cycle of poverty may be more effectively addressed individually, rather than a single program trying to solve several issues at once. In particular the company's 2018 impact report noted that 77% of recipients reported feeling more connected to

their community (412 Food Rescue, 2018) signaling an important component in the virtuous cycle of social enterprise.

However, this is not the full story as other differences between the two programs raise important concerns about how social entrepreneurship and inner-city economic development are viewed in the United States. While 412 Food Rescue does generate some wealth via entrance fees for classes, and by the sale of ugly produce and products made from reclaimed food, it is questionable how much of this wealth is being recycled back into the community. This is because, while 412 Food Rescue does have some employees and owns some of its own vehicles, it largely relies on volunteers who use their own vehicles to collect and distribute food. On a more general level, the approach taken by 412 Food Rescue leaves the success of the enterprise primarily in the hands of 'experts' rather than in those of community members, allowing conceptions about the competence, trustworthiness, etc. of individuals in poverty zones to remain intact. Likewise, the heavy reliance on volunteers strongly codes it as a primarily philanthropic enterprise, allowing entrenched ideas about the divide between profit and community benefit that social entrepreneurship seeks to bridge to go unchallenged.

In the end, neither undertaking can be considered a completely successful social enterprise, the West Side Xcelerator because it did not achieve sufficient concrete success and 412 Food Rescue because it does not sufficiently meet the criteria for a social enterprise. While social entrepreneurship is meant to be flexible to fit the situation, avoiding a one-size-fits-all model and further research needs to be done to produce additional data points, it can tentatively be concluded that steps need to be taken to address both practical and ideological barriers to inner-city development. Further, it may be desirable to develop a middle of the road approach with narrow focus and, therefore, greater sustainability than the initial version of the West Side Xcelerator, but which retains more direct involvement with the community than the system used by 412 Food Rescue, leaving greater potential for benefit through employment, role models, purchase of supplies, etc., in essence, finding the 'sweet spot' mentioned by Lyons in his discussion of social entrepreneurship.

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Skill IT for Youth Project – Romanian Non-Governmental Organizations E-Readiness to Develop Young People's Digital Skills

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Abstract. Romania ranks last in European Union regarding the share of population with basic or above basic digital skills. In filling out the gap between Romanians and other EU citizens, the nonprofit sector from Romania started, slowly, to address the issue through specific services, mainly targeting children and youth, but also teachers. The paper explores how prepared the nonprofit sector is to undertake this responsibility, mainly the one of developing the young people's digital skills. The main results show that NGOs have not yet a sufficient level of digital-readiness (not at the organizational level or at the professional level), the sector is similarly affected by the low level of digital skills of its professionals, and NGOs need assistance and help in getting on track with today's requirements regarding digitization and ICT use. The NGOs acknowledge this need aiming to improve the overall management of the organization, and to a lesser extent to improve the services delivered to their clients, young people, in order to support them to achieve a higher level of ICT/media use and literacy.

Keywords: Romanian nonprofit sector, Romanian NGOs, young people, e-readiness; digital skills.

1. Introduction

Romania ranks last in European Union regarding the share of population with basic or above basic digital skills: data from 2017, from Eurostat, shows that only 29% of Romanians have these basic or above basic skills, while EU average is 57%. In filling out this extremely large gap between Romanians and other EU citizens, the nonprofit sector from Romania started slowly to address the issue, complementary to the ICT formal education, through specific services, mainly targeting children and youth, but also teachers.

In a European level project, funded through EU Erasmus+ program, Danis Foundation (a NGO from Cluj-Napoca, Romania) researched how prepared and how interested the NGOs working with young people or youth organizations are to deliver digital skills, but also future work skills educational programs. The project (Skill IT for Youth, 2018-2020), developed in partnership with other NGOs from Ireland, Norway and Poland, aims at professionalizing youth workers in supporting young people to develop the future work skills, mainly digital skills.

The project stage of the project, conducted during the summer of 2018, aimed mainly to collect data necessary for the development of open educational resources for youth workers and youth organizations from the four countries, which are available at: www.digipathways.io. In the context of scarce literature analyzing the work of the Romanian NGO sector in the digital literacy field, the project research results help to build an initial profile of the youth organizations and NGOs working with young people regarding: digitization level of the NGOs, digital strategies of the organizations, perceptions on the role of NGOs in reducing the digital skills gap, and the readiness of the organizations and their staff in developing young people's digital skills. Based on the Framework for 21st Century Skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2002), the research included focus groups and interviews with young people, youth workers, employers' representatives, and senior managers from youth organizations and NGOs working with young people.

2. Country context and relevant previous studies

Only 29% of Romanians have basic or above basic digital skills, while EU average is 57% (Eurostat, 2017). Even in the group of individuals with basic or above basic digital skills aged 16 to 24 years, Romania has the smallest share of population of 53%, EU average being 82%. Moreover, according to the Digital Transformation Scoreboard 2018, Romania performs poorly, 'in particular in the fields of e-leadership, digital skills and digital infrastructure. (...) Overall, further efforts are needed in the supply and demand of digital skills, as the data shows that professionals have a rather low level of digital skills' (European Commission, 2018, p. 124).

At the same time, the Romanian labor market is very demanding referring to the digital skills the employees should possess. A study conducted by Foerster-Pastror and Golowko (2018) assessed the level of digital literacy requested by the Romanian employers. From 91 analyzed job descriptions for ten international companies with a subsidiary in Romania, 89 mentioned at least one IT skill. The IT skills currently on demand on the labor market are the following: office applications suits – 43%, development environments – 26.9%, network protocols – 20.22%, computer programming – 12.3%, service desk management – 8.9%, social media – 7.8%, operating systems – 5.6% and enterprise resource planning – 4.5%. The importance of IT skills differs across job categories: to no one's surprise, IT skills are mentioned in 86% of IT jobs, and in 80% of the sales jobs. Digital and computer skills are in high demand for jobs in customer service (77%) and for human resources (60%). The lowest percent in this list have the jobs in the finance field (43%) and that might be mainly due to the fact that those working in finance are expected to know how to use certain application and calculation sheets that are less common in other work domains.

Currently, the future employees of the Romanian labor market, mainly the young people, acquire digital skills mostly through formal education. Following the example of other European countries, in the last several years, Romania has struggled to implement viable public policies with the intention of putting the entire educational system on the track of digitization. The National Law on Education, adopted in 2011, mentions the digital competences that students should develop through ICT classes organized during the primary and secondary education stages. The approach of the law and of the forthcoming adopted measures were unfortunately unidirectional, since the intention of the policy-makers was to introduce singular ICT classes for teaching digital competences to children instead of a transversal approach that would envision teaching ICT across different courses and classes (Tokes and Velicu, 2015). Besides that, according to the same law the government had been planning to build and use an extensive e-learning platform and a digital library. And, at least in theory, through different governmental programs all schools have been equipped with Internet connection and computers.

According to the academic curricula, high schools students develop ICT skills in the course of the last four years of the secondary education stage (9th to 12th grades). Since 2009, the final graduation exam, Baccalaureate, contains a digital literacy examination. In 2010, the Ministry of Education started to recognize and validate the certificates that were obtained by high school students through ECDL exams (European Computer Driving License). In universities, freshman undergraduate students that are enrolled in other than STEM programs participate to a mandatory course that lasts a semester, and which aims at developing the digital skills of the college students. The content of the course is quite unsophisticated, because it focuses mainly on how to use Microsoft Office applications and offers trainings on

how to search and use online information. Universities have also been encouraged to use e-learning platforms for educational purpose. As a result, in 2010, almost 60% of universities nationwide were using e-learning solutions (Raport privind starea învățământului superior în România, 2016).

The digital skills development sector also benefits from the involvement of other parties such as private companies and NGOs (Intel, Microsoft, Google, Siveco, Orange, Active Watch, Save the Children, Digital Kids, Simplon, etc.). For instance, they donate digital equipment to schools or students, or they contribute to the professionalization of the schoolteachers whose digital abilities are developed through courses and trainings. Or, in large cities, big IT companies have recently developed their own university programs in IT and computer science, in their attempt to attract and train young people whom they could recruit afterwards as employees (Mureşan, 2018).

Relying on the most recent data available and provided by Eurostat, in 2011, about 50% of Romanian population, aged 16 to 24 years, have obtained ICT skills through formal educational institutions. Romania is considerably below the EU average, which clearly shows that more than 70% of the EU young people develop their digital skills in high schools and universities. Table 1 presents a comparative perspective on the different ways digital skills were acquired by youth both in Romania and in EU, on average, in 2011. Though data provided in the table is not recent, it can still be a proof to the fact that young people in Romania did not have the alternative to turn to other organizations, such as NGOs, for services or programs for IT skills development, or, in case this type of programs and services ever existed, young people did not have access to information about such possibilities of skills development. In essence, only 4% of Romanian young people have obtained IT skills through training courses and education centers on own initiative.

Table 1: Ways of obtaining e-skills

Ways of obtaining e-skills (% of individuals, 16-24 years old, 2018)				
	Romania	EU average	Highest ranking country	Lowest ranking country
Individuals who have obtained IT skills through formalized educational institution (school, college, university, etc.)	52%	72%	98% Lithuania	54% Italy
Individuals who have obtained IT skills through training courses and adult education centers, on own initiative	4%	6%	14% Greece	1% France
Individuals who have obtained IT skills through training courses and adult education centers, on demand of employer	2%	3%	10% Slovenia	1% Poland
Individuals who have obtained IT skills through self-study using books, CD-ROMs, etc.	24%	25%	62% Estonia	6% Greece
Individuals who have obtained IT skills through self-study (learning by doing)	50%	72%	96% Finland	38% Lithuania

Source: Digital Scoreboard, Eurostat, 2018

Unfortunately, no studies or reports are available at this moment about the non-formal education or programs for youth's digital skills development, delivered by the NGO sector. Since it is highly improbable that no such programs or initiatives exist outside the formal educational system, our main explanation is that if non-formal education in Romania does take place it is limited to infrequent practices that are not highly visible or even known among those who work with young people or among young people themselves. Lack of any type of data or information could also indicate the fact that these programs and services are not well presented or are not researched for the time being.

According to the data available in the National Register of NGOs, in July 2018, there were almost 110,000 nonprofit organizations in Romania. According to the last national study on the Romanian nonprofit sector (FDSC, 2017), in 2015, only about 48% of the organizations from the National Register are really active – meaning they reported financial data to public authorities for the last year of activity. And out of these active organizations, 5.7% could be considered as youth organizations (organizations run by young people or working with/for young people). Thus, applying these estimates to the NGOs figures from 2018, there would be around 52,800 active NGOs in Romania, and around 3000 youth organizations (CoOp Romania National Report, 2018). The main sectors of activity of the youth organizations are the followings: education (39.1%), social services/charity (27.6%), cultural services (14.8%) and sport & hobby (10.3%) (FDSC, 2017). No relevant information could be found about the Romanian youth organizations' capacity for developing digital skills of young people, but during the desk research we came across two examples of Romanian NGOs that include in their mission and activities list the provision of IT-related education programs and services. The two NGOs will be presented as examples of initiatives developed by the nonprofit sector in the field of digital skills development for young people.

The first organization is TechSoup and it is located in Bucharest. TechSoup was founded in 2010 as part of the larger network of TechSoup organizations in the whole world and it currently provides technology resources to nonprofits, as well as to youth and educators. The association implements an ongoing program since 2009, through which nonprofit organizations from Romania can benefit from professional software and cloud services from global tech partners and can upgrade their work. In 2015, the association has created a program for NGO employees and volunteers, who can be trained annually in the first digital school exclusively created for NGOs, where tech and online experts in Romania teach them. Other programs developed by TechSoup target educators and teachers in Romania. The first one started in 2017 and is a long-term professional development program for primary school teachers, in rural and small urban areas of Romania, to support them to embed a layer of technology to inquiry-based learning, and the second

program created the first accelerator in teaching computer science in Romania and a multi-annual program made up of computer science educators who are willing to transform public school computer science teaching. More than 2,800 Romanian NGOs have benefited from the TechSoup Romania programs, and more than 1,750 NGO employees and volunteers have been trained in digital skills, while among students there are more than 7,500 young people who have been trained in TechSoup's computer science and STEM programs along with 550 primary school teachers that were helped to understand how technology, computer science and digital skills can make education better. Simplon is an organization located in Cluj-Napoca that mainly organizes courses and events for children with the purpose of developing their digital skills. At Simplon, children develop the necessary future skills by exploring the latest technologies, learning computer programming and how to use the computer and other digital tools through play and creative teamwork. Since 2015, Simplon has trained more than 1,500 children and has organized 75 events focused on both on digital and entrepreneurial education.

One of the few studies that include some information about the digital skills of the NGO workers in Romania belongs to the Association TechSoup and is based on a research conducted in 2016 on a national representative sample of 302 NGOs from Romania (TechSoup and Cult Market Research, 2016). The study assesses the needs of the Romanian NGOs in terms of technology and IT services, and identifies some of the training needs of those working in the nonprofit sector. Most of the NGOs participating in the study were active in the social sector, being followed by education and youth sectors: 31% – social sector; education and youth – 29%; sports and culture – 11%; environment protection – 10%; community development – 7%; health – 6%; other sectors – 6%. More than one half of those who filled in the survey were presidents, executive directors and vice-presidents of the NGOs included in the research sample. Two questions included in the survey directly assessed the digital skills and the training needs of the NGO workers. They seem to be more familiar with social media and less familiar with cloud platforms, and are considered fast learners because the ability to adapt to ICT evolution scores high in the list of IT competences. The training needs of the NGO workers mostly refer to using and managing social media accounts and the organization's website, as well as the need of data presentation through info-graphics. Among other needs mentioned by the respondents are: legal and accounting applications, project management, volunteer management, marketing, photo and video editing, cloud applications, etc.

In our attempt to also learn about the digital capacity or e-readiness of the nonprofit youth sector, we turned our attention to the above-mentioned study, carried by TechSoup and Cult Market Research (2016) – but this talks only about the organizations' plans for digitization, and not about their current level of digitization.

According to this study, 71% of the NGOs plan to use more often social media to increase the visibility of the organization, while 66% intend to use applications that would help them in volunteer management and websites/ social accounts management. Project management applications are of interest for 63% of organizations and data presentation applications – for about 56% of them. In 2016, about one third of the NGOs were planning to use legal applications and one half were interested in using accounting and CRM applications. In conclusion, it is particularly difficult to draw an objective and valid conclusion about the e-readiness of the nonprofit sector in Romania due to lack of data about the degree of digitization of the NGOs and lack of NGOs internal practices to assess their own level of digitization. Thus, the current paper will provide an initial profile of the nonprofit sector in regard to digitization and its capacity for developing young people's digital skills.

3. Research methodology and profile of the research subjects

Based on the Framework for 21st Century Skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2002), the research included focus groups and interviews with 20 young people, 20 youth workers, eight senior managers from youth organizations and NGOs working with young people, and two employers' representatives. The research methodology followed the design decided within the Skill IT for Youth project, aiming to collect data needed for the development of specific educational resources for youth workers and youth organizations from Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania.

The subjects of the research were identified among the stakeholders of the partners – young people, youth workers and youth organizations, and employers – as they are the first groups to benefit from the outputs and outcomes of the project. Thus, in Romania, the young people, youth workers, senior managers from youth organizations and representatives of a couple of employers were selected from the stakeholders of Danis Foundation, the Skill IT for Youth Romanian partner. For the focus groups with young people, we invited university students who benefited from Internship Cluj program, through which Danis Foundation supported so far more than 1,300 university students. For the focus groups and interviews with youth workers and senior managers from NGOs, we targeted the partners of Danis Foundation – university students associations, and relevant NGOs working with teenagers and other young people. Finally, for the interviews with the employers, the Skill IT for Youth research design requested two interviews with human resources professionals from one company from the IT sector and from one other relevant stakeholder of the partner – we selected two companies, following these profiles, from the Internship Cluj program of Danis Foundation.

The focus groups with young people included 20 college students enrolled in BA and MA programs from two of the biggest universities from Cluj-Napoca

('Babeș-Bolyai' University and the Technical University). The group of students was quite homogenous under the aspect of age since most of the participants were between 19 and 23 years old. However, as most of the participants were female (80%), it is worth mentioning that the opinions of the male students (20%) could have been somehow underrepresented in the research.

The focus groups with youth workers were organized with members of two NGOs, one working closely with youth from Cluj-Napoca, as well as from its neighboring communities, and the other one working at national level. The first organization offers programs and services that help young people at risk, aged between 14 to 20 years, to finish their studies and get oriented around personal and professional life goals. Annually, the NGO helps more than 300 young people and since 2007 it succeeded in providing services to more than 2,000 clients. The second organization, working at national level, focuses on the empowerment of young people, to develop themselves and their communities, through innovative and non-traditional methods of learning and development. In 2017, it has developed programs for more than 250 high schools in Romania and have counseled and assisted more than 1,000 teachers and 100 school principals. Nonetheless, the most impressive achievement in 2017 were the 25,000 young people who benefited from their programs and services. The participating organizations are well appreciated by the local communities and members of the NGO sector for their achievements and dedication to improve the lives of young people. All participants to the focus group had at least one year of experience in working with young people and were familiar with the nonprofit environment when the interviews/ focus groups were conducted.

Since Danis Foundation programs target mainly university students, almost half of the interviews organized with senior managers from youth organizations included leaders of university students associations from Cluj-Napoca, while the other interviews included executive directors, presidents or vice-presidents of NGOs working with high school students, teenagers at risk, university students or young entrepreneurs. All the organizations have been part of the Romanian non-governmental sector for at least three years.

The interviews with the employers included two representatives of multinational corporations who are heads of HR departments of their companies. The types of two businesses differ considerably in terms of the industry (IT services and retailing) and also in terms of the number of employees. The IT company has more than 1,600 of employees and annually hires about 200 young people, while the retailing company has more than 2,700 of employees and offers approximately 900 of jobs per year.

Skill IT for Youth research explored perspectives on the current and future skills needed by young people on the labor market, on the digital skills of young people, on country specific obstacles impeding youth digital skills development,

and on the role and readiness of the youth workers and youth organizations in the development of the digital skills of the young people. For the purpose of this paper – to explore the readiness of NGOs for the development of young people's digital skills and the digitization level of the organizations – from the whole data collected we selected four main areas to explore:

1. NGOs/ youth organizations' role in developing digital skills in young people;
2. programs and services NGOs deliver to develop young people's digital skills;
3. youth workers' digital skills and NGOs' digital competences needs; and
4. NGOs' digital readiness and organizations' digital strategies.

4. Main results of the research on the selected areas

4.1. NGOs'/ youth organizations' role in developing digital skills in young people

In the focus groups with young people, the fact that some of the educational services for digital skills development could be provided by NGOs have not been mentioned by the college students participating in the discussions. Therefore, young people do not seem to be aware of the fact that the nonprofit sector can be a provider of programs and services through which they could be assisted to learn new digital skills. Actually, the discussions revealed two methods of learning a new digital skill that are preferred by young people. Whenever they are exposed to a new digital device, tool or application, some young people choose to get familiar with it by exploring its options and functionalities by themselves. The entire process of learning how to use a new application or a new device poses challenges that can be addressed either through online tutorials which are available on YouTube or by asking a person who already acquired that particular digital skill. In this sense, it could be said that young people are autodidacts and usually opt for a 'learning by doing' process during which they develop digital skills. The other category consists of students that prefer to turn to a tutor or instructor's advice. Though it was unclear if this category prefers formal or non-formal programs and services, it became apparent that some young people would rather choose face-to-face trainings and interactions, during which questions can be raised and answers can be provided by a 'living human being' (Focus group 2, participant 5).

When asked directly what NGOs could do in the digital skills field, surprisingly enough, several young people suggested that the main role in developing digital skills among children and youth should be assigned to institutions responsible of primary and tertiary education programs and not to NGOs, which already have taken over too many social roles and responsibilities, in their attempt to correct and attenuate the social and economic injustices and inequalities from Romania.

According to the opinions expressed by the employers' representatives, Romanian young people mainly develop digital skills in informal contexts, such as the

family. Children and young people get in contact with technology at their parents initiative and with their consent and, at least during the first years of their lives, they get familiar with technology and the digital world by exploring those by themselves. However, this reality does not fit into the 'ideal model' envisioned by the employers. They admitted that the involvement of formal institutions responsible for education is desired in all stages of a child's development and that schools and universities should be the most important and reliable providers of youth's digital skills:

> 'In my opinion, today, the Romanian schools do not provide a learning context in which students are trained in a continuous and consistent manner. And that is unfortunate, because students should benefit from an education that is more oriented towards what is happening on the labor market.' (Interviewee 2)

Still, the employers' representatives also assigned a significant role to NGOs as well. These are regarded as facilitators and even auditors of the quality and content of the programs and services offered by other actors. Seemingly, NGOs can contribute a great deal to the development of young people's digital skills by monitoring what the demands are from companies, on the labor market, and gaps from the formal or informal training/ education of the youth.

The youth workers participating in the focus groups focused on the factors that contribute to the low digitization among youth. The participants unanimously agreed that a large number of children and young people do not have access to technology infrastructure, especially in rural areas. When young people do not own their computers they usually have access to old school infrastructure with outdated software. Some of the youth workers blamed the central or local public institutions for their lack of initiative and policies/ programs aimed at adjusting the content of the curricula taught in Romanian schools and at providing training services for educators and teachers that would be in charge of developing digital skills of the children and young people.

When asked to reflect on the role of the NGO sector in developing digital skills in young people as well as on the possible ways NGOs can help to address the gaps in the digital skills, knowledge and competences of the youth, an interesting perspective surfaced during the discussions. Youth workers think that to some extent almost all NGOs contribute to the digital skills development of their clients, especially if those organizations work with children and young people, because every aspect of their work is somehow related to the information and communication technologies. However, another interesting opinion referred to the idea that the NGO sector should not be held accountable or responsible for the digitization of the future generations, unless this kind of endeavor is specifically included in

the mission of an organization (for instance, an organization that aims at increasing the online literacy of different categories of persons). In other words, the youth workers feel that they should contribute to the development of digital skills in young people in a very natural and 'organic' manner by carrying on with what they usually do in their organization. The general perception is that NGOs can play a role in this domain by offering expertise to other actors, by mediating the desired outcomes and measures meant to achieve those outcomes, by facilitating the learning processes, and by transferring knowledge and abilities to other parties or beneficiaries. The following quote appears to be particularly relevant for the indirect and implicit role that youth workers envision for themselves:

> 'In my opinion, in this case, just like in many other cases, the non-governmental organizations should play the role of a helping hand that provides assistance if it is needed. If we develop a program or think of an activity that has to do 100% with digitization of young people, it should be the result of our will and that of the organization's strategy. It should not be an activity dictated by the state's/ government's failure to teach kids in schools how to use technology and how to equip them for the job market and life, in general.' (Focus group 2, participant 8)

Most of the youth workers seem to be open to the idea of sketching and delivering in the future more programs and services aiming to develop young people's digital skills.

The senior managers from NGOs all agreed that the non-governmental sector has a role in developing youth's digital skills. They also emphasized that NGOs can be part of the solution for the problem, but they should not be regarded as the only entities that could or, worse, should 'fix' the issue of the Romanian un-digitized youth. Hence, as participating 'fixers', NGOs could intervene in teaching the educators new methods and tools for developing the right digital skills of young people, and they might also contribute with ICT equipment for schools, by bringing in sponsorships from technology companies. NGOs can play the roles of mediators among families, schools and youth people, and can validate or refine the skills that young people acquire elsewhere:

> 'Reaching directly high school students who are about to enter the working-force, especially in rural settings, is certainly necessary. Knowing how to apply for a job, how to prepare a CV, how to use social media, how to avoid fake sources of information are keys not only to a prosperous society, but also to a stable democracy.' (Interviewee 8)

Providing trainings for those who need improvement of digital skills (teachers, youth) looks like a contribution favored by many senior managers.

4.2. Programs and services NGOs deliver to develop young people's digital skills

According to the youth workers participating in the focus groups, all programs and services provided by their NGOs entail at least some activities that directly and indirectly develop the digital skills of the young people. In this case, examples ranged from situations in which their beneficiaries where taught how to write an email or how to do a PowerPoint presentation, how to use an application to edit videos or photos, or how to use a website to create a CV, etc. To some extent, the needs, as well as the constraints that originate from the inevitable progress of the digital and technological world tailor the programs and services of the NGOs and dictate a rhythm to which youth workers are making efforts to adapt in a timely and efficient manner.

The eight senior managers from NGOs interviewed also mentioned that all the programs and the services provided by their NGOs include a digital dimension, either directly or indirectly. The projects that were developed to improve a certain skill usually consist in activities that entail learning how to use Office applications, how to create a CV using online tools, how to write business emails or how to design websites, etc.

One senior manager told us that her organization supports, indirectly, the development of young people's digital skills through the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs program, in which the young entrepreneurs develop skills on online self-presentations, online applications and communication, etc. At the same time, in an Erasmus+ initiative for adult education, the participants learn how to use Moodle for online learning, but also, directly, the initiative includes a module on Internet security. Students associations provide training courses to their members in personal branding, online marketing, social media and content creation, time management, etc.:

> 'I think every project of our organization implied using some digital component. For instance, when we organized the event call Academy, I remember we did Skype interviews, then the applications were submitted online, when the participants arrived in Cluj-Napoca, we suggested them to download and install certain applications that helped them get around the city. And then, during the event we used different equipment and had to create PowerPoint presentations.' (Interviewee 3)

In other words, NGOs consider they contribute to the development of digital skills in young people in a very natural and 'organic' manner by carrying on with what they usually do in their organizations, while using the latest technology and digital tools they are aware of or familiar with.

4.3. Youth workers' digital skills and NGOs' digital competences needs

More than two thirds of the participants to the focus groups for young people have rarely interacted with the representatives of the NGO sector. For this reason, they were unable to assess and to offer insights regarding the digital skills of the youth workers. However, those who previously volunteered or were members in nonprofit organizations have evoked exclusively positive memories and impressions about their experiences with NGOs. As such, some of the young people even mentioned that there is nothing that could be imputed to the youth workers in terms of their lack of digital skills. And, as mentioned earlier, young people are not at all aware of the fact that youth workers can be providers of programs and services through which they could be assisted to learn new digital skills.

Youth workers were quite confident when evaluating their own digital skills. The short self-assessment puts them among the intermediate or upper-intermediate users of ICT. To a certain extent it could be said that, contrary to the obvious lack of skills of some persons, they did not appear as worried about the unsatisfactory level of digital literacy, on the contrary, they seemed auto-sufficient. But when it happens to the youth workers to acknowledge that they lack a skill, how do they deal with their own gaps in digital skills? Self-teaching and asking for advice from colleagues are the methods of acquiring skills preferred by the youth workers. While they self-assess their digital skills as satisfactory and reaching an upper-intermediate level, youth workers admit that usually a new skill is learned if it is led and preceded by a personal or professional need:

> 'I am a curious person and I think that am quite technologically-savvy. I recently learned how to use Canva, Google Drive and I have learned some tips and trick from friends on how to not over-share things on social media. We are all capable of learning new things, but since our time and resources are limited, our learning process is clearly needs-oriented.' (Focus group 1, participant 2)

Youth workers are open to the idea of delivering in the future more programs and services aiming to develop young people's digital skills. They admit that any idea coming from the management, the employers or the even young people can be put into practice, if the necessary resources will be allocated into making those plans a reality. However, these potential plans come hand in hand with several reasonable requirements on the behalf of the youth workers as members of their organizations. They admitted that before they focus more on educating young people, they feel the organization should provide them more trainings and, last but not least important, the management of the organizations should align their own visions to the modern, digitized world by bringing in the organizations more digitized management processes and new technology.

Senior managers consider that most members of their NGOs have basic digital skills that allow them to accomplish their tasks at work: 'If you ask me, I would give my colleagues a seven out of ten for how well handle technology' (Interviewee 5). Only some senior managers, those representing students associations more exactly, told us that the members of their organizations are proficient in using technology and digital tools. That assertion should not be dismissed immediately, because most students associations work with young people who probably have more chances than other categories of youth workers to have advanced digital skills.

Senior managers also declared that whenever a need is identified, gaps in the knowledge of youth workers are usually addressed through trainings provided by the members of the same organization or by some expert guests. Senior managers mentioned that, recently, trainings have been organized for the following: PowerPoint, Photoshop and other Adobe products, calculation sheets and applications, Google Drive, Canva, Boot-Camp, Gmail, etc. It is worth mentioning that the need along with the initiative for "digitization" usually belong to one of the managers or to some tech-savvy colleague and these people sometimes find themselves in the position to "sell" the idea to their colleagues from whom they once in while encounter some resistance to change or recalcitrance.

4.4. NGOs' digital readiness and organizations' digital strategies

Youth workers do not necessarily consider their organizations ready for the development of young people's digital skills in a planned and structured manner. They consider that these services should be planned, and proper resources should be allocated, including for providing more trainings for them – the youth workers. Also, the youth workers consider that the leadership of their organizations should align its vision to the modern, digitized world by digitizing more the organizational management processes and by investing in new technology.

Talking with senior managers, we found out that there are no digitization strategies for the organizations. However, all participants acknowledge the importance of the ICT and have plans of expanding by using different tools for the development of the organization. The strategies of the organizations do not have a chapter or section dedicated to their digitization and it is more than obvious that most of the plans that senior managers have for their organizations will yield incremental changes in the 'lives' of their NGOs. They are mostly focused on acquiring new technology and replacing the old one, and gradually introducing new digital tools for organization management, for activities such as communication and promotion, donors' management, etc.

5. Discussions and conclusions

The main research results show that NGOs have not yet a sufficient level of digital-readiness (not at the organizational level or at the professional level), the sector is similarly affected by the low level of digital skills of its professionals, and NGOs need assistance and help in getting on track with today's requirements regarding digitization and ICT use. The NGOs acknowledge this need aiming to improve the overall management of the organization, and to a lesser extent to improve the services delivered to their clients, young people, in order to support them to achieve a higher level of ICT/ media use and literacy.

Even though there is an opinion, coming mainly from young people and youth workers, that NGOs already do too much in 'fixing' what Romanian central or local government cannot solve, NGOs are given and also are ready to undertake a significant role in developing the digital skills of young people. This responsibility can be seen as complementary to the formal education system, by contributing with ICT infrastructure, specific digital skills development educational programs for educators and young people, or through the general organizations' services and programs that implicitly include digital skills development. Also, both private employers and senior managers from the NGOs consider that the NGOs should be facilitators between the labor market's needs and the formal education system. NGOs should support the formal education system to adapt the programs provided to young people to the labor market's demands regarding the skills needed by the future employees.

However, based on the previous few studies that exist and on the data we collected, the youth workers do not feel fully ready to deliver more and better digital skills development educational programs. They agree they need more training courses to professionalize in the field, but also they consider that the leadership of their organizations should change its vision and catch up with the technological trends from the society. Finally, at organizational level, the NGOs lack specific strategy for digitization, even though, once asked, they became aware of the need of such plans – the organizations acknowledge that more technology and more digital skills are needed for improving mainly operational processes, and at some extent also the services provided to young people.

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Agile for Romanian Public Sector Digital Transformation

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Abstract. This paper will attempt to present the concept of Agile, as a project management instrument and also as a concept for organization development and management and, following that, to address the question if Romanian public institutions are ready to use/ apply Agile as a tool for managerial operations. In order to do that, in our theoretical part of the article we will try to address the following questions: (1) What is Agile and what benefits could it bring to public sector digital transformation?; (2) What do public institutions need to have for Agile to get adopted?

The research part of the paper will include an analysis of three local public institutions in Cluj-Napoca, one of the largest cities in our country heading for a 'smart city' development. We will therefore examine the type(s) of organizational culture, from the perspective of Hofstede's dimensions: communication and conflict management styles, team work and individual tasks' inter-dependency, using an empirical quantitative survey methodology. In order to do that, we will examine a set of three research questions, presented in the paper. The aim of this article is to offer a starting point for further analysis on how prepared the Romanian public sector is to adopt Agile and what needs to be done in order for this adoption to be efficient.

Keywords: Agile, public sector, organizational culture, team, communication, conflict management styles.

1. Introduction

During the past two-three decades, Agile methodologies have been adopted and used worldwide, especially by information technology organizations. Agile framework has initially been applied to smaller projects involving reduced teams, to larger and multiple ones, finally getting to spread entirely in organizations and corporations. Even if this new methodology first appeared around 1957, under the concepts of 'iterative' and 'incremental' ways of project development (Larman and Basili, 2003), and later, in 1974, also as 'the evolutionary project management' (Gilb, 2017) or 'adaptive software development' (Edmonds, 1974), the term 'Agile' was first mentioned and introduced in 2001, through the Agile Manifesto. By then, a group of 17 experts were organizing a meeting for finding a solution as a response to the problems encountered especially in production companies (Beck *et al.*, 2015), where digital transformation projects were lasting years and by the time they were heading to their end, updates were again a necessity, as technology was fast evolving (Rigby, Sutherland and Takeuchi, 2016). After this, a serial of steps followed: in 2005, the 'PM Declaration of Independence' was issued, presenting a set of project management principles to guide software project management according to agile software development methods (Anderson, 2005) and in 2009 an extension to the software development principles was added (the Software Craftsmanship Manifesto). In 2011, the *Guide to Agile Practices* (renamed the *Agile Glossary* in 2016) has been created, by the Agile Alliance, a compendium of definitions of agile practices, terms, and elements, their explanations and guidelines for agile practitioners (McDonald, 2016).

Initiators of Agile define it as the 'ability to create and respond to change […] a way of dealing with, and ultimately, succeeding in an uncertain and turbulent environment' (Beck *et al.*, 2015). Researchers have tried to find practical explanations and definitions of Agile, as the standard definition wasn't less abstract. Collier affirms that agile is: 'an approach to software development under which requirements and solutions evolve through the collaborative effort of self-organizing and cross-functional teams and their customer(s)/end user(s)' (Collier, 2011). But, there are some other authors who still define it as rather a philosophy referring to Agile as being 'effective and maneuverable' […], a process 'both light and sufficient', where 'lightness is a means of staying maneuverable' and 'sufficiency is a matter of staying in the game' (Highsmith and Cockburn, 2001). Barry Boehm describes the Agile method as 'an outgrowth of rapid prototyping and rapid development experience as well as the resurgence of a philosophy that programming is a craft rather than an industrial process' (Boehm and Turner, 2003). Some other authors (Cohen, Lindvall and Costa, 2004) mention an eWorkshop on Agile methods organized by the Centre of Experimental Software Engineering (CeBASE), where participants defined Agile methods as iterative, incremental, self-organizing, and

emergent. These attributes were completed with the four values and the twelve principles of the Agile Manifesto (Beck *et al.*, 2015).

The four values are in fact highlighting the difference made by agile in opposition to the traditional (waterfall) project management. Scott Ambler (2011) is trying to elaborate for a better understanding: 1. *individuals and interactions* over processes and tools; 2. *working software* over comprehensive documentation; 3. *customer collaboration* over contract negotiation; 4. *responding to change* over following a plan (explained in Appendix 1).

Meant to increase efficiency and flexibility in software development projects and to reduce unnecessary specification, administration, documentation and unproductive work (Karrbom and Hallin, 2014), software development processes have completely changed compared to the traditional control-oriented and sequential waterfall models (Highsmith and Cockburn, 2001) into what is now called agile development methods (Beck *et al.*, 2015).

In the private sector, most of the studies and researches have proven that agile methods positively influence the project's success, contributing to higher customer satisfaction and enabling flexible change management in software development (Serrador and Pinto, 2015).

However, the academic research seems not to pay too much attention to this phenomenon of Agile adoption processes and their outcomes for the organizations and the process of project implementation itself, as the necessity for further and deeper investigations and research seems to be required and highlighted in those few existing papers. In their paper, significantly called 'Lots done, more to do: The current state of agile systems development research', the authors have recognized that their research has lacunas. However, they call for research completion, affirming that 'with Agile methods being routinized and infused in the adopting organizations, one of the most pressing issues is the need to develop a better understanding of the implementation of Agile at the organizational level' (Abrahamsson, Conboy and Wang, 2009). Other studies emphasize the need for research on 'the effectiveness of agile method adoption' (Conboy *et al.*, 2007) or insist on elucidating the issues in managing the transition to the 'new and conceptually different software development approaches' (Mangalaraj, Mahapatra and Nerur, 2009). The need is also raised for research concerning agile adoption and project management in different contexts, not exclusively software (Conforto *et al.*, 2014) and other industries besides the IT companies (Project Management Journal, 2015).

2. Challenges for public institutions

Recently, Agile software has also started to be applied within the public sector's software procurement projects. This seems to be a great challenge for the public sector, as complex changes in the way projects are negotiated, contracted, pro-

cured and organized are necessary, in order to maximize the value created over the project lifecycle. This is the main reason for which only a few public institutions worldwide have started adopting agile practices to their project management. If research in private organizations is rare, when analyzing agile implementation, as already discussed above, the situation with the public sector is even more delicate.

There are though a few studies on different subjects that narrowly touch the idea of agile related to the public sector. Some of them are highlighting the difficulty of using agile methodology when working for the government, as public institutions are not familiar with agile practices (Asnawi, Gravell and Wills, 2011). In other studies, Agile methods are only reminded as if used; public institutions would have the obligation to list these in the procurement announcement (Kärkkäinen, 2012).

Even if Agile was meant to bring a better solution to the failure of traditional project management implementation, especially in software development (Artto and Wikström, 2005), it seems that there still remains a problem (Charette, 2001), as many challenges have been identified while executing software projects (Cerpa and Verner, 2009).

The public sector has also struggled with managing implementation of software development projects even though there are some situations of major failures in public software procurement (Goldfinch, 2007). Most of the challenges and difficulties are related to projects involving digital development applied to those operations (Hardy and Williams, 2008) and providing online services to its citizens, based on software (Janowski, 2015). However, public institutions have some extra characteristics that make their software procurement even more difficult compared to private organizations: the legal environment regulating the procurement activities and its processes (Edquist, 2000); government software systems are more complex than those of private enterprises (Brown, 2001); innovation speed is lower than in the private sector (Janowski, 2015), and inappropriate management – another factor that generates difficulties in public software projects (Brown, 2001).

Nevertheless, with all the challenges described above, there have also been identified a number of benefits that Agile brought to the public sector while implementing digital software (Vacari and Priklandnicki, 2015). Some of these would be improvement in team morale and reduced dependence on contractors, improved communication and customer satisfaction (full list in Appendix 3).

So, as we could see, adoption of agile methods seems to have a slow rhythm in the public sector, this being also reflected in the poor academic literature. This paper aims to contribute to the research on agile practices implementation within the context of public organizations. The scope of the study is to take the pulse and to identify if Romanian public institutions are ready to adopt Agile as their practices.

This research is based on the case study of three local public institutions in one of the largest municipalities in Romania – Cluj-Napoca, nominated as one of the

most developed towns in our country, aiming for the title of 'smart city'. We agree that for a team and/ or organization to be Agile, it should respect and implement the 4 values of Agile and the 12 principles listed in the Agile Manifesto.

From the perspective of our study, we chose to analyze the 'people-side' of the organization, highlighting the communication and relationship between employees inside the organization and the organization's capacity to respond to change. In this case, we are focusing on some of the Agile values and principles. With regard to the Agile values, for our study, we will pay attention to three of them: 'individuals and interactions', 'customer collaboration' and 'responding to change'. Regarding the 12 principles of Agile Manifesto (Appendix 2), the analysis will consider only those expressing our scope of interest: the 'changing requirements', individuals who 'must work together daily throughout the project', 'motivated individuals' acting in an 'environment that support and trust them to get the job done', applying an 'efficient and effective method of face-to-face conversation', 'the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly' and 'highest priority is to satisfy the customer' and all parties involved (sponsors, developers, and users) should 'maintain a constant pace indefinitely'.

3. Data and methodology

For Agile adoption at team level (software project implementation, for example) or even at organizational level, from the human interaction perspective, attention should be given to three main topics: (1) how teams are organized and how individuals work inside the team, but also how they interact with their leader/manager, on the other side; (2) how is communication inside the team/organization and (3) are organizational cultures ready to face continuing changing environment and to build that kind of relationship with the customers?

So, the present research analysis will try to verify if the following criteria are present in public organizations. Therefore, these are our research questions:

1. Self-organized Teams and their Leaders/Managers are perceived rather as a Facilitator factor; Is that true in public organizations?
2. Frequent and Good Communication are needed; Do public organizations fee that need or already have that feature?
3. Open, Flexible, Trustful, Employee and Goal Oriented and Easygoing Work Discipline – these are the requisites of an Organizational Culture suited for Agile. Do public organizations have that type of culture?

This paper attempts to see if Romanian public institutions are ready for Agile. In order to do this, we employ an already existing study that includes a number of 3 public institutions (Cluj City Hall, Cluj County Hall and Cluj Public Library). The goal of that study was/is to analyze a set of organizational processes within the

aforementioned institutions. We want to employ part of that data in order to see if public institutions can properly receive Agile. This is just an exploratory study, to be followed by a more extensive research. The data gathering instrument was the questionnaire and we had a sample of 117 respondents. For the data analysis we used SPSS statistical program. The following data are based on their answers.

4. Research Analysis

This section presents the data that can answer our research questions.

4.1. First, do we have a perceived Facilitator in the person of the leader of self-organizing teams? (The data that we are using from now on is for all the 3 public organizations that are part of our study).
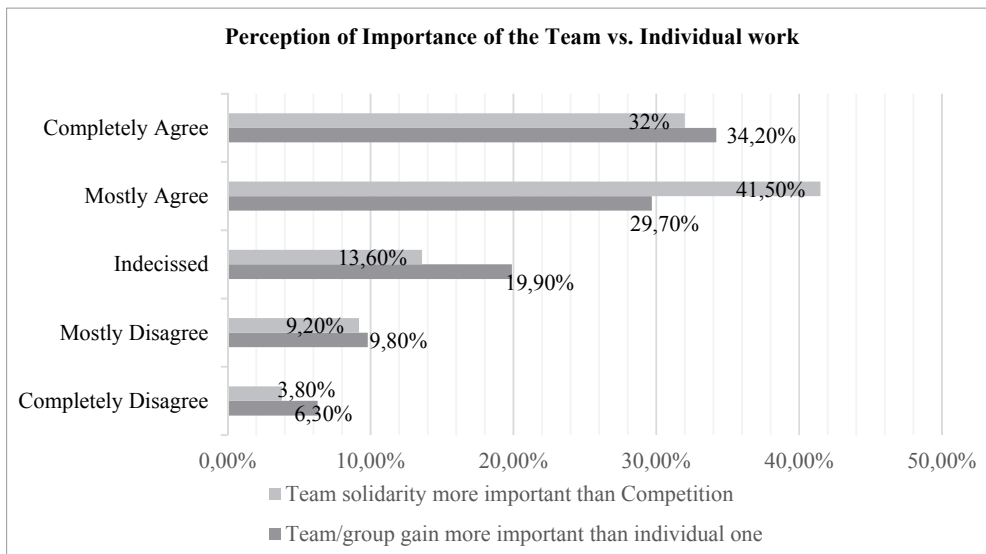
Figure 1: Perception of work

Source: Authors' work

When asked what they prefer most, as a way of working inside their team, most of the respondents across all three local public institutions showed a preference for a cooperative environment, rather than a competitive one, where success would be best celebrated within the team, than individually. As we can see (the lightly colored line) we have a total of 32% of our subjects that completely agree that team-work is more important than individual one, followed by a majority of 34.2% who also strongly agree that solidarity inside teams is more valued than individual competitions for prices. Those under 10% who are mostly or completely against it, lead us to the conclusion that employees in the three local public organizations are

collaborative persons who would prefer team work, instead of competition. This fact makes Agile adoption easier, as one of the values and part of the 12 principles already exist in the institutions that make the subject of our study.

Another Agile principle suggests that leaders, managers and even the organization itself should give the teams and individuals the 'support they need, and trust them to get the job done' (see Principle no. 5, in Appendix 2). This could also mean that teams should have empowerment and responsibility to get their tasks done, but also the role of the team leader or manager should also change from a directive and controlling one. In order to be able to fit an Agile team, the leader or manager should rather be a Facilitator.

In our research study, the focus was on dealing with conflict situations within the team. Our interest was on the third party intervention, as we needed to analyze the 'self-organizing' (Schwaber and Shuterlald, 2017) character that an Agile team should meet. In Table 1, presented below, by comparing means, we tried to find out which of the four organizational roles are mostly present in teams-level conflict management, as a third party intervention.

Table 1: Third party intervention

Organizational peer	External Specialist	Informal leader	Formal Team Leader/ Manager
2.3418	1.5253	3.2911	2.8418

Source: Authors' work

Comparing the data, it seems that external specialists are not welcomed in the public institutions that we analyzed, followed by the organizational peers. However, it seems that informal leaders are those who tend to have a positive role in intra-team conflict management. For our study focus and trying to respond to our first research question – the part where we stand that an Agile team should be 'self-organized', we draw the conclusion that recognizing an informal leader inside the team who usually helps manage conflict situations would not contravene the Agile Manifesto list of principles (Principles no. 5 and 12, in Appendix 2). On the other hand, the formal team leader/ manager has also an important role in conflict management. This could have an ambivalent impact on the self-organized team (-s): a positive role, if he/she would be facilitating communication and positive interaction between individuals, acting more like a mediator between sides, allowing them to choose their own directions and agreeing upon their solutions. On the other hand, if acting as an arbiter, applying his/her alternatives and solutions, then this role would interfere inside the team, breaking the 'self-organizing' Agile principle and would clearly not have a facilitating role. It would be of high interest continuing the study using interviews (qualitative research method), to go deeper with our analysis and find answers to such questions (Kristin *et al.*, 2008).

Self-organized teams, in Agile framework, also mean 'independency of tasks' (Schwaber and Shuterland, 2017). In our survey, the majority of respondents consider that their job-related tasks are dependent of other colleagues' work/approval. A number of 76 out of the total of 117 respondents mostly and completely agree with this statement, whereas only 27 affirm that their tasks are more likely independent from others (Figure 2). These answers clearly show us that from this point of view – of team individuals independency tasks – the three local organizations in the public sector are not yet prepared for the Agile way of working.
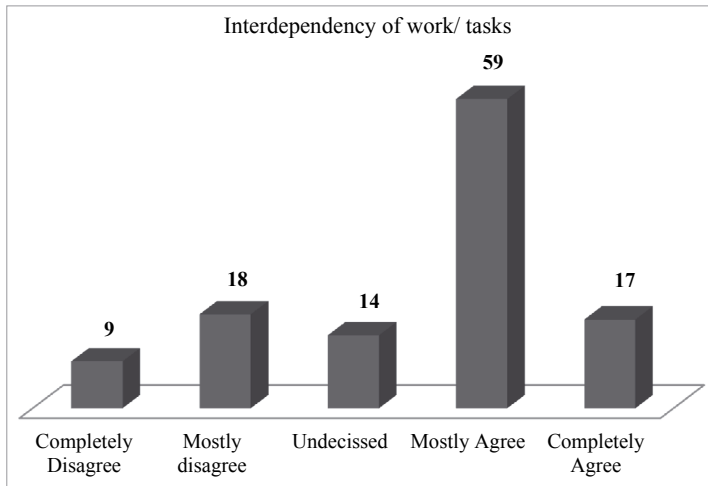
Figure 2: Interdependency of work/tasks

Source: Authors' work

The above statement is also supported by the analysis presented below, in Table 2 where, comparing means, while trying to find out which are the most common sources of conflict generation inside teams and across organizations, we could surprisingly find out that the highest score is given by the same 'interdependency of work'. This leads us to the conclusion that people in the analyzed public institutions, even if aware of their dependent work, still do not feel comfortable with this. But this could be also interpreted as being positive and valuable information for our study interest. Why? The opposite of dependent work is independent work, which is one of the Agile principles. In this way, we might suppose that employees could be more opened to adapt an agile way of working, where their daily tasks would not depend on others' and so, we might also suppose that conflict situations would decrease.

Table 2: Sources of conflict generation

Inequitable share of resources	Concurrent interests	Unclear roles	Lack/Bad communication	Interdependency of work/tasks
2.7251	3.2339	3.2339	3.3392	3.4444

4.2. In the same data analysis, comparing the means to find the sources of conflicts in the three public organizations, we could see, in Table 2 that very close to the interdependency of tasks, there is another important source of conflict – Lack/Bad Communication inside teams and organizations. This will lead us to our next research question, regarding the importance of frequent and good communication inside teams and organizations, in order for Agile to work.

When asked if they consider their communication with their colleagues to be rather bad than good, most of the respondents (57%, Figure 3) in all three local public institutions have agreed that their way of communication is difficult with their teammate and other colleagues belonging to other teams in the same organization, while only 26% consider they have a good communication at their workplace (Figure 3).
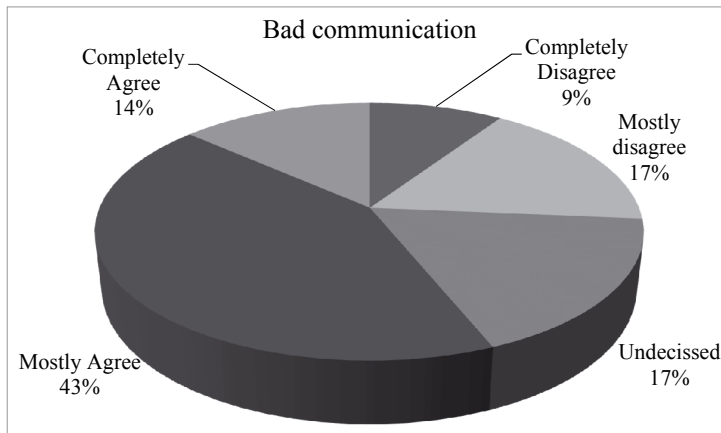
Figure 3: Quality of communication

A bad communication inside an organization would make a harder Agile process implementation and afterwards an even more difficult project management following an Agile methodology, as the first value in Agile Manifesto (see Appendix 1) and one of the 12 Agile principles (Principle no. 6, see Appendix 2) are broken.

Comparing the means of the five conflict styles, we can see in table below (Table 3) that Avoidance, followed by Accommodation have the highest scores. Usually, each conflict style has a corresponding communication type (Rahim, 2002).

Table 3: Conflict Management Styles

Avoidance	Compromise	Accommodation	Competition	Collaboration
3.4912	3.1988	3.269	2.9123	3.2573

Source: Authors' work

In our case, when using one of the two above mentioned conflict management styles, the type of communication adopted would be the non-assertive one (Rahim, 2002), which leads its users to avoid conflict situations and individuals, not to communicate or confront the others. This behavior usually generates tension between employees, which are called latent conflicts. We can see in the table below that one of the mosts frequent conflict types identified in the 3 local public institutions chosen for our research is the latent conflict, together with inter-individual and horizontal level conflict types.

Table 4: Types of Conflict

Hierarchical Conflict	Horizontal Conflict	Latent Conflict	Individual-Group Conflict	Manifest Conflict	Inter-individual Conflict
2.9942	3.2398	3.5789	2.6901	2.8655	3.5965

Source: Authors' work

Avoiding conflicts or accommodating to unpleasant situations and working in tension would clearly not encourage a 'frequent communication', as highlighted in the Agile principle list (Appendix 2). So, it seems that the three local public organizations would need to work on improving their internal inter-individual communication, in order to prepare their teams for Agile implementation, if needed. However, in any other cases, this data results could also be used as an organizational diagnosis and as a starting point for improvement and development.

4.3. Team and/or organization are Agile if it relies on an: Open, Flexible, Trustful, Employee and Goal Oriented and Easygoing Work Discipline Organizational Culture. The third research question of our study follows the analysis on organizational cultures dimensions, as per Hofstede's findings and suggestions (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, we could see in table below (Table 5) that all three local public institutions are very similar: *Strict Work Disciplined* (serious, conscious and punctual employees), *Local* (short-term directed, internally oriented and usually identifying with their team colleagues or their leader), *Open Systems* (having a welcoming environment, both for employees, but also for its customers and external

partners), *Work Oriented* (pressure on task prioritization), *Mean Oriented* (days are pretty much similar, reduced risks), with one exception – Cluj-Napoca City Hall, which is likely more *Goal Oriented* (taking more risks and surprises could occur on a daily basis) and *Externally* driven (focusing on meeting citizens' requests), excepting the Central Library which is highly *Internally* driven (they know best what is best for their client):

Table 5: The overall strategic orientation of the 3 public organizations
(Hofstede's organizational culture dimensions)

Public Institutions in Cluj-Napoca	Means vs. Goal Oriented	Internally vs. Externally Driven	Easygoing vs. Strict Work Discipline	Local vs. Professional	Open vs. Closed System	Employee vs. Work Oriented
City Hall	Goal	Externally (moderate)	Strict Work Discipline (moderate)	Local	Open System	Work Oriented
County Council	Mean	Externally (moderate)	Strict Work Discipline (moderate)	Local	Open System	Work Oriented
Lucian Blaga Central University Library	Mean	Internally (highly)	Strict Work Discipline (moderate)	Local	Open System	Work Oriented

Source: Authors' work

From the data analyzed regarding the type of organizational culture, it seems that some of the orientations are suitable for Agile adoption, while others still need improvement, in order to match the three values that we considered for our study (Appendix 1) and the principles (Appendix 2) we have highlighted as important for the current research in the Introduction section of the paper.

The fact that our three local public institutions are rather strict with the work tasks respect (*Strict Work Discipline*), having a high internal control could lead us to the idea of inflexibility, which will not correspond the one of the Agile values – 'responding to change' and to one of the Agile principles 'changing requirements'.

The employees' tendency to follow others, at the workplace, and not bringing their own potential and creativity to their team and organization (*Local*) seems also not to respect one of Agile principles, saying that 'the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly'.

As they are more work than employee oriented and they prioritize tasks fulfillment rather than people's needs (*Work Oriented*), all three public institutions would contravene the first value of Agile of 'individuals and interactions over tasks and processes' (Appendix 1) and two of the Agile principles 'motivated individuals' who are acting in an 'environment that support and trust them to get the job done' (Appendix 2).

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A *Mean Oriented* organizational culture that wouldn't like taking risks would also be hard responding to changes, as Agile practically is about. But being *Goal Oriented*, such as the City Hall, this would be much more appropriate to face a changing environment.

Being *Internally Focused* (as the Central Library is) and assuming what's best for their customers, without taking in consideration their voice, would clearly not follow the Agile value which refers to prioritizing 'customer collaboration' rather than follow the terms of a negotiated agreement (Appendix 1) and the Agile principle 'highest priority is to satisfy the customer' (Appendix 2). But, on the other side, and even if only at a moderated level, the other two local public institutions do take into consideration the needs of its citizens, NGOs and private companies (Externally focus). This is of course a proper field for an Agile implementation.

A pleasant surprise that all the three analyzed public organizations have in common is a welcoming environment for their new members, but also for their external vendors and partners, which respects one of the Agile principles: 'all parties involved (sponsors, developers, and users) should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely' (Appendix 2).

As per the organizational culture types of the three local public institutions, we could see that on some dimensions they are already prepared for Agile practices to be implemented, but on others, there would still need important organizational-level changes to be done in order for project management to be fully Agile.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

After the data analysis on the three local public organizations in Cluj-Napoca, we could agree that even if some of the findings meet the Agile values and principles recommendations, as briefly explained in the Introduction, such as an internal and external collaboration environment at both team and institution levels, there are still many other important aspects (from the perspective of our analysis) that still need improvements: organizational communication, more employee focus and more flexibility, as these are essential for Agile implementation (together with all other principles that we did not consider for the purpose of our study).

As a further recommendation for the organizations analyzed in the present paper, regardless of whether they are planning an Agile project management adoption in the near future, would be to pay special attention to their internal communication flow and processes, as we could see they generate tension, conflicts and, in the long-term, inefficiency. As a next step for an extensive research, we plan to continue our study on two different directions: to extend the survey to a higher number of public organizations at local, regional and central level and, on the other hand, we plan to build an interview guide and apply it to our respondents, in order to find out more delicate and specific information.

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The four values of Agile Manifesto

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools	Tools and processes are also important, but having competent individuals working together effectively is what matters more.
Working software over comprehensive documentation	A good documentation helping and guiding team members to understand how software is built is useful, but more important is to create software, not the documentation itself.
Customer collaboration over contract negotiation	Contracts are important, but closely cooperating with the customers is more efficient.
Responding to change over following a plan	Plans are important in project management, but accommodating to changes brought by technology or the environment itself need to come first.

Source: https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/the-agile-manifesto/

APPENDIX 2

The 12 Principles of Agile

1. Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software	By shortening the time between documenting the project, reporting to your customer and then getting feedback, you can focus on the real goal of the project, which is delivering what the customer wants, not what you planned.
2. Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage	Embrace change. Even when the customer requests a change late in the project phase, implement it. Why wait for another project to explore another iteration when you can do it now and get the results immediately? Agile wants you to stay nimble and on your feet so you can pivot without having to constantly reinvent the wheel.
3. Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale	If you're going to embrace change, then you're going to have to give up on your etched-in-stone schedule, or at least create a shorter range to run your tasks. One way Agile does this is by cutting out a lot of the documentation that is required with traditional project management when planning your schedule before you ever start a task. The trouble is a lot of that paperwork isn't necessary. It only slows things down.
4. Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project	It's like they're talking two different languages, and in a sense, they are, but both the business and developer side of the project are crucial to its success. You must build a bridge between the two so they can understand each other and, as important, work together. Use the same tools you would manage remote teams to facilitate an exchange of ideas that both sides understand and are on board with.
5. Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done	In other words, don't micromanage. It doesn't work. It takes you away from what you should be focusing on. It erodes morale and sends talent packing. You assembled the best, now let them do what they're good at. If you did the due diligence beforehand, then you can trust them to do the work. Of course you'll monitor that work, and step in as needed, but stay out of their way.

6. The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation	Documenting conversations, creating email narrative streams, even using collaboration software like Slack, are all well and good. But when you're trying to move swiftly, you don't have time to wait for a reply. You need immediate answers, and the only way to achieve that speed of response is by talking to your team member or team in person. You can do this by working in the same physical space or having distributed teams. But if it's the latter, you want to try and keep the schedules to the same hours, so you can at least video conference. That creates a more collaborative environment.
7. Working software is the primary measure of progress	That means, is the software (or whatever product or process you're working on in the project) working correctly? You're not measuring progress by checking off tasks and moving across your scheduled timeline, but by the success of the software (or whatever) is the subject of your project. Basically, it's staying focused on what's important. The process is what gets you to achieve the goal of the project, but the goal of the project isn't the process.
8. Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely	One reason for short sprints of activity is not only that they lend themselves to accepting change more readily, but they also help to keep your teams motivated. If you're working on a project for an extended period, there's going to be burnout. It's unavoidable. Don't overtax your team with too much overtime. It's going to impact the quality of your project. So, get the right team for the job, one that will work hard but not overextend themselves and put the project quality in jeopardy.
9. Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility	Whether you're working on code or something more concrete, you want to make sure that after each iteration it's improving. You don't want to have to come back and fix things later. Fix them now. Better still, make sure they're getting better. Use Scrum, an Agile framework for completing complex projects, to help review and keep the project evolving.
10. Simplicity – the art of maximizing the amount of work not done – is essential	If you're looking to move quickly through a project, then you're going to want to cut out unnecessary complexities. Keeping things as simple as possible is a great ethic to streamline your process. You can do this many ways, including the use of project management tools that cut out the busy work and give you more control over every aspect of the project.
11. The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.	When you have a strong team, you want to give that team the autonomy to act independently. This means they can adapt to change quicker. In fact, they can do everything with greater agility because you've given them the trust to act without second guessing them. If you've done your job in collecting the right people, then they'll do their job addressing issues and resolving them before they become problems.
12. At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly	Another benefit of creating a well-rounded team is that they will stop, reflect and tweak the way they do things throughout the course of the project. They don't act by rote or just blindly follow protocol, but think through their relationship to the project and adjust when necessary. The last thing you want is a complacent team, one that stands on their laurels. What you need is an ever-evolving group that is constantly engaged and looking for ways to improve productivity

Source: https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/12-principles-behind-the-agile-manifesto/

APPENDIX 3
Benefits of Agile in Public Sector

Deliver value to customers/stakeholders earlier
Better collaboration between IT and business
Improved customer/stakeholder satisfaction
Improved team morale and reduced dependence on contractors
Improved communication
Improvement in learning new technologies
Improved product quality
Improved project visibility
Increased productivity
Reduced cost
Improved manage changing priorities

Source: Vacari and Priklandnicki (2015)

Voluntary Municipal Tasks as Tool of the Resilience of the Local Communities[*]

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Abstract. Voluntary municipal tasks could be interpreted as an important element of the resilience of the local communities. These tasks are very flexible: in the European municipal systems these tasks can be provided relatively freely within the scope of the local public affairs. Therefore the municipal task management has an innovative role in the local government system, in other words, one can notice a process where facultative tasks may become obligatory. We also include the role of the central and territorial public administration in our analysis, concerning the financial background and the professional assistance of the voluntary task management as well. As an additional hypothesis, we present that the decreasing number of compulsory tasks highlighted the importance of the non-compulsory tasks; therefore, we also investigate the changes of the last few years.

Based on the hypothesis, we did an empirical research in three Hungarian and three Slovenian municipalities, where the nature of the municipal tasks were examined. We focused on the innovative nature of these tasks.

When selecting the municipalities, we paid attention to include different municipality models and their characteristics to verify our hypothesis. Our paper will present the main findings of this research: not only the large and rich municipalities and the municipalities with tourism destination roles perform facultative tasks, it is very important in the small communities, as well. These tasks are tools for the resilience to the changes of the regulatory environment and tools for the preserving the local identity.

Keywords: municipal tasks, voluntary municipal tasks, comparative administrative law, comparative municipal law, local government, municipal reform.

1. Introduction

Despite the general clause of local public affairs, the central administration gained more influence on municipal tasks due to the materialization of the 'service-providing' and then the 'regulatory' administration in the past few decades (Marcou and Verebélyi, 1993. pp. 237-240). Given a glance to European regulations determining compulsory municipal tasks, we can conclude that freedom to local service management is generally restricted. On the contrary, the central regulations regarding voluntary tasks are less overwhelming, thus, the municipalities have a broader ground for facultative task management. Thus voluntary municipal tasks could be interpreted as an important element of the resilience of the local communities. These tasks are very flexible: in the European municipal systems these tasks can be provided relatively freely within the scope of the local public affairs.

To add more, these are the aspects in which the municipalities can show off their own character, build a unique image (Ţiclău, Moldovan and Hinţea, 2018, p. 877; Radvan, Mrkývka and Schweigl, 2018, pp. 897-898). One of the most important tools of this characterization is the definition and provision of the facultative (non-mandatory) municipal tasks. These tasks could be analyzed hardly and it is related to the freely chosen nature of these tasks. Therefore the legal regulation on the facultative task in the municipal codes of the European (continental) countries are very concise. The voluntary commitment of local affairs is allowed by these legal acts, and several restrictions and limits are stated, by which the provision of the mandatory tasks is secured (Hoffman, 2015, pp. 88-90). The main aim of our research was to do a 'pilot' research on the facultative tasks, which could be a base for an extended research.

Therefore for the analysis of these tasks an empirical research is required. The Department of Administrative Law of Faculty of Law, Eötvös Loránd University has accomplished a research in the field of voluntary task management of local municipalities. The research was led by Prof. Marianna Nagy, Head of the Department, and it was realized in cooperation with the Local Governments' Research Centre of the Faculty of Science of Public Governance and Administration, National University of Public Service. In our research we put an emphasis on the fact that the presence of facultative tasks serves as a tool of self-governance and resilience tool in the continental local government systems (Pálné Kovács, 2016, p. 585).

2. Methods and approaches of the comparative municipal law

The analysis is focused on the legal regulations on facultative tasks of the local municipalities. Thus primarily the regulation on the municipal system and the municipal tasks were analyzed. Beside the jurisprudential analysis, the research also included an empirical inquiry regarding the implementation of voluntary task management.

The empirical research – which was based on the jurisprudential and financial analysis of the facultative service provision of several municipalities – was based on a qualitative method. Semi-structured interviews were done during spring and summer of 2018. The number of the analyzed municipalities were limited. The limitations were related to the pilot nature of the research and the limited resources. Therefore we focused our research on the analysis of several characteristic municipalities in detail.

The selection of the analyzed municipalities were based on our hypothesis. After the analysis of the literature we set up the hypothesis that voluntary tasks are present at municipalities of bigger size and bigger economic power (Szente, 2013, p. 163), especially in the case when a municipality has a more specific character, e.g. it is a touristic destination (Vlés, 2016, p. 68). We also assumed that the small municipalities (with limited financial resources) could perform non-mandatory functions. The decreasing number of compulsory tasks highlighted the importance of the non-compulsory tasks; therefore, we also investigate the changes of the last few years. The task performance of the smaller municipalities could be based on tools which requires only limited financial resources but more personal activities (Nagy, 2017, pp. 24-25).

Therefore in this pilot examination, we chose a city, a small town and a village as our base of research. The empiric inquiry and the analysis was realized with the contribution of the Students' Scientific Association of the Department of Administrative Law. Following the theoretical overview, we prepared a questionnaire as a base for the pilot inquiries. We chose three Hungarian and three Slovenian municipalities to thoroughly examine the voluntary task management both as an experiment and a foundation of a wider research, pursuing the methodology described above. When selecting the municipalities, we paid attention to include different municipality models and their characteristics to verify our hypothesis. As a result, one of the examined municipalities is in a disadvantaged region of Hungary and is in disposal of a weaker economic power. The municipality of Kesznyéten has approximately 2000 residents and is located in Tiszaújváros region of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County (which is one of the disadvantaged regions in Hungary). Our next municipality is Balatonlelle, small town in Somogy County of approx. 5000 inhabitants with touristic importance (a town at Lake Balaton, which is one of the most important touristic destinations in Hungary). Thus this town has better economic opportunities. The third municipality has been an urban municipality, the 14th district of Budapest (called 'Zugló', hereinafter Zugló), a bigger sized municipality of more than 100.000 residents.[1] Following the same methodol-

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1 In Hungary, the capital city, Budapest has a two-tier municipal system. The districts of Budapest (now Budapest has 23 districts) have the first tier of the system. These districts have

ogy, we did a comparative empirical research. It was focused on three Slovenian municipalities of similar size and character (a disadvantaged municipality, a small town of touristic importance, and a city municipality). The empirical studies were accomplished at the municipality of Hodoš (the smallest municipality of Slovenia with its 400 residents), the municipality of Bled (which itself is a town with 5000 residents, but it has 9000 residents with the integrated settlements) as a touristic destination town and the municipality of Maribor as a bigger sized city of more than 100.000 residents.

3. Approaches of voluntary tasks in academic works

3.1. Interpretation of the voluntary task in the literature

The definition of the voluntary tasks in the local government system is yet to be universally acknowledged in academic circles. Based on the various national and international academic works, we can highlight two different points of view regarding voluntary tasks: a narrow and a wider approach. The narrow approach considers only those public affairs as voluntary which are not part of any municipality's compulsory tasks. In this sense, the voluntary and the alternative tasks are separated, hence the alternative tasks are viewed as a means to adjust the structure of local government. The group of alternative tasks consists of the objectives which are taken over by a smaller or lower level municipality from a higher level or bigger municipalities (Nagy and Hoffman, 2016, pp. 58-70). This approach is mainly widespread in countries that are based on dogmatic principles of German jurisprudence. The wider approach interprets the voluntary tasks as a combination of the alternative tasks and the tasks defined by the narrower concept. Although this approach is primarily present in countries following French jurisprudence, we can find its traits in the Hungarian administrative law as well (Kilényi, 2008).

Our analysis is based on the framework of the above-mentioned interpretation. We must state that in the course of the analysis, we chose the narrower approach to voluntary tasks (Hoffman *et al.*, 2018). The research focuses on the voluntary task management; however, we partly included the analysis of alternative tasks as well. Consequently, the examination of compulsory objectives where the municipalities are provided with a wide competence is only limited in our paper. In this sense,

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self-governance and are defined as first tier municipalities. The second tier municipality, the municipality of the capital is responsible for the issues of Budapest as a single city and the functions which are related to the capital city status of Budapest. This second-tier municipality (the so-called *Fővárosi* Önkormányzat – Capital Self-Government) is responsible for the tasks of the counties in the area of Budapest (Budapest as the capital city does not belong to any county – the counties are the 2nd tier local governments in Hungary).

the municipal subsidies form clearly part of the compulsory tasks as prescribed by section 45 of the Act III of 1993 on the social welfare administration and social services, regardless to the fact that the content and the limits of those subsidies are ruled self-sufficiently by each municipality. Given the obligatory nature of the objective, the local municipality does not willingly take up any task, it only adjusts the provision of the compulsory tasks to the local needs (Tóth, 2016, pp. 169-172). This broader task management is not covered in our research as we interpret these objectives as a compulsory task only adjusted to local needs and not as a voluntary task.

3.2. The role of the voluntary municipal tasks in the local government systems – different approaches

To start with, we have to put an emphasis on the fact that the presence of facultative tasks serves as a tool of self-governance and resilience in the continental local government systems (Pálné, 2016, p. 585). As we have mentioned, the central administration gained more influence on the obligatory municipal tasks due to the emerge of the welfare state and especially due the decentralization reforms influenced by the paradigm of New Public Management (Marcou and Verebélyi, 1993, pp. 237-240; Fazekas, 2014, p. 29; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017, pp. 16-21). The principle of equal access to public services that realize fundamental rights does not tolerate significant local differences in the quality of services. This situation caused the academic sphere to even write about the decline in local self-governance in European (mostly northern European) countries where public administration is based on the human right approach – calling the municipalities the executive agencies of the welfare state (Blom-Hansen and Heeager, 2011, pp. 228-230). Given a glance to European regulations determining compulsory municipal tasks, we can conclude that freedom to local service management is generally restricted. On the contrary, the central regulations regarding voluntary tasks are less overwhelming, thus, the municipalities have a broader ground for facultative task management. To add more, these are the aspects in which the municipalities can show off their own character, build a unique image. This opportunity plays a more significant role for municipalities which consider themselves touristic destinations as local politics provide more possibility for voluntary tasks. Concerning those municipalities whose tasks and competences are strictly regulated, voluntary tasks gain utter importance to realize substantive local administrative management. These tasks are even more appreciated when municipalities suffer a significant loss of competences as in this case human resources can be rearranged to this area of tasks (Balázs and Hoffman, 2017, pp. 15-17).

Voluntary tasks are the most important characteristics of municipalities: they set apart local governments from other, corporate governments. The principle of local

public affairs generally provides only to local governments the freedom of managing and realizing services and other administrative tasks (Fazekas, 2017, p. 97).

In addition, voluntary tasks are the most important tool to municipal innovation. Whilst compulsory tasks shall be realized within the framework of state regulations, providing a narrow room for municipalities to use new administrative methods, in the field of voluntary tasks the municipal freedom is quite significant (Nagy, 2017, pp. 18-20). Consequently, several (now state-provided) public services appeared in a municipal toolkit. In Hungary this trend was specifically present in the social sector as in the wider framework provided by state regulations allowed municipalities to establish successful services which were later made compulsory tasks by state laws. As an example, we can name the previous debt management and support service for the disabled.

Innovation can appear not only in new services, but also in the method of task management. Local governments typically can give more possibilities to local socio-economic actors in facultative tasks, therefore this aspect is more important regarding cooperation with local economic actors, civil society and churches.

Thus, voluntary tasks gain more and more significance in modern municipalities and as central legislation increasingly defines compulsory tasks, this tendency is anticipated to strengthen.

4. The results and main findings of the empirical (pilot) research on voluntary municipal tasks

While examining the facultative tasks of a local municipality, it appears to be clear that tasks in the cultural sector bear a lot less significance in municipalities with tight budgets than in those which have numerous sources of revenue. As for touristic destination municipalities, we can generally say that cultural task management shares a strong connection with local touristic projects.

Regarding sports, municipalities of cities can provide a significant number of subsidies, apart from directly supporting sports associations, municipalities also turn to the maintenance and innovation of facilities. In the field of supporting sports activities, small, but touristic towns tend to merge these supports with touristic actions. Small municipalities have modest means to support sports activities, they tend to subsidize local associations as a means for community-building.

As municipalities have limited compulsory tasks in the field of education, voluntary tasks have gained importance and developed a supplementary nature. We found that cities operate an innovative scholarship network whereas small municipalities' voluntary tasks aim for rewarding teachers. Concerning small, touristic towns, this type of tasks has only a small significance.

Both Zugló and Maribor provide various voluntary tasks in the field of health care. This means facilitating the resident's access to diverse health care service

(such as supporting screening tests, refunding the purchase of vaccines). Uniquely, the municipality of Maribor appoints a local health care 'ombudsman' who is open for the residents' notices in his office provided by the municipality. In small, touristic municipalities, the maintenance and renovation of health care facilities to ensure the quality plays an important role, whereas in small municipalities this task is not really present due to their tighter budget (Hoffman *et al.*, 2018, pp. 77-80).

Bigger sized municipalities cover various and significant tasks in the social sector, however, we can note some differences between Zugló and Maribor. The municipality of Zugló undertakes a wide range of voluntary tasks in the social sector. These facultative tasks have different objectives, ranging from social situation improvement for the deprived residents to increasing the standard of living of all residents, depending on the capacity of the municipal budget. Zugló has a great variety of activities regarding social benefits. Previously, these tasks were not part of the compulsory tasks of the municipality, their introduction was based on the local social policy principles. Due to the limited number of compulsory tasks, Maribor undertakes several social voluntary tasks. Unlike Zugló, Maribor offers mainly personal social services and provides a social welfare system adjusted to the demands of a city. Touristic towns have limited number of voluntary tasks in the social welfare sector (in our research, both the Hungarian and the Slovenian municipality were rather of a good socio-economic position). Apart from innovative benefits, they concentrate on broadening the scope of the social welfare system. Respective to the challenges of a small-sized municipality, Hodoš has developed an innovative solution to encourage young people to settle in the municipality.

Public safety sector is present in city-level and touristic municipalities, in small municipalities there is no local organization for public safety. It is a characteristic of the Slovenian task management in this field that the state supports co-operation of municipalities, therefore public safety tasks are carried out jointly by a few municipalities. City-level municipalities have a bigger sized, fragmented public safety body. Touristic towns have a smaller sized organization but are supported by local NGOs and partly by guarding civil services.

The empirical analysis carried out in Hungary and Slovenia covering the significant municipality models gradually verified the initial hypothesis of our research. On the one hand, voluntary tasks play an important role in most municipalities. Logically, voluntary tasks management is more likely to be present in cities of greater economic impact. On the other hand, it is a characteristic of larger cities that the majority of voluntary tasks focuses on municipal services, including welfare, cultural and sports objectives. Our other hypothesis was also confirmed as we concluded that voluntary task management is remarkably strong in municipalities of touristic importance. As far as voluntary task management is concerned in Bled and Balatonlelle, we can state that beside touristic tasks and cultural objectives,

they focus on local communities as well. The touristic feature also causes that municipal police have a key role in the field of voluntary tasks. Apart from these, we concluded that in the voluntary task management of small touristic towns, the proportion of social services is smaller.

During the research, it also became clear that facultative task management plays a key role in local politics. In city-level municipalities this feature was quite obvious, but even in smaller sized towns emphasized that in 2017 and 2018, the voluntary tasks gained significance as municipal and national elections were approaching.

Regarding small municipalities, our hypothesis on the limited resources as a barrier to provide voluntary tasks have also been certified. Nevertheless, in these municipalities mainly cultural, youth and sports objectives are more important, as they not only contribute to community building and preserving the local population, but also demand less direct resource.

As a conclusion, the principle of local self-governance, appeasing local needs and being innovative are all featured when speaking of voluntary tasks. Municipalities have developed several services which may serve as a model for the central administration branch as well. Accordingly, our research and methodology might be an initial point for further investigations of voluntary task management as these fields undoubtedly constitute an important part of the principle of self-governance.

5. Municipal voluntary tasks and central government

Central administration has gained more influence on municipal tasks for the last decade in Hungary. After 2010 the newly elected Hungarian government decided to reorganize the system of human public services (for details see Hoffman, Fazekas and Rozsnyai, 2016). The main goal of the reform was to centralize the maintenance of public institutions in the fields of primary and secondary education, health care and social care. Before 2010 the most of the institutions were maintained by local self-governments, e. g. specific health care (like inpatient care) was compulsory task of the counties, primary care was under the scope of settlements. According to the governmental statements serious problems occurred before 2010 in these sectors. The local governments had no sufficient budgetary resources to maintain their institutions effectively and transparently, therefore only the state administration could provide these public services on a unified high quality. In the opinion of the governmental decision-makers only the control of central government could ensure equal opportunities in these sectors (Rapporteur's Justification 2011 of the Act CLIV of 2011 and Rapporteur's Justification of the Act CXC of 2011).

As we have mentioned, this justification fits the theory of 'service-providing' and 'regulatory' administration which has emerged in the past few decades in Eu-

rope (Marcou and Verebélyi, 1993, pp. 237-240). The principle of equal access to public services means that fundamental rights approach does not tolerate significant local differences in the quality of services. This human right approach calls municipalities executive agencies of the welfare state. According to these considerations the Government in Hungary has established agency-type central bodies and their territorial units for the task of maintaining institutions (e. g. schools, hospitals and nursing homes) in the aforementioned three fields:

a. health care: National Institute for Quality and Organizational Development in Healthcare and Medicines, then after the reorganization in 2015: National Health Care Service Center; and
b. primary and secondary education: Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre;
c. social care: General Directorate of Social Affairs and Child Protection.

Agencies are widely used types of the non-ministerial sphere of the central administration. These bodies are usually independent from the Government to some extent and are entitled with rule-making and individual authoritative competences, too. The main advantage of their existence is that they concentrate on a few specified tasks while the ministries can carry out policies and higher rule-making (Peters, 2010, pp. 129-130, pp. 314-315). Furthermore, agencies may provide much more flexible framework of human resource management as buffer organizations during personnel cutback campaigns, which are rather frequent in Hungary (Hajnal, 2011, pp. 77-78). In spite of their (respective) autonomy, agencies often carry out political tasks and they operate frequently under tight governmental or ministerial control (on politicization see Hajnal, 2011). The abovementioned three Hungarian agencies have been working under strong governmental control as we will see later.

Considering the increasing impact of central administration on municipal tasks the following question occurs: how can a local self-government maintain its influence on local public affairs? According to our research the answer is carrying out more voluntary tasks. It is possible because central regulations regarding voluntary tasks are less strict, thus, the municipalities have a broader ground for facultative task management. Doing so, local self-governments can express their own character and strengthen their identity.

6. Conclusions

Voluntary tasks play an important role in most municipalities. Logically, voluntary tasks management is more likely to be present in cities of greater economic impact. On the other hand, it is a characteristic of larger cities that the majority of voluntary tasks focuses on municipal services, including welfare, cultural and

sports objectives. It was also interesting that tasks related to public safety were significantly present in these cities due to challenges of an urban environment. It can be highlighted that the voluntary task management is remarkably strong in municipalities of touristic importance. The touristic features also cause that municipal police have a key role in the field of voluntary tasks. Apart from these, we concluded that in the voluntary task management of small touristic towns, the proportion of social services is smaller. Similarly, other functions were related to the tourism, as well. In the small municipalities the limited resources are a barrier to the provision of voluntary tasks. Nevertheless, in these municipalities mainly cultural, youth and sports objectives are more important, as they not only contribute to community building and preserving the local population, but also demand less direct resource.

As a conclusion, the principle of local self-governance, appeasing local needs and being innovative are all featured when speaking of voluntary tasks. We can mention, that the voluntary tasks can be interpreted as an "oppositional" element of the public administration systems: they can be alternatives of the centrally organized services. Thus municipalities have developed several services which may serve as a model for the central administration branch as well. Accordingly, our research might be an initial point for further investigations of voluntary task management as these fields undoubtedly constitute an important part of the principle of self-governance.

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Learning and Unlearning Sustainability Using Computer-Assisted Tools to Explore Gaps in Sustainability Policies[*]

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Abstract. Despite the 30 years since the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development (SD) have entered mainstream discourses and public agendas, environmental crises and economic disparities have intensified. Literature on sustainability and SD critique is pointing fingers to failure at different levels of policy-making and an unequal representation of the SD pillars: environmental, social and economic. These critiques are addressed at the level of formulation with a focus on language as the main research arena for exploring gaps in sustainability policies. In addressing if the social dimension is left behind, the paper turns its attention on the weight of focus received by the social pillar and how present it is across SD discourses. Computer-assisted tools are used to test how sustainability can be questioned at different layers of discourse analysis (topic modeling, sentiment analysis, glossary-based approach). With the help of text mining and digital tools, these are explored in major agreements, conventions and policy documents at UN, EU and national levels. The output is showcasing how computer-assisted tools can aid policy analysis in revealing imbalances in sustainability policies and it offers an empirical design for integrating text mining in policy analysis at large.

Keywords: text mining, sustainable development policies, topic modeling, sentiment analysis, discourse analysis, sustainability critique.

1. Introduction

As main propagators and introducers of the sustainability agenda and sustainable development strategies (SDSs), governmental actors are responsible for how these concepts are presented and promoted to the general public. The very language used is constructing the public reasoning around the subjects, how these are further understood, applied and multiplied. One of the main critiques of sustainability and sustainable development (SD) reflects upon the very definition and, by default, the very aim and direction of SD used by most prominent international institutions (United Nations, European Union, World Bank, etc.) – 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland Report, 1987, Chapter 2). The popular definition is perceived by critics as vague, interpretable according to interests, and rather having a focus on economic growth, ignoring and impeding the other two SD pillars – social development and environmental protection (Hove, 2004; Karoly, 2011; Smythe, 2014; Parker, 2014). Followings this learning, the paper looks at top policy documents promoting sustainability principles and SD, asking if the sustainability agendas tend to leave the social dimension out of the discursive arena.

The paper explores sustainability discourses used in policy documents at the level of UN, EU and national SDSs. With the help of computer-assisted tools, the research aims to identify patterns, gaps and imbalances in representing the SD pillars, with a stronger focus on the representation of the social dimension. Comparing policy documents at different levels offers the opportunity to compare language use, discursive framing, dissemination and approach between different stakeholders.

An overview of computer-assisted tools used in public policy is described with the purpose of pointing out a growing interest in tools able to facilitate policy analysis, while highlighting the methods and tools giving value to the present research. In this paper, semi-automated methods are used to test how sustainability can be questioned at different layers of discourse analysis – topic modeling, sentiment analysis, and glossary-based approach. The diversity of methods brought together is showcasing what new knowledge can each bring to surface from large text-data, and how these give more holistic insights of complex issues, here – the evolution of SD in policy documents across time and among different stakeholders, with a greater focus on the representation of the social dimension. Brief introductions to each method are offered, following a humanist-friendly approach and its potential of use in policy research. Finally, the outputs of each computer-assisted tool are presented and discussed separately and together, presenting newfound perspectives on sustainability policies and resuming lessons learned in using this research design.

2. Methodology and objectives

For the purpose of this paper, the data used consists of the most mentioned policy documents on sustainability and SD from UN, EU and most popular SDSs at national levels. The exact policy documents are further mentioned in section 4 (Data extraction and research procedure), as well as the detailed description and procedure of the methods used. Using semi-automated processes, the policy documents are investigated with the following methods and objectives:

– Text mining through the topic modeling technique using MALLET package (McCallum, 2002) is applied to identify patterns in the use of words and topics contained in a large text-data (Blei, 2012). The method is applied on the UN, EU and national SDSs policy documents to extract from each the top 20 topics occurring together in statistical meaningful way, in order to compare documents belonging to the same source, as well as sources between each other. Further, it is observed which topics prevail and to which SD dimensions are these belonging (economic, environmental, social). Making use of the documents' year of release, topic changes across time are observed in each cluster documents, by source. Further on, top 20 topics from each cluster documents are then compared to observe differences of discourse from the global level approach (UN) to the macro-regional level (EU) and the national level (national SDSs). The main objectives in applying this method is to interpret differences in priorities among policy-makers, highlight differences in discourses by source, and empirically emphasize the different approach in language use in communicating SD by the stakeholders.

– A glossary-based approach is applied using the Regressive Imagery Dictionary (RID) as a content analysis coding scheme designed to measure the primordial language vs. conceptual thinking (Martindale, 1975, 1990). Applied using the open source Yoshikoder content analysis tool, running the dictionary across the documents helps to observe if the language used is belonging to a realm of fantasy or rather a call for action, adding value to further research questioning the sustainability agenda at the level of policy message and the encoded language used. Further on, it serves the objective of observing the presence of the social dimension in SD discourses, by taking a special look at the emotional address used by policymakers when communicating the SD agenda.

– Sentiment analysis is applied on the policy documents with RStudio statistical computing and graphics software to gain insight on the emotional polarity (positive emotions/negative emotions) expressed within the documents (Sharma *et al*., 2017), and which are these emotions, following eight prime emotions used in social psychology – Anger, Anticipation, Disgust, Fear, Joy, Sadness, Surprise, and Trust (Plutchik, 1980). This further helps understand a layer of

language with effects on the social dimension, respectively how are sustainability and SD policies expressing potential triggers of emotional reaction towards the SD agenda.

3. Integrating computer-assisted tools in sustainability policies

The sustainable agenda is widely relying on technology to innovate the wrongdoings of the industrial progress not minding the planet's finite resources. Disseminating the sustainability agenda to the public implies communication processes that nowadays find their form in the digital world. The wide access to online information, big data and archives, particularly regarding public institutions under transparency premises, represent a great opportunity to make use of the text-data available and help respond to complex issues in shorter time spans.

In a concept paper released by the European Commission in 2017, it is stated that 'only about 20% of the data on intranets and on the World Wide Web is numbers, while most information (over 80%) is stored as text', therefore 'unstructured texts remain the largest readily available source of knowledge' (European Commission, 2017, p. 2).

According to many researchers and professionals in the policy field (Coulton *et. al.*, 2015), the use of text-data and computer-assisted language analysis in public administration domains is lagging behind the private sector and the rapid digitalization trend. Testing sustainability discourses using digital tools allows the analysis of large text documents addressing sustainability more efficiently timewise and with lower costs (Ngai and Lee, 2016). Thus, a door can be opened towards creating an empirical research design for spotting gaps and language patterns in sustainability agendas, at different levels of policy-making (in formulation, adoption, implementation, evaluation, strategies, etc.) and explore the reasons behind it. Planning a direction for the future obliges us to understand our present, to question concepts taken for granted, to refresh policy directions which evolve without consensus, to move beyond sustainability, paying attention to what doesn't work at the present moment, the only moment we can truly care for.

3.1. Text mining applications in public policy research

Policymaking is dependent on language to express principles and induce action. Text mining (TM) is a computer-assisted method for processing and structuring natural language in order to extract meaningful information, by detecting lexical or linguistic patterns (Kumar and Bhatia, 2013). TM implies processes of information retrieval, data mining, machine learning, statistics and computational linguistics. The data revolution facilitated by accessible technology and the internet is also challenging policy makers who find themselves with an ever-increasing

data at their disposal, highly valuable in orienting policy or evaluating its implementation and success/failure (European Commission, 2017).

TM for discourse analysis is a method which policy analysts can engage with to make use of large amounts of textual data available in digital formats, considering deadline pressures, accessibility, and the emphasis on delivering output in real-time. More recently, the public sector has started to reconsider methodologies able to extract knowledge and observe patterns to further inform policy-making. For instance, the European Commission's Science Hub has a specialized department dedicated to TM and text analysis – the Competence Centre on Text Mining[1], which is acknowledging that 'text mining and digital text analysis tools are necessary to address not only the problem of volume, but also of timeliness in order to provide the right information in the proper format for the decision-making process, in a variety of contexts' (Competence Centre on Text Mining and Analysis, 2016).

Text-data from public sector sources such as policy documents, reports, reviews, assessments, field-related news stored digitally can be easily accessed. Moving beyond typical data collection (like surveys, administrative databases), TM and other computer-assisted tools can help policy analysts to make better use of the unstructured data available online or in administrative information systems. TM extracts meaningful information from unstructured data, which is hidden within the language of documents (Goerge, 2018). The computational output is structuring the large text-data enabling insight on discursive patterns, implicit concepts, semantic relations, discursive framing, topics, keywords, trends, and other meaningful information from text. By linking together the extracted information, new facts or new hypothesis can be further explored (European Commission, 2017).

TM entails a quantitative text analysis method for processing large amounts of text-data, but requires a qualitative interpretative analysis of the output. Integrating qualitative and computational text analysis into policy work can help build a research infrastructure and solid research designs for language analysis complementing the quantitative data-driven approach.

Automated or semi-automated analysis of text is changing how research questions can be put or the kinds of questions that researchers can ask and offer an answer to (Gilardi and Wüest, 2018 apud Golder and Macy, 2014; Lazer and Radford, 2017). By citing González-Bailón (2017), Gilardi and Wüest (2018) try to emphasize how computer-assisted tools used for text analytics can reveal new phenomena, previously hidden in the language, enabling to test old theories and formulate new ones: 'when the right connections are made, much of the data-driven research that

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1 [Online] available at https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/text-mining-and-analysis, accessed on January 25, 2019.

is being conducted today speaks directly to long-standing (and unresolved) theoretical discussions' (Gilardy and Wüest, 2018 apud González-Bailón, 2017, xviii).

Ngai and Lee (2016) have put great effort in creating a systematic review on application of computer-assisted tools in the public policy process. They have succeeded in developing a conceptual framework and literature review of 55 academic articles related to the development of TM applications for policymaking, with the aim to empower both scholars and practitioners in using and promoting the use of computer-assisted tools. By looking at the use of TM tools at different stages of the policy-making cycle, a conclusion is reached regarding an unbalanced use of TM applications – more being applied at the level of policy implementation, few focusing on problem recognition, agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making and policy evaluation.

Policy makers and researchers in public administration will find great benefit in learning computer-assisted methods and other digital tools to diversity and simplify policy analysis, catching up on aspects of policy-making that were hard to approach before. By experimenting with text-as-data for policy analysis using computational tools, Gilardi and Wüest (2018) identify five advantages in doing so: the methods are scalable, can be easily extended to new contexts more efficiently and in different languages, it permits retroactive adjustments to data that were previously coded, it increases transparency and facilitates replication, and the methods are improving and developing fast, all offering a high potential for highlighting new aspects of policy-making.

4. Data extraction and research procedures

For the purpose of developing an empirical design for using computer-assisted tools on how to measure textual data used in communicating sustainability in policy documents – text mining, glossary-based approach, and sentiment analysis – are used on a corpus of policy discourses built from three sources:

- United Nations' page for major agreements and conventions – https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org – choosing top 6 documents most mentioned in literature review when discussing the origins and policy pillars for SD strategies: Brundtland Report – Our Common Future (1987), Agenda 21, Rio (1992); Further Development on Agenda 21 (1997); World Summit on SD, Johannesburg (2002); Report on SD, Rio (2012); Agenda 2030 for SD (2015).
- European Union's page for major agreements and policy documents – http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/ – choosing top 6 documents most mentioned in literature review when discussing sustainability and SD strategies in the EU: An EU Strategy for SD (2001), EU Strategy for SD (2006), Progress Report on SDSs (2007), Review of EU SD Strategy (2009), Europe 2020 Strategy (2010), Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future (2016).

- National strategies taken from the OECD and European Sustainable Development Network websites – https://www.oecd.org; https://www.sd-network.eu/?k=resources – choosing top 6 national strategies mentioned in the 'Report on National Sustainable Development Strategies of OECD Countries' (2006) for their maturity and success in implementation: Australia (1992), Finland (2006), France (2010), United Kingdom (2009), Netherlands (2008), Japan (2016).
- Aiming to observe the variations of discourse on sustainability and SD-related concepts, the purpose of using the above mentioned policies for constructing the corpus is to: (1) observe variation of different word frequencies and topics by each data source, (2) observe which sustainability pillar weights heavier in terms presence, (3) observe differences of SD-discourse from one source to another, (4) illustrating the variation of moods and sentiments, (5) enable the possibility of finding out topic priority changes across documents by making use of years of release, (6) find out psychological processes manifested in the content of the text and their appeal to emotional messages, (8) identify policy imbalances among documents' sources to disseminate gaps in sustainability policies.

4.1. Topic Modeling

Technique: MALLET (MAchine Learning for LanguagE Toolkit)[2]

Topic modeling is a type of statistical text analysis technique used in the field of computer science with focus on TM and information retrieval. Sometimes also referred to probabilistic topic modeling or latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) which are rather techniques of topic modeling (Blei, 2012), topic models are algorithms used to discover the main topics that occur in a large, unstructured collection of text documents, allowing to organize the text-data according to the discovered discursive patterns. To the computer, a topic is a list of words that occur in statistical meaningful ways, in different proportions within the text (Graham, Weingart and Milligan, 2012). Using a document from the text-data as a training model, an algorithm cycles to produce a best fit until words are gradually sorted into 'topics', and 'topics' into documents (Graham, 2012). A topic should rather be understood as a discourse rather than as a subject or thematic (Graham, 2012 *apud* Underwood, 2012a; 2012b).

The MALLET natural language processing (NLP) toolkit (McCallum, 2002) is an open-source software used to apply topic modeling and implies the use of command line for performing machine tasks like NLP, document classification, clus-

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2   [Online] available at http://mallet.cs.umass.edu/download.php, accessed on January 25, 2019.

tering, topic modeling and information extraction to texts. MALLET is the most popular and humanist-friendly tool for topic modeling in the broader community of digital humanities (Meeks and Weingart, 2012).
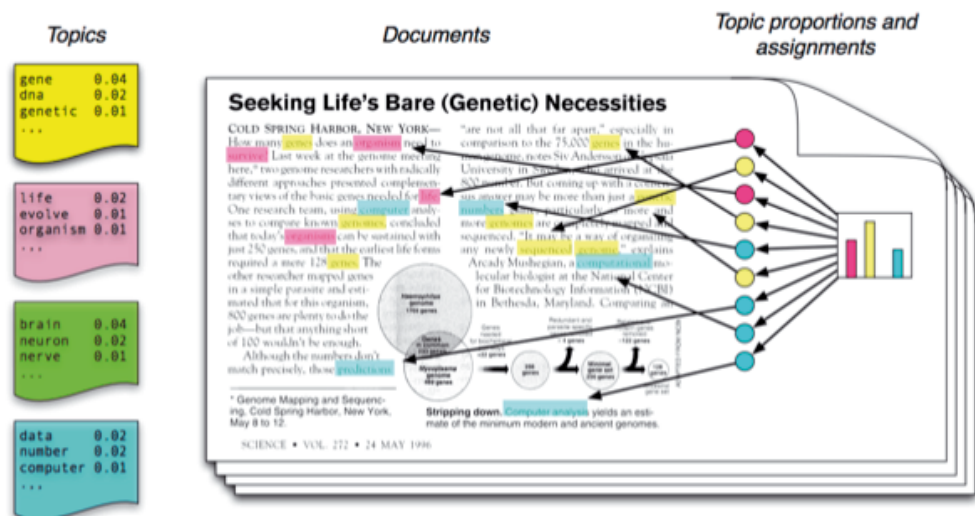
Figure 1: Illustrative example of Topic Modeling
Source: Blei (2012)

Considering that policy documents – specifically long-term strategies – are large documents, one document was used as a training model to see initial output and decide upon a number of topics for MALLET to extract from the corpus by source. This requires running MALLET a few times and removing stopwords to avoid language redundancy. By looking at the output containing a series of comma-separated files, the composition of documents and their distribution of topics can be consulted. The composition document is also giving a weight to the strength of the connection made (Graham, 2012 *apud* Meeks, 2011). To make sure that the output of topics preserves the variety character of the documents' content considering the complexity of SD concept, the program was finally set to extract 20 topics from each document, and for all cluster documents by source. A common practice of qualitatively analyzing the output is to suggest a descriptive label to each topic (Graham, 2012 *apud* Nelson, 2011) or looking at the list of words as discursive hot concepts or a network of most crucial terms offering insight of the ideological realm in the documents analyzed.

MALLET was run to extract 20 topics in three stages: first, from all six UN documents; second from all six EU documents; and third, from each national SDS chosen. To apply a label to each topic extracted, four categories were added next to

each topic in order to organize the words composing the topic, and to try labeling without bias: 'social', 'environmental', 'economic', 'governance', 'verb' and 'neutral'. 'Social', 'environmental' and 'economic' stand for the SD pillars, 'governance' for policy-specific language, 'verb' for observing action-language, and 'neutral' for words whose meaning are hard to grasp in terms of part-of-speech (verb or noun, e.g. 'access') or are too abstract to integrate in the SD pillars categories (e.g. 'future'). Two 'If-rules' were applied to discriminate between terms with potential to overlap in categories – (a) a word belongs to 'environment' SD <u>only if</u> is non-Anthropogenic; (b) <u>if</u> a word belongs to Anthropogenic activities, it is considered an economic externality, thus belonging to 'economic' category (e.g. 'waste', 'pollution'). This step further helped to observe how many terms in each topic belong to what SD pillar and thus, which is better represented discursively.

4.2. Glossary-based Approach

Technique: Regressive Imagery Dictionary (RID)[3] using Yoshikoder[4]

The Regressive Imagery Dictionary (RID) (Martindale, 1975, 1990) is a content analysis coding scheme designed to measure the primordial (associative, emotional, fantasy and dreams realm, taking little account of reality) vs. conceptual thinking (abstract, logical, reason, reality oriented, aimed at problem solving). The rationale behind the dictionary is that psychological processes will be reflected in the content of a text (Kovach Computing Services, undated). RID can be downloaded in various languages. For the purpose of the present research, the English version of RID was applied on the policy documents using Yoshikoder content-analysis program (Lowe, 2006). The English version is composed of about 3,200 words and roots assigned to 29 categories of primary process cognition, 7 categories of secondary process cognition, and 7 categories of emotions (Kovach Computing Services, undated). RID takes a piece of text, categorizes the words in that text into their respective types of emotional or logical thought and compares the frequencies of the specific thought processes (Wiseman, 2007). The output consists of the categories and the percentage of words in a document that is assigned to each category, afterwards being subjected to statistical analyses (Kovach Computing Services, undated).

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3   [Online] available at http://www.kovcomp.co.uk/wordstat/RID.html, accessed on January 25, 2019.

4   [Online] available at http://yoshikoder.sourceforge.net/, accessed on January 25, 2019.
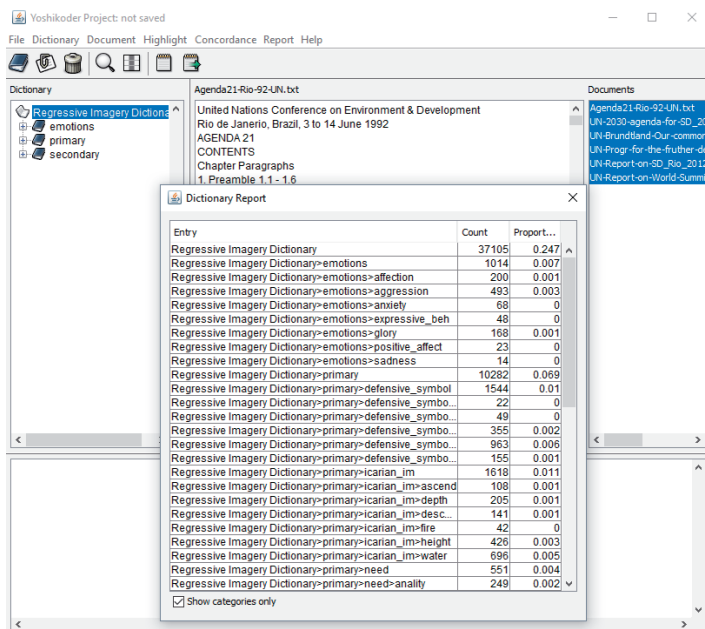
Figure 2: The Regressive Imagery Dictionary (RID) applied to
UN documents in Yoshikoder content-analysis program

Source: The author

By opening the RID dictionary in Yoshikoder, the dictionary was applied to all documents individually as well as to the cluster documents by source. Applying the dictionary on individual documents facilitates the observation of primordial vs. conceptual language use between documents, while applying it to cluster documents by source allows an easier observation of emotional or logical thought between the policy actors.

4.3. Sentiment Analysis

Technique: RStudio Software[5] using Tm, SnowballC, Syuzhet and Ggplot2 packages

Sentiment Analysis (SA), sometimes referred to as opinion mining, is a TM method which entails the use of NLP, text analysis and computational linguistics to systematically identify, extract, quantify, and study emotional polarity, affective states and subjective information (Patel, 2017). Two main approaches are used in doing SA: machine learning for getting high prediction performance or

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5   [Online] available at https://www.rstudio.com/, accessed on January 25, 2019.

dictionary-based generating lists of terms extracted with specific emotional value. In the present research, SA was performed using the dictionary-based approach. Emotion dictionaries contain words labeled with positive, negative or neutral emotional tone, or word lists annotated under specific categories and subcategories of emotions, most commonly following the eight prime emotions used in social psychology – Anger, Anticipation, Disgust, Fear, Joy, Sadness, Surprise, Trust (Plutchik, 1980).

In the process of applying SA, the text-data must be converted into a readable-machine format, which implies a series of pre-processing operations that require the use of TM packages. Most common preprocessing steps are: removal of stop words, stemming (reducing words to their root form), removal of punctuation, removal of white spaces and conversion to lower-case (Feuerriegel and Proellochs, 2018).
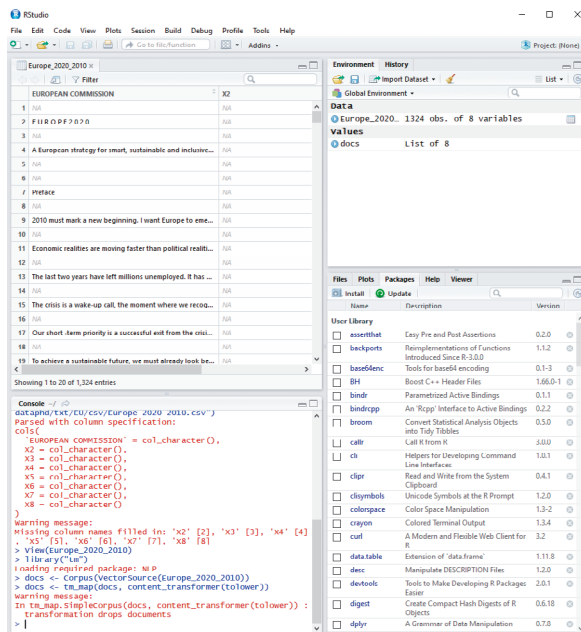
Figure 3: Document loaded in RStudio Software
Source: The author

For performing SA on SD policy documents, the RStudio open-source data-analysis software was used considering its user-friendly interface, wide array of packages and comprehensive tutorials for a digital humanities user. The following packages were loaded: tm (for transforming and cleaning the text), SnowballC (for text stemming and removal of additional stopwords identified as redundant due to repetitive words representing document-specific titles, authors, etc.), Syuzhet

(for transforming and cleaning the text for applying the National Research Council Canada (NRC) Emotion lexicon[6] (Mohammad, 2009; Mohammad and Turney, 2013) which calculates the presence of the eight main emotions and their corresponding valence within the text), and Ggplot2 (for creating visualizations of Syuzhet output).

5. Results and analysis

5.1. Topic Modeling Output

Applying topic modeling on the policy documents returned an output of top 20 topics extracted from each policy document of the three sources (UN, EU and national SDSs), in order to observe discursive changes from one document to the other across time. A second round was applied for extracting top 20 topics from all cluster documents, by source, in order to facilitate discursive differences between sources. Due to the output length, only the top topic from each individual document is illustrated in tables, by source. Another output is represented by the interpretation of the top five topics extracted from individual and cluster documents, which involved labeling the words topics, in order to get insight into how each SD pillars is represented at the language level.

Applied to UN, EU and national SDSs documents, the topic modeling approach extracted top 20 topics from each of the six documents. Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 illustrate the topic with the highest weight from each document, by source. In Figure 4, Figure 6, and Figure 8, with the help of Lexos visualization tool[7] (Lexomics Research Group, 2018), there can be observed the words contained in all 20 topics extracted from each document of the three main sources, emphasizing their frequency through the color green and the larger font size. Figures 5, 7, and 9 illustrate syntheses of how many words from the top five topics extracted from each document belong to which of the SD pillars.

By looking at Table 1 at the UN discursive arena, the topics of Brundtland Report, Agenda 21 and Earth Summit +5 (1997) revolve around keywords that highlight a rather economic focus, with specific areas of interest (work, progress, trade, sectors, food, trade, waste, economies, industrialized, bank, economic, growth, production, industrial, energy). For the two Earth Summits (2003, 2013) documents, a shift of focus towards cooperation among sectors at different levels can be perceived through terms such as 'local', 'cooperation', 'land', 'community',

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6 [Online] available at http://sentiment.nrc.ca/lexicons-for-research/, accessed on January 25, 2019.

7 [Online] available at http://lexos.wheatoncollege.edu, accessed on January 25, 2019.

doc	year	topic	content
Brundtlard	1987	4	commission convention nations work important organization made progress continue sectors trade council poverty united patterns official agenda session transition efforts
Agenda21Rio	1992	a	world international commission nations food problem trade present countries waste economies needed chapter problems community industrialized potential bank legal economic
EarthSummit+5	1997	6	countries energy growth population developing industrial future food species nations growing governments production water security global health rates increased small
ONGEarthSummit	2002	16	local human cooperation organizations activities land community strategies scientific level ensure policies technical system planning capacity institutions financial improve rural
EarthSummit-Rio+21	2012	7	countries development sustainable nations developing environment united international social agenda programme economic trade environmental efforts conference convention issues work important
Agenda2030	2016	16	development countries sustainable developing nations environment social united national management technology action conference cooperation resources efforts trade energy role education

Source: The author

'scientific', 'technical', 'capacity', 'financial', 'rural', 'global' as well as a rather social-oriented discourse (people, poor, rights, education). Finally, in the latest UN document setting the agenda for SD policies, the focus shifts again to the global level (world, global) and the economic and environmental dimensions occurring in close proximity to each other (energy, nuclear, problems, cities, security, costs, ecological, space).

Observing all extracted topics and word frequency across the six UN policy documents, a pattern of word use is most met regarding 'water, 'energy', and 'resources' stressing out policy priorities of two dimensions in tension, as economic and environmental keywords stand highlighted in almost all documents (Figure 4).

The top 20 topics extracted by MALLET from the EU documents (Table 2) reveal discourses referring to the limits of growth, space and resources (growth, rates, growing, capacity, space, cities, sewage, building, drylands, rangeland, water-use, crops, land). In the EU strategy for SD (2001) and Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future (2016), even though are documents formulated at 15 years distance from each other, their discursive priority overlaps on terms like 'growth', 'industrial' and 'nuclear'. The need to rewind and promote all SD pillars can be grasped by looking at the Review of EU SDS topic words (recognize, regard, importance, reaffirm, call, note, encourage, commit, acknowledge, environment, economy, social).

Figure 4: Word frequency for UN documents applied on topics computed by MALLET, illustrated through a Multicloud using Lexos

Source: The author

Table 2: Topic models with highest weight for EU policy documents, as computed by MALLET

doc	year	topic	content
EU-Strategy -for-SD	2001	16	population economic cent growth species world industrial nuclear wced million natural conservation rates space cit base hearing cities general time
World-Summit -on-SD	2003	16	implications assess contribute development capacity building drylands crop sewage financing water-use regional technological child effective agreements focal integrated rangeland
Piogress-Report -on-SDS	2007	18	development countries global sustainable states environmental health people policies action provide level cooperation public services protection lard scientific special levels
Review-EU-SDS	2009	16	sustainable recognize conference development regard importance environment reaffirm green call outcome poverty note economy social effective encourage commit acknowledge
EUROPE2020	2010	4	development sustainable international national support economic regional united action resources including states health developing global technology human policies women information
Next-steps-for -a-sustainable -European-future	2016	18	growth cent developing nations countries population nuclear public commission industrial million growing rates years security base report local resource political

Source: The author

The focus on resources, water and energy can also be met in Figure 5, illustrating word frequencies extracted from all topics across all EU documents. However, the discursive difference from UN documents is that most frequent words lie in a discourse grounded in governance and implementation of the SD agendas above specific SD pillars.

Figure 5: Word frequency for EU documents applied on topics computed by MALLET, illustrated through a Multicloud using Lexos

Source: The author

By looking at the topics extracted by MALLET from SDS documents for Australia, UK, Finland, Netherlands, France and Japan, a more targeted focus on the social dimension can be met in all, with a stronger tone for Netherlands (people, social, community) and Finland (health, social, human). The word 'social' is present across four SDSs (Australia, Finland, France, and Netherlands). Even if the word is not present for UK and Japan, it can be understood through words like 'people', 'living', 'gender', 'woman', and 'inclusive'.

Table 3: Topic models with highest weight for EU policy documents, as computed by MALLET

doc	year	topic	content
Australia-SDS	1352	19	development sustainable resources people areas local environment public support energy services social global regional management health information natural level develop
UK-SDS	2005	13	sustainable recognize including goals inclusive goal global reaffirm ensure access achieve relevant green women universal forum gender call commit action
Finland-SDS	2006	13	development national resources global health economic social services regional areas international increase support developed reduce means education future system human
Netherlands-SDS	2003	16	development resources national environment people global production regional areas services sustainable natural measures make reduce develop social system community consumption
France-SDS	2010	19	development countries sustainable united developing including nations implementation international support national states social global promote action access conference cooperation resources
Japan-SDS	2016	6	environment resources global countries production increase natural areas people system public means population energy make policy activities living effects increasing

Source: The author

Regarding word frequencies extracted from all 20 topics in each national SDS, a strong, unanimous presence of the environmental dimension can be felt as a greater priority at national level. In four out of the six Multiclouds illustrated in Figure 6, the variation of the term 'environment' is doubled and highlighted with highest frequency by size and color.

The following outputs represented in Figures 8, 9 and 10 showcase the labeling of top five topics from each policy-document and source, by SD pillars, the words being assigned to the corresponding category, following the set of 'if-rules' mentioned. These visualizations are done with RAW Graphs open source data visualization framework[8]. The three visual outputs are helping to observe how many terms in each topic belong to what SD pillar and thus, which is better represented discursively across all UN, EU and SDSs documents. Figure 7 offers an overview of how each SD dimension is represented within the discursive practice of each source analyzed, making use of pie charts with color codes for each SD pillar and the respective number of terms extracted from topics and labeled.

This particular interpretative step of top five topics extracted by MALLET from each text-data is represented with Circular Dendrograms serving the aim to identify discursive imbalances in sustainability policies, particularly in representing the three SD pillars and to test if the holistic premise holds at each discursive level.

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8   [Online] available at https://rawgraphs.io, accessed on January 25, 2019.

Figure 6: Word frequency for national SDSs applied on topics computed by MALLET, illustrated through a Multicloud using Lexos
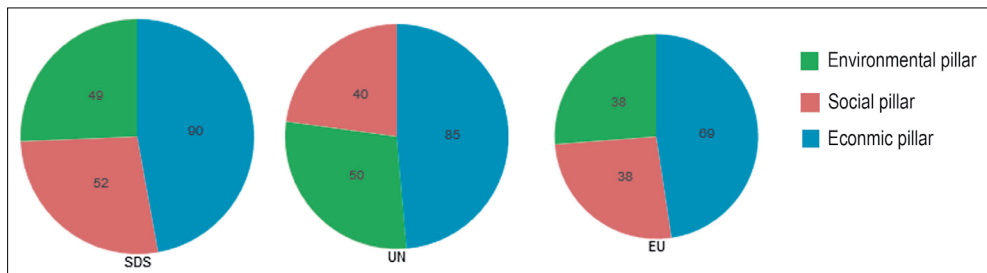
Source: The author

Figure 7: The number of terms belonging to each SD pillar, extracted from top 5 topics computed by MALLET from each source

Source: The author

Figure 8: Circular Dendrogram showcasing terms labeled by SD pillars
from top five topics extracted by MALLET from UN documents

Source: The author

Figure 9: Circular Dendrogram showcasing terms labeled by SD pillar
from top five topics extracted by MALLET from EU documents
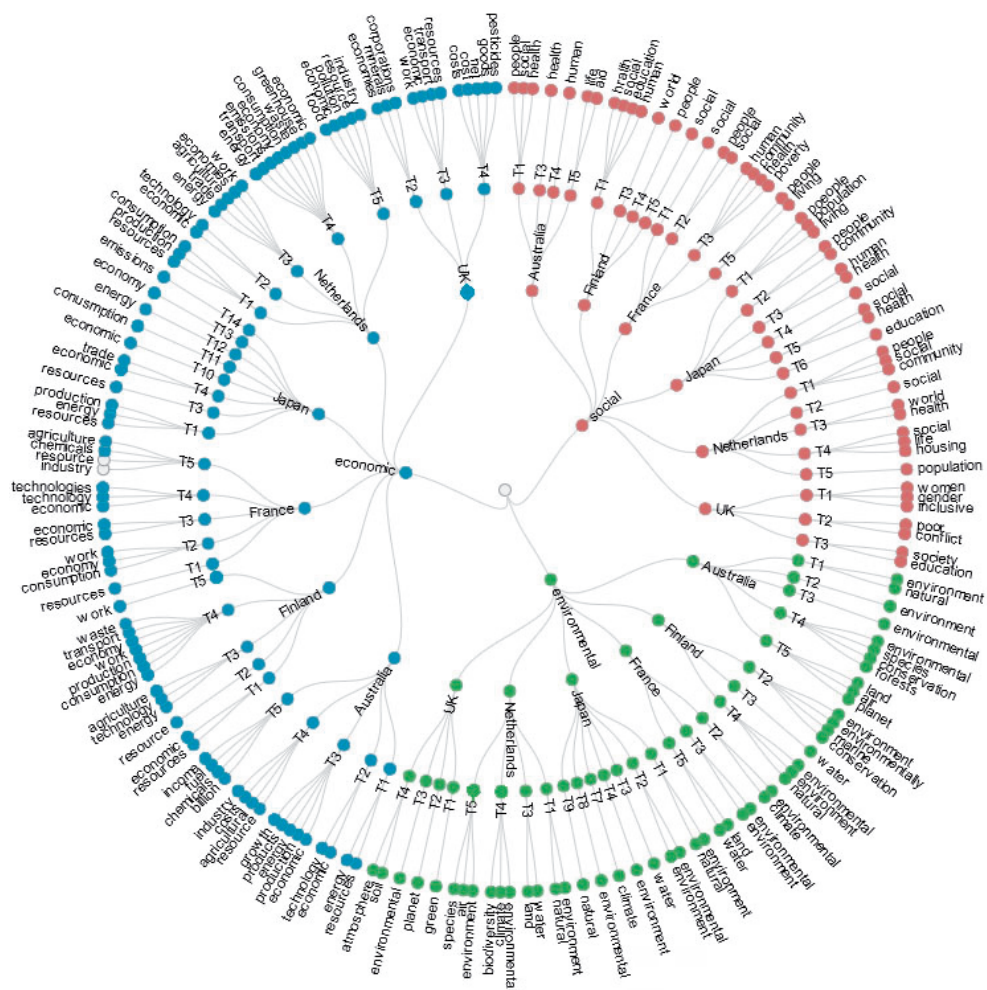
Source: The author

Figure 10: Circular Dendrogram showcasing terms labeled by SD pillar from top five topics extracted by MALLET from national SDSs documents

Source: The author

An imbalanced discursive representation is found in the top five topics extracted from UN, EU and national SDSs documents through the method of topic modeling. The economic pillar of the SD agenda is overrepresented discursively in all extracted topics. Economic concepts occupy over half of the discursive focus, the social and environmental dimensions sharing the other half, the terms belonging to the social pillar being slightly more underrepresented in language use.

5.2. Glosary-based approach output

Appling the RID dictionary on each UN document reveals secondary language use (over 60% in all cases) communicating conceptual thinking which is active, abstract, logical, reality oriented, aimed at problem solving. However, around 30% of the language used appeals a primary language, which is primordial thinking (passive, associative, taking little account of reality, belongs to fantasy and dreams realm) which might emphasize parts of language which fail to communicate the SD vision, containing words in semantic relation with terms associated with chaos, diffusion, passivity, sensations, regressive cognition, Icarian imagery. Still, the percentage similarity between documents reveals a consistency in language use across documents. A small but not negligible percent of language is attributed to a vocabulary manifesting emotional weight. In order to better understand which are these emotions, the emotional language will be further analyzed by applying sentiment analysis.
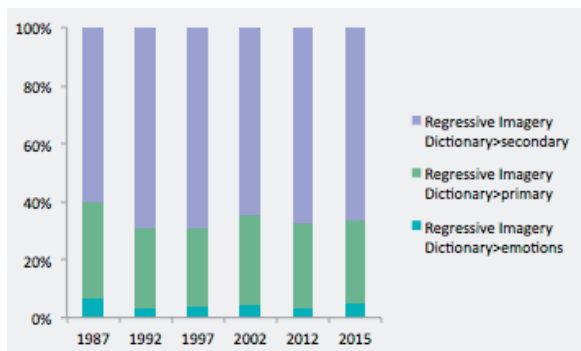
Figure 11: Regressive Imagery Dictionary (RID) applied on UN documents
Source: The author

On EU documents, the consistency observed at UN documents is less equilibrated as in the EU strategy for SD (2001) and World Summit on SD documents (2003); the primordial and conceptual thinking are almost identical and both documents completely lack emotional language use. For the documents released in 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2016, the emotional language appears to be arising and of equal use in all documents, while primary and secondary thinking are varying, the latter being dominant.

Figure 12: Regressive Imagery Dictionary (RID) applied on EU documents
Source: The author

For the SDS documents, RID reveals the use of primary thinking well over 60%, at the highest values from the aforementioned sources. From all SDSs, Australia's SDS seems to contain the lowest percent (20%) of primary language, meaning the lowest presence of passive or fantasy language. Considering the formal and legitimate character of a policy document, the significant presence of primordial thinking and emotional language deserves more in-depth analyses in future studies.
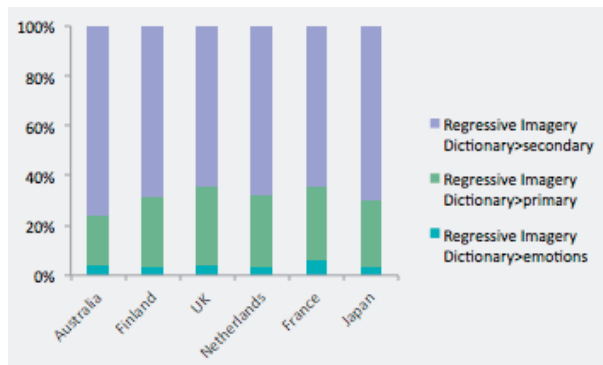
Figure 13: Regressive Imagery Dictionary (RID) applied on national SDS documents
Source: The author

Using RID on policy documents from all three sources bring to our attention the presence of language that appeals either to affective states or to realm of dreams and fantasy. Although this aspect is somewhat particular to being human, policy makers hold the responsibility of objectiveness and reason in communicating and setting a long-term agenda. It would be interesting to find out to what extent primary thinking is used consciously or purposefully, and dig deeper on how does

this affect message perceptiveness and attitudes towards sustainability principles and priorities.

5.3. Sentiment Analysis

With an interest to identify more specific emotions from the emotional content indetified with RID, SA performed in Rstudio and R packagages facilitate the extraction of sentiment from text using the NRC emotions dictionary comprised of several words for emotion expressions of anger, fear, anticipation, trust, surprise, sadness, joy, and disgust. After cleaning and transforming the policy documents, the proportion of emotion words used by all three sources stand more or less equal regarding a high level of trust indentified in language use. Anticipation and joy seem to be the following two distinctive emotions triggered by all three sources, followed by fear most present in EU documents and disgust, almost equal to fear in UN documents and least present in SDSs discourses.
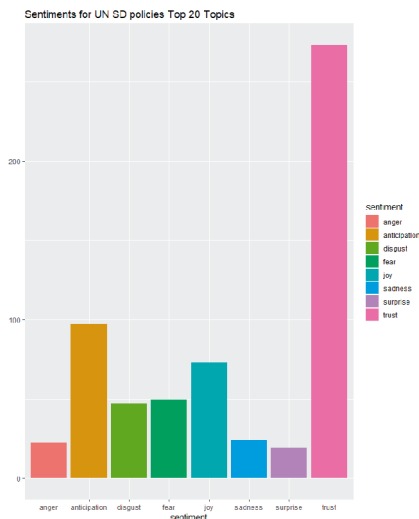
Figure 14: Sentiment analysis
of top 20 UN topics
Source: The author
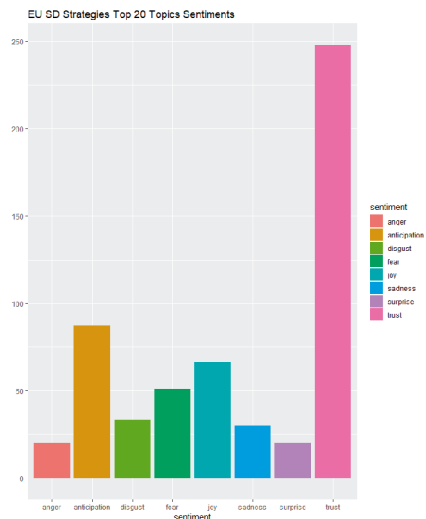
Figure 15: Sentiment analysis
of top 20 EU topics
Source: The author

320
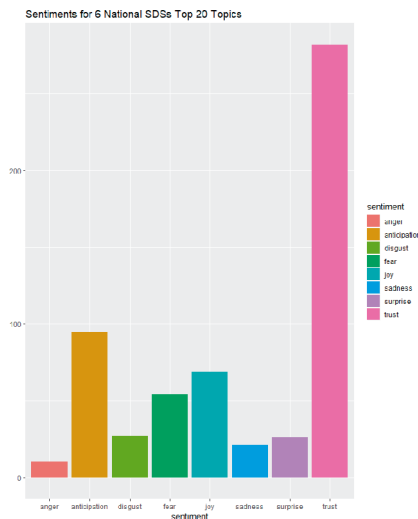
Figure 16: Sentiment analysis of top 20 UN topics
Source: The author

The high level of trust brings assurance in the legitimacy of the three sources as communicators and promoters of the SD agenda. Still, a further research on what exact language triggers sentiment of fear and disgust, and a closer look at differences between documents has potential to highlight efficient and inefficient persuasive mechanisms, as well as helping to identify best practices at policy levels.

6. Discussion and conclusions

By aiming to unlearn and relearn about sustainability using computer-assisted tools, the present research design describes a journey of experimental use of topic modeling, glossary-based approach and sentiment analysis. These are brought together as complementary methods mirroring language use in sustainability policies. The different outputs of all methods have broken diverse layers of discourse analysis, which revealed in the case of SD policy documents how different actors approach the subject, how well they communicate it, and how balanced it is at the level of language in representing the holistic premise. This approach may not be able to offer sharp, punctual and factual results for certain policy analysis purposes, but it facilitates new perspectives, new research directions and new knowledge using resources we already have, sparing at least one resource we never really have (time) and another that has always been sensitive (finance).

Using computer-assisted tools to analyze policy documents can prove quite challenging considering certain level of language formality and domain-specific discourse. It requires a greater effort in anticipating and post-processing a stop-

words list in order to eliminate policy language which is abstract and repetitive (e.g. conference, meeting, programme, action, etc.) and discover the language substrate that encodes less obvious messages. Best results should be revealed by truly making use of large text data, such as archives, periodically documents published over the years or any other online/digital content often updated, to fully enjoy how abstract topics are revealed from the information revolution the public sector is also experiencing.

Bringing together different computational methods applied to text-data has the potential to provide generous outputs from large text data, and facilitate an interaction with policy documents, beyond structure and form. Using topic modeling, an understanding of the imbalanced representation of the SD pillars at the level of discourse has been confirmed. Using the glossary-based approach, the presence of primordial thinking (fantasy language) highlights parts of the SD agenda that are disconnected from the reality. Using sentiment analysis, levels of trust and confidence or other prime emotions can be measured and get valuable, timely feedback.

Topic modeling can shed light on different discursive patterns that might emphasize different topic priorities than initially stated. Glossary-based approach can highlight psychological processes, which help explain thinking frames and encoded perception. Sentiment analysis can reveal mixed feelings encoded in text and offer policy makers the opportunity to better their message aim or have a post-understanding of a how a certain policy is being perceived.

When applied in policy research, the main potentials in using the aforementioned computer-assisted methods are:
– They help measure text data;
– They offer an overview of topic distribution, weights and word frequencies to further observe topic priorities and dimensional focus;
– They help to see changes in language use across time;
– They help to compare discourses between data sources;
– They help to reveal and identify psychological processes reflected in discourses;
– They help to perform policy analysis at different levels of the policy-making cycle;
– They offer a demo for policy analysis using text-data and highlights variances of outputs;
– They help to measure sentiment in policy documents;
– The outputs opens up to different 'why' questions that can further guide the researcher or offer new research directions;
– They are accessible and low-cost;
– They bridge the digital gap and enrich public policy research in computational sciences.

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Analysis of Leadership Characteristics at Hungarian Nonprofit Organizations

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Abstract. A relationship between leaders and followers has existed since the dawn of history. People have always needed leaders who either were elected or who assumed their leadership roles through dominance. Leadership is an activity which plans and utilizes the means of production – with a special focus here on human resources – in order to meet the objectives of the organization. Countless pieces of literature have been written on leadership in business, but the number of publications on the specifics of leadership in nonprofit organizations is, by contrast, quite low.

The main purpose of our research was to analyze the leadership of Hungarian nonprofit organizations. In our questionnaire, we sought to reveal the differences between some leadership styles at nonprofit organizations, and based on our research findings we would like to make suggestions for their practical applicability.

Keywords: Hungary, leadership style, management, motivation, nonprofit organization.

1. Introduction

Leadership is a comprehensive activity whereby the leader successfully accomplishes goals via and together with others (Vinichenko *et al.*, 2017); the leadership style is a behavioral pattern which the leader undertakes to influence the members of the organization and their activities (Karácsony, 2018).

Stine (1994) and Bastida *et al.* (2017) highlight that human resources are among the most important resources of a nonprofit organization. From an organizational structure perspective, nonprofits tend to be informal where decision-making powers and responsibilities are not clearly defined, and supervision and control are therefore more intricate than in business organizations. According to Hall (1990) another problem is that leaders and members of a nonprofit organizations in general participate in these activities on a voluntary basis so that the operation of the organization frequently becomes unreliable. As a result, the proper application of leadership and management knowledge is important in these nonprofit organizations, too.

Kirchner (2006) argues that leadership in nonprofit organizations requires special qualities. Of these, we would like to highlight systemic perspective, the ability to plan strategically, team building and the ability to coordinate a community.

Based on Lovelock and Weinberg (1984), we can differentiate between eight management functions in nonprofit organizations: the organization of activities, human resources, procurement, financial management, accounting review, public relations, fund raising and marketing.

From the literature on leadership style and methods in nonprofit organizations, Perry (2010) elaborates on the leadership-organizational tasks, the skills and the required abilities of a nonprofit organization manager in separate chapters. Perry (2010) considers it important for the leaders of nonprofit organizations to relinquish an individualist way of thinking in favor of thinking in terms of the collective, giving preference to social values. A study by Dobbs (2004) also cites this collective approach to nonprofit leadership as a positive example.

In a study published in 2004, Sohmen assembles the 'perfect nonprofit leader' from three types of leaders: the transformational leader, the visionary and the servant. Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems (Do Nascimento *et al.*, 2018). According to Sloan *et al.* (2016), leaders of nonprofit organizations are characterized by a supervisory role, the efficient use of resources and a strong representative role.

International literature also references how professional knowledge gained through managing business organizations can be utilized effectively by the leader of a nonprofit organization (Regan, 2016; Phipps and Burbach, 2010; Taliento and Silverman, 2005; Oster, 1995). However, all of these studies touch upon the fact that the environment in nonprofit organizations is different than that of business orga-

nizations. This means that leadership in nonprofit organizations requires complex knowledge of the environment surrounding the organization, which demands that the leaders in these organizations possess additional professional knowledge, skills and behavioral patterns.

2. Methodology

Hall (2006) states the nonprofit organization as 'a body of individuals who associate for any of three purposes: (1) to perform public tasks that have been delegated to them by the state; (2) to perform public tasks for which there is a demand that neither the state nor for-profit organizations are willing to fulfill; and (3) to influence the direction of policy in the state, the for-profit sector, or other non-profit organizations'.

According to Ramos and Garza Carranza (2016) leaders of nonprofit organizations generally tend to face a greater need to adapt to changing economic means, and need to encourage team spirit, sense of belonging, inspiration, motivation, and integration of staff (mostly volunteers). Mirvis and Hackett (1983) argue that nonprofit employees seem to be more committed to their jobs and organizations than profit sector employees.

Nonprofit organizations are characterized by the fact that they are created mainly through self-organization; that volunteering and the dedication of the members are important elements; that they struggle with inadequate funding and as a result leaders have only a few means to motivate the members and that, consequently, member activity can become hectic. This can lead us to conclude that the management of nonprofit organizations can differ from that of business organizations. Morris *et al*., 2008 states that the mission of nonprofit organizations is to create social value rather than to generate profit as in for-profit organizations; because of this their management might not be as experienced and skilled as that of for-profit organizations.

According to Drucker (1990) in no area are the differences greater between businesses and non-profit institutions than in managing people and relationships. According to Wolvén (2004) non-profit leaders are more Y-oriented (democratic) and have less Machiavellian traits than the leaders in the profit sector, because non-profit leaders assume that the employees are more motivated and have organized leader-follower relationship.

The general objective of our research was to study the specifics of leadership in nonprofit organizations. The initial assumptions we used in our research were the following:
- in the case of leadership in nonprofit organizations, some of Fayol's management functions differ from management functions in business organizations (Kotter, 1988);

- leaders in nonprofit organizations are characterized by teamwork and a strong willingness to cooperate (Bush, 2002);
- leadership in nonprofit organizations is characterized by a democratic leadership style and a warm, family-like atmosphere (Wolvén, 2004); and
- those active in nonprofit organizations are highly motivated, which mainly originates from within (Schmidt, 2006).

In our study, we are looking to identify the peculiarities and difficulties of leadership in these organizations. Additionally, we would like to find the leadership style that we believe can be most effective in operating nonprofit organizations. Our objective is to formulate conclusions that will assist leaders in operating nonprofit organizations more effectively.

Our research involved a questionnaire survey conducted among nonprofit organizations based in Hungary between 2015 and 2018. The nonprofits involved in the study were contacted personally and online. Our last-year students helped fill out the questionnaires. According to Hungarian Central Statistics database the total number of NGO's was 61 151 in 2017; in our research 42 nonprofit organizations accepted to participate and fill out the research questionnaire.

We used two types of questionnaire. One was designed for the leaders (we considered persons with decision-making power such as statutory representatives, chairmen, to be leaders) and the other was designed for the subordinates. The questionnaire did not cover financial information about the organization; it only contained questions concerning data about leadership practice. From a structural point of view, the questionnaire was comprised of several, easily recognizable parts. The general data about the respondent (gender, age, education, etc.) was gathered in the first part of the questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire for the leaders contained different questions than the one meant for the subordinates. This second part was concerned with leadership, decision-making, employee motivation and job satisfaction, among other topics. The questionnaire contained closed and open questions alike. Of the 187 questionnaires filled out, we were able to make use of 175 in our study because the rest of the responses we received were incomplete or inaccurate. 73% of the questionnaires included in our study were filled out by employees (128 people), while the remaining 27% (or 47 individuals) were filled out by people in leadership positions.

3. Research findings

The following will be a short summary of the most essential and important results of our research and will also cover the confirmation or refutation of our previously stated initial assumptions.

With regard to gender distribution, we found that an overwhelming majority, nearly 81%, of the leaders were male. Among the subordinates, women constituted a narrower majority of 64%. Regarding age distribution, both genders were mostly represented by the middle age group (40-55 years old; 43%) and the older (55+ years old; 41 %) age group. This fact also shows that only a small part (16%) of the younger age group (under 40 years old) can be mobilized when it comes to voluntary work. A significant part of respondents (around 34%) had a university or college degree and 24% had a high school diploma. 38% of the leaders who filled out our questionnaire had been in a leadership position in their organization for 6-10 years.
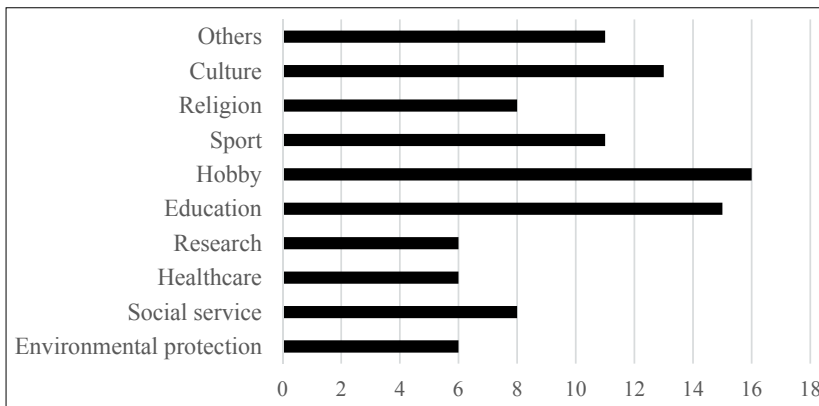
Figure 1: The field of activity of the studied nonprofit organizations, in %
Source: Own research, 2018

Figure 1 shows that the main areas of activity for the studied nonprofit organizations are hobby (16%), education (15%), culture (13%) and sports activities (11%). We classified nonprofits dealing with legal or professional activities and activities in the field of security or property protection into the 'Other' category. The remaining studied categories (religion, social services, healthcare, politics and environmental protection) were each represented at a rate of less than 10%.

The amount of time devoted to the operation of an organization can affect the degree of its success, so we were curious how many hours on average leaders of the studied nonprofits devote to their managerial-organizational duties. 24% of responding leaders spend fewer than eight hours per week managing their organization; 42% reported working between 8 and 16 hours per week while 34% of responding leaders reported working more than 16 hours a week (Figure 2).
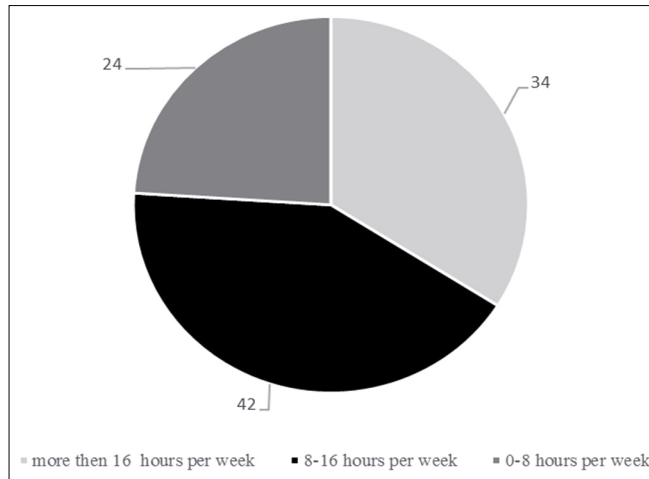
Figure 2: The weekly working hours of leaders of studied nonprofit organizations, in %
Source: Own research, 2018

In Figure 3, based on the Fayol's categorization (Voxted, 2017), we studied lead-ers' opinions on individual management functions. We used a 1-5 Likert-scale with 1 signaling least important and 5 signaling most important. The leaders who filled out the questionnaire indicated planning (4.32) and organizing (4.18) as the most important functions, while commanding (3.92), coordinating (4.01) and controlling (3.81) were rated as less important functions. It follows that thanks to the nature of nonprofit organizations, continuous and stringent control of people active in the organization is not a critical function of the leader.
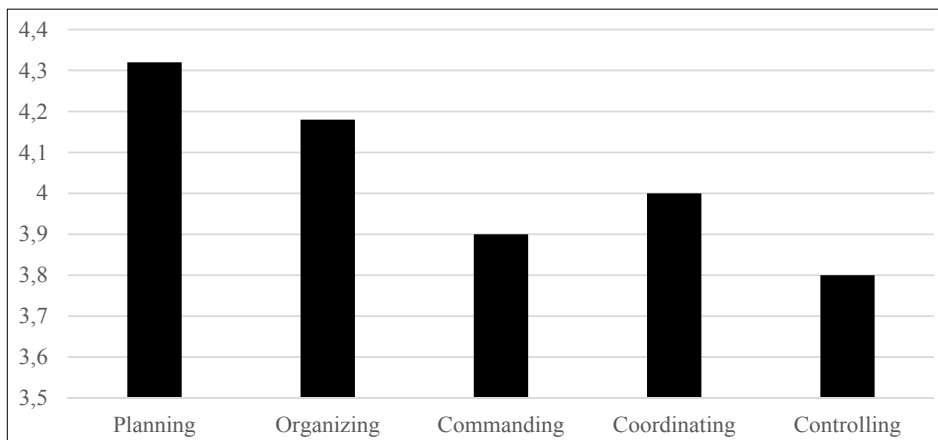
Figure 3: Opinion on the importance of management functions among the leaders, Likert-scale
Source: Own research, 2018

According to 56% of the respondents, the leader asks for their opinion before making a decision while another 20% indicated that the leader seeks their counsel depending on the situation; only 8 % of respondents indicated that the leader of the organization makes their decisions alone.

When responding to questions on the most important leadership traits for leading a nonprofit organization, leaders identified thinking in terms of the group (4.1) and task-orientation (3.9) to be the most important. These are followed closely by professional aptitude (3.7) and the ability to build trust (3.7). The collected responses show that the least important leadership trait in nonprofit organizations is the desire for power (2.4) (Figure 4). We concluded that the leaders of the studied nonprofit organizations belong mostly in the democratic leadership style category.
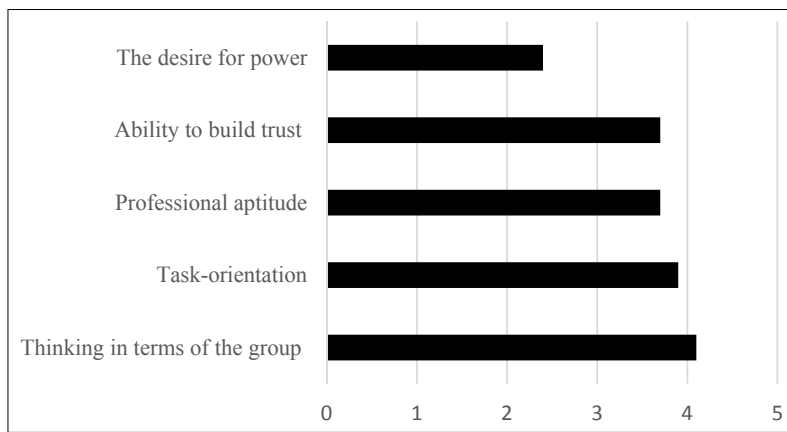
Figure 4: The judgment of individual leaders on the importance of leadership traits, Likert-scale
Source: Own research, 2018

In our questionnaire, we also asked employees to formulate an opinion on the leaders and their most important characteristics. Respondents were allowed to select more than one choice. The results were that the most characteristic traits among nonprofit leaders are leading by example (23%), fairness (16%) and listening to subordinates' opinions. Purposefulness (14%), friendly attitudes (12%) and sympathetic attitudes (10%) were also identified as positive traits. On the other hand, the answers also included heavy-handedness (4%) and unfriendliness (7%) as negative traits. These answers indicate that the leaders of the studied nonprofit organizations were generally characterized by a friendly leadership style.

One characteristic of nonprofit organizations is that those active in them participate mainly on a voluntary basis. To confirm this presumption of ours, we asked respondents what their motivation was for taking a job in a nonprofit organization. The survey shows that the employees of the studied nonprofits participate in the

activities of the organization mostly from internal motivation (44%), followed by professional development (21%) and motivation from the family (13%). External social pressure was mentioned only by 19% of the respondents.

Furthermore, our research also included an inquiry into which motivational tools leaders of nonprofits use most frequently. Here, it is worth highlighting that because money is available only to a limited degree to nonprofit organizations, and because a kind of volunteering and selflessness is – albeit only implicitly – expected of employees of nonprofits, money as a motivational factor is less frequent in comparison to organizations in the business sector. Nevertheless, the leaders of the studied nonprofit organizations only use monetary benefits (reward, premiums, wage increases) as motivation tools around 20% of the time, while praise and verbal recognition (e.g. issuing diplomas and commemorative letters) are present in 60% of these organizations. One potential reason for this is the fact that 20% of the responding leaders did not consider the motivation of their co-workers important because they believe people active in such organizations should regard the performance of their duties as 'natural', even without any motivation (Figure 5).
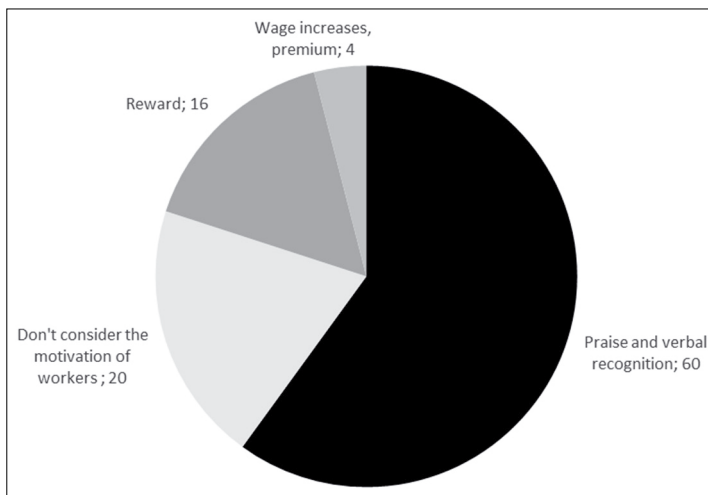
Figure 5: Motivational tools used in examined nonprofit organizations, in %
Source: Own research, 2018

According to Schmid (2006), a leader can be either employee oriented or product oriented; these two concepts have also been known as autocratic (task) and democratic (relationship) orientations. The democratic leader is very active in stimulating group discussion and group decision (White and Lippitt, 1960). According to Gastil (1994) the characteristics of democratic leadership are to empower group members and help the group's decision-making process.

The main objective of the research was to investigate the satisfaction of employees according to the leadership style. As seen on Table 1, there was significant correlation (p<0.01 level) between employee satisfaction and democratic leadership style. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient (0,644) indicates the direct relationship between the variables, which means they are aligned with each other. In the case of Hungarian nonprofit organizations, we can confirm that the democratic leadership style is very important for employees.

Table 1: Results of the correlation between democratic leadership style and employee satisfaction

		Democratic leadership style	Employee satisfaction
Democratic leadership style	Pearson Correlation	1	,644**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	128	128
Employee satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	,644**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	128	128

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analysis of Survey data 2018, using SPSS 21

4. Conclusions

Leadership and the leadership style play a decisive role in the life of all organizations. In order to lead people effectively, there is a need for a highly qualified person with countless positive traits. The objective of our study was to assess the leadership styles applied in our selected nonprofit organizations and to determine what factors can influence a leader. Our research involved an analysis of the relations between the satisfaction of nonprofit leaders and the employees of these organizations. We also highlighted the fact that the satisfaction of subordinates is contingent on the leader's preferred leadership style.

To fulfill the research objectives of our study, we prepared two different questionnaires; the first questionnaire was distributed among the employees and the second was distributed among the leaders. After evaluating our research results, we found that all the leaders of the studied nonprofit organizations strive to find the leadership style that best suits the internal and external environment of their organizations. Elements of the democratic leadership style were predominant among the leader, aiming to make sure subordinates are widely involved in decision-making, listen to their opinions, and encourage them to form an opinion.

It can be generally stated that the leaders are trained, have the necessary professional background and experience, are most of all characterized by positive traits,

enjoy working in a team and have a strong willingness to cooperate. From the perspective of the employees, we can state that the leaders of these organizations are not characterized by a heavy-handed leadership style or the strict control or supervision of their subordinates.

Regarding management functions, they spend most of their working hours with the planning and organization of tasks related to their organization. Concerning motivational tools, praise and recognition have the dominant role because of the well-known lack of capital in nonprofit organizations. Those active in the studied organizations were mostly driven by internal motivations to participate in their work. One of the most important messages of our study is that a leader must persistently strive to make his or her colleagues successful because it is only through them that he or she can become a successful leader.

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Analysis of GDPR Implementation at County Level

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Abstract. The General Data Protection Regulation is the solution of the European Union in light of the major challenges to personal data. Not only Google and Facebook are liable for personal data challenges, but also public authorities must deal with security concerns. This article aims to discuss the innovative character of GDPR for public authorities, considering the perceived lack of knowledge and improper implementation. The methodology features a short survey submitted to local public authorities in Bihor county aiming to evaluate the implementation of the legislation and overall knowledge. Based on a multilevel governance framework, the article discusses the main stipulations of GDPR and how they apply to local authorities. Then, it analyzes the national framework of the legislation in order to provide some solutions regarding GDPR implementation by public authorities. Finally, the article addresses the results of the survey and aims to offer possible solutions and recommendations for local authorities.

Keywords: GDPR, public authorities, public policy, Romania.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the European Union has advanced the regulatory framework in terms of technology, digitalization, and the information society in general. The multiannual and horizonal effort of building the Digital Single Market has had repercussions on physical and legal persons alike. Citizens have now the possibility to travel across the EU with their data, while companies and institutions must put in place mechanisms meant to protect citizens. This is the result of just one regulation, namely the General Data Protection Regulation, but digital policies have come closer to the citizen. This creates a series of obligations to all entities handling personal data, either as controllers or processors. As of May 25, 2018, GDPR empowers users, given it is based by a treaty article protecting data and ensuring the free flow of data across the EU. From the explicit consent of personal data use to the data protection officer, the legislation has instituted a series of mechanisms meant to protect citizens given the growing quantity of personal data available.

Public authorities are major users of citizens' personal data in its various forms. They have the same responsibility of protecting it as companies, like Facebook or Google, whose business model relies on users' data. Their responsibility is even higher, considering the sensitive character of data that citizens entrust with the public authorities: medical data, identification numbers, salaries, social security information, etc. Without the proper mechanisms put in place, public authorities are vulnerable to significant attacks.

These over-reaching measures must apply at all levels of the administration under the pressure of significant fines by the national data protection authority. Using the assumption that GDPR must be applied at all levels of administration, we have set out to identify the specific measures taken by local public authorities. Local authorities are the closest connection the citizens have with any form of public authority. The main question asked by this research is: how do local authorities relate to European-wide obligations? This research is fueled by the perceived lack of knowledge of authorities related to the subject, considering that the national law for the implementation of the regulation entered into force only after the European deadline of enforcement on May 25, 2018. If authorities lack proper knowledge of the regulation, then they will not be able to create adequate mechanisms to enforce the law.

The methodology is based on this assertion and features a short survey assessing the implementation of GDPR at the local level in Bihor County, Romania. The hypotheses of the paper are related to the perceived lack of information in the public space regarding the implementation of GDPR:
1. Local public authorities in BH have insufficiently implemented GDPR related policies in their institutions.
2. Local public authorities in BH lack knowledge of GDPR implementation.

Based on these hypotheses, we have designed a short questionnaire and sent to all local authorities in Bihor County (99 mayor's offices and all local deconcentrated services in Bihor County). The survey requires a theoretical framework. The article discusses the main stipulations of GDPR and how they apply to local authorities. Then, it analyzes the national framework of the legislation in order to provide some solutions regarding GDPR implementation by public authorities. Finally, the article addresses the results of the survey and aims to offer possible solutions and recommendations for local authorities.

2. Brief theoretical framework

Multilevel governance is the theoretical framing explaining the interaction between local authorities and the European Union. Marks and Hooghe, arguably the ones who synthetized the multi-level governance (MLG) model, start their conceptualization from the idea that the state actor has lost its relevance once the supranational layer has grown (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). In the light of these changes, several other actors can be more involved in the policy process. For instance, when discussing MLG, Marks and Hooghe emphasize the role of regional institutions for the deployment of the cohesion policy in the EU. The relations between these levels are not necessarily hierarchical, but they do not exclude the national level entirely. At the same time, the interactions become more complicated as the number of actors increases, although the levels of authority are not strictly delimited (Le Galis, 2009).

The example of multi-level governance presented within this paper concerns the implementation of a piece of legislation within the digital policies of the European Union (Mărcuț, 2017). In this scheme, the local authorities are mainly concerned with the implementation of legislation within the overall public policy cycle, considering that they mainly deal with the personal data of citizens. The utility of such a survey is that it can provide feedback for the European level as to the habits, as well as challenges that public authorities facing in relation to the implementation of legislation.

3. Main stipulations of GDPR for public authorities

The General Data Protection Regulation identifies three major subjects of this law, namely the data subjects, the controller and the processor. The data subject is the person whose data has been disclosed. Referring to the public authorities, the data subject can be either a citizen or an employee of the institution. The controller is defined as 'the natural or legal person, public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data' (EUR-Lex, 2016). The processor 'means a natural or legal

person, public authority, agency or other body, which processes data on behalf of the controller' (EUR-Lex, 2016). Hence, local public authorities can act both as controllers and processors of personal data.

At the same time, the principles regarding the use of personal data are at the forefront of any processing that public authorities might perform. Considering the major transformations regarding the use of personal data, public authorities can no longer use the idea of legitimate interest for collecting data. Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation details the principles:

– Lawfulness, fairness and transparency 'in relation to the data subject';
– Purpose and storage limitation – 'not further processed in a manner that is incompatible' with the specified, explicit and legitimate purposes of collection. Also, the form of the storage should not exceed the purposes of collection;
– Data minimization – considering that less data is necessary nowadays to identify a person, the collection should be 'adequate, relevant and limited';
– Data accuracy – authorities should take the proper steps to ensure that the inaccurate or inexact data is corrected; and
– Integrity and confidentiality of the data – the regulation instills the need for adequate security of the personal data, insisting of adopting protection measures.

Considering these principles and the immense amount of data that public authorities handle, they require a comprehensive policy and an integrated system with key people with different specializations to implement the regulation properly. This is especially relevant considering that the regulation provides the broad strokes of how personal data should be protected, but it does not provide an actual 'how-to' manual. The reason for this general outlook stems from the different traditions that Member States have with regard to data protection, as well as from the vast array of ways in which data is collected and processed, which may vary from body to body.

3.1. Obligations of public authorities

Although public authorities have a special regime within General Data Protection Regulation, they still must comply with a series of obligations stipulated by the law. The first obligation pertaining also to public authorities refers to the data protection officer, which is defined by articles 37-39 of the Regulation. Public entities are obligated to name a data protection officer, which can cover only one authority or several authorities and bodies, depending on their structure and size.

Its activity within the public authority is to be quasi-independent and its main task is to fulfill the stipulations of the regulation, as it is stipulated at paragraphs

3, art. 38 of the regulation: 'the controller and processor shall ensure that the data protection officer does not receive any instructions regarding the exercise of those tasks. He or she shall not be dismissed or penalized by the controller or the processor for performing his tasks. The data protection officer shall directly report to the highest management level of the controller or the processor' (EUR-Lex, 2016, p. 56). Applying this stipulation to the public authorities, we conclude that the data protection officer only answers to the management of the institution, such as a mayor, manager, rector or president, but s/he is not a subordinate in the quality of data protection officer. This post must be seen as a partner of the institution whose sole purpose is to help it comply with the data protections standards. Moreover, the regulation also stipulates that the DPO can be either an employee of the institution or an exterior person with a services contract. An exterior contractor is not in an inferior position to the public authority and the same situation must be applied in case the DPO is an employee.

The regulation establishes the main duties of the DPO, concerning the advising with regards to GDPR, to monitoring of the processing by the controller or to provide advice to the controller. The duties of the DPO can also deliver a series of obligations of controllers or processors, either public or private entities. For instance, one of the duties of the DPO is to 'to monitor compliance with this Regulation, with other Union or Member State data protection provisions and with the policies of the controller or processor in relation to the protection of personal data, including the assignment of responsibilities, awareness-raising and training of staff involved in processing operations, and the related audits' (EUR-Lex, 2016, p. 56). These tasks cannot be assigned only for the DPO, as s/he functions within an entity. As a result, we may find a few tasks that public authorities must implement in order to ensure compliance and reduce risk of data breaches. They are, as mentioned: assignment of responsibilities, raising awareness, staff training, regular audits, etc.

The data protection assessment is yet another stipulation of GDPR that may apply to public authorities, especially those processing big amounts of personal data.

3.2. GDPR and Romanian law with respect to public authorities

GDPR has left it to the Member States to legislate certain additional aspects regarding protection of personal data. Hence, the regulation is mandatory in its entirety, but the EU has put forward certain features that can be specified more clearly in national legislation. Also, the national authority must report on these issues to the Commission. This section illustrates a series of specificities of the Romanian law to implement the General Data Protection Regulation with regard to public authorities.

The law defines the tasks within public interest in more specific terms, as follows: 'those activities of political parties or organizations of citizens from national minorities, of non-governmental organizations, which serve for the accomplishment of objectives stipulated by the constitutional law or public international law or for the functioning of the democratic system, including the encouragement of citizen participation in the decision-making and public policy preparation processes, respectively for the promotion of democratic principles and values' (Ministry of Justice, 2018). However, this definition may seem restrictive for other types of public interest.

The national law makes a few significant changes with regards to public authorities. Firstly, the law defines them more specifically: 'Chamber of Deputies and Senate, the Presidency, the Government, ministries, other specialized branches of the central public administration, autonomous public authorities and institutions, local and county public administrative authorities, other public authorities, as well as the institutions coordinated by them and those under their jurisdiction. In the sense of this law, religious entities and associations and foundations of public vocation are assimilated to the public authorities' (Ministry of Justice, 2018).

Secondly, the law creates a series of distinctions between public authorities and private entities regarding possible sanctions and measures to remedy certain breaches of the law. They are stipulated at article 13 of the law as follows. If the national data protection supervisor finds that the public authority is in breach of the stipulations of GDPR, it files an official notice with the sanctions and a remedy plan for the authority to put in place. The remedy plan must be put in place in a reasonable remedy time that cannot exceed 90 days. Afterwards, the data supervisor may control the authority once again in 10 days' time to check compliance with the remedy plan and the law.

There is no such stipulation for private entities, which are subject to the full sanctions and punishments stipulated by the European regulation. At the same time, the administrative fines issued by the national data protection supervisor are different for public authorities compared to private entities. According to article 14, the maximum administrative fine issued to a public authority cannot exceed a maximum of 200,000 lei or approximatively 40,000 Euro (Legislative Portal. Ministry of Justice, 2018). Indeed, the European regulation stipulates that Member States 'may lay down the rules on whether and to what extent administrative fines may be imposed on public authorities and bodies established in that Member State' (EUR-Lex, 2016, p. 83). However, the maximum fine issued due to infringements of data protection provisions stipulated by the European law go up to 20 million Euro, which is a significantly higher number than the fines stipulated by the Romanian law.

4. Measures for GDPR compliance

4.1. Measures available directly under GDPR

Although GDPR is a mandatory legal framework for all Member States, it is just that – a general framework for data protection. The regulation is not overly specific especially considering its wide scope and application in both the physical and virtual worlds, without discrimination between the technology used to collect and/process the data. Moreover, it aims to appease also the national tradition and specificity with regards to the processing of personal data. For instance, when the regulation was voted within the Council, Austria voted against it declaring with regret that the legislation falls short of national level of protection of privacy and personal data (Mărcuț, 2017).

Hence, there is room for maneuver regarding the implementation at national level, as well as the level of any entity processing personal data. The Member States have the chance and, in some cases, the obligation to legislate certain aspect according to their national environment. Aspects like freedom of press and expression, processing in relation to employment, and the level of administrative fines, are left for the national level to clarify. Romania has done so with Law no. 190/2018, which entered into force in July 2018. The second aspect regarding being 'GDPR-ready' remains at the local level – either in a company or in public authorities.

Although the law does not provide clear steps on implementation, it offers certain cues of which local authorities can take advantage in order to become 'GDPR-ready'. One such measure is available at article 30, which is one of the most important aspects of GDPR implementation. According to this article, each controller must keep a record of every processing activity done within the institution. The article specifically states the information to be kept within the record in case of controllers (while the processors must do the same with a similar set of prerequisites for the record), such as the name and contact details of the controller, purposes, categorization of personal data, time limits, etc. (EUR-Lex, 2016, p. 51).

Article 32 of the regulation discusses technical and organizational security measures to be taken by the controller and processor, such as pseudonymization and encryption of personal data, the ability to restore the availability and access to personal data in a timely manner in the event of a physical or technical incident, or a constant evaluation of the procedures (EUR-Lex, 2016, pp. 51–52). Moreover, the same article lists potential other cues for the proper implementation of GDPR for public authorities, namely the adherence to a code of conduct and an approved certification mechanism.

In the absence of a specific manual on implementation, the article 40 details the creation of codes of conduct, 'intended to contribute to the proper application of this Regulation, taking account of the specific features of the various process-

ing sectors and the specific needs of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises' (EUR-Lex, 2016, pp. 56–57). The national data protection authority must approve them, but they can also give recommendations and issue opinions on these codes of conduct. These codes of conduct are industry-specific, but their implementation is to be monitored by a specialized board.

On the other hand, the certification mechanism is a voluntary action by entities aiming to pursue full compliance with the regulation. However, article 42, 'Certification', does state that having such a certificate does not reduce the obligations of the controllers and processors to work on compliance. The national data protection authority or a certification body may issue such seals of data protection compliance, which will be renewed every three years.

One cue is available at article 35, entitled 'Data protection impact assessment'. This article asks for an impact assessment for possible processing operations that might result in additional risks to the rights and freedoms of natural persons and after which legal effects can impact the person's life (EUR-Lex, 2016, p. 54). The article details some instances where impact assessments are necessary, some of which are relevant for public authorities. One example can refer to the systematic monitoring of public areas, which is done by public authorities with surveillance cameras, etc. For this impact assessment, the national data protection authority must create a list of the types of processing that have to be put under impact assessment.

The data protection officer is one of the most important requisites for GDPR compliance, under certain circumstances, which are listed at article 37. This is a mandatory measure for public authorities, but the implementation of such a measure is problematic considering the level of skills and abilities of such a person. Article 37, paragraph (1), letter (a) states that the DPO is mandatory in case of 'the processing is carried out by a public authority or body, except for courts acting in their judicial capacity' (EUR-Lex, 2016, p. 55). The advisory group on data protection provides additional details on this article, considering their conclusion that GDPR 'does not define what constitutes a 'public authority or body' (Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, 2016, p. 6). Considering this issue, the WP29 advises in favor of a clear definition of what a public authority or body is in national law. This definition has been adapted for Romania (see above).

Besides the duties, which are listed at the next article, article 37 specifies that such a position should be filled by a person 'on the basis of professional qualities and, in particular, expert knowledge of data protection law and practices and the ability to fulfil the tasks referred to in Article 39' (EUR-Lex, 2016, p. 55). Regardless of the vagueness of this statement, the Romanian national authority has put together a guide on the responsibilities of a DPO, which is based on the working groups at the European level advising on the implementation of GDPR. In view of

the Data Protection Working Party, the DPO can be hired also by virtue of voluntary action, whenever the condition is not mandatory (Article 29 Data Protection Working Party, 2016, p. 5). Applying this information to the national environment, the Romanian data protection supervisor has recommended the naming of the DPO in any case, as a measure ensuring compliance.

5. GDPR compliance for local authorities in Bihor County

At this point, the analysis reveals a generalized framework for implementation, which may cause misunderstandings and a national piece of legislation that favors public authorities to private entities regarding sanctions and fines.

So far, the national data protection supervisor has put forward a series of measures regarding compliance:
- a brief guide on GDPR-compliance measures with generalized application;
- a procedure for receiving and resolving complaints regarding data protection breaches;
- the mandatory list of operations for which a data protection impact assessment is required, according to art. 35 of GDPR (Autoritatea Națională de Supraveghere a Prelucrării Datelor cu Caracter Personal, 2018).

A series of official forms and procedures are required by the GDPR – form to declare the DPO, etc. At this stage, the knowledge regarding GDPR at the national level seems quite low. Knowledge requires expertise and, essentially, investment in human resources or external consultancy. In addition, compliance requires the pooling and redistribution of resources – both financial and human ones. It also requires an objective analysis regarding in-house practices on data protection and internal decision-making on the best way to adapt the regulation to the specificities of the entity.

The European institutions allowed for a two-year period between approval and implementation precisely to give entities time to implement the new rules. However, three months before the deadline, analyses showed that private entities were not prepared, with only 40% of companies having come up with an implementation plan by February 2018 (Ziarul Financiar, 2018). Another survey done by an IT company had shown that 45% of companies had not started the implementation process by May 25, while the other 55% were just at the beginning (Stirileprotv.ro, 2018). The press fueled the perception that Romania is not ready, by quoting legal experts agreeing with this point. For instance, another press article from the exact date of entry into force of the regulation mentions the opinions of practitioners in the field, namely that public institutions and companies alike are not GDPR-ready because of the overall lack of expertise on the subject (Gidei, 2018).

5.1. Base indicators of the survey

The period of the survey corresponded to the first months after the entry into force. The survey took place between June and August 2018, a sufficient time frame allowing local authorities to answer in due time and covering the traditional holiday period in local administration.

First, the transmission of the survey was done over the Internet, using Google Docs. The advantage of Google Docs and the overall transmission over the Internet are the user-friendly character of the survey, the opportunity to ensure anonymity and the eased processing of the data on a variety of devices. Some of the drawbacks, which could influence the overall results of the study, refer to the lack of discipline of the surveyed parties that could limit their answers over the Internet. This is to be taken into consideration when interpreting the data.

Secondly, the survey benefitted from the support of the Prefecture of Bihor County, in order to boost the number of responses. The Prefecture contributed with the contact data of all the local mayoralty in Bihor County and issued an official request to provide answers. This initiative certainly contributed and boosted the number of responses.

Thirdly, the survey was sent to the total 101 local mayoralty in Bihor County, covering both rural and urban areas. The second type of institution targeted were the local institutions providing services to the population, such as the health case, pensions, police, etc. They have first contact with citizens and their activities are based strictly on the collection and/or processing of personal data. Additionally, 26 local authorities received the survey. Out of the total 127 possible respondents, we received 93 responses, 10 of which were duplicates. One answer did not identify the institution properly, so it was eliminated. However, the idea that 10 answers of were duplicates points to the idea that there might be an overlap in responsibilities regarding personal data, since the survey was filled in twice by the same entity with different answers.

Hence, 82 valid responses provided the context for this research. This is where one of the drawbacks of Internet-based surveys has intervened. Without a face-to-face interview, a discussion, or at least a confirmed commitment to complete the survey, the overall picture can be skewed. Still, the number of respondents is viable to continue the research, considering that it is relevant for Bihor County:
- For the urban level – 34 respondents.
- For the rural level – 48 respondents.

The rural level represents only the rural mayoralty across Bihor County, while the urban level is comprised of urban mayoralty, as well as other local/regional institutions with the head office in Oradea, the county seat. 101 is total number of mayoralties in the county, with 10 urban mayoralty and 91 rural ones (Bihor County Council, 2014). Half of the rural mayoralty answered the survey.

5.2. Hypothesis no. 1 – Local public authorities in BH have insufficiently implemented GDPR related policies in their institutions

5.2.1. DPO

The Data Protection Officer is the least common denominator of GDPR-ready institutions. Basically, one of the first steps that an institution can do is to nominate a person for such a position. Hence, the following set of questions relates to the role of the DPO within the organization. 76 institutions out of 82 had named a DPO for their organization, while 6 had not.
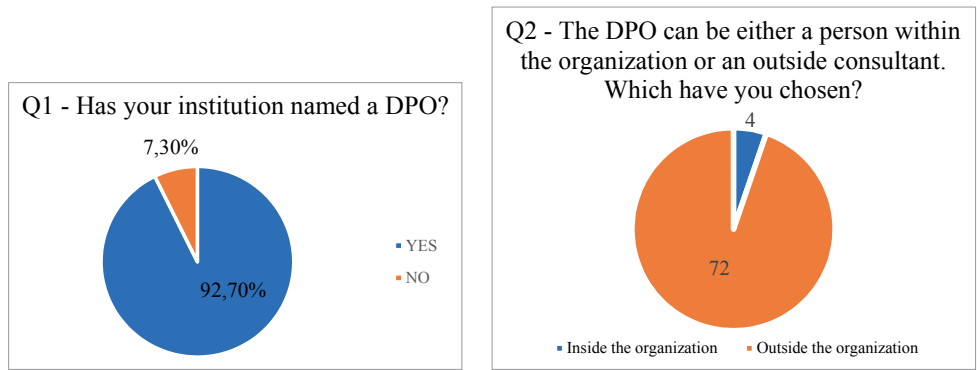
Figure 1: Has your institutions named a DPO?

Figure 2: DPOs as internal or outside consultants

The DPO can be an existing employee that has to fulfill the criteria set by the regulation, but the institution can also name an outside consultant. In Bihor, only 4 of the institutions that had named a DPO decided to go with an outside consultant. The advantages of a consultant can outweigh the possible expenditure given that an outsider is most likely a law professional that is trained. Moreover, the outsider can see the bigger picture within the institution to be able to provide more targeted solutions for compliance. The outside consultant was chosen either from the official public procurement procedures, or from recommendations from other institutions.

The share of DPOs within the institutions is high, considering the complexity of the issue. The regulation does not provide too many details about the necessary qualifications, leaving it up to those in charge of implementing to discern the best person for the job. To observe the profiles of DPOs in Bihor County, the next question of the survey asked about the background of the internal DPO. Multiple answers were possible considering that some institutions can create more complex data protection monitoring systems.
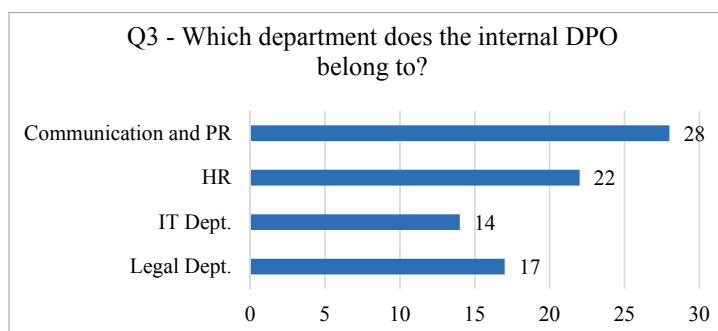
Figure 3: Departments of DPOs

The background of internal DPOs is quite diverse for local institutions, as the graph Q3 shows. The local authorities surveyed went with people from the communication department, followed by HR, while the Legal Department was the third choice. However, analyzing the provisions of the regulation, one can conclude that this type of position should require knowledge from more areas. It does not entail a simple act of communication, be it internal or external. Due to the complexity of personal data available, the person should have extensive knowledge about the collection and processing within the organization, as well as the proper technical and legal aspects necessary to safeguard such data. The communication role is secondary and takes place in interactions with the management or the data protection authority (DPA).

On the other hand, several institutions chose a more complex data management system. Indeed, the DPO needs to cooperate to all of the abovementioned departments and requires knowledge from different domains. Three institutions opted for more complex systems – the Prefecture of Bihor, the County Public Finance Authority and the local administration in Beiuş, a small city in the county. They still have a designated DPO, but they opted for a more complex option in order to manage the implementation properly.

Regardless of the background of the DPO, proper training and information exchange are essential when it comes to personal data processing. Currently, the educational system does not have clear specialization on the subject, except for those training in Law. Informal training (without an official certification of a DPO) can be a temporary solution.

In the absence of a certified form of training, it is relevant that 63.8% of the authorities with internal DPOs have offered opportunities to be better prepared to understand the legislation. When looking at those institutions who had not offered any form of training, we find that 11 of them are urban institutions. What could deter the proper instruction of DPOs? Lack of funding from the local or county
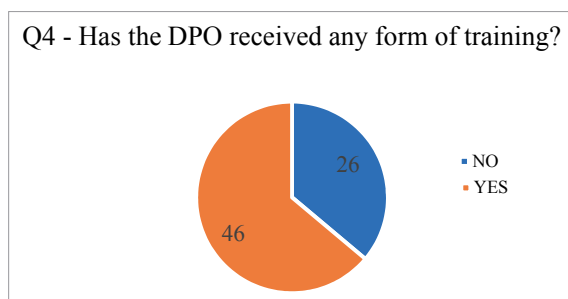
Figure 4: Status of DPOs training

budget can be one of the causes. A second reason can refer to the novel character of the legislation, a piece of legislation whose full effects have not been seen in their entirety.

5.2.2. Implementation measures

The implementation of GDPR can be a challenge for local public authorities, especially considering the challenges they face in Romania, such as lack of funding, lack of a proper financial framework, insufficient staff, etc. Moreover, at the date of entry into force, the legislation had not had a strict implementation framework for the authorities to follow. At the national level, the Romanian DPA had published an implementation guide in 2017 (ANSPDCP, 2017). Hence, local public authorities had sufficient baggage of knowledge at their disposal to contribute to the safeguard of personal data.

The national guide details the need for an impact assessment and the creation of internal procedures to detect the types of personal data that are not in concordance with the provisions of the law. Other measures include proper security safeguards, additional training for employees, etc. (ANSPDCP, 2017a, pp. 8–10). The local public authorities of Bihor County were also asked about the measures they had put forward to implement the legislation. The answer options are comprised of proper implementation measures that can be taken by institutions. Hence, there is no single correct answer regarding actions for compliance, rather a mix of these options are recommended, as per the DPA guide (ANSPDCP, 2017a).

Mainly local authorities went in the easy direction of naming a DPO, creating consent forms, and evaluating personal data. Moreover, the personal data record is required explicitly by the regulation, but only 4 authorities have implemented this measure. These procedures do not put a strain on the budget, but they are not enough for proper implementation. For once, personal data is more and more stored in an electronic format and proper security of the communication of such data and the maintenance of servers are required. This type of activity is aimed at
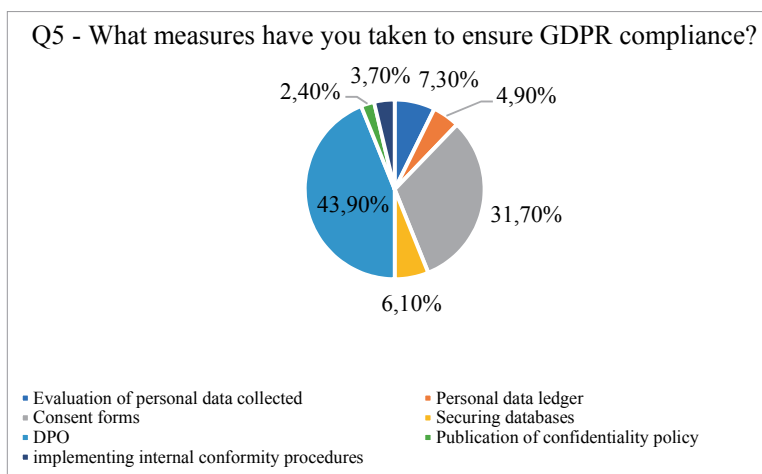
Figure 5: Measures taken to ensure GDPR compliance

reducing risks and creating a safe environment and local authorities can be affected by data breaches as much as a private company.

Concluding this section, we can argue that the local public authorities have insufficiently implemented GDPR regulations. Although the research shows that most authorities had named a DPO, 36% stated that there has not been proper training to the DPO. Moreover, only 7.3% of authorities have engaged in an assessment of the types of data used within the institution, which should be the basis for any GDPR compliance procedure. Only 4 of 82 respondents have created the record of personal data (required by art. 30 of GDPR).

5.3. Hypothesis no. 2 – Local public authorities in Bihor County lack knowledge of GDPR implementation

So far, the survey shows that proper measures to implement GDPR have not been put in place. Lack of knowledge can be also deduced from the lack of training offered to the DPO prior to his/her naming into the position. However, knowledge can be verified only after evaluating the degree of information of the employees, as well as the manner in which they have been informed. This is because the DPO is not the only person involved in the management of personal data, given that the employees are the first ones dealing with personal data.

This was an open question allowing respondents to provide more details about the status of GDPR implementation and the pro-active measures they put forward to adapt to the new regulation. Simple yes/no questions regarding employee training was left out of the graph, considering the fact that they did not provide relevant details on preparation for employees. 5 institutions had not provided training

Figure 6: Employees' GDPR training

by the end of the survey period, while 1 respondent stated that it would be underway. The vast majority of respondents stated that employees had been informed about the legislation within regular meetings. 12 respondents discussed about the training they had received either internally or externally as part of a GDPR course, which does not offer any accreditation in the absence of official certifications by the DPA. These answers (meetings and trainings) raises some concerns. For instance, how can knowledge on the subject be transmitted and then maintained with meetings where participants are passive rather than active? The same concern can be raised about the written memos and notes used as techniques to train employees? In this case, there is no official exchange of information between employees of different departments, except for any informal discussions. The level of employee training points to a more passive instruction rather than an active engagement into productive discussions about the management of personal data within the institution, which can contribute to a more open process.

In conclusion, we cannot state that authorities and employees have not been informed on compliance, but also the method of informing is relevant. The majority of dissemination has been done in regular meetings – without a proper training/ testing on the knowledge. Two public institutions – Oradea Municipality and the Prefecture of Bihor – organized trainings for local authorities (according to the answers provided by the respondents). Only 5 authorities have put forward an internal regulation on GDPR.

6. Conclusions

The General Data Protection Regulation is one of the flagship initiatives of the Digital Single Market strategy of the European Union and is an ample response to the need to create a unified framework to protect the privacy of European citizens. At the same time, it aims to educate citizens, while the operators and processors have more responsibilities in safeguarding personal data.

This article was concerned with the second idea, as it aimed to provide an in-depth look at the efforts of local public authorities to become more responsible due to the enforcement of GDPR. Built on the multilevel governance framework, where local authorities are present within the wider policy-making mechanism of the EU, the article set out to analyze two hypotheses stemming from the public discourse on GDPR using a survey of local public authorities.

The first hypothesis referred to a perceived improper implementation of GDPR by local public authorities in Bihor County. The hypothesis was confirmed, considering the fact that a significant percentage had not named a DPO by the end of the survey (August 2018). Moreover, the DPO and the consent forms are the best-known measures of compliance, but they are not enough for proper implementation.

The second hypothesis discussed the perceived lack of knowledge of authorities concerning data protection. This hypothesis is partly confirmed. The vast majority of respondents stated that the authorities provided details of the regulation to employees. While local authorities possess certain information on the topic, full enforcement of GDPR requires more than meetings where the regulation is presented.

Full compliance may never be fully possible, especially considering the changing IT risks. Good faith can go a long way during a personal data evaluation. Similarly, full knowledge on the subject is difficult to achieve without a truly specialized DPO and trained employees, but these require financial commitment.

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Advocacy Campaigns.
Exempt from Performance Criteria?

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Abstract. Advocacy is one of the hardest fields in which to measure performance. On one hand, there hardly is a consensus regarding the definition of the concept itself. It ranges from supporting certain groups or ideas to influencing public opinion or policies. This very broad understanding of the topic leads to a very broad range of activities which can be associated with advocacy. On the other hand, limited resources of non-profit organizations, which normally initiate advocacy campaigns, together with the difficulty of measuring how a particular initiative influenced decision-makers, makes it harder to evaluate these types of campaigns.

The main purpose of this paper is to identify and analyze the frameworks proposed by scholars, consultants and non-profit organizations for evaluating their advocacy campaigns. The research methodology is based on document analysis and the documents were found via online search engine, using relevant key words. I focused on frameworks that tried to evaluate not only results of actions or impacts alone in order to try to define another level which is 'success'. Result show that 'success' is not very well-defined for evaluation of advocacy campaigns in terms of indicators that need to be used, but is dependent on the objectives of the initiative and its capabilities.

Keywords: advocacy, non-profit sector, performance measurement, success, evaluation, advocacy objectives.

1. Success in advocacy campaigns

What is success? How is it defined in advocacy evaluation? The NGO sector and advocacy campaigns especially, have a long record of poor effective performance evaluation (Hatry, 1997; Kluvers, 1998), hence there is a pressing need for a rigorous and homogenous assessment framework. But why is this need for assessment and what value would it bring to an advocacy campaign? First of all, given the limited resources of non-profits, being able to assess the return on investment of each campaign would be beneficial for further resource investments. Moreover, having a sound evaluation framework allows organizations understand what they have done right or what they have done bad and recalibrate similar campaigns. There is also the matter of understanding if the campaign reached its objectives or not and, of course, several other operational benefits to attest the importance of evaluation frameworks for advocacy initiatives can be listed.

Traditionally, advocacy evaluations happened either at output or outcome level. Meaning that they either focus on short-term metrics which are directly linked with the results of the actions, such as number of views of a certain media post, or with the long-term impact, such as whether the policy makers were influenced or not by the campaign. While the first example brings little value to the evaluation of the overall influence of the campaign, the second one is hard to measure and hard to assess the impact of a single actor – the advocacy campaign, as decisions are usually influenced by several actors. As stated by the Alliance for Justice (2005): 'The usual framework for evaluating direct services does not work well for advocacy. Grant makers and grantees have to use a different framework to effectively evaluate advocacy. Advocacy is challenging to evaluate and measure. Policy change usually results from a combination of strategies and actions by multiple constituencies—it can be difficult to show 'cause and effect' between one specific organization's advocacy activity and a policy change'.

Furthermore, given that advocacy campaigns are not homogenous, one can consider that 'methodologies for assessing the impact of advocacy interventions face a number of specific challenges as well as challenges inherent in any type of impact assessment'. They have different strategies and different advocacy processes, which lead to different types of outputs and outcomes, either direct or indirect. The stakeholders and their expectations differ from one campaign to the other and other factors of influence can be the geographical region or the sector in which the campaign takes place. Advocacy can refer to public campaigning and awareness raising and/or more private strategies of lobbying, research and documentation or policy influence (Roche, 1999).

As Linda Mayoux (2003) argues, taken all the above into consideration 'makes any standardized guidelines for measurable indicators or assessing attribution extremely problematic.' Based all this, her conclusion is that 'assessments need to

include rather than assume assessment of impacts not only at the level of policies and decision-making processes, but on the lives of the ultimate intended beneficiaries. This requires not only a broader framework, but also a longer time-frame and much more complex modelling of change processes.'

The only problem is that, given the limited resources of NGOs, 'any assessment process must be efficient and able to achieve in a valid way without using precious public funding' (Kelly, 2002a). So, what is the solution? Is it worth evaluating advocacy campaigns if it is either of no value or requires too much effort? All scholars agree on the importance of evaluating advocacy campaigns, but there are too many tools and too many different approaches which as we have seen above, may or may not work in all cases and prove to be inefficient.

So, can we define a different level of evaluation which is nor too shallow nor too hard to measure? Let's consider the word success, rather than output or outcome.

Mauboussi (2012) links success to the objectives and with the factors that help achieve the objective which should be linked by a causal relationship, given that 'companies that make proper links between nonfinancial measures and value creation stand a better chance of improving results.'

When defined in the context of advocacy, success for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2010) is dependent on 'the particular context in which they are working. For a non-governmental organization working on the sex trafficking of women and girls, success might mean raising awareness among legislators about the need for housing for sex trafficking victims one year; while later in the advocacy process, success might mean passing legislation directing the government to allocate funds to such housing.'

From here we can conclude that not only should the success be viewed in comparison with the objectives of the campaign, but one campaign can mature overtime and change it objectives, hence the measurement of success can differ based on the maturity level of the campaign or reaching certain milestones. Building on this, Young African Leaders Initiative (Alkhair, 2016) recommends three development stages: grass-root level, become public by association with public figures or other institutions and third, reach international level.

This article will focus on understanding the existing literature on measuring success in advocacy campaigns; what tools are there and how is it done by different organizations or which are the advises of scholars.

2. Methods

As stated above, the objective of this paper is to identify the frameworks used for evaluating advocacy, as they are presented in the existing literature. After identifying the frameworks, they were analyzed for an in-depth understanding

on what and how is being measured in the advocacy field. Moreover, based on the literature review we wanted to create an idea of if or how professionals define success as intermediate measure between outputs and outcomes.

Data gathering was done through document analysis, using the online environment – Google search engine, given the easy access to data it provides and the increased number of resources available. The selection of articles was done based on two main criteria: key words and article analysis, regardless of the journal they were published in. These criteria are detailed in the below table.

Table 1: Criteria for search and selection

Keywords	Article analysis
Framework + to + measure + success + for + advocacy; Success + in + advocacy; Successful + advocacy; Advocacy + success	Topic = success; Sector = advocacy; Framework described

Source: Author's compilation

The first step was to use the four combinations of keywords on the search engine in order to find relevant articles, while the second step was to manually review and process the information. Around 60 articles out of all the results were chosen to be further reviewed, mostly based on the connection between the name of the article and the subject of the paper. The 7 articles selected to be included in the literature review, were chosen through on a manual review based on their original and relevant content to the topic of this paper.

If the article was not based on a sound research or framework presented and described was too general, focused on outcomes only or was not specifically designed for advocacy, the articles were not included in the literature review.

This paper will be used as basis for further research on the topic of understanding success for advocacy and building a new homogenous and easy to use evaluation framework for advocacy campaigns.

3. Results

Based on the secondary research we want to see if success of advocacy campaigns is really measured in practice, and if yes, how? Fowler argues that 'traditional evaluation and monitoring methods, which compare outcomes with original objectives based upon assumptions of linear progression and limited variables, are not useful for tracking change and evaluating the success of this type of process' (Fowler, 1997). Based on this, Dr. Linda Kelly (2002a) suggests two complementary processes for measuring advocacy: first is to treat every advocacy intervention as a unique undertaking and second is to build the particular context by gathering data about targets, focus and resources.

Another general approach is to build an outcomes chain, by identifying incremental successes for many aspects of your organization's work: infrastructure, coalition and network building, communications and public education, research, community organizing, and more and trying to answer questions such as:

- 'What impact are you trying to achieve?
- What is the 'So what?' of why you do what you do?
- Where do you want change to take place (e.g., in a region, a community, or a sphere of influence)?
- Who are the key players for your issue?
- What changes are expected to occur?
- When will those changes take place?' (Parrish, 2006)

The National Council of Nonprofits (Thornton, 2018) has a rather general approach as well, defining the main steps any advocacy campaign should take to measure if their mission is a success:

- Identify what success looks like to you.
- Make a plan to achieve that success.
- Collect information along the way to evaluate performance.
- Communicate what you're learning.
- Use lessons learned to continuously improve performance.

A more comprehensive framework is presented by Kristin Rahn-Tiemeyer (2015), who defines 8 themes of evaluative indicators of nonprofit advocacy success applicable depending on the stage of advocacy:

- Advocacy capacity. Alliance for Justice (2005) identified several indicators measuring advocacy capacity, such as the organization's size and level of experience, organizational readiness for advocacy and commitment to advocacy, also called 'organizational capacity over time'. The Alliance for Justice (2004) considers that, 'Capacity building strengthens the organization's ability to anticipate, respond to, and advance policy issues. In the broadest sense, building advocacy capacity means developing an internal support structure, from staff to board members to organization members'.
- Advocacy Network. Advocacy network, meaning the relationship of the organization with stakeholders, decision makers or other similar organizations, can influence the success of an advocacy initiative or can influence its magnitude. The reputation of an organization and its ability to reach as many supporters as possible or to reach the decision makers is crucial for the impact of the project. The challenge here is to transform this theme into measurement, and Rahn-Tiemeyer (2015) doesn't provide any information on this.
- Advocacy Planning and Theories of Change. Reisman, Gienapp, and Stachowiak (2007) consider that, 'A theory of change typically addresses the set of linkages among strategies, outcomes and goals that support a broader mission or

vision, along with the underlying assumptions that are related to these linkages'. Based on this the advocacy plan will be created taken into consideration their goals, the resources involved, the stakeholders and the best way to convey their message. Rahn-Tiemeyer (2015) emphasizes on the need to have the evaluation stated in the plan.

– Advocacy Tactics and Strategies. As stated by Coffman (2009) the evaluation of tactics 'most closely resembles the evaluation of direct-service programs', and include 'relationship building, direct or grassroots lobbying, conducting issue analysis, and the like.' Although it is important as part of a framework, only evaluating the tactics and the ability of the organization to execute the strategy, cannot predict the success of the advocacy campaign.

– Interim Progress. This type of evaluation is tangible and easy to measure in the context of an advocacy initiative, as well as helpful for the recalibration of the advocacy campaign in case the results are not satisfactory. Coffman (2009) proposes as interim objectives: building new partnerships or alliances, building awareness of an issue, or heightening public will for a policy outcome. These should not focus on results of certain actions, such as number of views of a media post, nor on the long-term impacts. From the description provided these are very similar to the second level proposed by the Young African Leaders Initiative (Alkhair, 2016): become public by association with public figures or other institutions; and is closer to the intermediate layer between outputs and outcomes.

– Advocacy Outcomes and Social Impact. As discussed earlier these are both hard to measure and time consuming, but since they are usually the ultimate goals of the initiative these should be taken into consideration when measuring an advocacy campaign. However hard to measure, Festen and Philbin (2007) suggested five indicators of social change: 'a shift in definitions, a shift in behavior, a shift in engagement, a shift in policy, and maintaining past gains'. Although at some point tangible results can be achieved, as argued in the beginning of the paper the changes cannot be reduced only at the efforts of one campaign and they measure more the impact of the campaign. Again, since success is linked directly to the objectives of the advocacy initiative, these can be included in the framework or overlooked.

– Relationship to Other Programs—Leverage and Return on Investment. Kristin Rahn-Tiemeyer (2015) notes that 'In addition to demonstrating success in achieving social change, evaluating the organizational leverage and overall social return-on-investment allows organizations to tell the complete story of the impact of advocacy and makes the case for sector-wide engagement in advocacy at higher rates.'

– Organizational Learning. Advocates should learn to measure whether their advocacy efforts contribute to understanding better which strategies work best for

their field or what needs to be corrected. In return this recalibration improves the strategies of future advocacy campaign and ensure their success. As argued by Coffman (2007), 'Strategic learning refers to advocates' (or funders') need for real-time data to inform their ongoing strategies. As data are returned, they can be used to learn what strategies or tactics are working well and where midcourse corrections may be needed'.

UNICEF designed a matrix with four measurement areas: activities, interim outcomes, goals and impacts. Each area is further divided, and each subcategory has several indicators assigned to it (Coffman, 2010).

Below it is reproduced the 'goals' sections, since it is a category we haven't found in the other frameworks. From analyzing the examples given by UNICEF, we can conclude that goals refer to policy changing or funds increasing, while impacts refer to social change. In other examples reviewed, what UNICEF considers as goals is included under impacts or outcomes.

Table 2: Section of UNICEF's advocacy performance management framework

GOALS		
Goals	*Definition*	*Indicators*
Policy development	Creating a new policy proposal or policy guidelines	• New proposals or guiding principles developed
Placement on the policy agenda	Appearance of an issue or policy proposal on the list of issues that policymakers give serious attention	• Policies formally introduced
Policy adoption	Successful passing of a policy proposal through an ordinance, ballot measure, legislation or legal agreement	• Policies formally established
Policy blocking	Successful opposition to a policy proposal	• Policies formally blocked
Policy implementation	Proper implementation of a policy, along with the funding, resources or quality assurance to ensure it	• Policies implemented or administered in accordance with requirements
Policy M&E	Tracking a policy to ensure it is implemented properly and achieves its intended impacts	• Funding established to formally monitor or evaluate policies
Policy maintenance	Preventing cuts or other negative changes to a policy	• Funding levels sustained for policies or programs • Eligibility levels maintained for policies or programs
New donors	New public or private funders or individuals who contribute funds or other resources for a cause	• Number of first-time donors • New donors offering financial versus in-kind support • Average dollars given by new donors
More or diversified funding	Amount of dollars raised and variety of funding sources generated	• Number of overall donors • Types of donors (individual, philanthropic, corporate) • Dollars donated to support advocacy efforts • Revenue earned to support advocacy efforts

Source: Coffman (2010), https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit_Companion.pdf

Another framework is designed by the Metropolitan Group, which considers that 'the ultimate purpose of which is always to gain a response from your audience'. They also advise to set measurable goals and outcomes and suggest that organizations should measure success in advocacy from two perspectives: process and outcomes. Process measures are similar to what we called outputs in the first part of this article, meaning the direct results of the actions, such as: number of flyers distributed. Outcome measures are the ones reflecting impact and most of the times refers to managing to influence the decision-makers or to creating social impact (Lee Dellinger, 2009).

Oxfam Community Aid Abroad (OCAA) use more or less the same approach, since they wanted to see the bigger picture, which encompasses both processes and outcome, however they include in the process of data collection several stakeholders, such as target people, end beneficiaries and the advocacy team members. Moreover, they looked for information from external sources or experts in order to prove the validity of their findings. The triangular assessment was useful for final learning, but it did not point to any changes during the initiative and did not allow for any recalibration, as ongoing assessment of performance was not incorporated (Kelly, 2002a).

Another framework with two features was built by Foundation for Development Cooperation (FDC). The first one relies on an international review of advocacy evaluations, while the second one is built around monitoring frameworks in NGOs. Based on these reviews FDC build the framework presented below (Kelly, 2002b).

Several other frameworks analyzed were only discussing about the measurement of outcomes and classifying the outcomes, such as the framework designed by the National Development Team for Inclusion, hence they were not included here since they are not part of the scope of this article.

4. Conclusion

As we can spot from the review above, there is no homogeneity regarding the performance evaluation of advocacy campaigns in terms of the measurement teams and the indicators they use, since the structures employed are very different and most organizations prefer to create their own framework. There are, however, some similarities, since most structures measure more or less the same things. The three approaches of defining the structure revealed by the review are the following:
  – Frameworks focused on outputs (short-term results linked directly with activities);
  – Frameworks focused on outcomes (long-term impacts);
  – Structures combining both types of measures.
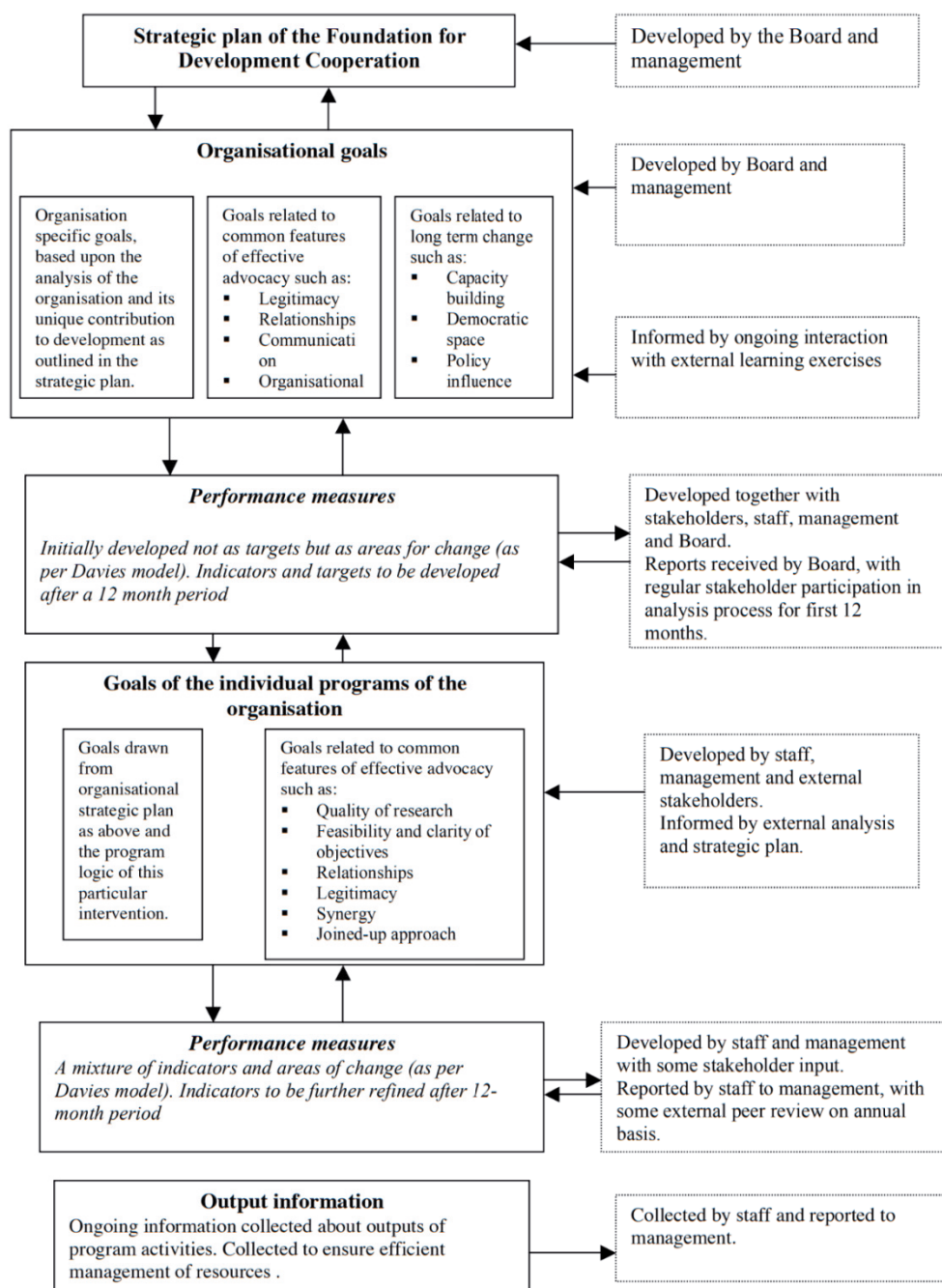
Figure 1: FDC performance assessment framework

Source: Kelly (2002a), http://www.pointk.org/resources/files/International_Advocacy.pdf

Although there are no frameworks focusing on finding a different set of measures somewhere in between outputs and outcomes, such as what we called success, most professionals advise to look at both outputs and outcomes, some adding themes of measurement into the picture. Even so, those themes can be split into outputs and outcomes.

If we want to move a little from this type of approach, I think it is important to define success around the objectives set for the campaigns, while these objectives should take into consideration the capability of the organization, its maturity, the availability of resources and so on, hence, there can be several layers of maturity as discussed. In a case of a grass-root project success will be measured with outputs measures, such as number of new people supporting the cause or value of money donated. For a well-known advocacy initiative, success can be measured with outcomes measures.

Based on this research and the variety of advocacy campaigns with very different objectives, we consider that a very standardized framework for measuring success can be a challenge to design. As Miller (1994) pointed out, the way an organization frames its goals and objectives is critical for both immediate clarity of purpose and for building broader and long-term support for an issue. However, this research can be the basis of a more extensive paper which focuses on defining success beyond its link with the objectives and designing at least the structure of a standardized evaluation framework, which will be easily customizable by each organization.

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Advantages and Disadavanteges of the Referendum

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Abstract. This paper attempts to understand the process of referendum in terms of relevant participation of the citizens. We start our analysis from the legal basis of the referendum and the certain practical examples – situations that occurred after 1989. Meantime, one can say that there is a lack of awareness as regarding any referendum, whether local or national, even if it is requested by some citizens' initiative.

The analysis will start from the text of the Code of Good Practices on Referendums, drafted by the European Commission for Democracy by Law (Venice Commission) in March 2007, respectively from the national legal base on the referendum.

The basis of the study and analysis is the national referendum of 2012 on the dismissal of the President of Romania, the local referendum on the including the Sânmartin commune into the Oradea municipality, and the national referendum amending article 48, par. (1) of the Constitution. The article aims to identify common points, advantages and disadvantages.

Among the first aspects there is also the issue of involvement of the Romanian citizens in the public and social life. Our citizens are not accustomed to actively participate in the public life or the administrative life of their community.

Keywords: referendum, participation, public administration, efficiency of decisions.

1. Introduction

This paper is based on several principles, which refer both to the need for a modern society to express freely and to the appreciation of its own vote. We appreciate the local referendum as a rationally motivated expectation in which citizens to participate, as well as public administration must offer a high degree of efficiency and transparency.

If in the past, A. Tocqueville promoted the idea that democracy and political participation are being learned at the level of local communities, today we find ourselves where the theme of participatory democracy at the local level is increasingly developed. Local collectivity can be the engine of democracy because it is closest to the citizens (or so should), it is the one who knows the local needs and problems – that is, the problems of the place, the people of the place, and the institutions of the place. Citizens' participation in local community decision-making contributes to improving the services provided by the community and making it more efficient.

Why do people not participate in a referendum or simply, ignore the referendum? One side of the story would be that the absence from a voting process is a form of voting itself. But this is not the subject of our paper. On the other hand, can the lack of information be about what the notion of referendum means? Yes, in certain rural areas this is certainly the reason. But in urban areas, the answer would be totally different. When the topic of the referendum is supported by only a small number of stakeholders, whether it is a party, NGO or public authority, it seems that the citizens' interest in participating in the referendum is decreasing. Our approach should highlight the benefits of the referendum, but we will not neglect to present the disadvantages.

How a democratic regime is supposed to or should be functioning has been written quite a bit in the literature, but as has been customary in Romania, theory is one matter, and practice is quite different.

If we are talking about theories, we can say that, in Giovani Sartori's vision, democracy means 'a government on ideals, a value-oriented political action, a debate about such values, a need for discussion' (Sartori, 2008, p. 11). Starting from the author's theory of democracy mentioned above, we consider as being a priority the necessity of consulting the population about taking an administrative decision. The notion of referendum has been regulated in the national law since 8th of December 1991, when a referendum was convened for the adoption of a new constitution. Until then, the notion of plebiscite was used, namely Plebiscite for the approval of the Paris Convention Development Statute – 1864[1].

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1   Encyclopedia of Romania, Romanian Constitution of 1864, [Online] available at http://enciclo pediaromaniei.ro/wiki/Constitu%C5%A3ia_din_1864, accessed on November 10, 2018.

2. The legal basis currently in place in Romania, the starting point of the analysis

Before we start our work on an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the referendum, we must start an incursion through the existing legislative texts. According to article 90 of the Romanian Constitution 'The President of Romania, after consulting the Parliament, can ask the people to express their will on issues of national interest by referendum.' (Dănişor, 2011, p. 13).

Another fundamental text draws attention to article 151 paragraph 3 on the revision of the Constitution which states that 'The review shall be final after its approval by referendum, held no later than 30 days after the adoption of the draft or the proposal for revision.'

On a first foray, we note that the fundamental law provides nothing with reference to the local referendum, not even an explanation as a general notion. Certainly, the Romanian society after 1989 was not used to the referendum process.

Unhappily, it did not occur when the Romanian Constitution was revised in 2003, when it is assumed that the society has gone through a process of understanding democracy and would need a democratic exercise of direct participation of the citizens in the life of the local community; there is no new evidence about the local referendum in the new form of Constitution. It refers only to consulting the people on issues of national interest, moreover the result of such a referendum is optional.

At the same time, it should be emphasized the fact that there are no regulated specific mechanisms of political or legal liability regarding the abusive, excessive or non-use of the referendum. Can anyone question who responds if the referendum procedure is misused? Unfortunately, the fundamental text is incomplete, unclear and unequivocal.

The special law on the organization and conduct of the referendum, Law no. 3/2000, stipulates in chapter I article 2 the ways in which a national referendum may be triggered: 'The national referendum is the form and the means of direct consultation and expression of the sovereign will of the Romanian people regarding: the revision of the Constitution; the dismissal of the President of Romania; problems of national interest'. Paragraph 2 of the said article provides that: under the present law, a local referendum on issues of particular interest to the administrative-territorial units may also be organized and held.

Last but not least, it is specified in the referendum that 'the population can be consulted on one or more issues, as well as on a matter of national interest and a matter of local interest, on separate ballot papers'.

This legislative framework has been amended by Government Emergency Ordinance no. 86/2018 whose provisions made the following changes to paragraph 3: 'In the referendum, the population can be consulted on one or more issues of national or local interest, as appropriate, as well as on the revision of the Con-

stitution; or to a problem of national interest and a problem of local interest, on separate ballot papers.'

According to article 5 paragraph 1 of the law, the national referendum and the local referendum are organized and carried out according to the provisions of the present law; respectively, the second paragraph refers to the quorum of participation: 'The referendum shall be valid if at least half plus one of the persons on the electoral lists participate in it'.

It is also necessary to mention the provisions of chapter II, section 1 dealing with the referendum on the revision of the Constitution of articles 6 to 7, and in section a2 to regulate the referendum on the dismissal of the President of Romania. Section 3 in articles 11-12 addresses the referendum on issues of national interest, chapter III deals with local referendums, articles 13-14, and chapter IV deals with Common Provisions on the Referendum, articles 15-48.

In the following, we will stop to the provisions of article 14 of Law no. 3/2000, which regulates aspects of the local referendum. Thus, the issues submitted to the local referendum are determined by the local or county councils at the proposal of the mayor or the president of the county council, and the citizens are called to pronounce 'Yes' or 'No' on the issue subject to the referendum, of the votes validly expressed at the level of the respective territorial-administrative unit.

From the analysis of this text we will find the following shortcomings of the legal text. First, how long has it been since the local council decision or the county council was issued until the local referendum procedure? Secondly, the fact that local authorities require citizens to be involved, but without being clearly specified in the special law which organizes the local referendum. Another issue would be the place of the referendum. Where is it organized? Extremely important are the consequences of the referendum. Does this have a purely optional or mandatory character? What would be the deadline for local referendum implementation by the local authority? All these questions arise logically from a desire that the administrative system to be efficient and less expensive, that the decision be taken 'closer' to the citizen and in the shortest possible time.

In other news, also in the updated version of Law no. 3/2000 in article 5 (1) it is stipulated with respect to the quorum that: 'The national referendum and the local referendum are organized and carried out according to the provisions of this law'. The recent amendments set certain thresholds: 30% – participation: 'The referendum is valid if at least 30% of the number of people on the permanent electoral lists participate', respectively 25% – valid options: 'The result of the referendum is validated if the validly expressed options represent at least 25% of those on the permanent electoral lists.'

Moreover, article 7 (1) stipulates that the citizens participating in the referendum have the right to choose 'Yes' or 'No' to the following question on the ballot:

'Do you agree with the law revising the Constitution of Romania in the form approved by the Parliament?'[2]. Given that the information campaign[3] is subject to the requirements of an electoral campaign, which implies certain limitations with a direct effect on the effectiveness of the information for voters, we appreciate that this form of the question is incomplete. The form should expressly contain the provision, or the provisions subject to change[4]. How to know a citizen what is the form approved by Parliament? Possibility still exists, at the end, but the idea is to increase the level of information. Following this idea, we believe that the question raised in any referendum process (national or local) should be clear and unequivocal, just as the answer is really 'Yes' or 'No'.

3. The European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and the referendum

The Venice Commission, a consultative body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts in the field of constitutional law, adopted in 2007 a Code of Good Practice on the Referendum[5]. This code addresses issues such as the organization of the referendum by an impartial body, the way of financing, special rules applicable to a referendum organized on request of a segment of the electorate and based on popular initiatives, as well as quorum issues, of course, and many other issues to which we do not refer now.

This Code of Good Practice discusses the organization of the referendum by an impartial body and the lack of a long tradition of impartiality of public administration in electoral matters, and that independent and impartial commissions at all levels must be set up. These committees must include at least one magistrate or other independent lawyer, representatives of parliamentary parties or parties that have obtained at least a percentage of the election, and what is very important for them to be qualified in the electoral field (In Romania do we have such people?).

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2 This was the case for the national referendum amending article 48, par. (1) of the Constitution, when the question was an abstract one, and many people considered that the voting paper was incomplete.

3 In this case it should not be an electoral campaign, although the referendum, through its subject matter, may have electoral consequences

4 Obviously, if they are more numerous, the solution would be that a copy thereof be available at the polling station, or even be electronically communicated to the voters by the authority that organizes the referendum

5 Venice Commission, 'Code of Good Practice on the Referendum', 2007, [Online] available at https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2007)008 rev-cor-e, accessed on November 10, 2018.

Regarding funding rules, the Code specifies that funding sources can be public and private, and that the use of public funds by the authorities for campaign purposes should be prohibited.

It is very interesting to quote about quorum. The Code provides that the following are not recommended: a) a quorum (threshold, minimum percentage) of participation, as it assimilates those who abstain from the partisans of the negative vote; b) a quorum of approval (acceptance by a minimum percentage of the enrolled voters) as it risks creating a difficult political situation if the draft is adopted with a simple majority, but less than the required quorum.

4. Instead of conclusions. Motions

Analyzing the text of the Venice Commission on the organization of the referendum by an impartial body, we appreciate that the local referendum could be organized by the prefect institution, and the voting process to take place within this institution. In any referendum process, many law enforcement forces are mobilized. It is important that the citizen's requirement is not that public administration violates the law or the abuse of power but results from the presumption of the lawfulness of administrative acts – that is, the fact that the public administration implements the law fairly, honestly and effectively. Of course, efforts must also be made from the perspective of the public administration, within it, for reform and continuous adaptation to the present society. In this context, oversight of ballot papers must be carried out during the voting process.

On the other hand, in terms of costs, by organizing a local referendum by the Prefect's Institution (even within the Prefect's Institution[6]), it may impartially impart this process, as the number of people involved decreases, decreases spending and the efficiency in the preparation of those involved in the referendum process is increasing.

Moreover, regarding a matter of local interest, we appreciate the granting of the entire procedure of the referendum to the local authority, without asking for the date of the organization of the referendum by the Government. We continue the argument that the local authority decides by decision of the Local Council the date and subject of the referendum, as well as the necessary expenses in this process, and the legality is checked by the prefect.

By resorting to a hypothetical situation where a local authority wishes to consult its citizens on the unification of a commune with a municipality, it establishes

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6 Meantime, we must admit that this could be a problem for the local referendum, in case of a distant territorial administrative unit. It would be difficult for the members of that community to come and vote in the main city of the county where the Prefect Office does reside.

by the Local Council Decision the data, the question and a timetable for informing citizens about this referendum; the prefect, by virtue of his duties, complies with the law of verification of the legality of this Local Council Decision, gives a positive opinion, informs the Ministry of Internal Affairs that this referendum will be organized and triggers the organization procedure without delaying things. It should be noted that the referendum is not an electoral process, the citizens at the referendum respond with 'Yes' or 'No', meaning that they give their consent to a situation in society, either at local or national level. They do not elect a person, do not vote a party, they are asked for opinions about a situation at a certain moment, a situation of national interest or a situation of local interest. This situation affects their lives in the future to a greater or lesser extent. On this basis, Romanian citizens must be aware of the importance of their vote, either 'Yes' or 'No'.

It is true that when a citizen notices that the local or national authority is mobilizing many law-abiding bodies for the referendum, it seems to be something to hide. But if the referendum process was left to the local authorities and organized in the prefect's institution, citizens would go to express their views more openly, much more openly and more relaxed.

It is true that it takes some time for citizens to become accustomed to the referendum process, but national legislation is incomplete and unclear, less effective in spending public money. Citizens are already wondering why a referendum costs a certain amount.

The fact that there is no real control in the referendum procedure in national law is at least dangerous. Who answers if the referendum does not find its purpose? The explanations regarding both the national referendum and those related to the local referendum are insufficient, and not at all tailored to the needs of today's society. We appreciate the need for society to be consulted mainly on matters of local interest. We believe that if local authorities truly value the consultative procedures, their use would be more frequent and, of course, the results would be binding as they would be in line with the wishes of the local community.

For Romanians to involve and to participate actively in social public life – and as a consequence in a referendum, probably we need a little more time, civic education and the support of clear and effective legislation both economically and from the point of view of the implementation of the results of the referendum. When citizens become aware of the importance of their active involvement, we will enter normality from a democratic point of view.

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Discursive Patterns
on the Facebook Pages
of Government Institutions.
A Comparative Analysis
of Romania and Hungary*

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Abstract. New media created new opportunities for government institutions to foster their openness. The open government is based on the principles of transparency, participation and collaboration, but the public institutions' presence on social media also fulfils *symbolic* and *presentational purposes.* The present study aims to analyze the discursive patterns in posts on the Facebook pages of the most followed public institutions from Romania and Hungary over a timeframe of two years (2016 and 2017) and to detect the type of posts and topics that engage users the most.

Keywords: open government, social media, symbolic interaction, discourse patterns, computational methods.

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1. Introduction

Data shows that every third citizen of the world is a Facebook user, since Facebook reached 2.27 billion monthly active users as of the third quarter of 2018 (Statista, 2019). With almost half of Facebook users between 25 and 44 years old (Statista, 2018), Facebook is at this moment the social media platform that dominates the market, transforming power relationships between citizens and organizations and shaping new forms of communication between the government and the citizens and the citizens themselves.

The social media presence of the public institutions emerges out of the need to reach audiences that do not usually interact with these organizations, to communicate with citizens and to receive feedback from their part.

Facebook has influenced the communicational strategies of public institutions from the entire world. Therefore, the current study aims to identify the communication patterns and the most engaging posts types displayed by the most popular Facebook pages of governmental organizations from Romania and Hungary and to compare them.

2. Social media functionalities for governmental organizations

Social media has generated major changes in how individuals and organizations communicate and exchange information, by offering alternative communication channels between the government and the citizens and among the citizens themselves.

Platforms such as Facebook provide a variety of democratic functions for government institutions, in their ability to increase transparency and citizen participation. In the case of government organizations, the use of social media facilitated openness, transparency, and democratization (Lathrop and Ruma, 2010). New media provide an environment capable of creating a more open government, several stages of openness being defined in the Open Government Maturity Model proposed by Lee and Kwak (2012, p. 492), starting from initial conditions (Level 1) and then moving on to data transparency (Level 2), open participation (Level 3), open collaboration (Level 4), and ubiquitous engagement (Level 5). A decade ago, the Obama administration proposed a strategic plan to enhance government *transparency*, *participation* and *collaboration* with their citizens (Open Government Directive, 2009). Since then, these three functions are associated with the government use of the new media and they are explained as follows: to inform citizens about what the government is doing; to provide opportunities for citizens to give feedback in policy-making and to offer the context for citizens to assess and enhance their level of collaboration with the government and to identify new opportunities for cooperation (Md Dawot and Ibrahim, 2014, p. 180).

The *transparency*, *participation* and *collaboration* principles of the open government represent political values with a substantial history in democratic theory and are also associated with the philosophy and methods of the 'open source' programming movement in which users have access to, and can thus contribute to, the development of software code (Harrison *et al.*, 2012, p. 86). Transparency is ensured by the delivery of public and accurate information to citizens and it refers to the public availability and flow of 'timely, comprehensive, relevant, high quality and reliable information concerning government activities' (De Feranti *et al.*, 2009, p. 7). The interaction of the government institution with citizens to obtain citizen information and feedback ensures public participation in government decision-making, which can increase legitimacy by incorporating the public interests in the decision-making process (Fung, 2006). Networking or collaboration refers to activities in which government organizations engage in dialogue or direct involvement in some activity in order to improve government related activities. The potential of collaborative approaches is greatly enhanced by new technologies that give rise to permeable 'networked' structures allowing people to connect across organizational boundaries (McGuire, 2006).

A consistent part of the literature suggests that transparency, participation and collaboration are the three core principles of the open government. But the social media presence of the government organizations does more than reaching out to citizens, disseminating information, enhancing community participation in decision-making and achieving transparency. Recent approaches claim that, beside information provision, input seeking and online dialog/offline interaction, a consistent part of the government's use of social media is for *symbolic* and *presentational purposes* (DePaula, Dincelli and Harrison, 2018, p. 2).

3. Self-presentation of the government institutions on social media

The cultural notions about notoriety, celebrity, and fame appear to be expanding and inclusive, thanks to personalized broadcast channels and social media. Thus, public institutions compete with professional news outlets, with professional and amateur communicators, macro and *microcelebrities* (Senft, 2013). Therefore, government institutions, in order to reach the audiences, need to provide an attractive content on social media. Harcup and O'Neill (2017, p. 13) propose an updated set of 15 contemporary news values that, in various combinations, seem to be identifiable within published informational content. Authors found that potential news stories must generally satisfy one and preferably more of the following requirements to be selected: *exclusivity* (stories generated by the organization), *bad news* (death, injury, defeat, loss), *conflict* (controversies, arguments, splits, warfare), *surprise* (unexpected or unusual elements), *audio-visuals* (photo, video, audio, in-

fographics), *shareability* (the potential to generate sharing and comments), *entertainment* (showbiz stories, human interest, light and humorous stories), *drama* (unfolding accidents, rescues, searches), *follow-up stories*, *the power elite* (individuals or organizations), *relevance* (stories about influential actors familiar to the audience), *magnitude* (stories with potential impact), celebrity (already famous people), *good news* (recoveries, breakthroughs, cures, wins and celebrations), *organization's agenda* (stories that fit the organization's own agenda).

Some of the aforementioned informational features could be identified in De-Paula's coding scheme of *symbolic* and *presentational purposes* of the government organizations. The self-representation communicational purposes were coded as follows: *Favorable presentation* (seeks attribution of likability, competency or worthiness, reporting of positive activity performed by the department, with positive imagery or self-referential language of gratitude); *Political positioning* (taking a clear stance on a political issue); *Symbolic act* (expressing congratulations, gratitude, condolences, celebration of holidays or trivia questions; references to cultural symbols); *Branding and marketing* (elaborate presentation of features of item or service, including qualities of item with intention to attract individuals to acquire) (DePaula, Dincelli and Harrison, 2018, p. 5)

4. Measuring social media interactions in the public sector

Social media bring out potential strategic advantage for an innovation and transformation in public administration through new communication channels between governments and citizens, as well as among citizens. Nevertheless, administrative innovation through social media technologies may combine expectations of advantages for government, but also could potentially challenge the standard operating procedures more than other previous waves of technological innovations (Criado, Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia, 2013, p. 231). Thus, potential risks are associated with the use of social media (Picazo-Vela, Gutiérrez-Martínez and Luna-Reye, 2012, p. 508): technological and digital illiteracy impacts the understanding of web and social networks; difference in communication styles (government officials vs. citizens vs. regions); public criticism and lack of trust toward government agencies, inappropriate use of social networks; fear to establish direct communication with citizens.

The present study aims to analyze the discursive patterns in posts on the Facebook pages of the most followed public institutions from Romania and Hungary over a timeframe of two years (2016 and 2017), and to detect the type of posts and topics that engage users the most. The study relies on the framework for measuring social media interactions in the public sector proposed by Mergel (2013, p. 332), here focusing only on the Facebook measurements:

Table 1: Framework for measuring social media interactions in the public sector

Mission	Goal	Tactics	Social media mechanism	Outcome
Transparency	Information education	One-way push	– number of followers & likes – FB likes – views – 'read more'	Accountability trust
Participation	Engagement	Two-way pull	– reach (demographics) – comments	Consultation deliberation satisfaction
Collaboration	Cross-boundary action Two-way interactive	Networking Co-design of services	– FB shares – creating their own content – conversations – volunteering, donations – offline actions	Community building Creation of issue networks

Source*:* Mergel, 2013, p. 332

Research questions

RQ1: What types of messages generate the highest engagement rates?

RQ2: What types of messages generate specific emotional response as identified through engagement?

RQ3: What are the discursive patterns characteristic of public institution pages' messages and self-presentation strategies?

5. Methodology

The analyzed dataset consists of 25,979 Facebook posts by the 30 most followed Romanian Facebook pages of public institutions and 12,927 posts created by the 16 most followed Hungarian Facebook pages of public institutions between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2017. Additionally, 404,129 comments generated by the posts in Romanian and 142,736 posts comments generated by the posts in Hungarian were collected. Data was collected by automated data collection through the API interrogation using the Facepager tool (Keyling and Jünger, 2013).

The Romanian sample: Agenția Națională Antidrog (National Antidrug Agency), Agenția Națională de Administrare Fiscală (National Antifraud Fiscal Agency), Ambasada Israelului în România (Israeli Embassy in Romania), Compania Națională de Administrare a Infrastructurii Rutiere (National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration), Departamentul pentru Situații de Urgență (Department for Emergency Situations), DNA – Direcția Națională Anticorupție (Anticorruption National Directorate), Forțele Aeriene Române (Romanian Air Forces), Forțele Navale Române (Romanian Navy Forces), Forțele Terestre Române (Romanian Terrestrial Forces), Guvernul României (Romanian Government), IGSU – Inspectoratul General pentru Situatii de Urgenta România (General Inspectorate

for Emergency Situations), ISU Bucuresti-Ilfov (Inspectorate for Emergency Situations – Bucharest-Ilfov), Jandarmeria Română (Romanian Military Police Force), Ministerul Afacerilor Externe (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Ministerul Agriculturii și Dezvoltării Rurale (Ministry of Agriculture), Ministerul Apărării Naționale (Ministry of National Defense), Ministerul Consultării Publice și Dialogului Social, Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Administrației Publice – Romania (Ministry of Regional Development), Ministerul Educației Naționale-România (Ministry of National Education), Ministerul Finanțelor Publice (Ministry of Public Finances), Ministerul Mediului – România (Ministry of Environment), Ministerul Tineretului și Sportului-România (Ministry of Youth and Sports), Ministerul Transporturilor România (Ministry of Public Transportation), Ministerul Turismului (Ministry of Turism), Parlamentul European – Biroul de Informare în Romania (European Parliament Information Office in Romania), Parlamentul Romaniei Camera Deputatilor (Romaian Parliament – The Deputy Chamber), Poliția de Frontieră Română (Romanian Border Police), Poliția Română (Romanian Police), SRI – Serviciul Român de Informații (Romanian Intelligence Service), U.S. Embassy Bucharest.

The Hungarian sample: BKK – Budapesti Közlekedési Központ (Budapest Transport Center), BM Országos Katasztrófavédelmi Főigazgatóság (National Directorate General for Disaster Management), BRFK Információs Portál (Budapest Police Headquarters), Európai Bizottság Magyarországi Képviselete (European Commission Representation in Hungary), Európai Parlament Tájékoztatási Irodája (European Parliament Information Office in Hungary), Izrael Magyarországon (Israeli Embassy in Hungary), Magyar Honvédség (Hungarian Army), Magyar Közút Nonprofit Zrt. (Hungarian Roads Company), Magyar Országgyűlés (Hungarian Parliament), Magyarország Kormánya (Hungarian Government), MÁV-START nemzetközi utazások, Nemzeti Adó- és Vámhivatal (National Tax and Customs Administration of Hungary), Nemzeti Infrastruktúra Fejlesztő Zrt. (National Company for Infrastructure Development), Országos Mentőszolgálat (National Ambulance Service), UK in Hungary, US Embassy Budapest.

The data was analyzed using Tableau for quantitative analysis and visualization. Qualitative analysis was used on the posts that generated the highest engagement rates.

6. Discussion and analysis

Most of the posts generated by the public institutions from Romania and Hungary are visuals (photos, images and videos), a type of content that is likely to trigger more reactions on social media. The total number of Romanian Facebook users (9.6 million) is bigger, compared to the total of Hungarian Facebook users (5.74 million), which determines higher fan numbers for the Romanian sample pages,

compared to the Hungarian pages. Considering this difference, it is no surprise that, on average, for each reaction of a Hungarian user, there are 1.62 reactions of the Romanian users. Following the same line, measures for shares are almost twice bigger for the Romanian sample, compared to the Hungarian one.
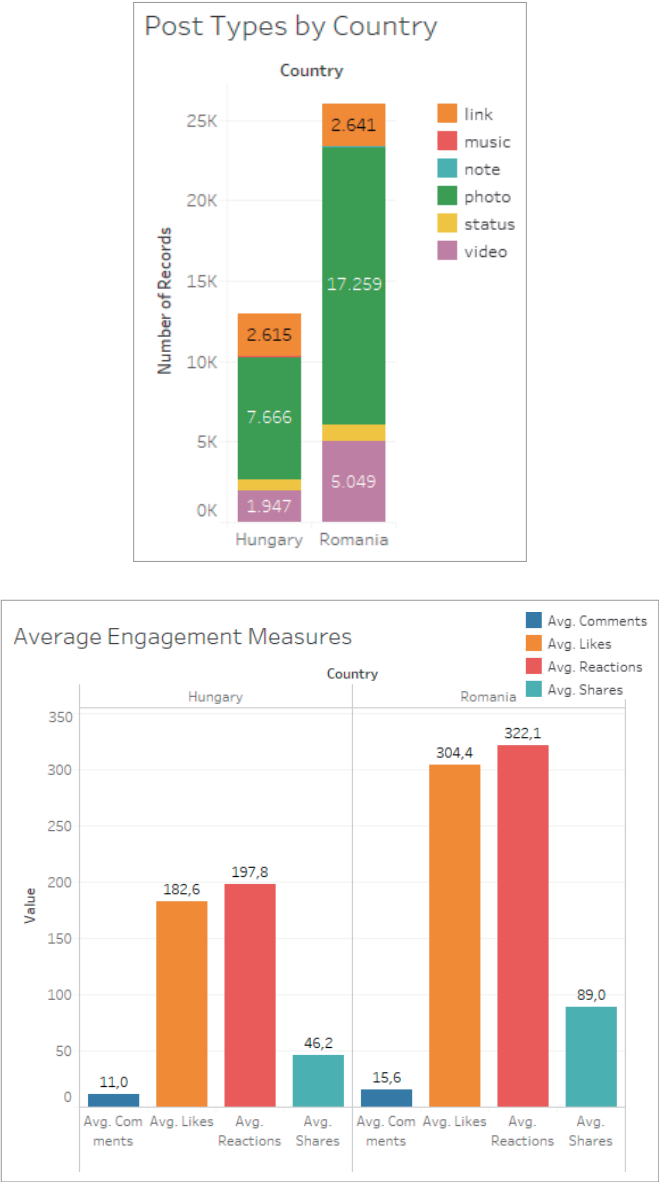
Figure 1: Post types and average engagement by country
Source: Authors' work

Data shows similarities in terms of the average percentage of the likes out of the total reactions, with slightly more other reactions than like for Hungary (93.73% for Hungary, compared to 96.21% for Romania). The highest percentage of other than like reactions is determined by *statuses* in the Hungarian sample (14.21%), while in the Romanian sample the *notes* trigger 7.52% Love, Haha, Wow, Sad or Angry reactions.

The efforts and know-how invested in the social media management by the government institution ranges from short and well targeted messages and custom designed visuals to long texts, usually used primarily as press releases or websites articles/documents and tens of minutes-long video footage.

A quantitative analysis of the text posts reveals that more than a half of the pages from both samples have on average texts longer than 400 characters, a feature that affect the readability of the post, since the Facebook post text that can be seen by the reader before being shortened with a 'Read More' message when the text is around 400 characters.

Facebook's character limit on status updates is 63,206, while the recommended length is around 120 characters. The average length of the post messages ranges from 120 to 4664 characters for the pages in Romanian and from 181 to 4361 characters in Hungarian. The shortest messages in Romanian are posted by the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest and the longest messages are posted on the National Anticorruption Directorate Page. For Hungarian, the shortest messages are posted by the National Police Headquarters and the longest by the Hungarian Roads Company.

Only three pages out of the entire sample generated over 1 million reactions: the Romanian National Defense Ministry page (400,811 fans), the Romanian Police page (409,653 fans) and the Hungarian Government page (166,663 fans). Data shows that the same pages had the highest rates of shares and comments.

The qualitative analysis of the posts with the highest rates of engagement posted on the Ministry of National Defense's page reveals that three emotional videos were shared over 10,000 times. The first one (11,877 shares) was posted on February 24, 2017 – when is celebrated *Dragobete* – the Romanian version of Valentine's Day. The second is a lip dub video of a Romanian hit played by *Taxi* band – *The two words* (Rom. *Cele două cuvinte*), featuring the Romanian soldiers from Afghanistan who are sending their love to wives and sweethearts back home. The second most shared video (10,301 shares) was posted on October 25, 2016 – the Romanian Army Day – and features a young boy bursting into tears while reciting *Don't cry, mother Romania* (Rom. *Nu plânge, maică Românie!*), a poem that was found in the haversack of a Romanian soldier in 1918. The third video (10,287 shares) was posted on January 26, but it was recorded on January 24, 2016 – Unification Day – and reports about an event that took place in a mall located in Bacău. The video advertises military music through a flashmob organized by the military band from the same city.

Country	Page	
Romania	Agenția Națională Antidr..	706
	Agenția Națională de Adm..	1.187
	Ambasada Israelului în Ro..	120
	Compania Națională de A..	401
	Departamentul pentru Sit..	741
	DNA - Direcția Națională ..	4.664
	Forțele Aeriene Române	328
	Forțele Navale Române	213
	Forțele Terestre Române	425
	Guvernul României	1.224
	IGSU - Inspectoratul Gene..	594
	ISU București-Ilfov	352
	Jandarmeria Română	576
	Ministerul Afacerilor Exte..	420
	Ministerul Agriculturii și ..	509
	Ministerul Apararii Natio..	367
	Ministerul Consultării Pub..	747
	Ministerul Dezvoltării Re..	1.044
	Ministerul Educației Nați..	389
	Ministerul Finanțelor Pub..	928
	Ministerul Mediului - Rom..	451
	Ministerul Tineretului și S..	368
	Ministerul Transporturilo..	338
	Ministerul Turismului	682
	Parlamentul European, Bi..	469
	Parlamentul Romaniei Ca..	379
	Politia Romana	590
	Poliția de Frontieră Româ..	273
	SRI - Serviciul Român de I..	293
	U.S. Embassy Bucharest	297

Country	Page	
Hungary	BKK - Budapesti Közleked..	325
	BM Országos Katasztrófa..	522
	BRFK Információs Portál	181
	Európai Bizottság Magyar..	401
	Európai Parlament Tájéko..	310
	Izrael Magyarországon	296
	Magyar Honvédség	325
	Magyar Közút Nonprofit Z..	4.361
	Magyar Országgyűlés (Hi..	782
	Magyarország Kormánya	308
	MÁV-START nemzetközi u..	725
	Nemzeti Adó- és Vámhiva..	932
	Nemzeti Infrastruktúra F..	535
	Országos Mentőszolgálat	319
	UK in Hungary	488
	US Embassy Budapest	467

Figure 2: Average length of the posts by country
Source: Authors' work

Figure 3: Total likes and reactions to pages by country
Source: Authors' work

The Department for Emergency Situations page (137,163 fans) has considerably less fans than the Ministry of National Defense page (400,811 fans), but the warning about the effects of the extreme heat on the kids left in unventilated cars, combined with explanatory infographics was the most shared post in the Romanian sample (16,137 shares).

Figure 4: Top shared posts from the Romanian Ministry of National Defense page

On the Hungarian Government page, two campaign videos preceding the referendum held on October 2, 2016, related to the European Union's migrant relocation plans, were the most shared (10,223 and 5,991 shares). The success of these videos is not a surprise, considering that Hungary was one of the affected countries during the European migrant crisis and the government campaigned against

Figure 5: Top shared posts from the Hungarian Government page

the migrant quotas and frequently using racist and xenophobic messages. On the same Facebook page, the photos that were mostly shared display a strong emotional appeal: on January 21, 2017, a short report about a bus accident in Italy, where 16 pupils died got strong echoes (5,635 shares and 650 comments). The two visual posts from June 21, 2016 (before the last football match of the F group, with Portugal – 5,151 shares and 229 comments) and from June 26, 2016 (before the round of 16 – 3,900 shares), with emphasis on encouragements and praises of the national football team during the UEFA European Championship 2016, appeal to the national pride.

7. Conclusions

Considering the three basic principles of the open government – transparency, participation and collaboration in the light of the analysis of the content on the Facebook pages of Romanian and Hungarian governmental institutions from Romania and Hungary and the engagement rates of the most successful posts, we can conclude that public institutions are using social media for several purposes: *to present their specific activity* (in many cases, using or borrowing formats that are not adapted to the Facebook consumption patterns – long text messages, long videos that lack dynamics, low quality photos or videos); *to issue warnings about public interest matters* (topics such as personal or cyber-security related posts, civil exercises notifications, referendum campaigns are usually widely shared by users) and *to enhance engagement on social media through social media newsworthy stories* (photographs of arrests, video, audio and infographics, humorous treatment, drama, good news, magnitude and relevance).

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Resilience Research:
An Analysis of WoS Literature

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Abstract. This research explores how 'resilience' has evolved as a scientific/research topic in a wide range of fields (from psychiatry and psychology to environmental sciences, biochemistry and even engineering) by using Web of Science (WoS) data from 1975 to 2018; the final database includes over 19,000 articles, books and book chapters, conference proceedings, extended abstracts, editorials, letters, reviews and other forms of scientific communication which included the key term (resilience) in their title.

The data is analyzed according to multiple criteria, such as: (a) the WoS category (scientific domain) in which the research was published; (b) the publication year; (c) document types; (d) the home organization of the authors; (e) funding agencies; (f) the source titles (in the case of articles, books and meetings); (g) the country of the authors, and (h) the language of the publication. Although this exploratory research cannot be regarded as a meta-analysis, the results are useful not only for understanding the multiple and complicated relationships between the aforementioned elements, but also for highlighting the complexity, ubiquity and multiple roles resilience, as a concept, has received in academic literature.

Keywords: resilience, research, academic publications, descriptive/exploratory analysis.

1. Introduction: definitions and a brief theoretical background

Resilience has garnered consistent academic attention in the last period and is often seen as an universal concept and becoming a 'one that fits all' type concept in multiple domains; starting from this recent surge of interest regarding the afore-mentioned concept, this work takes a step back and analyses its evolution from a publishing (research output) perspective. As such, the current paper explores how 'resilience' has evolved as a scientific/research topic in a wide range of fields (from psychiatry and psychology to environmental sciences, biochemistry and even engineering) by using Web of Science (WoS from here on) data from 1975 to 2018. This research continues previous endeavors to ensure a better and more nuanced understanding of resilience, complementing the picture offered by historical perspectives (Tusaie and Dyer, 2004; Vernon, 2004), etymological (Alexander, 2013) or broader conceptual analyses (Earvolino-Ramirez, 2007).

Resilience can be understood as 'the ability to operate in a changing environment while consistently maintaining one's effectiveness' (Isaacs, 2014, p. 112), the 'ability to adapt positively to adversity, under any circumstances' (Haffejee and Theron, 2017, p. 1), or as 'the process of harnessing biological, psychosocial, structural and cultural resources to sustain wellbeing' (Panter-Brick and Leckman, 2013, p. 335). The American Psychological Association (2014, p. 4) offers a more complex definition of resilience, as 'the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress'. Furthermore, resilience has multiple usages and applications, as 'is commonly used in the literature pertaining to ecology and conditions of the environment, microbiology, and studies involving cellular regeneration, materials processing, and different aspects of engineering, business, and economics, such as the stock market and corporate resilience' (Earvolino-Ramirez, 2007, p. 73), with the focus on human resilience representing just a narrow approach. Rebounding/reintegration, high expectancy/self-determination, positive relationships/social support, flexibility, sense of humor and self-esteem/self-efficacy are just some of the attributes of (psychological) resilience identified by Earvolino-Ramirez (2007, pp. 76-77). Alexander (2013, p. 2707) on the other hand dutifully notes some potential problematic aspects of the concept, as 'resilience involves some potentially serious conflicts or contradictions, for example between stability and dynamism, or between dynamic equilibrium (homeostasis) and evolution'.

According to Earvolino-Ramirez (2007, p. 73) the 'origins of the concept of resilience stem from the early psychiatric literature that examined children who appeared to be invulnerable to adverse life situations, but over time 'the term "invulnerable" was replaced by the term "resilience," and a new area of theory and research was born'. Tusaie and Dyer (2004, p. 4) argue that resilience is rooted in two different bodies of academic literature '(1) the psychological aspects of coping'

and (2) the physiological aspects of stress', two fields of study 'pushed apart by academic politics and drawn together by common elements of the human experience'. As Figure 1 shows, the concept originated in the 1800s from 'observations of individuals coping better than expected and actually improving as a result of adversity' (Tusaie and Dyer, 2004, p. 4) made in the psychological literature which constituted the groundwork of resilience. Similar ideas occurred in the 1920s on a physiological approach related to homeostasis and quantum physics, emotional stress and morbidity[1] (1950s) and brain plasticity[2] (during the 1970s); the two streams of the academic literature converged during the 1980s and 1990s under the guise of psychoneuroimmunology and resilience (Figure 1).
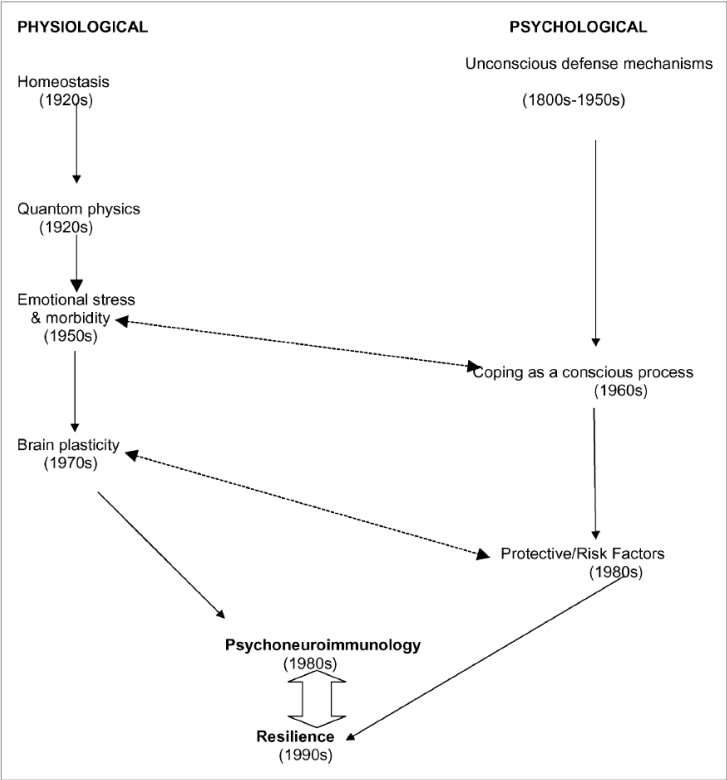

Figure 1: The evolution of the construct of resilience

Source: Tusaie and Dyer, 2004, p. 5

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1 A phase which corresponded to analyzing coping as a conscious process during the 1960s in the psychological field (see Figure 1).
2 A phase which corresponded to the focus on protective and risk factors during the 1980s in the psychological field (see Figure 1).

Other authors argue that resilience as a concept has a far longer history, as its origins can be traced backed to the Latin word for bounce[3] – *resilire, resilio* (Alexander, 2013, p. 2708; Manyena *et al.*, 2011). The word appears in the writings of Seneca the Elder, Pliny the Elder, Ovid, Cicero and Livy; Seneca used the term in the sense of 'to leap', Ovid used it with the sense of 'to shrink or contract', Marcus Fabius Quintilianus used it with the meaning 'to avoid', Pliny the Elder used it in the sense of 'leaping' and Cicero with that of 'rebounding' (Alexander, 2013, p. 2708). The longer history of resilience as well as its more complex usage and origins (in comparison with Figure 1) and the multiple connections and linkages between academic fields can be seen in Figure 2.
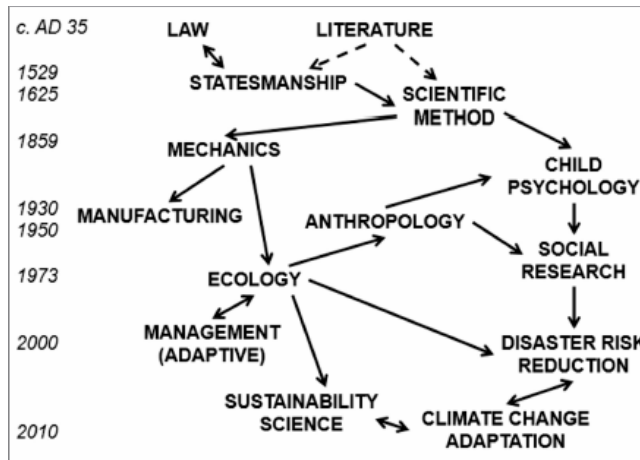
Figure 2: The etymological history of resilience

Source: Alexander, 2013, p. 2714

To partially summarize the rich history and conceptual complexity of resilience, as well as its usage across multiple scientific fields and academic domains, according to Alexander (2013, p. 2714):

> *In rhetoric and literature, resilience is a concept that is free to find its own level. In mechanics, it is an innate quality of materials, and thus one needs to alter the inherent characteristics of the material if one wants to increase it. Hence, it is a calculable property determined, in the main, experimentally. Resilience in ecological systems is about how they preserve their*

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3 In fact, some definitions of resilience are still based on the idea of bouncing; see for example the definition provided for resilience by Ledesma (2014, p. 1) as the 'ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune'.

integrity, while in social systems the concept is more complex and diffuse. Adaptation of the character, culture, activities and decision processes of communities should enable them to be better attuned to extreme situations. Rather than an ecological "threshold in state space", this is a social "mountain that must be climbed".

Alexander (2013, p. 2714) also mentions that resilience has garnered a status of 'common orthodoxy in social sciences' as a journal with its name already established; 'Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses' is published by Taylor & Francis (undated) since 2013 (currently at its seven volume) and 'creates a platform for dialogue about the processes, spaces, policies, practices and subjectivities through which resilience is seen to operate'.

The research will continue with a very brief methodological section (explaining the main data source) followed by the main research results and discussions (in section 3); the last section (four) concludes and presents potential future lines of inquiry.

2. Methodology

The current research is based on data collected from Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics, undated) in November 2018; the final database includes 19,204 articles, books and book chapters, conference proceedings, extended abstracts, editorials, letters, reviews and other forms of scientific publishing (or broader scientific communication) which included the key term resilience in their title. The data includes different types of academic publications and academic publishing from 1975 to 2018 (2019 to be more exact, as some articles were already published online one year in advance of their scheduled publication in a specific journal issue).

The data (publications focused on resilience) is analyzed according to multiple criteria, such as: (a) the WoS category (scientific domain) in which the research was published; (b) the publication year; (c) document types; (d) the home organization of the authors; (e) funding agencies; (f) the source titles (in the case of articles, books and meetings); (g) the country of the authors, and (h) the language of the publication.

WoS was also used by Bornmann and Mutz (2015, p. 2215) to look at 'the rate at which science has grown since the mid-1600s', Michels and Schmoch (2012, p. 831) to show that 'the number of basic journals covered by Web of Science (WoS) steadily decreased, whereas the number of new, recently established journals increased' or by Šubelj and Fiala (2017, p. 1018) to show that 'increase in the number of research articles indexed in the Web of Science database impacts the commonly observed distributions of citations within these articles'.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. The WoS category (scientific domain) in which the article was published

According to Figure 3, the most prolific fields of research are psychiatry (with 1,758 published works), environmental studies (1,332) and multidisciplinary psychology (1,239), followed by environmental sciences (1,195), ecology (1,031) and public environmental/occupational health (with 1,011 works).
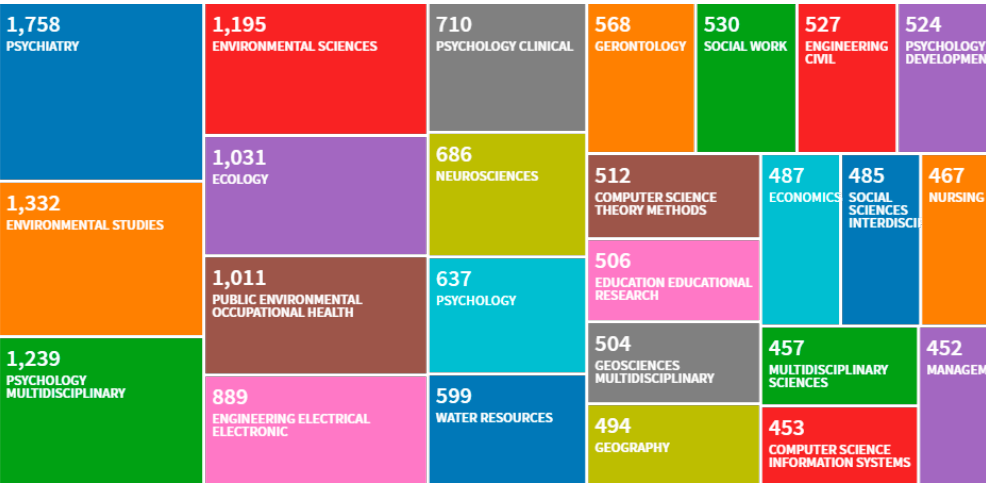
Figure 3: The WoS category (scientific domain) in which the article was published

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

Furthermore, if we add the different subfields of a more general scientific domain, publications related to psychology (including multidisciplinary psychology, clinical psychology, psychology and psychological development) dominate, followed by those related to the environment (environmental studies, environmental sciences, ecology and public environmental/occupational health). However, this finding is not surprising as these are the main research fields from which resilience originated (Alexander, 2013; Tusaie and Dyer, 2004).

3.2. The year of publication

If we analyze the year of the publication (see Figure 4 and 5) we can observe an almost constant increase, with the only[4] exception (when fewer works were pub-

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4   Since the data was collected/accessed at the beginning of November 2018, the number of publication for 2018 is not final; considering previous developments we estimate that the final number of published works will surpass 2017.

lished than in the previous year) being 2009 (when 481 works were published compared to 603 in 2008). The constant increase of publications focused on resilience can be attributed either to an increased interest for the topic or be seen as a result of a constantly increasing number of academic journals – which were estimated to be around 23,750 titles in 2006 (Jinha, 2010, p. 258).

Another potential explanation refers to a general 'inflation' or journal articles as Bornmann and Mutz (2015, p. 2215) observed in their analysis of WoS publications and citations, who 'identified three essential growth phases in the development of science, which each led to growth rates tripling in comparison with the previous phase: from less than 1% up to the middle of the 18th century, to 2 to 3% up to the period between the two world wars, and 8 to 9% to 2010'; also see Šubelj and Fiala (2017).
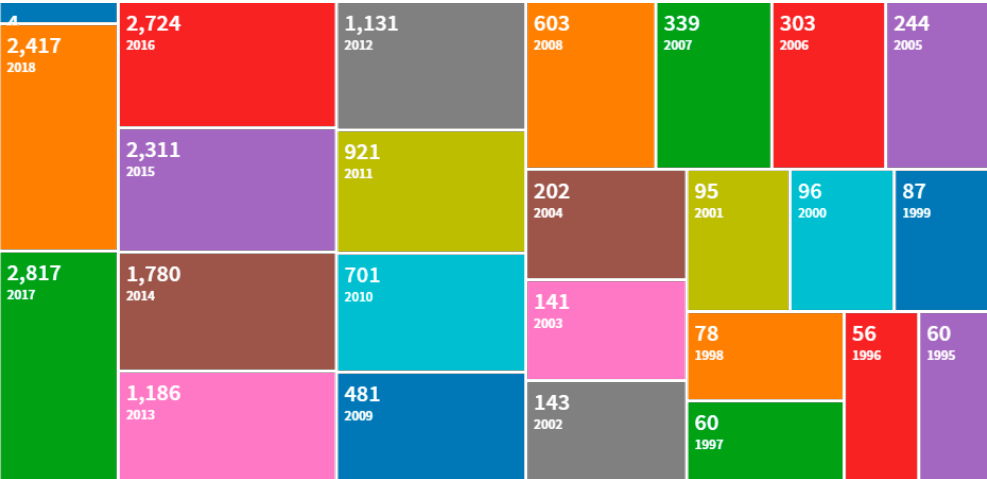
Figure 4: The year of publication (treemap)

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

Figure 5 also shows multiple situations in the recent period when the number of publications considerably surpassed that of the previous year: 2013 (1,186) and 2014 (1,780), 2014 (1,780) and 2015 (2,311), and 2015 (2,311) and 2016 (2,724).
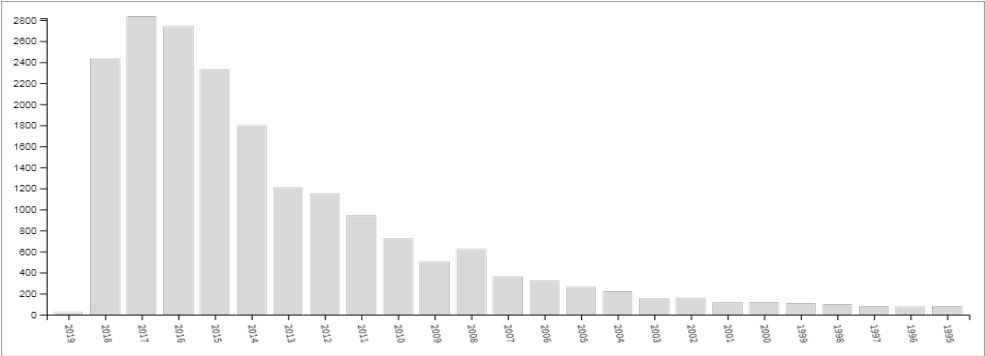
Figure 5: The year of publication (bar graph)

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

3.3. Document types

If we analyze the literature according to the type of the published works, Figure 6 does not provide any surprise as articles (12,217) are the predominant type of publication (being almost two third of the 19,204 works analyzes), followed by conference proceedings (2,573), meeting abstracts (1,895), book chapters (1,275), editorial materials (1,098), book reviews (739) and reviews (691); a more interesting issue refers to the number of retractions (three) which is rather low for such a vast body of literature.
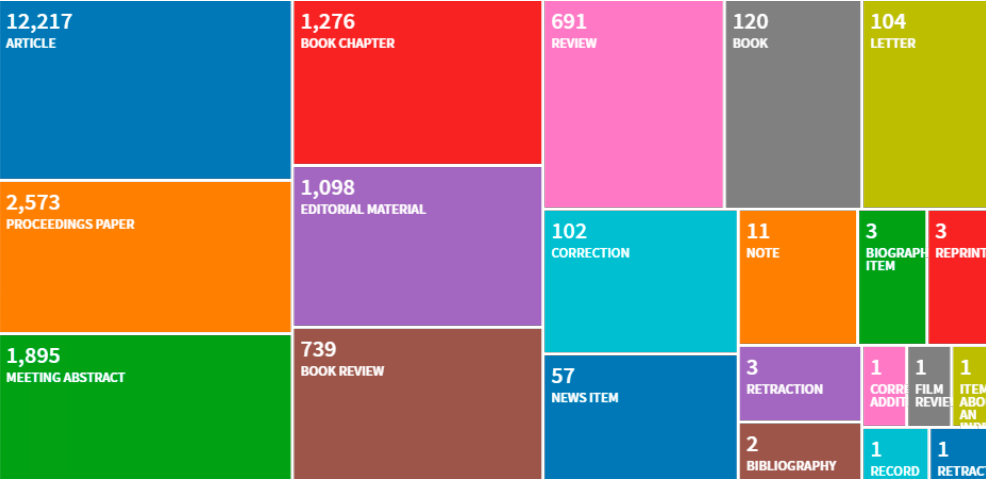
Figure 6: The document type

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

3.4. The home/ main organization of the authors

As it can be observed from Figure 7, most home/main organizations of the authors of the analyzed academic works are located in the United States of America or in the United Kingdom, with The University of California System, University of London, Harvard University and State University System of Florida 'claiming' most authors/researchers on resilience.

Only the French 'Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique' (CNRS) and the Australian University of Queensland manage to be situated in the first/top twenty organizations (according to the number of authors/researchers working on resilience published in WoS indexed venue) without being from one of the two aforementioned countries (educational and research systems).
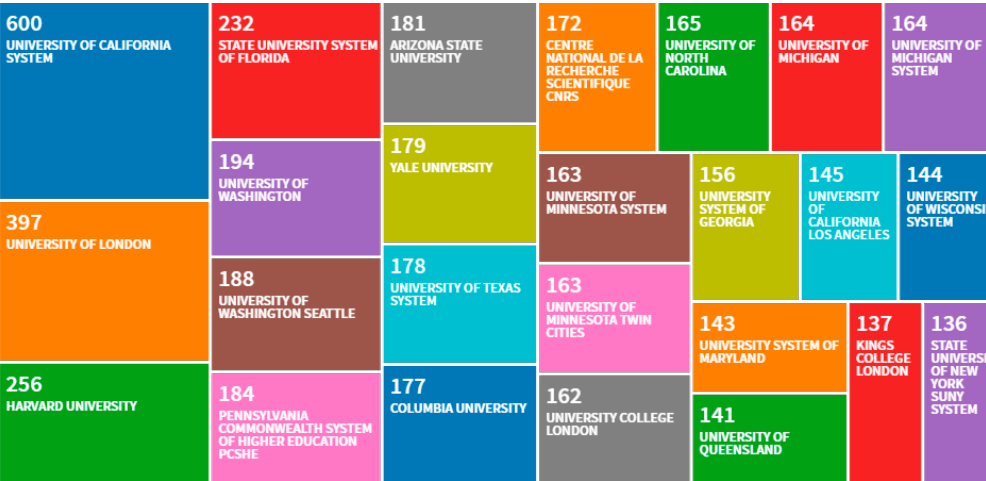
Figure 7: The home/main organization of the authors

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

3.5. Funding agencies

The main (most prolific) funding agencies are based in the United States of America (see Figure 8), namely the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institute of Health (NIH), including their different research centers such as the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

Figure 8: The funding agency

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

The National Natural Science Foundation of China, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Natural Environment Research Council, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and the Medical Research Council (from the United Kingdom) as well as the European Union (European Commission) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research complete the list of the main funding bodies/agencies for academic research focused on resilience. However, we should also at least raise some concerns regarding the potential existence of research biased due to this rather limited list of funding agencies (Galdas, 2017; Resnik, 2000; Barnett *et al.*, 2017; Wojick and Michaels, 2015).

3.6. The source titles (articles)

Figure 9 shows a very diverse array of academic journals which published articles on resilience, ranging from more traditional ones such as the Gerontologist (established in 1961) to newer and more 'disruptive' ones such as PLOS ONE (established in 2007) and Sustainability (established in 2009).

Figure 9: The source title for articles

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

3.7. The source titles (books and meetings)

The most prolific single source for books (and book chapters) focused on resilience is Springer's Lecture Notes in Computer Science while Elsevier's 'Procedia[5]' (Social and Behavioral Sciences, Economics and Finance, Engineering and Computer Science) dominates the series category (see Figure 10). Routledge is also included in the list with its International Handbooks series, while another important published (Emerald) makes the list with the Community, Environment and Disaster Risk Management book series.

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5   Procedia Social and Behavioral Science is included both in Figure 10 as a 'book' and in Figure 9 as an article.

Figure 10: The source title for books

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

Figure 11: The source title for meetings

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

In the case of meetings/conferences (see Figure 11) the 2nd World Congress on Resilience from Person to Society includes almost 9% of the works reported for this category in Figure 6 (167 out of 1,895), the next one (the 4th International Conference on Building Resilience) includes only 42 titles and the third one (namely the 76th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Psychosomatic Society – Optimizing Health and Resilience in a Changing World) provides only 25 titles/works.

3.8. The country of the authors

Considering our previous findings regarding the home/main organization of the authors (reported in Figure 7) and the main funding agencies (reported in Figure 8) it should not be a surprise that 7,378 authors are from the United States of America and more than 12,000 authors are from English speaking countries (see Figure 12).
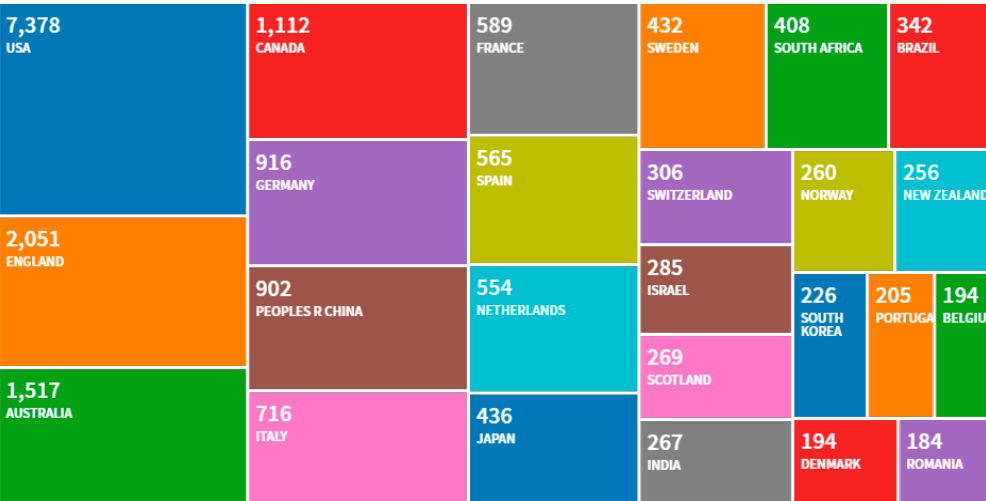
Figure 12: The country of the authors
Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

Over 5000 authors are based in European Union member countries (such as Germany, Italy, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark and Romania) excluding English speaking countries, while the Peoples Republic of China (with 902 authors) and Japan (with over 400 authors) can also be regarded as important players.

3.9. The language of the publication

As Figure 13 shows, English is the main language of publication in this area, with 18,674 out of the 19,204 analyzed works being written in this language; Spanish, German and French languages are also used but to a significant lesser degree. Furthermore, it should also be noted that some academic works on resilience are also in Portuguese (43), Czech (29), Italian (27) or other European Union official languages (such as Croatian, Polish, Dutch, Slovenian, Serbian and so on) and even in Russian (22), Korean (18), Chinese (11) and Turkish (also 11).

We can assume that the prevalence of English language publications can be connected with the fact that English is becoming the universal scientific language (Drubin and Kellogg, 2012, p. 1399), the home/main institutions of the authors (see Figure 7) or the funding agencies (see Figure 8) or simply with the fact that WoS includes mostly English language works.
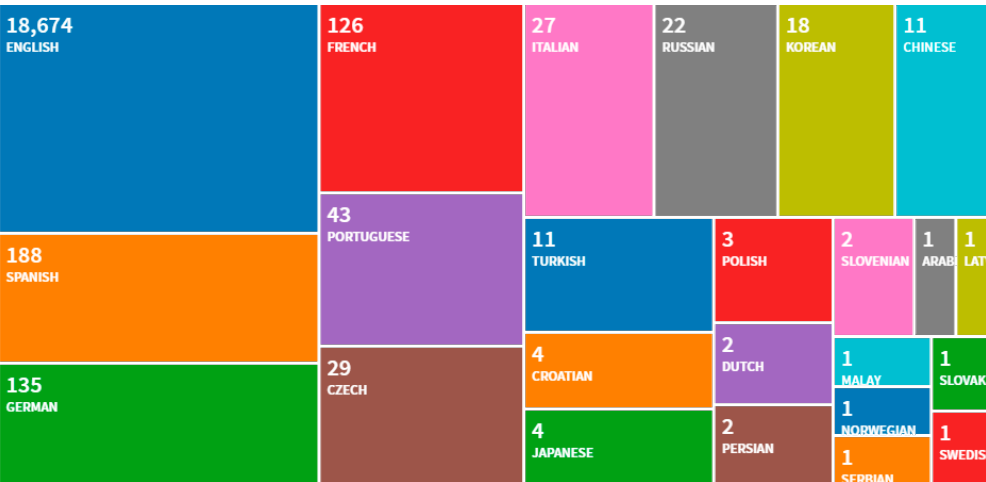
Figure 13: The language of the publication

Source: Clarivate Analytics (undated)

4. Conclusions

Although this exploratory research cannot be regarded as a meta-analysis, the results are useful not only for understanding the multiple and complicated relationships between the aforementioned elements, but also for highlighting the complexity, ubiquity and multiple roles resilience, as a concept, has received in academic literature. As our main results show, academic focus on resilience has increased consistently in the last decades (see Figure 4 and 5), most publications being under the form of research articles and proceeding papers (see Figure 6). However, a relatively small number of home/main organizations (see Figure 7) and funding agencies (see Figure 8) account for a disproportionate number of publications, with both the country of the authors (Figure 12) and language of the publication (Figure 12) being connected to the English speaking academic environment. Taking all these into account, we can also inquire upon the possibility of a systemic bias existing regarding the academic approaches and knowledge (orthodoxy) in this field.

The current research also presents some limitations, mostly regarding the database as the 'WoS (or the SCI) has been in operation for several decades and has

changed over the years' Bornmann and Mutz (2015, p. 2221), has constantly increased the number of articles indexed (Šubelj and Fiala, 2017, p. 1018) and constantly changes its covered/indexed journals (Michels and Schmoch, 2012). Taking into consideration its complexity, resilience should be approached from a more holistic perspective, similar to other multi-dimensional concepts and phenomena, such as the economic crisis (see for example Moldovan and Barnes, 2017); the approach of this paper is purposefully simplistic, as the main focus was not on resilience itself, but rather on the research conducted on it.

Future lines of inquire could/should explore the potential bias existing in the academic knowledge on resilience and how/if this bias is influenced by the relatively small number of funders and home/based institutions of authors or its general approach from an Anglosphere perspective. Furthermore, the data could also be used to analyze the usage of resilience as a key concept in different academic/scientific domains (see Figure 3) on a yearly basis in order to observe how the term/concept has migrated (or was adopted) from one field to another, as an analogy to the way in which social movements are diffused across national borders (see Moldovan, 2016).

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Resilience, Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in Romanian Higher Education

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Abstract. Based on a sample of 93 respondents (PhD students) from six Romanian universities, the study explores professional/workplace gender discrimination and sexual harassment in higher education institutions in the context of resilience. Following a brief theoretical exploration of the connection between resilience, gender workplace/professional discrimination and sexual harassment the research scrutinizes six different types of gender workplace/professional discrimination (1. during the employment/hiring process; 2. when establishing their work tasks and duties; 3. during professional evaluation; 4. during or for professional advancement / promotion; 5. during promotion to management positions, and 6. regarding premiums and bonuses or other benefits) and five types of sexual harassment/abuse behaviors (1. indecent comments/remarks made by their colleagues; 2. the promise of special/preferential treatment in exchange of sexual favors; 3. situations in which supervisors used their position in order to request sexual favors; 4. unwanted gestures such as touching from other colleagues, and 5. situations when employees offered sexual favors in exchange of preferential workplace treatment).

After observing that respondents have a better perception of the situation of women in their organizations (M = 2.73, SD = 1.06) than they do regarding the situation of women in general (M = 2.42, SD = 1.12), our results also show that while sexual harassment (as a gender discrimination behavior) is less likely to occur in Romanian HE institutions, other forms of 'professional/workplace' gender discrimination seem to be more frequent, but not necessary to the level to which they become systemic or endemic problems/issues.

Keywords: social resilience, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, higher education, questionnaire, Romania.

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1. Introduction

The current research[1] focuses on the opinions of Romanian PhD students regarding workplace (or professional) discrimination and sexual harassment in academia in order to explore female resilience[2] regarding multiple types of gender discrimination. The research builds consistently and can be seen as a follow-up of previous works which focused on the relationship between academia and local communities (Macarie and Moldovan, 2012a, pp. 81-97), gender discrimination in management (Macarie and Moldovan, 2012b, pp. 153-172; Moldovan, 2016a) and the strategies adopted by women who wish to break through the glass ceiling (Macarie and Moldovan, 2013, pp. 126-134) or horizontal and vertical gender segregation in higher education (Macarie and Moldovan, 2015, pp. 162-169).

Although the sample used in this exploratory research is not representative for the general population, even if it includes respondents from six Romanian universities in different geographic regions (and from multiple fields) and with heterogeneous fields of expertise, the analysis can provide valuable inside information regarding professional/workplace gender discrimination and sexual harassment in Romanian universities.

The article will continue with a brief theoretical exploration of the connection between resilience, gender workplace/professional discrimination and sexual harassment (in section 2) and a description of the methodology, including the instrument, the data collection process and the sample (in section 3). Section 4 presents the main results and discussions and section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Theoretical framework: the gendered aspects of resilience

Gender and gender equality need to be included in any discussion/analysis of resilience, as the 'impacts of climate change, extreme weather events and slow-onset disasters are acutely felt along gender lines' (Le Masson, Norton and Wilkinson, 2015, p. 9); furthermore, all measures (public policies) aimed at reducing the effects of such catastrophic phenomena should take into account gender inequalities and the different impact on the two genders (Morchain *et al.,* 2015; Gaillard *et al.*, 2017). The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD; undat-

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1 Sections of this research were previously published as part of one of the author's PhD thesis (see Moldovan, 2018, pp. 175-193); considerable improvements are made in the current versions both in the literature/theoretical review and regarding data analysis and interpretation.

2 Resilience can be briefly but accurately defined as 'the ability to operate in a changing environment while consistently maintaining one's effectiveness' (Isaacs, 2014, p. 112) or the 'ability to adapt positively to adversity, under any circumstances' (Haffejee and Theron, 2017, p. 1).

ed) argues that foreign donors and international organizations[3] should especially adopt a proactive stance and strengthen key gender-resilience linkages in their foreign assistance policy, with a special focus on the following key action areas (AA): gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (AA 1[4]); human dignity (AA 2[5]); growth that works for everyone (AA 3[6]); environment and climate action (AA 4[7]); inclusive governance (AA 5[8]), and peace and security (AA 6[9]) (also see Figure 1). Similar ideas, that resilience can be strengthened through gender equality are also expressed by Sterrett (2016), while Ravera *et al.* (2016) argue for multiple theoretical linkages between the two.

Taking into account the six key action area described by the IISD (undated) is essential for both international donors/organization and national stakeholders as 'projects are never neutral in the way they are designed or in their social impact, as they reflect, among other things, the implementing organization's values and priorities' (Le Masson, 2016, p. 11).

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3 Foreign donors and international organizations are especially important in the case of gender equality due to their role in the mediated diffusion of social movements (Moldovan, 2016b, p. 114)

4 According to the IISD (undated), 'strengthening women's organizations and movements contributes to self-organization, one of the main attributes of resilient societies. Improving the government's provision of services to women and girls helps achieve equality and inclusion, and increases the robustness of local institutions'.

5 According to the IISD (undated), 'ensuring that humanitarian assistance addresses the needs and potential of women and girls is crucial to build effective coping and adaptive capacities. Access to health care, nutrition and education is a cornerstone of inclusion, needed to sustain long-term change'.

6 According to the IISD (undated), 'increasing women's access to economic resources and opportunities is essential for livelihood diversification, as well as to ensure that women have the flexibility and the autonomy needed to adapt to changing circumstances. It can also create new opportunities to engage the private sector in resilience building, by integrating women/women-owned enterprises into supply chains'.

7 According to the IISD (undated), 'advancing women's leadership and decision making is crucial for innovative responses to the challenges posed by climate change. Fostering women's entrepreneurship and women-led initiatives to address environmental challenges – including the use of renewable energy – can strengthen experimentation and learning, which are essential for resilience'.

8 According to the IISD (undated), 'the protection and promotion of human rights, the rule of law and political participation are fundamental attributes of resilient societies, and are necessary for the empowerment of women and girls. The participation of women in positions of influence can act as a precursor of change across scales – community, regional, national – and improve institutional robustness'.

9 According to the IISD (undated), 'effective participation of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction is the basis for long-lasting prosperity. Ensuring that women help shape the design and implementation of security strategies is important for empowerment, as well as to achieve more comprehensive solutions to the root causes of conflict'.

Figure 1: Gender-resilience linkages
Source: International Institute for Sustainable Development (undated)

Papageorgiou and Petousi (2018) focus on the relationship between gender and resilience from another perspective, namely that of a socio-economic crisis; the authors analyze the perceptions that Greek men and women have on the latest economic crisis and observe that although both genders are resilient to its effects, the strategies adopted are different. Phillips *et al*. (2016, pp. 708-717) noticed that resilience in older populations is influenced by gender and can be tied to social norms and resources, while social adversity in early life predicts resilience, but only in the case of women.

Issacs (2014) used the Personal Resilience Questionnaire (PRQ) to collect responses from 35 deans (16 males and 19 females) and concluded that 'the average means scores suggested that female deans had a higher level of resilience' (Isaacs, 2014, p. 112). Issacs (2014) argued that the higher level of resilience showed by female deans can be explained by the hurdles and difficulties they had to overpass to reach a decision-making position; the experiences they derived from these challenges can then increase the resilience levels of female university managers. Other studies focused on resilience, gender and education showed that, in the case of students (N = 596), the psychological resilience of men was higher than that of women (Erdogan, Ozdogan and Erdogan, 2015), while in the case of secondary school students (N=390) girls manifested statistically significant higher academic resilience levels than boys (Mwagi and Ireri, 2017).

Kapıkıran and Acun-Kapıkıran (2016) analyzed the influence of optimism, self-esteem and psychological resilience on depression on a sample of 494 un-

dergraduate students (253 female and 241 male) from multiple faculties; their results showed that both optimism and resilience influence (reduce) depression, while self-esteem acts as a mediator. Other researchers analyzed how universities can support the development of student resilience (Holdsworth, Turner and Scott-Young, 2018; Minulescu, 2015), the relationship between resilience and students' well-being (Pidgeon *et al.*, 2014; McLeafferty, Mallett and McCauley, 2012) or the relationship between resilience, social networks and engagement (Fernández-Martínez *et al.*, 2017).

Resilience is also used as a key concept to explain different reactions and recovery processes following traumatic events, such as sexual harassment, assault and abuse; needless to say that universities are not immune to these types of phenomena (Reilly, Lott and Gallogly, 1986). Ponce-Garcia, Madewell and Brown (2016, p. 537) observed that not all individuals experience sexual abuse in the same way and that 'ability to buffer the negative effects of SA may lie in specific protective factors that determine resilience'.

Haffejee and Theron (2017, p. 1) reviewed multiple studies on abused adolescent girls and concluded that 'internal factors (meaning making, optimistic future orientation, agency and mastery) and contextual factors (supportive family, social and educational environments) function interdependently to enable resilience in sexually abused adolescent girls'. A similar literature review conducted by Domhardt *et al.* (2015, p. 476) highlighted the fact that 'education, interpersonal and emotional competence, control beliefs, active coping, optimism, social attachment, external attribution of blame, and most importantly, support from the family and the wider social environment' all contribute toward increasing the resilience in survivors of child sexual abuse.

3. Methodology: the instrument, data collection and the sample

The data on which this research is based was collected in October 2015 – January 2016 with a self-administered questionnaire especially developed for this goal. The questionnaire is composed of five batteries of questions regarding: (a) the situation of men and women in Romania, (b) the situation of men and women in the organization of each PhD student, (c) male and female traits and characteristics[10], (d) sexual harassment behaviors encountered by the respondents, (e) the respondents knowledge of the existence of 'professional/workplace' gender discrimination in the organization, and (f) general socio-demographic data (five items) (see Table 1 for a brief presentation of the questionnaire).

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10 The analysis of the responses regarding male and female traits and characteristics will not be included in this research.

Table 1: PhD students self-administered questionnaire

Question/item	Response/answer possibilities	Objective/aim
I. According to your opinion, in Romania:	1. The situation of men is much better than that of women. 2. The situation of men is a little/marginally better than that of women. 3. The situation of men is as good as that of women. 4. The situation of women is a little/marginally better than that of men. 5. The situation of women is much better than that of men.	To assess the respondents view on the general situation of men and women in Romania.
II. According to your opinion, in the organization in which you are studying:	1. The situation of men is much better than that of women. 2. The situation of men is a little/marginally better than that of women. 3. The situation of men is as good as that of women. 4. The situation of women is a little/marginally better than that of men. 5. The situation of women is much better than that of men.	To assess the respondents view on the situation of men and women in their organizations.
III. The following characteristics/traits are more specific to: (This item was followed by a list of 28 individual/personal characteristics and traits)	1. First of all to men 2. Rather to men 3. Both genders 4. Rather to women 5. First of all to women	To assess how/if the respondents view these traits as belonging to male or females as an indirect measure of their biases.
IV. How often have you encountered the following situations? 1. Some employees were faced with indecent comments/ remarks made by their colleagues. 2. Some employees were promised special/preferential treatment in exchange of sexual favors. 3. Some supervisors used their position in order to request sexual favors. 4. Some employees were faced with unwanted gestures (such as touching) from other colleagues. 5. Some employees offered sexual favors in exchange of preferential workplace treatment.	1. Never 2. Hardly ever 3. Rarely 4. Often 5. Very often	To assess if certain gender discriminative phenomena are present in the organizations where our respondents study.

V. According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? 1. During the employment/hiring process 2. In establishing their work tasks and duties 3. During professional evaluation 4. During or for professional advancement / promotion 5. During promotion to management positions 6. Regarding premiums and bonuses (or other benefits)	1. Never 2. Hardly ever 3. Rarely 4. Often 5. Very often	To assess if the respondents are aware of the existence of workplace/professional gender discrimination in their organizations.
VI. Socio-demographic data 1. Gender	2 answer possibilities: 1. Masculine 2. Feminine	General socio-demographic data.
2. Age:	4 answer possibilities: 1. Under 25 2. Between 25 and 30 3. Between 30 and 35 4. Over 35	
3. Current marital status:	2 answer possibilities: 1. Married 2. Single / not-married / divorced / widowed	
4. Total work/professional experience (in years):	Open ended question	
5. Organization (doctoral studies)	Open ended question	

Source: The authors

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The main socio-demographic indicators of the respondents of this study are presented in Table 2; 72.8% of the respondents are women, 57% of all respondents are between 25 and 30 years old, very few are below 25 (3.2%), 26.9% are over 25 and 12.9% are between 30 and 35 years old. Almost a third of the respondents (32.6%) are married and the average work experience is around 8 years (although it ranges between no professional experience and 30 years of professional experience).

Table 2: PhD students sample description

Variable	N	Selected descriptive indicators
Gender	92	Male: 25 (27.2%) Female: 67 (72.8%)
Age	93	Under 25: 3 (3.2%) Between 25 and 30: 53 (57%) Between 30 and 35: 12 (12.9%) Over 35: 25 (26.9%)
Marital status	92	Married: 30 (32.6%) Single, not-married, divorced or widowed: 62 (66.7%)
Respondents organization	93	Babeș-Bolyai University = 18 (19.4%) Unknown/not specified = 12 (12.9%) Lucian Blaga University (Sibiu) = 1 (1.1%) Valahia University of Targoviște = 7 (7.5%) University of Medicine and Pharmacy „Carol Davila" Bucharest = 11 (11.8%) University of Bucharest = 16 (17.2%) The Bucharest University of Economic Studies = 28 (30.1%)
Work experience	92	Mean = 7.86 (years), minimum = 0, Maximum = 30

Source: The authors

Although the sample is heterogeneous, being composed of respondents studying in 6 different higher education institutions, unfortunately it is not representative for the Romanian higher education system; as we do not have the reliability required to make generalized conclusions based on the limited sample, the following research will be an exploratory and descriptive one.

4. Results and discussion

As it can be seen in Table 3, the respondents believe that the situation of women is marginally better in their organization (mean=2.73) than it is in general in Romania (mean=2.42). Furthermore, the mode and median in the two situations also differs, being 2 in the case of the first variable (corresponding to the fact that the situation of men is a little/marginally better than that of women in Romania) and 3 in the case of the second variable (corresponding to the view that in the respondent's organizations the situation of men is as good as that of women) (Table 3).

Table 3: The situation of women: general vs. own organization perspective

		According to your opinion, in Romania:	According to your opinion, in the organization in which you are studying:
N	Valid	90	88
	Missing	3	5
Mean		2.42	2.73
Median / mode		2.00 / 2.00	3.00 / 3.00
Std. Deviation		1.12	1.06
Skewness		.370	.126
Std. Error of Skewness		.254	.257
Kurtosis		-.729	-.094
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.503	.508
Minimum / maximum		1.00 / 5.00	1.00 / 5.00

Source: The authors

Figure 2 shows the opinion of the respondents vis-à-vis the general situation of men and women in Romania. Only 18.89% of the respondents believe that in Romania the situation of women is much better or marginally better than that of men, while 25.56% believe that there are no differences between the situations of the two genders (corresponding to a situation in which neither gender is discriminated or receives preferential treatment), but 55.55% believe that the situation of men is marginally better or much better than that of women.
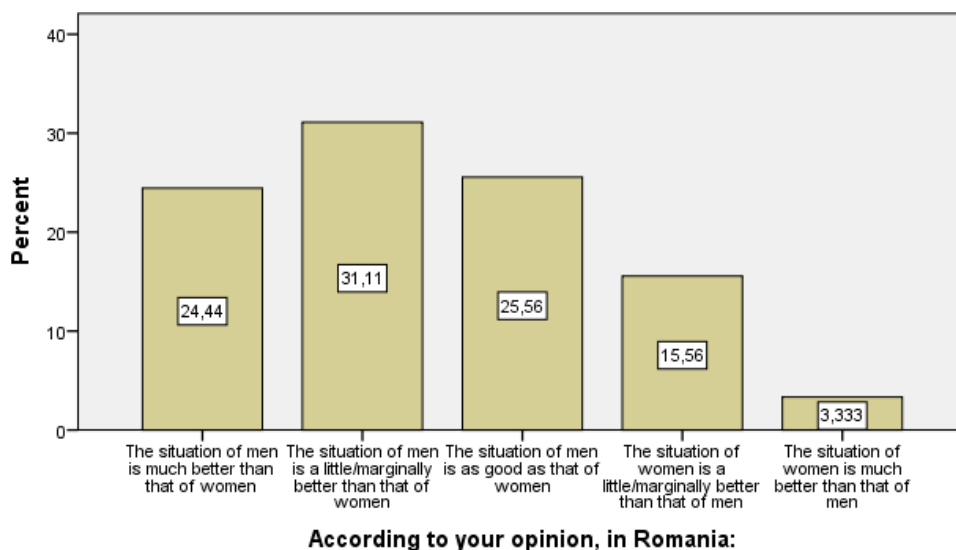
Figure 2: PhD respondents' view regarding the situation of men and women in Romania (in %)

Source: The authors

Regarding the second question, when referring to the situations of the two genders in their own organizations, the respondents seem to view the two genders as being on more equal footing, as 47.73% believe that the situation of men is as good as that of women (see Figure 3). Furthermore, only 17.04% believe that in their organizations the situation of women is much better or marginally better than that of men, while 35.22% believe that the situation of men is marginally better or much better than that of women. It seems that even if our respondents believe that 'men have it better' than women both at national level and in their organization, there is a shared belief that these organizations are (in general) more equal than the Romanian society.
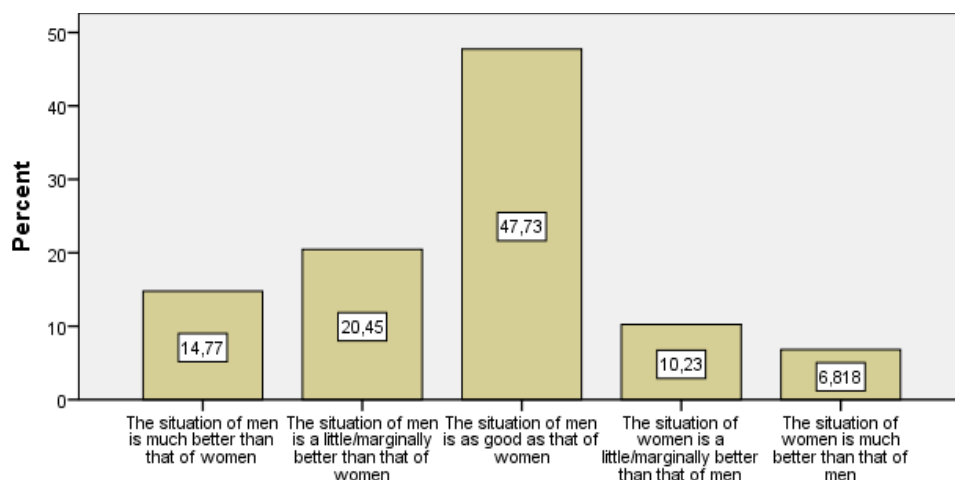
Figure 3: PhD respondents' view regarding the situation of men and women in their HE organizations (in %)
Source: The authors

After observing that the respondents have a better perception of the situation of women in their organizations than they do regarding the situation of women in general (in Romania), the research will focus on how the respondents perceive sexual harassment and other forms of 'professional/workplace' gender discrimination in Romanian HE institutions. It seems that sexual harassment (as a gender discriminative behavior) is less likely to occur in Romanian HE institutions (see Table 4).

The most encountered (frequent) sexual harassment behavior seems to be the situation in which employees are faced with indecent comments/remarks made by their colleagues (mean = 2.89), followed by situations in which employees were faced with unwanted gestures (such as touching) from other colleagues (mean = 1.87), situations in which employees offered sexual favors in exchange of preferen-

tial workplace treatment (mean = 1.81), situations in which employees were promised special/preferential treatment in exchange of sexual favors (mean = 1.68) and situations in which some supervisors used their position in order to request sexual favors (mean = 1.66) (Table 4). Although sexual harassment does not seem to be a major issue in Romanian HE institutions, other forms of 'professional' gender discrimination seem to be more frequent (see the second half of Table 4), but not necessary to the level in which they become systemic or endemic problems/issues.

The most frequently encountered forms of gender discrimination related to professional/workplace related aspects (Table 4) seem to occur during promotion to management positions (mean=3.01), during/for professional advancement/ promotion (mean=2.89), when establishing work tasks and duties (mean=2.86), during the employment/hiring process (mean=2.84), during professional evaluation (mean=2.72) and regarding premiums and bonuses (or other benefits) (mean=2.70). However, even if the means for these forms of gender discrimination related to professional activities are higher than those related to sexual harassment, it should be noted that most of these means are also below (or very slightly above) 3 (see Table 4) – the value which indicates that these behaviors occur / are encountered rarely.

Table 5 shows the existence of differences between the answers of male and females respondents in the case of multiple items, regarding: the promise of special/ preferential treatment in exchange of sexual favors (a difference of 0.40 between females and males), supervisors using their position to request sexual favors (a difference of 0.31 between females and males), the existence of gender discrimination in establishing work tasks and duties (a difference of 0.34 between females and males), the existence of gender discrimination during professional evaluations (a difference of 0.63 between females and males), the existence of gender discrimination during/for professional advancement/promotion (a difference of 0.32 between females and males), the existence of gender discrimination during promotion to management positions (a difference of 0.42 between females and males) and regarding premiums and bonuses (a difference of 0.34 between females and males).

In order to assess if the aforementioned differences between the opinions of males and females respondents regarding sexual harassment and 'professional/ workplace' gender discrimination are statistically significant, the research continued with an independent samples T Test. Before presenting the results of the independent samples T Test a brief discussion regarding its assumptions and how the data meets them (or is adequate for such an analysis) is warranted. Although the dependent variable data (regarding sexual harassment and 'professional/workplace' gender discrimination) is not measured on a continuous scale (at the inter-

Table 4: Sexual harassment and professional gender discrimination in Romanian HE

	N Valid	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Skewness	SE Skewness	Kurtosis	SE Kurtosis	Min.	Max.
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some employees were faced with indecent comments/remarks made by their colleagues.	92	2.84	3.00	3.00	1.24	.087	.251	-.950	.498	1.00	5.00
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some employees were promised special/preferential treatment in exchange of sexual favors.	92	1.68	1.00	1.00	1.08	1.496	.251	1.147	.498	1.00	5.00
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some supervisors used their position in order to request sexual favors.	92	1.66	1.00	1.00	1.12	1.514	.251	1.004	.498	1.00	5.00
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some employees were faced with unwanted gestures (such as touching) from other colleagues.	93	1.87	1.00	1.00	1.15369	1.256	.250	.655	.495	1.00	5.00
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some employees offered sexual favors in exchange of preferential workplace treatment.	92	1.81	1.00	1.00	1.14766	1.174	.251	.140	.498	1.00	5.00
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During the employment/hiring process	92	2.84	3.00	4.00	1.19463	-.174	.251	-1.016	.498	1.00	5.00
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... In establishing their work tasks and duties	91	2.86	3.00	4.00	1.17576	-.158	.253	-1.132	.500	1.00	5.00
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During professional evaluation	93	2.72	3.00	3.00	1.19205	-.068	.250	-1.074	.495	1.00	5.00
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During/for professional advancement/promotion	93	2.89	3.00	4.00	1.21996	-.194	.250	-1.053	.495	1.00	5.00
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During promotion to management positions	93	3.01	3.00	4.00	1.32283	-.308	.250	-1.116	.495	1.00	5.00
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... Regarding premiums and bonuses (or other benefits)	93	2.70	3.00	3.00	1.16638	-.082	.250	-.947	.495	1.00	5.00

Legend: measured on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1. Never, 2. Hardly ever, 3. Rarely, 4. Often and 5. Very often

Source: The authors

Table 5: Male and females views on sexual harassment and professional gender discrimination in Romanian HEI

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some employees were faced with indecent comments/remarks made by their colleagues.	Masculine	25	2.6400	1.113	.222
	Feminine	66	2.9242	1.304	.160
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some employees were promised special/preferential treatment in exchange of sexual favors.	Masculine	25	1.4000	.707	.141
	Feminine	66	1.8030	1.192	.146
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some supervisors used their position in order to request sexual favors.	Masculine	25	1.4400	.869	.173
	Feminine	66	1.7576	1.203	.148
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some employees were faced with unwanted gestures (such as touching) from other colleagues.	Masculine	25	1.8400	.986	.197
	Feminine	67	1.8955	1.220	.149
How often have you encountered the following situations? ... Some employees offered sexual favors in exchange of preferential workplace treatment.	Masculine	25	1.8000	1.224	.244
	Feminine	66	1.8333	1.131	.139
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During the employment /hiring process	Masculine	25	2.7600	1.200	.240
	Feminine	66	2.9091	1.186	.146
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... In establishing their work tasks and duties	Masculine	25	2.6400	1.113	.222
	Feminine	65	2.9846	1.179	.146
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During professional evaluation	Masculine	25	2.2800	1.021	.204
	Feminine	67	2.9104	1.202	.146
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During/for professional advancement/promotion	Masculine	25	2.6800	1.180	.236
	Feminine	67	3.0000	1.218	.148
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During promotion to management positions	Masculine	25	2.7200	1.369	.273
	Feminine	67	3.1493	1.282	.156
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... Regarding premiums and bonuses (or other benefits)	Masculine	25	2.4800	1.122	.224
	Feminine	67	2.8209	1.166	.142

Legend: measured on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1. Never, 2. Hardly ever, 3. Rarely, 4. Often and 5. Very often

Source: The authors

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val or ratio level) but rather on an ordinal Likert type scale, previous studies[11] and analyses warrant the use of Likert type ordinal data in such analyses as Likert type ordinal scales (data) such as the ones developed in this research are often used and treated as interval or ratio (continues) level data and analyzed using parametric tests. The independent variable (gender) consists of two categorical, independent groups (males and females respondents) between which there is independence of observations (participants cannot be in more than one group – either male or female – and there is no relationship between the observations in each group or between the groups themselves). The third assumption is also met by the data as there are no significant outliers (see Table 4). The dataset also meets the fourth assumption, namely the normal distribution of the dependent variable (see the values for the Skewness, Kurtosis, mean, median mode and so on as reported in Table 4); the dependent variable (opinions regarding sexual harassment and 'professional/workplace' gender discrimination) is approximately normally distributed for each group of the independent variable (male and female respondents). Furthermore, the Shapiro-Wilk Tests conducted to assess the data distribution yielded significance values above 0.05 (between 0.12 and 0.37), specific to normal data distribution. As such, overall, the data meets the assumptions of the independent samples T Test.

Last but not least, from the 11 items included in this analysis, only one passed the homogeneity of variances test/assumption (see the results of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances in Table 6. As such, according to the analyses presented in Table 6, females believe more than men that gender discrimination phenomena occur during professional evaluations (t= -2.325, p= 0.022, mean differences males – females= -.63045), while all other previously observed mean differences are not statistically significant.

Even if sexual harassment behaviors do not seem to represent a serious cause for concern in Romanian HE institutions (as they are less likely to occur), the respondents seem to be more aware of other forms of workplace/professional gender discrimination, which also seem to be rare events (or exceptions rather than the norm); thus, based on our (limited) sample, gender discrimination does not constitute a systemic or endemic issue in Romanian academia. One worrisome aspect can be identified (via the data collected from our respondents) regarding the difference of perceptions between male and female respondents regarding workplace discrimination during professional evaluation, as women believe (feel) that such practices are more prevalent.

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11 Although this is not an ideal situation and entails some inherent shortcomings, there are multiple authors who sustain/corroborate this approach: Carifio and Perla, 2008; Bishop and Herron, 2015; Jacoby and Matell, 1971; Joshi *et al.*, 2015; Awang, Afthanorhan and Mamat, 2016; Asún, Rdz-Navarro and Alvarado, 2016.

Table 6: Independent Samples t-test for Equality of Means (sexual harassment and workplace gender discrimination; males – females mean differences)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means (Males – females)					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
How often have you encountered the following situations? … Some employees were faced with indecent comments/remarks made by their colleagues.	Equal variances assumed	.616	.435	-.964	89	.338	-.28424	.29494	-.87029	.30180
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.035	50.410	.305	-.28424	.27456	-.83561	.26713
How often have you encountered the following situations? … Some employees were promised special/preferential treatment in exchange of sexual favors.	Equal variances assumed	7.581	.007	-1.584	89	.117	-.40303	.25440	-.90852	.10246
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.977	72.500	.052	-.40303	.20383	-.80931	.00325
How often have you encountered the following situations? … Some supervisors used their position in order to request sexual favors.	Equal variances assumed	4.446	.038	-1.204	89	.232	-.31758	.26378	-.84170	.20654
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.390	59.803	.170	-.31758	.22849	-.77465	.13950
How often have you encountered the following situations? … Some employees were faced with unwanted gestures (such as touching) from other colleagues.	Equal variances assumed	.920	.340	-.204	90	.839	-.05552	.27245	-.59679	.48574
	Equal variances not assumed			-.225	52.945	.823	-.05552	.24730	-.55155	.44051
How often have you encountered the following situations? … Some employees offered sexual favors in exchange of preferential workplace treatment.	Equal variances assumed	.367	.546	-.123	89	.903	-.03333	.27174	-.57328	.50662
	Equal variances not assumed			-.118	40.455	.906	-.03333	.28176	-.60258	.53592
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? … During the employment/hiring process	Equal variances assumed	.070	.792	-.534	89	.595	-.14909	.27944	-.70434	.40616
	Equal variances not assumed			-.531	42.884	.598	-.14909	.28092	-.71567	.41749
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? … In establishing their work tasks and duties	Equal variances assumed	.086	.770	-1.261	88	.211	-.34462	.27338	-.88789	.19866
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.293	45.959	.202	-.34462	.26644	-.88095	.19171

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		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means (Males – females)					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During professional evaluation	Equal variances assumed	.538	.465	-2.325	90	.022	-.63045	.27118		-1.16920	-.09169
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.505	50.352	.016	-.63045	.25164		-1.13579	-.12511
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During/for professional advancement/promotion	Equal variances assumed	.062	.804	-1.130	90	.262	-.32000	.28322		-.88267	.24267
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.147	44.333	.258	-.32000	.27910		-.88236	.24236
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... During promotion to management positions	Equal variances assumed	.755	.387	-1.402	90	.164	-.42925	.30612		-1.03741	.17890
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.360	40.674	.181	-.42925	.31560		-1.06678	.20827
According to your knowledge, how often were persons of a certain gender discriminated? ... Regarding premiums and bonuses (or other benefits)	Equal variances assumed	.059	.808	-1.259	90	.211	-.34090	.27072		-.87873	.19694
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.282	44.615	.207	-.34090	.26593		-.87663	.19484

Legend: measured on a scale from 1 to 5, where: 1. Never, 2. Hardly ever, 3. Rarely, 4. Often and 5. Very often

Source: The authors

Unfortunately, the nature of our data, mainly the small sample size, does not allow the development of more in-depth inferences, but the findings of this study can provide the background for further lines of inquiry that would connect both gender and issues/themes of distributive justice and organizational fairness.

5. Conclusions

The empirical study based on a sample of 93 PhD students from six Romanian universities showed that respondents believe that men have a better situation both at the national level and in their organizations, but there is a common belief that these home organizations are (in general) more equal than the Romanian society. Even if sexual harassment behaviors do not seem to represent a serious cause for concern in Romanian HE institutions, the respondents are more aware of other forms of workplace gender discriminations. One worrisome aspect can be identified via the data collected from the respondents, regarding the difference of perceptions between male and female respondents regarding workplace discrimination during professional evaluation, as women believe (feel) that such practices are more prevalent – this could in fact indicate the existence of such phenomena in HEI's.

Albeit the current research provides useful insights on professional/workplace gender discrimination, sexual harassment and resilience, future work is definitely required in order to better connect the three theoretical concepts and test these relationships through empirical inquiry. Such potential future empirical research avenues could include: (a) obtaining data from university staff (professors) to explore their perceptions of professional/workplace gender discrimination, sexual harassment and resilience; (b) exploring professional resilience in HEI's (why female academics continue to aim for the sky despite multiple 'setbacks'?), and/or (c) obtaining data from students in order to explore their academic resilience (what motivates students to continue despite adversities?).

Furthermore, we could also analyze the three concepts in a comparative perspective in public administration and higher education (similar to Macarie and Moldovan, 2012a) as these institutional setups are often also encountered, explored and compared by students during their professional practice stages (Moldovan and Raboca, 2019).

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#Romania100.
How Public Institutions
Communicated the Celebration
of the National Day in 2018
on Facebook

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Abstract. The year 2018 marked the passing of 100 years since the so called 'Great Unification' of Romania with all its historical provinces. This event was highly mediatized and most public institutions strived to initiate dialogue and aimed to involve their audiences in discussions about this event, especially on their Facebook accounts. The aim of the present paper is to evaluate the online communication of local and central public institutions in the context of reaching the peak celebration of a year full of events. Therefore we analyzed the official Facebook pages of the Romanian Government, of all the ministries, of the two chambers of the Parliament and of the city halls of all Romanian county seats in order to find out how and what local and central public administration institutions of the country communicated with the citizens in the period around the pinnacle of this year of celebration: December 1, 2018. We also focused on how audiences engaged in this communication.

Keywords: public institutions, Facebook, Romania, event communication, involvement.

1. Introduction

On the 1ˢᵗ of December, Romania celebrates its National Day, also known as the *Great Union Day*. On this date, in 1918, more than 100,000 people and 1,228 delegates were present in the City of Alba Iulia, where the National Assembly adopted the Resolution of the long-awaited union of Transylvania, including the regions of Banat, Crișana, Maramureș, with the Romanian Kingdom. After 1990, the 1ˢᵗ of December became an annual public holiday, on which Romanians celebrate the unification of the country's provinces. The year 2018 marked the passing of 100 years since the great unification of Romania with all its historical provinces and was a reason for all Romanian citizens to celebrate. For this occasion, known as *Centenarul Marii Uniri (the Centenary of the Great Unification),* several events were organized in Romania and abroad by several national and local authorities throughout 2018, and a special structure within the Romanian Ministry of Culture was created and carried out various activities.

The peak of a year full of events was marked by military parades and many other ceremonies organized on the1ˢᵗ of December in several Romanian cities, especially in the capital Bucharest and the City of Alba Iulia, where the Great Union declaration was signed. City halls and national state institutions communicated intensely with Romanian citizens around the date of this special occasion and were also the hosts and organizers of celebration events.

The events were covered all year round by traditional media outlets, online news platforms and social media. Hashtags such as: #romania100, #centenar, #100romania were developed and used in thousands of posts made on social media accounts of both private persons and institutions. The posts had a highly symbolic character, using the national flag, historical personalities, relevant buildings, etc. Our research is focused on the communication on social media related to the celebration of the Romanian national day in this year of celebration made by Romanian public institutions.

The aim of the present paper is to find out how and what local and central public institutions of the country communicated on social media around the date of the festivities and how the audiences engaged in this communication. Since the most used social media platform in Romania is Facebook, we analyzed the Facebook accounts of the most important public administration institutions at county and national levels, during the period November 26, 2018 – December 2, 2018. According to recent data gathered by *Gemius* (2018), a consultancy company in the field of online advertising, in 2017, Facebook was the most used social media platform in Romania, followed by Pinterest with 724,400 active users, Instagram with 660,700 users, LinkedIn with 644,000 users and Twitter with 582,000 users.

Facebook is the most popular platform in Romania with 8.4 million users in June 2017, having a penetration rate of 43% in Romania. To be more precise, 70%

of all Romanian Internet users have a Facebook account. Facebook is preferred to Twitter in Europe and in the eastern part of the continent, Romania having the highest number of Facebook users in the region. Regarding the penetration rate of Facebook, which is the number of Facebook users in relation to the total number of the population of each country, Romania (43%) is close to, but comes after Hungary (54%), Bulgaria (47%), Czech Republic (46%) and Slovakia (44%), but ahead of Moldova (17%) and Ukraine (12%) (Internet World Stats, 2018). These figures show the magnitude of people who can be addressed through this social networking site, but also the prominent status this platform has within the online communication process.

By carrying out a computer-assisted content analysis, we will focus on the online communication of Romanian local and central public institutions on their Facebook profiles or pages, in order to see how and what they communicated during this event, how active (in terms of number of posts) and how involved they were (in terms of discussions topics). In addition, we focused on how engaged their audiences were by looking at the engagement index, which is based on the number of reactions, comments and shares.

2. Social media communication of public institutions

In the current knowledge society, the role of information has become crucial. Social media is considered to have unquestionably altered the nature of private and public communication (Van Dijck, 2013, p. 7). Social media communication has changed the way public and private institutions communicate nowadays.

The phenomenon has grown, both in size and importance, primarily because of individuals' need for information and the changing behaviour in news consumption. Social media has become the main source of information for some types of audiences, especially for the young ones (Balaban and Mustăţea, 2019). Technological advances have made it possible for users to get more out of the media, so the relationships between the audiences and actors have changed (Lewis and Westlund, 2015) and this also applies to public institutions if they want to build a strong relationship with the citizens in the digital age.

The strong emergence of social media platforms has broken traditional journalism and the distribution of news (Tandoc and Vos, 2016), the former becoming important sources of information in several countries. A direct form of communication between institutions and target audiences via social media has become more and more widespread.

Facebook is one of the social networks most widely used by public institutions, especially in Europe because, among other reasons, it provides the opportunity for

them to interact efficiently with citizens (Haro-De-Rosario *et al.*, 2017). In addition, it constitutes a valuable tool for engaging with society (Strecker, 2011).

To engage with the public is an essential mission of public institutions. This type of interaction represents a constant dialogue that stands for transparency, a very important characteristic of contemporary public administration. Networking with the stakeholders is essential for a modern public administration (Mergel, 2013). The practice of using this platform in order to communicate with the citizens has grown rapidly (Sandoval and Gil, 2012). Studies revealed the positive effects of using social media communication by public institutions such as: emphasizing the accessibility of public institutions, the willingness to interact with the public, a dialogical attitude, trust and civic participation (Agostino, 2013; Song and Lee, 2013; Bonson *et al.*, 2014; 2016). The application of dialogic principles by local governments when communicating on social media can bring about significant benefits, since social networks, in themselves, promote relations among people (Haro-De-Rosario *et al.*, 2017).

3. Methodology

The main goal of this paper is to identify the communication strategies and topics of the most important Romanian local and central public administration institutions before, during and after the country's National Day in 2018. This date is considered to be the peak of the celebrations of the centenary. Therefore we analyzed their posts on Facebook, firstly because this online platform is the most popular one in Romania and secondly because most of these institutions own such an account and have numerous online followers. For this purpose, we conducted both quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

The aim of the quantitative analysis was finding out the extent to which (number of posts) the institutions used Facebook in this context and to compare their social media activity in these months with that during an entire trimester when no other significant events took place. Our interest is to see what importance they attached to this historic event, judging by the number of messages they posted related to it.

The research questions we aimed to answer in the first part of the content analysis are the following:

- Q1: How active were the most important Romanian local and central institutions on Facebook during the time frame November 11, 2018 and December 2, 2018?
- Q2: How active was the city hall of Alba Iulia?
- Q3: Which was the format of the most shared messages? (photos/videos/links/texts/events)

- Q4: Which was the institution which benefited from the highest engagement from its audience?
  – The second part of the analysis aims at finding out the way these institutions communicated (topics of posts) on Facebook. For this, we used hierarchical cluster analysis in KH Coder. The research questions we aimed to answer in the second part of the content analysis are the following:
- Q5: Which were the most discussed themes during this period?
- Q6: Which were the topics that triggered the highest engagement?

We carried out a computer-assisted content analysis and analyzed the activity of 53 Facebook accounts during the period November 26, 2018 – December 2, 2018. This one-week interval corresponds to the period in which the festivities were prepared, includes both the celebration day and the day after the festivities concluded. We analyzed the Facebook accounts of the city halls of Romania's county seats and the accounts of the two chambers of Parliament, the account of the Government and those of the ministries.

Regarding the local institutions, Romania has 41 counties and Bucharest (the capital of the country) and an equal number of county seats. From the total number of county seats (N=41), 33 own a Facebook account and 28 of them posted during the specified period.

As far as the central institutions are concerned, Romania has two legislative chambers (the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies) and the government, which consists of 24 ministries. All ministries own a Facebook account and all except for one posted during the selected period. The Government, the Chamber of Deputies, and the Senate own Facebook accounts, but the third was not active during this period. Therefore a number of 25 accounts of central institutions were taken into consideration for the analysis. Consequently, the total number of analyzed Facebook accounts is 53 (N=53). From the total number of posts which were published during the selected period (631 total posts), we took only the on-topic posts into consideration (345 on-topic posts).

4. Results

From the total of 42 city halls, 33 own a Facebook account, but only 28 of them were active during the analyzed period. They published a total number of 389 posts, out of which 221 posts (57%) were on-topic and subject to our analysis. Out of a total of 27 central institutions, all of which own a Facebook account, only 25 were active during this period. They published a total number of 242 posts, out of which 124 posts (51%) were on-topic, and these were the ones we took into consideration for our analysis.

Table 1: The most active local and central public institutions

City halls	No. of posts	Central institutions	No. of posts
Satu Mare	24	Ministry of National Defense	25
Alba Iulia, Curtea de Argeș	23 each	Ministry for Romanians Abroad	17
Giurgiu, Iași	16 each	Ministry of the Environment	10
Deva	13	Ministry of Education	9
Cluj-Napoca	11	Ministry of Transport	8

Source: The authors

Table 1 depicts the number of on-topic posts of the most active local and central institutions during the analyzed period. The least active city hall was that of Slatina (1 post). The following councils did not post anything about the events during this period: Bacău, Bistrița, Botoșani, Sfântu Gheorghe, Târgoviște, Târgu Jiu, Baia Mare, Suceava, Tulcea. All in all, the most active councils were those from the regions directly affected by the unification, namely the region of Transylvania, Banat and Crișana. The city hall of Baia-Mare, the county seat of Maramureș was the exception, with no posts during this period, which could be explained by the fact that this account is generally managed poorly and has sporadic posts. The least active central institutions were the Ministry of Research and Innovation (1 post) and the Ministry of Justice (1 post). The Senate of Romania has not been active on social media since the month of October 2018.

Regarding the type of posts, the most common in both categories, local and central institutions, were photos, making up 59.77% of all types of posts, followed by videos (27.5%), links (9.77%), and statuses (2.95%).

In order to determine how the institutions framed this event, how they chose to present it and which other topics they included in connection to this one, we took several steps. First, we used the tool Textalyzer to conduct a preliminary word frequency analysis on the entire corpus to determine the most frequently used terms, which we shall further refer to as concept codes. The list is displayed in the table below. Then, for each concept code, we grouped together terms belonging to the same lexical family or terms describing the same object/situation, thus creating 18 major categories or concept codes. For example, we used the concept code *centenar* (English *centenary*) and defined it by 'centenarul | centenar | centenarului | Centenarul | Centenar | Centenarului | CENTENAR | sută+de+ani | CentenarulMariiUnirii | România100 | 100centenar | 1918', using the different inflections of the word, its lexical family, synonyms, and also hashtags.

Then, we used a hierarchical cluster analysis in KH Coder (Higuchi, 2001) and calculated the Jaccard distance/similarity coefficient. The resulting dendrogram was used to group codes in order to create a co-occurrence network. The elements

Tabel 2: Dominant concepts identified in the corpus

Centenary	Great Union	Romanians	Congratulations	National Day	Shows	Celebration	Alba Iulia	City Hall
100.00%	28.48%	26.86%	25.57%	17.80%	16.18%	14.89%	13.59%	13.27%
(309 mentions)	(88 mentions)	(83 mentions)	(79 mentions)	(55 mentions)	(50 mentions)	(46 mentions)	(42 mentions)	(41 mentions)
Centenary, one hundred years, #Romania-100, #100centenar, #centenarul-mariiuniri, 1918	1st of December Union, Union, Great union, unification	Romanian, Romanians, nation, people	All the best, happy holydays	National Day, 1st of December	Show, shows, traditional music, fireworks, cultural manifestations, concert, music	Celebration, celebrations, celebrating together, national celebration	Alba Iulia	City hall, city halls, local council

Schedule	Military parade	Government	Solemn meeting	Contest	Diaspora	Traffic	Promotional video	Public administration
9.06%	8.41%	8.41%	2.91%	1.94%	0.65%	0.32%	3.23%	0.00%
(28 mentions)	(26 mentions)	(26 mentions)	(9 mentions)	(6 mentions)	(2 mentions)	(1 mention)	(10 mentions)	(0 mentions)
Schedule, schedules, timetable	Military parade, #participlaparada	Government, prime minister, minister, executive	Solemn meeting	contest	diaspora	Traffic, vehicle restriction	Promotional video, presentation video	Public administration, public institutions

Source: The authors

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of this network are represented by nodes or codes and the proximity to other nodes represent the link between them. The distance between codes is an indication of the strength of their connection and the similarity between them and is measured by the Jaccard coefficient. The modules of different colors represent another indicator for the high or low degree of similarity between different elements. Thus, nodes of the same color appear frequently in the same posts and are an indication of the main topics identified in the analysis. The size of the nodes represents the frequency of occurrence of the respective terms.

The posts of the city halls reveal the local authorities' preoccupation for organizing the festivities. Salient terms are, as expected, the ones referring to the celebration, which are linked to the City Halls on the one hand, and to Romanians, on the other. The City Halls are linked to the events they are organizing, posting about various shows, military parades and the related schedules. Other separate topics are narrations about the Romanian people, who are congratulated, whereas narrations about the national day are mostly linked to celebrations.
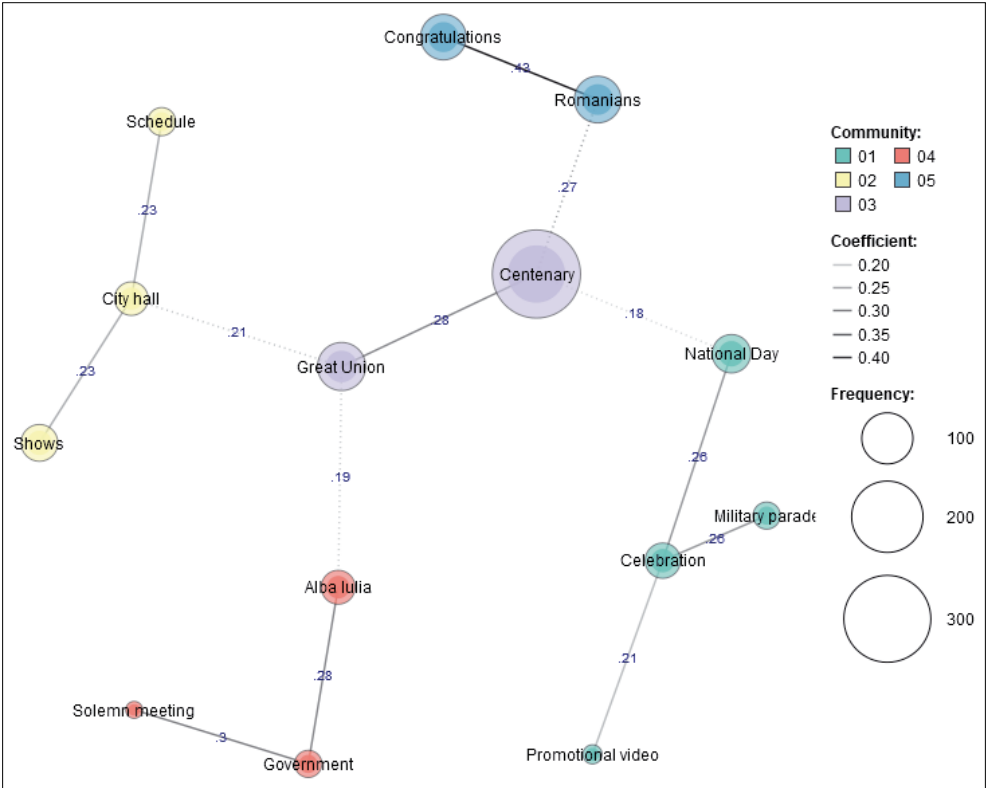
Figure 1: Co-occurrence of topics in the entire corpus
Source: The authors

The posts of the central institutions have their focus on the so called solemn meeting organized and attended by the members of Government in the City of Alba Iulia. Other distinct, secondary topics are about the Romanians directly linked to the centenary, the military parades, the official promotional video and the various shows and their respective schedules. The co-occurrence of the most discussed topics on the Facebook accounts of all analyzed institutions is depicted in Figure 1.

The term centenary co-occurs mostly in relation to the Great Union (Jaccard distance of 0.28) and to Romanians (Jaccard distance of 0.27). The national day is mostly mentioned in the context of celebrations, the military parade (Jaccard distance of 0.26) and the official promotional video created for this occasion (Jaccard distance of 0.21). The City Halls are clustered together with shows and their schedules (Jaccard distance of 0.23), while the government mostly co-occurs with the solemn meeting (Jaccard distance of 0.3) in Alba Iulia (Jaccard distance of 0.28).

The next step was to go deeper into the analysis and gain insight into the institutions which received the most reactions for a single post (Figure 2). In other words, to see whether there were posts which drew the attention of the audiences and had a more interactive character than others.
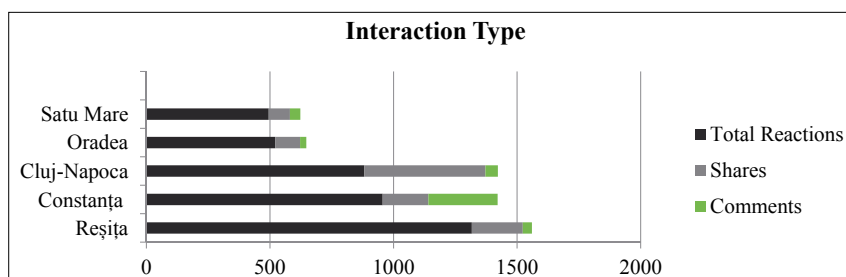
Figure 2: Top 5 City Halls gaining the most reactions to a single post
Source: The authors

The City of Reșița benefited from the most engagement for a post, compared to all the other accounts of local institutions that we analyzed (37 comments, 206 shares and 1,317 total reactions). This high interaction was for a post containing 15 pictures of the city and a caption congratulating the country and the residents of the city on the national anniversary. The city of Constanța gained a lot of interaction (280 comments, 185 shares and 956 total reactions) for a video where the mayor together with other officials presented the new modern public transport buses. This presentation was deliberately set to coincide with the National Day. The City of Cluj-Napoca (50 comments, 490 shares and 882 total reactions) posted 51 photos of all the central areas of the city which were modernized, and according to the

caption, the modernization works were completed right on time for the festivities, which were programmed to take place in many of those areas. The City of Oradea received much interaction (25 comments, 101 shares and 521 total reactions) for an article presenting the new Centenary Bridge (in Romanian Podul Centenarului) which would be inaugurated on the celebration day. The City of Satu Mare, which has the only account where the posts are bilingual, Romanian and Hungarian, received 42 comments, 86 shares and 495 total reactions for a video depicting the official inauguration of the Christmas and National Day lights, in the city center.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs received the most reactions by far (1,379 comments, 23,974 shares and 28,708 reactions) for posting a song about Romania and its citizens, sung by a famous national Romanian singer (Figure 3). The caption was evocative of the greatness of the Romanian people. The Ministry of National Defense gained much interaction (2,332 comments, 4,404 shares and 7,844 total reactions) for broadcasting a live video from the military ceremony organized in Alba Iulia, where the central figure was the president of the country, Klaus Iohannis. The Ministry of Internal Affairs occupies the third and fourth places on this list as well. It received 1,290 comments, 389 shares and 5,764 total reactions for posting ten photos depicting members of the military, of the police and Carmen Dan, minister of internal affairs, preparing for the official march through the streets of the capital. For another post depicting a police dog wearing the colors of the Romanian flag on its collar, this account received 131 comments, 421 shares and 5,158 total reactions. The Chamber of Deputies posted a picture of Nicolae Iorga, an important political figure, reminding the readers of his contribution to the great unification of the country (78 comments, 677 shares and 3,406 total reactions).
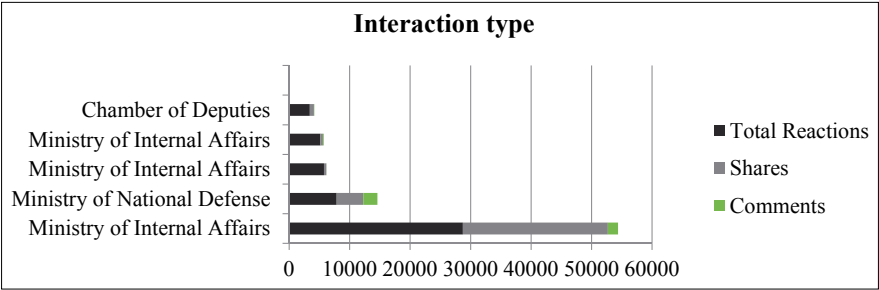
Figure 3: Top 5 central institutions gaining the most reactions to a single post
Source: The authors

There is a clear pattern of interaction types. The most popular way of interaction is liking a post, followed by sharing it and lastly commenting on it, which is consistent with the relative easiness of each type of interaction and also in line with existing literature (Alam, 2016, p. 7) about interaction with FB posts of gov-

ernments. Liking a post is much faster and easier than commenting on it, therefore citizens make more use of the 'like' than the 'comment' button, which shows a limited level of engagement on their part.

Introduced at the beginning of 2016, the five types of reactions, besides the traditional 'like', give users the opportunity to express a wider range of emotions. The figure below depicts the exact number of reactions registered for the most engaging posts of the main local and central institutions of the country. By counting the number of reactions, shares and comments we aimed to measure the impact of the Facebook posts, how they were perceived by the audience and more importantly, what types of emotions they expressed towards the official communication of public institutions on such a special occasion. The term 'reactions' refers to the total sum of 'likes', 'loves', 'hahas', 'wows ', 'sads' and 'angries'.

Looking at the top posts shared by the institutions, one can observe the presence of the reactions 'like' and 'love', which is expected for the type and content of the topics presented (Figure 4). Each of the ten most engaging topics bring forward either an accomplishment of one of the institutions or talk about future celebratory events. Therefore, the presence of negative reactions is fairly surprising. A possible explanation for the use of the reaction 'angry' could be the presence of public figures who are not favored by every follower.
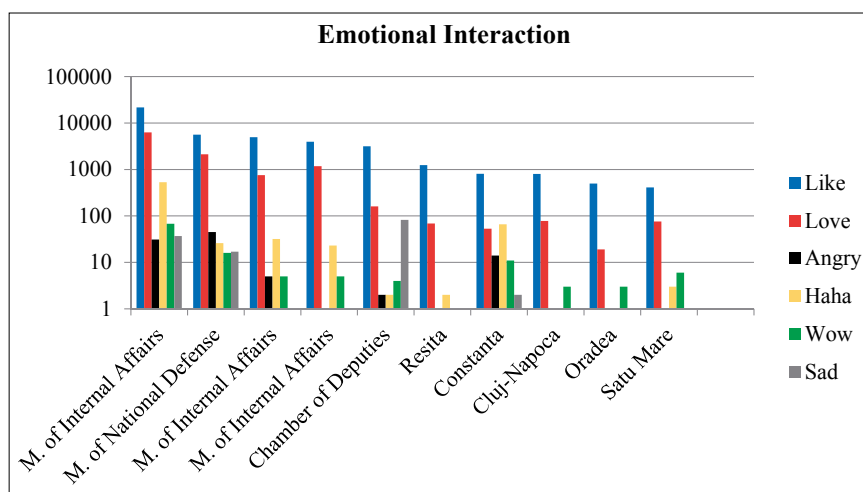
Figure 4: Types of reaction to the top five posts of local and central public institutions
Source: The authors

For example, in the top 3 posts and in the post of the City of Constanța, we can observe a relatively higher frequency of the reaction 'angry '. These are exactly the posts where the public figures appear. In the top three posts, the famous Romanian

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singer appears (Nicole Cherry), then Carmen Dan, the minister for internal affairs and then Klaus Iohannis, the president of the country. In the post of the City of Constanța, the mayor is the central figure of the video. These are also the posts where the most ironic laughing and sadness is expressed. The most sadness is expressed for the post of the Chamber of Deputies, where Nicolae Iorga, the historic political figure is remembered and the 'sad' reaction could be the expression of the feeling of nostalgia.

In order to determine which accounts engaged its audience the most, we analyzed the total number of reactions, comments and shares received by each account during the entire analyzed period. Bonsón and Ratkai (2013) proposed a set of metrics to assess stakeholder engagement of corporate Facebook accounts using 3 indicators: popularity, commitment and virality. We used these metrics in order to calculate the FB engagement for the posts published by our local and central institutions (Table 3).

Table 3: Facebook metrics for stakeholder engagement (Bonsón and Ratkai, 2013)

Popularity	P1	Number of posts liked/total posts	Percentage of posts that have been liked
	P2	Total likes/total number of posts	Average number of likes per post
	P3	(P2/number of fans) x 1000	Average number of likes per post per 1000 fans
Commitment	C1	Number of posts commented/total posts	Percentage of posts that have been commented
	C2	Total comments/total posts	Average number of comments per post
	C3	(C2/number of fans) x 1000	Average number of comments per post per 1000 fans
Virality	V1	Number of posts shared/total posts	Percentage of posts that have been shared
	V2	Total shares/total posts	Average number of shares per post
	V3	(V2/number of fans) x 1000	Average number of shares per post per 1000 fans
Engagement	E	P3 + C3 + V3	Stakeholder engagement index

Source: The authors

Since this index was designed before the different types of reactions were introduced on Facebook, we saw it necessary to change the way the popularity metrics is calculated and adapt it to the new functionality of the SM platform by taking into account not only the number of likes, but also the number of total reactions. Therefore, our popularity index refers to the number of reactions rather than the number of likes.

Table 4 depicts the top five local and the top five central institutions with the most engaged audiences. The aggregated index of engagement shows that the institutions with the highest number of followers have the least engaged audiences. For example, the Ministry for National Defense, which is the institution with the most followers by far (413,000) and was the most active institution during the analyzed period, has a very low engagement index (4.89).

Table 4: Aggregated index of engagement: Public institutions with the highest engagement

City halls	Engagement (E)	Central institutions	Engagement (E)
Curtea de Argeș (2,473 Followers)	E = 53.67 (P3=32.56; C3=2.83; V3=18.28)	Ministry for Internal Affairs (313,172 Followers)	E = 53.55 (P3=32.29; C3=1.33; V3=19.93)
Brașov (18,483 Followers)	E = 44.64 (P3=36.08; C3=0.22; V3=8.34)	Ministry of Justice (12,980 Followers)	E = 40.28 (P3=14.79; C3=2.61; V3=22.88)
Buzău (3,691 Followers)	E = 37.38 (P3=29.26; C3=1.89; V3=6.23)	Chamber of Deputies (33,372 Followers)	E = 27.41 (P3=21.87; C3=0.74; V3=4.18)
Cluj-Napoca (10,391 Followers)	E = 35.06 (P3=26.33; C3=0.93; V3=7.80)	Ministry of Communication and Information (4,414 Followers)	E = 19.24 (P3=13.81; C3=0; V3=5.34)
Râmnicu Vâlcea (4,430 Followers)	E = 34.98 (P3=23.64; C3=0.03; V3=11.31)	Ministry for Romanians Abroad (7,330 Followers)	E = 16.19 (P3=12.70; C3=0.54; V3=2.95)

Source: The authors

Furthermore, the most active institutions during the analyzed period do not have the most engaged audiences, with a few exceptions: Curtea de Argeș which was one of the most active accounts has the audience with the highest engagement of all. Cluj-Napoca, Râmnicu Vâlcea and the Ministry for Romanians Abroad, which were very active, have some of the most engaged audiences. It seems that certain topics triggered popularity, commitment, virality and engagement. For the city halls these topics are foremost photos, but also videos presenting the festivities unfolding in the city center, depicting citizens, officials (mostly the mayor of the city) and national symbols, such as the flag, or simply the colors of the national flag projected on important historical monuments or buildings, or simply painted on different objects or items of clothing. In the case of the national institutions, the most engaging type of content is the official video, created especially for this occasion by the Romanian Government, followed by photos from the military parade on the streets of the country's capital.

5. Conclusions

Communication and open dialogue are essential for public institutions, because they render legitimacy. Social media sites are ideal tools for initiating dialogue and interaction. Therefore, gaining insight into the communication strategies of public institutions and the engagement of their audiences is valuable. Our results show that 78% of city halls of county seats and 100% of the central executive and legislative institutions of the country own a Facebook account. Simply owning a

Facebook account is not enough. Public institutions should strive to deliver relevant content to their audiences, not only on special occasions, but especially then.

The current analysis shows that 85% of the city halls' Facebook accounts were active during the analyzed period, publishing a number of 389 posts (57% of them on-topic). 93% of central institutions were active during this period, publishing a total number of 242 posts (51% off-topic).

In terms of involvement and frequency of posting, the City of Alba Iulia, which played a central role for the unification process of the country in the year 1918 and was also the focal point of the celebrations and festivities one hundred years later, was very active. From the total of 53 public institutions which we analyzed, the account of the city hall of Alba Iulia ranked third (23 on-topic posts), after that of the city hall of Satu Mare (24 on-topic posts) and the account of the Ministry for National Defense (25 on-topic posts).

Regarding the type of posts, the most common in both categories, local and central institutions, were the photos, making up more than 50% of all types of posts, followed by videos, links, and statuses.

The institution which benefited from the highest involvement for a single post was the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This account received the most reactions by far after posting a song about Romania and its citizens, sung by a famous national Romanian singer. The caption was evocative of the greatness of the Romanian people. The most appreciated topics in both categories of local institutions presented either an accomplishment of one of the institutions or talked about future celebratory events. The most common reactions were the appreciative ones, but there was also a striking number of reactions expressing disapproval. The relatively higher frequency of occurrence of the reaction 'angry' could be linked to posts depicting public figures. Public figures tend to be more polarizing than common citizens. The most popular way of interaction was the 'like' button. Liking a post is much faster and easier than commenting on it, therefore citizens make more use of the 'like 'than the 'comment' button, which shows a limited level on engagement on their part.

In terms of institutions framing the events, the cluster analysis indicates that although the occasion was the same, the different types of institutions addressed it according to their own agenda. While local institutions were concerned with the organization of events, shows, concerts, military parades and popularizing their schedules, the central institutions mostly shared promotional videos or songs for the country and laid emphasis on the meeting of the Government's officials, which was strategically organized in the heart of the events, the City of Alba Iulia.

A major contribution of the present research is to highlight that if public institutions wish to engage their audiences through the use of social media, they should primarily post content about events directly affecting citizens, for example

about accomplished modernization works. Even in the context of a special occasion, these types of content drew the most attention.

This research also shows that a bigger audience does not necessarily result in larger engagement levels, which means that not all followers of these institutions are active on their platforms. The aggregated index of engagement showed that the institutions with the highest number of followers have the least engaged audiences. Furthermore, the most active institutions during the analyzed period do not have the most engaged audiences. It seems that certain topics triggered popularity, commitment, virality and engagement. For the city halls, these topics were foremost photos, but also videos presenting the festivities unfolding in the city center, depicting citizens, officials (mostly the mayor of the city) and national symbols, and for the national institutions, the most engaging type of content was the official promotional video, created by the Romanian Government for the occasion of the centenary.

This study has focused on one specific event and therefore cannot be subject to generalization, but the findings can be taken into consideration for further research on issues pertaining to the transparency of public institutions and the involvement of citizens. Investigating this matter in terms of the public sector's social media platforms is an area that requires further research as the continuous usage and engagement of citizens on these platforms can be key success factors especially for public institutions, which should value transparency now more than ever.

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The Management's Role in Implementing the National Anticorruption Strategy in State-Owned Enterprises

Elena NASTASE

Abstract. This paper aims, besides raising awareness towards the need to promote the anti-corruption culture and management as an example of good practices within the state-owned enterprises, to provide a different perspective on the levers the management of such companies may use. Neither the in-depth knowledge of the anticorruption legislation, nor the simple exercise of the authority one's position provides are guarantees for success in implementing the National Anticorruption Strategy (NAS). Context analysis, understanding expectations, careful planning, competence, and understanding the positive reactions-generating mechanisms are also necessary.

Achieving the National Anti-corruption Strategy, a complex and of great interest action at a national level needs a sustained effort of the state-owned enterprises' top management, as well as a consistent and coherent strategic approach. Providing the adequate resources influences the degree to which the Integrity Plan objectives are achieved.

It highlights both the positive aspects of implementing the National Anti-corruption Strategy objectives and the aspects to be corrected for maximising results and generating a substantial and durable impact.

Keywords: National Anti-corruption Strategy, state-owned enterprise.

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1. General notions on corruption

As far as the phenomenon of corruption is concerned, history suggests it has been a permanent trait of human societies. Each country's history, be it oriental or occidental, is full of corruption examples. Corruption is one of the most important challenges today's society must face. However, despite its importance, or, maybe, due to its importance, there is no unanimously shared opinion on the parameters to be used for defining it.

Although the notion of 'corruption' is widely spread, it is hard to identify a universally accepted definition of corruption, both due to its extent to all activity fields and all aspects of daily life, and to cultural differences, as well as because society is constantly changing. Expert literature provides some definitions of corruption related to the analysed operation and the goal of the study. However, the international organisations studying or fighting this scourge tend to have similar opinions on the matter. 'Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.' (Transparency International). 'Corruption threatens the rule of law, democracy and human rights, undermines good governance, fairness and social justice, distorts competition, hinders economic development and endangers the stability of democratic institutions and the moral foundations of society' (Council of Europe, Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, 27 January 1999, ratified by Romanian Law 27/2002). 'Using a public administration position as one's source of income, monetary advantages or personal influence, for themselves or others.' (Romanian Law 78/2000). As far as the classifications of corruption are concerned, Transparency International sets the following parameters considers that 'Corruption may be classified as grand, petty and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs.'

The causes and conducing factors are most diverse: poverty, low income as well as greed; non-functional competition, economic and political monopoly; non-functional democracies, discretionary behaviours, political instability; heavily bureaucratic and ineffective administrations, bureaucracy; lack of corruption-fighting bodies; management deficiencies, poor professional training; insufficient freedom of the press, lack of transparency; severe ethnical division and high levels of nepotism; fear of retaliation, lack of the legal protection framework; societies tolerant towards corruption; and custom. The main forms of corruption identified in Romania are: offering/accepting bribes, embezzlement, theft, fraud, purchasing and trafficking influence, extortion and blackmail, favouritism, nepotism, *clientelism*, receiving gifts, and misusing confidential information. The effects of corruption are most diverse, too: stumped economic growth; increased discrepancies between social classes, increased incidence of poverty; growing lack of confidence in the state's institutions; fewer services of lower quality; decreasing investments (in-

cluding foreign investments); failure to observe the citizens' constitutional rights, lower quality of justice; accidents; and pollution.

A question arising naturally from these is: can corruption be eradicated? If we assume that the human nature is in itself predisposed to corruption, the natural answer should be 'No'. However, there are examples that contradict this theory. In his Republic, Plato acknowledges the corrupt nature of political institutions and recommends to philosophers to retire under the shelter of a wall to avoid a senseless martyrisation. If political institutions are inevitably corrupt, how can we expect them to be a corruption-fighting standard, to generate policies and tools that would act against them? (Plato, The Republic). For these reasons too, maybe, fighting corruption is mainly focused on reducing corruption and maintaining it to a generally acceptable level. The three key components of the fight against corruption are prevention, education and enforcement.

In corruption prevention we can consider the following measures: administrative simplification; monopoly limitation; elimination of discretionary powers; increased transparency; information and education campaigns for the general public as well as the professionals; implementation of ISO 37001 – Anti-Bribery Management System. The key corruption-fighting means to be considered are: ensuring the independence of justice and an adequate legal framework, implementing control mechanisms at all levels.

2. The structure, content, and expected impact of the National Anti-corruption Strategy (NAS)

The 2016-2020 National Anti-Corruption Strategy was approved by the Government Decision no. 583/2016, and all state-owned companies must comply with the legal requirements. The first legislation on preventing and fighting corruption dates back to 1996. Anticorruption laws were developed faster after 2000 and were supported by dedicated institutions. National Anti-Corruption Strategies were compiled as of 2001, to promote integrity and prevent corruption *via* the application of the regulatory and institutional framework, as follows:

1. Decision no.1065 of 25 October 2001 approving the National Corruption Prevention Plan and the National Anti-Corruption Plan;
2. 2005-2007 National Anti-Corruption Strategy;
3. 2008-2010 National Anti-Corruption Strategy for the vulnerable sectors and the local public administration;
4. 2012-2015 National Anti-Corruption Strategy;
5. 2016-2020 National Anti-Corruption Strategy, as approved under Government Decision no.583/2016.

Drawing up the NAS appeared necessary in providing the Government/state institutions and all the stakeholder bodies with an opportunity to approach all corruption-generating situations and processes coherently, to increase the effectiveness of the public sector through optimising the contributions of all responsible structures, to create a common framework for monitoring its application and to reinforce trust and cooperation at the regional and international levels. The strategy is correlated to all international anticorruption tools Romania is part of (The Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification – CVM, the EU anticorruption report, The Group of States against Corruption).

The National Anti-corruption Strategy's aim is to promote integrity by rigorously applying the legal and institutional framework in preventing corruption in Romania as part of an integrity plan developed on the basis of risk and internal management control standards. We also noticed that the strategy emphasises adopting preventative measures at the national and local levels, an aspect highlighted in the CVM progress reports about Romania (2016-2020 National Anti-Corruption Strategy, as approved under Government Decision no. 583/2016).

Government Decision no. 583/2016 sets up 6 general objectives translated into specific objectives, identifying the priority fields of activities, the associated risks, the people in charge with performing the planned actions and managing the associated risks, as well as some priority action areas, such as:

1. Anticorruption education. There is significant knowledge deficit among employees and managers with regard to the legal integrity standards (whistle-blowers' protection, ethics counselling, post-hire interdictions such as the 'pantouflage', sensitive positions management). In this respect, we can approach two issues:

A better degree of anticorruption education of the local institutions'/authorities' personnel, although this is a legal obligation (professional training as per the Labour Code) of the institutions' managers since 2012 (National Anti-corruption Strategy), the actual experience proves that this action is not paid enough attention to, as it does not generate immediate income, political capital, etc. The anticorruption legislation mentions ethics, conduct, and integrity training for the holders of public positions and titles, as well as trainings related to whistle-blowing (Law 571/2004), preventative financial audit, internal audit, financial inventory audit, anticorruption/antifraud, legislation, human resources, corporate governance and public company management, procurement, etc.

A better degree of citizen anticorruption education related to the effects of corruption (waste of public resources, weak civil society, bigger rifts between social classes, lower quality of life, etc.), to their rights (free access to public interest information – Law 544/2001, citizens' and legally incorporated associations' rights to take part to the law-making and decision-making processes – Law 52/2003, access to e-government services and electronic administrative forms through the e-gov-

ernment and e-administration systems – Law 161/2003, public information on the professional conduct to be expected from public servants in public positions – Law 7/2004, the policemen's obligations and conduct rules for their professional activity – Government Decision no. 991/2005), as well as to the means of fighting corruption.

2. Public procurement (the National Public Procurement Strategy has already been adopted) and other types of contracts public institutions sign, as well as transparency. The reason for the attention paid to the procurement process is easy to understand considering the size of the financial resources granted to such activities that generate more frequent fraud and procurement procedure corruption attempts with a substantial financial impact, as well as more frequent occurrences of integrity incidents compared to other fields of activity.

3. Strengthening the prevention structures at the public institution level, as well as of internal audit and audit structures, along with an institutional risk analysis specialisation. The measures aim at creating/strengthening such structures, as well as granting enough resources (human, financial, material) for performing such activities.

4. Increasing the effectiveness of the preventative anticorruption measures by correcting legal loopholes and inconsistencies regarding the ethics counsellor, the whistle-blowers' protection and the post-employment interdictions (pantouflage) – Specific Objective 2.2 of NAS. To reach this objective, the Government Decision 583/2016 provides that the Ministry of Justice shall draw up, during 2017, the secondary and/or tertiary regulations for granting protection to the whistle-blowers. We analysed the Ministry of Justice website and did not identify any (finalised or not) initiatives in this respect.

Therefore, we may conclude that the whistle-blower's institution is still not a priority for the decision-makers developing the legal anticorruption framework. Adopting the Law 571/2004 for protecting the public authorities, public institutions and other entities where breaches of law may be reported was a significant progress, and Romania became the first continental Europe country to create a legal protection framework for whistle-blowers working for public authorities and institutions against retaliatory measures and is considered, along with Luxembourg, Slovenia and the United Kingdom one of the countries with advanced legislation in this field, as there are full/almost full regulations for protecting the whistle-blowers working in the public and/or private sectors. It is worth mentioning that the connotations of the name Romanian chose for whistle-blowers, i.e. the equivalent of 'public interest alarm-raiser' are fully positive, as opposed to other European countries where they alternate between positive, negative and neutral (Whistleblowing in Europe legal protections for whistle-blowers in the EU, Transparency International, 2013).

However, considering that Law 571/2004 has been enforceable for almost 15 years now, we must notice that progress is not notable, as the law, perceived as a 'snitches' law', is little or not at all known to the people it concerns, and its harmonisation with the internal regulations of public entities is almost non-existent. Studies indicate that the main reasons given for not reporting breaches of the law are fear of consequences (legal, financial, reputation-related), the overall opinion that no measures will be taken, and especially the uncertainty about how, where, and to whom to report such breaches.

5. Intensifying the integrity strengthening efforts in the business environment, including the public companies, especially by implementing an integrity plan, developing and enforcing a company ethics code, implementing whistle-blowers' protection mechanisms, enforcing preventative measures for sensitive positions and integrity incident processing mechanisms.

6. Information of the citizens, along with awareness-raising, on the consequences of acts of corruption. The results of a minimum knowledge of the legal provisions should be immediate in fighting petty corruption. Unfortunately, we see that the people do not know their rights in relation with the state authorities/institutions and become, thus, extremely vulnerable to be subjected, by the public servants, to abuse, as they do not have access to the legal levers provided by the state under the specific legislation.

3. Strategies for an approach of the integrity plan implementation in State Owned Enterprises

The National Anti-corruption Strategy concerns all public institutions representing the executive, legislative and judiciary powers, the local public authorities, the business environment and the civil society.

As per art. 6 of Government Decision 583/2006 approving the 2016-2020 National Anti-corruption Strategy, it concerns 'all local and central public institutions and authorities, including those subordinated to, coordinated by, under the authority of the aforementioned institutions and authorities, as well as the public companies'.

As per art. 2, p. 2 of Emergency Ordinance 109/2011 regarding the corporate governance of public companies, as approved by Law 111/2016, the public companies are defined as:

   'a) State – or local administration – incorporated autonomous enterprises;

   b) National companies or enterprises, with the state or a local administration as the sole, majority or controlling shareholders;

   c) Companies with one or more public enterprises as defined under pp. a) and b) as majority or controlling shareholders.'

Corroborating these two articles, we conclude that the provisions of Government Decision 583/2016 approving the National Anti-corruption Strategy are mandatory for the state-owned Enterprises (SOE).

Art. 6 of Government Decision 583/2006 establishes, as mandatory requirements for complying with the Strategy, issuing a 2016-2020 Anti-Corruption Statement, followed by drawing up, approving and communicating each entity's Integrity Plan.

The following items were approved by Government Decision 583/2016: The 2016-2020 National Anti-corruption Strategy, performance indicators, risks associated to the strategy's objectives and measures and check-up sources, inventory of the institutional transparency and corruption prevention measures, assessment indicators, and public interest information publishing standards.

As for the target public of NAS, the benchmarks were set up to cover the widest possible range of society issues, general interest problems, with the most visible impact possible, but not necessarily relevant for state-owned enterprises. Many of the measures/indicators/objectives proposed by the Annexes to GD 583/2016 are, for an instance, relevant for the central/local public administration bodies, with specific activities and without a correspondent in a company's activity.

One of the challenges occurring while implementing NAS is to adapt such mandatory legal requirements to the specific activity and work of a company (e.g. Publishing a set of financial information is not a problem for a ministry or a municipality, but, for a state-owned enterprise active on a free market, publishing such information may turn into an advantage for its competitors).

Therefore, we believe that each entity should analyse the enforceable legal framework, aiming at identifying their specific major corruption risks, their internal and external context to identify and implement their own administrative control mechanisms and procedures aimed at discouraging the occurrence and performance of acts of corruption within the company.

Understanding the organisational context is one of the most important steps in implementing SNA. Implementing the SNA measures without a proper understanding of the organisation's external and internal context is counter-productive.

The external context is represented by the stakeholders (all entities in contact with the organisation), including the geographical position, its economic, social, and political environment, and its field of activity. The internal context is represented by all the processes, procedures and the authorities of the people working for the company, both formal (organizational structure) and informal (given by authority, professionalism and charisma-emotional intelligence).

As far as the identification of the stakeholders is concerned, they vary depending on the specific activity, the size of the organisation and the general context. We

may provide some examples:

1. The legislative institutions, the Public Prosecutor's Offices, the National Anticorruption Directorate, the National Integrity Agency, the National Public Procurement Agency, etc.;

2. The Ministry of Finance, the National Fiscal Administration Agency (for collecting fiscal debt), the municipalities (for collecting due fees and taxes as local budget revenues), etc.;

3. Mass-media, as we all know, is the 'watchdog of democracy'. As for the National Anti-corruption Strategy, General Objective 1 – Developing a culture of transparency for an open government at the central and local levels proposes increasing the implementation quality of the provisions related to the access to information of public interest. The degree of compliance to the provisions of NAS and Law 544 of 12 October 2001 concerning the free access to information of public interest shall generate positive or negative reactions in the media;

4. Suppliers, contract partners; in this case, interests may vary and, therefore, they should be analysed on an individual basis and, wherever a high risk of corruption is probable, the management must set up additional control mechanisms;

5. General public; in this case, we are talking about the public's access to information of general interest such as the management of public funds. As per the National Anti-corruption Strategy, citizens shall have the right to decide in such matters, albeit not where state-owned companies are concerned;

6. In this respect, the shareholders, i.e. the majority shareholder (the Romanian State), through the competent ministries, has already expressed their will and expectations by adopting the National Anti-corruption Strategy;

7. Board; General Manager: the shareholder must make sure their interests coincide with the company's interests. This action can be performed during the selection process, and especially by specifying the adequate and relevant performance indicators in the management contracts.

As far as the importance of understanding the organisation and the context goes, we deem it necessary for the following reasons:

1. Complying with the relevant legal requirements;

2. Understanding the internal and external factors shall be the basis of the management's risk analysis for each objective included in the Integrity Plan, leading to identifying and processing the risks that may prejudice the performance of the proposed measures;

3. Limiting the allotted resources to an acceptable level, higher benefits compared to the invested resources; an economic cost of the NAS implementation process;

4. Planning an ongoing communication strategy for the entire NAS implementation process, to all stakeholders, and adapted to each stakeholder;
5. The Integrity Plan objectives shall both ensure the compliance with the legal requirements and meet the stakeholders' expectations.

Although the NAS implementation initiative belongs to the majority shareholder (the Romanian State via the competent Ministries), the implementation task is incumbent to the executive management and the Integrity Plan coordinator. These two positions must have the competences needed for understanding the organisation's internal and external context.

Competence is proven by their ability to perform their tasks and assumes relevant experience and knowledge obtained through professional experience, training and education. Depending on the size of the organisation, its field of activity or its corruption risk, the management may decide to create a new structure whose main task is to provide support for the Integrity Plan implementation, to monitor the implementation, to ensure the compliance with the legal requirements and to assess to which degree the objectives have been reached. The integrity plan should be built according to the company's mission and objectives. The zero tolerance to corruption items should be included in the company's mission and vision documents. The identification and analysis of expectations are also necessary. We are referring to both internal and external expectations.

As far as the internal expectations are concerned, if we refer to the shareholders' perspective, they will be, generally, related to the compliance with legal requirements, limiting the fraud/corruption risk, while maintaining the costs of the implementation process at a minimum level. A profit increase perspective following the implementation of the Integrity Plan measures may lead the shareholders to support the enforcement of the proposed measures. As far as the employees are concerned, the management may encounter resistance to changes. Implementing new control processes/mechanisms represents additional effort and responsibility for the employees, without an adequate salary increase.

The organisation's external expectations will be directed towards a simplification of activity, operational transparency, compliance with the international anti-bribery/ anticorruption standards (for the foreign contract partners) and improving the quality of services.

As far as the objectives' identification is concerned, most of them are already established under the National Anti-corruption Strategy. However, a high-performance anticorruption management will not be limited to those elements, but will also perform a risk analysis specific to the company's activity, its corruption incidents history, main operations, financial operations, etc. Setting up and prioritising the Integrity Plan objectives should be based on the risk analysis of the company's main processes and assets. The existing control mechanisms must be

identified, assessed, and, whenever necessary, enforced or updated. The coordinators of the departments with high exposure to corruption (ex. Public Procurement) may decide to draw up their own Integrity Plans, using an in-depth approach of their specific processes.

Such risk analysis will indicate the most exposed to corruption of their operations and the company's vulnerable and prone to losses areas. The adequate control mechanisms shall be decided as a result of this analysis, considering the accepted risk level approved by the top management. Identifying the assets exposed to the corruption risk and the adequate control measures is essential for the company's activity. The risks may vary, from fraudulent sales or inappropriate use of assets to failing to perform repair/maintenance works to the assets' degradation leading to danger to human life, etc.

As per GD 583/2016, the first step in complying with the SNA is issuing the 2016-2020 National Anti-Corruption Strategy Adhesion Statement. Issuing this statement is the task of the General Manager, but it can be initiated by the Board as well, for stronger impact.

As for its content, the statement should include the following items of compliance with the SNA requirements:

1. Explicitly forbidding any acts of corruption; the Adhesion Statement must express the management's zero tolerance for corruption. It is also probable that, in some situations, enforcing certain control measures for bringing the corruption risk to zero may lead to a blockage of the company's activity;
2. Encouraging expressing concerns in good faith and without any fear of retaliation (whistle-blowing);
3. Stating the consequences of not complying with the NAS requirements;
4. Accessibility (intranet, billboards in public spaces, e-mail communication, information upon hiring, communication to the stakeholders and partners with a high risk of corruption);
5. In line with and included in the organisation's mission.

The main vector for promoting the anticorruption behaviour is the General Manager, whose message is further conveyed by the lower level management. However, all management levels should be aware of the importance of the personal example in relation to the zero tolerance for corruption.

A successful implementation of NAS depends on understanding the role and responsibilities of the top management, bound to keep in mind the following aspects and to give priority to the requirements below:

The expectations related to complying with the NAS must be realistic from the implementation duration's point of view. As a rule, big organisations show resistance to changes. A realistic planning of objectives and measures diminishes the risk of negative reactions.

Another essential management role is appointing people in charge and investing them with authority at each level of the hierarchy. As per the legal provisions, the entity's manager is responsible for complying with the National Anti-corruption Strategy. In this respect, the manager must make sure they have identified the relevant positions within the company and that they provide those positions with the necessary authority for meeting the objectives. The NAS relevant positions must be communicated at all organisational levels. Each head of structure must also be informed and made responsible for their tasks within the organisation.

As for appointing the Integrity Plan coordinator, the legal requirements provide that they should be a member of the organisation's management. In our opinion, the requirement is adequate, but not sufficient.

The analysis shall start with the opportunity of this person cumulating the two positions (management position and Integrity Plan coordinator). As the Coordinator's role is, mainly, to monitor the compliance with the legal requirements, the risk of conflicts of interests related to the company's core activity is quite high.

The person appointed as the Integrity Plan coordinator should be appointed based on the following criteria:

1. Independence/autonomy: the person is not involved in the day-by-day company activity and, therefore, their exposure to corruption is limited. This can be achieved by creating an independent position within the entity's organisational structure;
2. Authority: the person appointed as the Integrity Plan coordinator shall be given sufficient powers by the General Manager/Board to make real change;
3. Competence: the appointed person has the necessary knowledge and experience, monitoring/control abilities, the image they project within the company is compatible with this position;
4. Knowledge regarding the organisation;
5. Informal authority (due to the person's authority, professionalism and charisma-emotional intelligence).

The plan coordinator must have a direct communication line, besides the General Manager, with the Board or the Shareholders' General Assembly, to minimize the risk of information distortion or incomplete transmission. Obviously, the shareholders are the main stakeholders in a successful implementation of the National Anti-corruption Strategy, but the managers' concern for the compliance with the legal requirements should also be a constant of the management activity, as the managers' accountability is personal.

The implementation of the policy preventing and fighting corruption must be a top management task; it should represent the management's commitment to complying with the legal requirements. However, signing the Adhesion Statement is not enough, and additional levers must be identified (i.e. the management's meet-

ings may begin with a few words on the organisation's management anti-corruption commitment). As for the new employees, they must be informed, during their pre-hiring interview about the company's zero tolerance for corruption, as well as about the obligation to comply with this value.

Finding the resources is one of the main roles of management. We are referring to financial, material, and human resources. An important resource to be provided by management is also competence.

Creating a communication strategy regarding the NAS Adhesion Statement and the implementation of the Integrity Plan is essential for the success of this action. An important communication vector for the external relations is the company's official website, that can be used both as a 'billboard' for the legally mandatory information, and as a consumer interaction platform. The social media accounts should not be neglected either, as they facilitate building a direct and more dynamic relationship with the concerned consumers.

Another essential aspect of implementing the National Anti-corruption Strategy to be considered by management is identifying the positivity-generating element. In other words, the emotional motivating element that justifies the implementation benefits, different for each of the stakeholders. As we mentioned before, the actors involved, directly or indirectly, in implementing the Integrity Plan have different expectations and roles. Substantial changes in the approach of work-related activities may generate a stressful environment and a strong negative reaction (ex. employees may feel overwhelmed by the new tasks or insecure because of the implementation of new/additional control measures). In this respect, managers must adapt their message to each of these categories in a way that addresses their concerns, as well as to determine the factors that motivate their employees (ex. the shareholders will be willing to allocate funds for implementing the Integrity Plan if it leads to profit increase and brings recognition to the company through its compliance to the best international practices; the employees will find a centralised procurement or document management system easier to accept when it leads to lower bureaucracy and risk of errors, as well as to obtaining additional certifications/competences).

The positivity element is essential for implementing the whistle-blower's procedure, often regarded as a delation procedure. Implementing this standard is an extremely difficult managerial task in the context of implementing the values of a culture of trust and ensuring a moral environment in a public entity, as the standard may be perceived as bordering delation. It is necessary, in limiting such risks, to change the attitude towards control at an organisation level and to develop a value system based on understanding that all employees are performing at various levels of management and that their objectives are, in essence, the same.

As for ensuring the employees' support for the success of this project, the psychological contract's role should be given an important role. This is represented by the informal relation between the employer and the employee regarding their

unwritten mutual expectations, other than those included in the labour contract. These two contracts define the employer-employee relationship. The psychological contract is a continuous evolution, based on the communication between the parties. This type of 'contract' appeared because the individual labour contracts cannot include all the parties' expectations.

4. Case study – Compania Națională Aeroporturi București S.A. (Bucharest Airports National Company S.A.)

Compania Națională Aeroporturi Bucureşti S.A. was incorporated under the Government ordinance 1208/2009, merging together Compania Națională Aeroportul Internațional Henri Coandă – București S.A. and Societatea Națională Aeroportul Internațional București Băneasa – Aurel Vlaicu S.A., under the authority of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure. Compania Națională Aeroporturi București S.A., hereinafter referred to as the Company was incorporated as a joint-stock company with the Romanian State as the majority shareholder. The shares are distributed as follows: 80% to the Romanian State through the Ministry of Transport and 20% to Fondul Proprietatea.

The Company's core business is providing airport services for air transport operators, as well as services of national public interest. Along with their core business, it also provides related services, consisting mainly of renting facilities for airport and air transport operators, as well as other businesses performing passenger-related activities or services.

The Company is run by the Shareholders General Assembly and managed by its Board. The Company works in compliance with the Companies' Law 31/1990, as subsequently amended and with the Emergency Ordinance 109/2011 regarding the corporate governance of public enterprises, as approved by Law 111/2016.

In June 2017, through an internal decision was established the Committee for Preventing and Fighting Corruption, with the main task of drawing up the Company's Integrity Plan. In November 2017, the Company's Integrity Plan, including its objectives, actions, risks, the necessary resources and the deadlines, was approved and sent to all the management positions. The Plan Coordinator was appointed via the same decision. The plan includes, besides some objectives that were already achieved under other legal provisions and through complying with the field's best practices, other actions to be performed. As far as the achieved objectives are concerned, we can determine, one year after the Integrity Plan was approved, the following:

1. Publishing the statements of assets and interests as per Law 176/2010 concerning the integrity in public positions and titles;
2. The Code of Ethics, approved and distributed, along with the due training of employees;

3. Procedure on reporting irregularities and protecting the whistle-blowers. Several warnings have been received as a result of this procedure, some along with identity protection requests;

4. The risk management operational procedure in line with the ISO 31000 standard principles and requirements. The risk management process is very active in key activity fields (security, safety, operations, professional health and safety, environment) and some sectors are specifically regulated. The risk management is an ongoing process in the financial and accounting activities, with specific analyses and risk registries. The Company's risk registry is compiled/updated from the departments' risk registries;

5. Specific procedures about the company's activity are enforced. The entity has implemented and maintains an integrated management system (IMS) compliant with the ISO 9001 – Quality Management Systems standard;

6. The Company complies with the provisions of Law 544/2001 regarding the free access to the information of public interest;

7. The procedures ensure the separation between the positions initiating, performing, checking, advising and approving operations by appointing different persons in such positions. This way the risk of errors, fraud, non-compliance with the enforceable law, as well as the risk of not detecting problems along a process or activity flow is considerably reduced;

8. The procurement activity has its own procedures and is performed in full compliance with the enforceable legal provisions. As far as the possible incidents are concerned, the Company can consider National Integrity Agency's warnings on potential conflicts of interests (most probably generated by not knowing the specific legal provisions or by the lack of awareness regarding the existence of a potentially conflict-generating situation);

9. In time, the Company has implemented and updated a series of financial operations control mechanisms proven to be functional (separate attributions, settlement audit, preventative financial control, a shared payment system for operations, i.e. min. 2 signatures, limited amounts for cash-only transactions);

10. As for the internal/managerial control standards, the requirements are known at each management level, a monitoring commission was appointed, and a new system development plan is approved annually. A dedicated department was created for this process, with monitoring the internal/managerial control system's functionality, checking up the standards' implementation and compliance levels and supporting the company's employees in implementing the managerial control procedures and standards as its core activities. This department's contribution to the implementation of many NAS-related measures was considerable, since the National Anticorruption Strategy and the Internal/Managerial Control Code have many common objectives;

11. Another positive aspect is the appointment of the internal/managerial control structure coordinator as the Integrity Plan coordinator. This appointment complies with the requirements included in the previous chapter;

12. We should also appreciate the management's open attitude towards the anti-corruption professional training. The management approved participations to postgraduate anti-corruption-related courses, ISO 37001 Lead Implementer certification courses, as well as to dedicated international events.

When it comes to measures that are in the process of being implemented we can mention the sensitive positions. The company is also taking steps towards ISO 37001 Anticorruption Management Systems implementation.

As far as the potential improvements are concerned, we noticed that, at the management positions' level, the approach of the necessary actions is often formal, along with an insufficient concern for implementing the Integrity Plan objectives. We have identified not understanding the benefits their implementation may bring as the main cause.

Another matter that can be improved is the management's availability to actually get involved in the implementation actions. The quality and frequency of the National Anticorruption Strategy support and compliance messages also leaves room for improvement.

5. Conclusions

This paper aims, besides raising awareness towards the need to promote the anticorruption culture and management as an example of good practices within the state-owned companies, to provide a different perspective on the levers that management of such companies may use. Neither the in-depth knowledge of the anticorruption legislation, nor the simple exercise of the authority one's position provides are guarantees for success in implementing the National Anticorruption Strategy. Context analysis, understanding expectations, careful planning, competence and understanding the positive reactions-generating mechanisms are also necessary. Achieving the National Anticorruption Strategy, a complex and of great interest action at a national level needs a sustained effort of the state-owned companies' top management, as well as a consistent and coherent strategic approach. Providing the adequate resources influences the degree to which the Integrity Plan objectives are achieved. It highlights both the positive aspects of implementing the National Anticorruption Strategy objectives and the aspects to be corrected for maximising results and generating a substantial and sustainable impact.

After analysing the expert literature and studies conducted by specialised international organisations, we may conclude that, without the active involvement of and collaboration between the Government, the specialised state institutions and

the management of the local or centralised public institutions/authorities and of the state-owned companies, the results can only be modest. In order for the implementation of the National Anticorruption Strategy to provide the expected results, the actions should be simultaneous and cooperative with the participation of all involved actors (the Government, the local authorities, the institutions directly involved in fighting corruption, the NGOs, the citizens, etc.).

As the National Anti-corruption Strategy is enforceable at a national level, the correction measures should be designed, in the first phase, as mechanisms enforceable at a national level too, such as:

- Including in the regulatory documents penalties for the lack of progress in implementing the NAS objectives and complying with NAS (at present, failing to perform the obligations resulting from Government Decision 583/2016 has no consequences for management and, therefore, there is no liability for an entity manager).
- Creating, in each entity, a specialised department supporting the management, as management changes are frequent and, more often than not, the newly appointed people have no knowledge of this specific regulatory framework and, inevitably, as a result of such changes, implementing specific measures is held back, although the process must be ongoing, with an important component related to changing the organisational culture.
- Including in the managers' mandate contracts objectives related to increasing the level of compliance with the National Anti-corruption Strategy objectives, as well as a deadline for the entity's system to be deemed compliant. Specific audits performed by the NAS Technical Secretariat and by the Court of Audit of Romania.

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Local Initiatives for Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Cities. Case Study

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Abstract. The need to adequately manage the different socio-economic and political challenges that the Romanian society is facing (reducing the degree of exclusion, social and territorial inequity, adapting to the pace and the innovations provided by the new technologies, increasing number of immigrants, pollution, so on and so forth) calls for an increased adaptability degree of the local public administration to enhance the quality of life of the citizens they represent. In this context, the local authorities have a key role to play in ensuring the sustainable development through local initiatives specific to each community, depending on the interests, needs, resources and actors that manage them. This paper tackles the roadmap of a set of initiatives undertaken by the city of Bucharest, considered to be a driver of sustainable development through competitiveness, innovation and human capital. The used methodology is mainly qualitative and is based on the analysis of official documents, key information and case study.

Keywords: City of Bucharest/Bucharest Municipality, territorial community, sustainable development, local public administration, adaptability.

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1. Introduction

The Romanian society faces a series of socio-economic and political challenges: the need to increase the degree of inclusion, to reduce social and territorial inequality, to implement ICT progress, to reduce pollution, etc. Faced with these challenges, increasing the degree of resilience of the public administration entails structural changes, especially on its own characteristics and its obligations with regard to providing public goods and services, to ensure the sustainability of public organizations and also the public interventions operated by these organizations.

This approach, however, has two dimensions, on one hand, the effort and the political will pertaining to the central and local authorities, and on the other, the consolidation of the cultural 'tissue' of the community – a catalyst factor for achieving the sustainable development goals of a local community: social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability.

In the context of the current Romanian reform initiated through the 2014-2020 Public Administration Consolidation Strategy (SCAP 2014-2020), the paper goes in depth of the behaviour of the local administration in Romania on the path of flexibility, integration into society and generally of improving its institutional performance, having as a case study the city of Bucharest.

Our increased interest in analysing the actions of the Bucharest authorities is supported not only by the broad *status quo* of the capital of Romania (the European capital, the largest urban agglomeration of the country and European metropolis), but moreover in view of the difficulties encountered by the local public decision makers to improve public services provided by aligning with the specific administrative model of the Northern European countries and characterized by the reduction of the number of municipalities through aggregation/ fusion until the territorial subdivisions achieve an optimal capacity to efficiently provide local public services (Argareto Layunta, 2017, p. 36). However, the application of this model is extremely difficult from a legal point of view because it involves two possible solutions: either the introduction of a third administrative level through a constitutional reform or the creation of intercommunity development associations – ADI (between Bucharest and its neighbouring county Ilfov), which in their turn would provide public services common to the two administrative-territorial units. For the time being, the first solution is not feasible, as the draft constitutional review has been blocked on the parliamentary circuit since 2013, while the second option, the ADI, is still viable.

The competences of the local public administration authorities in the context of the administrative decentralization system and the local autonomy in Romania allow the *deliberative* local public administration authorities to establish public institutions, commercial companies and public services of local interest (Article 36 (2) (a) of Law no. 215/2001).

An assessment of the impact of public service decentralization must be performed in the context of the economic sectors, and if we consider the most important, such as education, health, culture, social protection, transport, utility supply public services, the results reflect different local financing and management capacities, depending on the material, financial and staff possibilities, as well as, lately, on the possibility to access capital markets (Manda and Nicolescu, 2017, p. 72).

A relevant example of local management carried out with increased effectiveness and resilience in spite of major socio-economic challenges is that of the local authorities in Bucharest. Thus, the present paper presents the road map of a set of initiatives undertaken by Bucharest, appreciated as a driver of sustainable development through competitiveness, innovation and human capital, which can also be attributed to resilient behaviour.

2. Theoretical background and methodological aspects

The central topic of the paper is the management of local authorities to ensure through their initiatives and good practices sustainable, inclusive and resilient cities. If for the first two concepts, sustainability and inclusion, literature abounds in the theoretical presentation and different case studies, for the third concept, resilience, literature is mainly centred on psychology, the environment and the economy (Zhong *et al.*, 2014, p. 69). However, its use for the analysis of the behaviour of public organizations is a recent one (Zhong *et al.*, 2014) and mainly concerns the managerial crisis (Rogers, 2011), the ability to adapt (Seville *et al.*, 2006; Rogers, 2011; UN, 2007), the ability of organizations to mitigate risks and reduce them through different recovery actions (Bruneau *et al.*, 2007), flexible and fast response measures and the ability to provide a minimum of crisis services and return rapidly to full functionality (Australian Government, 2010). Also, the contribution to the Romanian scientific research area should be mentioned, as well as the contribution of the positive law to the definition of resilience, relevant in this respect being the following understanding of the term: 'the ability of a system, community or society exposed to a type risk to cope, adapt and recover after a disaster by maintaining and rehabilitating its essential structures and functions' (Article 2 (i) of the Government Decision no. 768/2016). Therefore, the concept of resilience targets both the strategies and public policies initiated by the organizations (implicitly the public authorities), and also the way they are implemented.

The objective of the research aims at identifying the behaviour of the Bucharest local administration when faced with situations of high uncertainty in crucial areas for the sustainability of the local community: budget-finances, health, culture, inclusion, etc. What strategies and policies are adopted by the local authorities in Bucharest, how do they connect and how do they cooperate with the local community

in such situations, given that the central administration itself is subject to extensive reform that leads to flexible and resilient behaviour? Is the subsystem (local administration in Bucharest) capable of developing itself better than the administrative system as a whole, especially if the latter has delays in its modernization?

Regarding the used methodology, it followed the logic of the research, encompassing both logical (analytical, comparative, historical) and empirical (case study) methods, based on a series of different techniques for collecting the necessary information from the field literature and from the analysis of official documents, regarding the behaviour of the local authorities when dealing with economic, financial, social, and other risks, and their main actions to ensure a sustainable development of the community they represent.

3. Local public management. Bucharest municipality

In spite of the difficult restructuring of the administrative apparatus and the initiation of local policies whose own impact must be distinguished from that of the governmental policies, the public decisions of Bucharest authorities demonstrate that a strengthening of their strategic decision-making capacity can be gradually observed. Below are some of the main challenges faced by the Bucharest authorities and the initiatives taken to overcome the risks on the economic, social, cultural, and other fields.

3.1. Economic and financial policy

The myth of the 'huge budget' owned by the capital of Romania, which currently stands at 1.3 billion euros, but often not reflected in the major capital investments (especially in infrastructure), raises a series of dissatisfaction and controversies for the residents, as well as other interested persons (population in the capital's influence area, foreign investors, etc.) on some non-actions or delayed reactions of the authorities in Bucharest.

In fact, almost a quarter of the capital's budget is used to ensure the functioning of the two local companies, the Autonomous Transport Company of Bucharest (RATB)[1] and the Autonomous Heat Distribution Company of Bucharest (subsidizing domestic consumers connected to the centralized thermal energy system with over 50% of the value of the giga-calorie), plus the 2015 tranches related to the

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1 Currently, the Bucharest Transport Company Inc. (STB) resulted after the reorganization of RATB. STB has a 994,686,000 lei budget approved for 2018, bigger than in 2017 (+20.66%), out of which the subsidies from the Bucharest municipality are of 693,890,000 lei, with an increase of 21.10% compared with 2017.

'roll-out' of EUR 500 million from a Eurobond issue released by the City Hall on the international capital market in June 2005.

In 2015, actually, the main economic and financial challenge that Bucharest has faced pertaining to the need to repay in a single annual instalment the EUR 500 million, the city's indebtedness reaching a threshold above the double accepted by the legal norm in the matter[2]. The quick placement and settlement of the 2.2 billion lei bond offer listed on the Bucharest Stock Exchange shows that Bucharest is considered by investors to be a strong economic and financial city, despite the decline of its rating. The structure of the four instalments of 3, 5, 7 and 10 years was considered to be the first on the local market as it was the first time in Romania when instruments listed in Bucharest were settled abroad (https://www.mediafax.ro/).

Thus, the Bucharest authorities have been able to refinance the local public debt by optimizing the local public debt service in terms of capital payment for the issuance of Eurobonds, and currently the operational performance of Bucharest is reflected in the well-being of its inhabitants, above the national average, being confirmed by Romania's BBB rating – with a stable outlook for the long-term foreign currency and local currency debt, the rating given by Fitch Ratings in January 2018 being the same as that obtained by Romania for its debt long-term government (http://www.economica.net/).

Another economic challenge faced by both Bucharest and other local authorities in the country was triggered by the entry into force on July 1, 2017 of the Framework Law no. 153/2017 on the remuneration of staff paid out of public funds. Art. 11 para. (1) of this law stipulates the decentralization of the competence for setting the basic salaries for the civil servants and contract staff within the 'Administration' occupational family from the county council, town halls and local councils and their subordinated public services, from the central level to the level of the local authorities.

Such a measure has accentuated the requirements stemming from the local autonomy, which seek not only to increase the accountability of the local authorities, but also budgetary prudence and strengthen control over the use of resources in the local budgets, especially that the entry into force during the financial year of this law conditioned in 2017 the increase or decrease of salaries according to the existence of legal commitments stipulated in the development budget section.

For Bucharest Municipality, according to art. 32 (1) of the Law no. 273/2006 on local public finances, it provides a breakdown of income tax of 71.5%, which is distributed as follows: 20% to the local budgets of the 6 sectors of the capital; 44.5%

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2   In accordance with the Government Decision no. 145/2008 the maximum value of the indebtness degree is equal to 30% of the arithmetic average on the last 3 years previous to the one the reimbursement of the funding is requested.

to the local budget of Bucharest; 7% in a distinct account, opened at the Bucharest Treasury, for balancing the local budgets of the sectors, as well as the local budget of Bucharest.

The official data of the National Institute of Statistics shows that in 2017 the employed civilian population in the Romanian economy reached approximately 8.36 million people, of which about 1.36 are in the capital, i.e. almost 16% of the total population (http://www.insse.ro/cms/) and almost 74% of the Bucharest Municipality's revenue comes from income tax (generally from wages)[3]. In the current socio-economic context in which alternative sources of financing for the capital's budget seem rather difficult to access, such as municipal bonds issuance, domestic loans or programs financed through European funds, etc., salary increases of staff paid out of public funds at the level of the Bucharest administration implicitly lead to an increase of the revenues to the capital's budget. However, the staff expenditures are difficult to secure under a very demanding budget in order to ensure the functionality of the local transport service and of the supply of the heating agent.

3.2. Healthcare policy

In 2008, the main challenge of the health authorities in Bucharest was the precarious situation of the hospital units in Bucharest, mainly due to government sub-financing, a field of activity where local authorities did not have at that time competencies to help improve their functionality. At that time, the Bucharest authorities decided to get involved in the first pilot-process of hospital decentralization, receiving 19 hospitals under its administration, thus becoming an important actor in the hospital network administration (according to Government Ordinance no. 48/2010 and Government Decision no. 529/2010). Subsequently, the extension of the hospital decentralization process was accompanied by a reform of hospital financing mechanisms, from structure-based financing (number of personnel, age, characteristics) to hospital based on outcome (complexity of diseases treated). The mechanism of involving the local authorities in the decision-making of all segments of the healthcare system has been institutionalized through the full take-up of the medicine school network by the Bucharest authorities (Mayor's General Report, 2013, p. 133).

For more than a decade, the management of the 19 hospitals was provided by the Administration of the Bucharest Hospitals and Medical Services (estab-

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3 See the Income and Expenses Budget of Bucharest Municipality for 2018 approved by the Decision of the General Council of Bucharest Municipality no. 54/22.02.2018, with all the changes and subsequent addendums.

lished by the Decision of the General Council of Bucharest Municipality no. 378/ 09.12.2008), and as regards the financing mechanism of the local hospitals in Bucharest, it is of a dual type, on one hand, financed by the National Health Insurance House (CNASS) for the patients it treats, and, on the other hand, financed by the local administration for certain expenses, especially administrative, such as utilities, cleaning, security, services previously funded by CNASS. Thus, by taking local expenditures by local authorities, hospitals can redirect their own incomes to medicines and sanitary materials, significantly improving the care process.

Table 1: The evolution of the hospital subsidy expenditures
from the Ministry of Health for the financial years 2009-2018

Expenditures /Year	Total (mil. lei)	Total (mil. Euro)	Healthcare (*hospitals*)		Healthcare (*hospitals*) mil. Euro
			mil. lei	Percent %	
2008	3,434.7	759.13	389.9	11.35	86.18
2009	4,345.00	969.41	180.31	4.15	40.23
2010	4,789.97	1,068.07	198.75	4.27	44.32
2011	4,108.20	927.63	192.32	4.68	43.43
2012	3,932.67	910.40	142.69	3,63	33.03
2013	3,815.41	890.45	141.38	3.71	33.00
2014	3,990.95	943.89	189.83	4.76	44.90
2015	4,060.90	1,019.00	182.71	4.50	45.85
2016	3,708.78	816.91	199.57	5.38	43.96
2017	4,877.17	104.88	248.44	5.09	53.42
2018	6,332.90	1,358.99	517.26	8.16	111

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the Reports of the General Mayor
of Bucharest Municipality for 2008-2015 and the budgets of Bucharest Municipality for 2008-2018.

For the direct payment of municipal public services in Bucharest to support the health of the population by subsidizing the hospitals taken over from the Ministry of Health, the sums provided in Table 1 have been spent during 2008-2018 from the taxpayers' total contributions. From the analysis of the values indicated in Table 1 it can be noticed that during 2017-2018 the Bucharest authorities increased the health budget, in 2018 almost doubling it in comparison to the 2009-2017 timeline[4].

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4 By decentralizing the healthcare system, Bucharest took over 18 hospitals during 2008-2009, then it increased to 21 hospitals during 2010-2011, and from 2012 until today Bucharest has a number of 19 hospitals.

3.3. The cultural policy

A series of economic, financial, social and political factors have gradually led to a decrease in the sense of belonging of the citizens to the community in which they live, Bucharest, which is why in 2015 the local authorities thought that a solution to counterbalance this 'decline' can be promoted through a protagonist, professional cultural policy, which must be benefiting from a budget increase based on the paradigm of the 'entrepreneurial city' and the participatory dimension of the population, transformed from simple spectator into the co-author of cultural productions. The new model of cultural policy involves the entire local community, knowing the maximum of complexity in the urban area, especially in the big cities, which is reflected both at institutional (structures, partnerships) and strategic (strategies, plans) level.

The appreciation was also based on the new interpretation given to culture, namely the pillar of sustainable development alongside its other three classic dimensions (the environment, economic and social inclusion), without which the urban regeneration promoted by the different actions of the local public administration authorities would not know the expected success (United Cities and Local Governments, 2010, p. 7).

The piloting of the new culture-oriented entrepreneurial policy was financially supported at an increased pace during 2011-2015, for example, the cultural sector benefited from an increase in the Capital Budget from 2.6% to 6.2% and the Bucharest authorities continued to grow this percentage, reaching 7.6% in 2018. Until 2016, the cultural management of Bucharest was fragmented due to the lack of a unitary cultural strategy of the city, partly offset by the different strategic documents of the municipality in which the cultural sector has a well-defined role.

In 2015, for a new reconstruction/ consolidation of local collective identity, after nearly a quarter of a century of local autonomy in Romania, Bucharest entered the 'European Capital of Culture' (CEAC) competition for 2021, an EU flagship initiative which implies a multidimensional transformation process for the candidate city and where culture is the platform that moves the city's life, highlighting its social needs and the administrative and economic challenges faced by the local community and influencing the entire urban dynamics (http://www.capitalaculturala2021.ro). By this decision, the local Bucharest administration joined the over 250 European cities across the EU that used this real urban marketing tool during 2005-2017.

In 2016, the 'Cultural Strategy of Bucharest Municipality for 2016-2026' was adopted, a cultural strategy 'seen' with other conceptual lenses, those of culture and ethics of diversity, consolidated also in view of the new statutes obtained by Bucharest in 2015 and namely, a 'participatory city of the Council of Europe' and a member of the 'Intercultural Cities Network' at the invitation of the Council of Europe.

The candidacy process represented for Bucharest an opportunity to change certain perceptions of a city unfriendly to its inhabitants, the identity fragmented by some tumultuous and sad historical times, and for its inhabitants a special chance to discover the city, and to give it support to remodel his identity. Although at the end of the competition Bucharest did not receive the title of European Capital of Culture, the entire process of preparing the candidacy (over a year and a half) significantly increased the social cohesion of the city, CEaC providing the city of Bucharest and its area of influence Ilfov) a major benefit not only in terms of international repositioning, but also in terms of urban regeneration, social innovation and international cultural cooperation.

3.4. Policy on migration

An emerging issue stemming from the internationalization and europeanisation of the EU Member States and its collectivities is migration, a phenomenon that has also affected Romania, with the decentralized integration of immigrants aiming at the creation of an adequate socio-economic and cultural framework to facilitate the integration of legal immigrants into the territory of a state.

In 2015, Bucharest 'became more aware of migration issues, but immigrants were not perceived as a priority because of the small percentage they represented in the Bucharest population'[5]. By demonstrating a pluralistic view of immigrants, the local authorities expressed their willingness to develop a future 'active multicultural local policy based on the recognition of the cultural and ethnic identity of different immigrants but economically and socially integrated into Romanian reality' and not a 'laissez-faire' policy, tolerant, but that does not promote diversity.

Recognizing the considerable economic and social benefits gained by the local community through migrants[6] due to their skills and investments, especially migrant entrepreneurs, and finding numerous legal, linguistic, cultural barriers as well as limited labour market integration offers in Bucharest, the Bucharest authorities decided to enter as a pilot city[7] in the European project 'Diversity in the Economy and Local Integration' (DELI). The project was a joint initiative of the

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5 Part of the General Mayor's Speech, Professor Sorin Mircea Oprescu, on the occasion of the works of the Second Round Table of the DELI project (May 19, 2015).

6 The highest number of immigrants in Romania live in Bucharest-Ilfov, in Bucharest existing approximately 27,000 registered immigrants (out of which approx. 20,000 are third country citizens).

7 Together with Cartagena (Spain), Dublin (Ireland), Getxo (Spain), Lisbon (Portugal), London Lewisham (UK), Munich (Germany), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Rotterdam (Holland), Vienna (Austria).

Council of Europe and the European Commission on Diversity, which was funded by the European Union through the European Integration Fund.

The project objectives aimed to elaborate a 'local platform, between the public authorities and the immigrant communities' in order to facilitate their access to the economic life and the support of the local authorities in their action to elaborate and 'implement local policies and strategies' according to the principles of equal chances, social inclusion and diversity management (Statement of reasons of the General Mayor no. 31/27.02.2014).

As one of the major challenges of integration is the incorporated cross-sectoral planning and reaching consensus among all stakeholders for collaborative projects, the DELI project aims to help partner-cities develop a flexible public-private dialogue framework so that, over time, to create an environment conducive to entrepreneurship among immigrant communities (Statement of reasons of the General Mayor no. 31/27.02.2014). In order to reach these objectives, the project was executed in five multi-level, multi-sectoral stages, which included several stakeholders, having the following activities: data collection and mapping, development of quality management standards, diversity and economy roundtables, development of on-line assessment tools, self-assessment review.

Taking into account the vulnerability situations regarding immigrants, namely housing, health, education, three main directions of action were identified for the assistance of the Bucharest authorities: educational, health and personal development as well as institutional. Particular importance has been given to the need to strengthen training policies for immigrant women, with equal emphasis on social and family integration.

Keeping the same dimensions, the initiatives following the implementation of the DELI project have taken into account the following: the adoption by the General Council of Bucharest Municipality of a local immigration integration policy based on four pillars: education, health, social assistance and business opportunities; promoting documented immigration; creating a single point of information for immigrants at the level of Bucharest; the conclusion of joint action protocols with different authorities and institutions involved in the integration of immigrants; simplifying administrative procedures to facilitate immigrants' access; to improve the officials of the Bucharest City Hall and subordinated institutions in Bucharest on issues related to cultural differences and legislation in the field of migration and integration; providing free Romanian language courses for immigrants; the development of a new project by the Mayor's office for the development of the skills of immigrant entrepreneurs; involvement of immigrant representatives in public consultation processes.

These measures, which are constantly reviewed and improved, contribute to ensuring the best possible conditions for the migrants to economically and socially

adapt to the reality of the Romanian society, in particular to the specifics of the Bucharest community.

3.5. Urban mobility policy

The need for citizens to access goods and services in the community in which they live requires local authorities to meet this need so that the 'citizens' effort to move does not adversely affect them, their quality of life and their possibilities for economic, social, cultural development' (Mataix Gonzalez, 2010, p. 10). The decentralization of public services, such as transport, has created a greater openness for the actors involved in the urban mobility policy-making process based on the supremacy of proximity and accessibility to mobility and transport (Avellaneda Garcia, 2007, p. 48).

Mobility is a major theme of sustainable development, being considered a collective right that must be guaranteed to all citizens and derives from art. 13 of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' of 1948 at UN level. Bucharest Municipality faced a twofold challenge (2014-2018) due to the highest road traffic congestion in Europe in 2014 (TomTom GPS, 2014) with a degree of motorization double to the national average and, on the other hand, the pre-infringing situation in Romania in 2016 for the non-transformation of the local public transport operator in Bucharest, the Bucharest Autonomous Transport Administration (RATB) in a commercial company, according to European standards (Regulation (EC) no. 1370/2007).

Although Bucharest has a consistent set of strategic urban development documents (Master Plan for Urban Transport Bucharest[8], Strategic Concept Bucharest 2035, Integrated Urban Development Plan), they have not been applied consistently. The evolution of the capital and the influenced territory 'were not oriented through adequate planning mechanisms and institutions, they were not coordinated with coherent funding or monitored with adequate indicators' (Strategic Concept Bucharest 2035, p. 17), and in 2016 Bucharest did not have a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan.

The need to ensure the sustainable dimension of urban mobility but also the alignment with European and national norms for mobility and transport required the adoption by the municipality of Bucharest of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PMUD) 2016-2030 in 2016, from an integrated perspective, for Bucharest and its area of influence, Ilfov County. PMUD is recognized as a municipal strategy that builds on existing planning practices and takes into account the principles

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8 The General Masterplan for Urban Transport – Bucharest was passed by HCGMB no. 140/15.04.2008. The plan's time horizon is 2027.

of integration, participation and evaluation and involves citizens in the planning process. PMUD is linked to the national transport plan, the general urban planning plan, the local urban development strategies and the sectoral strategies of social services, health, education, job creation and economic development.

In September 2018 RATB officially turned into the Bucharest Transport Company, by changing its legal form in a joint stock company, with two shareholders: Bucharest and Ilfov County. The dual shareholders' concern is to ensure a unified coordination and strategy for the integration of public transport services at the Bucharest-Ilfov metropolitan area through the implementation of joint programs for development, extension, modernization of infrastructure and a better tariff policy. However, the administrative measures adopted in the sphere of urban mobility are not sufficient, Bucharest being the number one in Europe's top congestion classification in terms of road traffic and 5th in the world (TomTom GPS, 2018), and a large number of negative externalities are still being generated: contamination, traffic jams and accidents, and studies have shown over the years that building new motorways or highways does not solve the problem (TomTom GPS, 2018).

4. Conclusions

In the context of rising conditions of risk and uncertainty, the necessity of increasing the efficiency of public services provided to local communities determines the alignment of the Romanian administration with the North European administrative model, which is now successfully implemented through the partnerships between the different administrative-territorial units. Local authorities need to develop a management based on sustainability, inclusion and resilience, materialized in strategies and initiatives that eliminate socio-economic inequalities and vulnerabilities and generating causes.

A positive example of this is the experience of Bucharest, and the paper provides a perspective on the management of its local authorities in five problematic areas with increased managerial risk: economic, financial, cultural, health, urban mobility and migration. A difficult moment successfully overtaken by the Bucharest administration was the refinancing of the local public debt, which grappled almost half of the capital budget, the issuance of municipal bonds for refinancing constituted a quick, flexible response and allowed a rapid return to the full functionality of the administration. Another risk mitigation action was to increase the budget allocations in these areas, the sanitary and cultural allocations being almost doubled. In the area of surface transport, the transport operator has been reorganized with a suitable structure to achieve an acceptable level of operation and delivery of an integrated public service that would satisfy not only the needs of the capital's inhabitants but also those of the area influence of Bucharest, Ilfov

county. In the field of migration, the authorities have succeeded in implementing an inclusive and participatory policy that eliminates institutional weaknesses and promotes manpower, responsibility, transparency, democracy and social cohesion.

In conclusion, the experience, the benefits, the failures, the expectations, as well as the barriers that arise from the presentation of the various initiatives of the Bucharest authorities in the sectors of activity selected for this presentation, show that Bucharest is one of the largest urban territorial collectivities in Romania, despite the many socio-political and economic challenges they face, not just desire, but also ongoing and sustained initiatives to build a sustainable, inclusive and resilient city. In addition, we appreciate that the good practices implemented by Bucharest show a high degree of adaptability of the local government to overcome crisis situations through the proper integration of citizen participation and control mechanisms into political, economic and social decision making, which leads to strengthening local governance, social cohesion and sustainable economic growth.

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Innovation, Productivity and Employment in Central and South Eastern European Countries

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Abstract. Technological development was regarded by Schumpeter (1939) and Solow (1956) as one of the major drives of economic development and productivity. Technical achievements such as electricity and information and communications technologies – now widely referred to as General Purpose Technologies – have reshaped economic processes, spreading from one industry to a number of others and creating potential for further innovative activities. As measured by patent statistics today's leading technology is still information and communications technology, though growth rates in other fields of innovation point to the beginning of a new epoch. The paper investigates how the selected 14 Central and South Eastern European Countries contribute to the world's technological progress with the help of R&D and patent statistics lagging far behind the G7 and even the OECD average. Despite the growing number of new patents, the deceleration of productivity dynamics has been a general phenomenon in both developed and emerging economies since the real economic effects of the 2007-2008 global financial crisis became perceivable. However, despite the moderating pace, productivity and employment growth go hand in hand in the developed countries at the national economy level as was stated by Kaldor (1961) and confirmed by Jones-Romer (2010) and Autor-Salomons (2017). As regards the 14 Central and South Eastern Countries examined we receive contradictory results. The correlation between employment and productivity (measured as real value added per person employed) mostly shows positive values even for growth rates in the majority of the countries in the period between 1995 and 2015. At the same time, panel regressions explaining the growth in employment with productivity dynamics and other control variables reveal a negative relationship between the two key indicators in the case of OLS estimations and the positive effect of productivity on employment can only be confirmed by using the GMM estimation method.

Keywords: innovation, employment, productivity, Central and South Eastern European Countries, economic development.

1. Introduction

The paper aims at discovering some innovation characteristics and estimating the relationship between productivity and employment at the national economy level in 14 Central and South Eastern European Countries, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. After a theoretical overview on how economists assess the effect of technology – with special regard to General Purpose Technologies – and innovation on economic development and productivity, the paper provides a brief overview on how the leading technology has changed since the start of the industrial revolution and what current patent statistics suggest about the future's main technologies. The question is addressed whether the use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) leads to productivity increase and, whatever drives productivity, how it affects employment. Finally, the above issues are discussed at the level of the 14 Central and South Eastern European Countries with special regard to the productivity-employment relationship which is estimated with panel regression methods over the period 1995-2015.

2. Innovation, GPTs and economic development

2.1. Theoretical background

Following on Solow's (1956) theory on technology, a large group of economists regards innovation as one of the main drivers of productivity increase and thus economic development. Schumpeter (1939) considered changes in the inputs of productive factors, changes in the social environment and changes in technology as determinants of economic development (Hartwell, 1971). His innovation theory focusing on the role of the entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 1926) was formed based on technological achievements which were created during the industrial revolution, as for instance the steam engine and the railways, having an industry reshaping effect. The upswing starts in one or a few branches of industry where innovation assigns the characteristic course of development. Obstacles to the embedding of innovation in a given industry and then others taking it over are removed by the promoters of innovation, so technological development spreads to other industries dragging them into a general growth process and causing revolutionary changes in their development (Hartwell, 1971). At the same time Schumpeter (1942) also acknowledged that with the evolution of new combinations earlier soultions and skills are squeezed out, become redundant, therefore he called this process in market economies through which innovation dismantles earlier structures as 'creative disruption'.

Technological innovation is thus widely acknowledged as the major force in productivity and economic growth, and as Rosenberg (2014) emphasises the mar-

ket has a great role in discovering what scientific result or invention can be converted into a saleable product. Innovation that is the appearance of successful products launched in the market largely depends on the institutional background, the quality of human resources, the organisation of labour and the dynamics of competing markets, R&D expenditure and investment activity in general (ILO, 2008).

Technical achievements such as steam engines and electricity (electric motors) earlier, information and communications technologies (backed by the invention of semiconductors) in our times – now widely referred to as *General Purpose Technologies* – have reshaped economic processes, interwaving the economy and creating potential for further innovative activities. General Purpose Technologies (GPT), as 'engines of growth' provide generic functions which enable the functioning of a great deal of existing and potential products and production systems (Bresnahan-Trajtenberg, 1992), as they spread over to other industries ('pervasiveness'), improve over time lowering the costs of users ('improvement'), make it easier to invent and produce new products and services ('innovation spawning') (Bresnahan and Trajtenberg *apud* Jovanovic-Rousseau, 2005).

The spread of information and communications technologies (ICT) is regarded as one of the most important technical shifts determining the economic growth potential in the last some fifty years globally. The development of computers already started during the second world war but two essential technological innovations occured in the 1980s which defined the progress of the info-communication industry and therewith that of other sectors adopting these new technological achievements: (1) miniaturisation facilitated by the semi-conductor industry, and (2) the arrangement of computers in networks (Verspagen, 2001). Info-communication technologies contribute to growth partly within the industry through increasing efficiency and capital deepening, partly through augmenting total factor productivity in other industries (Zhen-Wei Qiang, Pitt and Ayers, 2003). Their external efficiency increasing effects, spinning off to other industries can be attributed to the intensifying performance of computers. Info-communication devices can reduce administrative costs, facilitate the spread of information in a cheaper and more efficient way, support the extensive use of new and more viable business models and the penetration of new markets and products, new solutions for organising production and the society. The empirical justification of the productivity effect of ICT, however, has brought differing results for different time periods and sets of countries (Mačiulytė-Šniukienėa and Gaile-Sarkane, 2014).

2.2. Measuring innovation at the global level

The measurement of innovative activities is a debated issue, at global level technological development is mostly quantified and used for international comparison

with the help of R&D spending and patent statistics. R&D expenditures are the major indicators of efforts and inputs aimed at expanding the knowledge base but formal statistics, recorded in data bases on R&D spending, can only cover a fraction of resources, including human resources, mobilised to produce new knowledge. In contrast, patent statistics better reflect industry level processes. Patent statistics are availabe at both national and international patent offices, their data collection is regulated by law, is based on a wide information basis and centralised which enhances their measurability (The question emerges of course, whether the expansion of knowledge is well represented by processes and novel solutions recorded according to their practicality.) (OECD, 1996).

Comparing the global patent statistics of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) data published by the OECD, it is obvious that according to the international technological nomenclature (IPC), the greatest number of patents are submitted in the ICT domain and on the whole, the number of patents shows unbroken dynamics (Figure 1). The continuously augmenting innovative activity suggests steadily growing productivity, though the pace of the latter has spectacularly subsided since the 2007-2008 global financial crisis as we will see it later.
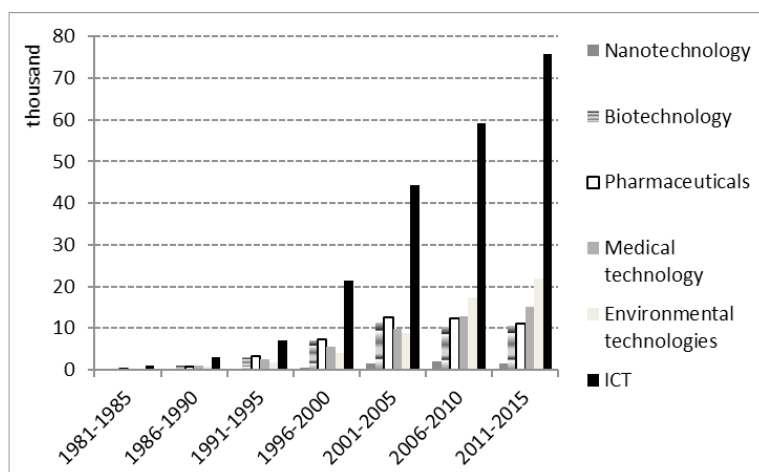
Note: Columns represent five-year averages

Figure 1: Patent applications by technology 1981-2015
Source: OECD, PCT patent statistics, inventor applications

Patent offices classify innovative solutons by industrial branch or technological and scientific domains. In recent years the ascendancy of information and communications technologies has been traceable both in terms of the number and the growth rate of patent applications as regards the technological nomenclature (Figure 2). A significant increase can be detected in innovative activity in the field

of environmental technologies (energetics, climate change related, etc.) until 2012 but in the last couple of years medical and biotechnology show a more significant expansion (pharmaceutical technologies seem to have reached their development peak at the beginning of the 2000s).
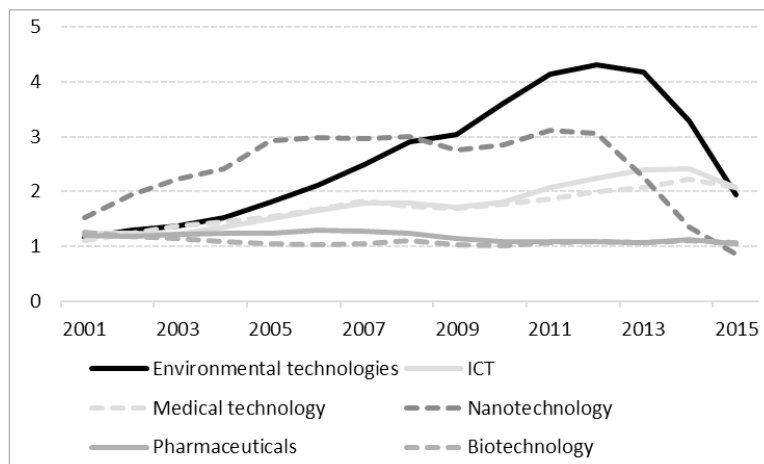

Figure 2: The growth rate of patent applications 2001-2015 (2000=1)
Source: OECD, PCT patent statistics, inventor applications

Based on the above we can conclude that innovation in info-communication devices and services is one of the main levers of today's economic development. The statistical proof for the leading innovation of the present period which is also manifested in the statistics is in line with the classification of Freeman and Soete (1997). Using Schumpeter's (1939) theory of business cycles built upon 'innovation clusters' (Table 1) as a starting point, which associated *Kondratieff-waves* with the permeation of the main technological paradigma changes, Freeman and Soete (1997) regards the spread of info-communication applications as the dominant technological condition of a new innovation lead economic cycle starting in the 1990s. We can thus think about the key technologies, as Schumpeter suggested, as those, whose evolution spans long technological waves (Bresnahan-Trajtenberg, 1992).

Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev (2017) identify business cycles of 50-60 years starting from the beginning of the industrial revolution with the help of intervals defined by Freeman and Soete (1997) but with different emphases, and set the period hallmarked by the widespread use of computer technology ten years earlier to the beginning of the 1980s. Furthermore, they supplement the already defined Kondratieff waves with a sixth one, with the business cycle defined by the so called MANBRIC (medicine, additive, nano-, bio-, robotics, information and cognitive) technologies which will commence in the following decades and will embrace

Table 1: Kondratieff waves since the unfolding of the industrial revolution

Appr. timing	Kondratieff waves	Main energy resource; input	Leading industry
1780-1840	Industrial revolution: factory production for textiles	Water power; cotton	Factory ('consumer') industry
1840-1890	Age of steam power and railways	Steam power; coal, iron	Mining industry, primary heavy industry and transport
1890-1940	Age of electricity and steel	Electricity; steel	Secondary heavy industry and mechanic engineering
1940-1980/1990	Age of mass production ('Fordism') of automobiles and synthetic materials	Oil; plastics	General services
1980/1990-2020(?)	Age of microelectronics and computer networks	Gas, oil; microelectronics	High-qualified services
2020/2030-2050/2060 (?)	MANBRIC technologies (?) (medico-additive-nano-bio-roboto-info-cognitive technologies).	Renewable energy sources (?); self-regulating systems[*] (?)	Medical human services (?)

* Self-regulating systems, can regulate themselves, responding in a pre-programmed and intelligent way to the feedback from the environment; systems that operate either with a small input from humans or completely without human intervention'. Such self-regulating systems are e.g., artificial Earth satellites, pilotless planes, navigation systems laying the route for a driver, life support systems (such as medical ventilation apparatus or artificial hearts), and robots in general, computer programmes and self-driving cars (Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev, 2017, p. 54).

Source: Own compliation on the basis of Freeman and Soete (1997) and Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev (2017)

some 30-50 years. Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev (2017) establish their assumptions on the dynamics of patent statistics in the last decades and the expected innovation needs of medical technological developments invoked necessary for the health care of the aging society. Their combination of the specific innovation fields were primarily underpinned by Eastern Asian countries' data from where, according to their assumption, the next technological shift will start off. Other researchers put more emphasis on bio-, nano- or ICT technologies or one of their subfields.

2.3. Technological development and productivity in different eras

Despite computer technology being widely acknowledged as a GPT of the second part of the 20th century, due to the slowing productivity of the developed countries after the 1970s a lot of theoretical and empirical examinations confuting its intense effect on efficiency were brought to surface in the 1980s and 1990s. Freeman and Soete (1994) came up with two explanations, (1) partly the measurability of the social utility of info-communication devices (in consumer surplus) faces obstacles, and (2) partly low interest rates in the 1980s due to lax monetary policy pushed firms to invest in short-term R&D instead of longer-term development. Later Basu and Fernald (2006) investigated the change in US productivity and con-

cluded that although the accelaration of productivity in the 1990s coincided with the price crash of computers and semiconductors which facilitated capital deepening. Nowithstanding, productivity gains at the beginning of the 2000s cannot be attributed to technological development. This latter can be much more interpreted as the retarded effect of the application of info-communication technologies and the allocation of supplementary investments between sectors, a part of which cannot be measured and therefore may not come out in TFP statistics.

Innovation in certain industries thus might not be reflected directly in economic growth and productivity. The phenomenon can be well described by the term coined as *Solow IT productivity paradox.* The development of the IT industry brought a radical structural change in the economy both in the case of production and consumption goods but it did not have a considerable impact on GDP growth and total factor productivity (Jorgenson és Stiroh, 1999, Verspagen, 2001). The phenomenon has found various explanations, like the low share of the IT sector in investment and the delay of the growth effect. Furthermore, Jorgenson and Stiroh (1999) argue that IT is not a technological change indeed but a move along the production function, a technological substitution. In case of substitution benefits deriving from technical innovations are reaped by the consumer and the service provider, in contrast to technological change where the same level of inputs results in higher output (and e.g. a third person will be the beneficiary). In the latter case economic policy should intervene in market processes because of the slow payback and consequently the private sphere would not undertake the additional investment needed. In the case of substitution, investment is stimulated by favourable price signals reflecting the change of demand and supply circumstances. Futhermore, it is also often raised in the literature that the impact of the information and communication advances on productivity growth will be palpable only in a delayed manner (MNB, 2017).

2.4. Technological development and employment

A hotly debated issue in relation to technological development in recent years has been the potential loss of jobs owing to digitalisation, robotisation, the use of artificial intelligence and internet penetration which especially badly affect the medium-skilled workforce (Pissarides, 2017). Technological progress can even lead to mass unemployment and significant welfare losses. More and more analyses appear in the economic literature which examine the general negative employment effects of the application of technological advances. The replacement of labour by machines meant a jobb loss for many (just think about the luddites) at the beginning of the industrial revolution and forced those employees to resistance who felt their income source being endangered by the introduction of innovative solutions.

The Agrarian sector is one of the best examples of the way technological development undermined employment in an important sector of the economy.

Earlier the dominant economic view set down by Kaldor *apud* Jones and Romer (2010) and Autor and Salomons (2017) was that increase in productivity goes hand in hand with growth in employment. According to Kaldor (1961) technical development in transport, production and telecommunication did not hinder labour in having a constant share in national income for a decade. This phenomenon was earlier evaluated as 'a bit of a miracle' by Keynes. Many empirical examinations, however, pointed to the fact that since the 1990s and especially since 2000 the share of labour income in total income has been continuously diminishing. (Karabarbounis and Neiman, 2013; Piketty, 2014; Dao *et al.*, 2017) which is often associated with the neutral effect of the info-communication sector, encompassing all industries, on total factor productivity. Concerning the employment effect of technology in the various sectors of the economy, Bessen (2017) calls our attention to more nuanced relations: employment shows a dramatical increase at the early stages of innovation then starts declining in later stages of maturity. It has been proved by numerous empirical studies that in developed countries not only productivity has lost momentum but the employment contribution of industries applying high technology is also declining. An examination of Autor and Salomons (2017) covering 35 years and 19 developed countries provides evidence on the declinig employment in high-tech industries and the continuously growing employment sparked by increasing productivity at the national economy level. They also reveal that the negative impact of the decrease in employment caused by the increase in productivity within the same industry is less than the positive spill-over effect of expanding productivity on other industries' employment. As a consequence, on average productivity expansion in the period examined by Autor and Salomons (2017) influences job creation in a positive way though its positive impact is moderating, and employment is largely dependent on population growth at the macroeconomic level.

3. Productivity and employment in the OECD and the EU

One of the approaches to measuring productivity is quantifying the joint contribution of productive factors to output – termed as *total factor productivity* (TFP). Comparable international statistics are, however, available in relation to *labour productivity* first of all. These quantify value added to employed workers or to working hours and are better indicators of productivity if value added is calculated at constant prices and purchasing power parity. Such data are available both in the OECD and the Eurostat databases, as we will see later, but these data are of mixed frequency and length, and comprise a limited number of countries. Therefore, I rely on statistics between 1995 and 2017 as this period is close to have a full data coverage.
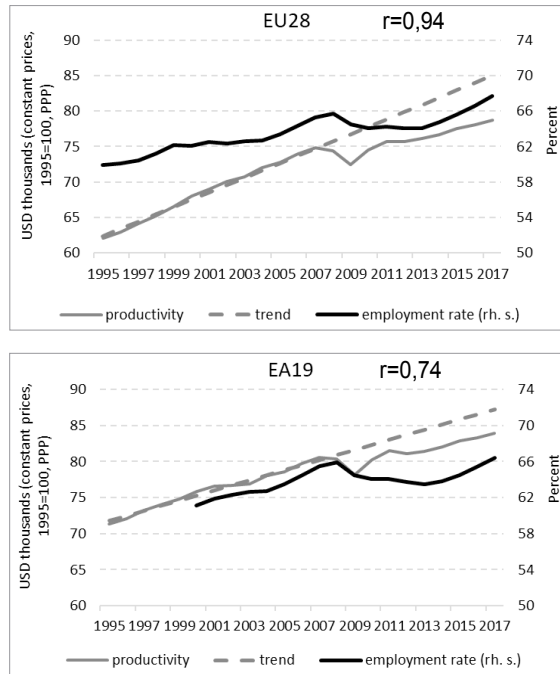
Note: The dashed line depicts a trend calculated using data between 1995 and 2008

Figure 3-4: Productivity and employment in the EU 28 and the eurozone 19, 1995-2017

Source: OECD and Eurostat statistics

On the whole, between 1995 and 2017 productivity followed a positive tendency in both the EU and the eurozone based on Eurostat and OECD data (Figures 3-4), though a slowdown is observable after the outbreak of the 2007-2008 global financial crisis. As regards the employment rate in the 19 countries of the eurozone, the pre-crisis level had not been recovered by 2016. The picture is more favourable in the case of the OECD, G7 and EU 28 where employment statistics have exceeded the 2008 levels by now. The structural break caused by the crisis is even more articulated in employment than in productivity.

Though an OECD study revealed a negative correlation between employment and GDP per hour worked based on a data series encompassing 35 years in 2007 (OECD, 2007), it is widely accepted that productivity and employment are positively correlated at the macroeconomic level globally. It does not mean that there might not be trade-off between the two variables in a given country, what is more, in certain industries it is a general phenomenon. As an ILO study (ILO, 2008) established, in countries of the Eastern-Pacific ring productivity and employment grew hand in hand, and in some economies of South-America, the Arabian Penin-

sula and in Africa population growth could bring forth higher dynamics in job creation than in productivity between 1990 and the 2007-2008 global financial crisis. In contrast, Central and Eastern European countries experienced no expansion in employment for a long time despite real economic convergence (ILO, 2008).

In the country groups of the EU and the eurozone we find a positive relationship between employment and efficiency over the entire time horizon of the last 20 years as reflected by the strong positive correlations (Figures 3-4).

4. Innovation and productivity in the Central and South Eastern European Countries

4.1. Patent and R&D statistics of the selected countries

Innovation activity in the selected 14 emerging countries lags behind the EU, eurozone or OECD average both in terms of R&D spending and the number of patents per population which is in line with the lower than EU and OECD average productivity of these economies (Figures 5-6).
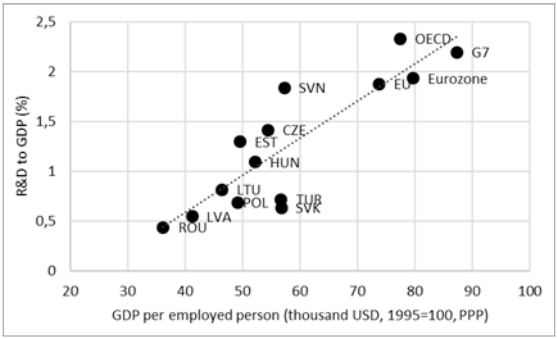
Figure 5: R&D and productivity 2001-2015 averages
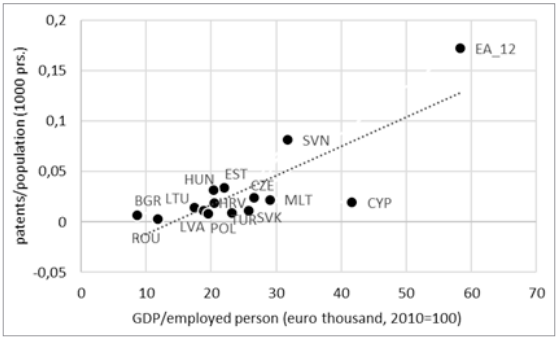
Figure 6: Number of patents/ working-age population
and productivity 2001-2015

Note: Data points represent 15-year averages
Source: OECD and Eurostat statistics

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The number of patent applications the inventors submit to international patent offices is insignificant in a global comparison and the number of patents per head of population is below the EU average in these countries. However, their share in total patents (between 0.5 and 1.2% in the last twenty years) registered at the PCT is on an increasing path in contrast to the developed countries represented by the group of the old eurozone and the G7 group of countries (Figures 7 and 8).
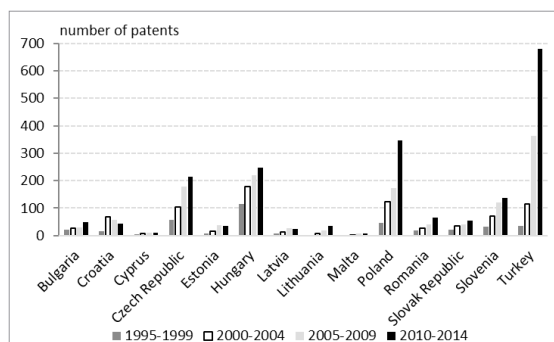
Figure 7: The number of patents in 14 emerging European countries
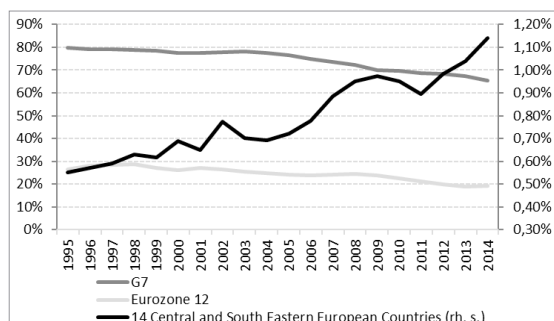
Figure 8: The share in total patent applications at PCT

Note: Columns represent five-year averages
Source: OECD, PCT patent statistics, inventor applications

The composition of patent applications is similar to that of the global dataset, at least in respect of the leading technological domain, which is ICT also in the case of the 14 countries examined. The order of the main technologies corresponds to the general tendencies after 2005 with one exception: new patents in the pharmaceutical technology are still at the second place in volume in the 14 emerging countries whereas the technological domain lost importance after 2005 at the global level (Figure 9).
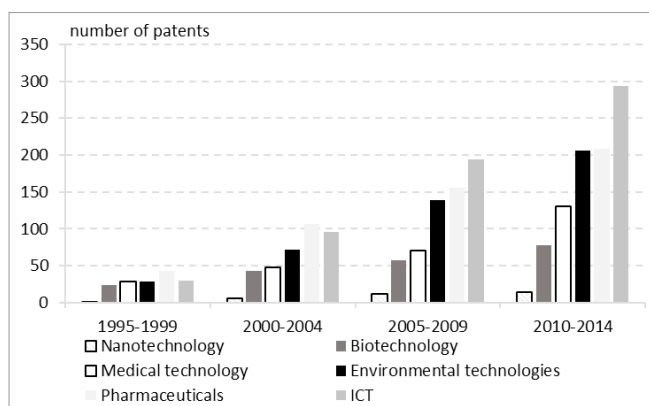
Figure 9: Patents by technology in the selected countries

Note: Columns represent five-year averages
Source: OECD, IPC patent statistics, inventor applications

As regards the economic weight of information and communications technologies in the economy, the 14 countries do not underperform the EU average (Figure 10 and 11). As Eurostat data on ICT to GDP and ICT to employment do not contain EU or eurozone averages, a simple averaging of data available for the various countries gives a magnitude of 4-6% as regards the ICT sector's contribution to GDP and 2.5-3.5% for the sector's share in total employment in the last 15 years. The ICT to GDP and ICT to employment data of the 14 Central and South Eastern European Countries moves approximately in the same data interval
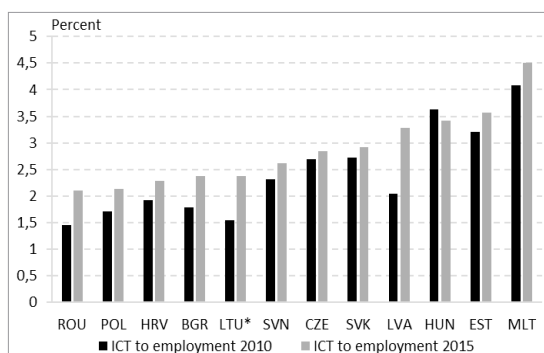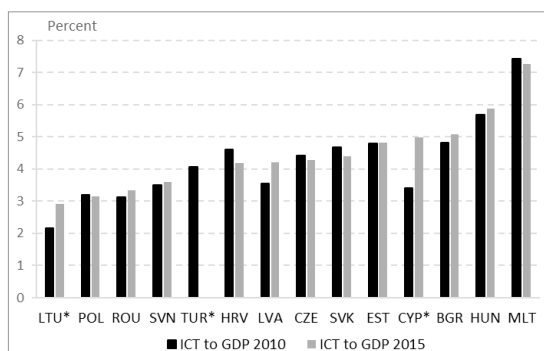
Figure 10-11: ICT to GDP and ICT to employment statistics of the 14 emerging European economies in 2010 and 2015

Note: Data for Lithuania in 2010 are 2009 data, Cyprus has only ICT services data, data available for Turkey from Tradingeconomics are from 2008
Source: Eurostat

with the exception of Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovenia mainly with a lower share in GDP (some countries have a somewhat lower share in employment than 2.5% as well).

4.2. Panel regression on productivity and employment in the 14 Central and Eastern European Countries

When comparing arbitrarily four different countries' employment rate and productivity data among the 14 countries examined, we see very dissimilar patterns. In the Hungarian data we find a very strong structural break in 2008, in Romanian data there is a weak negative and in the Czech data a weak positive correlation, whereas in Poland a rather strong comovement between productivity and employment. This foreshadows that we have a rather diverse productivity-employment relationship in the countries under examination (Figure 12-15). (It is worth noting, though, that correlations calculated with the help of various datasets usually have a positive sign.)
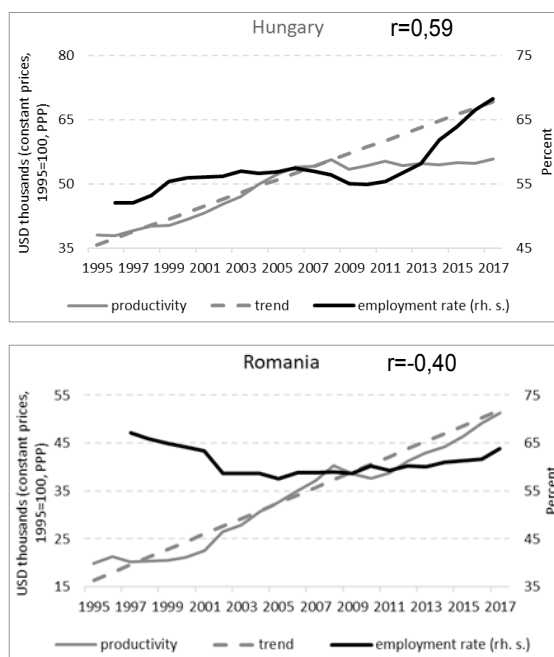
Figure 12-13: Productivity and employment in Hungary and Romania, 1995-2017

Note: The dashed line depicts a trend based on data between 1995 and 2008
Source: OECD and Eurostat statistics
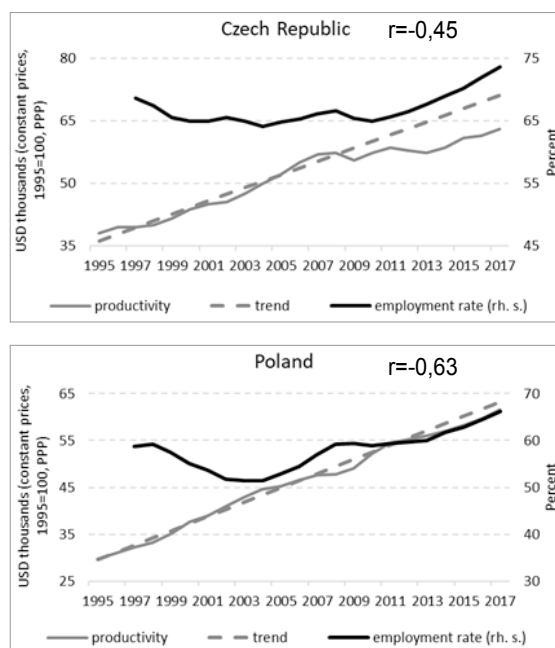
Figure 14-15: Productivity and employment in the Czech Republic and Poland, 1995-2017
Note: The dashed line depicts a trend based on data between 1995 and 2008
Source: OECD and Eurostat statistics

For analysing how productivity influences employment, I used panel regressions on the 14 countries' dataset, first simple OLS estimations then GMM to control for endogeneity in the data. The annual productivity and employment data were differentiated and logarithmised. Employment data were gained from the OECD databasis on total employment, the source of other data, including value added at constant 2010 prices, was the Eurostat databasis (patent statistics were also collected from OECD PCT database). I used the employment and value added statistics of the EU KLEMS data source as well but productivity calculated this way did not bring in statistically acceptable results.

For explaining the change in employment other explanatory variables were included in the OLS regression such as change in population (15-64) in the countries examined, change in employment and productivity in the eurozone 12 (without new member states), R&D and ICT to GDP, change in the number of patents, patents to population and a dummy to account for the structural break after the unfolding of the global financial crisis. The OLS regression confirms that in the EU and the eurozone an increase in productivity is generally followed by an increase in employment as well (one percent change followed by half a percent change) (Appendix 1 and 2). The results of the 14 countries' panel regressions, however,

show the opposite. The sign of productivity change when estimating employment is negative in calculations both for a limited number of countries (12) between 1996 and 2015 and for all the countries (14) between 2001 and 2015. (Table 2 and 3) (Note that OLS regressions only resulted in significant coefficients for productivity if the one-period lagged variable of employment was also included in the regression. If employment in the USA (eurozone and EU statistics) or employment in the eurozone was applied as control variable (panel regression), the productivity coefficient usually turned insignificant.)

Table 2: OLS regression for a panel of 12 countries, 1996-2015

Model 12: Pooled OLS, using 209 observations
Included 11 cross-sectional units
Time-series length = 19
Dependent variable: lndemp

	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-ratio	p-value	
const	−0,247031	0,0582514	−4,241	<0,0001	***
lndpop	0,299376	0,137064	2,184	0,0301	**
lndprod	−0,174621	0,0517674	−3,373	0,0009	***
RDGDP_eurozone	0,141465	0,0323648	4,371	<0,0001	***
dummy	−0,0498889	0,00988958	−5,045	<0,0001	***
lndpop_eurozone_korr	−1,37728	0,633143	−2,175	0,0308	**
lndprod_eurozone_korr	1,10184	0,158196	6,965	<0,0001	***
lndemp(-1)	0,389400	0,0624682	6,234	<0,0001	***

Mean dependent var	0,001918	S.D. dependent var	0,027122
Sum squared resid	0,088593	S.E. of regression	0,020994
R-squared	0,420999	Adjusted R-squared	0,400835
F(7, 201)	20,87851	P-value(F)	5,34e-21
Log-likelihood	514,9926	Akaike criterion	−1013,985
Schwarz criterion	−987,2466	Hannan-Quinn	−1003,175
rho	0,120373	Durbin-Watson	1,707011

Table 3: OLS regression for a panel of 14 countries, 2001-2015

Model 25: Pooled OLS, using 210 observations
Included 14 cross-sectional units
Time-series length = 15
Dependent variable: lndemp

	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-ratio	p-value	
lndprod_	−0,223388	0,0504105	−4,431	<0,0001	***
lndprod_eurozone_korr	1,11183	0,148905	7,467	<0,0001	***
dummy	−0,00982650	0,00309541	−3,175	0,0017	***
ICTtoGDP	0,00154205	0,000573140	2,691	0,0077	***
lndemp_1	0,469206	0,0574847	8,162	<0,0001	***

Mean dependent var	0,004783	S.D. dependent var	0,027562
Sum squared resid	0,097303	S.E. of regression	0,021786
Uncentered R-squared	0,405119	Centered R-squared	0,387119
F(5, 205)	27,92131	P-value(F)	1,59e-21
Log-likelihood	508,1109	Akaike criterion	−1006,222
Schwarz criterion	−989,4863	Hannan-Quinn	−999,4563
rho	0,072118	Durbin-Watson	1,808392

In the GMM estimation only a limited number of instrumental variables proved to have explanatory power (productivity, population and employment of the eurozone 12 and R&D statistics). In these estimates we see a positive relationship between productivity and employment with almost the same elasticity as in the case of the EU and eurozone estimation (Table 4 and 5).

Table 4: GMM regression for the panel of 12 countries, 1996-2015

| Model 1: Iterated GMM, using 220 observations |
| Dependent variable: lndemp |
| Instrumented: lndprod |
| Instruments: const lndprod_eurozone_korr lndemp_eurozone_korr |

	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	p-value	
const	−0,0126849	0,00666675	−1,903	0,0571	*
lndprod	0,465373	0,184396	2,524	0,0116	**

Mean dependent var	0,001895	S.D. dependent var	0,026758

GMM criterion: Q = 0,000343172 (TQ = 0,0754979)J test: Chi-square(1) = 0,0754979 [0,7835]

Table 5: GMM regression for the panel of 14 countries, 2001-2015

| Model 37: 1-step GMM, using 224 observations |
| Dependent variable: lndemp |
| Instrumented: lndprod_1 lndemp_eurozone_korr lndpop |
| Instruments: const lndpop_eurozone_korr RDGDP_eurozone numberofpatentspopulation_eur lndprod_eurozone |

	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	p-value	
lndprod	0,518819	0,209112	2,481	0,0131	**
lndemp_eurozone_korr	−1,68597	0,895290	−1,883	0,0597	*
lndpop	1,15762	1,29186	0,8961	0,3702	

Mean dependent var	0,003948	S.D. dependent var	0,027243

GMM criterion: Q = 9,67599e-009 (TQ = 2,16742e-006)

Note: The above tables contain the best regression results

5. Conclusions

The focus of the innovative activity in the selected 14 Central and South Eastern European Countries follows worldwide trends which is reflected in the composition of their patents statistics in terms of technological classification. They are not lagging behind in the share of information and communications technology in GDP and employment which suggests that ICT, commonly regarded as the General Purpose Technology of our times, plays an important role in these countries' economic efficiency. Nevertheless, their contribution to global innovation (measured in numbers per head of population) is less than the eurozone average and their R&D spending to GDP lags behind EU, eurozone, OECD and G7 averages.

Whereas productivity grows hand in hand with employment at the national economy level in the eurozone and the EU, in the 14 countries examined the relationship between productivity and employment is uncertain as OLS and GMM estimates have contradictory results. To better understand the relationship between the two variables a further revision of different panel data methodologies is recommended.

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Appendix 1: OLS regression for the EU countries

Model 17: OLS, using observations 1996-2015 (T = 20)				
Dependent variable: lndemp_EU				
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-ratio	p-value	
lndprod_EU	0,536343	0,130239	4,118	0,0007	***
lndpop_EU	1,52797	0,426765	3,580	0,0023	***
dummy	−0,00347004	0,00268536	−1,292	0,2136	
Mean dependent var	0,007274	S.D. dependent var	0,010281
Sum squared resid	0,000777	S.E. of regression	0,006760
Uncentered R-squared	0,746686	Centered R-squared	0,613230
F(3, 17)	16,70343	P-value(F)	0,000026
Log-likelihood	73,18203	Akaike criterion	−140,3641
Schwarz criterion	−137,3769	Hannan-Quinn	−139,7809
rho	0,199659	Durbin-Watson	1,498331

Appendix 2: OLS regression for the eurozone countries

Model 40: OLS, using observations 1997-2015 (T = 19)				
Dependent variable: lndemp_eurozone				
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-ratio	p-value	
lndprod_eurozone	0,545594	0,0901719	6,051	<0,0001	***
lndpop_eurozone	0,344793	0,414961	0,8309	0,4183	
lndemp_eurozone_1	0,571418	0,125365	4,558	0,0003	***
Mean dependent var	0,007326	S.D. dependent var	0,010560
Sum squared resid	0,000368	S.E. of regression	0,004794
Uncentered R-squared	0,878545	Centered R-squared	0,816848
F(3, 16)	38,57854	P-value(F)	1,49e-07
Log-likelihood	76,14192	Akaike criterion	−146,2838
Schwarz criterion	−143,4505	Hannan-Quinn	−145,8043
rho	0,395990	Durbin's h	2,061018

Conflict and Change in
the Traditional Roma Communities

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Abstract. The Romanian Roma communities are struggling with the pressure of adapting their traditional lifestyle to the modern style of the dominant culture, while their members are socially and economically isolated and marginalized. Using an ethnographical approach, this article aims to understand how some small Roma communities face change and uncertainty, deal with transformation and manage conflict. After studying the communities' resilience, we produce some recommendations to a smoother process of community transformation.

Keywords: Roma community, chance, community resilience, conflict, cultural conflict, traditional community.

1. Introduction

The Roma has always been a population that causes different reactions to those around them. Some of us look at them admiringly for their traditions, others are compassionate about the tumultuous history, many of us are curious and the most of us are suspicious. Although there have been many studies on the quality of life of these communities, on education, on poverty or their marginal role in society, both at the European Union and Romania's levels, currently there are few studies showing how these communities face change and deal with the conflicts that are inevitable in their shift from a traditional lifestyle to an imposed modern way of living.

Through an ethnographic approach, using observation and interviewing as a method of data collection, our study aims to understand how some small Roma communities seek resilience, deal with change and adversity and manage conflict.

1.1. Community

According to Mauss (1979), the community is defined according to certain cultural practices located in a certain historical context and is a combination of biological, psychological and sociological processes. The community can also be understood through the perspective of the existing moral code (Foucault, 1984), the activity of the subject within that code and the understanding by the subjects of how the behavior is validated by the code. A definition that we consider more useful for this study is given by Cohen (2007). According to it, communities are built up by the feeling of belonging that an individual feels toward a specific group. In this way, communities can be understood as a social construction in which members share common traits and interests and are able to differentiate themselves from the others.

A distinction between different types of communities must be established, considering the significant changes done by the urbanization process. Such typologies differ between the traditional model of community, the Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft* (1887 *apud* Guest, 2000), where the social interactions were primarily based on deep-rooted shared values like friendship and solidarity to the *Gesellschaft*, where more impersonal and dynamic relations, based on political and power ties are in place (Rapaport *et al.*, 2018). For our purpose, we will consider that the traditional model of communities is represented by the rule-based, static, homogenous, small towns and villages, that have higher levels of shared consciousness and organic solidarity, due to having higher levels of social trust and collective identification, as defined by Durkheim (1954 *apud* Rapaport *et al.*, 2018).

1.2. Change and resilience

Change is inevitable in all social structures and sometimes it can be an extremely rapid and transformative process. The difference between the successful transformation and more conflictual one is the preparedness and the ability to manage the forces of change of the particular social structure. Change is also an essential element of resilience, as resilience can be defined as 'a system's ability to withstand and respond to change' (Adger, 2000).

1.2.1. Resilient communities

To better understand the changes developed within a community, one must consider the concept of community resilience. Magis (2010) defines community resilience as the 'existence, development and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability and surprise'. In this case, the existence and the availability of natural, human, cultural, social, economic and political resources and the ability of the community to use them is of utmost importance in establishing the community's resilience and therefore its readiness to manage change and uncertainty (Revell and Henderson, 2018). Rapaport (2018) considers that among the many definitions of community resilience there are some key elements widely common: community's resources, community's ability to adapt and community's ability to absorb disturbances.

A distinction between resilience in urban communities and the resilience in the rural ones must be made. The main characteristic of the urban areas is the impersonal and utilitarian relationships between its members, given the heterogeneity and the density of the neighborhood (Milgram, 1970; Rapaport *et al.*, 2018). Also, Pierce, Budd and Lovrich (2011) demonstrated that there is a connection between the degree of communitarian values and resilience potential. The higher the degree of the communitarian values, the higher the tendency to engage in collective actions adaptation. However, this is not the case in the suburban communities which 'are often characterized by relatively homogenous neighborhoods that have a social and physical organization that is designed to prevent unwanted social interactions' (Lang and Danielson, 1997 *apud* Nation, Fortney and Wandersman, 2010). Suburban residents tend to have a higher level of belonging to their community, and also have a better relationship with their neighbors then the urban residents (Wilson and Baldassare, 1996; Nation, Fortney and Wandersman, 2010).

On the other hand, rural communities are less vulnerable then cities and urban areas due to their dense social relationship and interactions-based kin and neighbors (Lev-Wiesel, 2003). The sense of belonging and social interactions of rural communities' residences were found to be an important factor of community re-

silience (Rapaport *et al.*, 2018). In the same time, the smaller communities from the rural areas have a higher level of resilience because the they are more dependent on local resources which give them stronger social cohesion and self-resourcefulness (Cutter, Ash and Emrich, 2016).

1.2.2. Adaptation and transformation

Community resilience, as a concept, continues to evolve and attempts to a more integrated and flexible definition, that can embed community action and societal transformation, as has been done in the recent years (Henfrey, Maschkowski and Penha-Lopes, 2017). From this perspective two new elements have been involved: *adaptability*, or `the capacity to plan for and cope with change`, and *transformability*, 'the capacity to undergo a fundamental transformation when the existing forms, structures and ways of doing things can no longer persist in changing circumstances' (Walker *et al.*, 2004)**.** To better distinguish between the two, one way is to consider transformation as a synergy of adaptations (Bousquet *et al.*, 2016). As an action on a given object or subject can influence another object or subject, in the same way an adaptation cannot be considered as isolated but rather integrated in the dynamic of another adaptation, also called the adaptation pathways (Bousquet *et al.*, 2016). These adaptation pathways can be used to inform decision makers about integrating accumulative actions on nearby causes with the transformative aspects of societal change (Wise *et al.*, 2014).

1.3. Conflict

In order to have a better understanding of the connections between resilience and conflict we will use a broader definition of what conflict is and will focus on cultural conflict and the conflicts inside and between groups. In this sense, Kriesberg (1998, p. 2) offers a definition that encompasses a wide range of situations: 'a social conflict exists when two or more persons or groups manifest to believe that they have incompatible objectives'.

1.3.1. Group conflict

Ervin Staub (2013) argues that conflict does not occur by chance, but it develops predictably and progressively because of social, cultural and psychological phenomenal when there is a lack of intervention or preventive policies. For example, in a culture that encourages parenting and teaching self-regulatory principles like moral courage and active bystandership, in order to increase children's prosocial behavior, there is a smaller chance of ethnic conflict (Newton *et al.*, 2014; Flook

et al., 2015; Hoffman, 2017). On the other hand, limited exposure and isolation from ethnic and cultural diversity combined with a more authoritarian parenting style can contribute to ethnocentric ideology and conflict (Smith, 1998; Negy *et al.,* 2003).

Difficult living conditions, poor socioemotional health and general economic insecurity that contribute to unfulfilled basic human needs can lead to group polarization and conflict, but poverty by itself has not been identified as causal factor of group violence (Hardaway, Larkby and Cornelius, 2014). They must be associated with family stressors, like authoritarian parenting styles, visible phenotypical differences and belief systems that challenge traditional dominant group practices, in order to provoke group conflict (Hoffman, 2017).

A common contributing factor to group conflict, derived from rather limited economic conditions is the so-called *economic scapegoat*, seen as a primary cause for both economically related and national security problems (Green, Glaser and Rich, 1998). The primary victims of this negative stereotype are the immigrants and the ethnic groups, often considered by the dominant group members as being uneducated, poor and the primary drain of limited resources (Ruiz, Steffen and Smith, 2013).

1.3.2. Culture and conflict

For our purpose we will consider culture 'as the enduring norms, values, customs, historical narratives and behavioral patterns common to a particular group of people' (Mayer, 2012, p. 93). Every culture will contain multiple conflict styles and the range of behaviors and approaches that its members exhibit when in conflictual situations. But different cultures will have different rules about acceptable behavior and what is considered as deviant. Mayer (2012) identifies three variables useful in understanding what happens when different cultures engage in conflictual interaction: (1) *High and low context cultures* – When the most part of the communication is implied or understood, rather than directly expressed it's a high context culture. When the communication is based on directly and overtly expressed meaning, the interaction is low context. (2) *Power distance* – Low-power distance cultures value equity and equality in decision making, social status, access to power and communication. On the other hand, high-power cultures encourage the right of people in authority, elders for example, to make decisions without consulting the other members. (3) *Linearity* – One source of cross-cultural conflict can arise when cultures used with more linear communication are forced to interact with cultures that use a circular communication style.

1.4. The Roma – definition, history, characteristics

1.4.1. The history of Roma population

It is very difficult to give a fair and consistent definition of traditional Roma. One way to define the Roma is to look at their origin. Even if there are many hypotheses, it can be said that they originate from the Indian subcontinent, from where they have spread into a long migration all over the world almost a millennium ago.

Certain uncertainties persist in relation to their presence in Romania. Many historians link this group to the present territory of Romania by the Tatar-Mongol invasion of 1241-1242, the first documents attesting them later in the Romanian space (1385 in Wallachia, 1400 in Transylvania and 1414 in Moldavia). Unfortunately, we are talking about some documents that refer to their status as slaves, one of the most degrading in the medieval world, a statute that marked much of the history of this community (if not their entire history). The Roma continued to be slaves until the 18th-19th centuries when Romanian society, according to the weathered, abolished slavery.

Another way we can define Roma is by their activities. Since their appearance in the present territory of Romania, they have been engaged in crafts, contributing to a great extent to the economic development of Romanian society. One of their favorite crafts was blacksmithing, an occupation that became specific to this group. Other trades were sit-in, stoning, lingerie or saddlery, but also entertainment (circus, for example) while women were involved in domestic activities. Other activities that have contributed over the years to the formation of stereotypes about this community were the ones of executioner or gravedigger.

Beyond their social status, Roma were distinguished from other populations by their predominantly nomadic way of life. Their favorite home was the tent, a dwelling specific to the nomadic peoples. Obviously, as a craftsman, this nomadic lifestyle appears to be natural. At the same time, this nomadism was limited and controlled by the authorities (Nicoară, 2005). However, in the 18th-19th centuries, a slow sedentary process has occurred, caused by the technological changes that have altered and influenced certain occupations, but especially due to the measures of decimation of the slavery taken by the modern state (decrees and regulations that obliged them to adopt a sedentary lifestyle). The vast majority of Roma are now sedentary, only small groups have retained the nomadic way of life (hence the difficulty of defining traditional Roma communities). Regarding them and how to solve internal conflicts, they enjoyed internal autonomy.

1.4.2. Definition and characteristics

In order to complete the definition of this group, we must mention Iuliu Rostas (1998) who mentions that Roma, `being marginalized and subjected to oppression for centuries, subjected to forced assimilation and discrimination, have developed their own survival strategies, strategies that make them different from non-Roma. The experience of Porrajamos – the equivalent of the Holocaust in Romani – has given Roma the meaning of belonging to the same community, no matter where they live`.

This historical experience of the various Roma groups has generated a lot of particular historical characteristics. Being a minority, no matter where they live, the Roma had to adapt. This has led to differences in culture, customs, or language. Even though there have been differences between these Roma groups, there is still a sense of belonging to the same community, strengthened by the adversity of other ethnic groups towards them. According to Moisă (2000), at this moment, Roma in Romania can be classified into one of the following categories:

a. Roma who have all the traditional characteristics and identify themselves as Roma.
b. Roma who have all the traditional characteristics and identify themselves as Roma only in an informal context; in a formal context they do not do so in order not to damage their chances of a better life.
c. Modern Roma who have changed their lifestyle and no longer have visible traditional characteristics but are self-identified as Roma.
d. Modern Roma who tend not to identify themselves as Roma.
e. Roma who have so much integrated in the majority society that they have lost all their traditional characteristics and who have given up self-identification as Roma.

1.4.3. Căldărari Roma

Of all the Roma, for the purpose of this research, we have chosen to focus on the căldărari group. The main reason for this is that they still maintain the rules and habits specific to their traditional lifestyle (Moisă, 2000), being recognized by the rest of the Roma (and the rest of society) as the most traditional Roma, the only ones that still respect the traditions and values of the community. In the following, we will try a brief presentation of this ethnic group.

The căldărari Roma people are spread mainly in Oltenia, especially in the counties of Vâlcea, Dolj, Olt, Gorj and Mehedinți. Major groups can be found also in Sibiu or Alba. The name of this group derives from its basic occupation, the manufacture of boilers. They also spoil these boilers with tin. From metal or aluminum sheet, they also produce household goods that they sell through markets or fairs.

Their most important working technique is the Gypsy alienation, an old method transmitted within the family and secretly kept, which includes the great mastery of brass knocking (Stănescu, 2004).

Similar to other Roma groups, a particular place is occupied by the family. The larger it is, the more it is respected. The head of the family is the husband who is responsible for the financial part while the wife is responsible for household activities. With regard to child education, each parent is responsible for same-sex education.

As far as housing is concerned, the căldărari Roma have kept their nomadic lifestyle. It should be noted, however, that we are talking about a semi-nomadic lifestyle, more characterized by its economic aspect and less by tradition. Before, the entire life of the Roma was carried around the tent and wagon. It was said that a Roma without a horse and a wagon was not a true Roma (Stănescu, 2004). Today, for the reasons outlined earlier, they are also sedentary. However, from spring to late autumn (around St. Demetrius' Day, October 26), we find their tents set on the outskirts of the villages where they try to earn their money from making or repairing boilers. In the autumn, they return to their homes and prepare for the winter.

2. Methodology

2.1. Ethnography

Ethnography is concerned with the understanding of the social world of the actors we study. Literally, the term means *writing about the culture and the life of different social actors*. With this aim, the ethnographic research is carried out within the natural environment of the subjects. A useful definition in this regard is offered by Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (2004, p. 31): 'ethnographic work is based on a commitment to understanding everyday life in a social world given a commitment to that world. It is stated on the recognition that local social organization and everyday life is complex and these are done through multiple actions and social representations'.

Taking into account the specificity of ethnographic research, for our study, we chose to use the interview (semi-structured and completed by the subjects' life stories) and participatory observation as data collection methods. Both methods have been used directly in the Roma communities in their natural setting (at home, in camps or fairs), the purpose of which is to better understand how violations of moral codes and deviance are perceived by Roma, the justice they use, and their relationship with state authorities, especially those responsible for law enforcement (police).

In addition to the data obtained from the Roma communities that we had access to during this research, we also collected data from those working with/within

these communities (police officers, local authorities, or other members of Roma communities, other than those studied). For these people, we used semi-structured interviews, often conducted at their workplace or online (Skype).

2.2. Participants

Considering the purpose of this research, we chose three communities of căldărari Roma, two from Gorj County (Tg. Cărbunești and Scoarța) and one from Vâlcea County (Boişoara). The last community was chosen based on previous interactions with them and due to the fact that the members of the community know us and trusted us to participate in this research. With the help of their local leader, we managed to interview a number of eleven persons. For the Gorj county communities, we used the snowball method (Kuzel, 1992), our contacts indicating the people who could help us in our work. With their help, we were able to interview twelve people in Tg. Cărbuneşti and eight people in Scoarța.

For all three communities, we can say that they are semi-nomads and are considered both by the other Roma and by the Romanian neighbors as *traditional Roma*. In term of size, we are talking about small communities at the periphery of the mentioned localities. Although they built homes before 1989, members of these communities have retained their nomadic lifestyle for economic reasons. Every year, for eight or nine months, they travel to the fairs in Oltenia and South Transylvania to sell or repair products specific to their job. Although their present lifestyle would enable them to travel by car, they still prefer the wagon and the location of their tents near the fairs and localities.

As mentioned above, we interviewed 31 Roma, out of which 17 women and 14 men. All 31 participants identified themselves as *true* Roma belonging to the căldărari branch. Most interviews were conducted at the participants' home, but there were times when the interviews took place in the camps set up during random fairs. Besides them, we tried to talk with key people working with Roma communities. We did this to get information that could not be obtained from the Roma, but also to check their stories. In this case, we conducted a total of six interviews, two of them with two krisinitors (Roma judges), two with law enforcement officials and two representatives of local authorities.

3. Key findings

3.1. Kris Romani (the gipsy court)

Inevitably, breaking the rules underlying the moral or community-specific codes, as well as disregarding the other members of the community, leads to the emergence of conflicts. If these are not settled through negotiation, they are settled

through Kris, the name under which the Roma tribunal is known in Romania (in some cases, we find the Kris Romani formula, used more by the elite, or stabor, a name that does not exist in the Romani language but has been used from the communist period). In this sense, as confirmed by our sources, Kris is the most important, and at the same time, the ultimate procedure for solving an intra-community conflict (Chereji and Sandu, 2018).

The Kris is a community meeting where a specific conflict is being discussed and resolved. This form of judgment involves the whole community in the decision-making and conflict resolution process because, according to the Roma culture, the members of the group are responsible for both their actions and those of the other members. Also, the main reason why traditional Roma choose to resolve their internal conflicts without someone else's intervention, especially the authorities, is the fact that this is perceived as a great shame because it would mean that the Roma fail to resolve their own conflicts.

According to our sources, the Kris main purpose is to reconcile the parties and improve the situation rather than establish who is right and who is wrong. In this way, the justice of the Roma is not a punitive one, like the modern justice system that seeks only to punish the guilty side, but a compensatory seeking reintegration one (except in very serious cases in which it is disintegrating). Moreover, Roma justice is distributive – all the parties are right and all are guilty for the situation.

From the point of view of the conflict studies, Kris Romani works more like a med-arb hybrid with the particularities of the Roma tradition. At first, the judges act like facilitators for a negotiated agreement. If the parties reach a solution on their own, the judges will issue a verdict based on their agreement. If the parties are not able to reach a solution on their own, the judges will issue their own verdict based on the Roma traditions and moral code.

3.2. The fighting system

While Kris Romani is a formal form of justice and is used less frequently (since Roma callers use this court only as a last resort to resolve the conflict if other mechanisms or attempts at reconciliation fail), fights are much more common. Even so, over time, this system has undergone some changes and their role in the social control mechanism of the community is getting lower.

For the Roma from the three communities studied in this study, this fighting system has a very high legitimacy and, like other methods used to manage internal conflicts, takes precedence over the formal justice system. If community members are involved in a conflict, they plan and organise a fight in which the culprit has the opportunity *to wash his or her honour* and be forgiven for his behaviour and the injured party has the opportunity to take revenge for the suffered loss. According

to our sources, this method is also used if one of the parties does not want to resolve the conflict through the Kris.

3.3. Gossip and avoidance

The Roma from the three communities that have been the subject of this study use, in addition to Kris and fighting, two other methods of managing conflicts, that are gossip and avoidance. Avoidance, as a means of informal justice, has a very great impact on a community. Besides the ostracization imposed as a verdict following Kris, avoidance can take many forms. The most common of these is the relationship in which the parties do not communicate with each other. In this case, the parties continue to live in the same community but do not interact with each other. One advantage of this type of avoidance is that the group does not lose members and they continue to make their contribution to the good of the whole community. On the opposite side, the disadvantage of this type of avoidance is the duration of these conflicts, which may last for months, years, or even be permanent. In this way, avoidance (and even gossip) differs from the other two mechanisms presented in this article because, as we have seen, in terms of Kris and fights, as long as the parties pay attention and respect the rules and understand and accepts the outcome in agreement with them, the problem is considered resolved.

Regarding the gossip, this is very important to the Roma community because they are part of small communities where news is circulating very quickly, especially the bad ones. Being a small community with strong links between its members, gossip is the equivalent of shame that leads to the loss of respect for other members. Being started by women in the community, gossip has two functions. First, it functions as *a local newsletter*, informing the community about the existence of a problem in the community. In this case, gossip practically triggers the Kris procedures because the information needs to be proven, Kris being the most appropriate procedure. The second function, as we will see in the examples below, is to discourage deviance from community rules or conflicts because community members are afraid of becoming the subject of these rumours, which is considered shameful for them.

3.4. The relationship with the police

Previous researches highlighted the problematic relationship between the Roma and police forces. In Romania, between the two groups, there is a very high degree of mutual distrust that historically led to an adversarial relationship. On the one hand, police officers do not consider the presumption of innocence and, on the other, the Roma perceive the behaviour and actions of the police as being excessive to them, the use of force over the Roma going beyond the normative limits.

Such negative examples in the relationship between the two groups were narrated by our respondents in the interviews conducted in this study. According to our sources in both camps, one of the reasons for this is the repeatability and intensity of police actions in the neighbourhoods or areas inhabited by Roma callers, as one of the police officers interviewed states:

> When necessary, we go in a large number at them, in part to show us the presence and in part to show that we will not be intimidated by them ... think that there are a few hundred good ones in the locality, united, some have white weapons, you never know ... we need to act forcefully to balance things. Do not think we use force, we talk to them and we always try to calm things down, so we have a cameraman with us, but we go, we call the gendarmerie, some have the weapons on sight ... we do this many times, even on the same day, just to intimidate them and see that they cannot do what they want in our locality. I do not think it's easy for them either to see us, around 20-30 people there, but otherwise maybe ... and if it's not about problems, we pass 3-4 times a day through their area to see us there, know that we patrol and do nothing wrong (personal communication, police officer, Tg. Cărbunești, 11.06.2017).

If the previous fragment shows that the police force argues the large number of people who intervene in the community because of the large number of members of the Roma communities and to prevent a possible violent reaction of the members of the community, these actions leave many interviewed Roma căldărari with the feeling that they are unjust. Beyond the force of the police forces operating in the community, our sources also discuss the intensity of these interventions:

> It was a case when a gipsy from us killed a gendarme, military in term and it was a sensitive thing. It was a very difficult time. The gipsies in the neighbourhood, the police, the gendarmerie where they caught them were beating them directly, it was a sensitive thing because the press as it is today is saying – I send my child to the military service, and a gypsy here is killing my baby and I do not know what ... and it was a very difficult time that we were expecting measures… (personal communication, krisinitor, Tg. Jiu, 06.12.2017).

Concretely, according to our sources, the attitude of the police forces towards this community is an important factor that affects their legitimacy. On the one hand, the dissatisfaction comes from the fact that these actions were carried out without prior consultation of the community and because of the lack of an open dialogue between the two sides. As a result, in our respondents' opinion, the community did not understand the presence of the police there and the intensity of the actions made the Roma concerned, feeling discriminated because they believe that

other communities or ethnic groups benefitted from preferential treatment. Moreover, this feeling of discrimination is accentuated by the perception that the actions of the police forces do not take into account the cultural specificity of the community. According to our sources, such attitudes impede a normal relationship between the two sides, a situation that leads to little, almost inexistent interaction in the case of conflicts within these communities.

Taking into account Kriesberg's (1998) definition of social conflict (this is the perception of the parties that have incompatible interests), analyzed together, the gathered data shows that each group experiences a very high degree of frustration due to the different way to perceive this situation: on the one hand, police officers are mandated to act in a specific way, on the other, the Roma attach great importance to their culture and traditions.

According to one of the judges interviewed for this study, legislation has also a negative impact on the traditional Roma conflict settlement system. As we shall see, the verdict given by the judges is not recognized by the judicial authorities, and the understanding of the parties in Kris can even be considered a serious violation of the law. For this reason, the Roma believe that the authorities do not respect their tradition and, as a consequence, the relationship between the two sides suffers:

> We had cases that were criminal offenses, we met in court, and we were called for declarations because they said we conspired to favor the offender. Because at the moment when it is a phase that comes to court, we come to statements and we, in fact, the law, such as Romanian law, is not allowed to interfere when it comes to hearings and making a statement because if they do a peace, they are reconciled and they are no longer allowed to keep that statement, to put the man in jail because we have decided that they have reconciled, conditions are put in place, they do not have one another, they are no longer allowed to offend, they are no longer allowed to threaten, and the law comes in. Well, hold on!, you have influenced my man. Because he gave a statement and because of your judgment, it's enough to get us the file overhead (personal communication, krisinitor, Tg. Jiu, 6.12.2017).

3.5. Positive examples of the relationship between caregivers and official social control actors

Even though, until now, we focused on the difficult relationship between the Roma and the police, we have also witnessed positive examples of the relationship between the two sides, which has led to increased legitimacy of the police at some point. As the following fragment shows, some police officers appear to be more tolerant of the Roma community in the studied communities, which has positively

influenced their behaviour towards the respective officers and the interaction between them:

> *When I started my work ... I was right after the Academy, the first experience as a policeman ... I went to them to introduce myself and, to be honest, I was horrified by what I saw there. Most of them are living in unacceptable conditions ... To make my life easier, I set out to go to each and introduce myself and I told them I would always apply the law and punish any violation of it, but, at the same time, I told them we had to work together and that they could call me anytime they needed it* (personal communication, police officer, Boișoara, 19.07.2017).

This fragment, which is a clear example of a basis for a dialogue open between a police officer and the community in which they work, continues:

> *I told them that it would happen to come to their home for the investigation, they know they have a problem with that, but I promised them I would always be right with them and I will always tell them what my purpose is ... since when I'm here ... I would say that some relationships have improved, not all people are more receptive, we also meet in other circumstances and things are fine but a continuous process and everything is very fragile because it is enough for one to do something and things change immediately* (personal communication, police officer, Boișoara, 19.07.2017).

According to this police officer, the way in which he does his job is perceived positively by the caring Roma with whom he interacts, being able to build a better relationship with them.

However, as we can see in the following, no matter how good the relationship between the members of the Roma communities studied and the police forces acting in them are, the latter rarely resort to helping the former to resolve internal conflicts, this happening only in isolated cases and only under certain conditions.

3.6. Interaction with police forces in case of internal conflicts

The Roma have developed their own community justice system, the methods used ranging from more formal methods such as Kris Romani and the fighting system to informal methods such as avoidance and gossip. These principles originate in Romanipen, the moral code of the community that influences both internal interactions and community interactions with the outside world. One side of this moral code concerns the relationship with the police forces. According to the Roma tradition, it is a shameful thing to collaborate with the police forces. Using these principles, the Roma resort very little to social control agencies to resolve internal conflicts.

Moreover, as we have shown so far, in most cases, Roma callers in our study do not recognize the legitimacy of police forces. However, our study has identified, through interviews conducted in the studied communities, cases where their members have called on police to resolve or escalate internal conflicts. A first situation is the escalation of the conflict so much that the situation is out of control and the members of the community are no longer able to solve their own problems. In the second case, which is rarely the case, the Roma announce the police when a vendetta is in progress and one of the parties wants to gain an advantage over the other by involving police forces.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The social context is a crucial factor when assessing and enhancing resilience. At the community level the ability to manage adversity lies in the social relationships and interactions among its members (Rapaport *et al.*, 2018). In our study, the Roma community faced the change by making a compromise and integrating some of the values of the dominant group in their own culture. In this way they manage to improve their economic and social status in the society. The Roma who identified themselves as Romanians accepted more easily the new values into their lives. The others tried to keep their archaic traditions and customs – the traditional Roma lifestyle. Unfortunately for the latter, the pressure from the dominant culture and the desire to leave behind the marginalization, also make them gradually give up their traditional identity.

Okely (1983) prefers the word *bricolage* instead of *compromise* – a mixture of traditional values with those of the majority group by adaptation. Regardless of the term we use, it's obvious that the Roma have learned to adapt some values of the majority society to their own value system. We can conclude that the Roma communities we have studied managed to successfully adapt to change. From the Wilding's (2011 *apud* Revell and Henderson, 2018) point of view we can state that the Roma built a *breakthrough community*, being able to create a better future while using outside resources as a stimulus. But there are some recommendations we can make, as a result of our study, that can improve resilience and facilitate the process of cultural conflict management.

4.1. Cross-cultural approaches

The Roma are often accused that they do not respect the formal judicial system, while they still rely on their traditional conflict management mechanisms to provide peace, security and the equilibrium in their community. In this respect, there is a common stereotype that the Roma lack ability to respect norms and public order. This is clearly not the case, considering that they thoroughly obey their tra-

ditional rules imposed through their Kris Romani and supervised by their leaders, norms that can be even more restrictive than the majority's law.

It's simply the case of miscommunication and lack of understanding each other's main values. The Romanian judicial system already uses some alternative mechanists of conflict resolution. So, it would not be a difficult task to adapt to another alternative mechanism that it has been proven to be efficient during hundreds of years. We are not suggesting that the majority population should have to integrate another system of law, but we are merely implying that the Kris Romani decisions, for example, can be used in the preliminary steps of an official judiciary process as recommendation and as a deeper understanding of the context in which a crime or another disruption of the social norms occurred. In the same time, the official decisions of a court of law or another public authority can be used as starting point to a Roma traditional trial.

4.2. Agents of change

In each cultural community there are certain individuals that exhibit the communication and conflict style that is closer to the *cultural cluster* (Moore and Woodrow, 2010) of another group or community. These individuals can act as natural translators or as bridges to other culture and also act as agents of change. In the smaller communities, usually this role of agent of positive transformation is assumed by the leaders. However, we cannot assume that the role of leaders is always good (Bousquet *et al.*, 2016): sometimes leadership can legitimately block change and undermine certain transformative trajectories.

Steps towards using such agents of change have been made while talking about the Roma communities. There is the school mediator and the sanitary mediator whose roles are to facilitate communication between the Roma people and the school and sanitary authorities. There is also some involvement of Roma representatives into the public authorities' structures. A step forward would be the use of Roma policeman when dealing with Roma communities. And why not, the use of the most educated members of the Roma community to teach in schools, not only to Roma children and adults in need of education, but also to majority students and adults.

4.3. Prevention mechanisms

Recent research has identified that a society that utilizes preventive mechanisms will help cross cultural divides and improve itself by recognizing the multitude of skills and traits that the diverse groups inherently possess and need to share within a community environment (Weine, 2011). Also, communities that have a back-

ground of conflict and organized violence can provide resources that help reconnect people to each other and reclaim a sense of trust and dignity (Hoffman, 2017).

Community service activities and civic engagement projects can be used to encourage both the members of the Roma community and the majority one to work together towards mutually beneficial goals. For example, a community center that provides mediation services through mediators originating from both communities, in other to solve the conflicts in a more informal and customized way, can be organized (Chereji and Pop, 2014). In the same manner, accessible cultural activities and trainings could certainly help to enhance the social capital of the communities.

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Strategic Contributions
for Correlating the Educational
Offer with the Requirements
of the Business Environment
in Romania

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Abstract. This article contributes to the better correlation of the educational offer with the requirements of the Romanian business environment, both by identifying the common tools used by the university to monitor and support the professional insertion of graduates, as well as by identifying the best practices in this field in order to make general recommendations for the successful completion of these activities. InterChest is one of the best methodologies used for identifying the Romanian students' rates of integration into the labor market, also aimed at increasing the educational performance of young graduates to access the labor market by analyzing direct relations between parties from the point of view of pre-university education, universities' curricula, the legislation in education and private sector needs that need to be assimilated. Students' vocational insertion into the labor market is still understood as a research area in which the relationships between subjects, education and the labor market are analyzed. Vocational insertion is a process that is based on the degree of communication between graduates, employers, universities and the government.

Keywords: correlation, evaluation, universities, students and labor market.

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1. Introduction

Currently, in Romanian higher education institutions, students undertake internships in areas of competence, usually lasting two weeks, and the benefits for them have been visible, but on the other hand, the employers' perception has not changed. Employers believe that professional performance cannot be achieved in the two weeks of specialized internship. Considering that human capital is made up of educational quality, more exactly from the competences acquired during the university education process, it was developed as a concept in the economy, which is regarded, in particular as 'an estimation of the ability of a person to produce income through work' (Di Bartolo, 1999). Consequently, the responsibility for the employability of young people lies with the universities.

Strategic management is defined as a continuous, interactive process in order to maintain an organization which is properly adapted to its environment (Certo, 1995). Strategic planning is an organizational process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. It may also extend to control mechanisms for guiding the implementation of the strategy. Strategic planning became prominent in corporations during the 1960s and it remains an important aspect of strategic management. It is executed by strategic planners or strategists, who involve many parties and research for sources in their analysis of the organization and its relationship with the environment in which it competes.

2. Objectives of correlating the educational offer with market requirements

The general objective of this article is increasing the educational performance of young graduates on the labor market by analyzing them from the perspective of higher education, the curricula of universities, educational legislation and assimilating the needs of the private sector.

The specific objectives concern:
– Increasing the quality of higher education offered by tailoring it to the demands of the labor market;
– Facilitating access to information, the labor market, the rights and obligations of employees and employers, for all students, especially those with fewer opportunities;
– Professional guidance on sources of job search and identification, professional counseling based on skills and aptitudes;
– Stimulating and facilitating the participation of graduates in the development of workforce and in lifelong learning;
– Organization of information and counseling meetings for students – selection of potential students for practicing internships, counseling students in selecting the optimal internship;

- Initial training of young people, attracting young Romanians from abroad to universities in Romania and integrating them into the labor market;
- Improving social security measures to encourage employers and students to use various forms of labor, especially telecommuting, part-time work and work from home jobs;
- Stimulating youth mobility in the internal labor market;
- Developing a system to facilitate putting into practice the acquired educational skills;
- Creating regional databases with potential insertion employers; and
- Developing a counseling and guidance system.

3. Methodology: SUEG (quadrant model) versus InterChest (triangulation)

SUEG (quadrant model) is a graphic methodology analysis and a template for evaluation with four axes for the most important factors, such as students, universities, government and employers, in order to improve the process of integrating students into the national labor market. Through this process of correction of the weak points, a system of interaction between students, graduates, young people, the business community, Universities from Romania and the Government will be improved and will increase the number of graduates counseled in the employment steps.

The methodology involves establishing four axes for the four important factors, such as students, universities, government and employers. For each factor separately, tree marks are assigned, which are graded with '1' for nonconformity and with 'ten' for perfect conformity (Potcovel, 2018).

The purpose of InterChest methodology is to facilitate the process for the insertion of Romanian higher education graduates into the labor market by developing a triangular methodology and developing a system for diversifying partnerships between universities and employers through interviews and questionnaires.

The promoted research method involves the use of several methods, called triangulation, because each method presents some advantages and disadvantages. For example, the survey provides complete information, but not sufficiently detailed, while the interview provides such information. As a result, both qualitative research, more specifically the individual interview, and quantitative research, through the survey, based on the questionnaire, should be used. For example, the survey is a predominant quantitative indirect method, based on the exploratory study. The survey could be achieved by assigning a series of standardized questions, basically a questionnaire, applied with a certain technique to respondents who constitute a part (a sample) of the whole population. While the interview is a predominant qualitative indirect method, in which you do not have access to the studied phenomenon and you are trying to obtain the necessary data by asking students their opinions on the graduated study program and their experience with

their first job. Unlike the questionnaire, fewer cases are used here, but with the possibility to get richer information from each subject. Therefore, using the individual structured interview with a guide that includes all the questions that will be addressed during the interview is recommended.

Data collection is performed both by an indirect method, based on the survey, after completing a questionnaire designed for each party involved in the survey, applied both by electronic means and self-administered. In the questionnaire addressed to the graduates, the items are grouped in six categories, which refer to: the graduated higher education program, the program of study attended and the teaching methods, the skills acquired during the vocational training period, the first year post-graduation, the profession and current work place and socio-demographic data. The data is obtained from the statements of the subjects after completing the questionnaire (Potcovel, 2018).

4. Case study – Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

4.1. Problems of integration into the labor market of the graduates from Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

In part, the difficulty arises from the fact that there are several methods to classify the programs provided by universities. The most known method is the identification of the bachelor's degree areas in which the university study programs are credited or authorized. The classification of these fields is published on a yearly basis by the Ministry of National Education. The number of these fields is very high. Thus, during the 2015/2016 academic year, Romanian universities provided BA study programs in no less than 85 fields.

For the project of Informatics System of POCA (Administrative Capacity Operational Program 2014-2020) SIPOCA 3, carried out by the Romanian Academy on 'Developing the Ministry of National Education's capacity to monitor and forecast the evolution of higher education in relation to the labor market' SIPOCA 3 code, the objective of its analysis is identifying the methods and tools the university uses to keep in touch with its graduates, the manner in which it tries to involve them in the life of the academic community and how it ensures support to the students and graduates in view of integrating them into the labor market. The study contains information of the organizational structure of the university, its mission, the structure of faculties, the number of graduates in 2008-2015 in the fundamental fields of study, the main organizational structures with a role in the support and monitoring of students and graduates for integrating them into the labor market, the main types of activities and projects recently carried out, tools for collecting data regarding the graduates, as well as the results of the procedures for monitoring the professional insertion of graduates.

Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca offers study programs for bachelor, master and doctoral courses in twenty one faculties. Between 2008 and 2015, the university had bachelor and master graduates in six fundamental fields of study and doctoral graduates in five fundamental fields.

Table 1: The number of BBU graduates in 2008-2015 according to their fundamental fields of study

Mathematics and Natural Sciences	Engineering Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities and Arts	Science of Sport and Physical Education	Total Graduates	Year	Type of funding
976	102	2352	41	109	3580	2008	State funding
458	13	3085	20	164	3740	2008	Fee-based
1725	86	4053	86	210	6160	2009	State funding
998	6	7578	30	390	9002	2009	Fee-based
914	185	2515	54	112	3780	2010	State funding
613	55	4212	13	228	5121	2020	Fee-based
820	98	2410	9	109	3534	2011	State funding
374	36	3588	325	219	4542	2011	Fee-based
1063	51	2479	50	116	3758	2012	State funding
580	26	3705	18	1842	4511	2012	Fee-based
949	149	2583	72	150	3903	2013	State funding
520	41	2696	6	262	3525	2013	Fee-based
943	107	2670	77	110	3907	2014	State funding
466	7	2227	6	226	2932	2014	Fee-based
915	99	2725	54	127	3920	2015	State funding
293	8	1922	12	185	2420	2015	Fee-based

Source: Based on the information from CNFIS[1]

The tools used by the university to support graduates and monitor their insertion into the labor market are used by the organization CCARMA which has three structures: Career, Alumni and Business Environment Relations Center, all with complementary objectives and activities, such us:

a. Career division. It provides BBU students and graduates with career information and guidance and mediation services, free of charge. Some of the division's activities are: career guidance activities (self-knowledge, exploration of career paths, career decision-making, building a career plan);

b. Relationship to the business environment division. Career Center's The Alumni Relationship to the Business Environment Division is aimed at consolidating partnerships between the private environment and BBU; and

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1   National Council for Higher Education Funding, Romania

c. Alumni[2] – the third structure inside the CCARMA is the ALUMNI division. It represents the 'interface between the University and its graduates'. Its objective is to create a strong Babeș-Bolyai University alumni center based on a community adapted to their needs, as well as to the needs of the faculties.

Basically, the monitoring of the graduates' insertion into the labor market has been achieved for almost 20 years and it currently uses questionnaires dedicated to each study cycle. The Board of Directors released a decision conditioning the issue of the diploma upon the completion of the questionnaires, and for bachelor and master programs, the students' opinion of the curriculum (the usefulness of the current educational approach and suggestions for new teaching subjects) is registered in addition. It is worth mentioning that, under the above-mentioned decision, the forms are managed by the 'Center for Academic Development and the Office for the Release of Graduation Documents'.

4.2. Situation of the professional insertion of BBU graduates

Below is presented data from the Rector's Report related to the Bachelor graduates of 2015, who received their graduation documents between August 2015 and September 2017. The students completed a questionnaire with items grouped into four categories referring to: the graduated study program, the situation of the alumni after graduating the bachelor studies and their first job, the alumni's status on the labor market at the time when they filled in the questionnaire and social-demographic characteristics. The data presented in the report has been obtained from the subjects' statements at the time when they picked up their diplomas.

Between August 2015 and September 2017, 4,312 bachelor graduates of the class of 2015 completed the questionnaire, making up 84.7% of the total bachelor graduates. Of all the respondents, 60% were attending university courses at the time when they completed the questionnaire. Out of them, 95.4% were attending master courses, 2.2% bachelor courses, and 0.4% were attending doctoral courses. A part of the respondents, 1.2%, were attending, in parallel, bachelor and master studies. Out of the graduates attending master courses, 82.7% were attending the Babeș-Bolyai University, and 1.6% were attending courses at universities abroad (BBU Rector's Report, 2017).

The table below indicates the situation regarding the distribution of the respondents in bachelor, master and doctoral studies, in the first 12 months after graduation, depending on their status on the labor market.

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2 Official website http://ubbcluj.ro/.

Table 2: Distribution of the graduates depending on their status on the labor market
in the first 12 months after graduation

Status on the labor market	Bachelor Level (%)	Master Level (%)	Doctoral Level (%)
Employed	65.4	83.8	90.2
Continuing their studies	55.5	12	1.7
Unemployed	4.6	4.4	6.4
No answer	3.9	4.8	2.6

Source: Based on the information obtained from the Rector's Report 2017 regarding the graduates of 2015 (tables H1, H4 and H8: The distribution of graduates depending on their status on the labor market in the first 12 months after graduation)

As presented in Table 2, compared to bachelor graduates, the employment percentage of the master graduates exceeded 80%, respectively 90% for doctoral studies.

More than half of the respondents declared that their first job after graduation corresponded to their graduated specialization. In the first 12 months after graduation, the situation of the Babeş-Bolyai University graduates for bachelor, master and doctoral studies in the class of 2015 is as follows:

Table 3: The situation of graduates on the labor market
in the first 12 months after graduation

Occupational status	Bachelor Level (%)	Master Level (%)	Doctoral Level (%)
Occupied	91.5	90.8	91
Unoccupied	4.6	4.4	6.4
No answer	3.9	4.8	2.6

Source: Based on the information obtained from the Rector's Report 2017 regarding the graduates of 2015 (tables H2, H6 and H9: the situation of graduates on the labor market in the first 12 months after graduation)

As presented in Table 3, compared to master studies graduates, the occupation percentage of the bachelor and doctoral studies graduates exceeds 91%. Depending on the faculty, the situation of graduates in the first 12 months after graduation is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Situation of graduates on the labor market
in the first 12 months after graduation, depending on the graduated faculty

No.	Faculty	Employed		Continuing their studies		Unemployed		No answer	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1.	Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science	219	82.6	154	58.1	2	0.8	8	3
2.	Faculty of Physics	10	38.5	20	76.9	1	3.8	1	3.8
3.	Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	67	62.6	79	73.8	3	2.8	-	-
4.	Faculty of Biology and Geology	49	42.6	76	66.1	10	8.7	6	5.2
5.	Faculty of Geography	196	58	190	56.2	17	5.0	13	3.8
6.	Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering	51	66.2	48	62.3	3	3.9	-	-
7.	Faculty of Law	115	50.2	101	44.1	33	14.4	11	4.8
8.	Faculty of Letters	206	67.8	177	58.2	11	3.6	7	2.3
9.	Faculty of History and Philosophy	126	55.5	150	66.1	12	5.3	5	2.2
10.	Faculty of Sociology and Social Work	85	69.1	67	54.5	2	1.6	9	7.3
11.	Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences	466	69.4	261	38.9	48	7.2	28	4.2
12.	Faculty of Economics and Business Administration	620	72.3	510	59.4	26	3.0	35	4.1
13.	Faculty of European Studies	102	59	119	68.8	7	4.0	3	1.7
14.	Faculty of Business	63	66.3	50	52.6	5	5.3	4	4.2
15.	Faculty of Political Administrative and Communication Sciences	249	70.5	193	54.7	9	2.5	9	2.5
16.	Faculty of Physical Education and Sport	99	58.9	91	54.2	5	3.0	16	9.5
17.	Faculty of Orthodox Theology	40	53.3	46	61.3	2	2.7	2	2.7
18.	Faculty of Greek Catholic Theology	12	52.2	14	60.9	-	-	3	13
19.	Faculty of Reformed Theology	10	76.9	7	53.8	-	-	-	-
20.	Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology	13	52	14	56	1	4.0	5	20
21.	Faculty of Theatre and Television	19	48.7	24	61.5	3	7.7	1	2.6
22.	No answer (did not specify the faculty)	5	62.5	3	37.5	-	-	1	12.5
	TOTAL	**2,822**	**65.4**	**2,394**	**55.5**	**200**	**4.6**	**167**	**3.9**

Source: Based on the information obtained from the Rector's Report 2017 regarding the graduates of 2015 (table H3: situation of graduates on the labor market in the first 12 months after graduation, depending on the graduated faculty)

In the case of master graduates it is a decrease in the number of employed graduates according to table 5 below, because in 2013, this percentage has decreased 4% compared to 2011 and 2012. The trend in bachelor studies regarding the unemployment ratio is also found in the graduates of master studies. Furthermore, in the case of the class of 2013, the unemployment rate is lower compared to the classes of 2011 and 2012.

Table 5: Distribution of BBU graduates depending on their status on the labor market in the first months after graduation, master studies (2011, 2012 and 2013)

Occupational status	Class of 2011 and 2012	Class of 2013
Employed	88%	84%
Continuing their studies	13.8%	13.7%
Unemployed	11.1%	6.5%
No answer	3.3%	3.8%

Source: based on the information obtained from the Rector's Report 2015 regarding the graduates of 2015 (Appendix B.2.1.a._Insertion_of_graduates of the Institutional Self-Assessment Report (reported to ARACIS) for the graduates of 2011 and 2012)

4.3. POSDRU (Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development)[3]

Between May 2014 and August 2015, The Babeș-Bolyai University developed the POSDRU/156/1.2/G/134774 project 'Improving the interaction between the University and the business environment', aimed at achieving compatibility between the study programs provided by the Babeș-Bolyai University with the specific needs of the labor market. As a result, activities have been carried out to help improve the skills of the Babeș-Bolyai University graduates and first of all, to create communication relationships between the three parties involved, namely students, academic environment and the business environment.

For the achievement of this project, 21 study programs were selected within the University, one for each faculty, based on the need for compatibility with the labor market requirements. The university carried out activities such as:

a. 'Career week', to facilitate students' communication with the business environment with three categories of courses (mentoring in the university, professional competence assessment and vocational counseling) for the academic staff involved in the development of university degree programs for the purpose of developing certain competencies. Worldwide, mentoring is seen as one of the main tools contributing to professional development. The purpose

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3 Project 156/1.2/G/134774 'Improving the interaction between the University and the business environment'

of the mentoring program developed within this project was to develop collaborative relationships between faculties and employers' institutions. Thus, the participating members of academia developed at the end of the course a professional mentoring program to improve the relationship between the academia and the business environment.

b. Prize contest on the theme of 'Innovative strategies for developing the relationship of the academic environment with the business environment', which awarded 24 prizes. Five meetings were held, attended by students and business representatives from the Northwest Region. The topic debated was the professional career of the future graduates from a two-fold perspective: that of the professional and of the student. These meetings were followed by an essay contest for students enrolled in the target group of this project, the theme being the development of a personal and professional development plan, and the best essays from each faculty were awarded with a 700 lei prize; and

c. Twenty one focus groups were organized, one in each faculty, where discussions were held, based on an interview guide, between the academic staff involved in the development of the debated university study program and representatives of the business environment, potential employers of the graduates of these programs, finalized with a report prepared by the moderator of each debate.

The study regarding the convergence between the educational offer and the requirements of the business environment included 21 reports showing the extent to which the content and competencies that the analyzed study programs provided to the students corresponded to the labor market requirements, as well as the needs for adapting the curriculum of the analyzed study program, especially in regard to the content of the teaching subjects which must ensure the competencies. All these take into account both the existing educational regulations and standards, and the conclusions of the discussions with the business environment. The analysis of the prepared reports reveals several common aspects, irrespective of the field of the analyzed study program and the level at which it is carried out (bachelor/ master). Anyway, there is a considerable overlap in the competencies provided by the study programs analyzed and the labor market requirements.

Most business environment representatives believe that the so-called soft skills (teamwork, innovation capacity, flexibility, ability to communicate both in writing and verbally, language skills (foreign languages), computer skills, organizational skills, knowledge, ability to plan, to synthesize information, etc.) should be developed and the graduates of bachelor programs should be encouraged to continue their education. Also, there is a need for national legislation that clearly differentiates between the competences of graduates of a bachelor's degree program and those of a master degree program.

The project implementation team is confident in the potential for change and that the information contained in this study can generate it at the level of the analyzed study programs and more, but it is confronted with the structural problems in the educational system, as well as in the market. The curriculum can be changed only once every 4 years – according to ARACIS[4] requirements and for the economic environment this aspect is difficult to understand. 'The university is not isolated in an ivory tower and does not completely ignore the requirements of the market', but it must send clear and accurate signals to employers (Results of focus groups organized at the faculty level at Babeş-Bolyai University, vol. 1, 2015).

5. Conclusions

One of the greatest challenges for any attempt to assess the manner in which higher education graduates are inserted into the labor market is identifying the attended fields of studies and correlating the field of study with the competencies acquired as a result of graduating. A further challenge arises from the fact that it is often difficult, sometimes impossible, to achieve a clear correspondence between a particular field of study and a particular area of economic activity. In other words, there are two sets of radically different issues, nevertheless with serious effects on the construction of the mechanisms and tools for monitoring the professional insertion of graduates.

Using strategic planning with these applied methodologies, the SUEG (quadrant model) and InterChest (triangulation), helps improve performance, management efficiency that develops the ability to identify and benefit from market opportunities, and encourages students to have a positive attitude towards the labor market. They help develop the available strategy in order to be operational.

Business environment representatives believe it is necessary to strengthen the partnership with the academic environment, both by establishing common research themes, by participating in lectures during the academic year and by debating the content of the curricula. The development of internship programs is also mentioned.

The efficiency of the presented methodologies, during data collection, is dependent on the observer's effort to keep the system objective, especially made by using questionnaires, interviews and live records collecting (fresh data). It is necessary to invest in today's young people who will lead Romania tomorrow, because education in the near future will form the basis for future economic development.

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4   The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

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Employee Satisfaction and Engagement – Drivers for Performance in Public Sector

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Abstract. It is well known and widely accepted that employee engagement impact on their individual performance and ultimately on company performance and profitability. To support future initiatives that will contribute to high levels of engagement of the workforce, companies decide to regularly investigate the level of satisfaction and engagement of their employees through employee surveys. Most of the time, to ensure confidentiality of the respondents and increase participation, companies appoint external consultants to assist with the design, administration, analysis and documentation, and reporting on findings of the employee survey.

The aim of our study is to reveal what are the main strengths and weaknesses of work satisfaction that could affect the employee engagement and to recommend some measures in order to increase the performance of public company.

The methodology consists in a case study where a mining company from the public sector implemented a satisfaction and engagement survey for two consecutive years. Satisfaction index was calculated in both years using the same methodology to allow for a comparison. Also, an action plan was developed in the second year to address the development areas identified through the survey.

Through this case study, we present the results of the satisfaction and engagement survey conducted by the mining company and we compare them with the results from the previous year. Also, we describe the measures recommended to be implemented to address the first five areas of development identified through the survey.

Keywords: employee survey, employee satisfaction, employee engagement.

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1. Introduction

Job satisfaction is defined by Locke and Henne (1986) as 'a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences'. Considered as 'a complex phenomenon with multi facets' (Parvin and Kabir, 2011), different authors studied the factors that could affect the job satisfaction such as salary system, fairness, working environment, job security, relation with co-workers and immediate superior, communication, organizational commitment and autonomy (Lane *et al.*, 2010; Locke, 1980; Parvin and Kabir, 2011).

Leading organizations from across the word from both private and public sector decide to 'invest large amounts of time, energy, and financial resources in conducting employee surveys' (Sanchez, 2007) to support future initiatives that will contribute to higher levels of satisfaction and engagement of the workforce and address two of the major concerns of organizations nowadays: voluntary turnover and employee performance.

Employee engagement was defined by Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) as 'the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work'.

Ledimo and Martins (2015) consider that 'organizations are constantly faced with the challenge of organizational transformation, which has an impact on attracting and retaining talent in the world of work. The concern is that employee dissatisfaction is a threat to an organization faced with transformation, as it may lead to turnover and difficulties in attracting top talent if it is not identified and addressed'. Moreover, Harter *et al.* (2010) emphasize that 'employee perceptions of work cause future organizational outcomes such as employee retention, customer loyalty, and financial performance'.

Therefore, successful organizations today actively try to understand employee work perceptions, fulfil their expectations and create an impact on employee performance and retention.

CIPD (2018) advises that 'employees who have good quality jobs and are managed well, will not only be happier, healthier and more fulfilled, but are also more likely to drive productivity, better products or services, and innovation.'

Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) highlight that 'Employee Engagement is a concept that gained significant importance in the past 10 years' and that was demonstrated by many studies that it impacts employee performance. Bakker (2011), when defining the term of employee engagement, considers 'work engagement is different from job satisfaction in that it combines high work pleasure (dedication) with high activation (vigor, absorption); job satisfaction is typically a more passive form of employee well-being'. He also underlines that 'work engagement is a better prediction for job performance' and Caillier (2011) emphasizes that work satisfaction impact on employee intention to leave the organization.

2. Objectives and methodology of research

The aim of our study is to reveal what are the main strengths and weaknesses that could affect the employee engagement and work satisfaction and to recommend some measures in order to increase the performance of a public company.

The methodology consists in a case study where we had implemented a satisfaction and engagement survey for a mining company from the public sector in Romania which decided to conduct this survey annually.

Sanchez (2007) specifies that 'employee engagement is the ultimate outcome of employee surveying however, employee surveys often fail in their strategic aims'. He identified 'ten key stumbling blocks to employee survey success as: project planning, communication, questionnaire design, timing, prioritization of issues, engaging senior management, data delivery, follow-up support, monitoring and accountability, and linking survey results to business outcomes'.

When we had implemented the employee satisfaction and engagement survey for the public company that is the subject of this case study, we had considered and addressed all these stumbling blocks to ensure survey success.

The questionnaire is administrated yearly to a representative sample of the existing workforce to understand the factors that contribute to engagement and what are the development areas. This case study analyses the results from 2018 and makes a comparison between satisfaction indexes from 2017 and 2018.

In this project, we had assisted the public company with the review of the questionnaire, administration, analysis and reporting on findings of the employee engagement survey. We have worked closely with the public company's HR team and general manager to ensure success of the survey administration, and we have prepared extensive recommendations for improving employee satisfaction and engagement.

In 2018, we had sent invitations to fill in the questionnaire to a representative sample of 401 employees. 351 employees responded to the invitation and completed the survey. Anonymity of the respondents was one of the principles agreed, and the data collected for the purpose of this survey did not allow for the respondents to be identified.

Based on the results of the 2018 survey, an action plan was developed to support the public company in its initiatives that will contribute to higher levels of engagement of the workforce. The action plan addresses the main development areas identified.

The employee survey investigated the level of the public company's workforce satisfaction and engagement in eight branches. Employees with management responsibilities were considered a separate group in the data analysis.

2.1. Survey questionnaire and rating scale

We have reviewed the survey questionnaire that was already developed by the public company and decided to amend one of the items to provide better clarity for respondents. Even though, in our opinion the questionnaire could have been improved, no other changes have been made to allow for year to year comparison of the results.

The demographic data collected was the name of the branch and if the respondent was part of the management group. No other demographic data was collected. The questionnaire included 51 questions grouped in 9 categories as it is illustrated in the table below.

Table 1: Categories and number of questions

Category	No. of questions
Engagement	9
Management style	5
Client orientation	3
Teamwork	4
Company strategy	4
Performance and development	7
Line management	8
Health and safety	6
Ability to change	5

Each of the 9 categories had an open-ended question to allow the employees to submit their feedback and comments. The questionnaire was automated in an online dedicated software, and it was piloted by representatives from the public company and by us. The rating scale used was a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

2.2. Administration of the survey questionnaire

We used a stratified sampling technique to define a representative sample of employees from all departments and job role families. The list with selected employees was sent to the public company's HR to formally invite the employees to fill in the questionnaire. In 2018, from a sample of 401 employees, 351 employees responded to the survey. The response rate was 87.53%.

The questionnaire was administered online and in paper and pen version for the employees who did not have access to email. From the 351 employees that responded to the survey, 119 employees responded online and 232 responded using the paper and pen version of the questionnaire.

2.3. Analysis, reporting and action plan

The conclusions and the main points highlighted in the survey report are based on descriptive statistical analysis of the data at three levels: at the organization level, by category of questions and for each item.

Open-ended questions were not analyzed however, the comments submitted by the employees were attached to the report. In order to protect anonymity, comments that directly referred to some of the public company's employees and allowed them to be identified or indicated the respondent were not included in the report. Also, comments that used inappropriate language were removed.

Satisfaction index was calculated as a percentage of the sum of all the scores obtained from the sum of the maximum possible scores for each analyzed category. In 2018, the calculation of favorability was added to this analysis. Favorability was considered the percentage of favorable responses from the total number of responses.

The action plan developed as a result of the survey administered in 2018 addressed 5 development areas identified by the items with the lowest percentage of favorable responses. The action plan described the objective, success measure, the steps that have to be taken to achieve the objective and the success indicators. Further, the public company had to fill in the action plan with the name of the person responsible for each step and the deadlines.

3. Findings

Based on the data collected through the survey questionnaire, we have developed a comprehensive report that was discussed in detail with the public company management.

3.1. Satisfaction index

Overall, comparing the results from the survey administered in 2017 and 2018, the satisfaction index increased by 1.5%.

3.2. Highlights of the results for the survey administered in 2018

The most positive findings of the survey were that 79.46% of the participants responded favorable to the questions of the survey, and that 76.76% of the participants do not consider changing their job.

Table 2: Satisfaction index for each category of questions for 2017 and 2018

Category	Satisfaction index	
	2017	2018
Engagement	74.8%	74.1%
Management style	70.5%	67.8%
Client orientation	81.1%	79.0%
Teamwork	76.2%	75.7%
Company strategy	65.4%	75.6%
Performance and development	65.2%	69.0%
Line management	73.4%	75.9%
Health and safety	77.4%	77.3%
Ability to change	66.7%	67.0%
Total	71.8%	73.3%

The categories of questions with the highest number of favorable answers were 'customer orientation', 'health and safety' and 'teamwork', and the categories with the smallest number of favorable answers were 'performance and development', 'management style' and 'ability to change'.

Table 3: Favorability for each category of questions for 2018

Category	Favorability
Engagement	79.82%
Management style	71.62%
Customer orientation	88.06%
Teamwork	83.86%
Company strategy	83.38%
Performance and development	71.98%
Line management	83.76%
Health and safety	85.47%
Ability to change	71.09%
Total	79.46%

One of the findings is that most employees consider they understand how their work contributes to achieving company's objectives and they are willing to use their knowledge and abilities and to make a constant effort to help the company. Also, most employees consider they actively try to understand clients' needs and expectation and that their line manager involves them in solving work related problems.

Table 4: The first 5 strengths identified through employee survey

Item	Favorability
I understand how my work contributes to achieving company's objectives	93.39%
In our work we actively try to understand clients' needs and expectations	94.13%
In my work I use my knowledge and abilities	94.15%
My line manager involves me in solving work related problems	95.38%
I am willing to make a constant effort to help my company	96.54%

Regarding the development areas, we have identified that employees are least satisfied with how the public company rewards and retains talented employees and top performers and how the management encourage and supports the professional development of the employees to achieve their maximum performance. Also, from the comments submitted by the respondents, we understood some employees are not happy with their salary level.

An important area of development that we have identified relates to stress at work and this was given a special attention because, as Kang and Singh (2006) con-

sidered 'stress at work is a critical factor in the determination of employee health and well-being and also has important implications for organizational effectiveness'.

Table 5: The first 5 development areas identified through employee survey

Item	Favorability
The company recognizes and rewards performance with other methods than through salaries and benefits	46.90%
The company supports the professional development of its employees to achieve their maximum performance	63.16%
The management style encourages the employees to give their best	66.47%
Sometimes I feel pressure in my job	66.86%
The best (most talented) people are retained in the company	67.92%

4. Recommendations for the action plan

The recommendations for the action plan addressed the first 5 development areas identified by the items with the lowest percentage of favorable responses. For each of the development areas, we have developed recommendations for improvement that included the objective, success measure, the steps that have to be taken to achieve the objective and the success indicators.

The public company had to review the recommendations and their resources and fill in the action plan template with the name of the person responsible for each step and the deadlines.

4.1. Item 1: The Company recognizes and rewards performance with other methods than through salaries and benefits

The problem we have identified through this survey item is that 53.10% of the employees, more than half, believe that performance is not recognized and rewarded accordingly other than through salaries and benefits. The objective of the measures we recommended for addressing this this problem was to implement a performance recognition program that will raise the satisfaction level for this item with 15% in the next year employee survey where the favorability calculated for this item should be at a minimum of 61.90%.

The steps we recommended for the implementation of a recognition program were:

– To identify a type of performance recognition program according to the public company's available resources, for example: employee of the month, design and implementation of a performance management program, etc.
– To develop the program including all the policies and procedures;
– To develop all training materials and the guide of the program to support implementation;

– To conduct training sessions for the managers and to disseminate the performance recognition program guide.

4.2. Item 2: The Company supports the professional development of its employees to achieve their maximum performance

The problem we have identified through this survey item is that 36.84% of the employees, believe that the public company does not support the professional development of its employees. The objective of the measures we recommended for addressing this problem was to implement training programs for the company's employees that will raise the satisfaction level for this item with 15% in the next year employee survey where the favorability calculated for this item should be at a minimum of 78.16%.

The steps we recommended for the implementation of training programs were:
– To conduct and properly document a training needs analysis across the company and each of its branches;
– To develop and approve the training calendar;
– To develop the training programs for those areas where the public company has available resources to develop the training programs in-house;
– To conduct in-house training sessions for all concerned employees;
– To identify external providers for the training programs where the public company does not have internal resources; and
– All the designated employees to attend the external training sessions.

4.3. Item 3: The management style encourages the employees to give their best

The problem we have identified through this survey item is that 33.53% of the employees, believe that the management style does not encourage the employees to give their best. The objective of the measures we recommended was to implement a leadership program that will increase the managers' abilities to motivate the employees and that should raise the satisfaction level for this item with 10% in the next year employee survey where the favorability calculated for this item to be at a minimum of 76.47%.

The steps we recommended for the implementation of a leadership program were:
– To organize a development center for the public company's managers where specific psychometric tools are used to identify strengths and development areas related to their leadership skills;
– To identify external providers for a leadership program that addresses the development areas identified through the development center and also includes the development of the abilities to lead and motivate the employees; and
– All the nominated managers to attend the leadership training program.

4.4. Item 4: Sometimes I feel pressured in my job

The problem we have identified through the survey item is that 33.14% of the employees feel pressured in their job. The objective of the measure we recommended was to identify and address the work-related stressors and to address them accordingly. This measure should raise the satisfaction level for this item with 10% in the next year employee survey where the favorability calculated for this item should be at a minimum of 76.86%.

The steps we recommended for this measure were:
- To identify the work stressors through structured interviews and focus groups for different categories of employees. Examples of work stressors are: lack of clarity regarding reporting lines and work tasks, insecurity regarding the workplace, lack of communication and support from line managers, lack of internal equity, etc. Work stressors shall be identified and prioritized according with their importance;
- To develop an action plan to address the identified stressors also considering available resources;
- To monitor the timely implementation of the action plan.

4.5. Item 5: The best (most talented) people are retained by the company

The problem we have identified through the survey item is that 32.08% of the employees believe that the most talented people are not retained by the public company. The objective of the measures we recommended was to implement a program to identify and retain talent and this should raise the satisfaction level for this item with 10% in the next year employee survey where the favorability calculated for this item should be at a minimum of 77.92%.

The steps we recommended for the implementation of a leadership program were:
- To develop a methodology to identify the most talented employees, for example: setting criteria, regular documentation of performance, implementation of a performance management system, etc.;
- To identify the performance related rewards that would lead to employee retention, for example: performance bonus, career development, etc. The methods that could be used for this include: exit interviews, interviews with top performers, focus groups, etc.;
- To develop the calendar and implement the reward program.

5. Conclusions

Companies not just from private sector, by from public sector as well, consider an employee survey as a great tool for identifying strengths and development ar-

eas to set the basis for the development of a specific, measurable action plan that can be implemented to address employee satisfaction that will support a better employee retention and employee engagement that will increase individual performance. Further, this type of approach in understanding and improving work perception also addresses the complaints made by some about the usefulness of the insights provided by an employee survey as long as the development areas are not addressed properly. It makes the connection between the pure investigative role of the employee survey and the actions that have to be taken to address the issues.

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The Analysis of Regional Operational Programme Implementation in Romanian Counties During 2007-2013[*]

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Abstract. As seven of the eight development regions of Romania are considered less developed, our country received considerable resources for reducing the social and economic disparities between its regions and European regions and for raising the living conditions of the population. The Regional Operational Programme (ROP) is one of the instruments of EU Regional Policy which contributes to regional development, so the analysis of its implementation and impact on the economic and social development of Romanian counties and their resilience are topics of interest for researchers.

The main objective of our research was to identify the main obstacles encountered in the implementation process of the projects financed from ROP and to analyze the impact of this programme on the economic and social development of the counties, in order to observe if ROP could influence the counties' resilience. In the end, we proposed measures for the improvement of the ROP implementation process.

The study revealed that 95% of the respondents considered that the projects financed by ROP played a very important role in the economic and social development of the counties. Concerning the main fields where this programme had a major impact, the respondents considered that ROP contributed the most to the development of the transport infrastructure of the counties, health services, and social services.

Keywords: Regional Operational Programme, economic and social development, regional resilience, European Projects, Regional Policy.

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1. Introduction

The European Union is a competitive area at the global level which continues its economic, social and cultural development. Since the EU has undergone many expansions, especially after 2004, when twelve new Member States joined the Union, the differences between the Member States and their regions in terms of prosperity, productivity and development have become increasingly visible. Even if the EU, through its mechanisms and actions, has continued to channel its efforts in order to reduce the significant economic, social and territorial disparities from the regional level, these differences still remained very high. In this context, the European funds are playing a very important role in the harmonious development of European regions and in reducing social and economic disparities between them.

Many European countries, especially in the early post-accession, have faced difficulties with the structural fund's absorption. The most mentioned reasons have been: the lack of strategic long-term planning, especially on local level, insufficient funds for co-financing, low administrative capacity of the public administration, the lack of coordination between institutions, public-private partnerships failures and insufficiently qualified human resources (Zaman and Georgescu, 2009, p. 136), causes that would undoubtedly be mentioned in Romania's case, too. Absorption of EU structural funds represents an opportunity to support economic growth and reduce development disparities between regions, a problem which has become a new challenge for Romania after the economic crisis.

The Regional Operational Programme (ROP) is an instrument used to implement national strategies and policies regarding regional development. The analysis of ROP implementation and its impact on the economic and social development and resilience of the Romanian counties is a topic of interest because the program financed job creation, activities meant to develop the transport, social, education and health infrastructure, and tourism and business environment. The development of these fields could lead to better living conditions for the population, lower unemployment and GDP growth, contributing to the economic resilience.

Balanced development of all regions of the country could be achieved through an integrated approach, based on a combination of government investments in local infrastructure, active policies to stimulate business activities and support for marketing local resources, through 13 major intervention areas grouped in six axes (North-East Regional Development Agency, 2014).

Taking into account that, in the present, Romania is in the second financial exercise (2014-2020) the analysis of ROP implementation in the previous period and its impact could help to identify the best practices from the previous period, the errors committed by public administration from counties' level in order to reveal the most important obstacles in the program's implementation and prevent them in the present financial exercise. Moreover, an impact analysis of ROP on the de-

velopment of the Romanian counties could create a comprehensive view of where ROP have had the greatest success. The analysis of a program of such importance for the economic development of counties and regions could contribute to an improved implementation process in 2014-2020. The conclusions from the first period of ROP implementation should help the actors implicated in the present implementation period by transferring the best practices and eliminating the causes of the obstacles that stood against an efficient implementation process in the previous period.

The Regional Operational Programme is perhaps the most important tool by which the EU can contribute to the development of its regions. Because ROP should have an impact over the GDP and employment rate, it should have an impact on the resilience of the counties, too and help them to resist or recover after economic shocks. If ROP projects create workplaces and manage to reduce the unemployment rate and contribute to the counties' GDP growth, the economies of these counties should become more resilient to economic shocks, like a new economic crisis.

Given the fact that ROP supports projects which create jobs, develop counties and regional infrastructure and support entrepreneurs, the programme should be considered as a factor which influences local and regional resilience.

2. Romanian development regions and counties: their evolution during time

Ever since before Romania became a Member State of the EU, our governments had been concerned about taking measures which should have led to a balanced development of the country mainly through absorption of European funds. To this aim, in 1998, eight development regions have been created in order to allow the orientation of national regional policy towards major reductions of regional disparities between the developed areas and less developed (Profiroiu and Profiroiu, 2013, p. 6). These regions do not have legal personality and they are not considered administrative units. The regions were created by agreement between the counties and local authorities and each region was comprised of several counties (Law no. 315/2004).

Romanian regions are considered less developed, Bucharest-Ilfov being the only region in transition (Eurostat, 2017). In the 2007-2013 financial exercise, all Romanian regions were considered less-developed, including Bucharest-Ilfov. In this context, our country received considerable resources for reducing social and economic disparities between its regions and European regions and for raising the living standards (30 billion euros in 2007-2013, 33 billion euros in 2014-2020) (North-East Regional Development Agency, 2014; Ministry of European Funds, 2016). Improved living conditions could be achieved through programs which

should have led to job creation, an increasing GDP per capita, development of transport, social, education and health infrastructure. If opportunities and a framework for Romanian counties to develop and occupy higher positions in European rankings would be created, our counties would contribute more to the economic, social and cultural development of our country and they would become more resilient to economic shocks.

The accession of Romania to the European Union has led to the necessity of focusing our country's efforts towards actions meant to raise living standards and contribute to the development of the eight regions created in 1998 in order for them to become competitive and sustainable. Among the regions of Europe, the Romanian North-East region was considered the least developed region in the whole EU and Vaslui County was ranked the last in terms of economic and social indicators (Eurostat, 2013).

In 2016, the most underdeveloped regions in the EU were: Severozapaden from Bulgaria with a GDP per capita of 29% of the EU average, followed by Mayotte in France (33%), Severen Tsentralen and Yuzhen Tsentralen in Bulgaria (both 34%) and the North-East of Romania, with a GDP per capita of 36% of the European average. Among the 21 regions with a GDP per capita below 50% of the European average, five regions were located in Bulgaria, five in Poland, four in Hungary, three in Romania, three in Greece and one in France (Eurostat, 2017).

In 2016, the most developed region in Europe belonged to the United Kingdom with a GDP per capita of 611% of the European average, 21 times more than the most underdeveloped region in the EU and 17 times more than the North-East region.

At the national level, the ratio between the least developed region of Romania (North-East) and the most developed region (Bucharest-Ilfov) was 4 because GDP per capita in Bucharest-Ilfov was 139% compared to the European average, while the North-East region had a GDP of 36% of the European average. Vaslui remained the poorest county in the EU, with an income of 3,054 euros in terms of purchasing power standards per capita (Eurostat, 2017).

This situation showed that the central government and local authorities needed to concentrate their efforts in order to minimize the differences between Romanian regions and the European in transition or developed regions using the structural funds allocated by the European Union and create an opportunity for the citizens to improve their lives' standards and live like authentic European citizens.

In the first financial exercise since Romania has become an EU member (2007-2013), our country faced many difficulties. That period could be considered an exercise useful for learning and adapting to European reality and to the rules of the European Community.

The study of Regional Operational Programme impact over counties should reveal where these funds have generated the development of the regions, counties,

and municipalities, from the perspective of the beneficiaries. Moreover, this analysis could show the errors committed by the authorities with responsibilities in this area, difficulties and reasons behind the problems encountered, in order for them to be corrected and changed during the 2014-2020 financial exercise.

The financial exercise 2007-2013 should have helped Romania to accommodate with the rules, regulations and European directives, to gain experience in managing and implementing European funded programs and learn how to correct the errors in order for the new financial exercise to have a greater impact and positive effect on the development of Romanian regions.

3. The absorption of structural funds in Romania in the 2007-2013 financial exercise

During the financial crisis, in Romania, the GDP per capita has lowered and the unemployment rate has grown. The potential contribution of financial assistance from the EU represented an opportunity to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis over the Romanian economy. In the 2007-2013 financial exercise, Romania has been granted financial assistance from the EU of 19.7 billion euros. 98% of funds were allocated to the seven Operational Programmes (OP) under the 'Convergence' objective. The Regional Operational Programme (ROP) had an allocation of 4.4 billion euros for supporting social and economic development at the regional level by improving infrastructure and business environment (Constantin, 2013).

Even if the structural funds could have had a significant contribution to the welfare of the Romanian regions, especially in the unfavorable economic context existing at that time, in the middle of the financial exercise a series of concerns about the absorption capacity of our country have been raised. In a Report revealed by the European Commission in 2010 about the implementation of Operational Programmes, Romania occupied the second last place among European countries concerning the absorption rate (EurActiv, 2010). By the end of 2012, the absorption rate in Romania was 20.70% of structural and cohesion funds. Compared with the absorption rate of 45.15% registered in the EU, Romania was far behind similar states as the level of economic development: Poland – 51,30%, Slovenia – 47,60%, Hungary – 43%, Czech Republic – 37% and Bulgaria – 28% (Insideurope, 2013).

The highest absorption rate was registered by the Development of Administrative Capacity Operational Programme, with a percentage of 43.25%, followed by ROP with 42.2%. Compared to the average absorption rate at EU level, Romania was far behind the only countries with a rate below 30% by the end of 2012, Bulgaria (28.5%) and Italy (28%) (Constantin, 2013).

After the improvement of the economic context, by the end of October 2015, Romania had an absorption rate of 58.67% and by the end of October 2016, the rate increased to 80.16% (Ministry of European Funds, 2016).

Even though Romania encountered numerous obstacles in implementing Operational Programmes, for the 2014-2020 period our country has received 18% more financial allocation than in the 2007-2013 period. However, due to lower absorption capacity, the allocation of EU funds per capita was lower for Romania than for other new Member States. To increase the opportunities to spend money, the EU adopted a series of measures meant to strengthen the administrative capacity, to assume administrative responsibility, to simplify procedures, because the complexity of rules often led to errors and delays (Constantin, 2013). Whether these measures will have a positive effect and will help Romania to increase the absorption capacity of these funds, it will be established at the end of the 2014-2020 financial exercise.

4. The ROP and regional resilience

Resilience is the capacity of a system to adapt to external shocks by bouncing back to its original state or go forward to a new state of equilibrium (Mitchell and Harris, 2012, p. 2). Swanstrom (2008, p. 10) considered that 'a resilient region would be one in which markets and local political structures continually adapt to changing environmental conditions and only when these processes fail, often due to misguided intervention by higher-level authorities which stifle their ability to innovate, is the system forced to alter the big structures'.

Studies about resilience revealed that there are two ways in which a system can recover from a shock: either 'bounce back' or 'bounce forward' (Giacometi *et al.*, 2018, p. 17). When a region can absorb a shock or a disturbance without changing its core functions, it bounces back. If its characteristics have extremely changed, making it impossible to return to its initial state, the region must bounce forward (Bonß, 2016).

There are factors that contribute to regional resilience. Studies revealed that the most resilient regions are characterized by industrial diversification, high capacity of export, low financial restraints, and the development of human capital (Di Caro, 2015).

Taking into account the factors that influence regional resilience, it could be assumed that a successful implementation of ROP projects could help at strengthening regional resilience. A regional economy is influenced by the evolution of the economies from the subregional level. The social and economic development of Romanian counties, influence directly the economies of the regions they belong to. As ROP invests in the economic and social development of the counties, the analysis of the programmes' implementation in Romanian counties, should show if it contributed at strengthening local and regional economies, making them more resilient to shocks.

5. Methodology of research

5.1. Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the research was to identify the obstacles encountered in the implementation process of ROP financed projects and to propose measures in order to improve the implementation process in the 2014-2020 financial exercise.

The study had three specific objectives:

O1: To identify the impact of ROP financed projects on the infrastructure and business environment in Romanian counties.

O2: To identify the most important obstacles encountered in the implementation of ROP financed projects by the persons responsible with ROP implementation from the Romanian County Councils.

O3. To observe if ROP implementation contributed to counties' resilience.

5.2. Research questions of the study

We started the present research from four research questions:

R1: Which is the opinion of the persons responsible with ROP implementation from the County Councils concerning the importance of ROP financed projects on the economic and social development of the Romanian counties?

R2: Which are the most important obstacles encountered in the implementation process of ROP financed projects in 2007-2013 financial exercise?

R3: Which was the contribution of ROP financed projects to the development of transport infrastructure from the Romanian counties?

R4: Which was the impact of ROP financed projects on the evolution of the employment rate?

5.3. Research design and data collection

The methodology of research consists of an opinion survey which has been conducted using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was applied in all 41 County Councils of Romania and it was fulfilled by the persons responsible for ROP implementation from every County Council. The questionnaire included 21 questions regarding the effects of the projects financed from the Regional Operational Programme and the obstacles encountered in their implementation. The questionnaire included 20 closed questions and one open question and it was administrated via email. We received answers from the persons responsible with ROP implementation from each County Council and we had a number of 41 respondents.

From the 41 respondents, 20 occupied positions of public manager, 20 respondents were executive civil servants and one respondent occupied the position of senior civil servant.

The questionnaire was applied in every County Council of Romania and it was fulfilled by the persons responsible with ROP implementation. The questionnaire was sent via email and one person from the departments assigned for ROP implementation from every County Council has answered our questions. The collected data was processed in Microsoft Excel and SPSS and the results were used to answer the research questions of the study and to propose measures in order to improve ROP implementation.

19% (eight respondents) had between one and five years of experience, 37% (15 respondents) had between six and ten years of experience, 10% (four respondents) had between 11 and 15 years of experience, 27% (11 respondents) had between 16 and 20 years of experience and only 7% (three respondents) had over 20 years of experience. From the total number of respondents, 80% occupied positions in the County Councils during the implementation of Regional Operational Programme in 2007-2013 period.

Regarding the number of projects in which the respondents have been directly involved since they occupied positions in the County Councils, it could be observed that 46% (19 respondents) have participated to more than 7 projects and 22% (9 respondents) have been involved in 5-7 projects. The results show that only 10% have little experience concerning projects implementation since they have been involved only in 1-3 projects. The majority of respondents (90%) have been involved directly in more than 3 projects since they have occupied positions within the County Councils.

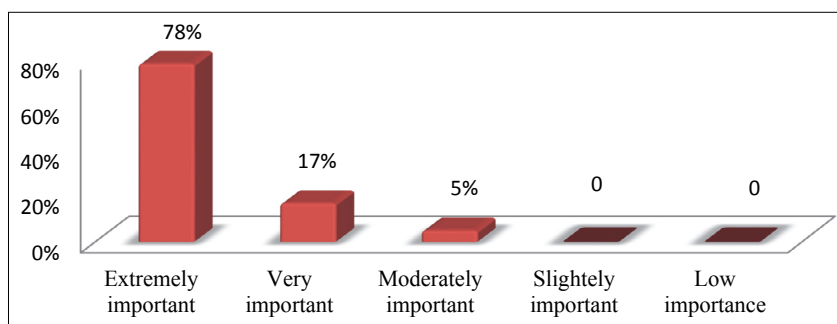## 6. Main findings of the research

Figure 1: The importance of ROP financed projects
on the economic and social development of the Romanian counties
Source: Authors.

In the first part of the questionnaire, we asked our respondents their opinion regarding the importance of ROP financed projects on the economic and social development of the Romanian counties, based on their experience in project man-

agement and on ROP implementation results. It could be observed that 95% of the respondents considered that ROP played an extremely important and very important role in the economic and social development of Romanian counties. Perhaps because the ROP invested in the most important areas for the general development of the counties and regions, none of the respondents considered that the programme was slightly important or had low importance in the economic and social development process of our counties.

The next question concerned the respondents' opinion about the most important obstacles encountered in the implementation process of the ROP financed projects. We asked the persons responsible with ROP implementation to evaluate on a scale from 1 to 5 to what extent the complex procurement process, the insufficient qualified human resources, the communication between partners, the delays in pre-financing, the low level of the pre-finance and the bureaucratic process of submitting the reimbursement requests represented obstacles encountered in the implementation process of the projects. We intended to establish if the obstacles most mentioned in the literature review about Operational Programmes were also encountered in the case of Romania.
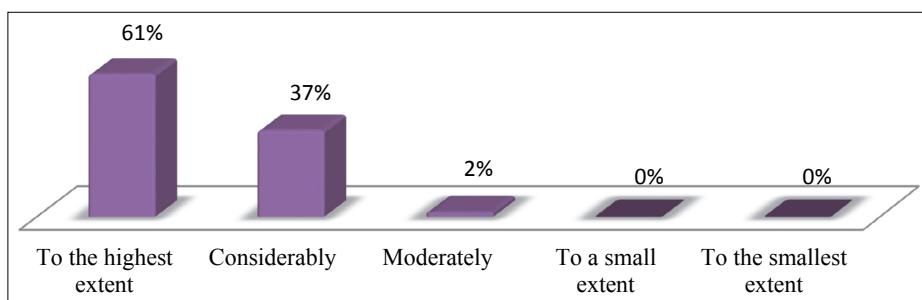
Figure 2: Complex procurement process
Source: Authors.

The results showed that the majority of the respondents (98%) considered that the complex procurement process represented an important obstacle faced into the implementation process. Given the fact that based on their experience in ROP implementation, none of the respondents considered that the procurement process represented an obstacle to a small or to the smallest extent, the results could be concerning and could represent a threat for the ROP because the potential beneficiaries could be determined to give up at trying to access European funding.

Public procurement was an obstacle often mentioned in the development and implementation of all Operational Programmes. The complex procedures were an impediment for the well-functioning of the implementation process. The problem could be related to the experience and competencies of the persons responsible

with public procurement, who could face many difficulties during projects implementation, due to their lack of knowledge on the subject. Public procurement should be a matter of interest for the national Government which has the competence to simplify the procedures for all Operational Programmes and to establish this field as a priority for the National Strategy for Public Servants Training.
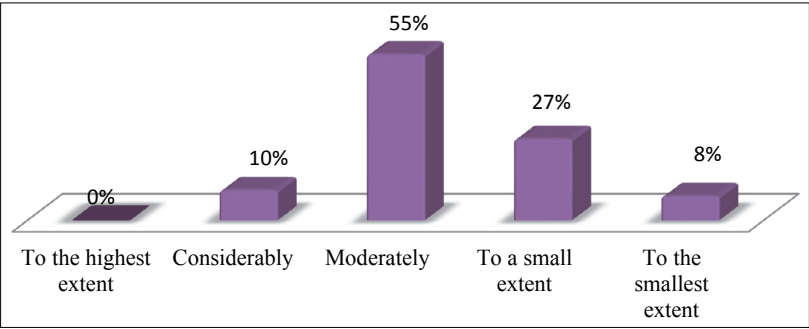
Figure 3: Insufficient training of human resources within the local/county public administration
Source: Authors.

Even if the lack of qualified human resources was a problem often mentioned in relation to the implementation process of Operational Programmes projects, the majority (55%) of the respondents considered that in the 2007-2013 financial exercise, the insufficient training of human resources from local or county public administration represented a moderate obstacle. Taking into account that none of the respondents considered that qualified human resources represented an obstacle to the highest extent and only 10% named it as a considerable obstacle it could be assumed that the human resources from local and county public administration started to gain experience and the necessary skills in order to implement projects with European funding in a performing and efficient manner. As 35% of the respondents
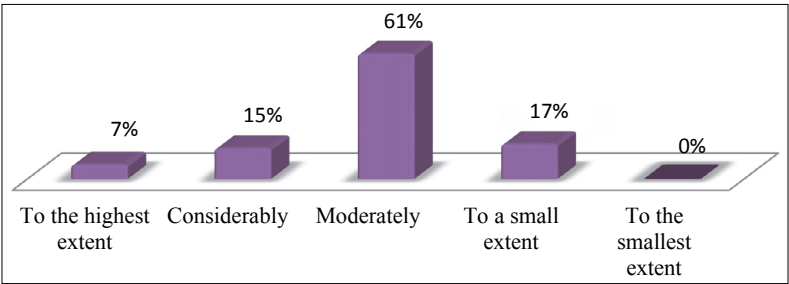
Figure 4: Communication between partners
Source: Authors.

supposed that human resources qualification represented an obstacle to a small and to the smallest extent, we concluded that the human resources from the public administration have benefited of a training process which showed good results.

Asked about the communication between partners, the majority of respondents (61%) gave to this subject medium importance and only 22% considered the matter as being a considerably and to the highest extent obstacle met into the implementation process. Given the importance of the communication process into the well-functioning of the projects' implementation, the results showed that the County Councils as beneficiaries of ROP should improve the communication process between them and their partners, by establishing clear rules, modern communication channels and design a new framework. The County Councils as beneficiaries should organize meetings with their partners at least monthly, delegate a person responsible with the relationship with the partners and deliver permanent support for their partners.
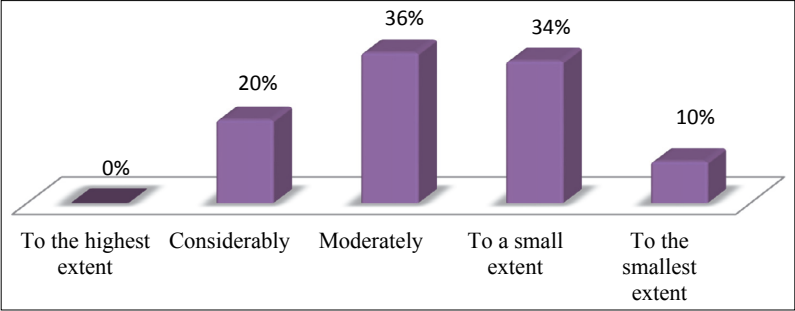
Figure 5: Delays in pre-financing
Source: Authors.
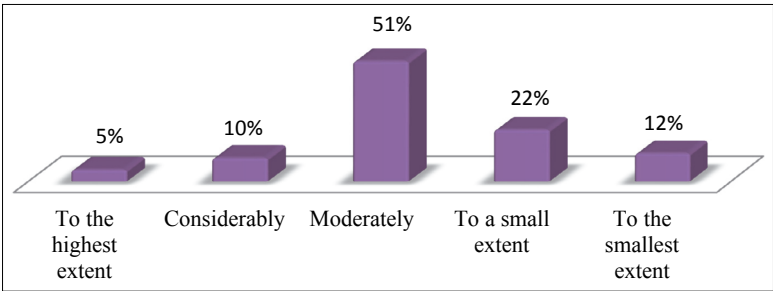
Figure 6: Low value of the pre-finance
Source: Authors.

Regarding the delays in pre-financing, a major part of the respondents (44%) considered it an obstacle to a small and to the smallest extent. 36% of the persons

questioned attributed to this matter, medium importance and only 20% considered it a major obstacle which affected the implementation process.

Similar results were displayed when the respondents were asked to what extent they considered the low value of pre-finance as being an obstacle in the implementation process. 34% of the respondents attributed low importance to this obstacle and 15% considered it as being a major obstacle.

It could be assumed that the respondents, who considered the pre-financing a matter of great importance, were working in less-developed counties, which have limited resources for projects' implementation.
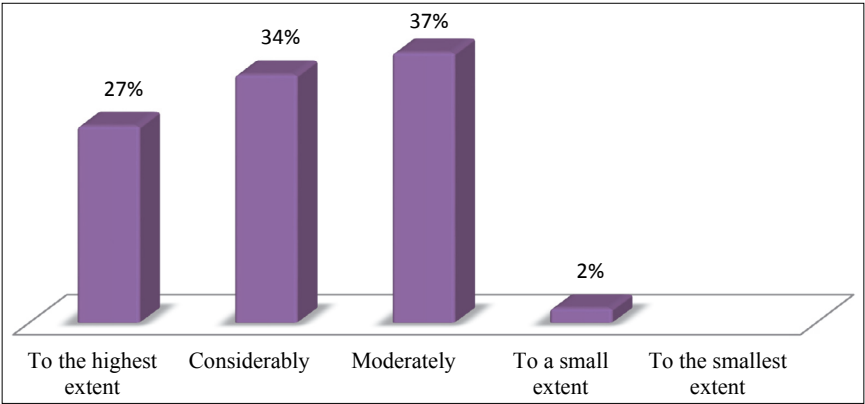
Figure 7: Bureaucratic process of submitting reimbursement requests
Source: Authors.

The bureaucracy was one of the most mentioned impediments by beneficiaries and all actors interested in implementing projects funded from Operational Programmes. 61% of the County Councils responsible with ROP implementation considered the bureaucratic process of submitting reimbursement requests was an
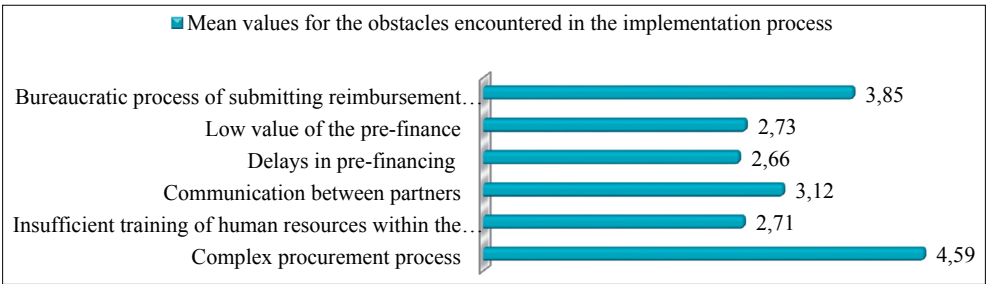
Figure 8: Obstacles encountered in ROP implementation process
Source: Authors.

obstacle to the highest extent and considerably. In this context, the results revealed the need for simplification of the reimbursement process because bureaucracy represented a threat to the well-functioning of ROP financed projects implementation.

Mean values for each obstacle encountered in the implementation process were calculated. It could be observed that the persons implicated in the ROP financed projects from all the County Councils of Romania considered that the most important obstacle was the complex procurement process. The respondents rated as the second most important obstacle the bureaucratic process of submitting reimbursement requests and the communication between partners was ranked in the third place. These could be considered the most important areas where improvement measures should be implemented in the 2014-2020 financial period in order for the programme to be implemented in an efficient manner. The procurement process should be simplified, which is only possible through the change of national legislation concerning public procurement. The bureaucratic process is another aspect which should be taken into account by the national Government which should simplify the procedures for all Operational Programmes.
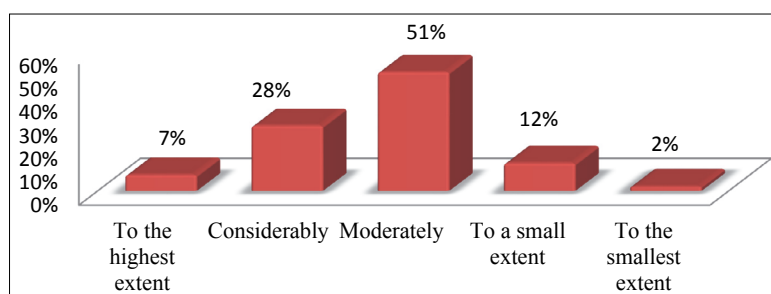
Figure 9: The impact of ROP financed projects on the increase of the employment rate
Source: Authors.

Regarding the ROP impact on the increase of the employment rate, 35% of the persons questioned had the opinion that ROP contributed to the increase of the employment rate to the highest extent and considerably, comparatively with only 14% that considered to have a small or the smallest extent influence. The majority of the respondents appreciated that ROP contributed moderately to the increase in the employment rate, which was one of the main objectives of ROP implementation. Consequently, it was expected that the impact of ROP on the employment rate to be a major one. Even if ROP succeeded to create a number of jobs higher than the established target (target – 20,000 new workplaces and new workplaces created – 24,582) (Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, 2017), the impact on the employment rate was moderate or even minimum, because the financial crisis caused a considerable decrease of the employment rate.

In the studied period, the counties' economies were exposed to an economic shock – the financial crisis and the results regarding the employment rate showed that the counties were not as resilient as it could be expected; however, ROP succeeded to contribute to the counties' resilience to a small or medium extent.

On the next section of the questionnaire, we asked our respondents to share their opinion concerning the contribution of ROP financed projects to the development of transport and education infrastructure, health and social services, enterprise and tourism development and cultural heritage from their counties. We asked the persons responsible with ROP implementation to rank on a scale from one to five to what extent the implemented projects contributed to the economic and social development of the counties (where five meant that ROP contributed to the highest extent and one meant that ROP contributed to the smallest extent).

The majority of the respondents (86%) considered that the ROP contributed to the highest extent and considerably to the modernization and rehabilitation of the counties' transport infrastructure. We considered that the transport infrastructure at counties' level referred to County roads, ring roads, and urban streets. Only 5% (two respondents) considered that ROP financed projects did not have a major impact on the development of this field.

Regarding the health services, the opinion of 78% of the respondents was that ROP contributed to the highest extent and considerably to the rehabilitation/modernization/equipping of health infrastructure. The results showed that the respondents considered that ROP had a major impact on the development of health infrastructure and only 7% believed that the programme contributed to health services' improvement only to a small extent.

The rate of the respondents who considered that ROP contributed to the highest extent and considerably to the development of the social services field was lower. However, the majority (67%) appreciated that ROP played a major role in the rehabilitation and modernization of social services infrastructure. Only 9% of the respondents considered that ROP contributed to a small extent or to the smallest extent at the development of this field.

Regarding the impact of the projects over the education infrastructure, the majority of the respondents (51%) considered that ROP contributed to the highest extent and considerably to the rehabilitation/modernization/development and equipping of the pre-university educational infrastructure, academic infrastructure and to the continuing professional development.

Only 37% of the respondents considered that ROP stimulated enterprise development to the highest extent and considerably. A large number of respondents (46%) considered that ROP impact was moderate and 17% had the opinion that ROP had a minor impact on this area.

This result could be concerning because ROP should have had a greater impact on business development. If ROP managed to develop the business environment, more jobs could have been created and ROP impact over the counties GDP growth would have been considerable.

Concerning the cultural heritage, the majority of the respondents (54%) considered that ROP played a major role in the development of this area. We considered that the cultural heritage development could be achieved through the restoration and sustainable valorization of cultural heritage, as well as the creation/modernization of related infrastructures. Only 9% of the respondents considered that ROP contribution to the development of cultural heritage was to a small or to the smallest extent.

We asked the respondents' opinion regarding ROP impact over the development and modernization of tourism infrastructure in order to capitalize the natural resources and increase the quality of tourism services. 42% of the respondents considered that ROP contributed to the highest extent and considerably to tourism infrastructure development and 19% believed that the programme did not have a great impact over this area.

Concerning tourism promotion, 47% of the respondents had the opinion that ROP contributed to the highest extent and considerably at promoting the touristic potential and creating the necessary infrastructure in order to increase the attractiveness of Romania as a tourist destination. 14% of the persons we asked had the opinion that ROP contributed only to a small and to the smallest extent at tourism promotion.

This could be a consequence of the fact that Romania did not have a national strategy regarding tourism development.
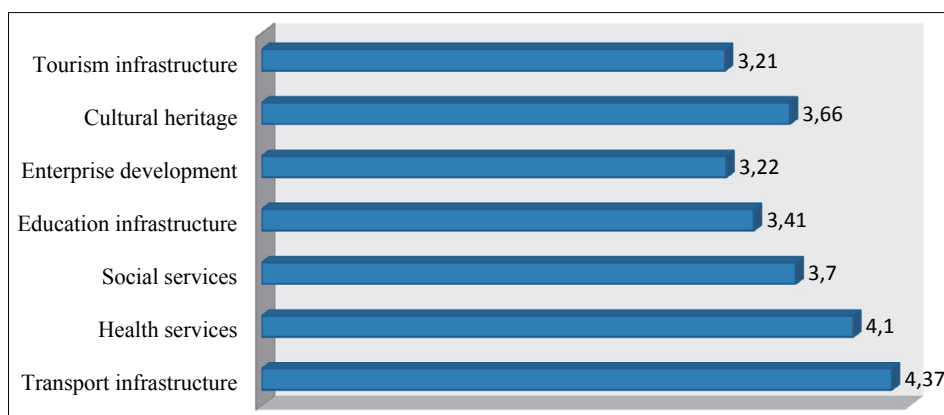
Figure 10: ROP contribution to the economic and social development of Romanian counties
Source: Authors.

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We ranked the responses regarding ROP effects on the economic and social development of the counties, in order to observe the fields where it was considered that ROP financed projects had a major impact. The respondents rated the most: the transport infrastructure (4.37), health services (4.1) and social services (3.7). The respondents' opinion was that ROP contributed the least to the development of tourism infrastructure and business environment.

Finally, it could be assumed that from the County Councils personnel perspective, ROP had a major impact over the economic and social development of Romanian counties.
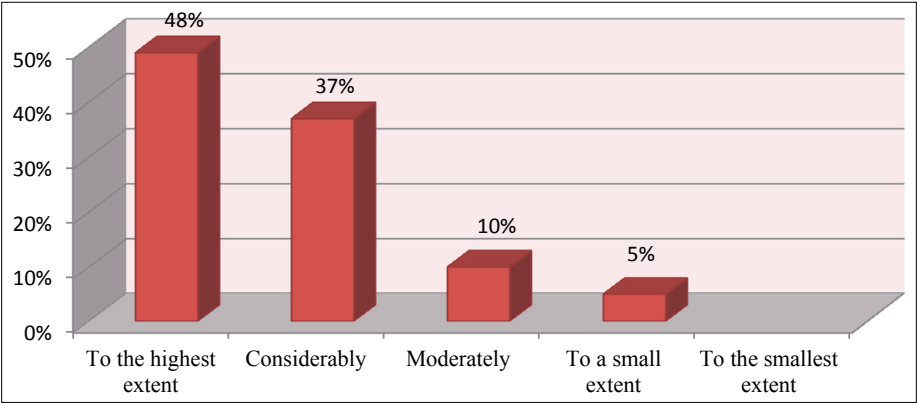
Figure 11: ROP contribution to the resilience of the counties

Source: Authors.

We asked our respondents which was their opinion regarding ROP contribution to counties resilience. The majority (85%) considered that ROP contributed to the highest extent and considerably and helped the counties to face the economic difficulties caused by the financial crisis. The respondents considered that ROP was an important factor which contributed to the counties economic and social
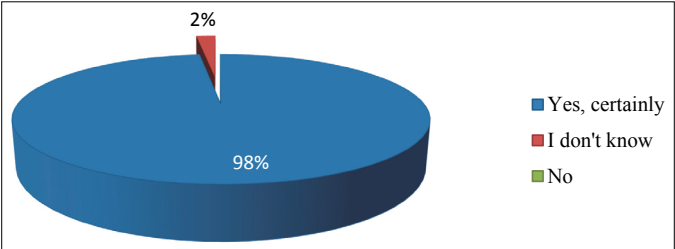
Figure 12: Respondents' intention in participating in European funded projects

Source: Authors.

development and believed that without European funded projects, the economic situation from their counties would have been worse.

The last question concerned the respondents' intention to access EU funding in the future. The majority (98%) responded that they would certainly access and participate to other project funded from European programmes.

7. Limitations of the research and future trends of research

A limit of the research could be the fact that this questionnaire was addressed only to the persons responsible for ROP-financed projects from the County Councils and did not include in the sample other beneficiaries, such as NGOs or the business environment.

Another limit could be represented by the small number of respondents.

As a future direction, we would analyze the opinion of the Regional Development Agencies' personnel regarding ROP impact on social and economic development of Romanian regions in order to identify the obstacles encountered and the best practices in the program's implementation.

Also, for a better understanding of ROP impact, we intend to identify the opinion of the beneficiaries from the private environment, from mayors and other local public institutions that have implemented projects financed from ROP.

8. Conclusions and measures for a better implementation of ROP

The study revealed that 95% of the respondents considered that the projects financed by ROP played a very important role in the economic and social development of the counties. Regarding the obstacles encountered into the implementation process of the programme, the majority of respondents (98%) considered that the complex procurement process was the main problem, followed by the bureaucratic process for submitting requests for reimbursement and the communication difficulties between partners of the projects. Concerning the main fields where the programme had a major impact, the respondents considered that ROP contributed the most to the development of the transport infrastructure of the counties, health services, and social services. The majority of the respondents (86%) considered that the ROP contributed to the highest extent and considerably to the modernization and rehabilitation of the counties' transport infrastructure.

Another finding of the study was that the majority of the respondents (51%) considered that ROP contributed moderately to the increase of the employment rate and the unemployment rate evolution showed an increase in the majority of Romanian counties. Due to the financial crisis, ROP did not have the expected results regarding the employment rate, but it could be assumed that the programme

had a positive impact on the counties' economies in the crisis period, helping them to be more resilient to the economic shocks.

We believe that the simplification of the public procurement process will have a major impact on the well-functioning of the implementation projects. The persons implicated in the procurement process should be periodically trained in order for them to be up-to-date to all the changes that take place into the legislation concerning public procurement. The national authorities should take into account the excessive bureaucracy and simplify the process of reimbursement requests and introduce fewer procedures. Concerning the communication between partners, the County Councils should create a new framework and establish a permanent relationship between them and their partners. The usage of modern communication channels concomitant with the delegation of a person responsible with communication between partners should help to the improvement of this problem.

Taking into account that, in the present, Romania is in the second financial exercise (2014-2020) the analysis of ROP implementation in the previous period and its impact helped to identify the main obstacles from the previous period, the main areas where ROP had a major impact and the area where the programme should improve its actions in the present financial period. Moreover, the impact analysis of ROP on the development of the Romanian counties helped at creating a comprehensive view of where ROP had the greatest success. The analysis of a program of such importance for the economic development of counties and regions should contribute to an improved implementation process in 2014-2020. The conclusions from the first period of ROP implementation should help the actors implicated in the present implementation period by transferring the best practices and eliminating the causes of the obstacles that stood against an efficient implementation process in the previous period.

We believe that the analysis of the impact of ROP financed projects implementation provided a better image of the actual situation from our counties. Every county contributes to the development of the regions so, from this point of view, the analysis of ROP impact on the county level, and not only on a regional level, was recommended. Even though Romanian regions are no longer ranked in the last place in terms of economic indicators, apart from the Bucharest-Ilfov region, they still occupy the last positions in European rankings. Consequently, the improvement of ROP implementation process should be a constant concern for Central and local authorities, taking into account its importance.

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On the Multidimensionality of the Performance Appraisal Satisfaction of the Public Organizations' Employees from the North West Region of Romania

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Abstract. Performance appraisal process represents an important HR developmental tool used in similar but not identical ways in both private and public sectors. According to its purpose, this process represents a very sensitive problem for all members of an organization because it implies several consequences. For this reason, one of the most important priorities of the most recent research work regarding this process is to understand different aspects of the employee satisfaction with this particular type of professional evaluation. On the basis of a quantitative research and a sociological survey, involving several public services and authorities from the North West Region of Romania, the final results show that the satisfaction of the Romanian civil servants and the public salaried employees with the performance appraisal process is not unidimensional but rather multidimensional, being similar to former studies which revealed at least three different main dimensions: (1) satisfaction with the most recent performance rating; (2) satisfaction with the appraisal system; and (3) satisfaction with the rater.

Keywords: performance appraisal, administrative purpose, developmental purpose, satisfaction with the PA system and process, psychometric approach, cognitive approach, social context approach, proximal variables, distal variables.

1. Theoretical framework and literature review

1.1. Performance appraisal definition

Performance appraisal (PA) is one of the fundamental activities of the development function of the public personnel management (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1993), perhaps the most important HR system in an organization according to some scholars and researchers (Judge and Ferris, 1993), and that also applies to the private sector as well. PA benefits from a wide range of definitions, starting with the ones which emphasize only the core elements or concepts, being seen as a 'process of evaluating or judging the way in which someone is functioning' (Coens and Jenkins, 2000, p. 12) or 'a measurement system designed to assess each subordinate's performance' (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995, p. 339) and ending with much more elaborate descriptions which combine more relevant characteristics than the basic ones, PA being considered in this case as 'a mandated process in which, for a specified period of time, all or a group of employees' work performance, behaviors, or traits are individually rated, judged, or described by a person other than the rated employee and the results are kept by the organization.' (Coens and Jenkins, 2000, p. 14). We should also mention that this research is focused only on the formal version of PA, though there are obvious organizational benefits which come from the informal version of the same process as well. More than this, if the question of why formal PA systems exist is still considered pertinent enough, one of the most logical answers is that they replaced the informal ones (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). Even this answer may not be entirely true or acceptable since a lot of us can relate with and confirm the idea that informal and formal evaluations co-exist, rather than one being the replacement of the other. That means that the new version did not replace the old one but rather evolved from it.

1.2. The problem of purposes and goals of the performance appraisal

Very well acknowledged by their authors, the PA alternative definitions mentioned above do not clarify the problems of PA purposes which is crucial for understanding the usefulness of the entire system or process.

The problems and the controversies of the PA reside at the beginning of the process, when its purposes and goals are established or decided. McGregor (1960/2006) identified three major purposes: administrative, informational, and motivational. Some other scholars and researchers proposed to split the traditional annual formal PA process in two sessions, in one session to be discussed the appraisal of performance and salary action which though may be the most important administrative action to be taken, is not the only possible one, and the other session to be focused on interview and performance improvement (Meyer, Kay and French,

1965/1990). This separation of purposes seems so logical and so appealing that it resurfaces from time to time in different research papers. Such is the case of Todd Grubb's study at the end of which the author suggests that the administrative procedures should be separated for each of the common uses of PA (2007).

Coens and Jenkins identified six distinct purposes which determined an equal number of PA functions (2002, p. 16): improvement, coaching and guidance, feedback and communication, compensation, staffing and professional development, and termination and legal documentation. If we are looking closely to these six purposes and to the three purposes provided by McGregor, we can see that all of these purposes can be split in two major categories: administrative and developmental (the second one being very similar by its meaning to what Coens and Jenkins established as improvement purpose). These two major categories of PA purposes are compatible with McGregor's idea of underlying a very important issue regarding the roles which have to be assumed by the raters who have to play the role of judges at the same time being useful counselors for those rated. He argues that the first type of role is unpleasant and unpopular among the majority of supervisors who do not feel comfortable with playing the role of 'God' in the PA process, while the second role, much more friendlier in its nature, requires a special training which the majority of supervisors do not have (McGregor, 1960/2006). Therefore, the people who have the responsibility of providing PAs are caught between two completely different roles, which are also incompatible in their nature.

Also, according to McGregor (1960/2006) if a manager or a supervisor has to be critical in communicating with the subordinate about her/his work, the response will be that the employee will start being defensive, rejecting some critics, though some of them may be accurate, and trying to get excuses and justifications for personal unsatisfactory performances. This happens because the PA process has the potential to trigger several different types of conflicts, here being the case of an intrapersonal conflict between an employee's desire for personal development and the intention to preserve hers/his self-esteem because people want to feel good about themselves, this being only one of the eight conflicts inherent in PA identified by Grubb (2007) (some of them being intrapersonal while the others being interpersonal, some of them being focused on employees only, others focusing on supervisors and others being focused on the relationship between employees, between employees and their supervisors, or the relationship between employee or supervisor with the organization as an entity which has its own specific priorities regarding the PA process). So, the more we are getting deeper in the problem of the nature of the PA purposes, the more the conclusion that these are not only incompatible but also conflictual is getting stronger.

One additional confirmation of this is provided by the problem of the management tools which are strongly connected with initially established purposes.

We are talking about the PA goals. Murphy and Cleveland established there are at least five types of multiple goals according to the stakeholders we are taking in consideration (1995, p. 393): rater, organization, ratee, customer/client and society. Quite unconventionally, this illustration of multiple goals takes in consideration not only the intraorganizational stakeholders but also some of the extraorganizational ones as well, variety which makes the idea of compatibility much more challenging. The conclusions of Murphy and Cleveland (1995) are that inside the organizations we will always have compatible goals but also incompatible and conflictual ones, and the incompatibility exists between goals of different stakeholders or between multiple goals of the same stakeholder.

1.3. The problem of employees' satisfaction with the performance appraisal system and process

The problem of satisfaction with the PA system and process has been best connected with the last of the three fundamental approaches which were developed from the moment when the performance evaluation started to be a widely spread practice in the field of human resource management. The first two approaches were dominated by the psychologists who were interested in studying psychometric aspects of the process with the intend of determining the best format for performance measurement tools which should produce a significant reduction of errors and increased accuracy and also on the training of the raters, those individuals were seen as a secondary source of errors and distortions (Landy and Farr, 1980; Murphy and Cleveland, 1995), and in studying the opportunities for improving the processes of collecting, organizing, retaining, retrieving and integrating information relevant for the PA process (Bretz, Milkovich and Read, 1992; Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell and McKellin, 1993). Though the psychometric and cognitive approaches had, no doubt, their own contributions to the understanding and to the improvement of some major characteristics of the PA process (Landy and Farr, 1980), they were excessively technical and too narrow in search of precise determination of causes of various problems to satisfy the major priority of the practitioners, that being the improvement of the appraisal effectiveness.

The social context approach which started a new direction of research in 1990s, in which the PA process was going to be analyzed in a broader framework, has its origins in the contributions of Murphy and Cleveland (1995) who shifted from the definition of PA as being a measurement tool towards viewing the 'PA primarily as a social and communication process' (p. 1). The social nature of PA process was already acknowledged by Padgett (1988 *apud* Ilgen, Barnes-Farrell and McKellin, 1993) who argued that there are certain factors generated by the 'social milieu' in which a rater is situated, which significantly influence hers or his rating, factors that are beyond the ability of the rater to produce accurate performance measure-

ments. Murphy and Cleveland (1995) present a four-component model of PA in which context plays a major role influencing the other three elements (performance judgment, performance rating and evaluation of the PA system). They are also underlying the idea that for the rating context will be useful to take in consideration two sets of macro-level factors: (a) *intraorganizational factors* such as organizational values, climate and culture, etc. and (b) *organization-environment issues*, such as competition within an industry area, general economic/political conditions, and so on. Also, the authors of the four-component model mentioned that the contextual variables can be categorized in two groups: *proximal variables* which have a direct influence on the rater, such as hers or his interaction with the employees, the nature of the rated job, the consequences of rating, etc. and *distal variables* which are those intraorganizational and extraorganizational, which influence indirectly the performance judgment and rating, such as organizational structure, climate and culture, and so on.

Ten years later, Levy and Williams (2004) produced a more complex model based on their 1995-2003 literature review, their research uncovering in that period of time approximately 360 published articles regarding the PA process. The extended model contains four categories of variables: distal variables, process proximal variables, structural proximal variables and rater and ratee behavior. The last category comprises contextual and task performance ratings, rater's and ratee's behavioral, attitudinal and cognitive reactions and rater's and ratee's perception of PA justice. Going beyond the identification and analysis of the four categories of variables which determine the social context of PA, Levy and Williams produced a scheme focused on appraisal effectiveness which was a concept already defined by Cardy and Dobbins as 'a multidimensional construct or ultimate criterion for measuring the success of appraisal systems' (1994 *apud* Levy and Williams, 2004, p. 890). Levy and Williams determined three second order constructs or dimensions of the appraisal effectiveness (2004, p. 890): rater errors and biases, rating accuracy and appraisal reactions, the last one integrating system satisfaction, session satisfaction, perceived utility, perceived accuracy, procedural justice, distributive justice, interactional justice, motivation to use feedback and acceptability. As we can see the first two variables from the appraisal reaction category are particular forms of satisfaction with the PA process which was considered the most frequently measured appraisal reaction (Giles and Mossholder, 1990) and was primarily conceptualized in three ways: (a) satisfaction with the appraisal interview or session, (b) satisfaction with the appraisal system, and (c) satisfaction with performance ratings (Keeping and Levy, 2000, p. 709). Many researchers suggest that the PA reactions may be the concept that has the potential to close the gap between the academics and the practitioners, Cardy and Dobbins making the assertion that 'with dissatisfaction and feelings of unfairness in process and inequity in evalua-

tions, any appraisal system will be doomed to failure' (1994, p. 54 *apud* Keeping and Levy, 2000, p. 890). A similar assertion has been also made by Murphy and Cleveland who stated that 'reaction criteria are almost always relevant, and an unfavorable reaction may doom the most carefully constructed appraisal system. One of the most difficult challenges that may lie ahead of PA researchers will be to convince organizations to (a) take reaction criteria seriously and (b) create conditions in their organization that will lead to favorable reactions to the performance appraisal system.' (1995, p. 314). But in order to do so, researchers have to start or continue the effort of evaluating the PA system and process, extending the effort in the direction of a better understanding of the way employees react to this particular HR management practice.

2. Research design and data analysis

2.1. Methodology

The purpose of the research is to analyze and to highlight the conceptual construction related to the satisfaction of civil servants regarding the performance appraisal process and to determine to what extent this concept has a multidimensional character (the concept can be seen from the perspective of many dimensions). It should be noted that the research was carried out through a sociological survey involving a number of 221 public employees (librarians and civil servants) within 4 county libraries and 3 county councils from the North West Region of Romania (Cluj, Bistriţa, Satu Mare and Bihor). However, only 204 questionnaires were taken into account (a number of 17 questionnaires being blank or filled in incorrectly). We have chosen a mixed sample of civil servants and librarians who are not civil servants but public salaried employees because their performances are evaluated with two PA systems which are very similar in structure and partially in content (Dodu, 2014), the PA system for civil servants being provided through the Government Decision no. 611/2008 and the PA system for librarians being provide through the Government Decision no. 763/2010. As an instrument for collecting data we used an anonymous self-applied questionnaire that included 12 items divided into three sections. Each of these three sections covered 4 items and addressed the issues mentioned in Table 1.

It should be noted that in the process of drafting and operationalizing the items, we took into account the specificity of the Romanian PA system for both civil servants and librarians as well as some of the research and studies previously undertaken by researchers (Abu-Doleh and Weir, 2007; Burns Walsh, 2003; Chin-Ju and Wen-Lai, 2013; Culbertson, Henning and Payne, 2013; Cook and Crossman, 2004; Giles and Mossholder, 1990; Keeping and Levy, 2000; Levy and Williams, 2004; Sudin, 2011; Meyer and Smith, 2000). From a socio-demographic point of view,

Table 1: Structure of the questionnaire (no. of items)

	1. Satisfaction with the most recent performance rating
1.1	I am satisfied with the performance rating I received for the whole last year's work.
1.2	My recent job performance rating was fair.
1.3	My recent job performance rating reflects what I really did on the job.
1.4	My recent job performance rating was accurate.
	2. Satisfaction with the performance appraisal system
2.1	Overall, I am satisfied with the performance appraisal system.
2.2	I am satisfied with the way the performance appraisal system is used to set my professional objectives for each rating period.
2.3	I am satisfied with the way the performance appraisal system is used to evaluate and rate my performance.
2.4	I am satisfied with the way the performance appraisal system helps me improve my job performance.
	3. Satisfaction with the rater
3.1	I am satisfied with the way my rater shows interest to discuss/takes interest in discussing my professional difficulties in each performance appraisal interview session.
3.2	I am satisfied with the amount of support and guidance from my rater.
3.3	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive at work from my rater.
3.4	My rater takes the performance appraisal process seriously.

Source: Authors' own work

72.5% of the respondents were women, respectively 85.9% of them being public employees from the operational level. From the analysis point of view, the research is based on a multivariate analysis consisting in dimension reduction analysis (exploratory factorial analysis).

2.2. Analysis and interpretation of data

The purpose of method applied was to analyze and highlight variability among observed, correlated variables in terms of a potentially lower number of unobserved variables called factors (latent variables). We used the exploratory factor analysis to explore and provide information about the numbers of factors (latents) required to explain the number of observable variables. More precisely, we wanted to see if it is possible that variations in 12 observed variables mainly reflect the variations in few unobserved (underlying) variables. Thus, we used this statistical method in order to uncover the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables – used to identify a set of latent constructs underlying a battery of measured variables. Starting from no *a priori* hypothesis about factors or patterns of measured variables, we wanted to see if the 12 observable variables could be reduced in a small number of latent variables (which, in fact, are the construct latent dimensions).

The fitting procedures used to estimate the factor loadings and unique variances of the model (the regression coefficients between items and factors and measure

the influence of a common factor on a measured variable) were based on 'principal component analysis (PCA)' method, respectively the parameters used to extract the factor loadings was based on 'eigenvalue greater than 1' rule and Varimax rotation method (with Kaiser Normalization – Table 2). Thus, to determine the optimal number of factors to retain in exploratory factor analysis we computed the eigenvalues for the correlation matrix and extract 3 factors (for eigenvalues greater than 1 – Table 3). Basically, these 3 factors (latents) can be considered, in fact, as the optimal dimensions of the concept construct of satisfaction with the performance appraisal process.

Table 2: Parameters of the Exploratory Factor Analysis Model

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.879
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2579.927
	df	66
	Sig.	.000
Extraction Method:	Principal Component Analysis (based on Eigenvalue 1)	
Rotation Method:	Varimax (with Kaiser Normalization)	

Source: Authors' own work

Table 3: Factor Loadings (rotated component matrix)

	Component		
	1	2	3
1.1. I am satisfied with the performance rating I received for the whole last year's work **D1.1**	.229	.216	**.892**
1.2. My recent job performance rating was fair **D1.2**	.214	.196	**.907**
1.3. My recent job performance rating reflects what I really did on the job **D1.3**	.214	.274	**.788**
1.4. My recent job performance rating was accurate **D1.4**	.164	.178	**.900**
2.1. Overall, I am satisfied with the performance appraisal system **D2.1**	.095	**.903**	.232
2.2. I am satisfied with the way the performance appraisal system is used to set my professional objectives for each rating period **D2.2**	.051	**.933**	.191
2.3. I am satisfied with the way the performance appraisal system is used to evaluate and rate my performance **D2.3**	.066	**.917**	.250
2.4. I am satisfied with the way the performance appraisal system helps me improve my job performance **D2.4**	.088	**.798**	.126
3.1. I am satisfied with the way my rater shows interest to discuss/takes interest in discussing my professional difficulties in each performance appraisal interview session **D3.1**	**.875**	.095	.172
3.2. I am satisfied with the amount of support and guidance from my rater **D3.2**	**.936**	.043	.197
3.3. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive at work from my rater **D3.3**	**.884**	.080	.267
3.4. My rater takes the performance appraisal process seriously **D3.4**	**.918**	.089	.133

Source: Authors' own work

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In conclusion, as a result of the exploratory factorial analysis, it can be stated that, from some points of view, the concept of satisfaction of Romanian public employees, both librarians and civil servants, could be seen as a multidimensional concept, based on three dimensions.

3. Conclusions

Understanding the factors affecting employees' satisfaction regarding the performance appraisal is critical not only for employee motivation, but also to design an effective professional appraisal systems and, not the least, for organizational justice and organizational effectiveness. On the other hand, civil servants' perceived satisfaction of their performance appraisal is, in fact, an important attitudinal dimension of organizations because of its prospective influences on professional performance and organizational performance. This research adds our understanding regarding the multidimensionality of performance appraisal satisfaction of Romanian public employees by underlying multidimensional construction of satisfaction, and investigating and revealing the relationship between different dimensions and their way of construct.

The findings of this study affirmed that the Romanian librarians and civil servants' satisfaction regarding the performance appraisal process is a multidimensional conceptual construction – even if we did not start from any hypothetical construct model. In that sense the finding of our exploratory factorial analysis reveals that satisfaction related to performance appraisal as a concept, can be dimensionally reduced to three latent dimensions, respectively the concept could be operationalized based on three dimensions: (1) satisfaction with the most recent performance rating; (2) satisfaction with the performance appraisal system; and (3) satisfaction with the rater. At a very practical level this can be translated in the idea that when you can divide a process in more components, you will have more chances to make a distinction between the particular aspects which are perceived as being acceptable and effectively applied and other aspects which are problematic and need to be improved or, in extreme situations, replaced with more adequate alternatives.

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The Administrative Procedure Regarding the Acquisition/ Restoration of Citizenship. Legal and Case Law Aspects

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Abstract. In order to acquire or restore Romanian citizenship, the persons concerned will go through a procedure which, given its characteristics, can be qualified as an administrative procedure, governed by special rules that have borne often and frequent changes and additions.

This issue, which is accompanied by the poor quality of the regulations in the field, has led to difficulties in the process of knowing and scrutinizing it by the applicants, and has led to difficulties in applying the relevant legal rules both by the administrative authorities, as well as by the courts.

Keywords: non-contentious administrative procedure, Romanian citizenship, unjustified refusal, conditions regarding the granting of Romanian citizenship, organization of law enforcement, jurisprudence in the field of citizenship.

1. Preliminary issues

Citizenship, a fundamental institution in the organization of modern political communities, is the personal status of an individual, civic relations between citizens, relations between citizens and the state, based on a 'contract' that includes a sum of mutual rights and duties, and on a more general plan, contributes to the political organization of the relevant community, establishing the way in which its members exercise their political rights of representation and exercise of power (Iordachi *et al.*, 2012, p. 20).

Citizenship analysis involves many theoretical and methodological difficulties, due to the fact that citizenship has at least two analytical perspectives or dimensions: citizenship as a social-political concept, respectively citizenship as an institution. The first dimension refers to the intellectual, legal and political purposes and meanings of the concept, as they emerge from public debates as well as from relevant legislation or jurisprudence. The second dimension of citizenship, the institutional one, involves two main components: the legal category of state ownership, which confers the status of member of a state defined as a distinct territorial and political organization (1), and citizenship as civil, social and political status, which confers participation rights and obligations incurred from the membership of a political community (2) (Iordachi *et al.*, 2012, p. 21).

In relation to the first institutional component, we distinguish between citizens of a state and foreigners, and its analysis induces the obligation to take into account the principles, procedures and conditions for the award of citizenship, foreigners' naturalization practices, monitoring policies, regulation of the status of foreigners, settlement practices of disputes in the matter. Citizenship as status results as a sum of civil, political and social rights.

The definition of the concept of citizenship in the legal literature of constitutional law is closely related to the notion of population. Thus, the population is an element of the state, and in the legal relations the population finds its reflection in the concept of citizenship (Boc and Curt, 2004, p. 21).

Considering the legal definition of citizenship in art. 1, par. (1), according to which, 'the Romanian citizenship is the link and the belonging of a natural entity to the Romanian state', the specialist literature identifies several meanings of the concept of citizenship: legal institution, legal condition or situation created by norms of law, the position of a person in a complex of legal relations (Draganu, 1998, pp. 131-132).

By developing the legal definition and meanings of this concept, the specialist literature offers multiple definitions of the concept of citizenship, explaining the notion in a more complex manner. Here are some of these definitions that we consider to be reference: 'citizenship is the legal status resulting from the membership of a natural entity in a determined state, characterized by the fact that it has

the fullness of the rights and obligations provided by the constitution and laws, including the political rights, the obligation of loyalty to the homeland and its protection' (Draganu, 1998, p. 132). Citizenship is 'the legal situation resulting from the stable relations between a natural entity and the Romanian state, expressing the person's belonging to the state, a situation characterized by the fullness of reciprocal rights and obligations' (Deleanu, 2000, p. 171). Citizenship is also defined as 'the political and legal link resulting from the affiliation of a natural entity to a determined state. The essence of the link is expressed by all the correlation rights and obligations between the state and the citizen' (Boc and Curt, 2004, p.21).

As part of an earlier approach, we have focused on the evolution of legal aspects regarding the acquisition / restoration of Romanian citizenship. This step, achieved and completed in a previous article, is intended to be an analysis of the administrative procedure for acquiring citizenship, highlighting the way in which the procedure is structured, the formalities to be accomplished in the procedure, plus a presentation of the typology of litigations in law enforcement, as a result of the various difficulties faced by applicants. Thus, in the following, we intend to pay attention to the procedure of acquiring citizenship, the conditions imposed in this respect by the law and to analyze more closely the judicial practice on the matter. In particular, we propose an inventory and an example of the main types of actions (litigations) that have arisen in practice in the context of the interpretation and application of the legal rules regarding the acquisition or restoration of Romanian citizenship, using the jurisprudence as a source of information.

2. Procedure for granting Romanian citizenship upon request

2.1. General aspects of administrative procedure

In the process of analyzing the procedure for granting citizenship, it is necessary to start from classifying it as a non-contentious administrative procedure, provided that it presents all the features of such a procedure. According to the specialist literature, the non-contentious administrative procedure designates the procedure followed by the public administration authorities when issuing administrative acts or issuing different types of certificates, notices, approvals, in the absence of a litigation (Lombard, 1999, p. 187). In order to support this qualification, we appreciate that the following features of the procedure can be identified, being arguments in support of the above statement: a) a series of activities can be carried out during the proceedings, which can be organized in phases or procedural steps; b) passing these phases and carrying out the related activities are tasks for administrative bodies; c) is a procedure based on and in the application of the law, respectively for its application; d) the result of the procedure is carried out in an administrative act issued; e) a legal relationship is born.

The administrative act is the result of a rational process that starts from the notification of the necessity of its issuance and continues with collecting the necessary information, processing it, choosing the solution, adopting or issuing it and applying it. The procedure for the issuance of administrative acts comprises several activities carried out by officials of the public authority issuing the act, but sometimes also of other public authorities that are required to be involved, with whom the issuing authority collaborates (Preda, 1995, p. 110).

These forms of activity or procedural forms may be grouped into three procedural categories, depending on the time at which they are carried out and their importance in relation to the final administrative decision. Procedural forms prior to the issuance of the administrative act (precursory activities) – the opinion (optional, advisory and conform), the agreement (prior, concurrent or posterior), proposals, certificates, statistics, studies, expertise, proceedings, reports, proposals, verifications; procedural forms (activities) concurrent with the issuance of the act – quorum, majority, motivation and signature, countersign; forms (activities) after issuance of the act – communication, publication, approval, confirmation (Dragos, 2005, p. 31; Petrescu, 1997, pp. 237-247).

The activities carried out during this procedural stage prior to the issuance of the administrative act are activities that do not produce legal effects in themselves, but they precede the elaboration of the administrative decision or decision producing legal effects (Petrescu, 1997, p. 237). These activities are carried out, both in the case when the necessity of the administrative decision derives from the provisions of law in the context of the execution by the public administration of organization, execution and the enforcement of law, and when the public administration authorities issue ex officio or on its own initiative, or upon request, proposal or request, such acts. Thus, in both situations, the administration authorities perform preliminary activities in order to prepare the administrative decision. Specifically, in this procedural phase, a number of documenting and processing operations are carried out, substantiating the administrative act (Preda, apud Trăilescu, 1995, p. 38).

Issuing an administrative act always involves signing it by the competent person within the issuing authority, sometimes the counter-signature by another person (established by law), in the case of some acts they are asked to state their reasons, and if the administrative acts are issued by collegial authorities, there must exist a quorum and a majority (Dragoş, 2005, p. 45). According to some authors, signing and countersigning are procedural forms taking place after the adoption or issuance of the act (Trăilescu, 1995, p. 38; Vlaicu, 2012, p. 173).

After the issuance of the administrative act, the communication, publication, approval and confirmation thereof are made. Individual administrative acts have legal effects since they were communicated to the addressee and the administrative act of a normative nature produces legal effects from the date of publication

or from the date of communication to the public. Communication is the operation by which the authority of the issuing public administration ensures the effective knowledge of the administrative act by the addressee, either by direct handing over or by displaying at his domicile. The publication is also an administrative, public disclosure operation, mandatory for administrative acts of a normative nature (Dragoş, Ranta and Chiciudean, 2013, pp. 96-97; Balan, 2005, p. 119; Vlaicu, 2012, pp. 176-177). Approval is understood as a manifestation of will of a superior authority by which he agrees with an act already issued by a lower authority, act that, without this manifestation of will, will not produce legal effects, according to the law (Draganu, 1959, p. 137). Confirmation is the manifestation of will by which a public authority maintains a previously issued act; another sense of confirmation is that of a procedural form that covers the vices of illegality (Draganu, 1970, p. 107; Petrescu, 2004, p. 314).

2.2. Phases and formalities of the procedure for granting or restoring Romanian citizenship

In the following, we will try, describing the administrative procedure by which Romanian citizenship is acquired or restored, to identify the procedural formalities under the same procedure and to highlight their importance as a result of their qualification from an administrative legal point of view, as the theoretical ones presented above.

Analyzing the content of Law 21/1991 republished with subsequent amendments, we identify in the procedure regarding granting or restoring the Romanian citizenship the following procedural steps: a. request for the acquisition of Romanian citizenship; b. solving the application for citizenship; c. granting citizenship / refusing to grant citizenship; d. taking of the oath.

2.2.1. Requesting acquisition / restoration of citizenship

From a procedural point of view, the application for granting or, as the case may be, for the acquisition of Romanian citizenship is a petition of a special nature, to be settled according to the rules of special procedure regulated by Law 21/1991.

Acquiring citizenship on demand is addressed to certain categories of people. Thus, petitioners may be: a) a person without citizenship or a foreign citizen (Article 8, paragraph 1); b) a person without citizenship or a foreign citizen who has contributed in particular to the protection and promotion of Romanian culture, civilization and spirituality (Art. 8^1); c) a person without citizenship or a foreign citizen who can contribute significantly to the promotion of the image of Romania through outstanding performances in the field of sport (Article 8^2); d) persons who have lost their nationality and their descendants up to the second degree in-

clusive and who request their restoration (Article 10, paragraph (1)); e) persons who were Romanian citizens, but who lost their Romanian citizenship for reasons beyond their control or who have been abducted without their will, as well as their descendants up to the 3rd degree (Article 11, paragraph 1). For all categories of applicants, the law establishes the style of filing the application. From the procedural point of view, the request is the formality that triggers the procedure, being the condition in which it places the authority in the position to provide the applicant's service.

According to art. 13 of the law, the request for granting or, as the case may be, the restoration of Romanian citizenship, shall be submitted to the Commission for Citizenship and shall be lodged personally or, in duly justified cases, by a representative with a special and authentic proxy at the headquarters of the National Authority for Citizenship (ANC), accompanied by documents proving the accomplishment of the conditions stipulated by law. Applications based on the provisions of Art. 10 par. (1) and art. 11 may also be submitted to diplomatic missions or consular offices of Romania, and they shall be sent to the Commission immediately.

Applications based on the provisions of Art. 8^1 may also be submitted to the diplomatic missions or consular offices of Romania in the state in which the applicant is domiciled and shall be immediately sent to the Commission through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accompanied by a point of view of the diplomatic mission regarding the accomplishment of the condition that the applicant has contributed significantly to the protection and promotion of Romanian culture, civilization and spirituality. If the application was filed at the ANC headquarters, the Commission for Citizenship will request the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to comment on the accomplishment of condition (Article 13, paragraphs (1)–(3) of Law 21/1991). The point of reference to the law is the value of a consultative endorsement, in our opinion, the decision to grant citizenship belonging to the competent authority, according to the law.

If the applicant bases his application on the provisions of art. 8^2 it is submitted to the Ministry of Youth and Sports as the only public authority that makes proposals for the granting of Romanian citizenship based on this article (Article 13^1, paragraph (2)). In this particular case, I note that the applicant's request is followed by another prior procedural form, namely the ministry's proposal. We appreciate that the ministry in this case has the role of a filter of applications for citizenship, having the possibility to follow it, sending the request to the Commission for citizenship, or may also appreciate that the application is not grounded, the applicant failing to meet the conditions for obtaining Romanian citizenship on the basis of art. 8^2, in this case not to formulate the proposal to which the law refers.

Applications, including those formulated under Art. 11, shall be recorded in all cases at the Technical Secretariat of the Commission established within the ANC.

2.2.2. Solving the application for citizenship

Essentially, this step consists of checking the legal conditions, as a prerogative assigned to the Commission for citizenship, unincorporated entity within the ANC. The results of the checks carried out shall be ascertained in a reasoned report adopted by the Commission with the vote of the majority of those present and, in the case of parity, the vote of the President of Commission or its substitute being decisive (Article 14 (5)). The report to which the legal text refers is another procedural formality prior to the issuance of the final administrative act, which will form the basis of the issuance of the individual administrative act, which is the citizenship order. It is necessary to emphasize the necessity of its motivation, a statement that will contain the aspects on which the administrative decision granting or rejecting the application for the acquirement of citizenship will be based. The name of such procedural formality is a matter of administrative operations, but since it has the role of determining the accomplishment or non-accomplishment of the conditions for acquiring citizenship, it approximates it to the category of acts producing legal effects.

In the description of procedure, the law refers to the resolution of the President of Commission for citizenship, in case it finds the need to complete the file due to the lack of documents necessary for the settlement of application. Failure to submit within six months (i.e. four months in the case of applications based on Article 11) upon receipt of the request for the necessary documents to complete the file determines the rejection of the claim as unsupported. Also, by resolution, the President of the Commission shall set the time limit for the request for granting or restoring citizenship and shall order the request for relations from any authorities regarding the accomplishment of the conditions stipulated in art. 8 par. (1) letter b) and e) (proof by behavior, actions and attitude, loyalty to the Romanian state, does not undertake or support actions against the rule of law or national security and declares that in the past it has not undertaken such actions, good behavior and has not been convicted in the country or abroad for an offense that makes him unworthy of being a Romanian citizen). If the Commission finds that it is necessary to audit individuals who could provide useful information in order to resolve the request, it hands out citations to them, setting a new deadline.

If the conditions for granting Romanian citizenship are met, the Commission shall, within a period not exceeding six months, set the person's appointment at the interview organized to verify the conditions provided for in art. 8 par. (1) letter f) and g), regarding the knowledge of Romanian language, the possession of basic notions of Romanian culture and civilization, respectively the knowledge of the provisions of Romanian Constitution and of the national anthem (Article 15, paragraphs (3)–(5)). It is worth mentioning that in the case of applications based

on art. 11, by resolution of the President of Commission to which it will verify the accomplishment of the conditions necessary for granting or restoring the Romanian citizenship shall be no more than five months from the date of registration of the application.

Analyzing the procedural formalities mentioned above, in the given context, we appreciate that the term resolution is not appropriate for finding the need to complete the dossier, given that the term resolution is used in the context of the decision-making processes following the debates achieved by the collegial authorities. Requesting relationships from any authority with regard to the accomplishment of the conditions has the meaning of some opinions with a role in substantiating the administrative act that will be issued at the end of the procedure.

In the case of applications for Romanian citizenship granted in accordance with art. 8^1, the law establishes the obligation of the Commission to ascertain whether the conditions for granting citizenship are accomplished or not accomplished by a reasoned report drawn up taking into account the point of view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the other documents necessary for solving the request. In this case, we appreciate that from the wider wording of the law, using the expression 'taking into account the point of view of the ministry', it is in fact referred to a consensus, which must be complied with when issuing the administrative act.

If the person requesting the grant or restoration of the citizenship is investigated in a criminal case, the Commission, if there are no other grounds for rejecting the application, may order the suspension of the procedure for granting or restoration citizenship until the case is completed (Article 16^1). Noteworthy is that, with the wording 'may order', the law leaves it to the Commission to suspend the procedure, as long as the wording of the law is permissive.

The finality of the Commission's activity is the reasoned report it draws up within the framework of the ANC President's proposal to reject the application if the legal conditions for granting or restoring citizenship are not met in the case of an unjustified interview or non-presentation, to support it. If the applicant is declared admitted to the interview, the Commission will mention in the report the meeting of the legal conditions for granting or restoring citizenship and will submit it to the ANC president, accompanied by the request for granting or restoring citizenship (Articles 17-18 of the Law 21/1991). We also emphasize on this occasion the prior character of the report drawn up by the Commission in relation to the final administrative act issued by the ANC President. It should be emphasized that it has a dual role: to ascertain whether the conditions are met or not, and to make a proposal to reject the application or to grant citizenship.

2.2.3. Issuing an individual administrative act on granting or restoring citizenship or rejecting citizenship

According to art. 12 of Law 21/1991, the approval of applications for granting or restoring Romanian citizenship is made by order of the ANC president, on the basis of the proposals of the Commission for citizenship, unless the application is based on the provisions of art. 8^2, when, by way of derogation, granting of Romanian citizenship is made by a government decision initiated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. As in other situations, we also believe that we are at the forefront of an inappropriate use of the term 'approval' because, in principle, approval is a procedural formality subsequent to the issuance of an administrative act by a superior authority that agrees with the act already issued by the lower authority, and without this manifestation of will, the administrative act would not produce legal effects. Other similar examples have been identified in the legislation and described in the specialist literature (Dragos, 2005, pp. 58-60). In fact, we are in the situation of issuing an administrative act – the order of the ANC president – on the proposal and on the basis of the conclusions of the Commission's report.

Thus, the law establishes in art. 19 that the President of the ANC issues within a term not exceeding 3 days the order for granting or restoring the Romanian citizenship as a result of establishing the accomplishment of the legal conditions. The order for granting or restoring the Romanian citizenship is an administrative act of an individual character, which creates the right of the applicant to acquire or restore Romanian citizenship. As a formality after the issuance of the act, the order for granting or restoration the Romanian citizenship shall be communicated to the applicant, by registered letter with acknowledgment of receipt, within 3 days from the date of issuing the order. In the same way we can characterize the order for rejection of the request for granting or restoring citizenship, issued in the event of non-accomplishment of the conditions stipulated by the law. In relation to the order for rejection of the request for granting or restoring citizenship, the law establishes the possibility to be attacked, within 15 days from the date of the communication, to the Administrative legal and Tax Division of the Bucharest Tribunal. The judgment of the tribunal may be appealed to the Administrative legal and Tax Division of the Bucharest Court of Appeal (Article 19).

2.2.4. Taking of the oath

The quality of a Romanian citizen is acquired or restored as the result of the oath of faith, after the issuance of the individual administrative act.

Thus, within 6 months from the date of communication of the ANC president's order for the granting or restoration of the Romanian citizenship or, as the case may be, from the publication in the Official Gazette of the decision of Govern-

ment granting the Romanian citizenship, the persons who have been granted or who have restored the Romanian citizenship will take the oath of faith towards Romania. In duly justified cases, the 6-month period may be extended once if the request for extension accompanied by supporting documents is made before it is accomplished (Article 20, paragraphs (1) to (3)). Referring to resolving the request for extension, the law again uses the expression that it `approves`. We also emphasize on this occasion that it is in fact the issuance of the decision whereby the ANC president or, as the case may be, the head of the diplomatic mission or consular office resolves the request for extension. The oath shall be filed in a solemn hearing before the Minister of Justice or the President of ANC or one of the two Vice-presidents of the delegated authority in this respect.

Also, the series of post procedural formalities is part of the issuance by the Commission of the Romanian citizenship certificate, drawn up in two copies, signed by the ANC president, one copy being handed over to the holder. The taking of oath within the term stipulated by law by the person who obtained the Romanian citizenship under the conditions provided by art. 10 and 11, while maintaining his/her domicile abroad, shall be performed in front of the head of the diplomatic mission or consular office of Romania in the country in which he/she is domiciled. In this case, the Romanian citizenship certificate shall be issued by the head of diplomatic mission or consular post, which may be delegated to another member of the diplomatic or consular staff. These categories of persons may also take the oath of faith before the Minister of Justice or ANC President within the time limit prescribed by law, with the consent of the head of diplomatic mission or consular post of Romania in the country in which he resides.

Where minors acquire citizenship with their parents or one of them, they will be issued a distinct citizenship certificate and do not take the oath unless they become major during the process of settling the claim until the date of acquiring citizenship by parents.

Failure to take the oath within the period provided by the law, for reasons attributable to the person who obtained the citizenship, determines the cessation of the effects of order for granting or restoring citizenship, the finding of cessation of the effects being the competence of the ANC president, at the notification of the specialized directorate of the authority, by the head of diplomatic mission or consular mission (Article 21).

From the series of forms after acquiring Romanian citizenship, the transcription of the civil status documents in Romanian, namely the birth certificate and the marriage certificate, as well as the obtaining of other deeds or documents of Romanian citizenship can be mentioned. Thus, according to art. 21, par. (1), proof of Romanian citizenship shall be issued with the identity card or, as the case may be, with the identity card, passport, travel document, Romanian citizenship certificate

or proof of citizenship for Romanian citizens abroad, issued in case of need by the diplomatic missions or consular offices of Romania. The citizenship of the child up to the age of 14 is proven by the passport, with the title of travel, with the citizenship certificate, or with the Romanian birth certificate, accompanied by the identity card, the citizenship certificate or the passport of any of the parents issued by the Romanian authorities or, according to art. 23, with proof of citizenship issued on request, diplomatic missions or consular offices of Romania.

3. Jurisprudence issues in the matter of acquiring or restoring of the Romanian citizenship

In the following, we will review the main types of actions that have occurred in the context of applying the legal provisions in the analyzed field, trying to classify or sort them according to the procedural phase in relation to which they appeared. In order to identify them, the information provided by different portals and web resources that synthesize jurisprudence have been taken into account and studied.

3.1. Issues reflected by jurisprudence on matters arising prior to the issuance of the citizenship order

A number of litigations arising from the application of Art. 10 and 10^1 were linked to the high duration of the procedure for applicants interested in restoring citizenship. In their applications, the claimants usually requested the court to find the defendant's unjustified refusal to resolve his request for the receipt of the necessary documents for the procurement of his/her citizenship and, as a consequence, to order the defendant to receive his/her request for the restoration of Romanian citizenship together with the documents required. In essence, on defense, the authority invoked the very large number of such requests and the lack of capacity to process all these requests. In such cases, the solutions of courts were to oblige the defendant to receive the applicant's request to regain the Romanian citizenship and the related documents, since the applicant was not given a certain date of receipt of the documents, bearing in mind that it is not the refusal to resolve a request, but the refusal to accept a request, provided that the request is received within a long time from the manifestation of the intention, which leads to the fact that the settlement of demand cannot be achieved in a more demanding way (Civil Sentence no. 2803 of 30 June 2009 of the Bucharest Court of Appeal, Section VIII of Administrative and Fiscal Appeal, maintained by Decision no. 491 of 2 February 2010, of the High Court of Cassation and Justice, Administrative and Fiscal litigation court).

Given that the Authority responded by communicating to the petitioner that, given the conditions in which it operates and the very large number of requests,

making appointments is an objective necessity, and in the light of the progress of the examination of the letters of intent submitted the HCCJ considered that the silence of the administration as an assimilated administrative act, subject to the legality control exercised by the administrative litigation court, cannot be taken into account, the hypothesis is not accomplished (Decision no. 491 of 2 February 2010).

In the context in which by Government Emergency Ordinance no. 36/2009 for the amendment and completion of Romanian Citizenship Law no. 21/1991 were established territorial offices under the ANC, the Moldovan citizens belonging to the provisions art. 10^1 of the Law no. 21/1991 may submit the application also at the headquarters of the National Authority for Citizenship, without any restriction regarding the place of residence or conditional upon the acquiring of the right to stay in Romania or a prior programming, provided that art. 12 par. (2) stipulates that: 'in the case of applications for the restoration of Romanian citizenship or for granting, based on the provisions of Article 10 paragraph (1) and Article 10^1, these may also be submitted to the diplomatic missions or to the consular offices of Romania. If the applications were submitted to diplomatic missions or consular offices of Romania, they shall be forwarded immediately to the Citizenship Commission within the Ministry of Justice and Citizens' Freedoms, the Citizenship Directorate'. Under the terms of the legislative changes, a number of litigations were considered irrelevant (decision no. 46 of 7 January 2011).

Another type of litigation occurred regarding the 5-month term – recommended or binding term. In the case of several actions based on an unjustified refusal to settle the application, the court found that there was an unjustified refusal to settle the applicant's claim (art. 2 par. (1) letter i) of the Administrative Litigation Law no. 554/2004) motivated by the fact that the request for restoration the Romanian citizenship, based on the procedure established by the special law in the matter (the Romanian Citizenship Law no. 21/1991, republished) was not reviewed and endorsed by the Commission within this deadline, as a rule, applicants reiterating initial claims. Constantly, in dealing with such requests, it has been concluded that the 5-month period cannot be regarded as a recommendation, but a binding one, in favor of the beneficiaries of the legal provisions, and not of the defendant authority, which has the obligation to solve such requests, so it refers to the entire procedure, not just to verify the accomplishment of the conditions. Failure to do so affects the claimants in the reasonable time of their claims, being equivalent to an injury to them in the law enshrined in law. In the view of the HCCJ, the reasonable duration of a procedure is assessed in the light of the circumstances of the case, as recognized in its case law by the European Court of Human Rights, taking into account the criteria established by the case law, in particular the complexity of the case, the applicant's and the competent authorities' conduct, as well as the stake of the litigation for the person concerned. However, this kind of litigation, as

a rule, is not particularly complex, and the competent authority is at fault for not responding to requests, as long as it has to take all due diligence to verify the status of requests. Any delay in the settlement of the applicant's request meant that the reasonable time allowed by the provisions of Art. 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (decision no. 1.527 of 21 March 2012) was exceeded.

3.2. Aspect reflected in the jurisprudence regarding the verification of accomplishment of the conditions imposed by law for the granting of citizenship

A first type of litigation identified was about how to interpret and apply art. 8 par. (1) lit. e) which requires that the condition for the applicant is known with good behavior and that he has not been convicted in the country or abroad for an offense that makes him unworthy of being a Romanian citizen. In this context, Decision no. 146/2016 the Bucharest Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the court of first instance, ordering the annulment of the order no. 1844/P/13.10.2014 issued by the ANC President and ordering the defendants – ANC and ANC President to re-examine the file and to issue a new order for acceptance/rejection of the application, depending on the result of verifications, following the appeal declared by the defendants, in view of the misapplication of the provisions of art. 8 letter e) of Law no. 21/1991. When issuing an order to reject an application for citizenship, the issuing authority took into account the information contained in the detailed criminal record no. 8/1-N-334/13 dated 12.03.2013 issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, according to which the applicant is registered in the MIA Central Data Bank of the Republic of Moldova, with several offenses. The appellant considers that the court of first instance wrongly considered that only crimes against public security, against national security, against the armed forces' fighting capacity, genocide, against humanity and war, may lead to the condition of being unworthy to be a Romanian citizen.

However, by examining the appeal, the Court finds that it is unfounded, the court of first instance ruling the recurring sentence with the correct application of the substantive provisions of art. 8 par. (1) of the Romanian Citizenship Law no. 21/1991. The Court has held that, as regards the requirement of good conduct provided for in Art. 8 par. (1) letter e) sentence I, the court of law correctly considered that this requires a complex analysis of the applicant's behavior in the society over a longer period of time, taking into account the real and personal circumstances and cannot be limited to an isolated incident, produced in a certain context. In this context, it has been rightly assumed that the prior engagement of a form of legal liability, even criminal, should not lead to the rejection of the request for granting or restoring citizenship, but the administrative body has the obligation to investigate the concrete circumstances in which committed that liability. In this regard, the

court of law correctly observed that the respondent authority did not analyze or ignore the fact that the offense for which the applicant was convicted was committed while he was a minor and from the date of that conviction and until the time when the application for the restoration of Romanian citizenship was filed, more than 10 years passed, during which the applicant-claimant, according to the documents in the file, did not commit any other deceptive, antisocial acts. Also, if the legislator wished to condition the granting or restoring of Romanian citizenship for the lack of any violation of the legal provisions, then it would have provided it expressly, imposing a requirement that there be no legal form of liability (civil, criminal, administrative, contravention, disciplinary, etc.).

As regards the requirement under art. 8 par. (1) letter e) second sentence, the court of first instance rightly considered that the lack of being a Romanian citizen cannot automatically result from the existence of a criminal conviction, but only by reference to the nature of the crime for which the conviction occurred. However, the applicant was not convicted of an offense of the kind referred to in Titles VII, X, XI, XII of Romanian criminal code (crimes against public security, against national security, against the armed forces, genocide, anti-humanity and war), but for committing the hooliganism offense in respect of which the lack of loyalty to the state cannot be sustained Romanian. Thus, not every criminal conviction is the expression of a lack of loyalty to the Romanian state, but only that which arises for acts that denote an unworthy attitude towards the state, such as those affecting the national security or safety, independence, sovereignty or territorial integrity, those that show disinterest to the fundamental values of the Romanian people, such as language or culture, and the like. Thus, although the deeds are antisocial, they are not likely to make the latter unworthy of being a Romanian citizen (Published in www.rolii.ro on January 18, 2016).

Analyzing other similar situations, it can be noticed that such a solution has not been embraced in all cases, considering the failure to accomplish the legal condition, in the situation when the applicant was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for committing the offense of theft committed through the penetration in the room, an act incriminated by the provisions of art. 119 para. (3) Criminal code of the Republic of Moldova. Thus, it was not acknowledged that the petitioner would have known himself with good behavior, a cumulative condition with the absence of any condemnation in the country or abroad for an offense that makes him unworthy of being a Romanian citizen, provided by the same legal text. The court also noted that the claimant's rehabilitation was also irrelevant, as rehabilitation deletes the effects of the conviction, but the assessment of the condition of good conduct is made in relation to the claimant's entire conduct, including in relation to that conviction, even if his rehabilitation intervened. Thus, it was considered that such a conviction is evidence that there was no good behavior on the part of

the person concerned and that good behavior after the conviction (civil sentence no. 3359/7.05.2015).

In another case brought in the application of the provisions of art. 8 of Law 21/1991 republished, there is another example of a situation in which the court considered that it is necessary to reanalyze the accomplishment of the conditions for granting the Romanian citizenship by the issuing authority of the administrative act that rejected the application for the citizenship, in which the court appreciated directly the level of knowledge of the Romanian language by the applicant, thus retaining the illegality of the order issued in the conditions in which the stated legal requirements, namely the knowledge of the Romanian language, and the possession of basic notions of Romanian culture and civilization sufficient for to integrate into social life, as well as the knowledge of the Constitution of Romania and the national anthem, appeared as being common, especially that the applicant has been living in Romania for over 15 years, has a family and a minor child, graduated in 2004 ASE courses, and the four brothers of the claimant have successively acquired Romanian citizenship.

It is worth noting that in dealing with requests for annulment of the order for refusing to grant or restoring citizenship and for obliging the administrative authority to issue the order, the HCCJ has ordered the defendant to reconsider the applicant's request to regain the Romanian citizenship, noting that the coercion of defendant A.N.C. to issue the order for the restoration of Romanian citizenship to the intimate-claimant exceeds the attributions of the judiciary powers. This authority will be obliged, however, to reconsider according to the provisions of art. 11 of Law no. 21/1991, the applicant's request for restoration (Decision no. 656/2013 as of February 8, 2013).

3.3. Aspects reflected in jurisprudence after the acquisition or loss of Romanian citizenship

Justified refusal to issue travel documents. In the action filed by the claimant P.V., in contradiction with the defendants of the General Passport Directorate and the Community Public Service for the Issuance and Record of Simple Passports, he requested the recognition of the right to issue a Romanian tourist passport and obliging the defendants to issue a simple tourist Passport, with the mention of Romanian citizen residing abroad. The Court of Appeal, as a court of first instance and then as a judicial review court, considered that the recurrent-claimant had failed to prove the unjustified refusal of the defendants to respond or to resolve the claims, since the replies sent by the defendant authorities do not amount to an unjustified refusal, within the meaning of the legal provisions, provided that at the time the application was filed, the claimant was unable to prove the Romanian cit-

izenship with a valid document, given the inconsistencies between the documents submitted by the claimant at the filing of the application and those in the records of passports. The fact that the claimant's requests have not been resolved in the manner claimed by him is not an unjustified refusal within the meaning of Law no. 554/2004, so that the High Court finds that the appellant's allegations and criticisms are unfounded and that the court of first instance has delivered a substantive and legal decision (HCCJ decision no. 7/2014 as of January 9, 2014).

Also, in a similar situation, the refusal to issue the passport of a Romanian citizen with his domicile abroad was considered to be justified. By Decision no. 6368/2013 The High Court notes that at the date of filing the application for the restoration of Romanian citizenship, the provisions of art. 1 of the Decree-Law no. 137 of 11 May, 1990, according to which 'former Romanian citizens who lost Romanian citizenship before 22 December, 1989, can regain it on request, on the basis of an authenticated statement', or such an application has not been filed by the claimant. The court found it irrelevant that the applicant had in the meantime held a Romanian passport whose validity had expired since it was considered to have been issued 'by mistake', since the applicant did not previously request the restoration of Romanian citizenship (Decision no. 6368/2013, as of September 26, 2013).

It should be noted that in the recitals of the decision of HCCJ, in our opinion, the address informing the applicant of the lack of Romanian citizen's status as compared to the records held by the competent authorities was qualified as an administrative act of an individual character.

Non-disclosure of travel documents for minors. Lack of evidence of Romanian citizenship with their parents. By Civil Sentence no. 620/C/2017 of the Neamţ Tribunal (published on portal.just.ro no. 2 of May 9, 2017), the court held that the claimants, parents of two minors, acquired the Romanian citizenship, proven by the certificates issued on 28.04.2011 and 07.08.2014 respectively by the Consulate General of Romania, based on the Order of ANC President for Citizenship, and on 04.11.2013, the Local Council issued the birth certificates issued on behalf of the two minor children of the claimants as a result of the transcription of documents of birth. Subsequently, the claimants referred to the defendant (the Community Public Service for the Issuance of Simple Passports) for the issuance of passports for the two minors, but the defendant refused the release because the documents submitted did not prove the moment when the Romanian citizenship was acquired by the two minors and that birth documents have not been drawn up properly.

The court found that the legal conditions for the issuance of passports for minors were accomplished, taking into account that in this respect, according to art. 17 par. (1) letter a) of Law no. 248/2005, 'minor Romanian citizens who are not in one of the situations of suspension of the exercise of the right to free movement abroad shall be issued simple electronic passports under the following conditions:

in the case of the minor who has not reached the age of 14, only at the request of both parents, (...) provided that both parents of minors are at the time of filing the application, Romanian citizens and minors are Romanian citizens. If only one of the parents acquires Romanian citizenship, the parents will jointly decide on the citizenship of the child. If the parents do not agree, the court within the territory of the minor's residence will decide, taking into account his interests.

This example is typical of the situation of the acquisition of Romanian citizenship by minors, in the context of the regulations in force prior to the adoption of GEO no. 65/2017, which stipulated that the minor born of parents foreign citizens or without citizenship and who has not reached the age of 18 acquires Romanian citizenship with his/her parents, and if the minor has acquired the Romanian citizenship under the conditions of par. (1) or (2) and has not been included in the parent's nationality certificate or has not been issued a citizenship certificate in accordance with the provisions of Art. 20 par. (7) or (11), the parents or, as the case may be, the parent, Romanian citizens, may request the transcription or entry in the Romanian civil status records of certificates or extracts of civil status issued by the foreign authorities under the conditions of Law no. 119/1996 on civil status documents, republished, as subsequently amended and supplemented (Article 9 (1)–(4) of Law No 21/1991, in force prior to the adoption of Emergency Ordinance No. 65/2107).

In this case, the court considered that even if the two minors were not included in any of the certificates of citizenship issued to their parents, `the birth certificates issued to minors by the Local City Council, certificates issued following the transcription of certificates of birth issued by the authorities of the Republic of Moldova. The court then notes that 'birth certificates (...) establish and confirm a legal fact' which, until a final judicial decision has been made to annul, amend or rectify, the birth certificates issued by the public authority to the two minors have the quality of authentic documents, authenticity capable of proving in full the factual situation they are recording'.

4. Conclusions

In accomplishing the above-mentioned approach, we focused our attention on the evolution of the legal framework in the field, highlighting the many changes that have occurred and the problems that some changes have generated, as they were mainly reflected by the media or statistical data (Ranta, 2017, pp. 51-70). In this paper, in the continuation of the research activity on this issue, we tried to present the administrative procedure by which the Romanian citizenship is acquired or regained, organized in stages and procedural formalities, and in addition and according to the procedure described, a synthetic description of the main

types of litigation that occurred in the context of the analyzed procedure and the application of the analyzed regulation.

In pursuing this approach, we appreciate the need to focus attention on the analysis of each type of litigation identified in this paper, in order to highlight accurately the conclusions of the jurisprudential findings. We consider that such an analysis would highlight the interpretations that the courts offer to legal norms in relation to which certain types of litigation arose, thus giving useful guidance to law enforcement bodies in order to reduce difficulties or errors in the interpretation of the legal rule and, ultimately, in order to increase the efficiency of the law enforcement process.

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Dealing with Energy Poverty from the Bottom Up. Local Approaches to a Pan-European Issue

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Abstract. This paper creates a conceptual link between governance and energy poverty while answering to the following research question: what role does the local public administration play in the wider institutional setup when dealing with energy poverty? We explain the importance of energy poverty for the policy agenda at the European and national levels, as the topic is deep-seated in the sustainability discourse of the European Energy Union. We then anchor these debates in the literature on governance, which provides the ground for understanding the opportunities that result from the interactions between various stakeholders.

We provide an outlook on the Romanian legislative framework in order to understand the interplay among the central and local administrations, utility providers, NGOs and citizens in their consumer position. The focus will remain on the role played by the local public administrations in both amplifying and diminishing energy poverty by providing field research evidence.

Keywords: energy poverty, governance, public administration, Romania, post-communism.

1. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to place the complex phenomenon of energy poverty in the context of a post-communist administrative system, by investigating the extent to which the public administration in Romania contributes to fighting the causes and symptoms of energy poverty, or rather creates the premises to amplify them. The research question guiding our case study is: Does the local public administration play a proactive role in the Romanian institutional setup when dealing with energy poverty? Besides the in-depth analysis of the Romanian case, we also aim to anchor our approach in the literature developed around the concept of governance, as it provides a new perspective on the various approaches to energy poverty developed in the past two decades.

The concept of energy poverty is receiving increasing attention, from both the scientific community and from practitioners, as it has been translated into legislation and public policies and touches a various range of stakeholders. Almost all of the European countries have elaborated public policies meant to combat the symptoms of this phenomenon. The concept is currently also mentioned in some of the most important political documents regarding the European energy market, including the Energy Union Package, as the concept has increasingly been integrated in the institutional framework. However, the insufficiency and inadequacy of the available statistical data and the differences in approach among the Member States – which vary from pure recognition, to concept definitions and the design of measures – have allowed for the general acceptance that the most efficient way to intervene is at the national level, where responses can take into account specific, local factors, which would, in turn, lead to more adequate instruments of intervention (European Commission, 2017).

Energy poverty is relevant both in the European context, where 50 to 150 million people are affected, as well as regionally (European Parliament, 2013). Central and Southeastern Europe are most affected with around 30% of its population under energy poverty (IENE, 2018) because of low living standards, low quality housing, and incomplete energy market liberalization (Househam and Mușatescu, 2012). In Romania approximately 20% of its population is energy poor, based on the computation of various cost indicators (Sinea, Murafa and Jiglău, 2018). The country has a median income per capita almost four times lower than the European average, while the energy market is in the process of liberalization. In Romania, the phenomenon of energy poverty is not completely understood, whereas the system created to capture it is rather inefficient and incoherent, being itself a factor for vulnerability at times.

Thus, beyond its conceptual relevance, energy poverty is relevant in what regards the quality of life, and in that respect it involves policy- and decision-mak-

ing, and Romania represents a compelling case for study, as it bears the feature of energy poverty visible across the entire post-communist space. By correctly identifying the households that are exposed to energy poverty, energy customers can be helped, so that they may be able to partake in the energy market with dignity. Beyond market objectives designing and delivering well-suited policies can translate into results in terms of quality of life for citizens. Given the lack of agreement between Member States and even the ambiguity in approaches at the level of the European Union, much of the burden for the task falls into the hands of local public administrations.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Energy poverty

There is no unitary approach with regard to energy poverty, neither at the level of relevant literature, nor at the level of public institutions (national or European), although it is an important concern for all modern states. This diversified approach mainly proves that the phenomenon is complex and multidimensional. Furthermore, this generates an entire diversity of indicators and public policies. Apart from the particular tendencies offered by the national legislation or scholars, the most widely accepted definition of energy poverty refers to the impossibility of a household to provide energy services for itself, at affordable prices (Brennan, Zevallos and Binney, 2011; Liddell *et al.*, 2012).

Conceptually, energy poverty is placed at the junction between household income and the energy expenses. According to some authors, energy efficiency should be added to the equation. In agreement with this perspective Househam and Mușatescu (2012) add three complementary conditions: the technical under-performance of a building, the lack of access to cheap services on a liberalized market, the lack of an adequate heating system (Househam and Mușatescu, 2012) All of these aspects are to be taken into consideration when seeking to understand the symptoms of the phenomenon in Romania.

An additional useful concept is that of vulnerable consumer. The literature identifies two ways to define it. On the one hand, vulnerability depends on the consumer's characteristics. This is the so-called endogenous perspective (Brennan, Zevallos and Binney, 2011) On the other hand, it depends on the larger context the consumer finds herself in – the exogenous perspective. Most often, the external conditions cannot be altered by the consumers (Clifton, Fuentes and Fernández-Gutiérrez, 2013). This is why external factors have a considerable impact on their options (Baker, Gentry and Rit, 2005). Sometimes this translates into some form of abuse, when alternatives are few or none (Hill and Kozup, 2007).

In agreement with this last idea, Stearn offers a complex definition which somewhat overlaps with that of energy poverty, because it references the impossibility of having access to necessary products and services, without a disproportionate burden of effort/cost/time (Stearn, 2012). This is rather a policy-making definition. It combines the endogenous and the exogenous perspectives, consumers who find themselves in a situation of vulnerability because of demographic or sociocultural conditions and conditions on the market (European Commission, 2016). In Romania, the endogenous perspective is used exclusively (Sinea, Murafa and Jiglău, 2018).

It should be noted that consumers might be vulnerable from one perspective but not from another, or they might find themselves in a situation of multiple vulnerabilities. Some approaches imply that vulnerability is rather a dynamic situation, with consumers going through it at times. One or more vulnerability factors may overlap (Griffiths and Harmon, 2011). Still, it is important to bear in mind that, due to certain economic or social-demographic conditions, there are groups in which the state of vulnerability is persistent, and where persistent intervention is needed. In Romania, we could easily reference the poorest large city neighborhoods (such as Ferentari in Bucharest or Pata Rât in Cluj-Napoca) that are inhabited in particular by Roma people. That is where intervention measures, which are meant to enhance their situation, must be comprehensive and comprise of measures that reduce the social marginalization as they target their multiple vulnerabilities.

In a nutshell, the concept has reinforced itself over time, while capturing all the above-mentioned dimensions, especially as a result of the research done in the UK and Ireland for the past three to four decades, and more recently in other parts of Western Europe. As the interest for the topic has grown in the European South or in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the concept, as it was originally learned, has broadened its understanding to other political and research areas not only to reflect its practical variations across spatial patterns (Boardman, 1991; Bouzarovski and Tirado Herrero, 2015; Bouzarovski and Petrova, 2015), but also to take notice of the concerns on the international agendas, which stresses its policy-making potential. This evolution shows the ramifications of the topic and the need to approach it in an integrated manner and with an enlarged perspective in both analysis and action. Due to this evolution a plethora of explanations have evolved to answer questions such as is the relevance of the topic and why decision-making should consider it in its agendas. Energy poverty is both a root and effect of social and economic marginalization, with some groups being more vulnerable than others (Pye and Dobbins, 2015). It is associated with general deprivation and poverty, whereas all these features associated add up to the outcomes (Reames, 2016). Sometimes affected groups are clustered together, which justifies targeted local action even more (Harrison and Popke, 2011). There is an array of

very practical and measurable outcomes with a large body of literature focused on health issues and their impact on health systems (The Marmot Review Team, 2011) and spending and other related macro-social and economic costs; the impact on the economy in general (Rademaekers *et al.*, 2016); the role of the energy systems and energy mix with distorting effects (Bouzarovski and Herrero, 2017); the quality of indoor and outdoor breathing air and the wider impact on climate change (Hills, 2012).

2.2. Where does governance step in?

Rhodes (1997, p. 15) defines governance as self-organizing, inter-organizational networks, characterized by interdependence, resource exchange, rules of the game, and significant autonomy from the state. Fritz Scharpf (1994) places the emphasis on the negotiated self-coordination process, embedded in pre-existing structural contexts – either within hierarchical organizations or within self-organizing networks of cooperative relationships. He synthetically labels this as 'self-coordination in the shadow of hierarchies'. Kjaer (2004) brings back the concept within the scope of the public sphere, reconciling governance with government. She argues that effective governance involves network managements, which, in turn, requires a governmental agency as coordinator. More networks providing services do not necessarily imply less government. Governance, Kjaer claims, is about coordinating the plurality and complexity of hierarchies, markets, and networks. Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan (1997, p. 2) state that 'governance is the guided influence of social processes', that goes beyond public stakeholders. Similar to Kooiman (1993) and Mayntz (1993), they argue that governance is about reaching consensus and building trust among public and non-public stakeholders revolving around a policy process.

With these elements of governance in mind, it is rather easy to return to energy poverty, which, as previously mentioned, involves a broad range of government and non-government stakeholders and is fundamentally a phenomenon embedded into networks – when it comes both to the causes of energy poverty and effectively dealing with its symptoms. A useful tool, which we will follow in our analysis and return to in the concluding part, is developed by Benyon and Edwards (1999, p. 46) and adapted by Kjaer (2004, p. 41). They rely on three elements – focus, orientation and technique – in order to distinguish between local government and community governance. Governance means an approach to citizens' well-being as multi-faceted and inter-dependent, their scope involves public-private partnerships that rely and foster active citizen participation, and the means of action involve flexibility and networking.

Table 1: From local administration to community governance

	Focus	Orientation	Technique
Local government	Delivery of services addressing social problems regarded as monistic and discrete.	Unilateral interventions by single agencies.	Rigid dependence on hierarchical / bureaucratic or (quasi-) market mechanisms.
Community governance	Managing the problems of citizens' 'well-being' regarded as multi-faceted and inter-dependent.	Multi-lateral interventions by public-private partnerships that recruit active citizen participation.	Flexible deployment of bureaucratic, (quasi-) market and networking mechanisms.

Source: Adapted after Benyon and Edwards (1999, p. 146); Kjaer (2004, p. 41).

Returning to how the energy poverty field of study has evolved, and how the related public discourse has come about, it is only legitimate to state that, in the European arena, from a policy-making perspective, the EU has so far been predicated as the most important level of intervention to reduce energy poverty. It was thus expected of the EU to deliver common standards, definitions and policies. This perspective has earned ground in the process of seeking breakthrough on the European agenda. However, it was not long until policy debates between the EU fora and the Member States brought to the forefront another layer of decision-making, namely the Member State level. This emerged from a long-lasting dispute between the EU and its members on the jurisdiction of the energy policy, where the dominating argument became the fact that energy poverty is so multi-faceted that it is impossible to be tackled at EU level. Therefore, national Governments are best suited to diagnose and intervene through national instruments.

A third layer in a line of importance that emerges from EU documents is the macro-regional level, which has to do with the way the European energy market has evolved – on grand energy regions (that is quasi-historic spaces) that are structured on an optimum-principle and the ensuing argument that issues have to be dealt with at a regional level, where spatial patterns occur depending on various market, economic, social, to some extent historic and cultural, but also political and institutional contexts and legacies (Bouzarovski and Tirado Herrero, 2015).

More recently two further levels of intervention have made their way to the research, policy and advocacy agendas: the argument is that the most effective level of intervention is at the grassroots with an important role played by the local administrations and the cooperation between them, even up to the scale of trans-national cooperation. The arguments are that, at the local level, the issues are better internalized by the political and institutional agendas, action is better suited, resources are much better allocated and synergies between stakeholders are easier to build and maintain generating innovation clusters (Saheb *et al.*, 2015; Engager, 2019). This perspective, formulated in defiance of the traditional approach and even though it has yet to become a sturdy point of view, finds itself in a dynamic and

rather enthusiastic and pluri-vocal process of build-up. On this trend, there is literature supporting the point of view that there is need to apprehend the manifestation of energy poverty across spaces and across time (Bouzarovski and Tirado Herrero, 2017), that there are important differences between subnational regions (Cochez, Durieux and Levy, 2015; Gouveia, 2018), or that social and spatial patterns can be derived from local trends on energy poverty (Lovelace and Philips, 2014).

Support comes also from literature pointing out that there are diverse climate regions that are not congruent with national boarders or macro-regions, but which can be smaller than the former and sometimes transcend them (Cochez, Durieux and Levy, 2015) while climate change has an impact on these patterns (Zhang *et al.*, 2018; Velte, Magro and Jimenez, 2010). The philosophy of the European Union based on economic integration, development regions and open spaces justifies this type of analyses (Gertz *et al.*, 2009).

3. The institutional design of the decision-making process with regard to energy poverty in Romania

The institutional design and the decision-making setup depend on the type of remedies applied. There are three types of assistance in the area of energy poverty in Romania. One non-financial – the prohibition to disconnect certain categories of households – and two financial – the social tariff applied by the supplier and the heating aid, which is a type of state subvention of bills. Whereas the first two are marginal (the social disconnection prohibition is vaguely defined and the social tariff is only applied to a little over 8,200 households), the third instrument is applied to almost 700,000 consumers, being the primary source of remedy. The latter, therefore, will be primarily discussed in this chapter.

As part of the institutional design, the Parliament is the source of primary legislation. Law no. 123/2012 modified by Law no. 64/2016, defines the more broad notion of vulnerable consumer, as opposed to energy poverty, as being the final consumer belonging to the category of household consumers who, for reasons of age, health or low income, is at risk of social exclusion and who, to prevent that risk, benefits from social protection measures, including of financial nature. Social protection measures, as well as the eligibility criteria for these, are established by normative acts (Law no. 123/2012, Art. 3(16)). Article 64 is dedicated to the protection of vulnerable consumers, stating that vulnerable consumers enjoy benefits regarding the energy supply service and network access and that It is forbidden to disconnect vulnerable consumers from the electricity distribution network, including in energy crisis situations.

Implementation rests with the Government. In line with European obligations, the primary law raises the issue of the development of a national action plan with

regard to energy poverty, which it places in the responsibility of the Ministry of Energy regarding Natural Gas, while with respect to Electricity the similar drafting task is awarded to the Ministry of Labor in collaboration with Ministry of Energy. This is most likely a legislative error. However, as of now, no such action plan has been adopted. The Government has also limited ability to regulate in the field as demonstrated through the Emergency Decree no. 114/2018 where the admissions criteria were altered. Law no. 123/2012 also defines a third decision-making tier marked by the energy market regulatory authority (ANRE) that enacts secondary legislation. As determined by law, the types of benefits for the protection of vulnerable consumers, apart from the financial ones, 'shall be determined by the National Authority for Regulation in the Energy field'. The ANRE also establishes the benefits granted to vulnerable consumers of electricity, namely to consumers with low incomes, or to elderly with health issues who require a continuous supply of energy. Based on ANRE regulations, the admission criteria for these categories will be established by welfare institutions, which is primarily the Ministry of Labor.

The regulation of supplying natural gas expressly states that financial facilities are represented by heating benefits during the winter months, whereas the regulation for the supply of electricity does not specify this. A later regulation, Emergency Decree no. 27/2013, provides for the fact that heating benefits are granted regardless of the form of heating: be it centralized heating, natural gas, solid fuels (wood, coal), or electricity (when the dwelling has no other forms of heating). Benefits for electricity are only allocated provided that there is no other source of heating in the household.

The principle of granting these benefits is that of proportional compensation of heating costs depending on the income per family member, up to certain monthly average consumption. Therefore, the higher the income, the smaller the compensation. The maximum monthly amount of the benefits varies according to the number of rooms, the temperature zone and the local gigacalory price. The proportional compensation is allocated both from the central budget, as well as from the local budget.

The application process can be described as follows: The applicant files with the local town hall a request for the heating benefit together with a statement of income and family size, ahead of the start of the cold season, before 15 September every year. The request will be analyzed by the town hall against a list of criteria described below and it is accepted or turned down by means of a mayor's directive.

At the request of the territorial agencies of the National Authority for Payments and Social Aid (ANPIS), town halls have to carry out social inquiries to verify the application statements. They shall be conducted for at least 60% of the beneficiaries of heating benefits.

Implementation norm GD no. 920/2011 enumerates the proofs that applicants must submit together with the application, among which a list of possessions. These will be appraised to be added to the household income and may constitute grounds for refusal. The document describes the process into more detail including the calculation formula applied for the benefits. There are rules and provisions relating to the communication between town halls and territorial ANPIS agencies, and the manner in which social investigations shall be carried out by the town councils (application of Art. 30 of the Emergency Decree).

Based on the approval and on the monthly consumption of each household involved, the supplier calculates the amount of heating benefit allocated for each targeted consumer. Both amounts – the amount payable and the benefit – will be included in the bill. Where dwellers' associations are involved, they step in the process and deliver to the energy supplier the monthly consumption of the subsidized household, and receive in return the allocated subsidies. The supplier sends for approval to the local administration a statement with the amounts involved. This is ultimately filed with ANPIS for payment. For wood and other solid fuels subsidies are payed in cash and just once for the entire season. In all these cases the main funding source remains the state budget, managed by the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection, but through transfers to local budgets. It should be added that beyond the general criteria which are applied to sums allocated from the national budget, local administration can also designate sums from the local budget to supplement state benefits. These additional benefits will be allocated, within a limit established by the implementation norms, in kind or cash. There is no centralized situation of these amounts, neither of the criteria applied for allocation.

Moreover, in practice, as highlighted by the field research, as well as by the lists of requirements provided by various town councils, there is significant room for discretion from mayors. This is likely to discourage many vulnerable consumers to apply. Emergency Decree no. 70/2011, with subsequent amendments and additions, mentions that 'with the purpose of enacting the right, the mayors request documents attesting the componence of the family and the revenues of its members, as well as documents on the dwelling or goods owned by them, including in other administrative-territorial units' (Art. 14(4)). Such evidence can be requested either from the applicant or from other public institutions, on the basis of a protocol of cooperation. In practice, they are always directly requested from the applicant, thus complicating the admissions process. The evaluation criteria are also applied inconsistently from one administration to the other.

For example, the city hall of the Sector 5 in Bucharest requires vulnerable customers applying for heating benefits 15 types of documents, including, for those requesting benefits for electricity-based heating, one 'to prove that they had been disconnected from the centralized heating system'. The Bacău city hall requests

9 types of documents, the income being proven, for instance, among other, by a bank statement on the personal account. Another example is that in some cases students' scholarships can be added up to the family income. Interpretations can differ in the absence of a precise list of requirements.

Another significant element is the fact that heating benefits are the only types of social benefits not included in the unique information system for the management of social benefits (SAFIR), as pointed out by representatives of some of the town halls included in our field research. This hampers the work of social assistants. In addition, the absence of computerization allows certain city halls to require, in a discretionary manner, documents which are hard to obtain by vulnerable consumers. For example, the city hall of Sector 6 requires of applicants residing legally elsewhere a statement issued by the town hall of residence to prove that the applicant had not applied for, neither had she been granted such benefits there. It also requests statements of income from the previous year issued by the Administration of Public Finance of the town of residence and a tax certificate issued by the Directorate General of Taxes and Local Taxes.

Since the law does not clearly mention what type of documents can be requested by city halls, they are often overzealous, affecting the accessibility to this form of support in a negative manner. The websites of certain town halls even mention that 'other documents, as appropriate' may be required.

Data compiled from the Statistics Office and the Labor Ministry shows the fact that the way the system functions is to the advantage of those households that are located in higher income thresholds, over RON 310, leaving many of the really needy consumers outside the system, for various reasons.

In sum, despite all the negative aspects identified, the system provides the local administration with an important role from the way it applies the criteria established by the central authorities, it evaluates the applications, it designs the criteria for the sums allocated additionally from the local budget and the amount it decides to supplement from own resources, to the way it performs the information of the general public, it interacts with the applicants and it facilitates the process. The field research findings support this argument, while identifying that, beyond the limits imposed by the system, opportunities for cooperation and action amount, provided there is political and administrative will.

4. Findings from the field research
regarding the role of the local public administration

The following section relies on a field research carried out by the Center for the Study of Democracy during the period 10-20 May 2017 by a team of eight people – six field operators and two coordinators. The results of the research are detailed in Sinea, Murafa and Jiglau (2018). The research covered three counties – Bacău,

Hunedoara, and Teleorman, selected based on previous data analysis gathered through the Family Budget Survey and from the Ministry of Labor and Welfare for the years 2015 and 2016. Bacău county was ranked first in the cold season of 2015/2016 for the total number of heating benefits, for wood benefits in particular, and third place for heating benefits for gas. Teleorman and Hunedoara occupied the top two places for heating benefits for electricity, with a considerable advantage for Teleorman (four times more heating benefits for Teleorman as compared to Hunedoara).

In the absence of data or the distribution of benefits at county level, the first interviews in each county were conducted with the heads of the County Agencies for Social Affairs (AJPIS). The objective of this first step was to gather information regarding the most problematic regions in the county, the benefits allocated during the previous cold seasons, the relation between recipients and the local authorities, the perception regarding the legislative framework in place. The localities selected for further research in each county have been chosen based on the results achieved from the interviews with the head officers of AJPIS. Therefore, in all three counties, we selected not only the county capital cities, but also localities from smaller urban areas or the rural areas. In each of these localities, interviews were conducted within the local administration: mayors, deputy mayors or social workers, depending on their availability; and homeowners. 38 interviews were conducted in total.

The localities were the following (in brackets there are mentioned the number of interviews conducted with household owners in each county and locality, respectively):

– In Bacău county (11): Bacău (4), Comănești (2), Letea Veche (2), Sărata (3);
– In Hunedoara county (13): Deva (2), Brad (4), Lupeni (2), Petroșani (5);
– In Teleorman county (15): Alexandria (9), Necșești (2), Vitănești (4).

The discussion on energy poverty in Romania is intrinsically connected to low income. From this perspective, there is a general temptation to associate energy poverty exclusively with poverty, as a general phenomenon (measured by low income), without looking at energy poverty as an independent circumstance that has important overlaps with poverty, but the manifestations and causes of which lie outside the discussion on income. For this reason, heating benefits end up being associated in the public perception, and in that of the public authorities, with social benefits, whereas their recipients are stigmatized accordingly and pushed at the edge of society.

There are significant differences between the amounts of energy benefits granted depending on the type of fuels households use. This difference has an impact on the behavior of potential beneficiaries, but also on that of the authorities. There are beneficiaries who try their best to obtain heating benefits for electricity, because

the monthly amount of money can be up to four times higher than that granted for other types of fuel. On the other hand, authorities are bound to make inquiries in cases of applications for electricity benefits, which can lead to exclusions based on criteria that are not always transparent or clearly understandable to applicants or even to the city workers. This is one of the important explanations for the low number of benefits allocated for electricity.

The procedures for receiving benefits are generally well perceived as they are. In our research we have especially dealt with recipients of wood and, in a smaller proportion, of electricity and gas benefits. In the first situation, the perception that cash payments are often used to meet other household needs is confirmed. In the second situation, when benefits are invoice deductions, the fact that the beneficiary is not a part of the process, is viewed positively due to the simplicity of the system, but also due to the fact that it overcomes some of the faults of the wood benefits allocation system.

Overall, there is a widespread perception, both within the local administrations and among the beneficiaries of heating benefits, that the sum of public policies designed to combat energy poverty fails to do so and even creates the premises for its proliferation. The decrease in the number of benefits is due to the increase in income in recent years, especially the increase in pensions and the minimum wage. On the other hand, connections to natural gas, where necessary, involve rather large costs either for tenants, either for local authorities. The need to demonstrate that electricity is the only source of heating in the dwelling hampers access to this type of benefit, although the electricity consumption to supplement heating in the dwelling can be quite high. The social tariff (although not approached in this field research) does not contribute to solving this issue connected to electricity, because a larger consumption leads to very high costs.

On the plus side, the relationship between the institutions involved in the process of granting benefits is usually a good one, which is especially relevant in the case of these three counties, where the system is very used due to the large number of requests. Also, the relationship between state authorities and utility providers is seen as positive. This being the case, a better information system to document households on a constant basis would be an optimal source of support. Through digitalization the pressure for additional human resources would be smaller, at least because the need to constantly perform investigations in the field would be reduced.

The relationship between beneficiaries and authorities is also perceived to be a good one. Social assistants are considered to be a support and a source of information for potential beneficiaries, which confirms the assumption that the large number of benefits from a county does not necessarily indicate that the problems

are greater there, but that the process of communication with the authorities is presumably better.

The relationship between recipients and utility companies is perceived as a good one as long as communication channels made available by utility companies are efficient. Communication between beneficiaries and providers can prevent disconnections, even when alternative solutions such as individually negotiated pricing plans in relation to vulnerable clients or even counselling are being sought.

Energy efficiency and energy poverty meet rather coincidentally in policy. At the level of local authorities, investment in efficiency measures in buildings usually fall within the framework of European funding, with its limitations, as there are no resources at the local level to start projects on their own. The limitations of funding, together with the lack of trust and a cooperative climate within associations of tenants, make energy efficiency measures rather an exception. Also, there is no framework to allow access to funds for the rehabilitation of dwellings and individual housing. However, where the residents have made interventions on their own, the impact at the level of the invoice was visible. Furthermore, there is a legal possibility to implement local means of combating poverty through energy efficiency measures. The example from Alexandria, where an expert evaluates the dwelling, indicates the necessary interventions and makes a calculation of the necessary money and equipment for interventions, is a model of good practice that could be taken over by local authorities with more generous budgets. However, the legislative limitations are visible in this case as well, because the process of effective intervention in the dwelling cannot be completed by the city hall in the absence of a public procurement procedure.

Interventions at the level of education and customer behavior are also important. The majority of respondents have difficulties in assessing their current income, the necessary income, the household expenses, and the specific expenses on energy or the consumption. On the other hand, there is a willingness to accept the counseling, so this question of education can be seen as education through schools or as the education offered by the authorities to persons with whom they come into contact or by suppliers to consumers (vulnerable or not) on their own behavior in order to limit household consumption and hence costs.

Last but not least, we note great deficiencies in relation to the reporting of data collected at the level of municipalities and their centralization by an authority of the state, as well as with respect to their availability to institutional actors involved in the development of public policies. With the exception of data related to the amounts of benefits received and the number of inhabitants of the households for which the benefit is granted, other information provided by ap-

plicants as part of the application for benefits does not get further than the city hall. In conjunction with the existence of an information system, such information could provide a more detailed image about the state of dwellings, energy expenditures relative to income, items related to behavior or situations that lead to the rejection of the files. This aspect is even more important if we note that there is no unified approach of city halls. Beyond the legal framework, the reality in the field is shaped also by the fact that city halls have a certain freedom of movement for finding their own intervention measures locally, or by the possibility that some city halls demand additional documents (as the case of Ferentari) to applicants or the possibility that the whole process be negatively influenced by poor communication between city halls and the community. Such situations can be identified through field research, but, in the absence of rigorous reporting and centralization, there are certain problems that may occur in a systematic manner on the ground which are not visible. Similarly, examples of good practice can be found through such qualitative research, but they are not known to the other city halls that could adapt them, or to decision makers at the central level or by the media and the public.

This research provides a clearer view on the relationship between energy poverty and governance mechanisms at the local level, on the approach of the phenomenon through heating benefits or on the relationship among the main institutional actors that come into contact with the phenomenon. However, the research has some limitations that should be mentioned, but which are transformed in opportunities for further research. First, the research does not represent a complete picture of energy poverty at the general level of the three counties. Things can be different in other municipalities, and the problems they face or the type of intervention may vary even within the same county.

The chosen counties are similar to each other in the sense that they are among the top ranked by the number of heating benefits offered. The conclusions arising from this research should be checked in the case of counties with lower ranking positions. Ideally, the data gained from the field research based on information aggregated at the level of the Ministry of Labor and Welfare should be correlated, at the level of the localities and counties included in the research, with statistical data regarding incomes and expenses, but these are not available at the level of the National Statistics Institute, because the samples used in the Family Budget Survey are not representative at the county level.

Table 2: Positive and negative feedback on the current policies
used at the local level to combat energy poverty

Positive feedback	Negative feedback
More local autonomy and local drive to improve the quality of buildings could generate community-oriented creative solutions (Alexandria example).	General dissatisfaction at the local level regarding the quality of the legislation coming from the central level.
A good connection of local authorities through social workers improves trust in the entire system.	Unclear legislation can lead to arbitrary interpretations, contrary to the interests of vulnerable consumers (the Ferentari example).
Local mediators functioning with the support of NGOs and utility providers can substitute the poor involvement of local authorities (the Ferentari example).	Lack of integrated electronic system to monitor heating benefits.
Better communication from utility providers improves the overall trust in the system.	Lack of communication regarding various solutions implemented at the local level.
	Social workers are key actors in the system, but depend on the local administration hierarchy.

Source: The authors

5. Conclusions

The goal of this research has been to understand the extent to which local public administrations in Romania play a role in preventing and fighting energy poverty, by using a theoretical approach rooted in the governance literature. The concept refers to the creation of guided networks, cooperation, and coordination among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders involved in the occurrence and the solution finding-process of social phenomena. Energy poverty, both from a conceptual and a practical perspective, is a concept that is well suited to this approach, as the phenomenon is multi-dimensional, trans-disciplinary, and context-dependent, to an extent that variations can occur even among local contexts in the same country, not to mention from one geo-political space to another.

With respect to the case of Romania, after we presented the EU's approach to energy poverty that provides some guidelines to Member States, we combined an analysis of the legal framework that establishes the role of relevant governmental stakeholders and of private and public utility companies with the conclusions of field research we conducted in several key-parts of Romania in order to determine the impact and efficiency of this policy framework on households that are in – or at risk of – energy poverty. Briefly put, to some extent the networks exist and function well on paper and sometimes even in practice. It is obvious that a great part of the effectiveness of the policies put in place depends on the local public administrations; the mayors and the social workers of the town halls are highly relevant. At the same time, the legislation has loopholes that can lead to additional administrative burdens on the vulnerable consumers and on the local administrations

themselves, but can also be exploited in a positive manner in order to generate additional local solutions fostered by the local administrations. Where this happens, we find a greater array of other stakeholders, such as NGOs or private firms, other than the utilities, that help in identifying and coming up with solutions for consumers and households affected by energy poverty.

A lot depends on the competence and the capacity of local administrations to work with other governmental bodies at the central and local level. There is no sanction for those who fail to do and the law does not create the premises to identify such failures. At the same time, the level of information and understanding of citizens regarding the phenomenon and the process addressing it is rather limited; therefore we cannot speak of some kind of 'political' sanction, which could be visible in elections. In the end, the local public administrations *can* play a significant role in preventing and fighting energy poverty, but if that happens or not in practice might be simply a matter of luck.

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Running the Extra Mile: Sustainable Community Wellbeing and Local Councils' Involvement in Distance Running Events

Oana Mara STAN

Abstract. The current study aims to understand organizational policies and practices by which local authorities and running associations engage with each other to foster a sustainable culture of movement. It uses a mixed methodology based on distance running participation statistics in Romania and abroad, discursive open-coding and thematic analysis of running associations and amateur race events websites, coupled with 5 in-depth interviews with NGO coordinators of running events. This empirical inquiry focuses on the role and impact that race organizers assign to local councils for supporting running in the attempt to build on health capital and community development considerations.

Empirical evidence highlights the need for local authorities to help establish an ecology of practice by a more active support for the culture of running, both as lifestyle and event management. The main role that running clubs assign to local councils centres on maintaining already existing infrastructure and facilities (i.e. pathways, parks, public gardens, riverside alleys, etc.) in good condition. The longitudinal analysis of 188 running events organized throughout Romania illustrates a steady growth in participation rates for distance running (i.e. marathons, half-marathons and 10 km races), with the slow decrease of the growth rate in the last 3-4 years. The regional distribution of running events shows a correlation with GDP/capita, poverty rates and average salary, suggesting that affluent communities are more prone to organize running events. The trends of gender distribution in participation rates to international races organized in Romania reveal female runners account for an average of 15% of marathon finishers, 27% of half-marathon finishers and 43% of shorter-distance, 10km and 5 km finishers.

Collected data suggest distance running is not an increasingly popular leisure activity, despite the fact that running events are recurring, rather than transient, with predictability and venue diversity as defining brand vectors. Interviews with host organizations converge with website content to reflect the institutional support received from local authorities as peripheral, and their involvement as problematic, rather than supportive. Race organizers expect local councils to contribute to the sustainability of local running events by providing expertise for new races, by drafting guidebook toolkits and supporting race promotion, hands-on implementation and follow-up evaluation thereof.

Keywords: Distance running, sportainment, community wellbeing, resilient communities, ecology of practice.

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1. Context

Physical inactivity ranks fourth among the leading risk factors for global mortality, after high blood pressure, tobacco use, high blood glucose (WHO, 2010). Since physical exercise has proven its positive impact in fighting against cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes (WHO, 2010), the promotion of running events should be part of the local administration strategy to tackle sedentariness, enhance public health, and decrease healthcare costs. Research (e.g., Barnfield, 2016; Heath *et al.*, 2012; Hallal *et al.*, 2012) acknowledges the stringent need for authorities to find innovative ways to encourage sustainable involvement in physical exercise for citizens throughout their life course with the aim to improve health status, quality of life and active life expectancy.

Distance running is a global mass sport phenomenon. Running is attractive among amateurs on grounds of availability, accessibility and affordability. As such, compared to other sports, it does not require a substantial initial or ongoing financial investment (e.g, in equipment, training facilities, etc.), it can be practiced indoor (i.e., on the treadmill) and outdoor and it promotes a healthy, active lifestyle. Given the above-mentioned considerations, the research questions focus on the following key aspects:

- How do local authorities get involved in organizing and promoting recreational running events, in terms of public strategy for leisure facility provision?
- What strategies do they employ in the attempt to install the community health ethos through increasing participation rates to physical exercise in the form of recreational running?
- How are sustainability concerns for resilient communities manifested in the design of distance running events? How do resilient communities engage in sportainment?
- How is the interplay between local administration and running associations (re)shaped through the organization and evaluation of amateur running races?

Guided by these research lines, the empirical inquiry attempts to portray what running associations expect from the local administration in terms of support for organizing running events. It reflects on the partnership between public administration and associations that organize running events, through the lens of a discourse analysis performed across media announcements of recent running events in Romania.

Tackling this spreading phenomenon and promoting a healthy lifestyle requires not only individual solutions, but instruments of institutional support. Local administration can take action as facilitator and influencer that makes communities more aware of the benefits of leading an active lifestyle and inserting sport into

their daily routine. By promoting running events, authorities subordinated to the mayor's office can influence people to pass from intention to deliberation, decision, onwards to behaviour and finally to sustainable commitment to a community of practice, by institutionalizing a culture of movement.

The inquiry hence explores the running landscape in Romania in a contextualized approach, in view of the serial interrogation: what works, for whom, and how can local settings knowledge contribute to larger-scale policies and practices? Complementary to the discourse analysis performed on running associations websites, in the section that describes the partnership with local authorities, another exploration is conducted by face-to-face, one-on-one interviews with race organizers. These stakeholders are leading representatives of amateur running associations based in Bucharest who provide in-depth accounts of the impact assigned to local councils for supporting running events.

These informants express arguments about this impact considered as sustainable means of strengthening resilient communities. Resilient communities refer to collective entities that develop local coping mechanisms to adapt to change, accommodate situational challenges and mitigate adversity such as economic or ecological threats (Barr and Devine-Wright, 2012). Also these empirical sources illustrate the discursive means and rationales by which runners can be described as belonging to resilient communities.

The role of sports events contains multifold objectives. Communities benefit from sports events that encourage tourism, boost civic pride and involvement also from marginalized groups to participate in community development (NSW, 2011). According to the same well-documented report, community councils dispose of resources (i.e., human, material, financial) to assist with the planning, management and assessment of community events that include running contests. Council financial support materializes in grants, subsidies and in kind support such as lending equipment for stages, marquees, road barriers, screens, safety fences, portable toilets and waste bins (NSW, 2011). Local authorities offer practical guidance and mentoring for novice and established event organizers, such as time management: event scheduling to avoid overlapping similar events and choosing start and finish hours to prevent road closure at high traffic intervals.

'Sportainment' is a catch phrase for the blending of sport and entertainment in mass sports events that are accessible to large audiences. Sportainment converts sports events into shows using media coverage. It functions as a public venue for performing sport to illustrate a message such as health benefits, recreation, bonding while spotting opportunities for local entrepreneurs, especially across retail and hospitality (Ermolaeva, 2014; Woolf, Heere and Walker, 2013). The term was first coined in the 1980s in professional wrestling with the promotional aim of drawing attention and attracting more advertisers, fans, sponsors and brand

ambassadors such as celebrities. From the initial branding attempts in wrestling, baseball and basketball, it spread to incorporate all sports that strive to gain more popularity and visibility.

2. Theoretical outlook

2.1. Running, healthcare costs and community wellbeing

Previous research sheds light on the social value of sports events for community wellbeing (Ermolaeva, 2014), by elucidations concepts such as health capital, city brand development in the direction of sustainable eco-cities and communities of action for health (Misener and Schulenkorf, 2016). Host communities of mega sports events such as the Summer Universiade in Kazan, Russia (documented by Ermolaeva, 2014), benefit from the association between the 'sport for all' ethos and post-materialistic values such as environmental protection. The popularization of sportainment events marks a growing impact ascribed to the health capital and their potential for active ageing and the prolongation of active lifestyles.

However, the positive influence of major races on the wellbeing and cohesion markers of host communities is documented in studies on cycling in South Australia (Mackellar and Jamieson, 2015) and on sports events with a social responsibility focus that function as 'brandfests' catalysts for community development (Woolf, Heere and Walker, 2013). In the latter research, charitable associations organize sport events for an instrumental purpose (i.e., networking mechanism for fundraising) and to endorse symbolic capital as identity marker and credibility booster. Although recreational, such charitable sports events have a competitive component that is intended to raise more funds. For instance, for the Swimathon international event (also happening in 5 locations in Romania, some of which reaching their tenth edition in 2019), the more laps a fundraiser-swimmer completes, the more funds he/she collects (Swimathon, 2018).

Mackellar and Jamieson's (2015) research, undertaken in a rural Australian context, revealed the impact of a cycling event in stimulating community interaction and social capital throughout the event planning and developing process. The longitudinal analysis tracking more editions of such events would provide evidence as to the longer-term variance in terms of social capital development. Concepts of running ethos, culture of behaviour, ecology of practice and sportainment mark the interaction between local government and sports associations for hosting sports events, either at professional or amateur level (Woolf, Heere and Walker, 2013; Ermolaeva, 2014; Barnfield, 2016). Such partnership functions on a bottom-up elicitation doubled by top-down coordination.

As such, a unilateral influence of local governments is criticized as overbearing and paternalistic because it can alienate other stakeholders who are not involved in

the decision-making process of organizing such events (Smith, 2008). Conversely, grassroots mobilization and crowdsourced knowledge without the involvement of local authorities can be less coherent and consistent and therefore miss out on opportunities and objectives. The partnerships between the two stakeholders abide social-contextual mechanisms of soft policy, soft instruments and soft regulation (Barnfield, 2016).

The soft regulation paradigm introduces a type of new deal governance or co-governance wherein public and private actors interact. They align and contract a voluntary agreement by which they position themselves in an institutional co-operation with the aim to exchange input and expertise on best practice models, to disseminate information, education and consultancy to involved parties. To enhance this upscale level of cooperation, application procedures, as illustrated by the NSW benchmark (NSW, 2011), have the mission of ensuring transparency and timeliness during the communication with partner running associations. The process of submitting and solving requests is expedited by taking advantage of the enhancement of government-citizen interface via digitalization (Mihai *et al*, 2016).

The rise in inactivity is differently shaped in the Western and Eastern European contexts. Hence, in the developed countries, participation rates in physical exercise are declining as a result of multiple factors such as growing attraction to digital technologies, work-life fusion and overspill effect and work intensification (Barnfield, 2016). In the developing former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the levels of physical exercise are timidly growing, but still are positioned at a significantly lower level compared to the Western counterparts (Eurobarometer, 2014). Structural explanations thereof involve, among others, limited healthcare budgets and low interest from public authorities to overcome the inactivity barrier and commit to the sports ethos by actively promoting physical exercise (Drygas *et al.*, 2008).

The World Health Organization recommends local government to support the culture of running by improving the visibility of running and the safety thereof (WHO, 2010). To create the critical mass needed to bring about community change and nurture running participation, local intervention should focus on the creation and maintenance of infrastructure for running routes and runner-friendly alleys in populated neighbourhoods, improved lighting, route signage, police control of running areas such as parks and upgraded control for stray animals (Barnfield, 2016).

2.2. Runners' affiliation to resilient communities

Qualitative research performed by multifold methodologies has explored runners as resilient communities of practice united by values and the running ethos. An ethnographic study dwells on running rationales conceptualized as individual

pursuits in a social world, with a quest for identity and validation as running self. This vocabulary of motives shapes the events, actors, organizations and practices at play in the culture of distance running (Shipway, Holloway and Jones, 2013). Narrative techniques using autobiographies of expatriate runners relocated in Beijing found running reconciles two opposing tendencies: the orientation towards affiliation and belonging to a community and, on the other hand, the individualistic desire to stand apart and feel like oneself (Ronkainen *et al.*, 2017). The same authors found that, for migrants, the practice of running brought sense and continuity to their experience of selfhood across a major life transition, and they achieved this comfort of maintaining what they deemed good old habits through negotiated meanings and bodily performativity.

A study on two trail running events found sports brands act as drivers for the subculture of consumption that defines group identity and promotes intense socializing among participants Schwarzenberger and Hyde, 2013). This is partly due to the fact that trail running (e.g., in forests and on mountain tracks) has a reputation of being tough in the running community and hence appeals to a minority niche of 'hardcore' runners on the lookout for high-performance challenges and they look for running gear that sets them apart from average runners.

Another study showcased parkrun (Stevinson, Wiltshire and Hickson 2015), a community-based intervention that supports running in the UK through a volunteer association. Parkrun partners with local authorities to provide a national network of weekly, free, timed 5-kilometer runs in public spaces. Interviewed adult participants revealed motivation for participation classified into two main themes: freedom and reciprocity. An interesting finding is that personal benefits (i.e., wellness and anticipation of health and fitness gains) only accounted for initial motivation, whereas the transition from casual experience to sustainable involvement with parkrun marked community contribution, cohesive and participative goals as more important.

3. Method

The study integrates an inductive methodology based on an in-depth exploration of discursive evidence that pinpoints the partnership between running associations and local government. An auxiliary component presents statistics about the attendance to distance running events over past editions. The discursive approach is relevant to depict subtle tensions and idiosyncrasies across race organizers' narratives and meaning-making techniques. Five in-depth interviews took place during October and November 2018; the peak season for racing across Bucharest. The participants were representatives of running non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who organize a total of 14 yearly road and trail races in Bucharest, Praho-

va and Braşov counties. They were selected primarily according to their long-term involvement (at least three-year old) with end-to-end organization of racing events and secondly as per their availability.

Interviews took place at the NGO headquarters, they lasted between one and two hours and interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality of answers and protection of personal information. In the data processing phase, discourse analysis was performed on primary data (in-depth interviews with running events organizers) and secondary data (i.e., the online promotional messages on races websites obtained from the portals of Robert Cadar and Forum Maraton). Interviews were transcribed and relevant messages were included in thematic categories using the framework analysis of discursive repertoires. These semantic collections and socio-linguistic cues that designate deliberate, customized vocabularies which activate embedded beliefs, assumptions and rationales enacted in oral or written communication. They are evocative of justifications, explanations and other forms of argumentative and interpretive knowledge deployed to make sense of problematic or complex facets of discourse (Toth, 2016).

The statistics on numbers of participants included only finishers, and excluded DNF (runners who did not finish) and DNS cases (runners who did not start). These metrics needed to be computed and aggregated from individual databases posted on race tracking websites. To the best of our knowledge, there is no statistical overview of participation races or any subdivisions such as gender distribution for running events in Romania, so it is the first attempt of this type so far. The selection criteria for these races involved the international component (i.e., events are open to foreigners and elite runners), and having at least 3 consecutive editions (2016-2018), for a longitudinal comparison purpose.

4. Results

4.1. Statistical description of the evolution of main running races

The following table presents a non-exclusive distribution of race types organized in 2018 in Romania. This is because one race type can fit into more than one category: a trail event can also have an ultra-race component.

Points of interest reveal a somewhat counter-intuitive, almost equal distribution between rural (trail) and urban (road) races. According to regional distribution, most economically developed regions (i.e., Bucharest, Braşov, Cluj and Timişoara) host 60% of the total number of races organized in Romania in 2017. There are counties with no running event organized throughout the year, counties which are also the most under-developed, having the highest unemployment rate and the lowest average wage: Brăila, Ialomiţa, Călăraşi, Giurgiu, Teleorman, Vaslui, Botoşani, Sălaj, Gorj, Olt.

Table 1: Distribution of 188 races organized in Romania in 2017

	Numbers (of 188)
City races (road race and cross: 5-42km)	74
Fun & family races	10 (e.g. Color Run Bucureşti, Timişoara, Cluj, Oradea)
Mixed (duathlon, triathlon)	18 (e.g. Pegas Triatlon Buftea, Transfier, Triatlon Fără Asfalt La Mare)
Extreme and ultra-races (24h race, mud run, obstacle run, night run, ultramarathon)	12 (e.g. Transylvania 100k, Ciucaş x3, Iron Man – XMan Oradea, Transylvanian Bear Race, Ultimate Mudness Ciolpani, Asaltul Lupilor, Braşov Heroes)
Rural races (trail, cross-country, sand, grass/ park)	79
Mountain hiking & hillside races	48 (including 4 night races: Dracula Night Run Târgu Mureş, Parângul Night Challenge, Postăvaru Night, Edelweiss Night Run Câmpulung Moldovenesc)
Corporate	4 (Bucureşti, Craiova, Timişoara, Iaşi: Crosul Firmelor)
Regional distribution by county/city	Bucharest metropolitan area: 45, Braşov – 21, Timiş – 17, Cluj – 15, Iaşi – 7, Tulcea – 7, Mureş – 6, Sibiu – 5, Constanţa – 5, Prahova – 5, Alba – 5, Hunedoara – 5, Bihor – 4, Suceava – 4, Harghita – 4, Bacău – 3, Bistriţa – 3, Maramureş – 3, Caraş Severin – 3, Dolj – 3, Vâlcea – 3, Galaţi – 2, Covasna – 2, Vrancea – 2, Argeş – 2, Dâmboviţa – 2, Neamţ – 1, Mehedinţi – 1, Satu Mare – 1, Buzău – 1, Arad – 1
Distribution by month	January – 8, February – 9, March – 13, April – 27, May – 34, June – 37, July – 20, August – 12, September – 24, October – 11, November – 7, December – 3
Distribution by organizing associations	Runsilvania – 4, http://runsilvania.ro/despre-noi/, Cluj-Napoca Asociaţia Trăiesc Sănătos, Bucureşti – 3, http://traiescsanatos.org.ro/ Runners Club, Cluj-Napoca – 6, https://runnersclub.ro/ Ro Club Maraton, Bucureşti – 3, http://roclubmaraton.ro/contact/ Clubul Sportiv Eco Alpin Bucureşti – 3 Invictus România, Bucureşti – 4, https://web.facebook.com/InvictusTeamRomania/ Pegas Triatlon Club, Bucureşti, http://www.triatlon.info.ro/ Club sportiv No Stress (Triatlon), Bucureşti – 3,www.sportivity.ro/club/asocia tia-club-sportiv-nostress/ ACS Smartatletic: www.smartatletic.ro – Bucureşti (6) MPG Bucureşti (tennis, running – 3, mostly fun run, cycling, MB), http://mpg.com.ro/ Activ Pontica, Constanţa,www.sportivity.ro/asociatie/asociatia-sportiva-activ-pontica/ (1) Asociaţia Tura în Natura (mountain running, MTB, tourist orientation), Sibiu (2), www.turainnatura.ro/ro Clubul pt Protecţia naturii şi turism Braşov (educaţie eco-civică, plogging, mountain racing: Braşov Marathon, Marathon 7500 sau Propark Adventure Race):www.cpnt.ro/ Rotary Club, Iaşi (1 – Semimaraton Iaşi): http://rotarycopou.ro/ Alergotura, Timişoara (5-Petrovaselo, Crosul Cetăţii, Team up & run, Timotion, Plai), alergotura.ro ACS Xterra sport Bihor (6, mostly trail, including Iron Man), www.xterrasport.ro/ Sana Sport, Constanţa, http://www.sanasport.ro (1-Maratonul Nisipului) Bucharest Running Club – abrc.ro (3) Cozia Racing Team (1 running, 3 cycling, incl.junior), www.cozia-mtb.ro/mtb/ Fundaţia comunitară Iaşi – 1 (Cros pentru şcoli): www.fundatiacomunitaraiasi.ro/ Fundaţia comunitară Sibiu – 1 (Maratonul internaţional Sibiu) fundatiacomunitarasibiu.ro Asociaţia Pădurea Copiilor – 2 (Transmaraton, Crosul Pădurii Copiilor), www.padurea copiilor.ro/

Numbers (of 188)	
Distribution by organizing associations	Jitsu Zărneşti – 1 (racing & enduro motorcycling)
	Fundaţia Rafael, Codlea, Braşov (social assistance: occupational therapy for persons with disabilities): 1 (mountain marathon), fundatiarafael.org
	CS CovAlpin, http://covalpin.ro/ (ecological education, trail run) Sf. Gheorghe (CV) – 1 – Şugaş Trail Running
	Asociaţia Sport la orice vârstă, Bucureşti (Retezat Sky Race, Corcova Trail, Alba Iulia, Buşteni, Azuga, Sinaia, running & MB) – 6, https://web.facebook.com/pg/SportLaOrice Varsta/about/?ref=page_internal
	Pachamama, Bucureşti (ecology, Maratonul Roşia Montana) – 2, www.pachamamaro mania.ro/contact/
	Feel Good Team, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Harghita (1), https://hargitatrailrunning.ro/en/
	Tăşuleasa Social, Tiha Bârgăului, Bistriţa: Via Maria Theresia, https://via-maria-there sia.ro/contact/
	Asociaţia Blessing Hearts
	Clubul alpin român universitar Cluj
	Asociaţia Ultrabug (Fundu Moldovei, Bucovina, 3-day, 100km ultramarathon run&hike), www.ultrabug.co.uk/
	Asociaţia Şapte Scări

Source: Author's database

Empirical data reveals most target NGOs are omnibus, being active in mountaineering, cycling, ecological and civic education, swimming, duathlon, triathlon, training plans, nutrition counselling, sports marketing and corporate wellness training. Also, only a meagre 5 are specialized in running, the rest have mixed profiles, e.g., community development, environmental (reforestation), humanitarian, social responsibility.

The next four charts illustrate the time-bound evolution in the number of finishers (male and female) for the most important international races in Romania, in terms of attendance: Sibiu, Braşov, Cluj-Napoca and Bucharest. For the first three events (Sibiu, Braşov and Cluj-Napoca), the 21-kilometres (half marathon) events were selected on grounds of the extremely reduced number of finishers at the full marathon, whereas for Bucharest the full marathon was chosen for analysis, as the most representative race.
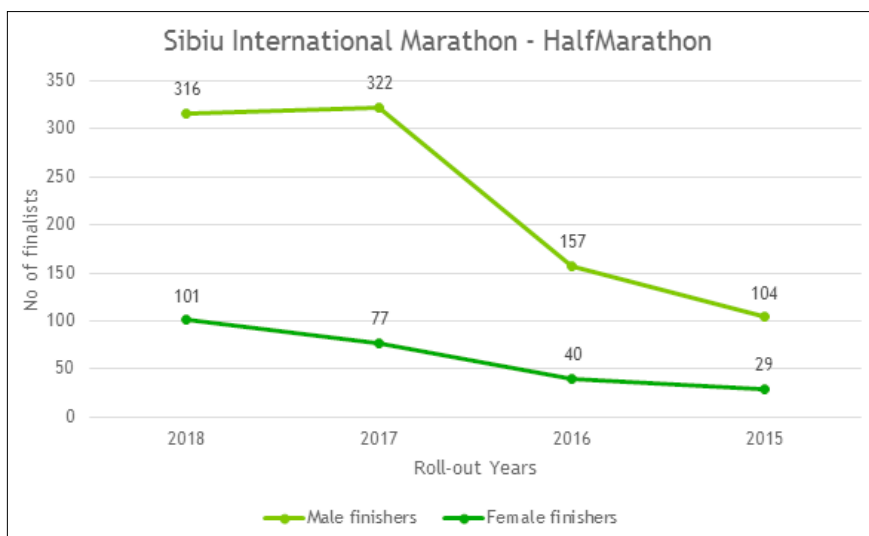
Figure 1: Sibiu International Marathon: evolution in the number of finishers split by gender during 4 editions (2015-2018) – the half marathon race

Source: Author's database
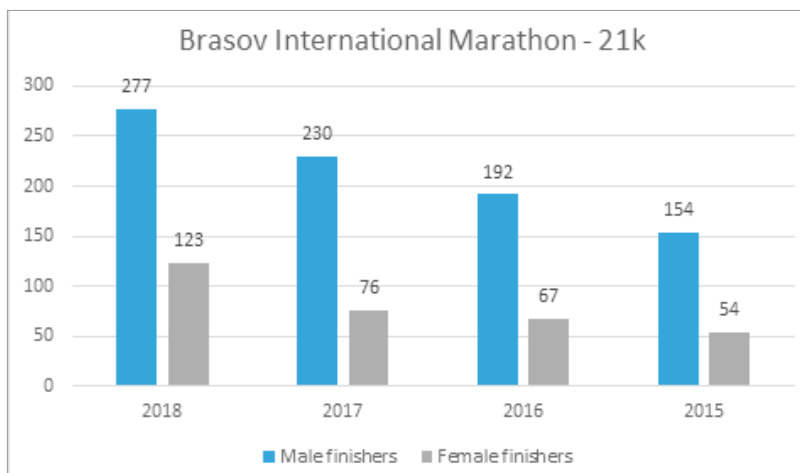
Figure 2: Braşov International Marathon: evolution in the number of finishers split by gender during 4 editions (2015-2018) – the half marathon race

Source: Author's database
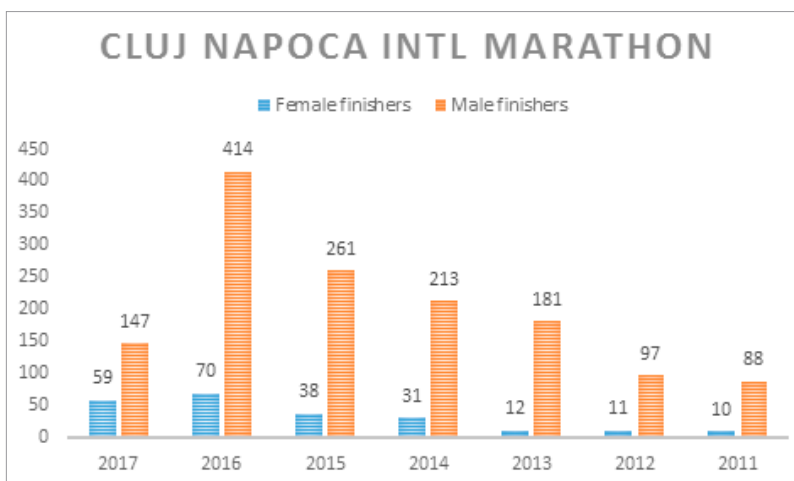
Figure 3: Cluj-Napoca International Marathon: evolution in the number of finishers split by gender during 7 editions (2011-2017) – the half marathon race

Source: Author's database
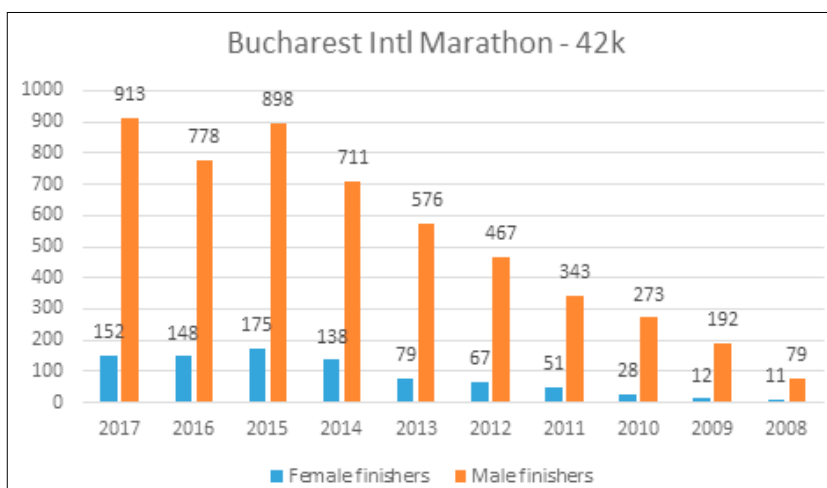
Figure 4: Bucharest International Marathon: evolution in the number of finishers split by gender during 10 editions (2008-2017) – the 42 km race

Source: Author's database

The trends of gender distribution in participation rates to international races organized in Romania reveal female runners account for an average of 15% of marathon finishers, 27% of half-marathon finishers and 43% of shorter-distance, 10km and 5 km finishers. Although the total number of finishers has increased throughout the successive editions, however there is not a noticeable trend toward

rebalancing, or a move towards a more even gender split. The growth rate for the total number of finishers has curved in the last 3-4 years to reach a consolidation stage for the main events, however the local events are predictably evolving to gain more attendance.

An international comparison ranks Bucharest Marathon above average in the popularity of East European international distance running races, as per number of finishers (Statista, 2018).

Table 2: Marathon ranking per number of finishers (selection) 2017 statistics

City, country	Number of finishers
Worldwide marathons	
New York, US	51,303
Paris, FRA	41,708
Chicago, US	40,608
London, GBR	39,072
Tokyo, JPN	36,150
Berlin, GER	36,054
Osaka, JPN	29,431
Boston, US	26,606
Yokohama, JPN	22,594
Los Angeles, US	20,617
East European Marathons	
Budapest Marathon, Hungary (since 1984: 32 edition)	5,415
Poznan, Poland	4,230
Ljubljana, Slovenia	2,183
Bucharest, RO	1,065
Kiev, Ukraine	869
Belgrad, Serbia	764
Zagreb, Croatia	454
Chişinău, Republic of Moldavia	385
Sofia, Bulgaria	313
Skopje, Macedonia	170

Source: Statista, 2018

The Bucharest marathon is ranked high in a regional hierarchy according to attendance, however on a global scale it is incomparable to mega-events of tens of thousands of participants, in the US, Europe and Asia. The top ten marathons in terms of the highest number of finishers are listed above.

4.2. Analysis of online discourse on branding and public-private partnership

The following table explores the type of names of running events in terms of branding strategies. As the table shows, many race names are toponymical, which proves their contextualized essence and closeness to naturalistic settings. Also a significant number of 81 out of 188 analysed races have English names. 34 out of 188 have metaphorical names whose content is explored in the following section. Also calendar events and timing are categories filtered by suggestive name tags. Fewer are named after corporations or personalities.

Table 3: Overview of running races organized in Romania in 2017, as per classification criteria. Categories identified in this classification are not mutually exclusive

Toponymical	77 (e.g. Harghita Trail Running, Urlea Eco Trail Run, Rodnei Sky Race, Semie maraton Târgovişte) 77 of 188: 41%
English	81 (e.g. Băneasa Winter Trail Run, Oradea City Running Day, Măcin Mountain Fun, ASE Student Run, Liberty Marathon UVT): 81 of 188: 43%
Time-based (e.g. events, calendar, seasons)	18 (e.g. Vlădeasa Winter Trail, Semimaraton Gerar, Crosul Mărţişorului, Croṣul Moş Nicolae, Crosul Anului Nou, Crosul Ziua Feroviarului): 18 of 188 = 9,5%
Metaphors, connotations, word play	34: Hai să dăm mână cu mână (January 24, Galaţi), Crosul îndrăgostiţilor de alergare (Bistriţa), Run for life, Runsilvania Wild Race, Crosul "Campionii Sănătăţii", Maratonul Argonauţilor, I...AŞI in Trail, Hit the Egg (Ouşoru Challenge), VeteRUN, Transylvanian Bear Race, the Beard Run, Triatlon fără Asfalt la mare, Asaltul Lupilor Beast, Asaltul Lupilor, Braşov Heroes, Călătorie între cer şi pământ, Legion Run, No stress triathlon Callatis, Titans Triathlon, Bate toaca (Durău, Neamţ), Atacul vânătorilor de munte, Legendele Nemirei, Tura licuricilor – Light up your city, RUNderFULL Fun, Moldoviţa Colţ de Rai, Ultransilvania, Pe-un picior de plai, The Music Run, Fuga pe uliţă, Istriţa Escape, PanaLaCapatUltra4320min, Semimaratonul Bucuriei, Crosul Castaanelor, Hercules Maraton
International events (in title)	6 (Braşov,, Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Bucureşti * 3: 10k, half marathon, marathon BRC)
Races named after personalities	3: Crosul Gall Layos Sfântu Gheorghe, Memorialul Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu (Recea, Braşov), Crosul memorial Gheorghe Lazăr (Bucureşti)
Races named after main sponsor	5: All BRC events (Uniqa Asigurări 10k & family run, Volkswagen Bucharest Half Marathon, Vodafone Relay Race, Raiffeisen Bucharest Bank Marathon), Honeywell Race (Lugoj), Maratonul DHL Ştafeta Carpaţilor. Sibiu: Crosul Visma, Zacaria 10k, Maratonul Continental, Semimaratonul Joyson Safety Systems, Crosul Europlast Oradea – first comes sponsor, then comes toponymical
Supported cause: fundraising events	6: Cursa pentru şcoli, Run for Epilepsy, 100 for children, Run for Wildlife, Cursa Pădurea Copiilor, Maratonul Blessing Hearts
Organized by Bucharest-based associations	120

Source: Author's database

The name distribution of running races reveals the use of metaphors and other connotative cues is frequent, as well as the use of toponymical cues and English

key words, whereas races named after the main sponsor or after personalities are less common. Even if sponsors appear in the name of individual races, especially high-profile international ones such as Bucharest Marathon, they do not appear in the name of full events. The majority of races, even those that take place outside Bucharest, are organized by Bucharest-based associations. There is a polarization of races in big cities that already established a running tradition, whereas small-scale events remain confined to local communities that are less developed. The curbed growth rate of races may signal that these running events have reached their peak potential and did not manage to attract the critical mass needed to consolidate a culture of health outside the runners' niche subculture, also on account of the peripheral involvement of local administration.

Race branding involves also having atypical names for events. Particularly unusual were the following: Maratonul transfrontalier / Crossborder marathon Via Pontica (2 Mai – Krapet – Bulgaria), Hit the Egg – Ouşoru Challenge (Vatra Dornei), Crosul Makedonilor (Bucharest), The Beard Run, Dive din Deva, Crosul Divelor/ Diva's run (Cluj).

Apart from the regional, gender and toponymical criteria, the time-bound distribution of running events reveals clearly-cut patterns, i.e. summer races are generally trail and mountain running, while most road and city races take part in spring (months of April and May), early summer and early autumn (September). Included in this quantitative analysis are also the scarce running races organized by state authorities: universities (University of Bucharest, West University Timi-șoara, ASE), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (VeteRUN Bucharest), and the Ministry of Transport (Crosul Ziua Feroviarului – Bucharest). All races support at least one social, environmental, cultural or educational cause.

Metaphorical names allude to values such as:

- Health: Campionii sănătăţii, Crosul sănătăţii.
- Heroism, grit, courage, resilience, intrepidity, self-challenge: Hercules Marathon, PanaLaCapatUltra4320min, Maratonul Argonauţilor, I...AŞI in Trail, Atacul vânătorilor de munte, Asaltul Lupilor Beast, Legion Run, Braşov Heroes.
- Euphoria, positive energy, wellbeing, fun, humor: Crosul îndrăgostiţilor de alergare, Semimaratonul Bucuriei, Bate toaca, Tura licuricilor – Light up your city, RUNderFULL Fun, No stress triathlon.
- Solidarity, affiliation, belonging: Maratonul reîntregirii neamului românesc, Hai să dăm mână cu mână.
- Escapism, freedom: Liberty Marathon, Timişoara, Fuga pe uliţă, Istriţa Escape
- Scenic landscapes: Pe-un picior de plai, Moldoviţa Colţ de rai, Călătorie între cer şi pământ, Retezat Sky Race.

A case study of the sports division of the Timişoara local council evaluated 25 sports projects proposed for 2018 (Timişoara City Hall, 2019). The average financing approved amounted to 20% of the sum that the sports associations requested. Only two of the 25 projects concerned running and athletics in general: one received only 2000 ron from the required 120 000 ron for the Super Sports Club Association for hosting the European championships of 24 hours endurance running, whereas in the case of Alergotura Sports association that intended to host Timişoara City Marathon 2018 and Tura Licuricilor, both projects were deemed ineligible. Event organizing guides with pointers and best practices toolkit are not available on the local administration websites documented for the international marathons (Braşov, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Sibiu). In opposition to the detailed application guidebooks available for the NSW procedure on mayor's office support for sports events (2011), on the Romanian website of mayor's office there are no provisions related to: deadline for application (minimum submission interval for the application between the announcement and the event day), check-list for risk assessment, approved schedule and event conditions e.g. parking, traffic control, police surveillance, or emergency first aid.

4.3. Race organizers' feedback
– empirical evidence from in-depth interviews

The social history of running in Romania apparently begins at the end of the nineteenth century. The first documented race was held on May 12, 1896, was organized by the Royal Club in partnership with the Army and the Jockey Club. This co-hosting marks the beginning of the public-private partnership. The task sounded outrageous for the media of the time (Turturică and Turturică, 2016) because it involved 222 km in maximum 60 hours, 14 check points, only male participants, 330 starters, registered from 9 nationalities (the majority Romanian), 11 above 60 years old, and 20 finishers. Bystanders ostensibly thought war was breaking out.

Practiced regularly, running constitutes serious leisure because it serves as meaning-making strategy and gratifier. The status of runner is associated to self-identity and, even if it is performed in an amateur, hobbyist and volunteer manner, it is intrinsically significant, captivating and fulfilling. Additionally, this activity impacts runners' lifestyle because it shifts their daily routines (e.g., eating and sleeping habits, schedule of training sessions, interaction patterns with fellow runners). Hence, running incorporates the defining features for serious leisure that is practiced thoughtfully and thoroughly, with deliberative purpose, and marks the common ground of two otherwise separate worlds: work and fun (Stebbins, 2012). As its author explained, serious leisure was coined after the most frequently evoked adjective in respondents' narratives.

What distinguishes running as serious leisure from an ordinary casual pastime relies on five arguments: (1) runners' identification with the status and its ensuing symbolic benefits, (2) their ongoing desire to persevere and self-improve, (3) the possibility of a social career or leisure career, (4) the need to invest time, physical and mental focus (attention, efforts, stamina, resilience) to acquire and consolidate running skills and (5) belonging to a social world characterized by a unique ethos and positioning. The identity benefits that runners draw refer to bodily practices that enhance attire, social presence, self-esteem and physical attractiveness, as well as correlated attributes of social capital that rely on runners being thought of as committed, resilient to adversities, high achievers, self-motivated, optimistic, energetic and/ or extravagant, non-conformists who defy rules and venture to new grounds by pushing their limits. These attributes were synthesized from interviewees' input.

Interviewees' accounts argue that there are many elements of the running ethos culture, like cultural vocabulary or motivational tunes. Funny, inspirational mantras or aspirational messages printed on running T-shirts are part of runners' community self-expression strategies and become viral in running folklore e.g. 'I'm runtastic', 'The faster you run, the quicker you reach the finish line', 'WTF really stands for where's that finish?', 'If found lying on the ground, please pull over finish line', 'Purebred runner', 'The first two you give, the last one you earn', 'Who made me do it?' or 'Breaking my personal best'.

Race organizers argue that non-competitive events such as kids' races, family races and popular races on shorter distances such as 3 or 5 kilometres draw larger audiences and provide opportunities for generations to exercise together, with inclusive sportainment practices even extending to babies in pushchairs and pet dogs. The inclusion of such elements in community-based interventions may increase the success in initiating and maintaining this health-enhancing physical activity.

Website analyses and interviews both reveal race organizers are satisfied with the strong cooperation with community service providers such as fire departments and police. BRC is thankful towards local authorities for providing, among others, marketing support by advertisement street banners free of charge. Bucharest hashtag '#city of running' illustrates Misener and Schulenkorf (2016) approach to the asset-based community development, by which running events serve as eco-city brand endorsers to attract tourists and to entice community affiliation.

This search for competitive advantages is illustrative for race descriptions that underlie a power game between established and emerging events that are striving to gain social capital in terms of recognition, credibility, visibility and popularity. To counter-act the power dynamics by which strong races grow stronger and weak ones are threatened to disappear, especially low profile races (e.g., trail running

and newly established events) need strenuous support from local authorities, and marketing by running clubs, health and wellness clubs and local community influencers to gain popularity. Their attractiveness depends on sponsors and NGO fundraisers responsible to handle relationships with authorities and other stakeholders and to answer queries thereof.

What have organizers learnt from past incidents? There are technicalities such as the need to pay attention to bib – chips are best incorporated in race numbers, instead of participants wearing them attached to the shoe or by velcro (hook-and-loop fasteners), these were easier to lose while running. Also informants argue for the need to use follow-up and participants' feedback to implement modifications, e.g., to introduce more hydration points, and have start time in waves according to self-assessed timing to avoid overcrowding. It is also of essence to make sure every participant signs the acceptance of terms and conditions, most importantly assuming personal liability in case of accident, injury or disease contracted during or following participation. Also race organizers must bear in mind the possibility to develop coping techniques to adjust to route modifications, e.g. due to wasps (in trail running) or competing traffic restrictions (in road running).

5. Conclusions

Race informants expect local authorities to support running races primarily by authorization and traffic control. Furthermore, associations expect more public involvement in terms of advertising space free of charge, funding/ joint grants, signalling, logistics and transport of materials for tents, hydration points, as well as volunteering and media coverage. Concerning the recreational running facilities, associations expect from local councils to create and maintain more running spaces: open parks, tracks (neighbourhood stadium), leisure centres and indoor gyms. These are necessary amenities to avoid stratified access to physical exercise based on income, and to make running accessible for all, even the underprivileged citizens with lower social-economic status. Informants view running races as sustainable following a three-fold rationale:
- Economic sustainability: running boosts sports-related tourism and is good for the hospitality business;
- Social sustainability: positive long-term impact on public health, active lifestyles and active ageing, social bonding, and sportianment; and
- Environmental sustainability: races are considered eco-friendly in terms of anti-waste organizing procedure, fundraising for reforestation, land use restoration for parks, pathways, and enhanced green space management.

As per race organizers' input, communities of runners are resilient because they choose to spend meaningful time together, they reunite for important events

and they organize periodical outings together, they share outstanding memorable experiences (i.e., the collective endorphin burst coined 'runners hype'), and they also contribute to ecology and fundraising for community development campaigns. Furthermore, volunteering is a key factor of resilient communities, because it enables participants to contribute to the sustainability of their local event, by ensuring year-round support through rotation of participants and volunteers – these being interchangeable roles.

Race representatives view their mission as oriented towards changing the public perception on running from an extravagant middle-class preoccupation to a safe, fun and useful serious leisure, but also as ecological pastime, and an economically attractive and healthy transport means. To legitimize this positive sustainable impact, there is a need for a data-driven approach to test empirical evidence: e.g. the correlation between participation rates to running events and public health output (e.g., chronic cardio-vascular disease statistics, also health expenditure on hospitalization, etc.). These data would serve to convince local and central government to invest intelligently the necessary resources in physical activity programs. Associations can provide valuable input on means by which public authorities can and should promote personal (i.e., health, weight control, fitness) and community gains like participative agency, enjoying social interaction, networking and friendship opportunities. Belonging to a resilient running community can constitute a major residential benefit that enhances the members' social capital for influencing and inspiring others to engage in healthy choices for their personal and collective wellbeing, for instance by volunteering, fundraising and racing.

With limited public resources provided for health, the partnership with running associations can prove a lucrative, win-win solution for local government striving to cut back on healthcare costs and for the community at large. Exposed to running events, by advertisements and especially by experiencing this type of sportainment festival, as observer, volunteer or participant, the citizens have close-up contact with events that presumably boost their intention to practice sport and streamline their efforts to convert this intention into consistent behaviour.

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Quality of Life
in Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area

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Abstract. The article explores the factors that influence perceptions of quality of life, lifestyle satisfaction, and the overall level of well-being in the city of Cluj-Napoca's (Romania) Metropolitan Area. Quality of life research points to the importance of considering subjective factors as well as objective measures of well-being in shaping citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards quality of life indicators.

Findings indicate that the general level of well-being, citizens' trust in government, and lifestyle satisfaction are impacted by the quality of public services and education, and the quality of e-governance services and the environment.

Keywords: quality of life, resilience, sustainability, subjective well-being, metropolitan area, Romania.

1. Introduction

The study entitled 'Quality of Life in Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area' seeks to explore determinants of the quality of life in Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan area in the context of sustainability and resilience. With a focus on subjective well-being, the study beings with a literature review that covers the most important concepts related to quality of life. The study employs quantitative analysis based on a survey applied to 5,156 citizens of nineteen communes that are part of Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan area. While assessing indicators related to education, environment, quality of governance and quality of public services, the study also explores a series of research questions related to the influence of specific attitudes on quality of life dimensions and the quality of public services that are delivered overall in the Metropolitan area. Through the use of several probit regression models, the authors seek to identify the factors that determine specific outcomes in terms of the general level of satisfaction with citizens' quality of life and the quality of governance processes.

Another goal of the study is to present best practices from European regional communities that involved successful urban-rural partnerships that are focused on cross-border cooperation and the creation of metropolitan institutions. The goal of these institutions is to increase the level of well-being through integrated and collaborative planning approaches based on resilience and sustainability. All in all, the study addresses the importance of contextual factors in adopting best practices at local and regional level institutions in Romania. By drawing on certain trends at Central and Eastern Europen level in terms of environmental impact of new developments, and the creation of functional urban-rural relations, this paper provides a series of recommendations to be implemented at administrative level that aim to improve citizens' level of well-being and ultimately the quality of life.

2. Quality of life: definitions and concepts

The concept of quality of life has gained attention at European level through the European Union's 2007-2013 Rural Development Policy (RDP) that represents a framework intended to support rural development based on the intervention logic model, evaluative questions, and the use and application of economic indicators (Cagliero *et al.*, 2011). Enhancing quality of life in rural areas therefore becomes a major strategic goal of European policies, in terms of addressing problems such as high levels of poverty, social exclusion, inequality, deprivation, low quality labour, low access to various opportunities, which includes public services, housing, and poor quality economic conditions in general (Bernard, 2018). Studies show that Southern and Eastern European rural areas experience higher levels of poverty and deprivation than Western rural areas, and they generally

focus on poverty and economic hardship, subjective well-being and satisfaction, opportunity deprivation and low accessibility to services (Bernard, 2018; Philip and Sucksmith, 2003; Pénzes, 2013; Townsend, 1987). According to Romania's Rural Development National Program for 2014-2020, the rural environment is characterized by significant gaps in accessing basic services, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, local governance, and access to credit for investments. These disparities generate the need to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion, especially among the Roma population, where poverty risk is high (Rural Development National Program for 2014-2020, 2015). The document encourages the transition towards a bottom-up, participative, integrated governance approach that supports the 'new rural' in improving quality of life of its citizens. This approach is supported by Brauer and Dymitrow (2014) who mention that the traditional urban-rural divide is counterproductive, and the new rural 'becomes more and more all-inclusive, less predictable and more aligned with developmental strategies previously associated with urban areas' (p. 46). As Woods (2011) points out, collaborative policy formulation between urban and rural needs to focus on three dimensions: '(a) constructing the problems that challenge rural areas; (b) evaluating the capacities of these areas; (c) setting out a vision for their future' (p. 131). For this purpose, this study addresses urban-rural interdependencies and dynamics in metropolitan development.

Quality of life needs to be understood in the context of sustainability and resilience, two core concepts that are critical for bridging the gap between theory and practice, and addressing the vast array of developmental social, economic, and environmental challenges. In doing so, the urban affairs field introduces the socio-ecological systems (SES) concept (Romero-Lankao *et al.*, 2016). According to this concept, urban areas are considered SES that represent five domains: socio-demographics, economy, technology, environment, and governance (Romero-Lankao *et al.*, 2016). We propose expanding this approach to rural areas in order to create a framework that supports the interdependency between urban and rural. Therefore, by defining the unit of analysis of this rural quality of life study as a socio-ecological system, we create the conditions for addressing the five domains in an integrated approach of governing in a sustainable and resilient manner. Furthermore, it is important to answer questions such as 'for whom, when, and where sustainability and resilience will be promoted' (Romero-Lankao *et al.*, 2016, p. 8). Existing studies point to governmental and non-governmental actors as main drivers of sustainable and resilient policies, through defining the boundaries around who participates and the spatial delimitation of rural resources, actors who can be involved in coproduction (with an emphasis on citizen participation), mediation and conflict-resolution strategies, allocation of authority for governing at multiple levels, and institutional capacity (Romero-Lankao *et al.*, 2016; Ostrom, Janssen and

Anderies, 2007). All these elements are considered to be conditions that support the improvement of quality of life in rural areas, through collaborative, bottom-up efforts, that demand cooperation between researchers, decision-makers, citizens, and communities.

Sustainability is therefore defined as 'a condition in which resource use and waste production remain at levels below the carrying capacity of their supporting ecosystems, while ensuring a capacity for sustaining life, social practices and quality of life deemed acceptable by current and future members of a social system [such as a village or a city]' (Romero-Lankao *et al.*, 2016, p. 3). Specifically, it is argued that sustainability needs to ensure the functioning of an ecosystem (or SES), so that future generations are considered by our present actions and activities. In addition, resilience 'applies to the ability of a system to stay within its 'basin of attraction', through an ability to cope with, or to adapt to impacts and take advantage of opportunities' (Romero-Lankano, 2010, p. 8). For a rural area, resilience may be correlated with the structure of governance processes, economic and cultural aspects, traditions and customs. The five domains that define SES are therefore strongly correlated with communities that aim to be sustainable and resilient with the purpose of improving the quality of life.

However, despite much theoretical focus on quality of life indicators, the scholarship provides just a few definitions of what quality of life actually represents. Quality of life as a concept is intended to help create the context for policymaking and create strategies by local and regional actors, in an integrated, holistic, and interdisciplinary approach that supports sustainable and resilient development (Constanza, 2008). One strand arises from the work of scholars that use quality of life indicators to measure people's level of well-being (Cummins, 2000; Cummins and Ferris, 2001; André and Bitondo, 2001). This usually includes indicators such as economic well-being, health, education, freedom, safety, quality of the environment. Another strand defines quality of life as the general well-being of an individual (Meule *et al.*, 2013). One of the most popular indicators is the *Quality-of-Life Index* that includes nine factors: 'health, family life, community life, material well-being, political stability and security, climate and geography, job security, political freedom and gender equality' (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2005). The World Health Organization defines quality of life as 'the individual's perception of their position in life in terms of culture and value system in which they live and also retain to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns' (World Health Organization, 1997). Furthermore, Brauer and Dymitrow (2014) state that quality of life refers to 'the general level of well-being of people, groups, or societies, and has been used widely within e.g. healthcare, policy and international development' (p. 30). Being a complex concept, quality of life incoporates both material and immaterial dimensions (Brauer and Dymitrow, 2014).

Consistent with this approach there's OECD's definition of quality of life as being formed out of key topics such as community, education, environment, governance, health, life satisfaction, safety and work-life balance (OECD, 2011). The institution developed a 'How's Life?' framework for measuring well-being and progress, and 'puts emphasis on individuals and households, focuses on well-being outcomes rather than indicators, and looks at the distribution of well-being across individuals' (OECD, 2011, p. 18). The framework is presented below:
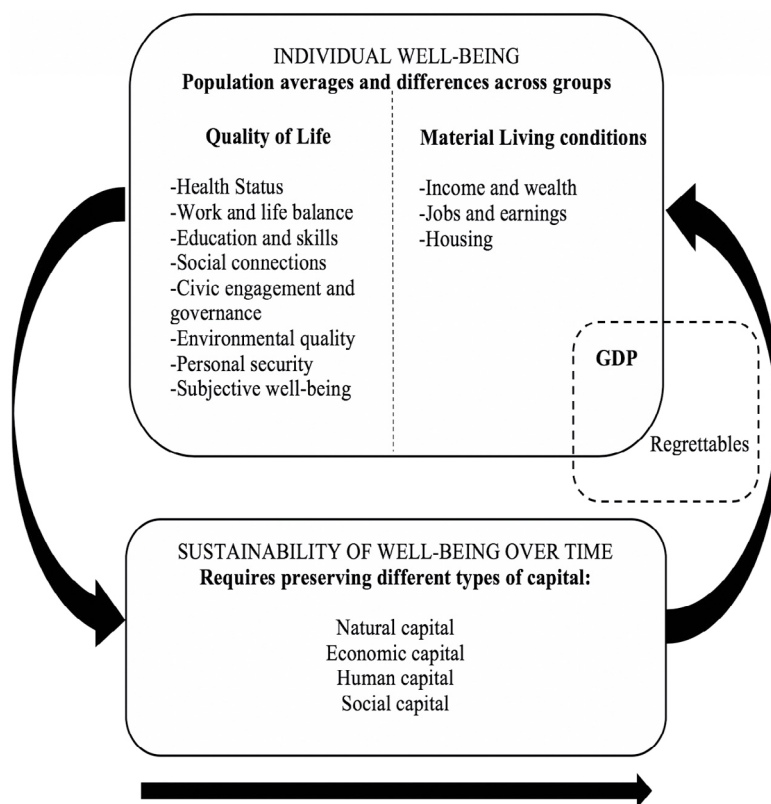
Figure 1: The 'How's Life' Framework for Measuring Well-Being and Progress
Source: OECD (2011)

This framework defines quality of life as eight dimensions: health status, work and life balance, education and skills, social connections, civic engagement and governance, environmental quality, personal security, and subjective well-being. According to OECD (2011), quality of life is therefore an element of individual well-being. However, the sustainability of individual well-being includes also material outcomes such as income and consumption (OECD, 2011). Despite various limitations of using standard measures of economic performance for measuring

well-being (such as GDP), the framework acknowledges the importance of considering them since they assess economic activity.

The third strand of scholarship includes Cagliero *et al.*, (2011) definition of quality of life as 'a function of people's life circumstances, which of course has an economic dimension, but also includes their social networks, their health and their sense of worth and the sustainability of the environment on which they depend' (p. 6). With a more obvious focus on the environment, Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi (2009) and Jackson (2005) consider that the sustainable use of the resource set is critical for maintaining quality of life. Specifically, quality of life incorporates three major dimensions: (a) the socio-cultural and services dimension (customs, community life, social capital), (b) the environmental dimension (conservation and protection of the environment and of the interactions between various factors and systems), and (c) the economic dimension (security of income, equality) (Cagliero *et al.*, 2011). For a more structured classification, some scholars differentiate between objective well-being and subjective well-being.

Objective well-being refers to features that are external or tangible conditions that individuals experience, that are derived from secondary data such as crime, housing, security and privacy, econonomic stability (Gabriel and Bowling, 2004; Badiora and Abiola, 2017; Pospěch, Delín and Spěšná, 2009). Subjective well-being is focused on an individual's evaluation and perception of objective life conditions, which includes happiness, feeling of safety, work satisfaction and others (Cummins, 2000; Badiora and Abiola, 2017; Ballas and Tranmer, 2012; Hagerty, Cummis and Ferris, 2001). Subjective well-being is considered important in international comparisons of European national quality of life indicators, because it points to the importance of considering each country's unique context, and therefore subjective features bring more validity in the overall assessment (Pospěch, Delín and Spěšná, 2009). Subjective well-being is defined as 'a broad category of phenomena that includes people's emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgments of life satisfaction' (Diener *et al.*, 1999, p. 277). Subjective well-being goes beyond assessing economic prosperity and makes room for defining, measuring, and analyzing happiness. There is a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary literature that shapes the science of happiness and highlights the factors affecting it, together with their importance in considering quality of life (Ballas and Tranmer, 2012; Dolan, Peasgood and White, 2007; Layard, 2005). For a better understanding of the construct, researchers focus on the connection between internal factors and the external environment. Consequently, subjective well-being needs to be considered as a general domain of interest rather than a simple concept (Diener *et al.*, 1999). Psychology researchers consider that personality is the strongest and most influential predictor of subjective well-being (Diener *et al.*, 1999), and they link temperamental predisposition to be happy or unhappy to subjective well-being, as

part of heritability studies. Furthermore, they add that 'the influences of traits on emotions are probably moderated by the environment in which the individual is immersed' (Diener *et al.*, 1999, p. 281). Table 1 presents the components of subjective well-being:

Table 1: Components of Subjective Well-Being

Components of Subjective Well-Being			
Pleasant affect	**Unpleasant affect**	**Life satisfaction**	**Domain satisfactions**
Joy	Guilt and shame	Desire to change life	Work
Elation	Sadness	Satisfaction with current life	Family
Contentment and pride	Anxiety and worry	Satisfaction with past	Leisure and health
Affection	Stress	Satisfaction with future	Finances
Happiness	Depression	Significant others' views on one's life	Self
Ecstasy	Envy		One's group

Source: Diener *et al.* (2011, p. 277)

Researchers extensively used the components of subjective well-being to evaluate the events that take place in people's lifes and determine their perceptions on their quality of life. They also stress the importance of differentiating between short- and long-term influences, as they create various effects on people's behaviors and perceptions.

As indicated previously, quality of life is an interdisciplinary construct that relies on subjective and objective measures of well-being with the purpose of supporting international comparison of people's perceptions of happiness and material living conditions. The concept embarks different meanings and depends on key factors such as health, infrastructure, human good, safety, freedom, as well as environmental and economic aspects. It is a concept linked to the three elements of sustainability (environment, society, and economy), and its content is divided by the Institute for Sustainable Development into five parts: 'urban (and rural) environment; urban (and rural) economy, community assets, individual well-being, community leadership, and pride' (EEA, 2009).

The next section discusses the specifics of Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area, as the unit of analysis of this research study. According to European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) from 2016, the Romanian national context surrounding the metropolitan area of Cluj-Napoca, is experiencing a continuously improving trend in terms of subjective well-being (Eurofound, 2017). However, Romania has the highest proportions of people with very low resilience (Eurofound, 2017). The report also points to a substantial increase in an imbalance between work-life in Romania, together with a very difficult reconciliation between paid work and social care (Eurofound, 2017).

Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area occupies 24% of Cluj County's total surface (1,603 sq km), and includes 59.87% of the county's population (National Institute of Statistics, 2011). The main authority responsible with local development and project management is the Intercommunitary Development Association (ADI) 'Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Area' founded in December 2008. The founding members are: The City of Cluj-Napoca, Cluj County, and the communes of Aiton, Apahida, Baciu, Bonțida, Căianu, Chinteni, Ciurila, Cojocna, Feleacu, Florești, Gilău, Jucu, Petreștii de Jos, Tureni and Vultureni, Sânpaul and Săvădisla (ADI, 2018). When considering other socio-demographic indicators such as the ethnic structure of the area, it can be noticed that aproximately 75% of the population is Romanian, 15-17% is Hungarian, while the Roma represent 3% of the population when considering the urban vicinity, and 5% in the rural area. Data from the survey shows a decrease in the evolution of people who are getting a scholarly degree in the rural metropolitan area. The Community Development Index is an accurate measure for evaluating the local development level in Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area and was developed in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics. When comparing the evolution of the index for 2002 and 2011, a significant progress can be noticed for the majority of component communes, while for the communes of Aiton, Ciurila, Vultureni, and Chinteni the index value has doubled.

However, it is important to point to a series of strategic problems of the Metropolitan Area, as highlighted by Stănică (2016): (a) agriculture, as the main economic branch, is approached in an inappropriate way by insufficiently subsidizing land use activities (subsidy values are up to four times lower than the EU average); (b) the political system is not supportive of rural areas that do not offer political campaign benefits, leading to a decreased involvement in their development and policymaking; (c) insufficient community action and involvement of citizens and interested stakeholders combined with weak administrative capacity; (d) low levels of economic attractiveness and demographic decline. All these problems point to the need of creating a bottom-up integrated approach of governing the area, while actively involving citizens in initiating, designing and implementing public policies. These approaches need to be complementary to national, regional, and local regulatory frameworks, and be supported, facilitated and encouraged by public administration authorities for better serving the public interest.

In his article on how to create the strategic profile of a community, Hințea (2015) points to the need of including a quality of life analysis in every strategic plan to better define the strategic profile. He defines quality of life as a concept that 'analyzes the lifestyle, level of well-being, level of development and of attractiveness of a community from the citizens' perspective' (Hințea, 2015, p. 109) and refers to the subjective and objective measures of quality of life. When designing the strategic plan of Cluj-Napoca, quality of life was placed at the center of the strategy; there-

fore, in order to obtain an integrated governance approach, all strategic efforts in Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area should follow the same path. Having a common vision based on qualified human resources, engaged university, long-term sustainability and prosperity, and knowledge-based economy will help acheieve a strong cohesion in regional policymaking, all through a citizen-centric orientation.

3. Best practices from European metropolitan collaborative efforts

Romania's metropolitan development includes 34% of the total population living in metropolitan structures (7.5 million people) (Grigorescu *et al.*, 2012). Various provisions introduced in the legislation (Law no. 351/2001, National Territory Management Plan, Law no. 286/2006) have helped facilitate the development as part of the administrative-territorial framework, through 'association, by voluntary partnership between the main urban centers and adjoining the urban and rural settlements situated at distances up to 30 km, that established cooperation relations at different levels' (Grigorescu *et al.*, 2012, p. 45). The post-communist urban restructuring happened at an accelerated pace for the cities of Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Iași, and Constanța. The authors discuss the main key drivers of suburbanization-related residential sprawl and point to political, demographic, economic, housing and social factors as defining the current character of the country's metropolitan areas (Grigorescu *et al.*, 2012). However, in the context of global environmental, economic, and social change it is important to re-consider current approaches to the metropolitan development, and create an integrated, coherent, efficient, and feasible framework for urban policies that focus on governance processes that promote development, resilience, improvement of quality of life, and sustainability. There are only a few studies that approach urban-rural interdependencies. In the United States, Murdoch (2000) evaluated various networks of governance in shaping a new rural development paradigm, by linking internal rural problems to external factors. Similarly, in the European Union, there is the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) that emphasizes the need for polycentricity (Atkinson, 2001), and a networked approach to urban-rural development policies, that includes voluntary cooperation of local authorities (Caffyn and Dahlstrom, 2005).

Next, the paper will present best practices that helped achieve a series of metropolitan goals in the European Union. The 'Central German Metropolitan Region' focuses on three main pillars of development: business and science, transport and mobility, and culture and tourism. It is considered by the METREX working group to be a 'network of networks' that promotes trans-regional cooperation and family-friendly policies. Similarly, the Nuremberg Metropolitan Region established a series of common goals that include strengthening regional economic cycles,

strengthening tourism, improving mobility by extending transport mobility, and cross-border cooperation with Eastern Europe. All these approaches promote tailored-based solutions, and not generic policies. For this specific reason, it is essential to involve stakeholders and facilitate bottom-up approaches in governing metropolitan areas. The Amsterdam Responsible Capital concept is another example of metropolitan cooperation and has come up with a series of innovative solutions such as: facilitating cooperation between knowledge and educational instituions in shriking regions (e.g., summer schools), promoting and investigating the role of food in the attractiveness of cities (Amsterdam Food Strategy), building ICT in shrinking areas, or organizing holiday camps in shrinking areas for young people that live in underprivileged neighborhoods. The Western Meckleburg Regional Planning Association aims to connect rural areas with metropolitan areas through linking public transportation in Northern Germany by achieving the following objectives: improvement of the traffic situation and urban-rural connection, eliminating public transport infrastructural deficits, and developing common strategies and joint lobby for better connections (METREX working group).

4. Methodology

4.1. Data source and sampling

This section presents the data and methods used in this study to test the research questions and hypotheses concerning quality of life in Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area. While employing quantitative methods, the study uses a survey designed by scholars in the College of Political, Administrative, and Communication Sciences at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. The survey contains 16 dimensions: (1) satisfaction with general aspects related to quality of life, (2) lifestyle, (3) family, (4) safety, (5) freedom, (6) health system quality, (7) education, (8) quality of the environment, (9) quality of governance, (10) traffic, (11) economic prosperity, (12) workplace, (13) use of Internet, (14) e-governance, (15) socio-demographics, and (16) commuting. Each dimension has a specific number of items, and respondents used a scale from 1-10 to express their satisfaction with the various quality of life dimensions.

This exploratory approach was applied to citizens from all component communes of the metropolitan area, using a non-probabilistic convenience sample. Citizens were selected through educational institutions at county level (with the help of Cluj County School Inspectorate) based on a self-administered questionnaire. A total of 5,156 respondents chose to answer the survey questions. The data collection process took place between March-April 2018 and the univariate and multivariate analysis was pursued in Stata 13.0.

4.2. Research questions

The study seeks to answer four main research questions:

a. What is the relationship between the quality of education (E) and citizens' trust in government (CG1)?
b. What is the relationship between the quality of public services delivered in the metropolitan area (CG2) and the overall level of well-being (A3)?
c. What is the relationship between the quality of e-governance services at local level (EG3) and citizens' trust in government (CG1)?
d. How does citizens' satisfaction with the quality of the environment (CM1) influence overall lifestyle satisfaction (A1)?

The variables included in these four probit regression models are operationalized as follows:

(a) quality of education: quality of education in Romania, quality of education in public kindergardens; quality of education in private kindergardens; quality of education in public schools; quality of education in private schools; quality of education in highschools; 1-10 scale;
(b) citizens' trust in government: citizens trust in political parties, justice, NGOs, city hall, the president, the parliament, the church, mass media, Cluj county council; 1-5 scale, 1=very high; 5=no trust;
(c) quality of public services: quality of public transport, road infrastructure, bike infrastructure, water and sewage infrastructure, social housing, sanitation services, green spaces, tax collection systems, public lightening, parking services, children's playgrounds, sports facilities, public spaces for recreation/relaxation, socializing spaces, spaces designed for cultural events, methane gas distribution infrastructure; 1-10 scale;
(d) overall level of well-being: workplace satisfaction, living standards satisfaction, living conditions satisfaction, family life satisfaction, personal health satisfaction, social life satisfaction, personal economic situation satisfaction; 1-10 scale;
(e) quality of e-governance services at local level; 1-10 scale;
(f) quality of the environment: quality of air in the vicinity, water quality in the vicinity, noise level in the vicinity, cleanliness level in the vicinity; 1-10 scale;
(g) overall lifestyle satisfaction: 1-4 scale, 1=very satisfied, 4=very unsatisfied.

The hypotheses that are generated by these research questions are the following:

- **H1:** An increased level of quality of education in Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area positively influences citizens' trust in government.
- **H2:** The overall perceived level of well-being in Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area is positively influenced by the quality of public services delivered in the metropolitan area.

- **H3:** A high level of quality of e-governance services positively influences citizens' trust in government.
- **H4:** A high level of satisfaction with the quality of the environment positively influences overall lifestyle satisfaction of citizens in the metropolitan area.

The goal of these hypotheses is to check for all the factors that indicate correlations between the main variables included in the four statistical models and indicate their significance (if any). The data analysis will first present the descriptive statistics indicators and then compare the four probit regression models' findings with and without the control variables (age, sex, ethnicity, religion).

5. Findings

5.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics from the survey data. The average age of respondents is 38 years. The gender categories are coded 1=men and 2=women, and the percentage distribution indicates that 28.76% of respondens are men and 71.23% are women. Ethnicity was coded as follows: 1=Romanian, 2=Hungarian, 3=Roma, 4=German, and 5=Other. Romanians are represented by 75.79% of respondents, Hungarians by 11.25%, and Roma by 12.5%. The dominant religion is Orthodox (75.37%), being followed by Protestantism (8.76%) and Roman-Catholicism (3.17%). In terms of education, 35.48% of respondents have a high school degree (9-10 and 9-12), while 18.36% gained a professional degree. A percentage of 17.88% graduated gymnasium, while 3.97% have a bachelor's degree. When considering household types, 77.69% of respondents live in a house, while 15.48% live in an apartment building with maximum four floors. The lowest standard distribution value is for the variable Sex (0.45), being followed by Ethnicity (0.72), and Type of household (0.92), indicating normal distributions.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Control/Demographic Variables

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Age	4,873	38.47	9.46	1	96
Sex	4,951	1.71	0.45	1	2
Ethnicity	5,030	1.37	0.72	1	5
Religion	4,996	1.76	1.5	1	9
Education	4,981	5.21	2.15	1	10
Type of household	4,973	1.46	0.92	1	5

Source: Authors' findings

The satisfaction with the overall style of living was measured on a scale from 1-4 (where 1=very satisfied and 4=very unsatisfied). A percentage of 56.59% of respondents consider they are satisfied with their overall style of living, while 23.05% mention that they are unsatisfied. All other variables are measured from 1-10 (where 1=totally unsatisfied and 10=totally satisfied) or 0-10 (where 0=totally unsatisfied and 10=totally satisfied). Table 3 points to high levels of satisfaction for family life (8.42 mean) and personal health (7.84 mean). Lower levels of satisfaction are indicated for living standards satisfaction and personal economic situation satisfaction. The general level of happiness is relatively high, with a percentage of 70.42% of respondents choosing values close to the maximum (scores 8, 9 and 10).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Lifestyle Satisfaction (A)

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Satisfaction with the overall style of living	4,979	2.16	0.73	1	4
Workplace satisfaction	4,896	6.96	2.60	1	10
Living standards satisfaction	5,027	6.84	2.43	1	10
Living conditions satisfaction	5,006	7.78	2.38	0	10
Family life satisfaction	5,009	8.42	2.20	0	10
Personal health satisfaction	4,988	7.84	2.19	0	10
Social life satisfaction	4,955	7.47	2.32	0	10
Personal economic situation satisfaction	4,994	6.84	2.54	1	10
General level of happiness	4,912	7.92	2.06	0	10

Source: Authors' findings

In evaluating environmental quality satisfaction, 39.09% of respondents chose values above being neutral about this indicator (scores 5, 6, 7) indicating a relative moderate level of satisfaction, while 42.03% of respondents are clearly satisfied and very satisfied with the environment in which they live (scores 8, 9, and 10). Respondents are mostly satisfied with the quality of air, and less satisfied with the cleanliness level in their vicinity.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Environmental Quality Satisfaction (CM)

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Environmental quality satisfaction	4,836	6.57	2.38	1	10
Quality of air satisfaction	4,963	7.43	2.48	1	10
Water quality satisfaction	4,951	7.56	2.42	1	10
Noise level satisfaction	4,934	7.16	2.67	1	10
Cleanliness level satisfaction	4,980	6.38	2.79	1	10

Source: Authors' findings

The level of trust in government is measured for each variable on a scale from 1-5, where 1=very high trust, 4=very low trust, and 5=no trust at all. Citizens reported the highest level of trust in church institutions (54.24%), followed by the City Hall (29.7%), the President (27.3%), and Cluj County Council (25.43%).

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Level of Trust in Government (CG1)

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Level of trust in the City Hall	4,655	3.11	1.16	1	5
Level of trust in Cluj County Council	4,241	3.21	1.21	1	5

Source: Authors' findings

Quality of public services is measured from 1-10, where 1=low quality and 10=high quality. The highest levels of quality are reported by Table 6 for public lightening (6.36), local public transportation (6.13) and sanitation services (5.69). The lowest levels of quality are indicated by the methane gas distribution (3.25) and the bike infrastructure (3.78).

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Public Services Quality (CG2)

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Quality of local public transportation	4,759	6.13	2.92	1	10
Quality of road infrastructure	4,697	5.21	2.78	1	10
Quality of bike infrastructure	4,555	3.78	2.87	1	10
Quality of water and sewage infrastructure	4,690	5.27	3.05	1	10
Quality of social housing	4,059	4.30	3.00	1	10
Quality of sanitation services	4,759	5.69	2.90	1	10
Quality of green spaces	4,673	4.91	2.98	1	10
Quality of the tax collection system	4,641	5.22	2.89	1	10
Quality of public lightening	4,757	6.36	2.91	1	10
Quality of parking services	4,517	4.46	3.03	1	10
Quality of children's playgrounds	4,722	4.56	3.05	1	10
Quality of sports facilities	4,602	4.68	3.06	1	10
Quality of public spaces for recreation	4,575	4.24	3.05	1	10
Quality of socializing spaces	4,606	5.07	3.07	1	10
Quality of spaces for cultural events	4,570	5.36	3.05	1	10
Quality of methane gas distribution	4,335	3.25	3.25	1	10

Source: Authors' findings

Satisfaction with education quality is reported by Table 7 on a scale from 1-10, where 1=very bad quality and 10=very high quality. The highest level of satisfaction for this set of variables is indicated by the quality of education in Cluj-Napoca's universities, 65.86% of respondents considering it high and very high (scores 8, 9, and 10), being followed by the quality of education in Cluj-Napoca's highschools, reported as high and very high by 57.94% of respondents and the quality of education in their municipality's highschool with a percentage of 55.82%.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Education Quality (E1)

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Satisfaction with Romania's overall education quality	4,570	6.52	2.49	1	10
Satisfaction with Romania's higher education quality	3,628	7.13	2.16	1	10
Satisfaction with education in Cluj-Napoca's highschools	3,666	7.45	2.00	1	10
Satisfaction with education in Cluj-Napoca's universities	3,346	7.75	1.96	1	10
Satisfaction with quality of education in your municipality's highschool	2,563	7.30	2.40	1	10

Source: Authors' findings

The e-governance indicators are assessed as follows: frequency of Internet use for accessing public services is measured on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1=a few times a week, and 5=never; the use of various services is measured as 1=yes and 2=no, and quality of e-governance services at national and local level is measured on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1=very unsatisfied and 10=very satisfied. Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics and points to normal distributions for the use of various services given the value of their standard deviations (close to zero). A percentage of 48.56% of respondents mention that they rarely or never use the Internet for accessing public services, while 46.11% of them state that they use it a few times a week and a few times a month. A percentage of 63.45% of respondents use online information services, 10.48% use online document download services, 2.5% use online filling and complaint services, 8.7% use online tax-paying services, 2.1% use online fee-paying services, and 1.8% use online registration services. A percentage of 40.67% of respondents are satisfied and very satisfied with the quality of e-governance services at national level (scores 7-10), as compared to 41.05% of respondents that reported for the same scores at local level.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for E-Governance Indicators Quality (EG)

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Frequency of Internet use for accessing public services	4,941	3.06	1.55	1	5
Use of online information services	5,018	1.36	0.48	1	2
Use of online document download services	5,037	1.89	0.30	1	2
Use of online filling and complaint services	5,037	1.97	0.15	1	2
Use of online tax-paying services	5,038	1.91	0.28	1	2
Use of online fee-paying services	5,035	1.97	0.14	1	2
Use of online registration services	5,038	1.98	0.13	1	2
Quality of e-governance services at national level	3,872	5.47	2.73	1	10
Quality of e-governance services at local level	3,808	5.43	2.80	1	10

Source: Authors' findings

5.2. Regression models

The dependent variables are ordinals because the increase/decrease in level does not follow a rule. The order of values is clear, but it is hard to quantify the difference between values. The classical linear regression model assumptions do not hold in this case. The ordered probit and ordered logist models are more suitable. In order to decide which model better fits the data, we perform Akaike's and Schwarz's Bayesian information criteria. In general, smaller values are better and, according to Table 9, the model with the smaller AIC fits the data better than the one with larger AIC and similar in BIC case. Based on the values from Table 9, we are selecting the ordered probit model for the analysis.

Table 9: Akaike's and Schwartz's Baynesian information criteria

Model	Observations	df	AIC	BIC
Logit	1,576	5	4,716.07	4,728.8
Probit	1,576	5	4,384.5	4,410.95

Source: Authors' findings

The first regression looks into the influence of education quality on citizens' trust in government (Table 10). The dependent variable selected was the 'level of trust in Cluj-Napoca's County Council'. The analysis includes all predictors with and without demographic variables. Control variables were used because when looking at the partial effect of one variable, the effects of all other variable predictors are taken into account, by separating their effects from those of the explanatory variable of interest. The control variables included for all hypotheses are sex,

religion, and ethnicity. The predictors used account for 2.19% of the variation of the dependent variable. Both satisfaction with Romania's overall education quality and satisfaction with public schools in Cluj-Napoca had a negative relationship with citizens' trust in Cluj-Napoca's County Council. However, given the level of measurement of the dependent variable, from 1-5, where 1=very high trust and 5=no trust, we need to ignore the coefficient sign (the negative sign has a different meaning), leading to positive relationships between the variables.

The coefficient shows that with an increase in Romania's overall education quality, the expected z-score of considering a high level of trust in government increases by 0.0537, holding other variables constant. Similarly, with an increase in the satisfaction with public schools in Cluj-Napoca, the expected z-score of considering a high level of trust in government increases by 0.0646, holding other variables constant. The z-score interpretation is more difficult to understand, therefore we explain coefficients using probabilities. This is only possible if we assign values for the independent variables. Without this assumption, we can only report the direction of the probability and not the strength. Calculating predicted probabilities for multiple predictors allows us to examine realistic categorizations of the dependent variables.

The probability of citizens' trusting the government at a *very high level (1)* is 11.1%, the probability of trust at a *high level (2)* is 15.9%, the probability of having *no trust (5)* is 16.75%, holding all other independent variables at their mean value.

All other variables are not significant at 95 percent level of significance, given that their p-value is >0.05. According to this hypothesis, there seems to be a positive correlation between education quality and citizens' trust in government.

Table 10: Influence of education quality on citizen's trust in government (CG1_9)

Dependent variable: Citizens' trust in government	No demographics	With demographics
Satisfaction with Romania's overall education quality	-0.0451***	-0.0537***
	(0.012)	(0.013)
Satisfaction with the higher quality education in Romania	-0.00494	-0.00386
	(0.015)	(0.011)
Satisfaction with public schools in Cluj-Napoca	-0.0681***	-0.0646***
	(0.020)	(0.019)
Satisfaction with Cluj-Napoca's Universities education quality	0.016	0.00795
	(0.021)	(0.020)
Satisfaction with highschools in your municipality education quality	-0.0194***	-0.0089
	(0.006)	(0.008)
Observations	1,576	1,466
R Squared	0.0208	0.0219

Robust standard errors clustered at level of birth place.
Significance levels: *** p<0.01 **p<0.05 *p<0.1

Source: Authors' findings

The second regression of this research study evaluates the influence of public services' quality on the general level of well-being and assumes that an increase in public service quality results in an increase in the general level of well-being (Table 11). A percentage of 2.7% of the variation of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.

The explanatory independent variables are: quality of local public transportation (positive relationship), quality of road infrastructure (positive relationship), quality of bike infrastructure (negative relationship), quality of water and sewage infrastructure (negative relationship), quality of social housing (positive relationship), quality of green spaces (positive relationship), quality of the tax collection system (positive relationship), quality of public lightening (positive relationship), quality of parking services (negative relationship), quality of public spaces for recreation (negative relationship), quality of spaces for cultural events (positive relationship), and quality of methane gas distribution (positive relationship). All these variables are correlated with the dependent variable.

The variables that negatively impact the general level of well-being are: quality of bike infrastructure, quality of water and sewage infrastructure, quality of parking services, and quality of public spaces for recreation. A one-unit increase in these independent variables results in a decrease in the general level of well-being, pointing to existence of additional factors that influence the dependent variable. The hypothesis is partially being confirmed; if we exclude the variables that negatively influence the dependent variable. Stata does not calculate predictions for this model.

Table 12 presents coefficients' values (and the standard errors) included in the third regression based on the hypothesis that assumes that citizens' trust in government is positively influenced by e-governance services quality. There are five variables that have strong explanatory power on the model, and they account for 1.7% of the variation of the dependent variable (citizens' trust in Cluj County Council). The use of online information services, the use of online filling and complaint services, the use of online fee-paying services, and the overall quality of e-governance services at local level positively influence citizens' trust in the local public authority (a one unit increase in all four independent variables results in an increase in the dependent variable). The signs of all explanatory coefficients need to be reversed given the dependent variable's level of measurement. The use of online fee paying services has the strongest explanatory power in the model when considering citizens' trust in Cluj County Council (a one unit increase in the use of online fee paying services results in a 0.322 increase in citizens' trust in Cluj County Council). The probabilities of citizens' trusting the government at a *very high level (1)* is 8.81%, at a *high level (2)* is 16.67%, at a *low level (4)* is 17.98% and at a *very low level (5)* is 18.28%, given that all predictors are set to their mean values.

Table 11: Influence of public services quality on the general level of well-being (A4)

Dependent variable: The general level of well-being	No demographics	With demographics
Quality of local public transportation	0.0119**	0.0108**
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Quality of road infrastructure	0.0254***	0.0289***
	(0.006)	(0.008)
Quality of bike infrastructure	-0.0131***	-0.0132***
	(0.002)	(0.004)
Quality of water and sewage infrastructure	-0.00703*	-0.0184***
	(0.004)	(0.003)
Quality of social housing	0.0434***	0.0406***
	-0.00403	-0.00243
Quality of sanitation services	-0.0193	-0.0135
	(0.013)	(0.013)
Quality of green spaces	0.0206***	0.0221***
	(0.006)	(0.004)
Quality of the tax collection system	0.0162***	0.0185***
	(0.003)	(0.004)
Quality of public lightening	0.0314***	0.0304***
	(0.004)	(0.003)
Quality of parking services	-0.0313***	-0.0294***
	-0.00626	-0.00713
Quality of children's playgrounds	-0.00272	0.0012
	(0.005)	(0.004)
Quality of sports facilities	0.0104	0.00999
	(0.014)	(0.012)
Quality of public spaces for recreation	-0.0420***	-0.0400***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Quality of socializing spaces	0.0177*	0.0148
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Quality of spaces for cultural events	0.0239***	0.0263***
	(0.008)	(0.005)
Quality of methane gas distribution	0.0292***	0.0250***
	-0.00768	-0.00699
Observations	2,415	2,281
R Squared	0.0204	0.027

Robust standard errors clustered at level of birth place.
Significance levels: *** p<0.01   **p<0.05   *p<0.1

Source: Authors' findings

Table 12: Influence of e-governance services on citizens' trust in government (CG1_9)

Dependent variable: Citizens' trust in government	No demographics	With demographics
Use of online information services	-0.113**	-0.132**
	(0.058)	(0.065)
Use of online document download services	0.0994***	0.104***
	(0.019)	(0.021)
Use of online filling and complaint services	-0.280**	-0.279**
	(0.127)	(0.139)
Use of online tax-paying services	-0.0348	-0.0382
	(0.070)	(0.073)
Use of online fee-paying services	-0.308***	-0.332***
	(0.061)	(0.050)
Use of online registration services	0.0563	0.049
	(0.133)	(0.097)
Quality of e-governance services at national level	-0.00593	-0.00209
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Quality of e-governance services at local level	-0.0769***	-0.0805***
	(0.010)	(0.009)
Observations	2,650	2,498
R Squared	0.0158	0.017

Robust standard errors clustered at level of birth place.
Significance levels: *** p<0.01   **p<0.05   *p<0.1

Source: Authors' findings

Table 13 presents the relationship between the influences of environmental quality on overall lifestyle satisfaction. It is assumed that environmental quality has a positive impact on overall lifestyle satisfaction. The R Squared value of 0.0303 indicates that 3.03% of the variation of the dependent variable is determined by the independent variable. This is confirmed by three independent variables that have strong explanatory power, and whose coefficients become positive given the level of measurement of lifestyle satisfaction variable (1=very happy; 5=very unhappy). As pointed by table 13, the coefficients' values for water quality satisfaction, cleanliness level satisfaction, and environmental quality satisfaction positiviely influence overall lifestyle satisfaction. The probabilities of citizens' being *very satisfied (1)* with their lifestyles is 14.57%, *satisfied (2)* is 58.75%, *unsatisfied (3)* is 22.92%, and *very unsatisfied (4)* is 3.75%, holding all other predictors set to their mean values.

Table 13: Influence of environmental quality on overall lifestyle satisfaction (A1)

Dependent variable: Lifestyle Satisfaction	No demographics	With demographics
Quality of air satisfaction	-0.019	-0.022
	(0.013)	(0.014)
Water quality satisfaction	-0.0396***	-0.0343***
	(0.004)	(0.005)
Noise level satisfaction	-0.012	-0.007
	(0.008)	(0.009)
Cleanliness level satisfaction	-0.0185***	-0.0167**
	(0.005)	(0.007)
Environmental quality satisfaction	-0.0360**	-0.0406**
	(0.018)	(0.017)
Observations	3,675	3,470
R Squared	0.0223	0.0303

Robust standard errors clustered at level of birth place.
Significance levels: *** $p<0.01$ **$p<0.05$ *$p<0.1$

Source: Authors' findings

6. Conclusions and recommendations

This study aims to contribute to the literature on quality of life and urban-rural development, by emphasizing the interdisciplinary and complex character of the concept of quality of life, through its various definitions, categorizations, and dimensions in the context of resilience and sustainability. The need to develop quality of life studies in Central and Eastern Europe is given by the social, economic, and political context in which problems such as poverty, social exclusion, or low access to basic services affect the living population and limit its access to economic opportunities and human development. The authors consider that the urban-rural divide is counterproductive for this purpose, and support the creation of governance processes and policies that focus on urban-rural interdependencies. Viewing both urban and rural areas as socio-ecological systems is the first step towards implementing collaborative policies that support a sustainable and resilient living and working environment. The sustainability of well-being therefore includes preserving the natural, economic, human, and social capital.

Cluj-Napoca's Metropolitan Area presents great potential in this respect, by observing the economic progress of the area in the last years and all strategic efforts that involve increasing the quality of life of its citizens and encoraging public administration authorities to facilitate citizen engagement in decision-making processes, and open various channels of collaboration with stakeholders. Having a citizen-centric orientation is therefore crucial for the success of collaborative strat-

egies and all strategic efforts in the Metropolitan Area need to include a quality of life analysis.

The study also seeks to analyze the relationships between overall lifestyle satisfaction of citizens, the quality of public services, the quality of education and of the e-governance services, and citizens' trust in government. A percentage of 56.59% of respondents mentioned that they are satisfied with their overall style of living, while lower levels of satisfaction are related to citizens' living standards and personal economic situation. Only 42.03% of respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the quality of the environment, and 41.05% of respondents reported that they are satisfied with e-governance services quality at local level. Findings also reveal that education quality has a positive impact on citizens' trust in government, especially when considering Romania's overall education quality and the satisfaction with public schools quality in Cluj-Napoca. Furthermore, most indicators that evaluate the quality of public services delivered in the metropolitan area positively influence citizens' level of well-being, excepting the quality of bike infrastructure, the quality of water and sewage infrastructure, and quality of parking services, and the quality of public spaces for recreation. When evaluating the factors that positively impact citizens' trust in government, the study identified a series of e-governance indicators: the use of online information services, the use of online filling and complaint services, the use of online fee-paying services, and the overall quality of e-governance services at local level. Last, but not least, water quality satisfaction, cleanliness level satisfaction, and overall environmental quality satifaction have a positive impact on the overall lifestyle satisfaction.

As indicated by the previous analysis, creating sustainable and resilient policies at metropolitan level must therefore focus on improving the quality of the environment, the quality of education, and overall offering easy access to basic services, but also improving e-governance infrastructure through creating more mechanisms of civic participation. Problems such as lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities of authorities and stakeholders, poor implementation of plans and limited institutional capacity, and unsustainable financing need to be addressed by regional development frameworks that complement bottom-up approaches. Focusing on improving institutions and governance, improving urban-rural planning and implementation, ensuring inclusive socio-economic development, and investing in sustainable urban-rural infrastructure are the main policy areas that call for attention from all levels of governance. Furthermore, it is crucial to provide clear mechanisms that link technical studies with public infrastructure and private investment, to promote long-term work programs, and to include representation of all local governments of the metropolitan area in the government body of the metropolitan planning authority.

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Sources of Competitive Advantage in Some Rural Areas from Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Area

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Abstract. Due to the fact that competitive advantage has become for rural areas a source of increasing the local economy, the number of inhabitants, and other things, this paper wants to provide a framework which will help communities be aware of their existing competitive advantage in order to use it in their benefit.

Competitive advantage has turned into a source of growth for rural areas. This paper aims at creating an index, in order to help communities identify their competitive advantage. The results thus obtained can be used to guide the actions of the local authorities, so as to increase their competitive advantage.

Keywords: competitive advantage, index of competitiveness, rural communities.

1. Introduction

The aim of this article consists of creating and applying an index of competitiveness to some rural areas from the Metropolitan Area of Cluj-Napoca, in order to identify competitive advantage for them so as to be aware of the resources that they have and to increase the awareness regarding the importance of competitive advantage both for communities, but also for people inside the community.

In the actual context, competitive advantage has become a widely used concept, both in public and private sectors, but also in the NGO sector, due to its functions and meanings. Competitive advantage is used in these three sectors in order to develop themselves, creating a name in the world, but also for establishing some directions for the future. For rural communities, competitive advantage has turned into a source of increasing local economy by exploiting the local resources and also by keeping the inhabitants in the community, or attracting new residents or tourists within the community.

Competitive advantage is a concept used in different domains, especially in the strategic management one, which handles sharing knowledge from different fields such as management, marketing, finance, production, research, etc. in order to ensure the organization's success (David, 2011, pp. 5-9). Strategic management is about how to gain and maintain competitive advantage, and it refers to doing something which others cannot do, or owning something that others desire to own. The relationship between strategic management and competitive advantage is strengthened by the fact that in order to achieve competitive advantage an organization needs to adapt to external changes and events, but also to formulate, implement and evaluate strategies in order to learn how to discover, gain or maintain competitive advantage. In other words, competitive advantage is one element which cannot miss from a strategy, because it adds values to an organization (David, 2011, pp. 21-25).

In his book 'Competitive Advantage. Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance', Michael Porter introduced the term of competitive advantage and wrote about the importance of competition in a company which leads to its success or failure. Moreover, it has an important role regarding the activity of the firm, because it influences its performance, but also it can have an impact on innovation, cohesion or culture. In order to understand the competitive advantage, it is important to look at the company entirely, because the competitive advantage arises from all the activities that a company performs. A tool for analyzing all the activities from a company and how they interact in order to understand the competitive advantage, in the author`s opinion is the value chain. What needs to be highlighted is that in a company, its value chains can be different because of their history, strategy and implementation. In order to identify the competitive advantage of a company it is needed to defined the value chain of the company which includes

the strengths and weaknesses of the company, principally in comparison with the value chain of the competitors (Porter, 1985).

Because of the competition which nowadays is between companies or other actors, it is essential to know how companies create and sustain competitive advantage, but also how it is created and sustained using a competitive strategy. In this manner, Porter explains the interests which lay at the basis of choosing to have a competitive strategy. In his vision, one interest is related to the industry structure where companies compete and the second one consists of their positioning within an industry. In order to develop the competitive strategy the author came up with a new idea which asserts that the nature of competition requires and involves 5 forces: the threat of new entrants and substitutes, the bargaining power of buyers and suppliers and the rivalry between the existing competitors. This is the most well-known model that determines the industry competition and is called 'The five competitive forces of Porter' which include the new entrants, suppliers, buyers, existing competitors and substitutes (Porter, 1998). By adapting this model to our topic it can be said that a public authority or service has to avoid the threats of new entrants by bringing something new, different, providing new value in order to attract and sustain the inhabitants. In order to do these things, they have to pay attention to the power of suppliers, for obtaining different services at a high quality and low price, achieving human satisfaction. In this case, the buyers are the people, the ones who live in the commune, the ones who want to come here, but also in some cases the ones who are just visiting. In order to make them close to the community, the communes need to offer them something special and different which will link people to the commune. Another aspect which needs to be taken into consideration is the threat of substitute products or services, because other may copy what a commune does, and they can do it better, and that is why the commune has to come regularly with ideas of promoting their product and make it unique. There are communes that can be considered rival among the existing competitors, because in many cases they can have the same features, and this can make them similar. This similarity leads to rivalry and that is why communes need to differentiate from each other in order not to be considered rival because they are doing different things. Competitive advantage can be adapted to communities looking at all the aspects presented above, but it can also be attained by cooperation, because communities can cooperate by selling products to each other or by working together providing services or products. For example, a community can provide one service or good, and another one can provide a different service or good which is linked to the other community. In this way they can cooperate and all of them can sell or use their own competitive advantage.

In Barney's approach, a company's resources include 'all the assets of a firm, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge, etc.'

and these are used in order to create and implement strategies whose purpose is to improve efficiency and effectiveness. These resources are divided into three big categories such as: human capital resources (which include experience, trainings, and relationships), physical capital resources (such as equipment, raw materials, location) and organizational capital resources (which include systems such as planning, controlling, coordinating and informal relationships) (Barney, 1991, pp. 101-103). For him, a company has competitive advantage when 'it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitor' (Barney, 1991). In other words competitive advantage exists in a firm when it does something different from other firms. Sustained competitive advantage exists in a firm when 'it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and when these other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of strategy' (Barney, 1991, pp. 105-111). Sustained competitive advantage can be considered as doing something different from other firms, which cannot be imitated. It is stated that firms which have and exploit resources and capabilities which are valuable rare will have a competitive advantage, and these advantage in the future will be transformed in improved performance (Newbert, 2008, p. 747).

Competitive advantage is poorly defined and hard to operationalize. Hao Ma looked at some models of relationship between competitive advantage and performance and made some suppositions: competitive advantage is not performance; it is a relational term and is context specific. Starting from here, three models of relationships between competitive advantage and performance were identified: one is that competitive advantage leads to an increased performance, the second one is that competitive advantage can be without an increased performance and the last one is based on an increased or superior performance, without a competitive advantage For answering to the first supposition, the author came with two main approaches used in defining and constructing the competitive advantage. As it is known, the most important approaches in the strategic management domain are the structural approach and the resource based-view. The structural approach appears in all of Porter's work, stating that this approach is part of economy. Porter has a strong and defensible position in a certain attractive industry form the sustained competitive advantage. From this statement Porter stated his five-force framework which was used in explaining the sustainability of a profit in negotiations, and different types of competitions. What Porter succeeded in doing was to differentiate the competitive advantage by performance or profitability, but also to start seeing the competitive advantage as an end and not just as an outcome. The other approach, the resource-based view, sustains that competitive advantage is sustained by the unique resources that a company owns, and in order to create the competitive advantage the resources have to be rare, valuable, inimitable,

non-tradable and non-substitutable (Ma, 2000, pp. 22-27). As it was presented in Barney`s approach, a company`s unique resources is mandatorily related with performance, because of the fact that the features of resources generate economic rent, and the uniqueness of resources together with the performance which is given by the economic rent, these leading to the statement that competitive advantage and performance are two different concepts.

Looking at the sources of competitive advantage, Porter considers that in order to grow the competitive advantage, companies have to provide comparable buyer value at a lower cost, or to perform activities in a unique way (differentiation) (Porter, 1998).

Another way of having competitive advantage is to create it, and in this case innovation is taken into consideration. In order to keep up with innovation and to create a competitive advantage it is necessary to know some causes of innovation which lead to a competitive advantage, such as new technologies, new or reconversion of the buyer's needs, a new industry segment, changes in inputs costs or availability or changes of regulations. All these causes can change the competitive advantage, and by taking them into consideration a company should keep up with them and be aware of them in order to build their competitive advantage (Porter, 1998).

It is well known that competition in general and also for communities can be considered a good thing, because it can stimulate the actors to develop themselves. Since communities are seen as 'a functional group of individuals who live in a certain geographical location, at one point, share a common culture, are arranged in a social structure and express a consciousness of their uniqueness as well as their separate identity group' (Zamfir and Stanescu, 2007, p. 118), it appears that a community is composed of members who are aware of belonging to a group, with common interest for which they work together. In this way, since the membership feeling is expressed, the only condition is to become aware of and develop their community competitive advantage in order to come with something new, different from others, but also to make them unique in relation to others.

During the time, while the rural area was forgotten, the cities developed and started to be the important attraction to people. Inside of towns there were all the necessary services, places to live and jobs. But what happened with the rural area? It should be understood that rural communities have a lot of competitive advantages which derive from matters of geography, demography or economics. All this rural area's features can attract people from cities to move into them. Trying to define the rural areas, Isserman sustains that rural is a non-place, because it does not require a specific density of people or a specific number of people, and he identified that rural America is a home for reserves and places set aside (2001). In terms of economy, rural America has a small labor force and lower population density, which means less local market demand, and few business services. Also, it

does not have increased numbers of educated people, which puts it in a position of inequality in terms of competition with increased number of population communities. Besides what it has not, the rural America has its own features such as natural area, outdoor recreation, decreased pollution, low rate of crime, diversity, and no traffic jams. These advantages once they are recognized and valued, can become competitive advantage for rural America (Isserman, 2001, pp. 40-45).

In order to have a competitive advantage in a community, it has to be recognized the importance of having firms in rural areas or other forms of business (farms, social entrepreneurship, association of local producers), because they can lead to economic development. In order to attract those firms into the community, it must be identified the competitive advantage of the communities, to provide for companies incentives which can attract them. In rural areas there is a need to create jobs, because there is available labor force. Rural areas can offer the business sector the proximity to the city, unmet local demand, decreased taxes and utility costs, but also a low crime rate. In terms of disadvantages there can be the access to infrastructure, the lack of access to different services, low educated labor force. In the last years, the focus of the companies from cities was concentrated on relocating them in the rural area, especially remote firms such as those from IT sector, because they want to provide to its employees an environment with less pollution, less traffic, less noise in order to make them fell at work as they are home.

To determine the competitiveness of a community in the rural tourism sector, which is seen as a phenomena which is influenced by the interaction of internal capabilities, external environment, business context, regulations, culture, were used some determinants of the concept (Topolansky Barbe, Gonzalez Triay and Häufele, 2016, p. 169). For endowed resources they have identified tourism infrastructure (airport quality, tourist guidance, local transportation, visitor's accessibility, and food services facilities), range of activities (waster and nature based, adventure and recreational activities, sport facilities), shopping (diversity of shops, quality and variety, value for money in shops), entertainment (night life, entertainment quality) (Topolansky Barbe, Gonzalez Triay and Häufele, 2016, pp. 175-177).

Regarding created resources they looked at general infrastructure (accessibility, health services, financial institutions, telecommunication, safety, electricity supply), quality of service (monitoring visitors satisfaction, training programs and service quality), hospitality (hospitality of residents toward tourists, quality in performing rural tourism services, trust among tourists and residents) (Topolansky Barbe, Gonzalez Triay and Häufele, 2016, p. 178).

Supporting factors were divided in destination marketing management (cooperation between public and private sector, branding), destination policy, planning and development (vision about development of tourism, tourism values, resident values, stakeholder values, existence of policies), human resource management

(commitment to tourism education, educational infrastructure, training for tourism needs).

Destination management was comprised of competitive environment at micro level (domestic business environment, access to venture capital, level of cooperation), competitive environment at macro level (political stability, extent of foreign investment), price competitiveness (value for money, both for tourist and residents) (Topolansky Barbe, Gonzalez Triay and Häufele, 2016, p. 177).

Situational conditions were divided in demand conditions (international awareness of destination, or destination product) (Topolansky Barbe, Gonzalez Triay and Häufele, 2016, p. 179). The model presented regarding measuring of competitiveness may be easily adapted to the aim of the paper.

There are some forces of competitive advantage such as workforce skills, infrastructure, but also quality of management which need to be taken into consideration. Also, some competitive factors which lead to success of rural tourism development, such as great involvement and support of local community, but also a good strategic planning and a good cooperation among stakeholders, can also be used in other types of development if they are adapted correctly. Economic impact, socio cultural impact, environment impact, community knowledge impact and community support impact are positively related to rural tourism competitive advantage and stakeholder involvement is not related to rural tourism competitive advantage because of the lack of communication between traveler agencies and local communities. Other authors also look at the rural tourism competitive advantage and they used indicators related to the number of historic sites, artistic features, natural habitats, transportation, recreation facilities, health facilities, quality of services and telecommunication correctly (Chin, Thian and Lo, 2017, pp. 242-247).

2. Methodology

The research question that this paper attempts to offer an answer to is: Which are the sources of competitive advantage? Is the economic impact of the firms positively related to the commune's competitive advantage?

In order to identify the existence or possibility of existence of the competitive advantage we opted for adapting an already made index of competitiveness to our case, an index applied on Finland which was part of a project funded by the National Technology Agency, TEKES, index which was applied on the regions in Finland in order to see their competitive advantage (Huovari, Kangasharju and Alanen, 2011, p. 5). For each of the chosen indicators there are some sub-indicators. For human capital, there were the following indicators: population with higher education (using data from Romania Census from 2011), young population (0-19

years), using data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, from 1st of June 2016, and demographic dependency ratio which is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labor force (the dependent part ages 0 to 14 and 64+) and the working age population (people between 15 and 64 years) per 100 people. This indicator shows how many people in a society need help, including people under the age of 15 and those over the age of 64, people who cannot take care of themselves, at least financially. For this indicator we used data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, on 1st of June 2016.

The second indicator, regarding the economy of the non-agriculture sector, we took into account the turnover in 2016, the number of companies in 2016 and the average number of employees in 2016. For this indicator we used data provided by the National Trade Register Office, for year 2016.

The third indicator, related to the economy of agriculture sector, used the area cultivated with the main crops, agriculture crop production on the main crops, fruit production, and livestock by categories of animals like cattle, swine, sheep and birds. In order to understand easier this indicator, the sub indicators were split in two categories: groceries and animals. The data used for this indicator were provided by the National Institute of Statistics and the newest data are from 2003.

The last indicator, accessibility, takes into account the total length of the simple drinking water distribution network, the total length of the sewer pipes, the total length of the gas distribution pipes, existing dwellings at the end of the year, individual owned cars, establishment with domicile (including external migration), home departures (including external migration), persons permanently convicted in penitentiaries (including re-education centers, criminal offenses investigated and solved by the police). These data were processed based on the map of the locality, from 2016, data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. The role of this indicator is to help identify the competitive advantage from one community, looking at numbers. It was established that communities with scores bigger than 100 have for sure a competitive advantage and the ones scoring 90-100 can become in the future a source of competitive advantage. This indicator is important for communities because since the competitiveness is identified, the communities have the chance to foster, attract and sustain economic activities in their own benefit, but also in the community benefit. Since there is a well-developed community, it has also an increased quality of life and the level of welfare is increasing.

For each of the indicators was calculated the index using the formula $X_i=100 (x_i/X)/(p_i/P)$, where the capital letters X and P are the total values for metropolitan area of Cluj, excluding the city of Cluj-Napoca. The city was excluded because its values could influence the results, so the paper chose to focus only on the rural area from the metropolitan area. The small letters are the values for each commune that was analyzed. As reference point was taken the value 100, this meaning that

everything which is above 100 is considered a competitive advantage, and what is comprised between 90 and 100 can be considered a possible source of competitive advantage. It needs to be highlighted one more time that the results from one commune are divided by the ones of total metropolitan area, which can provide different results from the ones that people suppose should be.

3. Analyzed communities description

In 2001, Law no. 315 from 6th of July introduces the concept of metropolitan areas of Romania, which was defined as an area formed by association, which is based on a voluntary partnership between urban centers and rural communities located in the perimeter of 30 km away from the city, and they are supposed to develop different relations between them (Law no. 351, 6th of July 2001).

The Metropolitan Area of Cluj was established in December 2008 following the Local Council Decision no. 415/2008, by the association of Cluj-Napoca Municipality with Aiton, Apahida, Baciu, Bonțida, Borșa, Căianu, Chinteni, Ciurila, Cojocna, Feleacu, Florești, Gilău, Gîrbău, Jucu, Petreștii de Jos, Tureni and Vultureni communes from Cluj County. One year later, in 2009, Sănpaul commune joined the Metropolitan area, and after, Săvădisla commune joined to the Metropolitan Area.

In order to have a proper delimitation of communes and also to work easily with all of the 19 communes, it was created a preliminary instrument of work, and communes were grouped in two rings, Ring 1 (Apahida, Baciu, Chinteni, Feleacu, Florești) and Ring 2 (Aiton, Bonțida, Borșa, Căianu, Ciurila, Cojocna, Gîrbău, Gilău, Jucu, Petreștii de Jos, Săvădisla, Sânpaul, Tureni, Vultureni).

For this paper were analyzed the communes from Ring 1 (Apahida, Baciu, Chinteni, Feleacu, Florești) and also Gilău and Jucu from Ring 2. The reason for choosing these communities was their proximity to the city, but also because all of them were the founders of Cluj Metropolitan Area in 2008. The reference years for the study were the following: data from 2016 were taken into consideration because the majority was available, while for others we used data from the last census in 2011, and data from 2003 regarding agriculture. In the following section the chosen communities will be described, looking at the geographical position, population evolution, natural growth, confession, and ethnicity. For each community there will be a short description in order to create a framework for data analysis.

4. Results

Taking into account the confession of the inhabitants, it has been noticed that the majority of them are orthodox. In Apahida, the second confession is Pentecostal, while in Baciu is Roman-Catholic, in Chinteni, Feleacu, Florești, Gilău and Jucu is reformed. From the confessional point of view the communes are different

because of the diversion of religions, but the structure of confession tends to be quite compact. The ethnicity of people can be reflected in how united they are as a community, but also it is reflected in the community status, because, being coordinated by the confession people can do a lot of team work for their communities.

Regarding the ethnicity of people from the seven communes, it can be seen that the main ethnicity is Romanian, and the second ethnicity consists of Roma people. In Florești there are some Ukrainian, German, Turkish, Greek, Italian and Jewish people, in Baciu there are some Italian and German people. It can be noticed that ethnicity appears to be diverse only in the communes with a numerous population, the other being composed only of 3 big ethnicities. The ethnicity can be seen as an important source of social cohesion that is why it is important for communities, because as compact as a community is in most cases, the community is more united.

An important feature of the Metropolitan area is the presence of the International Airport of Cluj-Napoca, Avram Iancu, the closest commune being Apahida (6 km), followed by Jucu (15.1 km), Florești (16.4 km), Baciu (17.1 km), Chinteni (18.6 km), Feleacu (23.4 km), Gilău (25.1 km). This proximity to the airport is very important for communes speaking in terms of accommodation, tourism, access, attracting investors, and others.

In terms of public transportation, there are metropolitan lines which serve the communes Apahida, Baciu, Chinteni, Feleacu and Florești. There are buses and minibuses from different parts of the city to the communes. For instance, in Apahida there are 7 lines, for Baciu there are 5 lines, for Chinteni there are 4 lines, for Feleacu 3 lines and for Florești 6 lines. Besides public transportation, in each commune there are private operators. In the case of Gilău and Jucu, there are only private operators, the public transportation not being extended to them.

Looking at the first indicator, human capital, which in most cases is considered to be the basis of success in some communities, people with higher education in a community are a valuable resource, because they come with new ideas, they have enough knowledge to start a business, some of them have that spirit of entrepreneurs, but also they know how to convince others to do something for them and for the community. Florești and Baciu are above the mean of 100, which means that population with higher education is a source of competitiveness here.

The sub indicator, young population with ages between 0-19 years, is very important for a community, because if it has young people it can develop more easily, but also can attract different investors, or services, they also can stop migration to big cities, they become in short time employees, and they can strengthen the connection within people from the community. Of course an increased number of young people within a community can be considered a disadvantage, e.g. the unemployment rate can increase, the natality can decrease, the poverty rate can increase as well, etc. For Apahida, Baciu and Florești, the young population is a

source of competitive advantage, and for Chinteni it is a possible source of competitive advantage.

The last sub-indicator, the demographic dependency ratio is looking at different age categories, in order to identify in which proportion young and old people are dependent on the work force people. At this indicator the small values indicate that people need the lowest help from others, and the higher values indicates that people are dependent on the ones on working force. Florești, Apahida, Baciu and Gilău, are the ones with lowest values which means that they have the lowest percentage of dependent people.

The second indicator, the situation of non-agriculture sector, is formed by turnover, numbers of firms and average number of employees. Looking at the values for turnover which include the total revenue from business transactions made by the company, they represent the sale of goods and products over a specific period of time. Sources of competitive advantages after calculating the index are present in Gilău, Apahida and Jucu. For a better understanding it is necessary to look also at the number of firms, because the turnover speaks only in terms of money, but the number of firms shows the diversity of them in one commune.

If we analyze the number of companies present in each commune, the sources of competitive advantage are Apahida, Gilău, Feleacu and Florești, and a potential source of competitive advantage is Baciu. In Jucu's case, even though there are fewer companies, their turnover is bigger which means that these companies are developed, not only from a turnover point of view, but also from the number of employees they have. This can be explained also by looking at the number of employees.

For the third indicator, the situation of the agriculture sector, in the beginning we took into account 11 sub indicators, which in the end were comprised only in 2. The sub indicator animal comprises the number of cattle, swine, sheep and birds. The groceries sub indicator consists of wheat and rye production, corn grains, sunflower, potatoes, vegetables, sugar beet, fruit production.

Looking at the animal results, Chinteni, Jucu, Feleacu are the ones considered to have a competitive advantages, which can be explained by the land that they own, but also by the decreased number of companies, people preferring to work for themselves in agriculture.

As sources of competitive advantage regarding groceries, meaning vegetables, fruit and other cultures which serve for preparing food, Jucu and Chinteni are the most important ones. Also, Feleacu can be considered a source of competitive advantage in the future, its value being between 90 and 100.

The last calculated indicator, named accessibility, takes into account different types of utilities, but also existing dwellings at the end of the year, number of individual cars, establishment with domicile, home departures, houses build during

on year, persons permanently convicted in penitentiaries, but also criminal offenses investigated and solved by the police. The data we used are for 2016.

Looking at the total length of the simple drinking water distribution network measured in kilometers, this shows that Apahida, Jucu, Chinteni and Baciu have a competitive advantage regarding this sub indicator.

In terms of total length of the sewer pipes measured in kilometers, Gilău and Apahida have a competitive advantage, and for Jucu can become a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage regarding the total lengths of gas distribution pipes is met in Apahida, Feleacu, Chinteni, and Jucu. Due to the fact that this index is related to the population of communes, it can be observed that in Baciu, Florești and Gilău the values are small, because the gas distribution is not present in the whole commune.

It was thought that the number of existing dwelling in a commune can be considered a competitive advantage, due to the fact that since there is an increased number of dwellings this can attract in future more inhabitants. Feleacu, Chinteni and Florești are the ones which in terms of existing dwellings have a competitive advantage, and Apahida and Jucu can develop a competitive advantage of this.

Since it was analyzed the existing dwellings at the end of the year, it was interesting to have a look also at the houses built in one year, so we calculated the index for houses built in 2016. Florești, Apahida, Chinteni and Baciu are the ones with a competitive advantage regarding the number of built houses, this could mean that all of communes attract, or will attract more inhabitants due to the increased number of new houses.

The index of competitiveness for individual cars was calculated in order to make some connections with the public transportation and also daily migration to the city. The bigger values regarding individual cars ownership are present in communes such as Feleacu, Gilau and Florești, and also Jucu can become a source of competitiveness. In this case, the competitiveness refers to the fact that people have the opportunity to move around easily. Also, this index can indicate a problem regarding the quality of public transportation. For example, in case of Baciu and Apahida communes, the numbers of individual cars are lower, but it can be explained by the qualitative public transportation connectivity to the city.

The sub indicator called establishment of domicile including external migration, refers to people who have the domicile and also a house in a certain commune, but it also include new entrants in the commune. In 2016, this sub-indicator shows that Florești and Apahida have for sure a competitive advantage. Chinteni's values are comprised between 90-100 which means that it can become a competitive advantage. This value is high because the 2 communes are well known places for living in the proximity of the city, and they are well connected with the city in terms of roads and proximity. This sub-indicator includes people which leave one

community and establish themselves in another community. Even though Florești had the highest value regarding establishment with domicile, it has also the highest values regarding home departures, which shows the mobility of people, and how one person came here and another one left. This migration can be beneficial if it consumes within the country and not outside of it. The lowest home departures are registered in Gilău and Feleacu, the ones which register the lowest values regarding young population, meaning that since in the commune there are only old people they will not leave the community in which they have lived more than half of their lives.

Another sub-indicator in terms of accessibility not only for new inhabitants, but also for new investors is safety. The safer a place is, the more new people will attract. Using data from the maps of the localities, two sub indicators were calculated, one regarding the persons permanently convicted in jails and one regarding criminal offenses investigated and solved by the police in 2016. The safer communes are Chinteni, Florești, Feleacu. Jucu, Apahida, Gilău and Baciu registered between (9-15 convicted persons) these giving them the increased values. In terms of criminal offenses investigated, the safer communes are Chinteni, Baciu and Jucu. It needs to be highlighted that since the values are reported to population and metropolitan area, they lose a part of their values. For example, looking at the figures, Florești, Apahida and Gilău registered the bigger values (720-140 cases), but reported to their population the values in the index decreased.

5. Research limitations

The main limitation of the research consists in the access to current data, for example in the case of animals and groceries where we used data from 2003. The same problem appeared in the case of ethnicity and people with higher education where data were provided by the last Census in Romania in 2011. Due to this, the research`s results may be influenced by the lack of updated data.

Another limitation of this research can be the number of analyzed communes, because this paper does not comprise the whole communes from the Metropolitan Area of Cluj-Napoca, and because of this only some communes can be visible from the perspective of competitive advantage.

6. Conclusions

To answer the first research question we can say that all the indicators and sub indicators which formed the index of this paper can be considered sources of competitive advantage, because not only that some of them were already tested in other research, but also because literature stands as basis for choosing them.

The second research question focuses on the economic impact over communes, and if it can be related to competitive advantage. As it was presented in the introduction, competitive advantage is connected to economy, performance, and the profit of a company. In this case, it is linked to the average number of employees and turnover. The economy of local firms can be related to the competitive advantage of the communes, because companies can keep and use the competitive advantage of the communes, or based on the existing ones they can create other competitive advantages for the communes, which leads to a local economic development, not only to their own economic development.

Accordingly to Porter, it is important to understand the competitive advantage by looking at the totality of activities that a firm, or in this case, the commune needs in order to perform, by using the value chain (Porter, 1985, pp. 36-38). Value chain is a tool used in order to understand the sources of competitive advantage. Based on the literature and on the practical part, this paper wants to transpose the value chain defined by the author for firms, into one designed for communities. The value chains divide the activities into primary and support ones. In this case, primary activities are grouped into transportation, wholesale, public services, while support activities consist of infrastructure, human resources, technology, and product and service development. This value chains shows the total value which is made by the commune, and it comprises all the activities from a commune in order to obtain competitive advantage (Cetinski and Milohnic, 2008, p. 43). This paper used this kind of activities in order to construct the index which shows the presence or absence of the competitive advantage at the commune level.

While analyzing the chosen communities and also at the practical part, we took into consideration those features of the communes, where we applied the questions from the VRIO framework (V– value, R– rareness, I– imitability, O– organization), looking to see if they are valuable, rare, hard to be imitated, capable of being exploited by the commune. All the indicators were filtered by these questions, and only after that they were used in measuring the competitive advantage.

There were some findings regarding some natural features of communes which, in time, can be transformed into competitive advantage, such as protected areas, lakes, forests, sky slopes and other. It may be assumed that tourism and cultural events can be considered a source of competitive advantage. What is more important is that if they are not considered to be competitive now, they can be easily transformed into ones, because they already have the product, the only need is to present it in a way in which it can be considered better or unique.

The purpose of this paper was to identify a tool which can measure the existence of competitive advantage at each commune level. To put it in a nutshell, all communes have a competitive advantage, but many of them have not discovered it yet, and with the results of this paper we can provide some recommendations

which can be helpful in discovering local competitive advantage, or at least understanding it better.

For improving this research there should be taken into consideration all the communes from the metropolitan area. Furthermore, the data used for calculating the index should be updated. Taking these in consideration, in the end we can draw up a map of competitive advantage which will serve to the Metropolitan Area of Cluj-Napoca Agency, in order to support the communities in different projects, sustaining the existing competitive advantage or possible ones, in order to develop the communities. By looking at the map, it will be easier to provide information for different interested actors in terms of available places for manufacture, tourism, existence of different places, leisure activities and others.

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The Virtual Transparency
of the Local Public Authorities
from Szeklerland

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Abstract. The basis for this study is an analysis of the Szeklerland local public authorities' internet pages. The analyzed public authorities are those from the localities inhabited preponderantly by Hungarian ethnics, in Harghita, Covasna and Mureș counties. The internet pages analysis was conducted in the first half of 2018 by the students of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences College, Babeş-Bolyai University, Sfântu Gheorghe Extension, based on a standardized guide developed by Dr. Cziprián-Kovács Loránd. This guide, comprised of 82 items, focused on the existence, or inexistence of the internet pages, as well as on certain types of information, such as those of public interest, or mandatory by law, the actuality and content of these pages, the languages in which these are published, and information regarding the management-level public servants. Aided by this guide, the students have analyzed 154 internet pages. In the planning of this study, we have formulated three general objectives. The first objective is based on the premise that nowadays the virtual presence of a public institution is indispensable. The second objective is based on the current legal environment, which makes the publishing of certain information of the public institutions' internet page mandatory. The third objective is rooted in the explicit intention of this region's leaders to make Szeklerlend more visible internationally, an attitude we consider should be reflected in the internet pages of this region's public authorities.

Keywords: Szeklerland, on-line visibility, official documents, institutional transparency, web page.

1. Introduction

The basis for this study is an analysis of the Szeklerland local public authorities' internet pages. The analyzed public authorities are those from the localities inhabited preponderantly by Hungarian ethnics, in Harghita, Covasna and Mureş counties. The internet pages analysis was conducted in the first half of 2018 by the students of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences College, Babeş-Bolyai University, Sfântu Gheorghe Extension, based on a standardized guide developed by Dr. Cziprián-Kovács Loránd. This guide, comprised of 82 items, focused on the existence, or inexistence of the internet pages, as well as on certain types of information, such as those of public interest, or mandatory by law, the actuality and content of these pages, the languages in which these are published, and information regarding the management-level public servants (mayors, deputy mayors, local council members, secretary). Aided by this guide, the students have analyzed 154 internet pages. At the beginning of this study we have formulated three general objectives. The first objective is based on the premise that, in the second half of the second decade of the 21st century, the internet presence of the institutions performing a task of public interest is indispensable. At the same time, we need to mention that, with the apparition of the web 3.0 era, the 'virtual presence' cannot mean only a simple poster-like presence, but shoud consist of a flexible on-line interface, which is capable to interactively adapt contituously to the population's needs. The second objective is based on the current legal environment, which makes mandatory the publishing of certain information of the public institutions' internet page, such as the statements of assets and interests of civil servants performing a management function, or different official documents of public institutions, such as the budget, balance sheet, organization and operation regulation, internal organization regulation, local council decisions, minutes of local council meetings, etc.

Because each locality in our sample appears in Appendix no. 1 of G.D. (Government Decision) no. 1206/2001, according to this G.D. most of the official documents listed above should be translated into the mother tongue of the minority, in our case in Hungarian: 'The final texts of the council decisions and other documents submitted to the deliberation and approval of the local or county council shall be drafted in Romanian and translated into the national minority language' (Art. 6, paragraph (5) and Art. 16, paragraph (1) of G.D. no. 1206/2001). All these obligations of the local authorities derive from the premise of institutional transparency. The third objective formulated at the beginning of the study has a local character, namely that the leaders of the Covasna, Harghita and Mureş counties have, for several years, formulated the explicit goal of making Szeklerland more visible internationally. To achieve this goal, different cultural, artistic, gastronomic and tourist actions are organized annually in each county: 'Make Szeklerland

visible! – this goal guides the organizers of the Szeklerland Days, the councils of Mureș, Harghita and Covasna counties, and the cultural and artistic institutions and civil organizations of the three counties involved in the organization, – say the chairmen of the councils, Csaba Borboly, Ferenc Péter and Sándor Tamás in their introduction.' (Élő Székelyföld, no date). This event is only one of the many, which in 2018 has already reached the 9th edition. We believe that today the visibility of a region must also include virtual visibility, because the vast majority of people when they want to get information about a location/ locality, first start searching the internet. From this point, we consider that the desire of the county councils to make the Szeklerland visible should be reflected also on the internet pages of the localities in this region, where besides the information required by the law we should also find useful information about the tourist locations, the cultural, artistic and gastronomic activities organized in the area.

2. Research results

2.1. Information about the internet pages

In the research, with the help of the students, we first checked whether the localities included in the study had an internet page. As can be seen in Figure 1, the vast majority of localities (97.33%) have a website, which means 146 localities out of 151. With the help of on-line programs (e.g., whois.icann.org or www.scamadviser.com) as well as using content analysis, we tried to identify the owners of these sites. On the basis of these analyzes, we found that the vast majority of web pages are owned by local authorities and only approx. 18 sites are owned by other entities (e.g., individuals or NGOs). Following the study's objectives, we checked whether or not the localities included in the study had an official website in the Hungarian language. We found that out of 151 localities in 49 cases (33.1%) there is no Hungarian version of the official website (see Figure 1). For each variable, we also verified whether there is a relationship with the counties where the localities are located or whether we can identify differences between counties depending on these variables. Thus, in the case of the existence of internet pages, we found no significant difference between the counties, but in the case of the Hungarian version of the Internet page we found a significant relationship between this variable and the counties of the localities (χ^2 = 24,357, p≤0,001, Cramer V = 0.399, p ≤ 0.001). Based on the cross-table we found that most of the localities that do not have a Hungarian website are located in Mureș county.
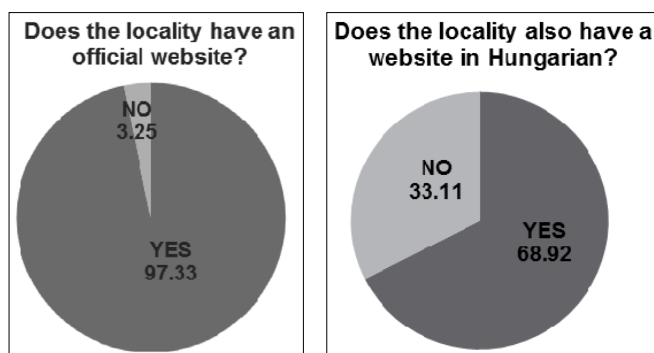
Figure 1: Number of websites
Source: Author's calculations

2.2. The main language of the internet pages

Continuing the idea of seeing how they use the native language in the local space, in the next step we analyzed the language on which the site's IP address is set (the one associated with the IP address) and in which language the home page appears on the Internet. As we can see in Figure 2, in the vast majority of cases (about 60%) the internet address of the locality gives us the Romanian name of the locality, and in 56.25% of the cases the home page appears also in Romanian. Of course, there are 18 localities, where there are two separate websites, one in Romanian and one in Hungarian. By doing some additional analyzes, we have also noticed that in the localities where the name of the website and the welcome page appear in Hungarian the percentage of Hungarians is over 75%.
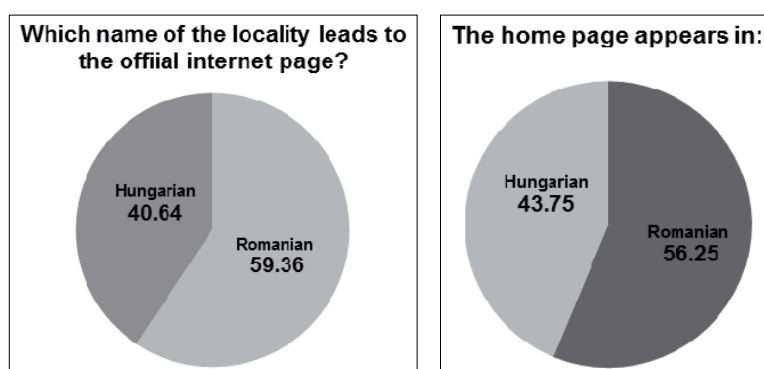

Figure 2: Language of websites
Source: Author's calculations

2.3. General description of the locality

An unwritten rule of web pages is to contain a general overview, from which the visitor can create a general idea of the institution, firm, locality, etc. Someone can visit the site's website for a variety of reasons. For these reasons, each is related to obtaining information. Among the most likely information is the general presentation of the locality, from which a foreigner should obtain general information about the size, history, location, etc. of the locality. In Figure 3 we can see that the vast majority of pages (82%) respected this expectation.
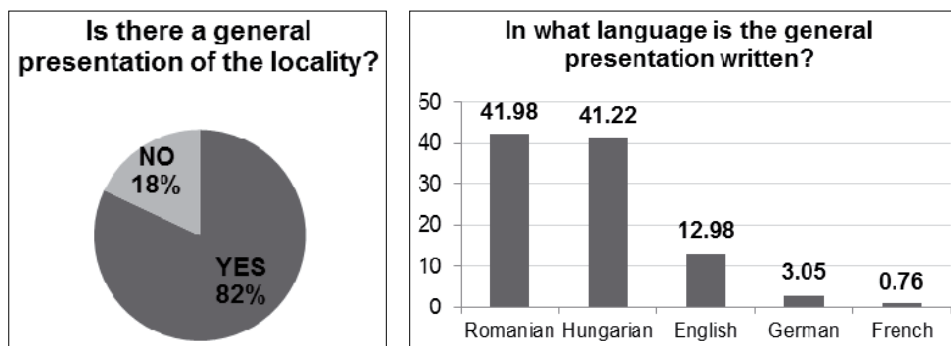

Figure 3: Content of the websites
Source: Author's calculations

We also noted the language in which these presentations are written. The presentations (where they exist) are mostly written either in Romanian or in Hungarian, but we also found cases when they appear only in German or English. Of the internet pages, which contain a general presentation of the locality, only 30% appear in two languages (in Romanian and Hungarian). If we take into account the intent of the local authorities from Szeklerland that they want to make this region internationally visible, we consider that an important aspect of this intention should be the presentation of localities in the virtual environment in an international language as well. From the data collected, it appears that only 17 websites show the general presentation of localities and in an international language, which means 13.8% of these localities and 11.2% of the total Internet pages included in this study. Specifically, this percentage in the case of Covasna County means 7 out of 39, in Harghita 7 out of 63, and in Mureș 3 out of 49. We consider that these percentages are very low, because, as we pointed out in the introduction of this article, when people want to get information about a locality, they first start searching the internet, and this is even more valid for foreigners who want to visit these localities.

2.4. The news on the internet pages

As mentioned in the previous chapter, someone can visit the website for several reasons, each of which is related to obtaining information. Compared to the previous chapter, where we focused mainly on general information, which may be of interest to the people outside the locality, we analyze in this chapter the news that appear on the website of the locality with the intention of checking how much pressure is placed on local authorities to provide information to the local audience.
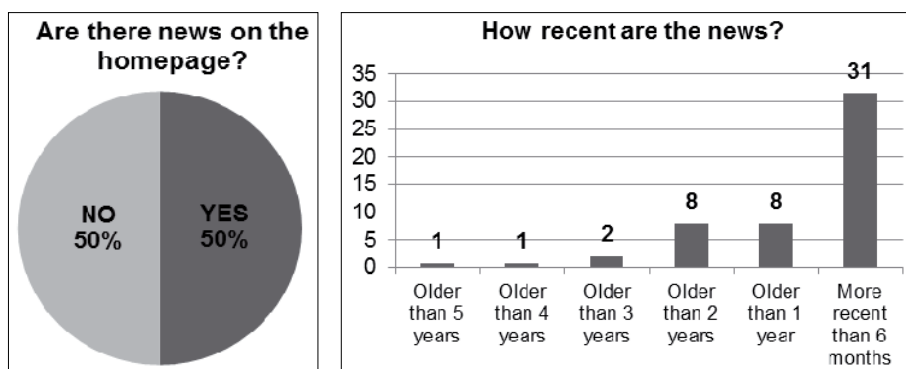

Figure 4: News on the websites
Source: Author's calculations

In Figure 4 we can see that only 50% of the analyzed websites contain news, which we consider to be quite low, because the main purpose of these pages would be to provide citizens with local and public information. Providing news on the Internet pages would also be an opportunity for self-promotion for local authorities, which half of the public authorities in Szeklerland do not use. Regarding the language in which this news is published, we can state that the vast majority of news appear in Romanian and Hungarian (50%); 43% only in Romanian; only 3% in Hungarian and the remaining 4% in three languages. Analyzing the character of these news, we found that most of them are local news (37%); 28% cultural news, 22% economic news, 6% are related to projects, 4% are republished from newspapers, and the rest are of some other nature. In addition to the type of news, their actuality is much more important (see Figure 4) as stated in the introduction, a web page must be dynamic, always providing current information. From this perspective, we consider that the news pages largely satisfy this criterion, because 78% of the news provided was published less than one year ago.

2.5. Informations about the local leaders

Even though it is not mandatory in each case, we considered that the public institutions' websites should also contain information about local leaders such as the mayor (or county council chairman), deputy mayor, local secretary, and local councilors. We have based this hypothesis on the fact that these leaders are or ought to be aware of the potential of online promotion.

Based on data received in case of the mayors, we can only confirm this hypothesis partially, because even if 93% of the internet pages contain the name of the mayor, their program with the public and their contact details appear only in 40% and 45% of the cases respectively (see Figure 5). In addition to this mandatory information required by law, we also analyzed the existence of other information related to local leaders such as photographs, political affiliation, curriculum vitae, etc. Based on the collected data, we found that in 40% of cases there is a picture of the mayor, 53% of the websites contain of his/her political affiliation and 12% their curriculum vitae. These data show that most mayors do not make much use of the self-promotion opportunity provided by the institution's website.
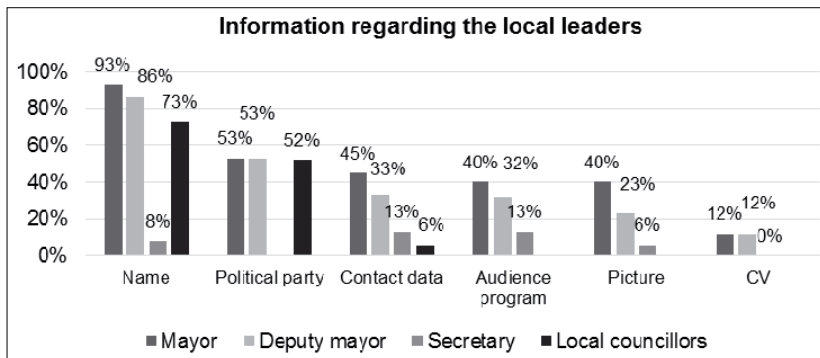
Figure 5: Information about the local leaders
Source: Author's calculations

As to the other local leaders, such as deputy mayor, secretary and local counselors, we find even less information on the websites. As seen in Figure 5, in their case the percentage of personal information or public interest is noticeably smaller, except for the political affiliation and vice-mayor's resume, where the percentage is the same as the mayor's. We also mention that in the case of the secretary we cannot talk about political affiliation as they are not elected officials and in the case of local councilors we did not check the program with the public, the photographs and the CVs.

2.6. Statements of wealth and interests

Based on Law no. 176/2010 on integrity in the exercise of public functions and dignities: 'The wealth declarations and the declarations of interests shall be kept on the website of the institution and of the Agency for the duration of the exercise of their office or mandate and 3 years after their termination and shall be archived according to the law'. These statements shall be filed in within 30 days of the date of appointment or election in office or from the date of commencement of work, or at the latest by June 15th, for those who have been in office for several years. Starting from this legal basis, we assumed that in the vast majority of cases these statements can be found on the websites of local public authorities, but according to Figure 6, only approximately half of the local leaders have their wealth and interest statements posted on the websites of local public institutions.
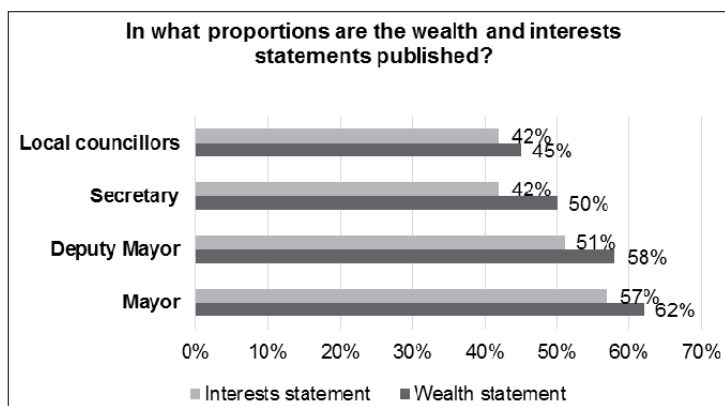
Figure 6: Statements of wealth and interests
Source: Author's calculations

In Figure 6 we can see that in the case of the mayors the declarations of wealth and interests appear most often, and that their percentage decreases along with the level of hierarchy. At the same time, we can see that the percentage of wealth statements in each category of public dignitaries is a small percent (3%-8%), higher than the percentage of interest declarations. In addition to the existence or non-existence on the websites of the wealth and interest declarations, an important aspect is their timeliness, as the aforementioned law also requires that these statements should be renewed in each year. Due to the fact that we conducted this study in the first part of 2018, most of the statements were older than one year but more recent than two years. For example, in case of the mayors 67.8% of the statements were older than one year and only 15% were more recent than six months. However, the data we received suggests that in those cases where the wealth and interest statements do appear, these documents are regularly renewed and posted on the institution's website.

2.7. Other information of public interest

Law no. 544 of 2001, as amended and supplemented, regarding the free access to public information provides that certain documents containing information of public interest should also be posted on the institution's website. From these documents we focused on those that appear in Figure 7. The data show that the vast majority of this information does not appear on the websites of local public authorities. The biggest proportion is that of the local council decisions (53% are published entirely and 19% partially), and the slightest proportion (in 27% of the cases they are not published, and in 13% only partially) is of the minutes of the local council meetings. Apart from the local council decisions, we did not find a proportion of more than 50% for any other documents. We believe that these small percentages are not primarily due to malintent or indifference, but are due to the fact that, especially in small localities, there are not enough and/or qualified staff to type and/or scan each document and post these on the institution's website (e.g., on the minutes of the local councils).
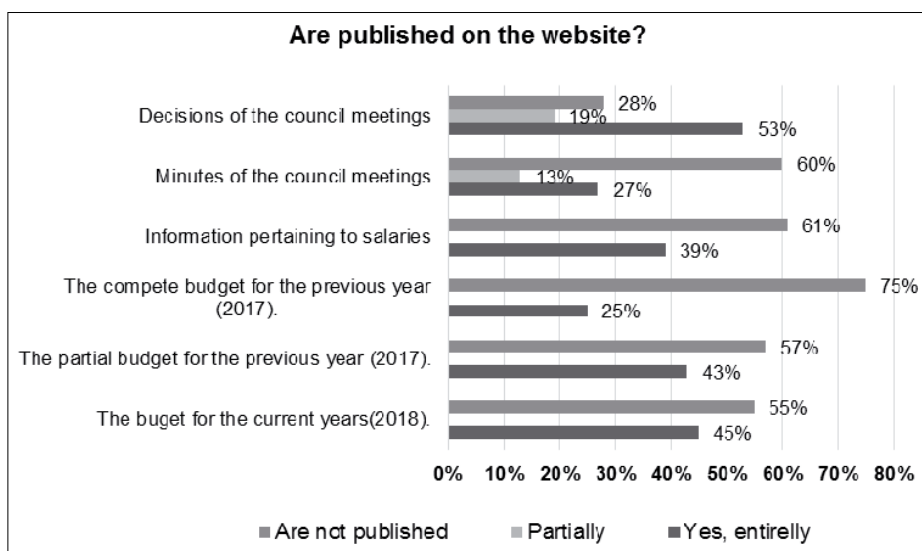
Figure 7: Documents published on the websites
Source: Author's calculations

On the transparency of income (see Figure 7) we mention that it is regulated by art. 33 of the Law no. 153/2017, which is a law that has recently appeared compared to the period in which we conducted this research, which means that although public institutions should apply these laws from the moment they appear in the Official Journal of Romania, some institutions start their application much later, due to a rigidity specific to local public institutions.

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Based on Government Decision no. 1206/2001, presented in the introduction, we also checked whether the decisions of the local councils were translated in Hungarian, and we found that in 5% of the cases all the decisions of the local councils appear in Hungarian as well and in 2% only partially. The Hungarian title of decisions does not appear in 86% of the cases. These data show that although the law provides the possibility, the vast majority of local councils do not post the translation of local decisions, and we can assume that they do not translate these documents, primarily because of the lack of personnel.

2.8. Official documents regulating the institution's functioning

Official documents regulating the functioning of institutions are usually treated with superficiality and often are general documents taken from the internet without adaptation, yet their importance is major, which only emerges in crisis situations. According to the legal regulations presented in the previous chapter, these documents must appear on the websites of the local public authorities. In this regard, we have focused on the most important documents, namely the Internal Regulation (ROI) and the Organization and Functioning Regulation (ROF). In addition to these two documents, we are also dealing with the state of public functions. As can be seen in Figure 8, these documents appear to a very small extent on the institutions' websites. Of these, the status of public functions is the most common, 42%, the Organization and Functioning Regulation appears in 22%, and the Internal Regulation in 13% of the cases. Regarding to how old these documents are (see Figure 8), we found that most ROFs and ROIs are older than two years (61% ROF and 54% ROI) and in 55% of the cases the status of public

Figure 8: Official documents regulating the institution's functioning

Source: Author's calculations

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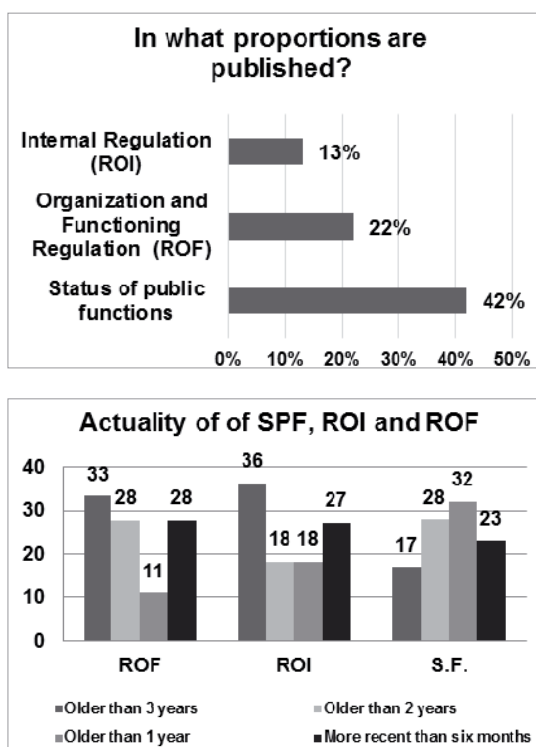
functions is more recent than one year. Based on the data in Figure 8 we have come to the conclusion that not only these official documents appear to a lesser extent than expected, but their timeliness is questionable as well.

2.9. Information regarding other public institutions

In the study, the last dimension is the information about other institutions in the locality. Even if the posting of this information on the websites is not mandatory, we consider that they are information of public interest (e.g., the program and contact details of the dispensary or local police, etc.), but we cannot neglect that some of these institutions are supported in whole or in part by local municipalities (e.g., schools or cultural center, etc.). From Figure 9 we can see that very few web pages contain information about other public institutions in the locality, which either functionally or formally are in close contact with the local councils and thus with the local community. Most frequently we found information about the medical dispensary and schools (27% and 24% respectively), but about the culture house there is information in only 8% of the cases.
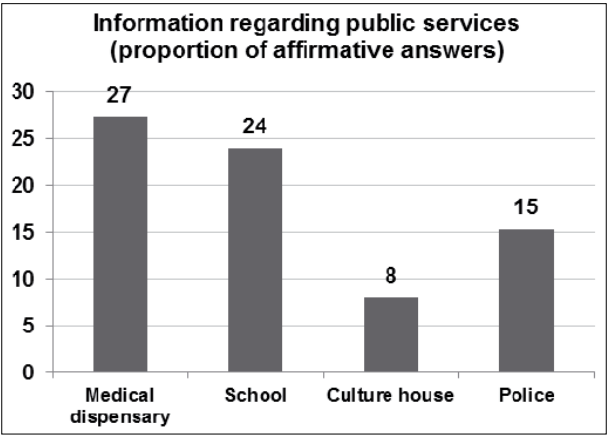
Figure 9: Information regarding public services
Source: Author's calculations

3. Conclusions

Starting from the objectives of the study we concluded that the majority of the local public authorities in the Szeklerland do not fully use the possibilities offered by the virtual environment, because besides the information of public interest, imposed by the legislation, they do not post on the websites information through which they could promote their image or the image of the locality. Thus, as a feed-

back to the first point of the present study, we have found that these public institutions are not very aware of the fact that virtual presence on the Internet is indispensable in the 21st century. The second objective of the study was the analysis of public interest information. Posting this information is also required by law. In this chapter, the results did not confirm our expectations, as the percentage of these posts was even lower than expected, so we came to the conclusion that in addition to the mayor's name in more than half of the cases, the local public authorities included in the study do not post on their website the public interest information required by law. The reason for this phenomenon is the fact that small localities in particular do not have sufficient and competent staff to handle these tasks, but also the laws do not provide for clear sanctions for those who do not post this information. For example, in the worst case, during verification, it will be made as a recommendation to post this information on the institution's website.

We paid a special attention to the translations into mother tongue, in our case in Hungarian. Based on the laws presented in the introduction (e.g., G.D. no. 1206/2001), each local public authority in the study should translate certain documents of public interest into Hungarian. From this perspective, we have come to the conclusion that the public institutions in the Szeklerland do not use their rights provided by the law regarding the posting of the Hungarian version of the documents and of the public information.

The third starting point was based on the explicit intention of the county councils to make the Szeklerland visible internationally. From this perspective, we have found that the percentage of general (not specific) information appearing in a language of international circulation is insignificant. In the vast majority of cases, useful information about tourist locations, cultural, artistic and gastronomic events organized in the area are not translated into an international language. In conclusion, the intention of the local public authorities to make Szeklerland visible internationally, can hardly be seen on their websites. In addition to this general conclusion, we also came to the following secondary conclusions: (1) The vast majority of localities (97.33%) have a website, but only 69% of them have a Hungarian version. (2) Of the websites analyzed, 82% contain a general overview of the locality, but only 17% of these presentations are also translated into an international language, which means that the vast majority of local public authorities do not perceive that the Internet can offer a global visibility for that locality. (3) On their websites, the local public authorities do not emphasize local information, as in only 50% of cases there are news of local interest, but also out of these, only 78% of them are more recent than 1 year. (4) Local elected leaders do not perceive the possibility of self-promotion offered by the institution's website. (5) The data received support the assumption that official documents regulating the functioning of institutions are usually treated superficially because these documents (ROF and ROI) not only

appear in very small proportions, but also their timeliness is questionable. (6) Very few web pages contain information about other public institutions in the locality, who either functionally or formally are in close contact with the local councils and thus with the local community.

4. Recommendations

Even if there is no perfect solution whereby all the lacks and shortcomings identified in the study can be removed, at the Transylvanian International Conference in Public Administration, 3rd edition, held in Cluj-Napoca, on November 16, 2018, together with the present public we have formulated a possible way to remedy this situation identified in the content of the web pages. Thus, we propose that the local public authorities in the Szeklerland should establish together a profile association that could perform the translation and publication tasks of local and public information. We believe that this association could be supported from small contributions. Participants also formulated the idea that college students could work in this association as well.

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New Public Governance – A Bridge Too Far? The Case of the Romanian Public Administration's Reform Strategy

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Abstract. Public administration reform efforts have a long history marked with different ideas, trends, concepts or models. In Romania the reform efforts were seen as a requirement for further goals (such as accession to the EU), inspired from outside (EU and other international institutions), as a strenuous process characterized by low coherence, with many changes of focus and accomplished mainly through enacting new legislation (Şandor and Tripon, 2008). At this stage for each component of public administration reform (sociopolitical governance, public policy governance, administrative governance, contract governance and network governance) we might find a mix of ideas, originating from Public Administration (PA), New Public Management (NPM) or New Public Governance (NPG), co-existing in the public discourse.

The goal of this article is to assess Romania's readiness to adopt NPG ideas and to identify the influencing factors based on a doctrinal content analysis of the Romanian Public Administration Reform Strategy.

In social sciences each new wave of thinking did not prevail entirely, always bringing something in addition to previous waves but without replacing them. It is hard to believe that NPG will be the exception. For Romania and other similar countries it is important to understand in what areas the ideas inspired by this theory are likely to lead to a better functioning of the public administration, how and under what conditions.

Keywords: Romanian public administration reform, new public governance, New Public Management, classical public administration.

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1. Introduction

Public administration reform efforts have a long history marked with different ideas, trends, concepts or models. Debates about reforms started in the mid-1960s (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011), but the path of reforms was different from country to country. Reforms challenged the classical Weberian model of public administration characterized by a clear separation between politics and administration, a great emphasis on rules and procedures (continuity, predictability), qualification, hierarchy of tasks and people (Minogue, 2001). In states dominated by classical public administration there is an excessive regulation regarding all public sector aspects – from recruiting and selection, remuneration, job description, qualification requirements while powerful central agencies will assure compliance with the rules (Schick, 1998). During the 1980s public administration reform measures targeted a more adequate response to citizens' needs seeking better services with less public spending. Since then the term NPM has been used often in the broader context of administrative reforms (Pollitt and Boukaert, 2011). Hood (1991) viewed NPM as a result of a 'marriage' between new institutional economics and business-type 'managerialism' in the public sector and enlisted the relevant components of this trend in public administration – professional management, explicit standards and measures of performance, output control, disaggregation, competition, and private sector styles of management. As Polllitt and Boukaert (2011) noted there was a dichotomist approach of NPM – based on principal-agent relationship ('make the managers manage') and a managerial approach ('let the managers manage').

In the field of public administration many theories were advanced, especially during the last twenty years, as a response to the New Public Management (NPM) movement. Some of them are unidimensional responses to NPM. The New Public Service (NPS) theory (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000) was built around responsiveness: Classical (or Old) Public Administration responds to clients and constituents; NPM to customers and NPS to citizens. The appeal for democratic values and citizenship was primarily a response to the neglect of those values by the NPM (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2015). Digital era governance was proposed by Dunleavy *et al.* (2006) to replace NPM based on the emergence of the new Information and Communication Technologies.

In some other cases, like the Neo-Weberian State theory, we have attempts to modernize traditional bureaucracy by making it more professional, efficient, and citizen-friendly (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011, p. 19).

The term New Public Governance (NPG) was introduced not as a theory or a doctrine but as an object of study, an existing reality (Toonen, 1998). There are many meanings and uses of governance but a common element refers to the involvement of many different actors (including citizens) in the decision-making and service delivery processes – plurality and pluralism (Osborne, 2006). Governance

implies the existence of different kind of networks – 'governance refers to governing with and through networks' (Rhodes, 2007, p. 1246). Nowadays, in the context of the government's necessity to cope with more and more complex issues, it is evident that the situation requires the involvement of more than one organization. Public governance involve the 'steering' of complex networks and government is a part of the 'steered system' (Kickert, 1997, p. 732, 736). Koppenjan and Koliba (2013) consider that NPG might be an umbrella term for governance innovations that might have little in common and instead of replacing other approaches will rather mix with classical public administration and New Public Management. Some authors are already trying to look beyond NPG (Bao *et al.*, 2012).

2. Romanian Public Administration Reform

A multitude of actors, sources and resources might trigger and shape a reform; some of the reasons that might influence these actors towards a reform are (Şandor and Tripon, 2008a):

1. The lack of trust of the citizenry in the public administration system. An increasingly pronounced drop in the level of trust of the citizens toward the governmental institutions led to a severe anti-bureaucratic rhetoric, as well as numerous critiques regarding the size of the governmental apparatus and the level of state-involvement into several aspects of the social and economic life.
2. Ideology. There is an important ideological dimension to the reform process. The start of the reform processes in many of the Western countries in the 1980s was prompted by the election of conservative leaders like Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan or Brian Mulroney.
3. Democratization. In Eastern Europe, the fall of communism generated a profound political reform accompanied by a complex public administration reform.
4. Integration into the European Union. The initial reforms in ex-communist countries were followed by a second wave of reforms required by the very process of integration into the EU.
5. Development. In less developed countries, economic growth was and still is the main priority. Under the influence of financial institutions such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (which consider reforms in various fields a necessary requirement for development), new and innovative ideas spread into the countries that were their clients.
6. Economic crises. The often inadequate response of many countries to crisis situations generates (sometimes unintentionally) reforms. As examples we can mention the less than successful attempts of the Western countries to manage the 1970s' crisis, the numerous crises faced by countries from Latin America in the 1990, the economic debacle encountered in Eastern Europe after the fall of the communist regimes and the last financial crisis of 2008-2012.

One can notice that there are many causes and combinations of factors that trigger any reform process, causes and factors that are both internal and external (financial institutions, EU, etc.) and that the public opinion and the political authorities begin to doubt the public administrative system's capability to administer and manage the crises of the past or the challenges of the future. In the specific case of Romania the fall of communism was the initial trigger, soon accompanied by the need of a response from the administrative system to the economic crisis that followed. The requests and conditionalities which accompanied the European integration were the decisive factors for the initiation of a more comprehensive and efficient reform (Hinţea, Şandor and Junjan, 2004). The budgetary reform of 2010 generated by the economic crisis was influenced by the International Monetary Fund and the European Union's demands, but also fueled by an ideological anti-bureaucratic discourse trying to capitalize on the growing distrust of citizens in the political and administrative system.

The objectives of the paper are:

1. To identify the doctrinal influences on the Romanian Public Administration Reform Strategy 2014-2020; and
2. To assess the extent of NPG adoption and to identify the factors influencing this process.

In order to assess which is the envisioned future situation of the Romanian public administration (in 2020) we should analyze the initial situation and the proposed trajectory (reform measures). Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011, p. 75) speak of reforms by using the term scenario – from a starting point or initial situation we have three basic elements: an initial situation, a trajectory and a future state or situation, all three being very important for the complete specification of the reform.
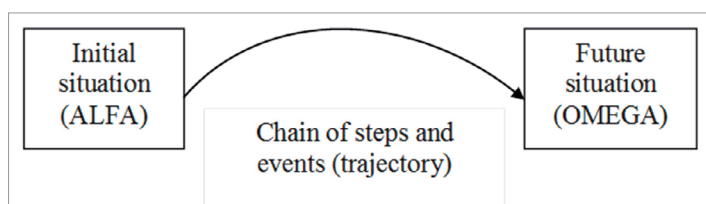
Figure 1: Reform trajectory

Source: Adapted after Politt and Bouckaert (2011, p. 76)

The initial state of the Romanian PA (2014) is a result of different waves of reform measures applied since the fall of communism, with different degrees of success (but without reaching a desired Omega situation). Before 1989 Romanian public administration was characterized by tight subordination, coordination and control from the Communist Party. Public administration institutions were just

executing party policies with tightly controlled resources (financial or human). Citizens, with restricted individual and collective rights were treated as subjects.

The first reforms focused on democratization, the re-establishment of a de-politicized administrative system, the re-introduction of local autonomy and administrative judicial review (Hinţea, Şandor and Junjan, 2004). The desired Omega state was extremely vague – Romania being willing to adhere to the Western model without taking into consideration the significant differences between the administrative systems in each country. The steps taken were hardly a part of a strategy, the reforms measures were oscillating between the re-establishment of pre-communist institutions and rules, and the import of new ones from the Occident.

The candidature towards EU membership brought a significant demand for new reforms. Europeanization (still not completely specified) was the new Omega. The trajectory comprised a large number of measures considering that only between 1994 and 2006 299 public administration reform measures were enacted (Şandor and Tripon, 2007, p. 103). The reform measures focused upon the establishment of a professional civil service, relationship with citizens, managerial, administrative and financial decentralization, human resource or cooperation with the community. Most of them were in fact improvements of already implemented reform measures.

There was (and still is) no clear trajectory – the reform process was very complicated, not very coherent, with many changes of focus according to the prevailing values of the moment. Each government wanted to put its mark upon the reform process, usually starting the process all over again and pointing it in a different direction. The perceived results were not satisfactory, especially for the citizens (Şandor and Tripon, 2008b), but also for the public servants (Şandor and Tripon, 2008a).

After the accession to the EU, without a higher or clear purpose to drive the administrative reform, Romania has witnessed mixed results regarding the evolution of the administrative capacity, similar to other CEE countries (Verheijen, 2007). For the period 2007-2013 the two main directions of reform were de-centralization and improvement of the policy making processes, both without significant results. Even a somewhat optimistic review of the NPM-inspired public administration reforms in Central and Eastern Europe found only that 'although the bulk of evidence would point to failure, some also find certain positive developments following reform' (Dan and Pollitt, 2015, p. 1312). More spectacular changes, even if controversial, were generated by an unplanned series of events – the financial crisis and the subsequent budgetary crisis had triggered a series of structural reforms mostly inspired by the IMF.

The chain of steps we will analyze is comprised of the reform measures from the Romanian Strategy for the Consolidation of the Public Administration (SCAP)

2014-2020, enacted in 2014. The strategy has four general objectives:

1. Adapting the structure and mandate of the PA to the citizens' needs and to financial resources;
2. Implementing a better management;
3. De-bureaucratization and administrative simplification; and
4. Consolidation of administrative capacity to ensure better quality and access to public services.

These objectives contain 16 specific objectives and will be reached through 57 reform measures. The strategy also proposes a vision of the future state (Omega). According to it, by 2020 the Romanian PA will be a participative and partnership-based administration offering high quality public services, common projects administration-society, predictable and pro-active, based on new instruments, tools and skills (Government of Romania, 2014). The three pillars of this new vision are:

1. Orientation towards the clients of the public services;
2. Openness towards new, innovative solutions; and
3. Simplification and consolidation of institutions and mechanisms based on better decision-making processes, professional human resources and financial management based on public interest.

3. The model – criteria for assessing doctrinal influences

According to Osborne (2010) the most influential concepts or theories in shaping reform strategies are (classical) Public Administration, New Public Management and New Public Governance.

In his original article Osborne (2006, p. 383) identified several elements of the NPG in order to differentiate it from PA and NPM. The main criteria for classification proposed by Osborne were theoretical roots of the three paradigms, nature of the state, the focus and emphasis of each NPG, PA and NPM, relationship to external (non-public) organizational partners, governance mechanism and value base. A few years later, in 2010, Osborne changed the terms of 'governance mechanism' with 'resource allocation mechanism' and 'relationship to external (non-public) organizational partners' with 'nature of the service system'. When analyzing Romanian Public Administration Reform Strategy 2014-2020 we sought doctrinal influences based on several questions or dimensions:

WHAT are the inspirational source theories of the measures comprised in the Reform Strategy? Political science and public policy theories are concerned with the organization, functioning and management of public sector (characterized by hierarchy, control and command, impartiality and neutrality of public servants) and with policy cycles within politico-administrative systems. The origins of NPM lie in public choice theory (rational choice to non-market decision making, Buchan-

an and Tullock, 1962) and management. Public choice theorists (Niskanen, 1971) have criticized the traditional bureaucratic model (considered inefficient due to the lack of direct connection between cost and the quality of service delivered) and they mostly exposed government failures. They started by the premise that people are motivated by self-interest; if there are no incentives for improving performance or efficiency why should one do so? Also, NPM insisted on private management style in the public sector.

NPG is rooted in network theory (as alternative to hierarchies and markets, Powell, 1990), policy networks (sets of formal and informal institutional linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared interests in public policymaking and implementation, Rhodes, 2007, p. 1244) and network governance theory. For Jones, Hesterly, and Borgati network governance refers to a select, persistent and structured set of autonomous organizations (private or non-profit) involved in service delivery through implicit and open-ended contracts that are socially, not legally, binding (1997, p. 914).

WHO makes the decisions and delivers the services? To what extend does the Romanian government want to involve other actors (private for-profit, non-profit) in decision-making and service delivery or does it prefer to remain the sole provider? We wanted to see from the proposed measures of the Strategy if the state remains the sole provider of services and decision-maker or if the involvement of more actors is sought. The central role of bureaucracy (as a category) in public service delivery is considered a main feature of PA (the state has a unitary nature) and subsequently there are strict set of rules guiding all the system; policy making and implementation are vertically integrated within the government. In NPM the role of state is mainly regulatory (disaggregated) meaning that independent organizations, in competition with each other, are the providers of public services and the state is regulating the competition/market. Disaggregation – along with competition and incentivization (Dunleavy *et al.*, 2006) – is at the core of NPM. Many critics questioned the appropriateness of disaggregation; post-NPM reforms were intended to increase political and institutional capacity of the state and the coordination in different ways like joined-up government, horizontal government, whole of government, integrating government (Christensen and Lægreid, 2007; Halligan, 2010). As a response to the NPM approach, NPG focuses on the relationship between the state and society and on citizens' engagement in service delivery. The state is considered plural and pluralist as independent actors, including non-profit organizations, private organizations and the government, often through public-private partnerships (Osborne, 2006), contribute to the delivery of public services (plural state) and many stakeholders are involved in the policy-making processes (pluralist state).

WHERE is the main focus of the administrative reform measures, at what level is the analysis conducted (the main locus)? Is it at the level of the entire political

system (macro-level), at the organizational level (micro-level) or at the meso-level, if one considers organizations to be open systems where the environment cannot be ignored? The macro-level focus is characteristic for classical public administration where the analysis is concerned with the relationships between politicians and public servants, the organizing and functioning of the public sector or policy cycle. An important feature of NPM lies in the separation of policy formulation and the operational processes through which the decision comes to life. Therefore, NPM's focus was shifted from macro-level to micro-level, on what happens in organizations and how one could assure better services with improved performance. In NPG the focus is centered on the organization in its environment (meso-level). Considering the multitude of diverse interdependent actors involved in service delivery, there is a shift of emphasis in NPG to a meso-level that reflects more than organizational processes and less than the entire system but 'the inter-organizational and interactive nature of contemporary public services provision' (Osborne, Radnor, and Nasi, 2013, p. 3). Although some authors argue that meta-level analysis is more appropriate in NPG, a level of analysis that provides a view of the 'overall direction or steering for society' (Barraket, Keast and Furneaux, 2016, p. 129) does not fit this criterion.

WHAT do we analyze in the WHERE context; which are the main processes targeted by the reform measures – policy creation and implementation in the political system, organizational management or negotiations of values, meanings and relationships? In the classical approach of public administration the emphasis is set on policy creation and implementation (Osborne, 2010). In this approach little attention is granted to policies' effect within society or the internal processes and mechanisms of public organizations through which the inputs are transformed into outputs. NPM-oriented reforms changed the attention toward organizations and organizational management by adopting private sector management style. Subsequently, the importance (and need) of control, evaluation, performance, audit, entrepreneurship and other elements of the NPM was enhanced. In NPG there is a shift of emphasis from inputs and outputs toward outcomes. In other words, performance and efficiency are good, but quality services that respond to citizens' needs are even better. The negotiations of values, meaning and relationships rise in the context of more heterogeneous networks where interdependent participants with different interests and resources have to negotiate and to exchange their resources in order to fulfill their interest (Börzel, 1997).

HOW are the resources allocated within the system? Hierarchies, markets and networks are used mostly in analyzing different types of coordination mechanisms (Thompson *et al.*, 1991). Nowadays there is a wide acceptance of the three modes of governance – hierarchical governance (characteristic to the Weberian state), market governance where public services are delivered through market type mechanisms that include outsourcing (contracting out), public-private partnerships or vouch-

ers and network governance where interdependent actors collaborate in specific fields (partnership, coproduction). In hierarchical forms of resource allocation characteristic to PA there are vertical dependency relationships between public organizations and government. Hierarchies, by nature, imply authority and rule following and are supposed to have the advantage of reliability and accountability (Powell, 1990).

In NPM the resources are allocated in a variable combination of competition between independent service units within horizontally organized markets (Osborne, 2010, p. 8). Accountability is assured through prices and performance based contracts. Inter-organizational networks as those described in NPG theories are working in a different way. Such networks are able to mobilize new resources (financial, material or human) supplementing the public resources and by doing so are in a position to negotiate the desired outcomes and the way in which resources are allocated. Accountability is negotiated at the inter-organizational and interpersonal level within the networks (Osborne, 1997).

WHO delivers the services? Does the Romanian Public Administration Reform Strategy 2014-2020 regard increasing competition on performance-based criteria, setting or consolidation networks or is it intended for the maintenance of state monopoly in service delivery? In PA the service system is closed; there is a state monopoly in providing services to individuals. A main question regards on how good these services were and if there is a way of getting better services with fewer funds? NPM tried to address this problem by involving other actors, private ones, in service delivery and stimulate competition through market type mechanisms. A main critique to NPM regarded the prescribed role of the individuals – as clients/costumers and not citizens or co-producers. In NPG the nature of the public services systems includes public service organizations (public, private, non-profit) but also service users, the community, other stakeholders and technology (Osborne and Radnor, 2016). The novelty of the approach is that the user is also a co-producer of the service. The delivery system is open to a wide range of actors but it is also closed because cooperation in networks is based on long-term relationships – so preferred suppliers (Osborne, 2006) have better chances to be included in such a network.

WHY? Which are the (supposed) values that influence the reform measures? The value base represents the thought system that stands behind the preferences for one or another type of theory. For PA it lies on the assumption of the superiority of the public sector for the implementation of public policy and the delivery of public services (Osborne, 2010, p. 8). Such a belief is rooted in the public service ethos or public service motivation, or 'the belief, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity and which induce through public interaction motivation for targeted action' (Vandenabeele, 2007, p. 547). The existence of such an ethos is deemed to

be necessary and sufficient for public services delivery. NPM has a different set of beliefs. The public servants are considered to be less dedicated to the public good. In public institutions, longevity and 'go with the flow' attitudes are valued instead of performance, creative leadership or imaginative problem-solving (Norris, 2004, p. 3). NPM followers believe in the efficacy of competition and of the marketplace and in the superiority of private sector managerial techniques. NPG acknowledges that the different actors involved in a network have different values. Osborne (2006) labeled the values base as neo-corporatist, but in 2010 he changed it into dispersed and contested, indicating that we have a mix of values that often request negotiations of meanings at inter-organizational and interpersonal level in order to make those networks functional.

4. Theoretical influences in the ALFA situation (2014)

After 1989 the functioning of the Romanian public administration was far from reaching the concept (and reality) of the bureaucratic (or classical) administration and the conditions for rapid Weberianization were less favorable than in the other CEE countries (Meyer-Sahling, 2009, p. 515). Considering the criteria described above, the 2014 state of Romanian public administration was:

1. The theoretical roots had changed in the last two decades from administrative law towards a classical PA with a influence of NPM;
2. The central government continued to be the main actor, all public institutions being heavily regulated;
3. The reform targeted the entire system (especially public servants);
4. The emphasis was on policy implementation;
5. The service system is closed – mainly state monopoly with private services being offered as a response to the failure of the state to provide enough services (education, health, social programs); and
6. Value base – the need for a public sector ethos is recognized.

5. Methodology

The method we used is content analysis, a seldom used measure in the study of the public administration. Fattore, Dubois and Lapenta (2012) found only 22 content analysis studies in 17 Public Sector Research Journals from 1980 to 2009.

The 57 measures proposed in the Romanian Strategy for the Consolidation of the Public Administration SCAP 2014-2020 were the analyzed cases. For each criterion described by Osborne (2010) we build three variables each indicating the correspondence with a specific paradigm. Scores were allotted as follows – a variable will take the value 1 if the measure belongs only to the corresponding paradigm,

0.5 if it belongs to more than this paradigm and 0 if there is no correspondence between the measure and the specific paradigm.

Below we have a short excerpt of the data. The columns represent the variables – for theoretical roots we defined three variables labeled PA, NPM and NPG (this continues for the next six criteria). For the first criterion the first measure has influences from PA and NPM and no influence from NPG, the second has only PA influences.

Table 1: Coding the data

Measure	Theoretical roots – PA	Theoretical roots – NPM	Theoretical roots – NPG	...
1.1.1 – Clear definition of the mandates of PA institutions	0.5	0.5	0	...
1.1.2 – Measures towards structural stability of PA institutions	1	0	0	...
...	...	...	...	...

Source: The authors

The process of coding the data was rather complicated by the fact that the measures were presented in various manners – some of them rather briefly, others *in extenso*, even with references to other strategies (like the anti-corruption or the e-government strategies). In some cases the proposed measures had several sub-measures, with quite different sources of inspiration, which made the analysis more difficult.

Identifying doctrinal influences was not an easy task as there are no clear-cut distinctions between the paradigms (as an 'ideal' model does not exist), at least for some points/ criteria. For example, contracting out services or public-private partnerships might be an important feature in NPG also, not only in NPM; moreover, performance measurement represents an important element in all types of public administration reforms (Pollitt and Boukaert, 2011). In order to make a clear distinction we have to go in-depth, to analyze all the necessary elements.

In the case of a specific objective like 2.4 from the SCAP, related to e-government, the tendency would have been to consider it as NPM-influenced (especially because it is connected with the general objective concerned with better management). Homburg and Bekkers (2005) warned against the fallacy of a univocal marriage between New Public Management and e-government. Different trajectories for the implementation of e-government may lead to different ends – some towards enforcing a classical public administration, others more in line with New Public Management reforms and others more similar to New Public Governance. In order to establish the influences upon an electronic government reform measure we should take a closer look at all the proposed features.

Each author rated the strategy independently. Out of 1197 values (57 measures x 3 paradigms x 7 criteria) that were assigned by each of us in 827 (69.08%) there was rather agreement. The remaining 370 values were jointly discussed and agreed upon.

6. OMEGA – results

The overall analysis shows that the main source of inspiration for the Strategy is Public Administration, closely followed by the New Public Management. New Public Governance lags behind. The declared vision of the Strategy would have suggested a NPG and NPM like mix – NPG for the role of the society in administration and NPM in terms of management.
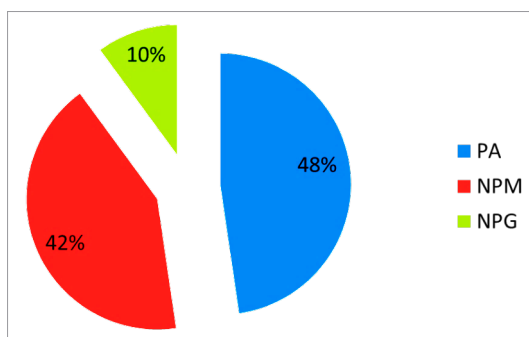

Figure 2: Overall theoretical influences on the Strategy
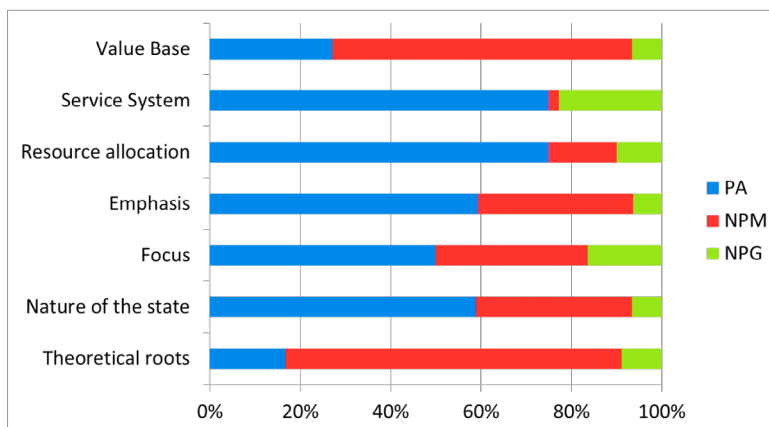**Source:** The authors

Figure 3: Theoretical influences for each criterion
Source: The authors

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We can see that classical public administration is present through its conservative strand: resource allocation is hierarchical, the monopoly on service delivery is not threatened, and the state keeps its role as decision maker and provider of services. The strategy is focused on the political system with an emphasis on policy implementation. The New Public Management is highly influential on the language (theoretical roots) and on the value base (after several years of bureaucracy bashing). The smallest influence is on the service system. The New Public Governance starts to be considered as a possible alternate way of delivery and the environment plays a more important role. Still, the involvement of other stakeholders is seen mainly as a form of consultation.

The theoretical influences differ from one general objective of the Strategy to the other.
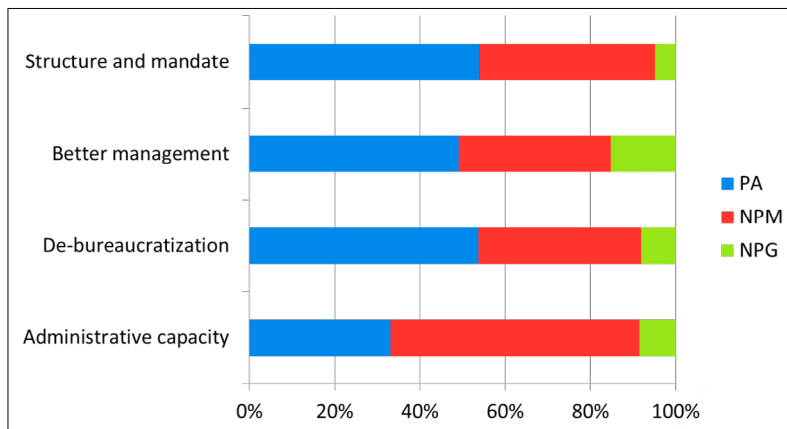
Figure 4: Theoretical influences for each objective of the Strategy
Source: The authors

The first objective of the Strategy is mainly related to de-centralization seen from the point of view of classical PA with influences from NPM regarding the use of specific tools. Networks and dialogues (NPG influence) are involved only in the consultation phases. The second objective (better management) should have been more NPM-like, but it is implemented in a unitary and centralized way. In here we also have measures regarding professionalization of public servants or ethics (which belong rather to PA). The NPG component may be found in the support for the association of local institutions and in encouraging other stakeholders to get involved in ethics and e-government. The third objective is NPM-like, but is also implemented in a unitary and centralized way. The fourth objective, regarding administrative capacity, is seen in terms of quality management, financial management, managerial culture, monitoring and evaluation (NPM). The stated

goals were quality and access to public services, but in the discussion about access, stakeholders are mostly neglected.

Through this reform strategy the Romanian government wanted to reform the public administration by adopting NPM-like tools in a classical public administration environment and mindset. A possible reason is that the reform strategy was developed by experts, with EU support and without political consultations. The participative dimension – the NPG-like part of the strategy – is mainly about consultation without really creating the necessary networks and creating co-production possibilities. The eclectic approach of the reform in Romania is not unique for Central and Eastern European countries. Hajnal and Rosta (2016), analyzing the regional and local public administration reforms in Hungary, also found a mix of doctrines (NPM, NPG and Neo-Weberian State), with low emphasis on NPG. The difference is that in Hungary a rather strong original component was identified which the authors attribute to a possible 'illiberal' vision.

7. Is Romania prepared for NPG?

The analysis of the actual reform strategy showed that NPG is present in the desired state or the vision but the measures proposed to reach that visions are not aligned with the goal. One of the possible reasons might be related to the preparedness for the new public governance. In order to assess this we might review the existing state in the light of Osborne's seven criteria.

A country may move towards NPG when having the proper theoretical roots. But, as discussed before, the theoretical roots of existing reforms come from classical public administration and New Public Management. NPG ideas are not present even in the schools of public administration (which are supposed, at least some of them, to be able to be ahead of the existing situation). An analysis of the curricula of Romanian public administration programs proves that we have a mix of law and management, with some schools moving towards management (Şandor and Creţa, 2015). Governance is rarely taught, and mainly in the context of EU-governance or of Inter-Governmental Relations.

The nature of the state is unitary and the perspective for a plural and pluralist state is rather dim we have several political parties, democracy, etc. In several areas state and other (non-profit and for profit organizations) public services providers do exist but there is little or no collaboration and, in certain cases, we have a strong competition for resources. With regard to the decision-making processes, there is little input from outside the political system. The national culture has a deep impact on this. Inglehart (2007, p. 18) found that Romania has a culture with mostly traditional and survival values which positions the country at one extreme of CEE countries, quite close to countries from South Asia. Such a culture has strong implications on the level and type of democracy – less democratic and less pluralistic.

Also, another consequence is that civil society may lack the strength to be a partner in decision-making processes – in the Civicus Civil Society Index (2009) we find average scores on all dimensions for Romania.

The focus for reform measures is still at the level of the political system and it is likely to remain there as Romania and some other CEE countries may face a democratic crisis as Blokker (2014) or Meka (2016) are warning. Without a stable and functioning political system the problems related to inter-organizational service processes and outcomes will be largely neglected.

The capacity of the Romanian government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies is ranked by the Worldwide Governance Indicators 2016 to be only slightly above world average so the emphasis on policy creation and implementation will remain central and services processes and outcomes will be considered only in the context of improving policy making and not as negotiations of values, meaning and relationships as Osborne (2010) suggests.

In the framework of NPG trust, relational capital and relational contracts serve as the core governance mechanisms (Osborne, 2006) but the level of trust between different public institutions is rather low (Şandor and Tripon, 2008a), the relations between different stakeholders are very often seen as being suspect in the light of the anti-corruption efforts. As a consequence, the resource allocation mechanism is likely to remain hierarchical.

The state is the main provider of public services not only because of the willingness of the political system to maintain the monopoly, but also because the dominant traits of the national culture (Inglehart, 2007, pp. 21-22) are, on one hand, leading to the expectation that the state has to provide those public services and, on the other hand, hindering the involvement of citizens in the co-production of public services.

From the values point of view we might have several factors that might influence the adoption of NPG. Fattore, Dubois and Lapenta (2012), analyzing the political programs of candidates in the Italian regional elections from 2005, showed that NPG ideas are more likely to be held by center-left candidates while center-right candidates are more inclined to NPM. In Romania the electorate is mostly left-leaning about economic matters and conservative regarding social aspects (Burean and Popp, 2015) – thus providing little support for a new vision on governance. The existing public sector ethos seems to be rather weak. We do not have knowledge of studies regarding the level of PSM in Romania but there is a strong possibility that we might have a low one as it is the case in other CEE countries (Vandenabeele and Van de Walle, 2008). Creţa and Şandor (2011) found that PSM-related needs are ranked only 15th out of 20 different needs of the public servants. The motivation of public servants is based on other factors. Creţa and *Şandor* (2011), Cristescu, Stănilă and Andreica (2013), as well as Ciobanu and Androniceanu (2015) consider that public servants motivation is based on extrinsic factors: pay and other benefits related to

public service and organizational climate. There is a strong need for the establishment of a strong public sector ethos – the perceptions of a widespread corruption among public servants and the weak performance of public services are strongly demanding such a tool. The hegemony of the public sector in the field of public services is grudgingly accepted while acceptance for a dispersed value base is not accepted as public interest is considered in a collectivistic national culture as being unique.

NPG is a product of and a response to the increasingly complex, plural and fragmented nature of public policy implementation and service delivery (Osborne, 2010, p. 9), a product and a possible response for a more mature stage of societal development than the one existing in Romania. While another vision on governance may seem appealing, path dependency should be taken into consideration. A NPG-like overall approach would not work for Romania and SCAP is (voluntary or not) realistic in its measures, if not in vision. Still, NPG offers important contributions especially related to inter-organizational relations and citizens engagement (Robinson, 2015, p. 14), areas in which countries like Romania have a deficit. A reform strategy should include measures focused on the improvement of these issues, measures adapted to the existing realities and adopted only when there is enough support for them; otherwise Romania will have only new forms without content.

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Uncertainty and Resistance to Change in Romanian Local Public Institutions: A Possible Connection

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Abstract. In mature societies, public institutions should be a pillar of stability. In CEE countries in general, and particularly in Romania, prolonged uncertainty at the social level led to discontinuous public administration reform efforts which undermined the stability of this sector. The problem of uncertainty is central to any organization's response towards change; it shapes its policies and its culture and models its employees' behavioral patterns. It also generates specific types and levels of resistance to change.

The paper is based on theoretical models regarding resistance to change (Leigh, Coch and French; Lewin; Kotter and Schlesinger) proposing a different approach – a model that intends to predict and analyze the level of resistance to change of an organization based on several organizational denominators. In other words, we will analyze resistance to change and the manner in which certain variables (like organizational culture, leadership, organizational structure, intra-organizational conflicts, motivation, planning) influence this concept.

The research was made on public servants from 6 Romanian local public institutions (one City Council and one City Hall from 3 different counties) in an attempt to include and study the influence of extraneous factors upon resistance to change. The survey was based on a questionnaire and included 294 subjects from the above-mentioned institutions.

Keywords: organizational change, resistance to change, uncertainty, goals, organizational structure, work, motivation, communication in organizations, organizational culture, leadership, conflict and conflict management.

1. Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to study resistance to change within Romanian public institutions. In other words, our aim is to test a model that will allow us to evaluate/ measure the level and type of resistance to change of any organization according to several organizational characteristics.

Our specific objectives refer to a. the interaction between resistance to change and nine organizational characteristics and b. the relation between resistance to change and uncertainty. The nine characteristics were selected based on the contemporary prevalent theories that postulate a clear connection between these organizational attributes and the phenomenon of resistance to change.

Implementing any organizational change is met by and generates a host of problems. One of them, maybe the most important, is resistance to change. All organizational changes, no matter how well thought-out and implemented, produce a certain amount of resistance to change.

First let us define the concept. According to Andrew Leigh resistance to change is 'any behaviour that aims at preserving the status-quo against the pressure that tries to modify it' (1997, p. 69). We selected this definition because, although there are other, more complex ones in the literature, it is general and simple enough to include all the others.

It goes without saying that the literature approaches the phenomenon of resistance to change within and in close conjecture with the organizational change framework. From Coch and French's famous study in 1948 these organizational processes were the main topic for a whole plethora of authors; we mention here only a few of them – Lewin (1951), Leavitt (*apud* Androniceanu, 1998), Golembiewski (1993), French and Bell (1999), Burke (2009), Lawrence (1969), Shephard (*apud* King and Anderson, 1995), DuBrin (1974), Kotter and Schlesinger (*apud* Jones, 2013), Leigh (1997), King and Anderson (1995), Cummings and Worley (2009). The main research topics focused on the causes of resistance to change and the ways of overcoming it. Our research targets the first aspect in an attempt to identify certain organizational dimensions that generates, influence and explain resistance to change.

The theoretical foundation of our approach consists of the theoretical models of A. Leigh (1997) and Ramnarayan and Tao (2011). Leigh (1997, p. 72) considers that there are no less than 13 sources for this phenomenon:

1. The desire not to lose something of value;
2. Historical factors – experience with other changes;
3. The way the change is presented and implemented;
4. Misunderstandings regarding the nature of change and its consequences – lack of information; the change it is not considered as beneficial;
5. The belief that the change does not make sense for the organization;

6. Uncertainty about the freedom of doing things differently;
7. Lack of experience in terms of decision implementation;
8. Lack of experience in implementing change;
9. The existing psychological and social links about how the organization currently looks and behaves; strong group norms;
10. The general condition of satisfaction with "the way things are now";
11. The attitude of unions;
12. Frustration caused by the complex change issues; fear of uncertainty; and
13. The management wants change, so resist it!

A careful analysis of this model points to the fact that, in reality, all its 13 elements can be reduced to two great categories: objective/ rational sources and non-rational, subjective sources.

This statement is supported by Ramnarayan and Tao (2011, pp. 45-54), also, who consider that there are three main types of resistance to change, according to the forces/sources that generate them:

1. Cognitive resistance to change. This form appears when the organizational change is not explained well enough, therefore its targets do not comprehend the necessity for altering the present status-quo nor the goals and consequences that will be attained through or will stem from the change. Of course, we are talking here about a deficient communication process and a lack of effort in preparing the groundwork for the planned change.

2. Emotional resistance to change. This form appears when the persons involved in the change have an emotional attachment toward things that will be altered by the change – they do not want to lose something they perceive as valuable for them. Another situation that falls under this category refers to the instances when the change recipients feel that the change is too radical, too big – the efforts to accommodate with the ensuing status quo are perceived to be too great. Summarizing, this type of resistance manifests itself when the subjects are either too emotionally attached to certain aspects of the organizational reality that are to be changed or when the fear/ apprehension they feel toward the change exceeds a certain level and generates a sentiment of uncertainty within the employees.

3. Individual-oriented resistance to change. It occurs when the participants do not trust the change agents. It is possible that they do not have a problem with the change process *per se* but with the individual(s) that are in charge of it. This attitude can be the result of a generalized lack of trust in the management of that organization, it can be based on previous negative experiences with those persons, or simply based on personal reasons. This latter type of resistance is the most difficult to control and overcome.

The other concept that we employ in our analysis is uncertainty. For Groves (2010, p. 17), uncertainty is „the failure of the interpretive tools we use to manage our passage from the past and present into the future". Uncertainty is also perceived as the reaction to ambiguous new stimuli, being responsible for conflicting conditions, or anxiety experienced in uncertain situations (Gray and McNaughton 2003).

Uncertainty is the vulnerability to loss, self-doubt or experiences which make no sense to us, and in general it comes in two broad forms (Marris, 2004):

– subjective uncertainty (the breaking of attachments) and objective uncertainty (the indeterminacy of the future).

As a comment, one can observe the similarities with the resistance to change – it also has two main categories, objective resistance and subjective resistance.

Uncertainty is different from the risk because the risk can be predicted or even calculated. Resilience in the face of uncertainty depends very much on networks of attachment and on what the future might hold. Once can say that uncertainty is the sentiment generated by risky and undefined situations and it can be managed through individual strategies (reciprocity, withdrawal) and institutional strategies (autonomy, reciprocity, withdrawal).

2. The theoretical model

Our model intends to appraise the phenomenon of organizational resistance to change by analyzing its relation with certain organizational characteristics. Andrew Leigh considers there are 13 causes that can generate resistance to change. Carefully analyzing them one can observe that they can be grouped in two main categories: objective/rational causes and subjective/non-rational causes. Therefore, we considered that resistance to change (ORC – overall resistance to change) is comprised of two processes: SRC (subjective resistance to change) and RRC (rational resistance to change). In a previous research it was proved that Leigh's 13 factors are not clear for the respondents and there was an overlap among several of them so, in order to reduce the confusion, we employed only 10 questions (5 per each type of resistance).

A few words about our model: the majority of its factors are endogenous, within the organization itself. But it is obvious that resistance to change is influenced by other factors too, factors that exist outside the organization. One of the problems we encountered was how to identify and isolate these exogenous factors. What we did was to include in the model some cultural, social and demographic characteristics and to choose our public institutions from three counties (Cluj, Satu-Mare and Covasna) that have different ethnic and cultural traits, the assumption being that there will be significant differences in accordance to these criteria.

Another factor we studied in an indirect manner is the organization's size. Shortly, this is our theoretical model:

ORC= f (G, W, OS, OC, L, C, Sz., M, Com., Ex.), where:

ORC – Overall resistance to change (comprised of Subjective and Rational resistance to change)

G   – Goal

W   – Nature of work

OS   – Organizational structure (with its components formalization, complexity and centralization)

OC   – Organizational culture (with its 5 components according to Hofstede)

L   – Leadership

C   – Conflict

Sz.   – Size

M   – Motivation

Com. – Communication

Ex – Exogenous factors – social, economic and demographic variables

The theories that our model is upon are as follows – Robbins – G and OS (Robbins, 1996), Hackman, Lawler and Oldham – W (*apud* Jex and Britt, 2008), Hofstede – OC (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005), Blake and Mouton – L (*apud* Cole, 2004), Shephard – C (*apud* Morgan, 2006), Hatch and Robbins – Sz. (Robbins, 1996; Hatch, 2006), Latham – M (*apud* Rice and Cooper, 2010), McShane and Von Glinow – Com. (McShane and Von Glinow, 2009).

3. Methodology

The method we employed was the survey, with a questionnaire as its instrument. Sample: six public institutions (3 city-halls and 3 county councils) from 3 counties (Cluj, Satu-Mare, Covasna). 100 questionnaires were distributed to each institution and we received back 294. Timeline: 2012-2013. The questionnaire is comprised of 95 items; the first 83 are questions related to our organizational dimensions and the last 12 are identification questions. For the first 95 items we employed a Lickert scale with 5 response options. The value of each dimension is the mean for all the composing items. Additionally, we were interested in the relationship between ORC and uncertainty.

4. Data analysis

First we will present an overall image of the data. Table 1 includes the values for each dimension for each institution. As one can observe, there is little variance even if there are some significant differences for some dimensions.

No.	Dimension	City Hall Cluj	County Council Cluj	City Hall Sf. Gheorghe	County Council Covasna	City Hall Satu Mare	County Council Satu Mare	Total
1	G	3.6872	3.5660	3.7810	3.7929	3.4687	3.7771	3.6616
2	CX	3.2770	2.9279	3.2619	3.2682	3.2636	3.2778	3.2049
3	M	3.4084	2.9937	3.3995	3.1195	3.2381	3.4063	3.2371
4	CONF	2.7762	2.7296	2.7480	2.7284	2.9576	2.7476	2.7863
5	CENT	2.9514	3.0231	2.9227	3.0963	3.0857	2.9389	3.0136
6	ORC	2.7543	2.9882	2.9302	3.0643	3.0585	2.9143	2.9726
7	SRC	2.8154	3.0453	3.0000	3.0182	3.0444	2.8588	2.9797
8	RRC	2.7400	3.0220	2.9463	3.0418	3.0540	2.8794	2.9691
9	FORM	3.4270	3.1882	3.2651	3.1529	3.1057	3.5143	3.2526
10	COM	3.5090	3.2778	3.3016	3.1458	3.0303	3.3429	3.2446
11	IND	2.8446	2.6934	2.6369	2.6273	2.7454	2.8472	2.7220
12	FEM	3.1786	3.1346	3.1607	3.1528	3.1429	3.0139	3.1336
13	UNC	2.7297	2.6765	2.8721	2.8318	2.9727	2.7574	2.8145
14	PD	3.1014	3.0755	3.0061	2.9861	3.1000	3.0588	3.0538
15	ORI	3.4189	3.5337	3.6786	3.6455	3.3929	3.5500	3.5361
16	W	3.2410	3.2113	3.5571	3.4370	3.2892	3.5706	3.3686
17	PL	3.3590	3.3037	3.2318	3.0655	3.1143	3.4167	3.2282
18	TL	3.6154	3.7308	3.5524	3.5491	3.3750	3.8625	3.5880

Source: The authors

The first thing that Table 1 shows us is that there are no differences among the institutions. Therefore, we can conclude that the influence of exogenous factors – social, economic and demographic variables – is almost non-existent. The three counties have different ethnic structures, economic development, levels of quality of life but their scores are similar nonetheless. Thus, our initial assumption is contradicted by the data. Figure 1 presents the values of resistance to change (ORC) we obtained for the whole sample.

The mean for this dimension – 2.97 is close to the theoretical mean (3.00) which indicates that we have only a moderate level of resistance or, in other words, an ambivalent attitude toward change of the public servants. We must note the grouping of the data alongside the mean, a curved distribution (high curving – Kurtosis 1.927) and the standard deviation is quite small. A possible explanation is the fact that public servants are a homogenous population, despite the fact that they work in different institutions and locations, fact supported also by Table 1.
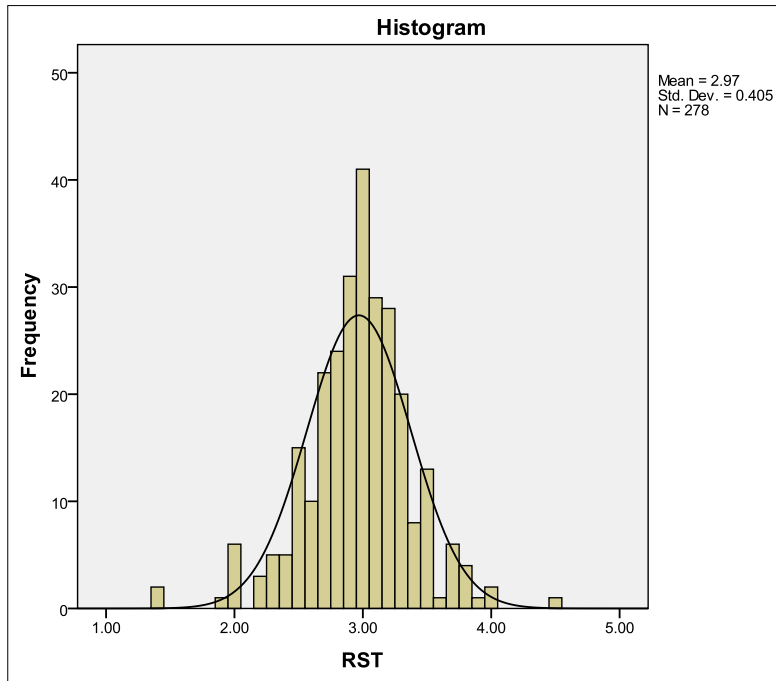
Figure 1: The values of resistance to change
Source: The authors

Table 2: The hierarchy of the ORC items

No.	Item	Mean
1	Changes are not well explained	3.1541
2	We do not want to lose something of value to us	3.1345
3	Uncertainty – can we make things differently?	3.1190
4	Change brings bad consequences	3.0306
5	Our experience with change is a negative one	3.0172
6	I am pleased with the present status-quo.	2.9966
7	Change brings uncertainty.	2.9450
8	Change agents do not have experience.	2.9116
9	The union is opposed to change.	2.7163
10	The management wants change – resist it!	2.6928

Source: The authors

The most important source for resistance to change is perceived to be the way in which changes are explained, which corresponds with both theories that we based our approach on. In the field of public administration, the vast majorities of changes

are top to bottom processes and are in the shape of orders emitted by the superiors. This being said what is surprising is the relative low value for this item only 3.15.

The second most important source is perceived to be the desire to not lose something we value – possible explanation the changes the PA system recently underwent through. The third source is about the lack of autonomy that the majority of public servants have at their workplaces, because of all the rules and procedures.

An interesting fact is the position of items 5 and 6, which, according to logic, should be the main sources for resistance to change. Possible explanation: the previous changes did not have major or important outcomes (neither negative nor positive) and the public servants are not particularly attached to their present situation but they do not hate it too much either (...).

We have to point out that there is no clear grouping of these items in accordance to SRC or RRC; as a consequence, the means for the two dimensions are similar.

The theoretical model proposed is a significant one in explaining ORC. However, its explanatory power is very low ($R^2 = 0.129$).

The following will analyze correlations that exist between the 9 dimensions of our theoretical model and ORC. Table 3 points out that only 5 dimensions have a statistically significant correlation with ORC: Uncertainty avoidance, Communication, Long term orientation, Person oriented leadership and Goal. Pearson coefficients being at most 0.244 are indicating weak correlations.

Table 3: The correlations between ORC and the 9 dimensions

	RST		
	Pearson Correlation	**Sig. (2-tailed)**	**N**
UA	.244	.000	262
COM	-.158	.010	262
LTO	.148	.017	262
PL	-.142	.018	276
G	-.140	.020	274
M	-.087	.157	269
CONF	.074	.235	259
F	.073	.244	257
W	.071	.244	272
CENT	.062	.316	265
FEM	.020	.744	261
PD	-.016	.798	259
CX	.014	.824	264
IND	-.011	.864	263
TL	.010	.876	270

Source: The authors

The direction of the correlations is in accordance with the majority of the literature (Lewin, 1951; Golembiewski, 1993; Greiner *apud* Cummings, 2009; Kotter-Schlesinger *apud* Jones, 2013; Greiner *apud* Cummings 2009).

Table 4: The significant correlations between ORC and items of the 9 dimensions

No.	Item	ORC	
		Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	A quiet life is important	.325*	0
2	Information is a rare resource	.251*	0
3	**It is hard to work with someone from a different department (CX).**	**.187***	**0.002**
4	Long term benefits are extremely important	.177*	0.004
5	**I am usually consulted by my superior (PD).**	**.157***	**0.01**
6	Traditions must be uphold.	.154*	0.012
7	**We must maintain a harmonious workplace no matter the costs (IND).**	**.150***	**0.013**
8	Nothing is more important for my boss than the team	-.147*	0.014
9	**Conflicts are solved only if the boss intervenes (Conf).**	**.146***	**0.015**
10	**Labor division according to objectives (CX).**	**-.142***	**0.018**
11	**My work demands creativity (W).**	**.142***	**0.018**
12	The employees have their priorities straight.	-.140*	0.019
13	**We have many conflicts in our organization (Conf).**	**.139***	**0.021**
14	**We have a standard work (F).**	**.137***	**0.025**
15	**We are content with our chances of promotion (M)**	**-.124***	**0.041**
16	**I consult my bosses for everything (Cent).**	**.122***	**0.046**
17	**Flexible labor division (CX)**	**-.120***	**0.046**

Source: The authors

At another level of analysis, we observe that only 17 items are significantly correlated with ORC (see Table 4). The items that are presented in bold-format were not present in Table 3. As we can observe, the majority of them refer to the organizational structure, underlining its importance for the resistance to change process.

The following paragraphs will discuss uncertainty and its relationship with ORC. We tried to compute a composite indicator for uncertainty based on the items used in the questionnaire. Items related to uncertainty were included (or dropped) after a reliability analysis. The uncertainty scale resulted has an alpha Cronbach of 0.701 – acceptable. The items and their means are presented in the following table.

Table 5: The uncertainty items

	N		Mean
	Valid	Missing	
New ideas must not be suppressed	289	5	4,0173
The goals must be clear	293	1	3,8328
I prefer to be level-headed in my actions	290	4	3,7621
One must never break the rules	281	13	3,6441
Our work environment is comfortable	291	3	3,5704
You can be a good manager without knowing everything	280	14	3,4536
Conflicts are solved through recourse to regulations	277	17	3,4296
Success means obeying the rules	282	12	3,4220
I can easily obtain the information I need	280	14	3,2750
Our work is standardized	278	16	3,2662
It is easy to get information from other departments	282	12	3,1489
The rules cover all the situations	281	13	3,0819

Source: The authors

We can see that Romanian public servants actually do not consider that new ideas may bring incertitude, consider that they have clear defined objectives, prefer to act in a prudent manner, do not like to break the rules and rely on them for success, conflict solving task accomplishment and to deal with all kind of situations. Uncertainty is close to the mean also in informational terms: they have most of the information they need, even from other departments.

We tried to see the relationship between the new constructed indicator and indicators of resistance to change (total, affective and rational) – except a very small correlation with affective resistance to change there are no significant correlations.

Uncertainty has a distribution closely following the normal curve (see figure below). The mean of the distribution is close to the theoretical mean (36.00).

The relationship between uncertainty and change was investigated also as a possible source of resistance to change. As we see in the figure below such a relationship is considered to be a strong one by a small minority – only 7.56% totally agreed that change brings uncertainty. 25.09% agreed with this statement, while the rest do not see a connection between change and uncertainty.
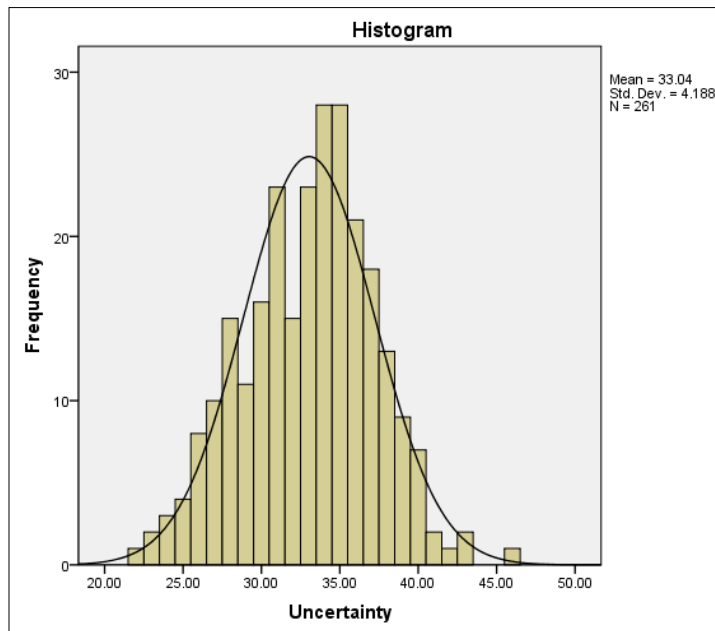
Figure 2: The distribution of uncertainty items
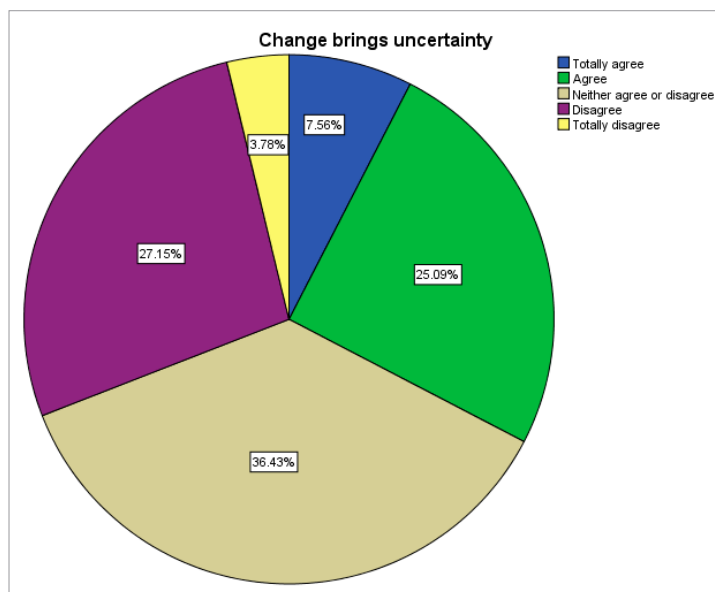**Source:** The authors

Figure 3: The relationship between uncertainty and change
Source: The authors

5. Conclusions

First, based on the data we analyzed, there are very few (and small) differences between the 6 organizations we studied. This means that the region's ethic, cultural and social composition does not affect the functioning of these public institutions – thus, the exogenous factors from our model seem to have little effect upon ORC.

The level of ORC for all our organizations is around the mathematical mean which tells us that organization size is not having an effect on ORC, either. Another important conclusion: we registered quite homogenous results for all our organizational characteristics (including ORC). The data suggests very little difference between the public institutions we studied, the similarities being greater than the differences which can suggest that we are faced with a common organizational behavior, specific to the sector (public administration). In this context the particular organizational characteristics do not count for much.

Regarding our postulated influence of the 9 organizational dimensions on the resistance to change we found out that the factors that exert the most influence are goals, organizational culture, organizational structure, communication and leadership. The factors with the least influence are the exogenous factors. The level of uncertainty rather low (as proven by data in Table 5) and, contrary to our initial expectations, there are no significant relationships between uncertainty and resistance to change.

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The Third Force of Improving Rural Development in China. Case Study of the Phelex Foundation

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Abstract. Rural poverty has existed and constrained the social and economic development in China. Improving the rural education could change the imbalance of resources and the shortage of government investment, and could recover the lagging conditions of running a school. However, the government and markets cannot fully improve the severe situations in China. In the era of globalization, the third force – non-governmental organizations (NGO) – has merged as a complementary actor and provided solutions. The International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) is considered an important part of the global civil society, serving multiple functions such as increasing effectiveness, promoting a sustainable development, and enhancing the ability of disadvantaged group, etc. Based on the 'New' Modes of Governance and the Areas of limited statehood, (I)NGO as one of the new modes of governance, provides public service in the limited statehood. This article analyzes the operation mode of the foundation. How the three resources such as community, government and social resources work together? How the foundation plays a complementary role, thereby improving the educational development level? The recommendations to the further development of NGOs in China are highlighted in the last section of the paper.

Keywords: China, rural education, NGO, government, development.

1. Introduction

Poverty has always existed and cannot be ignored in the process of national development, and rural poverty is a top priority. Since the founding of China, the problem of rural poverty has been particularly acute, and this has seriously constrained China's economic and social development to a better and faster pace. Properly resolving the problem of rural poverty will not only solve the problem of food and clothing for the poor, avoid riots, and maintain stability, but will also be conducive to the implementation of the state's major policies. The revitalization and development of the rural areas need to lay a solid foundation for education. Rural education is the focus of education in contemporary China. However, the current situation of rural education is still rather severe. For example, shortage of government investment, the conditions for running a school are lagging behind, and teachers have a heavy workload, etc.

In the context of globalization, the double failures of the state government and markets in certain areas have spawned the rise of the third sector's forces. They respond to the needs of society and provide various service functions that the government and the market cannot provide. The influence of the field has become more and more widespread. The activities carried out by non-governmental organizations have transcended the limits of national boundaries and are carried out in a broader context. They have become an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) and are considered as an important part of the global civil society. NGOs and all sectors of society in China jointly promote the diversification of poverty reduction. They are committed to continuously responding to the challenges of poverty, improving the effectiveness of anti-poverty, and enhancing the ability of the disadvantaged group and promoting the sustainable development.

This article takes the concrete work of the Phelex Foundation's participation in rural education in the remote and backward regions of China, as an example to analyze the operation mode of the foundation. How the foundation plays a complementary role, thereby improving the educational development level? Last but not least, the problems faced by NGOs in China are analyzed.

2. Theoretical background – 'new' modes of governance and the areas of limited statehood

Thomas Risse mentions that 'areas of limited statehood belong to internationally recognized states (even Somalia still commands international sovereignty), it is their domestic sovereignty which is severely circumscribed […] in other words, areas of limited statehood concern those parts of a country in which central authorities (governments) lack the ability to implement and enforce rules and decisions and/or in which the legitimate monopoly over the means of violence is lacking,

at least temporarily. Areas of limited statehood can be parts of the territory (e.g., provinces far away from the national capital), but they can also be policy areas (e.g., the inability to implement and enforce environmental laws)' (Risse, 2010). An example of territory is China. It has 23 provinces, 5 municipalities and 4 municipalities directly under the central government. The imbalance of economic equality and resource allocation between coastal region and inland region leads to the extreme disparity between the rich and the poor. Besides, China is characterized as one of 'newly' industrializing countries which creates deficits in local areas and/ or in certain policy areas (Figure 1) (Risse and Lehmkuhl, 2006).

	Monopoly on use of force and ability tu enforce decisions	Countries or areas investigated by Research Center (SFB) 700
'Failing' or 'failed' states	missing	Afghanistan Columbia Congo Nigeria Tajikistan
'Weak' states in transition countries or developing societies	Serious deficits	Argentina Armenia Azerbaijan Georgia India Indonesia Mexico Pakistan
'Newly' industrializing countries	Deficits in local areas and/or in certain policy areas	Brazil China South Africa South Korea
Colonial and semi-colonial areas	Varying degrees of deficits in colonial governments' ability to enforce decisions in local areas and/or certain policy areas	British colonies in North America French colonies in North America German colonies Japanese colonies 19th century China

Figure 1: Areas of limited statehood
Source: Risse and Lehmkuhl (2006)

Governance has three basic structural dimensions, the so called 'governance by government', 'governance with government' and 'governance without government' (Benz *et al.*, 2007; Czempiel and Rosenau, 1992; Grande and Pauly, 2005; Zürn, 1998 *apud* from Risse, 2010). Limited statehood is not the end of governance; weak statehood is not weak governance. But who governs in areas of limited statehood? External actors and global governance act as 'players' in the governance. They are the 'new' mode of governance, such as foreign governments, internation-

al organizations, multinational companies, and non-governmental organizations ('I'NGOs) and firms (Esguerra, Helmerich and Risse, 2017). External actors are functional equivalents to the shadow of hierarchy and compensation for limited statehood such as NGOs, which engage in governance and provide public services in areas of limited statehood (Borzel and Risse, 2010, pp. 113-134).

2.1. NGOs' participation in China

After the open-up and reform, the Chinese government began to accept the development assistance from Western developed countries. In 1979, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) approved the first China aid program. One of the most important parts of China's INGOs is a charitable international non-governmental organization. Their headquarters are generally not in mainland China but mostly in developed countries. Fundraising is also conducted abroad. There is no public fundraising activity in China. They are generally small-scale and low-key in external propaganda; they all advocate a participatory, sustainable charity that highlights the power of the 'community'. The main areas of work of INGOs in China are education, public health, environmental protection and animal protection, AIDS, women/ children/ elderly people, poverty alleviation, community building, agriculture, rural areas and other fields.

3. Case study – The Phelex Foundation

3.1. Brief introduction

The Phelex Foundation is an operating charity based in Massachusetts, the United States, which was established in 1995 by a small group of Boston-area residents. The foundation is aimed to promote basic education for financially, socially or physically disadvantaged children in the poverty-stricken regions of rural Asia. It has to be noted that since the Phelex Foundation entered China in 1995, its development has gone through four stages. The first step took place between 1995 and 1998, by entering and testing the ground, by supporting the 'Rainbow Plan' for the establishment of sustainable development of agricultural education located in poverty-stricken rural primary schools in Hubei Province, and starting to enter China to carry out experimental rescue work. At this time, the foundation did not formally register in China. In order to carry out the work, only the Hubei Provincial Education Commission issued a letter of approval and agreed that the foundation should carry out a student education program in Hubei Province. The projects continued to grow during this period, yet no specific charitable plans and cooperation methods were set up. They were driven by the idea of combating poverty by providing assistance and support for Chinese domestic institutions.

The second phase (1998-2000): Project improvement and promotion phase. During this phase, the Phelex Foundation began to promote the project after two years of experimentation in China. The scope of the implementation of student assistance programs has expanded; the content has also evolved from a single plantation to a comprehensive project combining planting, breeding, processing, and marketing; at the same time, it has expanded the ways to improve the education environment for impoverished schoolchildren. In order to adapt to the development, the foundation's China office was relocated to Beijing and registered at the Beijing Administration for Industry and Commerce in the form of industrial and commercial enterprise at the end of 1999.

The third phase (2000-2003): The rapid development stage in China. At this stage, the foundation has formed a relatively mature and unique concept, a scientific and rigorous project management approach, and a benign public welfare operation model widely supported by the public at home and abroad. In terms of concept, the unique 'Phelex partner' operation mode has begun to gain widespread recognition in the world. In terms of work, the content-rich student assistance programs began to mature, and the benefits and problems of the students were presented at the same time. As a result, they began to carry out a series of planned work on the standardization supervision and management of the project and organization construction, and established the program called 'Special Scholarship for Poverty Children's Aid for Education'[1]. In ancillary groups, the model of auxiliary groups for volunteers has grown. Volunteers have played an increasingly important and non-negligible role in project development.

The fourth stage (2003-present). Since 2003, the foundation has started to develop aid content, pay attention to the project's benefits and the project's ability to achieve sustainable development. It has focused on strengthening the counseling of commercialization of student-assisted products and information-assisted networking, and hopes to achieve community-based, self-reliance sustainable development of rural education programs for education. The foundation intents to use the Internet resources to publish information on projects to be funded so that more people can further promote charitable activities[2].

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1 As a result of the eco-agriculture projects that are supported, the income cycle is longer, at least one year, usually 3-5 years, and the way to set up the scholarship is to make the poor children get in the ecological agriculture project. Earning relief before income and realizing the long-term, medium-term, and short-term benefits of the project have to be mentioned.

2 Claiming is an indirect type of donation by Phelex. It is directly responsible to the donor, and the recipient's information is made public and the donator chooses to claim it. In the process, the Phelex promises to use the money to help the students and provide relevant evidence to the donors. The benefits of this type of donation are small, while the cost of management is relatively high. It used to be a small-scale individual behavior. However, due to the ever-in-

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In the course of the development of Phelex Foundation's entry into China, there is a growth of the foundation itself, as well as the development and impact of the foundation's operating environment. The concept of study aid, implemented by the Foundation, was tested in practice and was recognized by society, and created a huge social effect (Figures 2-4) (The Phelex Foundation).
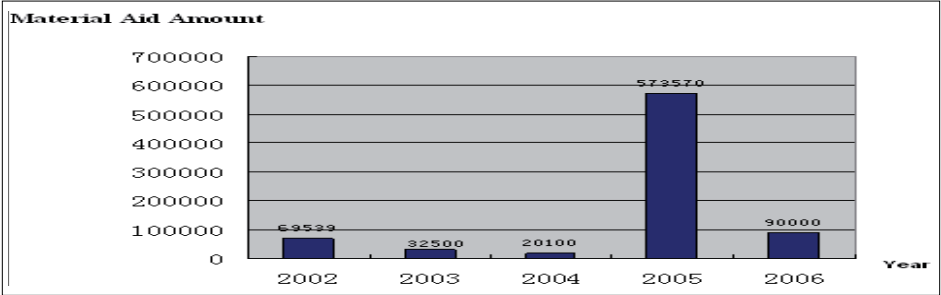

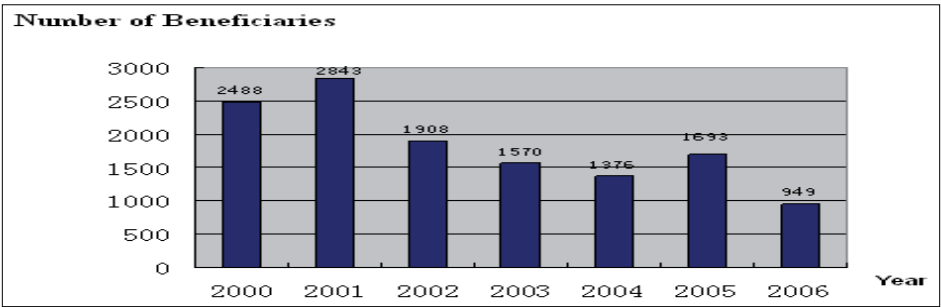**Figure 2:** Material aid amount (1 euro ≈ 10 RMB)

Figure 3: Number of beneficiaries
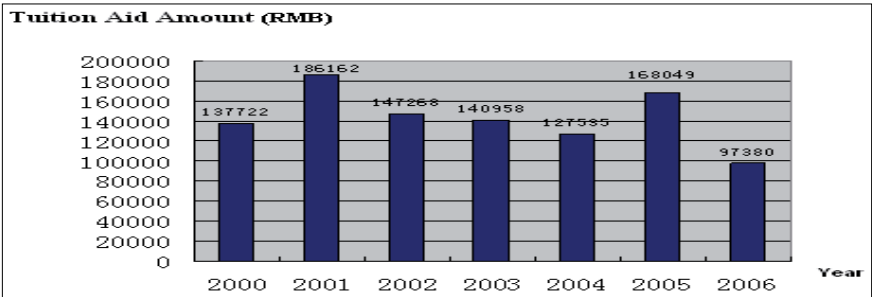
Figure 4: Tuition aid amount (1 euro ≈ 10 RMB)
Source: Phelex Foundation

creasing influence of the foundation, many enthusiastic people hope to provide assistance in this way and thus expand the scope.

3.2. Operation of the Phelex Foundation
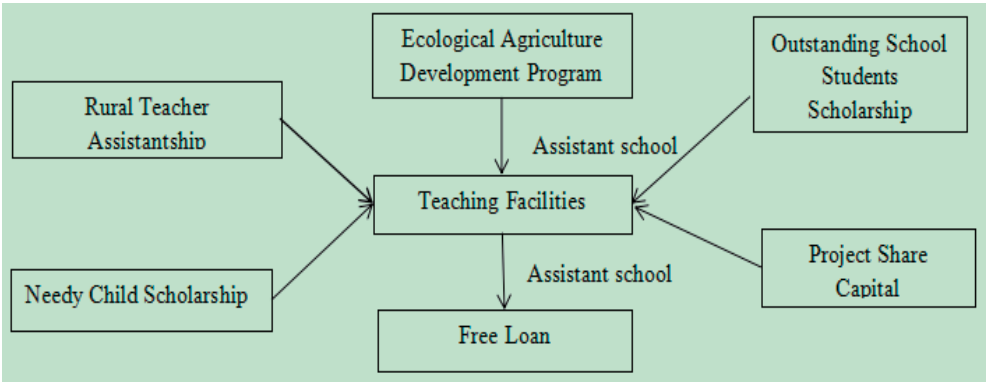
Figure 5: Diagram of the relationship between major projects
Source: Author's work

Phelex is a charitable international NGO focused on the development of education in disadvantaged areas in Asia; its goal is to assist schools in impoverished areas so as to achieve education, especially the sustainable development of basic education. The operation is not a single one. According to the different types, it can be divided into two types, each divided into two kinds: coordination: 'indirect financing', because the fundraising is illegal, it will indirectly help the targeted school to obtain assistance for goods or money in China through the information; 'communication and pairing' (promoting the willingness to help people in the society, contacting the helper, the typical representative is 'claim')'; directly operational: 'assisting schools' (using schools as operating units, through market operations, establishing ecological agricultural projects such as nurseries, tea gardens, orchards, medicinal herb bases, and breeding sheep bases to enable schools to achieve sustainable development); 'assistance in studying' (physical assistance to school children directly, to achieve immediate results and win the trust of the community) (see Figure 6) (The Phelex Foundation).

Coordination	Indirect financing	Communication and pairing
Operation	Assistant in School	Assistance in Studying

Figure 6: The content of operation
Source: Author's work

In these four types of operations, assistant in schools is the core way in which Phelex achieves the foundation's goals. Only when a certain school is identified as

the implementer of an ecological agricultural project will there be corresponding coordination activities and various activities of 'student-assistance', the latter being the supporting content for the realization of 'assistant in school'.

As a force outside the poverty-stricken communities, Phelex's operation to achieve its own goals is based on a variety of projects. The above four types of operations are also embodied in various projects. Projects will be launched as specific approaches. Since entering China in 1995, Phelex has gradually transformed itself from simply making donations for helping poor people to carry out systematic and sustainable development. Nowadays, the aim of the foundation is to establish a sustainable development to targeted groups through allocating community resources, government resources, and social resources (see Figure 7) (The Phelex Foundation).
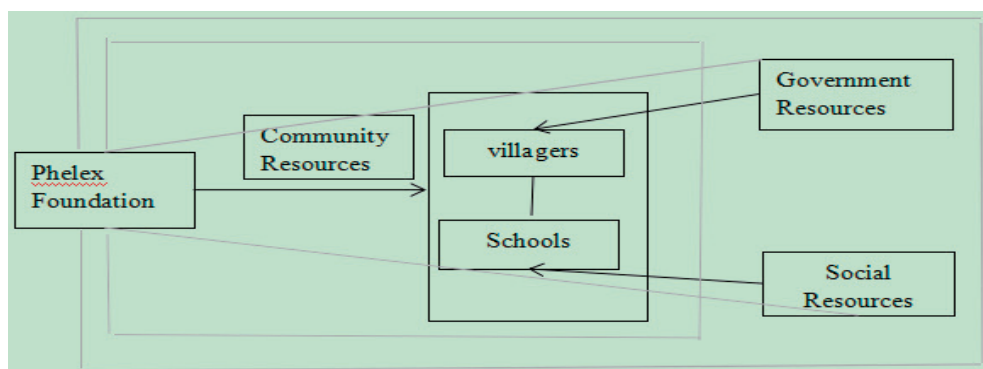
Figure 7: The relations of three resources
Source: Author's work

3.2.1. Community resources

The Phelex project's community resources are the overall conditions of the human resources, material resources, and financial resources in the community that support and implement projects to achieve their intended goals, including the human resources of project management and the participating resources of the operation. The principal or teacher of a rural school, as the person in charge of the Phelex project, has responsibilities in the actual operation. He/ she are responsible for the planning, organization and implementation of the project, accepting supervision and fair distribution of income. This requires that, first of all, he/ she must ensure that the project's production organization, technical guarantees, market outlets, etc., must be managed like an entrepreneur by his own project, and it requires an entrepreneurial spirit and the professional qualities of entrepreneurs. For the successful development of the project, it is necessary to have a certain reassembling

point in the rural community to mobilize the villagers in the aided area to participate in the development of the project and provide some support. In remote rural primary and secondary schools, serving as project managers in a part-time manner requires a great deal of investment in the cultivation of such professional qualities.

At the same time, another important aspect of the Phelex project's operations lies in 'community participation'. Through mobilization of the Phelex project leader, villagers can be involved in the project as beneficiaries. The direct beneficiaries of the project are underprivileged school children – the children of the villagers, and therefore the villagers are also potential beneficiaries. The upstream or downstream markets and technologies brought about by the project can also bring direct benefits to them. In this context, villagers may be mobilized into the operation of the project.

The establishment of the villagers' councils played an important role. The council generally consisted of 5 to 11 parents, villagers, and volunteers that were democratically elected by local school districts. The responsibility is to make decisions on matters related to the student education programs. These decisions include: granting scholarships, supervising the finances and accounts of the student education projects to ensure their authenticity and transparency, and presenting the school's overall financial management to the principal, etc. For example, the site of the high-quality rabbit-breeding base at Fangtai Middle School in Xingguo County of Jiangxi Province failed to meet the technical requirements for a rabbit-raising plant, but the budget for the project did not include the funds for the construction of the factory. As a result, there was a gap in the funds of the project. At the council meeting held on November 25, 2000, the funding shortages encountered by the school's projects were raised to allow members of the council to discuss. Finally, the agreement was jointly funded by the township government and the villagers to build a factory (The Phelex Foundation).

However, there are still many problems in the governance of the community council. The reason why the community council was formed was for the reasonable and equitable distribution of benefits. Its 'legality' is affirmed and supported by the foundation, and further promotion. However, as the self-organization advocated by NGOs, the council is in a traditional and backward rural Chinese village. There are also many defects while it serves as a mechanism for organizing and mobilizing the sustainable development of the community, and involves the participation of villagers and their ability to deliberate.

3.2.2. Government and social resources

In addition to the community's own resources, it is also greatly influenced and constrained by the environmental resources – governmental and social resources. The first is the state of government resources. At the current stage of China's devel-

opment, the government has strong power and resource mobilization capabilities. Phelex provides participation mechanism and development opportunity for the aid recipients. However, to achieve the sustainable development, it is necessary to provide corresponding support from the government, that is, the acquisition of government resources. Government resources can be divided into two types: policies and volunteers.

As a policy resource, the institutional form of government resources acts on the Phelex project through various channels: the legal definition of the status of succors, the corresponding policy support during the project development process, including tax relief and capital allocation, the use of land resources, etc.; at the same time, the government also has corresponding poverty alleviation and developments projects. Volunteers are the human resources of government. During the development of the foundation's project in the community, the government department, the education department, the person in charge of the agriculture and forestry technology department, or the technicians as volunteers participated in the construction and development of the project. Phelex attaches great importance to volunteers' mechanism for mobilizing the government's resources; this type of input directly affects the effectiveness of the project.

These resources may have a strong mobilization ability to promote new systems and projects involved in the community. The project operations will directly affect the effectiveness in terms of support for student funds, use of land resources, tax relief, market cultivation, and personnel deployment; may implement other poverty alleviation policies in the macro development environment and affect the external environment of the NGO project operations; it may also affect the operation of the Phelex project indirectly through the influence of policies and regulations. Although the government encourages NGOs to carry out poverty alleviation and development activities at basic level, there are still many problems in the realization and utilization of such resources.

4. The issues of NGOs in China

To begin with, there is a lack of communication mechanisms between the government and NGOs. Without fixed relevant ways, it appears very contingent and lacks rationality. For example, the aid projects that are carried out may conflict with the government's poverty alleviation projects in the market. There is a lack of appropriate communication mechanisms between the government's poverty alleviation plan and the foundation's poverty alleviation plan, which results in the waste of limited resources. For example, the government may launch a poverty alleviation program to send lambs to villagers. The foundation project is to use technology to raise sheep and sell lambs. This will cause a huge blow to the project's market and fail to help villagers effectively (The Phelex Foundation).

Second, local government policy changes may lead to project failure. For example, after three years of operating a cage fish culture project at a primary school was compromised, due to changes in local government policies, which started to advocate family fish farming and provided corresponding governmental subsidies. Under this circumstance, the project fails to achieve the goal of sustainable development and declares failure.

Third, it is worth mentioning the relation between the government and the NGOs under the circumstance of the latest Law of the People's Republic of China on the Administration of Activities of Overseas Non-Governmental Organizations within the Territory of China. Najam (2000) puts forwards a four C's theory; he believes that government and NGOs compete in the policy arena for achieving their goals (ends). On any issues, they have own preferred strategies (means), their goals may be similar or dissimilar. There are four possible combinations after they choose their means: seeking similar ends with similar means; seeking similar ends but dissimilar means; seeking dissimilar ends but similar means; seeking dissimilar ends with dissimilar means. The four relations correspond to four modes: cooperation, complementarity, co-optation and confrontation (Figure 1, Najam, 2000, pp. 375-391).

Figure 1: The Four C's of NGO-Government Relations
Goals (Ends)

		Similar	Dissimilar
Preferred Strategies (Means)	Similar	Cooperation	Co-optation
	Dissimilar	Complementarity	Confrontation
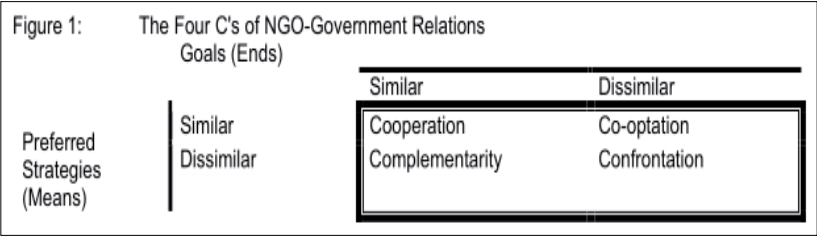
Source: Najam (2000)

The government plays the management role and according to the latest law that came into force in 2017: 'The Ministry of Public Security under the State Council and public security organs of provincial-level people's governments shall be the registration authorities for activities of overseas NGOs in the mainland of China. Relevant departments and offices of the State Council and of provincial-level people's governments shall be in charge of corresponding activities of overseas NGOs in China's mainland' (Ministry of Public Security, 2016). As far as registration is concerned, the subject of the act is more dependent on the initiative of the government and it is not enough to check the legal process.

At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to the organizations and regions that independently obtain the registration certificate of the representative office through a complete legal process, or obtain the legitimacy of the activities in

the form of being approved for recording. Among them, some overseas NGOs with a long history in China have passed through intergovernmental agreements, local government platforms, partnership, business, and volunteers. They have been in China for a long time. Whether they continue to exist is not only the profit and loss of public welfare undertakings, but also a symbol of the relationship between the pace of reform and opening up in China and the international community.

Second, which organizations and behaviors under what circumstances apply to the enforcement of legal responsibilities? The law does not define 'activities' or 'temporary activities' and there is room for interpretation as to who is the subject of the regulated objects. After the implementation of the law, on the one hand, foreign NGOs faced their own behavior choices, whether they were formally registered, or they did not contact China and retired Chinese members. Otherwise, there would be a risk of legal borders; on the other hand, the Chinese law enforcement agencies constantly define the boundary of legal definition in practice. In addition, foreign NGOs that have successfully registered or recorded have encountered some specific problems in their practical work. There is no clear legal basis for many specific tasks when they are carried out. A further step for the Ministry of Public Security is to improve the relevant supporting measures. For example, overseas NGOs charge a fee by providing professional services. Whether the fees set out are within the scope of other lawfully earned income remains an issue. After the tax registration, how to declare taxes, pay taxes and enjoy certain taxation preference policy? The specific requirements for the recording of temporary activities by the cooperation partner are an unclear aspect to the present day. These specific supporting measures need to be continuously improved in practice.

5. Conclusions

The Phelex Foundation as a typical external actor makes a great effort in the rural education in China by using the resources from community, government and society. It not only provides funds for different projects to the targeted group, but also brings about new experience. It adjusted measures to the China's conditions when it entered, mobilized the local villagers, parents and volunteers to participate directly in the 'community council'. Governmental and social resources also influence the effectiveness of project, poverty alleviation policy from central government, and the volunteers of different fields improve the local education level. However, some flaws cannot be ignored. Lack of communication between NGOs and government may result in the 'conflict' of projects. The latest law regarding the NGO activities is still vague, and supporting measures need to be taken for further development.

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An Integrated View
of Disclosure Requirements
in the Public Sector Bond Market

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Abstract. Our paper objective is to conduct an analysis of the way in which official disclosure requirements and guidelines are fostering the inclusion of multiple categories of disclosures in the bond issuance process, to meet the needs of all recipients of information. This outcome is achievable through a content analysis assessing the extent to which the disclosure requirements and guidelines from official sources are targeting similar types of information in the municipal bonds market and determining a discharge in municipal bond issuers' accountability towards the other information users. The main research deliverable of our paper is the integrated checklist including the disclosure requirements and guidelines concerning financial instruments, as well as the links in terms of disclosure targeting with information users. In terms of checklist structure, we find several conceptual overlapping from different regulatory and guideline documents. As a development, we aim to find whether there is an inherent prioritization of information recipients, as the main two actors of the bond issuance process (issuers and buyers) are subjects to a great extent of disclosure.

Keywords: bonds, public sector, disclosure, accountability, transparency.

1. Introduction

In its entirety, the public sector consists of a myriad of interactions between several actors, leading to an environment of complex relationships. Within this system, the various projects developed by the public administrations (and subject to public interest and use) are a significant component, enabling the web of interactions with various actors, through the need for financing. Whereas the great extent of public financing comes from budgetary sources (provided by local, regional or central Governments), the financing deficit is often covered through alternate sources, among which we identify the financial market.

Nowadays, Governments are facing economic growth and rapid urbanization that leads to very costly investment projects for which Governments appeal to alternative sources of financing. The advantages of external funding are connected to the development of local communities through complex investment projects that ensure equity between generations (Inceu, Lazăr and Zai, 2005). Also, capital spending is crucial for the maintenance and extension of the current infrastructure (Rivenbark, Afonso and Roenigk, 2018).

The capital market has become a solution to overcome the lack of resources for financing the provisions of public goods and services. The public sector has the opportunity to issue bonds for financing the investment project (Charles and Shon, 2018). Through this funding method, public sector finances investment projects that lead to the sustainable development of the community. The bond market allows Governments to get a higher volume of resources available at a lower cost than other forms of debt financing such as bank loans (Kovács, 2015).

The bond issuance process enables several actors (also consisting of information users), including: issuers, buyers (an active participant within the financial market), financial intermediaries, regulators (both from accounting and financial market perspectives), confidence assurers (analysts and rating agencies), as well as taxpayers (the main financier of the public sector). Inherently, a series of accountability relationships arise between these actors, as a consequence of financial flows and fiduciary involvements. Discharge of these instances of accountability is possible through an enhanced level of transparency (thus minimizing the degree of information asymmetry). And the 2008 crisis, provided the necessary catalyst for overdue improvements in market practices concerning transparency.

Our research objective is to analyze disclosure requirements and guidelines in the bond issuance process with the purpose to identify the common elements. Also, the broader extension of our research objective is to identify what type of information do Governments have to publish to access capital market and towards whom they are accountable.

To achieve our purpose, we conduct a content analysis on a series of official documents which oversee the disclosure in the bond market. We overlap the dis-

closure requirements and identify the conceptual similarities. The paper considers covering international public-sector accounting standards, financial market regulation, frameworks and governance codes.

Governments' disclosure requirements in general, and in our specific case related to bond market lead to a discharge of accountability and increase transparency of the Governments. The importance of our study lies in identifying the most crucial information needed to be published, and merging them within an integrated disclosure framework.

Our paper undergoes several research phases. First of all, we conduct a brief review of the relevant literature (with focus on aspect connected to financial markets, the link between accountability and transparency, as well as aspects regarding the users of information within the bond market). Afterwards, we provide an explanatory section with the research design and elements of methodology (focusing on the conceptual model, general aspects concerning content analysis, and the construction of the checklist). We then proceed and employ the methodology on the selected provisions from the official documents, we identify the markers and the overlapping traces, and we discuss the results. Last, but not least, we issue some preliminary conclusions and emphasize future developments.

2. Research state of art in the area of public sector bonds market disclosure requirements

2.1. Bonds – a financing resource for governments

The main role of the public sector is to provide goods and services for the well-being of the citizens. In the context of limited resources and many demands for investment projects, the Government need to draw alternative sources of financing. So, a Government can borrow financial resources on the short term to fund regular activities or long-term for capital investment (Bajo and Primorac, 2010). As a golden rule in most countries, long-term borrowing is permitted only for capital spending and not for covering operational expenses (Wynne, 2003; Kovács, 2015).

Financial markets represent an alternative method to finance the budget deficit. Levine and Greaves (2013) state that fiscal health and sustainability of a country is based on the capacity to access the financial market, especially the bond market because the bond market is an essential source of external financing (Fink, Haiss and Hristoforova, 2003). A bond is a loan, an issuer raises the needed capital by selling a bond for various periods, from a few days to decades (Thau, 2011, p. 3). In general, bonds are used by Governments for financing investment projects that lead to the development of the community, supporting economic growth and providing a higher quality of life for citizens (Hildreth and Zorn, 2005; Martell and Guess, 2006).

In the United States, government bond market has a long history and is a common way to finance investments projects; in Europe bank leading is the most used method of finance but after the financial crisis, the states have orientated on capital markets (Peterson, 2002).

The EU Government bond market is large, has high turnover and narrow trading spreads. But it is not just big. The sovereign bond yield curve represents the frontier between risk and safety. Today, every point along that curve is artificial, imposed administratively by the Government and not based on reality (Persaud, 2017). In the Eurozone, Italy (26%), France (23%), Germany (18%) and Spain (13%) are the largest issuer of government bonds and account for 80% of all issues in the 19 countries of the zone (European Central Bank, 2015).

Since 2008 there have clearly been significant pressures on government budgets, and disclosure, transparency and accountability come to the forefront. Investors, need the information necessary to make good decisions when they buy or sells a bond and disclosure is part of that. The European Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II) has come into force on 3 January 2018 with the aim to introduce more transparency and competition, and more unbundling and separate pricing and delivery of financial services (ICMA, 2018).

2.2. Disclosure – transparency-accountability relationship

Transparency is a key aspect in the financial market (Vishwanath and Kaufmann, 2001; Hameed, 2011) because market participants are interested in information about the issuer to establish the default risk and also facilitate the decision to invest. A transparent market reveals information that is known to every market participant. Also, transparency of financial market promotes competition, fairness and investors' protection (Dunne, Moore and Portes, 2010).

The determinants of a country to issue bond are the economic size, per capita GDP, lower public debt and effective Government (Presbitero *et al.*, 2016). Considering that a bond can be issued in national or foreign currency, also bonds can be traded nationally or going internationally, there appears the need for comprehensive and comparable information to be understood by investors or any users of information.

The International Monetary Fund (Dippelsman, Dziobek and Gutierrez Mangas, 2012) highlights the need for 'comprehensive, internationally comparable, and reliable information on the debt of general Government and, more broadly, the public sector to inform policymakers, financial makers, and other users of statistics has long be recognized'. Investors in bonds are interested in all public sector debt to find the capacity of the issuer to repay its debts, therefore the IMF guide comes to improve the availability and the international comparability of public sector debt statistics.

Access to information is seen as a discharge of accountability of the public sector to its users (Mack and Ryan, 2007). The public sector can report to their stakeholders using two ways: an indirect reporting realized by intermediaries or communicate directly (Lee, 2004). This also has an impact on how complex stakeholder relationships are within entities in the public sector.

2.3. The need of a comprehensive disclosure framework

Development failures, inadequate disclosure – material omission or misstatement in documents – or other abuses that happen in the market, lack of information and corruption highlight the need for an appropriate legal and regulatory disclosure framework with the purpose of increasing investors' confidence.

Vishwanath and Kaufmann (2001) emphasize the need for implementing standards and accounting practices that increased transparency. A standard or a regulation about reporting must establish the users, to whom the reporting entities address (Wynne, 2003). Policymakers need to know what the stakeholder profile is, how useful are the information to them (Mack and Ryan, 2007). Also, policymakers must determine the type of information needed for dissemination, where is a higher level of transparency necessary, and how can it be adapted to local needs (Vishwanath and Kaufmann, 2001).

Taking into consideration the advantage of issuing bonds from U.S. bond market for finance investments projects, policymakers from emerging economies try to replicate the U.S. bond market characteristics to try to attract new issuer and investors (Leigland, 1997).

The most important user groups of information targeted by the public sector are citizens, investors/creditors, as well as legislative/oversight officials (Daniels and Daniels, 1991). Hay (1994) states that public sector users are municipal securities analysts and trade unions. A more recent study has identified the categories of stakeholders such as governing bodies, investors and creditors, resource providers, oversight bodies, constituents, internal management, library, information services and other Government agencies (Mack and Ryan, 2007). Different typologies of stakeholders (mainly tackling the same categories, but renamed) identified are regulators, employees, local community (McAdam, Hazlett and Casey, 2005).

Dissemination of information allows stakeholders to understand, evaluate and supervise Government activities, reduces the asymmetrical distribution of information and show to the public how resources are spent (Chen *et al.*, 2016). In this sense, disclosure outlets can be seen as a part of the accountability process because the public administration has to report the usage of public resources (Lourenço, 2015).

The relationship between bondholders and issuers can be improved through the transparency of Government operations. Investors demand bonds can be en-

hanced by investors' familiarity and confidence, access to information regarding risks and assistance in interpreting information (Martell and Guess, 2006). Information is used by the investors to choose the projects to invest and to see the performance of the issuer (Vishwanath and Kaufmann, 2001).

For information to be useful, the user should be able to process the data. An important aspect is represented by the presentation of information to individuals in an understandable way. Also, user characteristics are defining the interpretation and analysis of the disclosed data (Bourmistrov, 2017). Transparency practices should offer comprehensive information, disciplined and regular appearance accompanied by audits and be known to audiences (Held, 2012). Besides the availability to anyone, all the time, and in any place, transparency is perceived as useful information for users to determine the benefits and risks, meaning data which must be prepared for the public interest (Park and Blenkinsopp, 2017). Analysing the literature, Lourenço (2015) finds characteristics of data disclosure like quality, completeness, access and visibility, usability and comprehensibility, timeliness, value and usefulness, granularity, comparability. Reliable and timely information can increase efficiency, improve resource spending and sustain welfare and development (Vishwanath and Kaufmann, 2001).

Disclosure of financial information enhances Government credibility that leads to a lower cost of debt financing (Chen *et al*., 2016). The financial information allows investors to see the performance of Governments and their ability to repay its debt (Caperchione and Salvatori, 2012). However, the financial information also has a purpose to prevent and detect corruption and graft, budgetary control and value for money and enhancement of public accountability (Chan, 2003). Hameed (2011) sustained that the level of transparency influences the credit ratings and spreads, his results show that more transparent countries have higher credit ratings and lower spreads. Dunne, Moore and Portes (2010) reveal that pre-trade transparency reduces research costs, reduces uncertainty and improves liquidity.

Overall, the literature reveals that Governments which are accountable and timely in issuing financial statements have a developed accounting system that leads to increase transparency and confidence (Henke and Maher, 2016). The users of financial statements need current and timely information because if disclosure is delayed, the data becomes less valuable, obsolete, and will, eventually, lose its importance.

Reviewing the literature concerning public sector bonds we identified a gap in the literature about the type of information and disclosure requirements with the purpose to meet the need of all markets participants. So, our aim is to try to make an integrated disclosure framework based on official documents. A good disclosure creates greater familiarity with an issuer and its obligations so that there's greater receptivity when a bond comes to market – and that can result in lower costs. All of this contribute to an open, transparent and accountable Government.

3. Research questions, design and methodology

The research question for this paper in line with the most relevant literature issues presented in the previous section is the following:

RQ. *Which are the similarities and conceptual overlapping traces concerning the disclosure regulations and guidelines overseeing the EU bond market?*

Within the conceptual model of bond issuance, we find several actors who hold key positions, as well as secondary actors (all of them acting as stakeholders in the entire process). Understanding this model is essential in determining the focus of the main disclosures directed from issuers and to recipients of information within this section of the financial market. The full extent of the model (drawn from the theoretical underpinnings existing in the literature review) can be observed in Figure 1.

Starting from this conceptual model, we find that the elements of disclosure circulating between the stakeholders (acting either as providers, or recipients of information) are subject to oversight from specific normative documents. According to their type, the disclosure requirement is either mandatory or voluntary. Nevertheless, we will analyze the sets of information in their entirety, as our aim is to refine an integrated disclosure framework concerning the bond market.

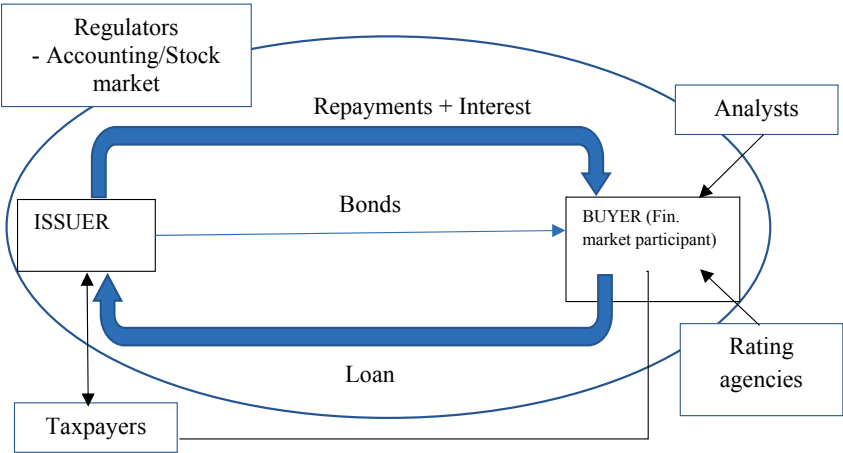**Figure 1:** The conceptual model of bond issuance,
with emphasis on stakeholders and information users
Source: Authors' projection, with the use of theoretical underpinnings

Our qualitative study is mainly based on the content analyze of archival data, existing official documents (regulations, standards and frameworks) to select the elements which cover the disclosure requirements and the development of a check-

list of disclosure requirements and guidelines, drawn from he selected documents and presented in an integrated output.

The set of documents include international public sector accounting standards (mainly, IPSAS 30 – with paragraph references to other standards, as well), financial market regulations (e.g. the European Union Directives concerning securities admitted to trading on regulated markets), sets of guidelines (e.g. International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector – issued by IFAC), and specific frameworks (e.g. the Conceptual Framework for General Purpose Financial Reporting by Public Sector Entities – issued by IFAC; Disclosure framework for financial market infrastructures – issued by the International Organization of Securities Commissions). Additionally, for the assessment of the accountability issues, we include elements from the AA1000 – Accountability Principles Standard. The full extent of the official sources we use within our analysis is presented in detail in Table 1.

To achieve our research objective and provide answers to our research question, we use content analysis on the previously mentioned official documents, to split and refine their provisions into fewer generic and representative categories (as checklist items) and construct an overlapping matrix, thus allowing us to pinpoint conceptual similarities and provision matches across the set of documents. Hence, content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) as a research method used in this paper is actually a normative cross-analysis, involving certain regulatory, framework provisions or guidelines for examination and then tallying their presence in the other documents. This derivative of the content analysis is used in other studies which compare different frameworks and official documents (Nistor *et al.*, 2017; Nistor, Oprisor and Crisan, 2018).

Within our study, we use the interpretative side of content analysis – namely, the 'meaning-oriented' one, with the purpose of acquiring a greater understanding of the provisions from the analyzed documents (Smith and Taffler, 2000). In this respect, we provide added value to the research literature by posing more concerned with qualitative and richness aspects of the texts' interpretation, as well as their underlying themes and proxy extensions, as opposed to volumetric captures involving regular word counts.

In essence, the research strategy which we employ in this study is a theoretical-normative investigation, using content analysis as primary research mean involving the use of certain provisions from various documents on the topic of inquiry (concerning financial instruments). Furthermore, to analyze the presence of certain disclosure elements (whether requirements or guidelines), we use Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework by emphasizing different patterns and themes included in the content, outlining links with the literature and identifying significant contributions to already existing knowledge to the field.

Table 1: Sources used to construct the disclosure checklist

Codification	Name of the document	References	Year of issuance	Official sources
D2003/71/EC	Directive 2003/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the prospectus to be published when securities are offered to the public or admitted to trading and amending Directive 2001/34/EC	Article 5 Article 7 Article 10 Article 12 Article 14 Article 16 * with respective lines and bullets	2003	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:345:0064:0089:EN:PDF
D2004/109/EC	Directive 2004/109/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the harmonisation of transparency requirements in relation to information about issuers whose securities are admitted to trading on a regulated market and amending Directive 2001/34/EC	Article 4 Article 5 Article 6 Article 16 Article 18 Article 21 Article 22 * with respective lines and bullets	2004	http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:390:0038:0057:EN:PDF
IPSAS-30	IPSAS 30 – Financial Instruments: Disclosures	Paragraph 10 Paragraph 11 Paragraph 12 Paragraph 13 Paragraph 24 Paragraph 25 Paragraph 31 Paragraph 38 Paragraph 39 Paragraph 40 Paragraph 41 * with respective lines and bullets	2010 (updated in 2013)	https://www.ifac.org/system/files/publications/files/B6%20IPSAS_30.pdf
IPSAS-CF	Conceptual Framework for General Purpose Financial Reporting by Public Sector Entities: Presentation in General Purpose Financial Reports	Paragraphs 2.3-2.28 (continuously) Paragraphs 3.6-3.42 (continuously) * with respective lines and bullets	2014	https://www.ifac.org/publications-resources/conceptual-framework-general-purpose-financial-reporting-public-sector-enti-8
AA-1000	AA 1000 AccountAbility Principles Standard	Section 2 (in full)	2008	https://www.accountability.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/AA1000APS_english.pdf
IOSCO-DF	Disclosure Framework for Financial Market Infrastructure	Section 3 (in full), (with each principle as a separate provision)	2012	https://www.bis.org/cpmi/publ/d101c.pdf
IFAC-GG	International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector	Sections A through F (with each subsection as a separate provision)	2014	https://www.ifac.org/publications-resources/international-framework-good-governance-public-sector

Source: Authors' projection, with the use of official sources

Methodologically, we centralize within a database all the provisions from the references mentioned in Table 1 (from all seven documents). We do not refrain solely by counting the articles, paragraphs and sections, but we take into consideration the subdivisions as well (e.g. lines, bullets, enumerations), as they are the 'atom' of our analysis. Afterwards, we group provisions into proxies (depending on the core essence of the provisions and what are they referring to) and count the occurrences for each proxy. We then place the occurrences within the overlapping matrix and create the markers, which have two identifiers (one on the column, symbolized by a letter; the other on the row, symbolized by a number). If on one row we have multiple markers, we can note that there is a normative overlapping across the official documents. The strength of the marker is given by the count of occurrences drawn from each official document.

4. Findings and discussion

After computing all provision occurrences, we can observe the overlapping matrix in Table 2. As expected, not all columns and rows include markers as each of the official documents are targeted towards a specific type of disclosure requirements and/or guidelines. Within some documents the dispersion across proxies in larger (e.g., the Prospectus Directive), whereas for other documents (such as IPSAS 30 – which is an accounting standard), the proxies are gathered around fewer vectors.

As we can observe from Table 2, the most emphatic normative overlapping is between the IPSAS CF and AA 1000 (with markers D8-E8 and D10-E10 at hand). This finding occurs mainly since AA1000 is the most generic document we have in our analysis (providing principles of reporting, without specific references to particular issues). Conversely, the framework from IPSAS also deals with generic aspects, only more focused on the public sector, but easily comparable to the principles from AA 1000 (especially those tackling issues on stakeholders, which is a core subject for the latter). Also, on line no. 10, we have a consistent match with the Good Governance set of guidelines issued by IFAC (which also devotes several subsections to stakeholder issues).

Another interesting finding is that on the matter of accountability relationships, where the IPSAS Conceptual Framework has more provisions explicitly mentioning this aspect in comparison to the accountability standard (which appears to be more set on the stakeholder issues, inclusivity and materiality). In terms of documentation structure (for the entire bond issuance conceptual model, on all ends), we find that the Prospectus Directive and the IPSAS Conceptual Framework tackle the same issue within their content (although, the provisions from the Directive are much more specific towards the financial instruments, whereas the Framework

Table 2: Main findings: markers of normative overlapping and provision occurrences

Marker codes Row	Column Proxies (alphabetically)	A D2003/71/EC	B D2004/109/EC	C IPSAS-30	D IPSAS-CF	E AA-1000	F IOSCO-DF	G IFAC-GG
1	Accountability relationships				10	1		
2	Annual reporting guidelines and requirements	4	15	1				1
3	Basic information about financial instrument	9		2			5	
4	Basic information about market participants	1					5	6
5	Descriptive static information about users and stakeholders				4	1		
6	Documentation structure, regulatory and framework references	14	3		7		1	
7	Financial information concerning the reporting entity	1	1	6				
8	Principles of reporting	1			10	23		3
9	Risk information			9			8	1
10	Stakeholder interactions and engagement				11	13	2	8
11	Transparency requirements and public display of information	12	9				3	1

Source: Authors' projection, with data from official sources

offers a generic set of documents for public sector entities). This, however, can be compacted within a single complex verification item in case we pursue empirical testing on bond issuers.

Also, we note the normative overlapping concerning transparency and public display of information between the two directives (A11-B11), which might be expected, as both are regulatory documents issued by the same governing bodies (the European Parliament and the Council). Given that they both amend the same directive and provide regulations for the financial instruments, there is a high probability that they have complementary provisions on the same issues. Concerning the Transparency Directive, we note that it is more technical than its Prospectus counterpart, with most of the provisions polarized on two proxies.

Concerning risk information, we observe a moderate overlapping between the provisions from IPSAS 30 and the IOSCO Framework (C9-F9), as both documents allot extended paragraphs and sections on this issue (and even split the risk into several categories, such as credit risk, liquidity risk, market risk, etc.). The risk

analysis in the case of financial instruments (including municipal bonds) is critical within the delineation from official documents as quantifying risk exposure is adamant for the decision to invest (or not) in a financial instrument. If the market participants do not acquire sufficient information concerning the risk they take (with mitigation solutions), they might decline entry to the specific market. One subsection in the IFAC Good Governance guidelines is dedicated to this issue, but far fewer provisions than in the case of the other two documents.

One interesting link we found is in marker pair A3-F3, concerning information disclosed about the financial instrument itself. Here, we found a specific reference in article 7, line 3 from the Prospectus Directive a clear and direct reference to the IOSCO Framework, meaning that there is complementarity between the documents (in some cases, such as this, acknowledged by the regulators themselves). This reference opens up the discussion of whether collaborative structures and a converged disclosure framework are possible and might constitute a perspective in future regulatory and delineating initiatives.

In descriptive terms, the highest number of documents addressing the same proxy is four (which occurs in multiple occasions). On the other hand, the lowest number is two documents (manifested for D1-E1 and D5-E5). An explanation for this is that we delineated the proxies to contain information with an assessable degree of similarity (leading to no occurrence for just one document). However, the normative overlapping for the formerly mentioned pairs of markers are weak. On the other hand, the multitude of aspects tackled by the seven official documents leads to a maximum of four simultaneous marker occurrences (bearing in mind that some of the documents are not even targeted towards financial instruments, as we draw from them generic information).

Overall, if we pursue our research endeavor further, we have some key points identified in each of the seven official documents, so that we may restructure the checklist to tackle specific issues (and improve the power of the test, as well as the correctness of the verification – minimizing redundancy).

Our findings come in line with some tracks from the literature, as we find there is an emphasized presentation and focus placed on stakeholders, in terms of structure and typology (Daniels and Daniels, 1991; Hay, 1994; McAdam, Hazlett and Casey, 2005; Mack and Ryan, 2007), as well as engagement and communication instances (Lee, 2004). On these issues we find strong marker overlapping situations concerning normative delineation, signifying that issues concerning stakeholders are held in high regard. Also, other tracks – such as the need for increased transparency and public display of information are markers where our normative analysis is aligned with prior literature (Chen *et al.*, 2016; Lourenço, 2015).

5. Conclusions and future developments

The financial markets manifest a continuous dynamic and constantly develop new opportunities for financing (including entities from the public sector). In this respect, even more, Governments are trying to obtain funds for their projects through the issuance of financial instruments (especially, bonds). However, to maximize the chances of a transaction taking place, informed decisions are of paramount importance, and – in this context – we note the importance of disclosure requirements.

Within our study, we identify different pieces of regulation, frameworks, guidelines and standards which might constitute the basis for an integrated (or consolidated) framework for bond market disclosure. Using content analysis, we perform a cross-analysis, and we find that between different official documents there are similarities in approach and normative overlapping instances (thus, providing an answer to our first research question, through the interpretation of the overlapping matrix). Whether the discussion falls upon stakeholders, documentation structure or transparency requirements and public display, inherent similarities in approach occur, opening up the debate for a broader, integrated framework for disclosure encompassing all the documents (in a possible collaborative structure).

Although we expected accountability to have an emphatic role as a transparency enhancement enabler (Mulgan, 2012; Adejuwon, 2014) and act as a linkage between different sets of documents, the marker occurrence shows weak normative overlapping (meaning that on a conceptual level we have inference of public accountability, but across oversight structures and official documents, the issue is hardly tackled). Moreover, we find that the accountability standard is rather focused on a principles-based approach (on inclusivity, materiality and stakeholders), being overrun in provisions by the IPSAS Conceptual Framework (with explicit mentions of accountability).

This research brings added value to the field, mainly to the literature concerning financial instruments and how they are impacted by the pressure points between accountability and transparency (with encouraging development perspectives). On a more practical note, another element of added value is the integrated checklist for disclosure assessment (already refined from a normative point of view through the overlapping matrix), which can (and will be) tested empirically and allows analytical tracking of disclosure proxies.

Within our study, we identify several limitations. First of all, regarding regulations, standards and frameworks, we find that not all of them are applicable to every market participant. For instance, there are disclosure exemptions within several articles from the EU Directives for state, regional and local authorities. Second of all, the adoption of IPSAS and harmonization with national accounting standards is an ongoing process, leading to a heterogeneous mix of observations

within a potential sample, hindering empirical testing. This restrains our analysis, at this point, solely to conceptual and normative levels. Last, but not least, our study is prone to a certain degree of subjectivity, as we provide reasoning for linking disclosure patterns across documents with proxies of information.

However, we aim to diminish this limitation by identifying patterns and streams from previous research and validate our argumentative structure. As a future development of this study, we aim to assess whether the formerly-mentioned accountability relationships have an impact or not in user prioritization concerning disclosure patterns.

After constructing the checklist and assessing whether there are conceptual overlapping, using deductive reasoning and grounding on patterns identified within prior studies, we will determine towards which types of users (from the bond issuance process) the main bulks of disclosed information are targeted, considering the extent of bond issuers' accountability in connection to the other stakeholders. Afterwards, we will refine a final form of the disclosure checklist and conduct empirical testing on a sample of bond issuers.

The paper contributes by its results to the promotion of good disclosure practices for government bond issues that will gather a broader interest from the investor community, and which can result in lower cost of capital, finding more liquidity for their bonds in the secondary market, and also better pricing of those trades.

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The Luxury of Building Community Resilience. An Exploratory Study of the Role of Community Foundations in Building Community Resilience

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Abstract. Previous research has indicated that community foundations have an active role to play in building community resilience, and that these are both able as well as in the right position to evolve from their 'traditional' role to this new area. Developing resilience in the face of environmental, socio-economic, political and other uncertainties and risks has become an important goal for cities, but the topic has also attracted interest in recent years, both of academics and of decision makers across disciplines and sectors. On the other hand, in-depth studies of how community foundations can contribute to building community resilience, and whether contextual variances inhibit the development of a generally applicable model for strengthening community resilience through means available to community foundations (and nonprofits in general) are still lacking.

The study explores the role community foundations play in building resilience in their community in three different countries: Romania, Germany and United Kingdom. Analyzing data collected through document analysis, non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews the study examines the role of community foundations in building community resilience, as well as whether local variances in context foster or hinder the ability of these nonprofits to take on an active role. While the qualitative nature of this exploratory study does not allow for generalizable conclusions, it will provide valuable insight into the role of local or regional community foundations in building community resilience, and may provide a foundation for larger scale, quantitative or qualitative studies on the role of nonprofits in building community resilience.

Keywords: resilience, community resilience, urban resilience, resilience building, resilient cities, community building, community foundations, civil society, nonprofits.

1. Introduction

Developing resilience in the face of environmental, socio-economic, political and other uncertainties and risks has become an important goal for cities (Meerow, Newell and Stults, 2016). Recent studies have indicated that community foundations, these 'trusted stewards of philanthropic resources' (Richard, 2014, p. 32), have an active role in building community resilience. It is also increasingly apparent from findings that these organizations progressively find themselves in key positions in local communities allowing them to play this role, and that they also possess the potential to pool resources that can increase local resilience (Bevan, 2013).

While there has been a wealth of research on the topic of urban resilience, on the one hand, and on community foundations, on the other, in-depth studies of how community foundations can contribute to building community resilience through means available to community foundations are still lacking. The present study aims to address this gap in the literature and explores the role that community foundations play in building resilience in their community in three different countries: Romania, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Using qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis, the study examines an array of community foundations ranging from those that have a history of decades in developed western democracy, to those that have been recently established in countries considered part of third wave democracies (Mainwaring and Bizzarro, 2019).

As it is an exploratory study, it primarily aims to analyze whether local variances constitute an obstacle in the way of community resilience building, identify some common themes that provide indications of the role that these organizations play in the process, as well as potential avenues for future research.

2. Community foundations. A short overview

2.1. Definition and scope

Community foundations (CF) have a history of over 100 years in the US and 50 years in Europe (Feurt and Sacks, 2001), and they have proven uniquely adept at bridging between different social, political, and economic interests and bringing them together to promote the common good and to support local community needs (Carson, 2014, p. 43). These organizations can be defined as non-partisan / non-political grant-making public charities overseen by a board of local citizens, with long-term commitment to improving the lives of people by raising money from within their communities to encourage and support the local non-profit infrastructure, and to serve the needs of all local constituents (Council on Founda-

tions, n.d.; Guo and Brow, 2006; Millesen, Strmiska and Ahrendt, 2007; Ostrower, 2007; Sacks, 2014). Traditionally, their focus on a specific geographic community was seen as an essential aspect that sets them apart from other grant-making foundations. However, that is no longer the case, as in a world where community and geography are no longer synonyms (Carson, 2014, p. 44), the relevance of the geographic region as a key vector for defining the functioning of community foundations is losing its relevance (Carson, 2013). Accordingly, the concept of community in this context is reframed as a process of engagement and a resulting sense of belonging rather than a physical locale (Phillips *et al.*, 2016).

2.2. Traditional and non-traditional roles

During their existence, community foundations have taken on a number of broad roles in developing their communities (Sacks, 2014). Applebaum (2005) argued that these roles can be divided into two broad categories, namely charitable transfer agents and community change agents. Accordingly, community foundations perform their traditional role as charitable transfer agents by collecting and disbursing funds to support the local charitable infrastructure and address changing community needs. Their more expanded role as community change agents include teaching and promoting philanthropy, taking on the role of community leadership, promoting, but also effecting, community development, building community stability and empowerment, setting and raising the accountability and operating standards of nonprofits, bringing about social justice, but also focusing resources in the times of disasters (Applebaum, 2005; Easterling, 2011; Feurt and Sacks, 2001; Grady and Morgan, 2006; Hamilton, Parzen and Brown, 2004; Millesen, Strmiska and Ahrendt, 2015; Sacks, 2014, pp. 6-9).

While the latter may seem like a novel area, – Bevan (2013) relatively recently indicating that community foundations have an active role to play in building community resilience – community foundations have been continuously expanding their roles, gradually adding to their resource development and grant-making functions. Interesting in this respect is the list provided by Carson (2014) on locally led responses to natural and human-caused disasters. Containing examples such as 'the Oklahoma City bombing, the 9/11 World Trade Center tragedy, the devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Minneapolis–Saint Paul bridge collapse, and the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico' (p. 43), this list, albeit highly US-centric, is indicative not only of the active involvement of community foundations in community disaster relief, but also of their ability to enhance the capacity of local communities to solve complex and challenging problems they face (Graddy and Morgan, 2006), as well as of their effectiveness in times of disaster in helping to rebuild their communities (Sacks, 2014). At least in areas where com-

munity foundations have a long history, a well-established donor base, and enjoy widespread community trust.

3. Resilience and communities

The concept of resilience is seemingly ubiquitous in the current context. As resilience theory is growing increasingly popular across nations and disciplines (van Breda, 2018, p. 54), the concept once regarded as the exclusive appanage of the systems ecology and biology literature, 'has now entered the social sciences vocabulary' (Juncos, 2017, p. 4).

Holling's seminal piece (1973) defined resilience as 'the ability of a system to return to an equilibrium or steady-state after a disturbance'. The ecosystems literature on the topic is well developed and the concept has since become one of the major tools to deal with change in the environmental literature. Conversely, while the adaptation of the concept from the natural to the social world 'provides a useful framework for understanding how complex socio-ecological interdependencies work', only in the later years has this translation from the natural to the social world received particular attention. Despite this relatively recent adaptation to the social science world, the term has spread like wildfire in social science disciplines, but has also been used by a wide range of decision-makers (Shaw and Theobald 2011; Shaw 2012), outgrowing the academic field and permeating into the practitioner, political, and policy discourse.

We are currently experiencing 'a resilience renaissance' (Bahadur, Ibrahim and Tanner, 2010), which may be due mainly to the concept cuts across the 'grey area' between academic, policy, and practice discourse (Bristow, 2010). This 'feature' has enabled the term to colonize even the foreign policy discourse, the European Union Global Strategy indicating that one of the key strategic priorities of the EU is building state and societal resilience (Juncos, 2017, p. 1). Similarly, the concept of resilience is an important element (and even a driver) of urban policy discourse, although what it actually means in practice for urban governance is not yet clear (Wilkinson, 2012).

Following the adoption (and adaptation) of the concept to social sciences, a series of more specific versions of the concept have appeared. From the multitude of variants of particular interest for this exploratory study is the concept of 'community resilience'. Community resilience was defined by Magis as 'the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise' (Magis, 2010). In other words, the ability of a community to bounce back using its own resources after a disruptive (even catastrophic) event. There is a wealth of research examining the concept of community resilience in various

contexts and from various disciplinary perspectives, but some argue that research on the topic has overemphasized the role of the state in developing resilience to disaster threat, with little consideration for members of the community or organizations (Fagan-Watson and Burchell, 2015).

This certainly seems like a fitting description, as there is limited evidence from qualitative studies regarding the role of community foundations in this process. Recently, Bevan (2013) indicated that 'community foundations which undertake 'community needs mapping' are expanding their roles in civil society beyond that of traditional grantmaker' (Bevan, 2013, p. 2) and into the realm of resilience building. However, while the expansion of their roles is somewhat well established, few studies have examined the extent to which community foundations are positioned to assume the role of a change agent. One of the few studies that have examined their ability to enhance the problem-solving capacity of communities they serve concluded that, although they are uniquely positioned, they 'may not in many cases have the capacity to do so' (Graddy and Morgan, 2006, p. 625). This may be due to the fact that community foundations have typically reacted to disasters by relying 'on their reputations for integrity, broad community participation, and the ability to serve as trustworthy conduits for monies from givers (...) address the emergency' rather than by 'spending down their unrestricted assets' (Carson, 2014, p. 46). Community resilience is facilitated through developing and engaging diverse resources from throughout the community (Magis, 2010).

4. Methodology

Given the exploratory nature of the study, qualitative methods were preferred to quantitative ones. In addition, since the study explores the role that community foundations play in building resilience in their community in three countries – Romania, Germany, and the United Kingdom – understanding their comprehension of the concept of resilience was also key to this endeavor.

The three methods – document analysis, non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews – were meant to offer a broader picture, and allowed the examination of the research topic from various angles, offering more in depth understanding than a single methodology. The document analysis was aimed at examining – first and foremost – the scientific and practitioner literature regarding the link between resilience building and community foundations, but other relevant documents (e.g., case studies) were also analyzed to provide context and additional information. Conversely, non-participant observation and interviews were utilized to add depth to the understanding already provided by the literature, to identify specifics and overarching themes alike.

5. Data collection and analysis

Non-participant observations and interviews were conducted during a Resilience Lab meeting – held in October 2018 in Timisoara, Romania –, with the participation of nonprofit organizations professionals from Community Foundations from Romania, Ukraine, Germany, the United Kingdom, Serbia and Hungary. The meetings were inspired by international programs and movements, and their aim was to create a platform for dialogue and cross-sector cooperation (Kelly, 2018). The event, entitled 'How can community foundations contribute to increase resilience in the community?', was the second meeting on this topic organized in 2018 by the Association for Community Relations. It was a follow-up to the first meeting, held in Bucharest in April 2018, where the concept urban resilience was introduced locally, a common working definition was agreed by the participants, and a resilience building blueprint was developed.

Even the location of the three-day meeting was an example of resilience and heritage building, as it was held in a former tobacco factory in an industrial zone on the banks of the Bega River. The space is called MISC and is now a cultural space center, founded by a young actress, who – together with other friends who share her passion for art – are running the establishment that hosts exhibitions and experimental theater events. Its resilience was demonstrated when in September 2017, just before it was set to open, a big storm hit Timisoara and caused serious damage to the city and the building itself (the roof was totally destroyed, there was no water or electricity). With the help of volunteers the building was repaired and it was repurposed as a cultural center. It now stands as a symbol of community resilience.

During the three-day meeting, a series of activities were held with the active involvement of the participants, culminating in a commonly agreed upon working definition of community resilience, which then participants attempted to apply locally. According to the working definition, community resilience is embedded in culture, in us, in our communities. The role of community foundations is to 'awaken the (latent) resilience, to activate it, and to remind everybody that it is there inside us like muscle groups waiting to be flexed and strengthened' (Kelly, 2018). Accordingly, building resilience is not only about resources, about preventing, coping and adapting, but also about exploring ways to strengthen the capacity of communities to grow and evolve. Therefore, it is about managing and activating resources, but also about managing the community's ability to exercise its ability to bounce back.

The non-participant observation unfolded during the three-day activities, especially during the open-space discussions and presentations. This allowed observation of the events without interference, and taking detailed notes to be analyzed at a later stage. Discussions focused on several resilience-related topics, such as ur-

ban resilience, community resilience and even organizational resilience (how resilience can be built into organizations/community foundations themselves). During the meeting, the participants from Ukraine, Serbia, and Romania gave updates on their progress with regards to testing the resilience building blueprint developed at the first meeting, others presented case studies related to resilience (UK, Germany, Romania), while others presented preliminary research findings (Hungary's representative is preparing her doctoral dissertation on the topic of resilience).

During the three days, interviews were held with the representatives of three community foundations that were in different stages of engaging in resilience building: Romania (Bucharest Community Foundation), Germany (Bürgerstiftungen Deutschlands), and the U.K. (South Yorkshire Community Foundation). The semi-structured interviews had six main questions (See Annex 1), with several sub-questions developed ad-hoc with the intention of probing deeper on different aspects that emerged from the respondents' answers to the main questions. While these varied slightly from respondent to respondent, they were kept along the same major lines in order to facilitate comparability.

Respondents were asked to speak about their organizations (structure, human resources, financial stability), about their community (general context, stress factors, reasons for which it needs to build resilience and the role of community foundations in evaluating and strengthening community resilience), about how their organizations became interested in resilience, how they build resilience in their communities, and what other stakeholders participate in this effort. The interviews were recorded with the verbal consent of the participants to the study. Each interview took around 20 minutes, during which the subjects were responsive and engaging, providing lengthy, complex, and eloquent answers to the questions, while also offering their support in case of the need for further information. In addition to recording, notes on recurring patterns and interesting ideas were taken.

The fully recorded answers were later transcribed, resulting in six pages of valuable information that – alongside the document analysis and researcher's notes – formed the basis of the qualitative analysis meant to uncover patterns and detailed information.

6. Findings

The rationale behind including these community foundations in the present study is linked primarily to availability (presence at the Resilience Lab events), as well as to the fact that they exhibit a range of variation in terms of their stage of experience with community or urban resilience building. Accordingly, while the experience of the U.K. community foundation is lengthy and impressive, and the German foundation has extensive experience, the Romanian representative is the

first community foundation in the country to take an active interest in the concept and to build a fund for resilience (the earthquake fund for Bucharest).

During the analysis, several main topics emerged from the interviews, alongside particular views and ideas that expressed variations among locales and organizations, as well as between individuals. Based on the responses from the interviewees, it is apparent that the community foundations from Germany and U.K. have invested a significant amount of resources in resilience programs – related to immigrants (Germany) and housing, homelessness and gender equality, race equality (UK) –, and are gathering stakeholders and funds both from the Government and individual donors. Conversely, the Bucharest Community Foundation (Romania) is in its early stages, having just initiated the building of a disaster relief fund for earthquakes, as well as discussions with the local authorities, and pushing the issue through on the public agenda.

6.1. Contextual differences

The analysis revealed that there are major contextual and structural differences between community foundations from various countries. The main differences identified relate to the organizations' relationship to the community served, institutional relationships and the organizational structure and sustainability.

1. The organization's relationship to the community it serves

Concerning the relationship to community served by community foundations, the Bucharest Community Foundation (BCF) highlights the fact that individuals are primarily self-interested, and have a disregard for community needs. There are signs with regards to change in community mentality moving towards a budding community spirit, but this process is at an incipient stage and mostly related to anti-government protests of recent years (Abăseacă and Pleyers, 2019). Although there are signs that more citizens are getting involved in civic activism, as well as in the activities of 'traditional' civil society, numerical data is lacking, and evidence with this regard is scarce.

Conversely, the South Yorkshire Community Foundation (SYCF), in the U.K., is confronted with an entirely different context. The community foundation enjoys a well-established position in the community that has a strong culture of giving. This does not mean that it has always been so, but rather that the U.K. community foundation had to confront adverse community context some thirty years ago. Serving former mining communities, the organization had to overcome community mistrust in helping the community recover after the economic shifts that caused massive unemployment. However, the long history of giving culture has aided the organization in funding initiatives that supported developing skills (mostly as part

of educational programs) and employment. Accordingly, 'despite of the mistrust and a lot of resistance from the community (…) began rebuilding after the huge downfall of the economy in Sheffield' (SYCF representative).

2. Institutional relationships between the community foundations and the local and central public authorities

A second major contextual difference regards the institutional relationships between the community foundations and the local and central public authorities. The BCF characterizes their relationship with the public administration as 'antagonistic', largely because of the prevalent 'inadequate management and widespread corruption', with the interviewee indicting that 'they are not a partner for discussions or other reasons' (BCF representative). Moreover, the community foundation lacks community and institutional support, with no partners in addressing the burning issues Bucharest deals with.

In contrast, Bürgerstiftungen Deutschlands from Germany (BD) has a closer relationship with the public administration in the sense that there are regular regional and national meetings for community foundations to exchange good practices, learn about challenges, develop solutions and ideas together, and to get strategic advice. The foundation also receives a substantial monetary support from the Government, amounting to bout EUR 500,000 per year. They distribute the funds received from the Ministry of Family Affairs to all community foundations in the region to support volunteers and refugees.

3. Organizational structure and sustainability

The third and final major contextual/structural difference observed is constituted by the organizational structure and sustainability of the foundation. While BCF has no reserve or an endowment fund, despite registering a growth in terms of funding gathered from the community, BD and SYCF are more structured and sustainable. BD is practically a network of community foundations, a large and financially stable organization, belonging to another (larger) umbrella organization: the Association of Community Foundations. SYCF is somewhat different, in the sense that it is covering four cities and has a history of 32 years, with three major teams focusing on philanthropy, grant-making and administrative support. In terms of grant-making, they reach approximately GBP 1 million per year, and have a target of building an endowment fund of up to GBP 20 million until 2020. It is obvious that both in terms of financial stability and power, the organizations grappling with building community resilience stand far apart. In addition, experience, structure, and staff size can be essential factors affecting their ability to act as agents of change.

6.2. The need/ motive for building resilience

BCF's motives are related to the needs of the community it serves. While a lot of Bucharest was destroyed in the 1977 earthquake, the city lacks both governmental and non-governmental programs in terms of preparedness in face of a disaster. The foundation has initiated dialogue with key stakeholders (e.g., local public administration, the Emergency Situations Inspectorate, etc.) and is actively seeking to place the issue on the public agenda. 'After beginning discussions about the earthquake, we realized the situation is rather a critical and difficult one', said the BCF representative. According to her, this is most evident in the resistance from public administration representatives, who are afraid to support this kind of action, in order not to frighten the citizens, but action is required, because such a natural disaster can happen anytime.

BD's motive is also related to the needs of the community: a more agile response to the problem of immigration due to government structure inflexibility. Even though they receive significant monetary support from the Government, the process is burdening and the foundation of ten finds itself in difficulty of performing its activities, because it has to wait for answers from the public administration. Similarly, SYCF also highlights the responsibility it has towards the community. Even though the need is located in the past (economic downturn), the threat is ever-present and 'CF's have a responsibility to be involved…they are building a thriving third sector from the bottom-up, which is about creating resilience, strength and adaptability and helping them grow' (SYCF representative).

To summarize, all three CFs present the same motivation for engaging in community resilience building: either an immediate or a more distant, but very real need or threat in the community.

6.3. The role of CF's in building resilience

One of the participants in the Resilience Lab indicated that building resilience is 'close to the mission of the community foundation […] connected to their strategy and to what they do each day […]' (Director of the ARC Community Foundation Programme 2007-June 2016). Community foundations identify their mission in connection to the community and its needs, and data from the interviews suggest that by doing community needs mapping, CFs move beyond their traditional role, but that this role is well within the realm of their mission and activity.

It is apparent that community foundations fulfill the **role of a change agent** in building resilience within their communities. As a change agent, these organizations are acting as *community need identifiers*. They actively seek to identify, chart and publicize such needs. One suitable example in this case is the Vital Signs study undertaken by BCF, which collects data and identifies needs or opportunities for

action in Bucharest. As Bevan states, '(…) community foundations which under-take 'community needs mapping' are expanding their roles in civil society beyond that of traditional grantmaker' (Bevan, 2013).

In addition, they are *uniquely placed resource aggregators and mobilizers*. However, community foundations are not only 'uniquely placed (…) [and] (...) trusted by their community with access to resources we can potentially mobilize' (SYCF representative), but they also constitute 'a factor of resilience, a stable pole, a small mountain, a framework within the community' (BD representative), that promote the idea of resilience, provide support for elaborating public policies, and gather resources from the community. In this respect, community foundations act as catalysts that build or activate a community's ability to take planned action and effect change.

7. Limitations

The results presented here must be interpreted in the light of the limitations of this study. First and foremost, given the size of the sample involved in this qualitative exploratory study, results cannot be generalized beyond the study sample. Additionally, given the qualitative nature of the study, results presented here may be regarded as indicative of underlying reasons to observed events. But, while they offer a rich description of particular settings and organizations, offering a more in depth understanding of particulars, they limit the generalizability to other community foundations or locations. Finally, as with most qualitative research, causality cannot be determined with an acceptable degree of certainty: the present analysis provides a rich description regarding 'what is going on', 'how things are happening', but not to 'why things are happening'.

8. Conclusions

Based on the findings and taking the limitations inherent to exploratory qualitative research several cautious conclusions may be drawn. It is evident that the role of community foundations in building community resilience is not yet well examined in the resilience literature, and that the present study is an indication of what these roles may be, rather than definitive evidence.

Based on limited evidence from the collected data, community foundations seem to fulfill at least two major roles with respect to community resilience building. These nonprofits are a) community needs identifiers and b) resource aggregators and mobilizers acting as agents of change in their community, while also fulfilling their traditional role. It is conceivable that these organizations play further roles in the process, but a larger sample of community foundations must be examined in order to identify what these roles may be.

9. Potential avenues for future research

While there are few studies aimed at analyzing the issue of community resilience and the position that community foundations occupy in the process of community resilience building, neither the scientific or practitioner literature has examined this issue in depth. Most of the supporting evidence about the role of these organizations comes from the latter, and both the scientific and practitioner literature relies almost exclusively on qualitative data and analyses. It is obvious that not only there is a need for more research on the topic, but also that scientific research needs to take interest in examining these key actors in society.

In addition, existing qualitative research should be expanded on either by using mixed methods, or by corroborating findings through rigorous quantitative studies. Finally, designing and conducting large scale quantitative research is imperative in order to obtain more generalizable results.

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Annex 1. Semi-structured interview

1. Could you please tell me about your organization:
   a. What are the main characteristics of the organizational structure/ human resources?
   b. How would you describe the organization in terms of financial stability?
   c. What does the wider socio-economic, political, community context look like?

2. Could you please tell me more about your community?
   a. What do you think that are the major stress factors in your community?
   b. Why does your community need to build resilience and to what specifically?

3. In general, do you think that community foundations have a role to play in evaluating and strengthening community resilience?

4. What role would that be in your opinion?

5. How did your organization become interested in resilience (internal or external factors)? Why?

6. Specifically, how does your organization build the resilience of the community it serves?

7. Who else (organizations, individuals) participate in this effort?
   a. What is their role?
   b. Could these efforts be successful without the aid of these individuals/organizations?
   c. Who else could contribute and how?

Gendered Experience
in Local Governance:
Views of U.S. Female Mayors

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Abstract. Throughout recent years, political events have brought about a surge in female candidacies for various types of electoral seats all over the world. One of these venues of power is a lesser-explored type of office, that of the mayor, the top leader of a municipality. Theories of representation shed light on what it means and what it entails for one's presence in office to actually matter, and women's perception on whether, to what extent, and how they exert representation needs further scientific investigation.

This paper aims to analyze American female mayors' perceptions on the office they hold, on whether and in what ways gender plays out in their political activity, and on the dimensions of representation that they encompass by the way they exercise mayoral office. The relevance of studying their perceptions stems from the size of their constituencies, and the enlarged access the latter have to their elected officials, which allows these women holding local office to directly assess the quality of their representation. By conducting 36 interviews with women leading U.S. city halls, the author finds commonalities in their path to office and perceived gender-related barriers, and builds on literature tackling gender differences in recruitment, election, and exercising political office.

Keywords: gender, representation, local governance, female mayors.

1. Introduction

Recent years have brought about a surge of female electoral candidacies and victories across the world, generating multiple firsts in terms of women holding elected or appointed office on numerous scales. As national executive or legislative offices have so far caught most of the scholarly interest, local venues of power remain utterly underexplored and in need of in-depth and further investigation. From the election of Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, D.C., Anne Hidalgo of Paris, Gabriela Firea of Bucharest, or Yuriko Koike of Tokyo, several capital cities of the world are currently experiencing the leadership of the first woman to hold the top municipality office.

Building on theories of political representation, female elected or appointed officials in local venues of power constitute a twofold interest, as they reflect the in-office experience of a conventional political minority, and exercise leadership in an office of local impact, which can be either a stepping stone for a further national candidacy (Briggs, 2000), or the place where politicians who have gained national-level experience return to capitalize on it and actually make a difference (Kotakorpi, Poutvaara and Tervio, 2015). This paper aims to address these gaps by analyzing American women mayors' experience in local leadership.

2. Women's representation in municipal leadership

As of 2018, 23 of the 100 largest cities in the United States were led by women (CAWP, 2018). Thus, almost one in four of the top 100 U.S. cities experienced female leadership. Literature on local politics showed that municipal politics fosters women's participation, for a series of reasons: 1) it is a less competitive venue of power; 2) it does not require relocation; and 3) it is deemed as a stepping stone for other, higher-level, offices (Crow, 1997). Moreover, women's motivation to run locally might be more compatible with their very nature than higher-level office, as local office offers the chance to provide change that affects their own lives most directly, and witness first-hand how their policies impact the community (Rombough and Keithly, 2010).

Even if the lion's share of research focuses more on national-level leadership positions than their local versions, of mayors and councilors, the latter are arguably sources and training wheels for higher-level leadership roles (Broockman, 2013; Folke and Rickne, 2016; Matland and Lilliefeldt, 2014; Sanbonmatsu, 2006; Schreiber and Adams, 2008; Smith, Reingold and Owens, 2012; Sundström and Wängnerud, 2016). Whereas local office might be more accessible to women due to its more limited scale, legislative office might also be more attainable than executive one – even on a local level – due to its multimember feature. While holding office, women leaders can earn political capital, or so-called 'useful credentials'

(Sanbonmatsu, 2006) for eventually making a bid for an eventual higher-level positions. Also, these less prestigious seats can lend women an elevated level of comfort (Voina, 2018), as well as parties and constituents, when contemplating recruitment and vote for a woman, in cases when the election is not a zero-sum game; thus, endorsement might increase when women's victory in a campaign does not translate into men's failure.

The desirability hypothesis (Smith, Reingold and Owens, 2012) represents yet another construct justifying women's underrepresentation in politics; it states that the level of power or prestige associated with a certain political role stands in inverse ratio to the likelihood of a female candidate to actually attain it. Hence, power of a leadership seat weighs on both the party's decision to recruit and propel a woman toward it, and the constituents' decision to vote for her, facing such a situation. In local decision-making, however, policy areas might be less likely to generate divergent positions, but rather to dictate priorities based on the resource allocation strategy: 'women are likely to have a different preference ordering than men because of their life experience' (Matland and Lilliefeldt, 2014).

Moreover, ideology and geography seem to impact dramatically on women's level of representation in cities, as Smith, Reingold and Owens (2012) found that 'the strongest and most consistent predictors of women's presence as mayors and councilors are demographics and geographic region' (p. 316). Areas where liberals dominate the ideological make-up of the population are conventionally more open and favorable to women seeking office – women's right to stand up for election is in itself a liberal claim. Also, unsurprisingly, studies show that the Democrats are the main endorses of female politicians in American politics (Beckwith, 2014; Elder, 2014; Erzeel and Celis, 2016, Lawless and Pearson, 2008).

Last but not least, studies have shown that women in general populations do seek for candidates who share their demographics; in other words, substantial findings show that women manifest gender solidarity (Djupe and Olson, 2013; Fox and Lawless, 2010; Mansbridge, 1999; Sanbonmatsu, 2006), building on Pitkin's (1967) concept of symbolic representation.

One particular model of representation (Pitkin, 1967) can be chiefly used in describing ways in which women holding political office. Formalistic representation stands for how women are authorized to seek political roles and reach them, as well as mechanisms by which they are held accountable. Descriptive representation refers to numerical distribution of elected officials, and their demographic resemblance to their constituency. Whereas this latter component shows whether representatives look like citizens in the general population, substantive representation adds a layer that shows actions taken on behalf those represented, whether they act for them. Symbolic representation, on the other hand, undergirds the meaning the representation act carries or engenders for those being represented.

3. Methodology

According to Rutgers' Center for American Women and Politics, data for female mayors in cities with populations over 30,000 showed under 20% women's representation in local office for 2016, and 21.8% in 2017, an unprecedented level in U.S. history (CAWP, 2017). Based on the CAWP list, the author generated a database of women holding local office in 2017, adding e-mail contacts for 232 of the 297 women in the list, due to contact information availability on institutional or professional websites. E-mails requesting interviews were submitted to all 232 female representatives, in waves throughout April and May 2017, met with 4 refusals and 36 positive answers. The e-mail provided information regarding the aim and scope of the study, as well as source confidentiality and further access to findings specifications. Following the interview requests submitted over e-mail or website contact forms, the author obtained 1 face-to-face interview, 5 phone interviews, and 30 online administered interviews with women holding local office in USA, in 2017. Interviewees were coded chronologically (time of interview completion) and will henceforth be referred to using their assigned indices, from I1 to I36.

3.1. Limitations

Due to the proximity of the 2016 presidential elections, *gender* was a sensitive subject to tackle; thus, some interviewees displayed availability to contribute to the study, while other local officials approached refused to participate specifically due to the gender component of the study. Out of the 297 women in the CAWP database, 65 local officials had no electronic route of contact; in several cases of those actually contacted, assistants/secretaries would filter the electronic correspondence, and acted as barriers against delivering the message to the women in office, sending negative responses to the author's interview request based on the official's busy schedule or lack of interest. Moreover, local administration in the United States of America presents a variety of types, so women contacted for this study were mostly elected officials, but a handful were also appointed, and held top local leadership roles termed as mayor or Village President.

3.2. Research questions

Based on theories of representation, RQ1 aimed at identifying why and how women experience local political representation. Through this research question, the author intended to shed light on female local officials' view on their representation experience, their motivations for seeking office, and their experience as women holding a traditionally male position.

Moreover, RQ2 introduced the gender variable, aiming to analyze how gender played out in the women's local office experience. Tackling aspects of political sup-

port, constituents' support, or policies framed based on gender, the author expected to essentially document whether or not gender is perceived as a factor in local governance by the women interviewed, and the multifold experiences that center around gender in recruitment, reaching office, and exercising it.

3.3. Interview guide

The interview method was employed in carrying out this study; a semi-structured interview guide was designed, based on literature, and pre-tested on one female local official, suggesting that the line of questioning was coherent, relevant, and consequential for the study design.

The interview commenced with a background question, assessing paths to office of American female mayors. The author framed the following nine questions within the logic of representation theory, building on Pitkin's (1967) model of representation. Questions on perceived barriers and opportunities, partisan differences in fielding candidates, and voter bias build on formalistic representation. Another set of questions tackles descriptive representation, investigating subjects' effort to enhance representation by recruiting other women and their perception on the status and perspectives of women's empowerment in the United States. Substantive representation was considered in framing questions about their impact on policy-making, attitudes and actions towards their female constituents, and experience-based guidance for gender peers. Lastly, the study weighs on symbolic representation, inquiring about officials' perceptions of female constituents' attitudes towards them.

4. Gendered experience in local governance: views of women mayors

4.1. Paths to office

The opening question, undergirding women's motivation to seek office, revealed multifold grounds for emerging as candidates for local leadership, mainly centered around three concepts: community, change, and tradition. As transpired from nearly all answers provided by women mayors, their candidacies were overwhelmingly community-driven. Interviewees mostly talked about community service, grassroots activism, knowledge of community issues, issue-based candidacies to justify their interest for local office. Several women discussed their previous grassroots efforts in the city and held several roles, either in the city council (I1, I7, I30), as Chairs of different city Boards (I2, I20), and issue-based committees that enabled them to gain in-depth knowledge of issues (I30), as well as an opportunity to experience a disconnect between the rhetoric presented and the reality of issues (I33). Regarding the idea of local office being the stepping stone for national office or the retirement place, one mayor declared to returning to her hometown to cap-

italize on her political expertise after having 'worked many years for the federal government' (I6).

Moreover, several women stated that public service ran in their families (I1, I31, I34), and presented their political interests as tradition and duty: '[m]y father … raised me that we all have to take a turn serving our country and participate' (I5), 'to protect [the city's] history, present, and future' (I12). A handful of female mayors also declared having been encouraged to run for office (I23, I26, I28); interviewees confessed to gatekeepers being persistent in their requests, as they had 'been asked repeatedly to run for office' (I23), or 'urged to run for office by the then Mayor, a male' (I26). Last but not least, they also received encouragement from their male partners or other women holding office, acting as gatekeepers. One of the mayors interviewed discussed her membership to 'the League of Women Voters, [who] inspired me to get more involved with my city' (I36); research on women's networks shows that these entities are vital to women's empowerment, nurturing their capabilities and providing support in order to increase their political participation (Smith, Reingold and Owens, 2012).

Community, as stated before, stood out as playing a crucial role in women's decisions to get involved into politics. The idea of making a difference within their communities was expressed in multifold ways (I1, I2, I4, I8, I9, I10, I13, I17, I24, I25, I27); beyond this commitment, the subjects declared they 'care about the city' (I1), driven by 'a great deal of public engagement and volunteerism' (I4), and even defined themselves as products of their community, 'home grown product of my city' (I2). Women stated a 'desire to provide better […] for my community' (I8), 'utilize my skill set to benefit my community' (I9), 'a way to serve my community' (I10), and 'work for the community and fight for my city' (I34), to make it 'better for the future' (I13). Thus, women mayors defined community as both their public service target group, and their drive to bring about change.

Change also emerged as a central aspect of the women's rhetoric. Positioning themselves against the status quo, women decided to launch a bid for office as a reaction to the then city management: 'I saw a level of extreme discontent with the former administration over a policy issue […]. It had to change!' (I2), 'dissatisfaction with the previous Mayor' (I32), and saw an opportunity to employ a different style of local leadership, 'to make a positive change for businesses in the community' (I3), 'to provide [a new style of] leadership [to spur economic and population growth and participate in regional objectives]' (I11). However, the leadership style advanced by women leaders did not only come down to transactional leadership (Burns, 2010), but also to transformational leadership (Burns, 2010), as confessed by mayors who projected their candidacies as an opportunity to 'revitalize my hometown' (I19), 'a positive leader who would build relationships and help our community move forward' (I22), proposing themselves as solutions before communities

that 'deserved better leadership' (I29). What is more, women mayors saw their presence as disruptive to the old boys' club, declaring their 'drive to create change in my community, innovate a dry and exclusive organizational system and chart a new path for women in leadership' (I14), and acknowledged their pioneer status: 'I am the first woman to hold this office' (I14), 'our city has never elected a woman Mayor before me' (I31), '[…], the first elected female Mayor in our history' (I29).

4.2. Perceived barriers and opportunities

Data provided by female mayors showed the need to navigate gendered terrain, when exploring the political realm. Only a handful did not think gender was a factor in exercising political roles, and some attested to witnessing real improvements throughout their public service (I4, I13, I34). In terms of opportunities, respondents capitalized on some traits that gave them the upper hand, such as being perceived as 'better communicators and [as] have[ing] better attention to detail and outcomes' (I27), or as owning a 'natural ability to multitask, [as well as a] deeper level of empathy' (I29).

Accounts of barriers outnumbered those of opportunities, revealing gender bias and attempts to discourage and diminish them while exercising office. The traditionally male realm of politics was defined as a 'hard to break network' (I23), as it is 'harder to men to accept [women taking on authority roles]' (I1). Frequent accounts of interactions with male colleagues and counterparts showed that men 'often overlook the female' [for answers] (I10), undermine them, 'feel they have to educate or explain issues' (I17), 'have trouble dealing with a woman' (I21) and 'trouble hearing a woman's voice' (I23). What is more, mayors even denounced acts of defiance, as men 'refused to look me in the face when negotiating [and] they would defer to my male Chief of Staff' (I2). Respondents also pointed out gender being an element of surprise in meetings or first encounters, being 'assumed […] male, until someone sees me and is corrected' (I3).

One woman's perspective took a more positive tone, declaring gender an asset, due to giving her 'the mother's edge, [by being perceived as] more honest, concerned with family issues, more compassionate, and more trustworthy' (I7), yet this might also translate into associating women with traditional roles: '[p]eople used to ask me who watched my kids while I was working' (I3).

More barriers became obvious as women documented their experience: 'the layer of gender is evident in the tone, language and demands placed upon my professional and personal time' (I14). Several felt being held to higher standards, and sanctioned more drastically than their male counterparts, as they were given 'not much room for trial and error' (I5), and expected to work twice as hard to be heard and taken into consideration, despite holding expertise (I3, I17, I20). Women thus

faced greater scrutiny and criticism, especially on issues beyond the traditional feminine area of expertise (I33), whereas their out of ordinary candidacies made fundraising more difficult (I8, I15).

Jamieson's (1995) double bind emerged as a central concept in the 36 mayors' accounts of gendered leadership experience. Judged by looks (I15, I17, I31), balancing authenticity and viability was declared to be a more difficult task for women (I1), as they encountered a 'finer line they [women] have to walk in terms of being credible and likeable' (I1). The double bind was expressed in terms of being criticized for being 'too bossy, or abrasive' (I29), while having to balance showing 'legitimacy, professionalism' (I1), 'expertise' (I13) in a 'compassionate, but not forceful [manner]' (I13), showing 'calm temperament and authenticity' (I1, I31).

Gender also played out in the networking component inherent to the job: '[A]ny authority is perceived differently and professional relationships are seen as 'affairs'' (I12).

4.3. Partisan differences in fielding female candidates

Results show that nearly all subjects stressed that local office is traditionally a non-partisan role (I3, I9, I18, I21, I20, I23, I24, I26, I28, I29, I31, I32, I36), one mayor even offered a further variable to investigate by placing geography before party in justifying the gender disparity in local office. Thus, a future line of research should focus on the red-state and blue-state divide and partisan efforts to promote women for public administration leadership. Several mayors declared working with or being supported by one party of the other (in most cases, the Democratic Party) on a local level (I2), and one subject even declared being supported and collaborating with the opposing party; she identified as a Republican, but worked better with local Democrats (I3). Another noteworthy finding substantiates a further inquiry into men's support of women in office, as one mayor confidently asserted having been 'supported and helped by men to do a good job' (I22).

The mayors interviewed disclosed their perceptions of the two parties' attitudes towards women, and perspectives turned out to be mixed. Whereas Democrats are deemed as 'more civil' (I9), 'accepting, increasingly committed to equality' (I1), favoring 'younger candidates' (I30), and openly offering women encouragement to run for office (I3, I33), and 'execute [duties] and get things done' (I5), mayors also identified a disconnect between rhetoric and action, advancing the idea that Democrats are 'far less likely to support females [and act] very passive aggressive[ly]' towards women holding office (I16).

On the other hand, subjects describing Republicans' recruitment efforts denounced tokenism in their treatment of female candidates, stating that the latter promote 'those who seem to be subservient to their husbands or other political operatives around them' (I13) and 'want [women] for decoration and to support the

'established' party line' (I16). Others experienced Republicans being 'not friendly, descreasing[ly supportive, focusing on] traditional gender roles' (I1), and when actually recruiting women for office, they tend to do so seeking 'more attractive women' (I15). However, mayors portray female Republicans to be 'bolder in their communication' and 'women are less open to accept women in power' (I1), thus stressing the lack of gender solidarity, a paradox common in conventional wisdom regarding women in power. Beyond these views, utter partisan differences were shown in some mayors' experience: '[S]ure, but I don't have time to write a book and that's what it would take' (I8).

4.4. Voter bias

The aspect of voter bias, framed within the question investigating whether they gender played a role in their voters' election choice, turned out to be problematic for some interviewees. Answers took a defensive tone, as several justified their victory through competitive advantages against their opponents, in terms of raising more money, working harder, being more experienced and qualified (I9), knowing the community (I13, I34) and being popular and trusted: 'the residents trusted my loyalty to the city and to them' (I2), 'they believe I would be better at the job' (I22), 'I raised more money and worked harder' (I11), 'my success has been what they valued' (I29). One mayor distinctly owes her 'overwhelming victory [to the] leadership roles [held] in various organizations during many years of service' (I20).

Other findings focused on issue compatibility or gender solidarity (I21, I3, I35), advancing an existing 'balance. There are some people who would never vote for a female and others who would vote for you because you are female' (I21) or outright stating that gender was an aspect they were able to leverage to their benefit: 'women tend to look for opportunities to support female candidates,' 'voters want to see gender diversity' (I29). Moreover, a substantial share of answers confirmed gender playing out to their advantage, as it gave them assets that would make them the suitable candidate for the job (I3): 'I get things done and manage effectively. Both essential skills that women excel at and are more visible locally' (I5), 'the only woman running who was on the right side of the major issue' (I8), '[constituents] needed someone to be their voice and I provided them that avenue' (I2).

4.5. Recruitment of other women

In terms of acknowledging their role in paving the way to elected office for other women, nearly all mayors interviewed declared actively and consistently recruiting women. 'I have a very strong belief that when women reach the top of ladder, we must hold it in place for others to follow. Achieving a milestone is not

the time to kick the ladder away. You will stand alone' (I14). The focus of their recruitment efforts went beyond women, onto other conventionally underrepresented groups, such as minorities or young people. However, women mayors stressed that gender was not necessarily the reason for fielding female candidates, but rather their fitness for the position: 'it had to do with the fact that I felt like she could do the job, from her education, from her experience, from her career' (I7).

Women confessed to 'always filling the pipeline, [as doing so was a] critical part of being a leader' (I1), even from a very young age 'I spend time talking with girls and young women to encourage them to consider careers and elected office as options' (I23). Studies on political ambition reveal gender gaps in considering public office (Fox and Lawless, 2010; 2011; 2014), thus recruiting young falls under recommendations of scholars whose research are consequential for the field.

The lion's share of women interviewed declared successful in their recruitment efforts, to such an extent that one mayor managed to bring female majority to city council (I36). Just one respondent pointed out to a trial and error process in which she had 'tried [to bring women on board], but most are unwilling to take the criticism inherent to the position' (I26).

4.6. Perception of women's status and perspectives

Views on women's status and perspectives also turned out to be mixed, yet close to all local leaders interviewed acknowledged tremendous progress achieved during the last decades, whereas – aware of their own role in empowering women – they announced that significantly more work needed to be done (I1, I2, I3, I15, I17, I24, I26, I28, I33). Optimism transpired from most women's perspectives, but several mayors bluntly evoked the 2016 presidential election results being a setback for women (I1, I5, I26, I32). As the author expected, Hillary Clinton's loss – or Donald Trump's victory – impacted on female leaders' psyches, as they tried to justify the results by a sum of factors undergirding gender bias: '[m]isogyny played a role in Hillary's [Clinton] loss, in the vitriol and hatred she inspires in men and in other women' (I1), 'media, politicians, voters discount women's role in politics' (I3); most mayors also expressed their desire to improve women's representation: '[w]e need a woman in the White House' (I35).

One mayor anticipated the surge eventually substantiated through an unprecedented level of candidacies and victories in American electoral politics (CAWP, 2018): 'I think we are about to see a flood of women in political office' (I9). Aware of their role as mentors and gatekeepers, mayors pledged to 'continue to recruit more women into public service' (I4). Based on the idea that exposure to women in political roles ultimately normalizes their presence in the arena (I6), the leaders in question stressed the need for systematic recruitment, mentoring, support, and

encouragement (I36): 'We need to build the bench and donate to female candidates so they have the funds needed for good campaigns' (I8).

Significantly, some women suggested including men in the process of improving women's perspectives, thus creating allies and enriching the process of deliberative and representative politics: 'I don't need an invitation to a conversational table – I can get myself there. But I do need men to stop talking long enough to realize there's another voice there' (I14).

4.7. Perceived impact on quality of policy-making

Previous research on women holding public office (Polletta and Chen, 2013; Volden, Wiseman and Wittmer, 2013) shows that women impact the quality of deliberation and policy-making, from their unique position of holders and nurturers of different perspectives. Various commonalities can be identified across the answers provided by the mayors, focusing on women bringing added value to the leadership style through collaboration: 'greater willingness to explore the grey areas of collaboration and compromise' (I14), good negotiators (I1) and great consensus-builders (I4), providing 'a more nurturing, collaborative spirit to the conversation' (I3), 'more collaboration and a different perspective to issues that broadens the policymaking options that are developed' (I36), 'an innate ability to build consensus' (I20), and to 'approach issues with a collaborative mindset rather than competitive' (I24).

Other views pointed out a different perspective (I34) aimed at identifying the best policies: 'negotiators, and willing to compromise to work out solutions' (I24), 'better attention to detail and outcomes, ability to multitask' (I1), 'evaluate [the situation] differently [than their male counterparts]' (I2), 'interested in solutions to fix things' (I5), and 'some of the best public servants that I know' (I29).

Last but not least, women's accounts of their leadership experience centered on altruism, linked to their nurturing nature; according to the mayors, women in public office are better communicators, have a deep level of empathy, and work hard to provide a social safety net (I1), they are the best listeners (I4) and 'more women leaders would result in improvements in education, health care, and the environment' (I33).

4.8. Attitudes and actions toward female constituents

Building on the essence of substantive representation, the question investigating attitudes and actions mayors express towards their female constituents is framed in terms of whether the former deem the latter as a special constituency, and whether there are gender-specific issues they address. Despite emphasizing that local office is less gendered than higher-level positions, most subjects com-

prised in this study declare that policies relevant to their communities overlap with issues facing female residents. Among these issues, mayors discussed education, street safety and public lighting (I1, I11, I6, I17), health care (I6, I14, I35), housing affordability and safety (I14, I20). Women argued that they 'play a unique role in parenting, in education, and I think that our perspective is different' (I29).

In their majority, women positioned themselves as advocates for women in their constituencies, working on and promoting policies that primarily affect women; some went as far as placing gender in the forefront of their activity: 'I see the world in the gendered way' (I1). Mayors described advocacy in terms of focusing on alleviating the gender gap (I14, I33), childcare and afterschool programs (I15), paid parental leave and universal pre-k (I25), policies for single working moms (I5, I35), and women facing homelessness or unsafe housing: 'Sometimes you need to connect them to the right resources, and other times you can solve the problem by being an advocate for them' (I4). One notable initiative pertains to one mayor aiming to close the gender gap in STEM, by hosting 'workshops and classes to teach young girls how to code at an early age' (I34). Another unique gender-related advocacy effort belongs to one mayor engaged in working with the university on educating the community on issues of sexual assaults, rape, and drinking issues (I17).

On the other hand, a handful of the women interviewed took a genderless approach and disclosed tackling constituents' issues based on their specific individual needs: 'all unique to the circumstance and are dealt with on an individual basis' (I2), 'I don't see women's issues and men's issues, I see human issues' (I7), women's issues being rather perceived as only 'a different perspective held by a large number of voters' (I9).

4.9. Experience-based guidance for gender peers

In providing advice for other women displaying political ambition, the author aimed to incentivize mayors to share their own struggles and experience in seeking office. Nearly all respondents drew on their experience and suggested authenticity (I22) and to stay grounded in their core principles and values (I2, I22, I36), suggesting double-bind related challenges they had to face. Other guiding points focused on issues and people, recommending women to be community-oriented and enforce a power with strategy – 'rather than forcing your will on others' (I20) – in pursuing issues related to their policies of interest and outworking their opponents (I3, I4). A feminist approach also emerged from suggestions to support other women (I2) and to not contribute to the 'unnecessary gender binary narrow-mindedness' (I36); furthermore, women's networks and grassroots work came up again as a support structure of strategic importance: 'network within your community to maximize your name recognition once you decide to run' (I26).

4.10. Perception of female constituents' attitudes

The question interrogating mayors' perceptions of their female constituents' attitudes toward them specifically asked whether the latter felt more comfortable reaching out to them than to their male counterparts. Most interviewees identified this aspect as part of their mayoral experience, and framed its reasoning within the ethics of care, traditionally associated with traits and behaviors stemming from women's nature. According to the mayors interviewed, their gender projects a higher level of trust and approachability (I1, I11, I26, I33, I34), so that female constituents feel more comfortable reaching out to them and sharing their concerns (I21, I23). They are deemed 'more sympathetic, [having a] softer touch, feel[ing] a connection [and being] identified with' (I1). Several mayors pointed out that their presence in office impacts differently on male constituents as well, yet in different ways; whereas one mayor shared that constituents listen to her, but 'still want validation from a man' (I10), several others declare that men share women's level of comfort in reaching out to their female leader: they 'don't feel intimidated' (I1), 'undoubtedly prefer to speak to me over male staff' (I2), and 'are more comfortable to talk to me than to my male colleagues' (I7).

Consistent with these statements, the descriptive dimension of representation may build on its symbolic one, as mayors found meaning of their being in office for both female and male constituents: '100% yes. And I think many men do as well – certainly people who identify as being from a marginalized population see a more likely inroads and synergy to a conversation with me. I hear repeatedly how meaningful it is for both men and women that there is a woman in this seat of a 'strong mayor' system' (I14). Moreover, one mayor advanced her role and responsibility as a gatekeeper for her younger gender peers: 'I have been contacted by many girl scouts to present on city government. I feel a distinct pride in showing them that there are no limits for women' (I29).

5. Conclusions

Interviews conducted with 36 female mayors of American cities substantiate former findings in regards to gender and layers of representation. The local leaders narrated their representation experience on various levels, engendering confirmation of representation theories and of a persistent gender gap. Capitalizing on their connection to the community and professional experience that enabled them to seek local office and exercise the top local leadership position in certain ways and styles, the women used the interview opportunity itself to navigate a double bind, in that they balanced their authenticity as women and their viability/competence as office-holders.

The mayors centered their discourse on the idea of serving their communities, and doing so in a different style than their male counterparts. Displaying a high

commitment to women, mayors built on the various layers of representation by channeling their resources towards sometimes gender-based issues facing residents of their communities, and by actively and consistently recruiting and propelling women towards assuming public service roles. Gender also turned out to dominate their rhetoric in several ways, by confirming biases, embracing gatekeepers' efforts, narrating barriers and gender-related assets. The strategic importance of investigating women in local leadership positions comes from their proximity to their constituency and authenticity of their experience, as impact of their policies and representation itself become more quantifiable.

Future lines of research should include a wider and more diverse population of women holding local office. Also, interviewing at difference stages of their local tenure and following up on their experiences might provide a deeper, more relevant and authentic account of their public service, building on empirical representation and theories of gender and politics.

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Participatory Budgeting Model at Global Level

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Abstract. This article is presenting general aspects regarding participatory budgeting models at the global level. We are discussing about legislative aspects related to participatory budgeting, advantages and disadvantages, actors of participatory budgeting, while also pointing out several models of participatory budgeting at the global level. Principles that govern participatory budgeting and steps proposed in initiation participatory budgeting are also parts treated in this paper. The analysis of participatory budgeting is the most important subject studied in this article.

Keywords: citizens, budget, good practices, principles, actors, steps, involvement.

1. Introduction

This paper is about to discuss about what makes a good participatory budgeting model and therefore what elements to include in the process, in order to have a linear and fruitful development of a plan that would help the city, community, neighborhood whatever the case. The research method used in this article is documents studies. We are presenting a modern approach regarding a model of participatory budgeting at global level.

What is considered to be important in the participatory budgeting process is the involvement of the citizens (with ideas and identification of concrete problems they deal with), the issue around money which is represented through an amount from the budget for the usage of that particular purpose identified accordingly to the policies, directions of the strategy all this is concreted in meetings that are organized through the Internet, papers and other means and which are conducted by a coordinator. The methodology that we used is a qualitative method of research, documents analysis.

2. Theoretical framework

A very important element that this type of budgeting has to keep in mind refers to the principles that govern it from the beginning all throughout the end. The first principle is transparency and it is regarding the fact that everything is dealt with public money and in public meetings and in accordance with the official policies and strategies and therefore everything has to be illustrated and presented in a document posted at everyone's reach, also there are the public meetings that also represent a great deal in the transparency of the public level. Collaboration which refers to the citizens because they have to meet and decide in an integrated manner all the problems that they are facing and it may be also the case of the different institutions that are responsible to implement a plan and resolve the problems identified. A third principle is involvement which implies that the citizens can and have to be part in the public meetings and participate in the presentation and the decision making process of the identification of problems that are to be resolved through the money allocated (Lazenby, 2013, pp. 10-21; Bergin and Ghironi, 2013, pp. 1-3).

Efficiency is about handling and solving the problems in the most efficient methods with the exact amount of money that it is received and therefore not to waste it when we can solve other problems as well. Compliance with the strategy is very important because one can only solve the problems that are in direct connection and referred to in the city, national, community strategy. Anything else is not going to be taken into consideration unless a new problem arises or it is not identified correctly. Subsidiarity is another principle that one may want to con-

sider and it is referring to the idea that the identification of the problems and the decision should be taken at the most immediate level of those who are dealing with the problem. Correlation is mostly about the fact that one should consider all the investments that are taking part at that precise time in the present and the ones that are going to be (with regard to the identified problems) and connect, correlate them. Another principle that can be added here is that of accountability in the sense that now, after applying the one of subsidiarity and empowerment of the citizens and the institutions at a more local position, the responsibilities are shifted from a central level to a more local and therefore the accountability should lay on a more appropriate level (Masser, 2013, pp. 31-56; Nader, 1994, pp. 579-586; Shah, 2007, pp. 10-33).

Alongside the aforementioned principles, the actors represent another important component in the participatory budgeting realization process. They come from different positions and levels but in the end they contribute in one way or the other to the same idea. First we have the local community and citizens from the places that the participatory budgeting is trying to be implemented and with which help the identification of problems in accordance with the policies and strategies is much more on the spot and on concrete and reality bases (Sgueo, 2015, pp. 33-67; Kazumasa, 1991, pp. 473-497).

Then there is the civil society which has to be taken into account, encompassing associations, foundations, councils and so on. Thirdly, we have those who represent the political side and we can mention the civil servants, the City Hall, Local Council as main examples. Universities and faculties in the field of the public administration, finance and the public sector may have a valuable input. The volunteers can help with the organization of the meetings, and in the actual meetings they would help with the organization of the citizens and the proceedings. Along with the public sector we can have also the private sector which can be influenced by the decisions that are being taken or they can have a problem as well. Last but not least, there can be international bodies which can help by providing best practices in the field (see Menifield, 2011, pp. 63-80; Annicchiarico, Giammarioli and Piergallini, 2012, pp. 111-130).

In the participatory budgeting model we may include different financing scenarios which may represent a way to evaluate which is the best way to implement a decision of solving a problem or one can realize a Cost-Benefit Analysis to evaluate every alternative that exists for every problem or maybe it can be done also between them in order to identify problems that can be dealt with more efficiently and in conditions of greater effectiveness (Mulas-Granados, 2006, pp. 63-80; Driscoll and Steinar, 2014, pp. 133-147).

Along a Cost-Benefit Analysis we can also developed and adapt a Gantt diagram. With the help of this type of diagram the one responsible can realize it

in the moment when the directions of action are established. In this way, with a much clearer representation, the details of the action would be much more evident and the transparency as well. More specific solutions appear and can be adopted at more specific problems. An interesting fact would be designing a map of the neighborhood, in this way it can be identified the investments that are going on at that particular moment and from there we can decide the contexts and ways of implementation. We have to bear in mind the size of the communities, or the cities or whatever it is we are talking about; because being small means also small projects.

As best practices in the field we can enumerate the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where those living in several communities participated in such a project and the steps followed are at the base the same but what was considered as an interesting factor was the manner in which the citizens were informed about the meetings and kept up to date, which was through the cell phone as texting and they even developed a communication system which was used in a province (source ideas taken from The World Bank, 2012; also see Rubin, 2014, pp. 45-65).

Another example of good practices is considered to be Paris, which it is said to have the biggest participatory budget to invest. The process that they decided to implement was to ask the citizens to submit ideas on what and how to spend the money in a certain time period and at the end of that period the administration tested its feasibility in about two months. In another month the most feasible projects are presented to the citizens and later in the year they would cast a vote both on the Internet and on paper (source ideas taken from Napolitano, 2015; also see Dufrénot and Jawadi, 2013, pp. 1-4).

After studying and analyzing all the elements of the current participatory budgeting model developed for a community city and looking also at best practices available, the ones responsible can understand better the process and the mistakes they made, and for the next one they would know how to implement it much better and to cover all the faults that they made. Participatory budgeting is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making. It appeals to people's self-interest and benefits, not just community benefit.

3. Legislative aspects: the example of Romania

The category of revenues from public budgets can be identified under Article 5 of law 273/2006 which states that they can be under the form of taxes, sponsorships or subventions from the state budget. In a process of citizen's inclusion we must have under consideration their incomes, credits or loans. Having these categories of possible revenues, any local authority must establish the incomes for the local budget. In other words it must be established the way of taxing like line 2 from article 5 states: 'It is fundamental for the local public budget to identify and value the

taxing goods and the way of taxation based of how the following taxes are being calculated with a proper evaluation of the revenues'.

The expenditures classify as destinations under the form of activities, projects, programs and objectives and credit coordinators (city halls, public institutions, etc.). The major area of public budgets themes are executive authorities expenditures, education, health, culture, social help, services, agriculture, transportation and communication as well as other economic actions, funds for extern loans, etc. (Huang *et al.*, 2008, pp. 694-700; Goldfrank, 2012, pp. 11-40).

Another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is that all the taxes are collected for state budget and the final results are being allocated monthly in a proportion of 47 percent at the local budget where the following tax payers are having their activity, 13 percent to the local budget of the county and 22 percent into a different account. The last part is given for balancing the local budgets of communes, towns and cities. The rest of 18 percent is being taken by the state budget.

Steps for a successful budget plan include its development by a letter sent to the Economic and Finance Ministry. The letter should have under consideration the macroeconomic context where the forecasted project for the budget will be made (see Tanzi and Schuknecht, 2000, pp. 53-67; Waggoner and Tao, 2012, pp. 167-184). Also it should include the methodological approach and the limits of some incomes of budget during the consolidated transfers on the county overall; the deadline is the 1st of June each year. The second step, in a 10 days term, must be the communication from the ministries the budgets that have sums which must be transferred to the local budgets for special funds. In maximum 10 days from the requesting of project approval, the local county adopts the local budget project, being voted on chapters, articles, lines and appendixes.

To have in consideration the legislative framework, law 273 from 2006 is the essential part for public consulting. The article 8 states that the budgetary process is open and fully transparent by being published on the local media, the public institution website, as well as a public debate of the budget. Article 43 states that only if the project is being voted, the local council sessions take part with closed doors; otherwise, they are open for public.

When the project is being elaborated, the city hall is required to publish a press release regarding this point in a space that is fully accessible to the public and also has to broadcast the announcement through mass-media, according to law 52 from 2003 regarding public administration transparency in decision-making.

The local referendum is another mean of legal citizen participation in local matters of interest. It is seen as a direct instrument of citizen integrity in the decisional process of public budget allowance.

Another mean of public debate is represented by public coffee shop, which can include a coffee shop itself where people are grouped under 3-6 persons debating the aspects of the final solution regarding the public budget.

But because of the character of the local budget and the many steps that need to be taken into account a bond between city halls and citizens is rather hard to establish. The main reason is that in many scenarios the public servants choose to respect only minimally the legal framework aspects that establish obligations for local administration. As a result, it is very obvious that citizens are not pleased by the services provided, meaning that they are not satisfied with local administration services (Hume and Sentence, 2009, pp. 1426-1461).

4. The advantages and disadvantages of participatory budgeting

A few notable characteristics of participatory budgeting are central to understanding its functioning. First, participatory decisions only have an impact on investments, and the total amount available for investment priorities is calculated after allocating funds for current costs, such as salaries, maintenance, and interest payments. In some jurisdictions, the amount left over has been negligible, raising obvious questions about how much energy citizens are likely to dedicate to the participatory budget process if there is little at stake (Sintomer *et al.*, 2013, p. 11; Shim and Siegel, 1983, pp. 67-70). However, active involvement of civil society in the budget process, regardless of how much is available for investments, allows government to petition citizens for more resources or explain why there has been little investment undertaken. Once the amount to be invested has been determined, the decisions made in the participatory meetings are aggregated to determine how much will be spent in each of the investment areas (roads, health, etc.). Sometimes the transparent and seemingly rational-bureaucratic nature of the allocation formula legitimizes the allocation of resources, both for civil society and for bureaucratic and political actors operating in other phases of the budget process.

When sent to the legislature, the executive budget includes the budget priorities decided by the elected council and the division of resources decided by the allocation formula. The legitimacy provided by participation makes it extremely difficult for the legislature to engage in its traditional activity of amending the investment budget.

After the completion of the budget, the meetings review and evaluate the projects implemented. During the first months of the year, the budget implemented last year and decided two years prior is evaluated; the budget decided last year is implemented and tracked; and next year's budget allocations are discussed.

The participatory budgeting structure, though well institutionalized, has no legal framework. There is no law that forces the executive to accept the priorities voted by the participatory structure nor is there any prohibition on the legislature to amend the executive budget. This extra-legal format is necessary given the constitutional restrictions on the formal institutions of budgeting, and this flexibility

allows the participatory structure to adjust to fit changing fiscal, political, and economic circumstances.

Participatory budgeting has many advantages that can prove to the citizens that it is a process that would help them all. First of all, it re-directs the public resources for the benefit of the poorest; many of the current budgets do not think of the less unfortunate people, they don't have a specific system in which they could help them, while participatory budgeting can do that.

Secondly, it creates a new relationship between municipalities and citizens. There is no current relationship between the citizens and the municipalities, and this method could help create this relationship and also maintain it. Citizens don't believe in the system, and also don't think that the government is doing anything for them, they just want to take their money. But they do not see the other perspective that the government is just doing its job by trying to divide all the money they have in a correct manner.

Thirdly, participatory budgeting re-builds social ties and social interest. Having to do this together, the citizens have to work together in order to take the best decisions. It involves decisions about spending and devolving real power. It can also build the skills and awareness of the participants through the process of deliberation. And last but not least, it invents a new democratic culture and promotes active citizenship; as mentioned before, this practice is not a common one, and by involving all the citizens in taking such important decisions, makes them feel more involved in the process, and also makes them realize that the government cares about all of its citizens, and tries to do the best for them.

Participatory budgets are also promoting a new level of democracy, they create room for reflection and experimentation that infuses local authorities and political action with renewed legitimacy. In the effort to make all the matters regarding the budget more transparent, they serve as an instrument to re-direct local policies for the benefit of the poor, and affirm popular rights, the rights of all citizens to responsibility and autonomy. The fact that this participatory budgeting is a public and transparent process sends a message of genuine engagement and legitimate budget decisions, but there are however a few disadvantages.

The first disadvantage of this process would be that even though the municipalities undertake the participatory budgeting to increase efficiency in the budget and thus save money, it does require a large investment of money to begin with, and also staff time. Secondly, if it is not managed properly, it can create unrealistic expectations amongst participants; the citizens can think that with this, they could solve all of their problems, but these problems need to be prioritized, and a certain problem for a citizen can be less important to another. Another problem in this process could be the fact that the population which would get involved in this could not be very representative for all the citizens. In order to have a good under-

standing of what are the problems that society is facing every day, a representative group of people should be taken into consideration.

5. An analysis of participatory budgeting

The participatory budgeting process is not as simple as it seems because it involves a set of key elements that make possible and practicable the action. So, in this respect, we should take into consideration what is really important for us to know before starting the negotiations with local authorities.

The local budget represents the most important key element in case of participatory budgeting because it is the direct source that finances any action for solving the problems identified by citizens.

Involvement of the citizens is a very important aspect and to fulfill the involvement of citizens' criteria you should focus on helping people to identify their common problems. Also, you must create a very good image of the process and its importance. A certain part of the budget should be put aside in order to use it for the purpose of participatory budgeting and without the support of the local council this process is almost impossible, except of course the part responsible with researching the local problems and developing people's awareness regarding problems. So, the initiator of participatory budgeting needs to persuade the council and the mayor, as well as to allocate a percentage from the available budget to sustain the project.

Another key aspect is to respect the policy and the directions of the strategy – the strategy of a community is a very important document because it shows the course of public administration actions for the next years and it is available to forecast the indicators for development. In this respect, the strategy has also identified a set of local problems needed to be solved. One of the roles of participatory budgeting is not only to solve problems mentioned in the strategy, but also to potentially identify new ones.

Meetings with those who do not know to work with the computer are also important – if we are speaking about rural communities the main problem is universal access to internet and also the capacity of people to use computers. So, in the case of this situation, face-to-face meetings are fundamental for delivering information and gathering opinions.

The main principles that govern participatory budgeting are: transparency, collaboration, involvement of citizens, efficiency, compliance with the strategy, subsidiarity, correlation and public awareness.

The main actors that should be involved in any participatory budgeting process are: the local community, civil society, citizens, civil servants, political bodies, international bodies (that can give us best practices in the field), universities, volunteers and private actors.

The steps proposed in initiation participatory budgeting are the following:

– Consult the local budget and the strategy;
– Consult a certain number of citizens in order to observe their involvement and support for the process;
– Create an instrument of social research to be applied on internet, in face-to-face meetings and group meetings;
– Propose the instrument created to the Local Council, the mayor and other administrative authorities and debate in Local Council meetings the feasibility of entire process and its potential impact;
– The Local Council decides the amount of money that they would allocate for participatory budgeting;
– Collect data through the instrument applied to as many citizens as possible in individual meetings, in a random manner and on a random sample and inform the respondents about the next group meetings;
– Organize the group meetings where all the participants will/can debate the problems identified in questionnaires and in groups interviews;
– Centralize, analyze and interpret the data collected and write a report regarding the results;
– Present the report to the Local Council and to the mayor in Local Council meetings and propose the adaptation of the strategy if some new problem arises or it is not identified correctly;
– Analyze the report with experts, rank every problem after indicators as: costs for solving, importance, emergency and impact on a certain number of people;
– Take the final decision regarding the problems which will be solved and those which will not be solved;
– Implement the process; and
– Monitor, evaluate and then present the results through a final report (see Cluj-Napoca City-Hall, 2013).

Possible problems, risks and challenges which can arise during the participatory budgeting process include: individual approaches and values which are very different from the group ones; not being in compliance with the strategy; not having enough money; promoting projects which have already been done or activities existing in other projects; not having the right target group or audience; not defining correctly; not being motivated enough or not working in teams.

At the end of the process, when all the selected problems were solved, they have to be presented to the citizens, in order to show them that this participatory budgeting was not in vain, that they did have an impact on the decision making that they managed to solve some of the community's most important problems. This part of the process can be made in several different ways. The local municipality can have meetings with all the involved citizens; it would be best if some of

the citizens that did not managed to be in the first part of the process, could come and see the results, which can convince them that the project was a success and maybe it will make them get more involved in the upcoming years. Also, the local municipality can make an announcement in the local newspaper and present all the results; this would be a very efficient method because almost all of the population reads the newspaper.

The first participatory budgeting process took place in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Since the Participative Budget has been consolidated, the City Hall has steered a percentage varying from 15% to 25% of the income to investments – the rest is spent in paying staff and the normal administrative expenses. This way, according to what was mentioned in the beginning, the works decided by the participative budget represent investments of over 700 hundred million dollars.

Throughout the years, the basic sanitation works have been prioritized by the participative budget. This has allowed the increase in the water supply, between 1990 and the beginning of 1995, from 400,000 to 465,000 households. Today, 98% of the households are served by the water system. With regard to the sewerage system, the growth was even bigger. In 1989, 46% of the population was served by the sewerage system and, presently, 74% is being served (UNESCO, undated).

Another item that is a priority in the participative budget is the street pavement in the suburbs. Annually, between 25 and 30 km of streets are paved in the poorest city sections and suburbs. Drainage, public lighting and the urbanization of areas, health and lodging are other issues that are considered priorities. In the education field, the decided investments by the participative budget allowed more than duplicate the total number of enrollments between 1988 and 1995, along with an upgrade in the quality of the education. But the results of the participative budget cannot be and should not be judged by numbers and percentages only, even though this is fundamental to prove that the participation, the transparency and the democracy can make the public spending a lot more efficient and effective.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The theoretical part describes participatory budgeting in terms of definitions, main components, advantages and disadvantages identified until now and also the results obtained through the implementation of this process. The second part of this paper (section 5) is concerned with creating, adapting and establishing the way to implement a new model of participatory budgeting. In this process we used some ideas taken from practical examples and we kept the main principles (transparency, collaboration, involvement of citizens, efficiency, compliance with the strategy, etc.). After that, we drew the steps in logical and chronological order for implementing the participatory budgeting process, also not omitting an internal

and external analysis from a strategic perspective, including the strengths, weaknesses, and associated risks analysis. As such, we are also recommending: using and applying new ideas; designing maps and using them for data and forecasting; developing a communication system; linking priorities with participatory budgeting; simplifying; developing financing scenarios; creating modern instruments; establishing new modern methods that can be used and determining the vision at central and local level.

We hope that the ideas of this paper will be successfully applied through the local authorities' collaboration and citizens' implication. That will be a real achievement for our academic background and a strong sign for participatory democracy in allocating public funds for local problems.

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