

GLOCALIZATION OF NEOLIBERALISM IN ROMANIA THROUGH THE REFORM OF THE STATE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT¹

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Abstract

The study captures how global neoliberalism has been localized starting from the end of the 2000s, acquiring particular relevance and significance in post-socialist Romania, newly integrated in the European Union. Moreover, it observes that especially from 2010, while neoliberalism has been constructed and justified as the political recipe or the alleged solution for economic crisis, it solidified as The taken-for-granted political economy of the country. The analysis goes through the presidential speeches between 2009 and 2011 that have transformed the provisions of the economic policy of the European Union, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in discursive justifications that made sense in Romanian context, most importantly framing them as the demand for reforming the state. Furthermore, the analysis descends into the contexts of two settlements from Romania to show how local actors translate/produce the neoliberal model of development, and how they articulate visions of neoliberal entrepreneurial competition and culture in local development programs. Eventually the paper observes how nowadays in Romania too, neoliberal governance reinvents itself by transferring the social role of the state to 'local communities' and demands from them competitiveness in the vein of a "community-led local development" paradigm, which is a new tool of neoliberal governmentality that re-creates the relationship between the citizen and the state.

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Introduction – topic and approach

Many analysts, among them Brenner and Theodore², Sheppard and Leitner³, or Morange and Fol⁴ - going beyond the limits of neo-Marxist structuralism - refrain from descriptions that portray neoliberalism as a homogeneous regime imposed by powerful international actors on passive, marginal states. Side-lining neo-Marxist approach, they are prone to interpret advancement of neoliberalism as a process of diversification of the core structure of neoliberalism (as for example the term *variegation of neoliberalism* coined by Brenner and Theodore in 2010 suggests). For these authors neoliberalism is an ideology that adjusts to particular local context in an overarching global neoliberal environment. They consider that neoliberalism is a process that permanently reinvents itself and has the capacity for self-regulation, it generates crises but also reactions to crises, and advances unequally from one local context to the other. Taking up this theoretical challenge, my study wishes to capture the way global neoliberalism has been localized starting from the end of the 2000s, acquiring particular relevance and significance in post-socialist Romania, newly integrated in the European Union. Moreover, it observes that especially from 2010, neoliberalism has been constructed and justified as the political recipe or the alleged solution for economic crisis, however - as a particular phase of the formation of capitalism in Romania - it started to make its effects earlier.

Using the term glocalization of neoliberalism I want to foreground the transnational flux of neoliberal ideology, the role of local actors and the consequences of hybridization and creolization (discussed in other contexts for example by Appadurai⁵ or by Hannerz⁶). My study is a contribution to

² Neil Brenner, Nick Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of Actually Existing Neoliberalism" in *Antipode*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2002, pp. 349-379.

³ Eric Sheppard, Helga Leitner, "Quo Vadis Neoliberalism? The Remaking of Global Capitalist Governance After the Washington Consensus" in *Geoforum*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2010, pp. 185-195.

⁴ Marianne Morange, Sylvie Fol, „City, Neoliberalisation and Justice” [Translation: John Crisp] in *Justice spatiale/Spatial Justice*, no. 6, 2014, pp. 1-29.

⁵ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis:

the understanding of how powerful players located on different levels produce and promote this ideology depending on their interest and spaces of negotiation, but also on territorial and historical circumstances in which they occur. Nevertheless, I do accept that wherever it emerges, the political core of neoliberalism is constituted by the fact that it employs a process of state engineering through which the state reconstitutes itself as a machinery instrumental in social stratification and classification⁷. This is the very reason why analysing the reform of the state, with special eye for the period of 2009-2014, is well-suited to grasp the process of entrenchment of neoliberalism in post-socialist Romania.

On discursive level, economic de- and restructuring in Romania after 1990 has been articulated by making appeal to the need for democratization and marketization of economy (or westernization in a general sense) and to implicit anti-communist arguments, since the new regime promised the assurance of the right to property, freedom, and economic prosperity. The former socialist political block collapsed during the crises of the Fordist model of capitalist accumulation and the expansion of capital accumulation into the spaces of the former East European socialist countries. Meanwhile, local political elites transferred state property in private hands through privatization (taking advantage of previously held positions that raised their level of 'competitiveness,' instrumental for becoming the 'winners' of transition). However, in the newly emerged context, Romania seemed to be a desirable target for foreign investments attracted by land and natural resources that could be privatized, and by cheap and 'disciplined' labour force. Furthermore, Romania's accession to EU almost coincided with the global financial crisis caused by capitalism. Neoliberal policy of crisis management has had serious effects on the population, so many people found themselves even more redundant and precarious than they were in the previous decades. International financial institutions' 'life buoy', repeatedly thrown to the Romanian Government since 2009 in the form of loans, came with a set of

University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

⁶ Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity*. New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press 1992.

⁷ Loïs Wacquant, "Three Steps to a Historical Anthropology of Actually Existing Neoliberalism" in *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2012, p. 71.

conditions that were acting as means and instruments of neoliberal governance internalized and incorporated by the Romanian government of that period of time. The President of Romania articulated a local political discourse for the public, which served to justify "economic recovery" made in the spirit of reforming the state (i.e. transforming it into a market-maker state and dismantling the welfare state).

In what follows, in Chapter 1 my study shows how Bănescu's speeches between 2009 and 2011 have transformed the provisions of the economic policy of the European Union, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in discursive justifications that made sense in Romanian context. Meanwhile, the president, self-named as "player president" has become one of the main actors in spreading global neoliberalism in the country through public policies. Furthermore, my analysis in Chapter 2 descends into the contexts of two settlements from Romania to show how local actors translate/produce the neoliberal model of development and how they articulate visions of neoliberal entrepreneurial competition and culture in local development programs. As such, local actors act as interested parts in neoliberalism or as players of the 'reformed state'.⁸ In the concluding section of the article I suggest how

⁸ In this study, I refer in particular to Aiud and Calafat, where we have conducted fieldwork from October 2012 until June 2014 in the frame of Faces and Causes of Marginalization of the Roma in Local Settings: Hungary - Romania - Serbia. Contextual inquiry to the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. A joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Open Society Foundation's Roma Initiatives Office (RIO) and the Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion program, and the Central European University/Center for Policy Studies (CEU CPS). Desire Foundation coordinated phase two and three of contextual research in Romania (www.desire-ro.eu). The second phase entitled Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization: Tools and methods for evaluation and data collection aimed at describing economic, social and public policy factors that reproduce social and spatial marginalization of Roma in local context. In this phase of the research we conducted field research in 25 settlements in Romania. (Vincze and Hossu 2014; Vincze 2014). Phase three (Causes and Faces of Exclusion of the Roma in Local Communities), during which we carried out fieldwork in three settlements (Aiud of Alba county, Calafat of Dolj county and Lungani commune of Iași county), describes the dimensions and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion as processes influenced by ethnic relations embedded in the context of larger local societies. Besides, the research on the Spatialization and racialization of social exclusion: Social and cultural formation of 'Gypsy ghettos' in Romania in European context forms the base of our approach to social and spatial marginalization closely connected to neoliberal regime, and tackles the relation

despite being increasingly criticized worldwide, but much less in Romania, neoliberalism recovers in Romania's new strategy approved in 2014, which sets up the relation between the Government, the European Commission and the World Bank. I observe how, through measures that "reduce poverty" or social exclusion, (Romanian) neoliberalism promises to move from the welfare state exemption phase to a stage where social policy attempts to correct the social consequences of the previous period (from *roll-back* to *roll-out*⁹). In this process neoliberal governance reinvents itself by transferring the social role of the state to 'local communities' and demands from them competitiveness in the vein of "community-led local development" paradigm.¹⁰

Describing all these developments my study aims to grasp the particularities of neoliberalism's glocalization in Romania today: how this process is constituted not only by the global ideology of contemporary capitalism, but also by the local process of reforming the state that promotes development in the service of internal and external economic and political capital, thus acting as a factor of the formation of capitalist neoliberalism; and how neoliberal governance stabilizes by employing techniques of governmentality¹¹ in reconstituting subjects and citizenship.

1. "Modernizing the state" – the neoliberalizing discourse in Romania and silencing its social effects (2009-2014)

In 2009, during the launch of the *Report of the Presidential Commission on the Analysis of Social and Demographic Risks in Romania*¹² President Traian

between capitalism and racism. The research begun in 2001 with the support of a CNCS – UEFISCDI, PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0354 grant (sees for example Vincze and Raț 2013, or visit www.sparex-ro.eu). Ideas on economic development and progress were among the topics we researched in the cities where we carried out fieldwork (Cluj, Târgu-Mureș, Miercurea Ciuc, Ploiești and Călărași) (Simionca 2013).

⁹ Morange and Fol, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Dezvoltarea locală plasată sub responsabilitatea comunității. Politica de coeziune 2014-2020, [http://eufinantare.info/Documente/community_ro.pdf], [http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf].

¹¹ Michel Foucault, „ The Subject and Power” in *Critical Enquiry*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1982, pp. 777-795.

¹² The discourse can be accessed on the internet page of the Romanian Presidency [http://cparsd.presidency.ro/upload/mesaj_lansare.pdf].

Regulations regarding the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Social and

Bănescu's implicit (and main) message coined the need to substantiate the so-called political "structural reform and modernization of the state." Meanwhile, in March 2009 Romania signed a loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Commission (EC), World Bank (WB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for the amount of 19, 95 billion Euros.¹³ The loan consecrated a new phase of structural adjustment policy¹⁴ in Romania, being conditioned mainly by reducing budget deficit.

Demographic Risks in Romania, and the report launched in 2009 are available at: [http://cparsd.presidency.ro/upload/CPARSD_raport_extins.pdf].

¹³ After 1990, the first such loan allocated to Romania came from EBRD in June 1992 for supporting "actions, objectives and policies for the implementation of structural adjustment of the economy", more precisely to "finance urgent imports necessary for execution of the program" [<http://lege5.ro/Gratuit/heydmmzr/acordul-de-imprumut-imprumut-de-ajustare-structurata-intre-romania-si-banca-internationala-pentru-reconstructie-si-dezvoltare-din-02061992>]. As far as the IMF loan from 2009 is concerned that was justified by telling the public that the loan is needed to "help the country in reducing the effects of global financial crises." However, some analysts state that, as it happened in other countries too, the loan and the accompanying structural adjustment in Romania work as means to subordinate the economy of the country to the economic interests of powerful states such as USA or Germany, and they negatively impact on workers' rights, public spending for social protection and social development, because they support privatization of goods, deregulation in economy, exports at the expense of local population, etc. (John Horvath, "The IMF and Romania: A Road Well Travelled", 2009 in *Heise Online*, [<http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/30/30129/1.html>]).

¹⁴ Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were economic policies the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund imposed on developing countries (or low and medium income countries) in the beginning of the 1980's. Since then, the program consists of conditional loans allocated to countries for structural adjustment of the economy: it means cutting public expenses and promoting market competition as part of the neoliberal agenda represented by the World Bank. These economic policies encourage governments to reduce their role in controlling the economy and to open up their own economy for external competitors/investors. Thus, Structural Adjustment Program assumes privatization, but also conditions that facilitate increase in the number and value of foreign investments (Foreign Direct Investment, FDI). Neoliberal capitalism holds that these are an indicator for classifying national economies and economic growth. Critical analysis on SAPs, and on the relation between adjustment economic policy and deepening poverty and marginalization in local populations are expressed for example in the SAPRIN (Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network) Report of 2002 ("The Policy Roots of Economic Crises and Poverty. A Multi-Country Participatory Assessment of Structural Adjustment", pp. 173-188, accessible here: [http://www.saprin.org/SAPRI_Findings.pdf]).

In January 2011, we did clearly find out what was about the urge for reforming the state promoted by President of Romania in the context of the agreement with the IMF.¹⁵ Justifying the measures taken by the Government in 2009 and especially in 2010, Traian Băsescu announced that the "welfare state no longer could work in Romania" and that "intervention is less painful now than when we reach a higher level of debt that amounts to 70%, 80% of the gross domestic product." (More detailed analysis of the political discourse about the end of the "social state" in Romania follows in Chapter 1.1 of this study).¹⁶ We have to evaluate this argument in the light of the fact that Romania has continued to be among the countries with the lowest levels of public debt in the EU (in 2007 this was 13.0% of GDP, while for example Belgium had a debt ratio of 84.9%;¹⁷ in 2009 Romania's public debt ratio was 23.9% of GDP, at least three times lower than that of France, 78.1% of GDP;¹⁸ in 2013 Romania reached the level of 38.9% of GDP, but in the same year for example Germany had a debt ratio of 78.4% of GDP¹⁹). Thus, public indebtedness alone could not have justify cutting funds for social policies. Moreover, cutting funds are not justified also because the population of Romania is second in terms of poverty rate; life expectancy in this country is among the lowest in Europe; and funds for social welfare represent one of the smallest shares of GDP compared to other Member States. For example, in 2007 social expenditure in Romania represented 12.8% of GDP compared to 29.5% in Belgium and 30.5% in France;²⁰ in 2009, the percentage allocated to social protection was below 20% of the GDP in

¹⁵ President Traian Băsescu's declarations in the debate about the Institutional reform of the Romanian state. Assistance state, minimal state or efficient state? (Reforma instituțională a Statului Român. Statul asistențial, statul minimal sau statul eficient?), organized by the Institute for Liberal Studies and Konrad Adenauer Foundation in 2011, are presented in a Press release which can be accessed here:

[http://presidency.ro/?_rid=det&tb=date&id=12696&_prid=ag].

¹⁶ Right after the public presentation of this 'diagnosis' many critical analysts reflected on it (for example Raț, 2011; Stoiciu, 2011).

¹⁷ EUROSTAT, "Key Figures on Europe. 2009 edition", p. 33.

¹⁸ EUROSTAT, "Key Figures on Europe. 2011 edition", p. 21,

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ity_offpub/ks-ei-11-001/en/ks-ei-11-001-en.pdf].

¹⁹ EUROSTAT, "Basic Figures on the EU, First quarter 2014",

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ity_offpub/ks-gl-14-001/en/ks-gl-14-001-en.pdf].

²⁰ EUROSTAT, "Key Figures on Europe. 2011 edition", p. 87,

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ity_offpub/ks-ei-11-001/en/ks-ei-11-001-en.pdf].

countries like Poland, Estonia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and Latvia, while in countries like Denmark (33.4%), France (33.1%), Sweden (32.1%), the Netherlands (31.6%) and Germany (31.4%) the ratio was evidently higher.²¹

Consistently echoing the President's statements in 2009 and 2011, the *Romanian Government's Convergence Program 2011-2014* – in which Romanian government instituted on local level the European Council's decisions of 2010 on the coordination of budgetary policies in the Member States – reiterated the principles of Structural Adjustment Program. The *Convergence Program* made explicit the austerity measures imposed to Romania and transformed them into the taken-for-granted principles of political economy. Although these initiatives are defined as "anti-crisis measures" they are pretexts to justify a new phase of neoliberalism's entrenchment in Romania. In Chapter 1.2 I will describe these measures in more details.

1.1. Demonization of "social state" in the political discourse of 2009-2011

Even though the Romanian president had used terms such as "*people's needs*" in his message of 2009, he resorted to the phrase mainly to criticize how, after 1990, governments and politicians in Romania "*used social policies as electoral currency to 'buy out' the goodwill of voters*". The President expressed concern about the diagnosis that the

state instead of helping in the formation of more and more consistent and powerful middle class, it has increased dependency on the state thickening the group of socially assisted, which today reached the number of 11 million persons.

The report he launched using the above mentioned message reveals the existence of severe social problems in Romania. However, instead of identifying their structural causes and adequate solutions for them, the president's political discourse reshaped its meaning by embedding it in a moralizing discourse. This discourse was based on the supposed complicity between the populism of political actors on the one hand, and the

²¹ EUROSTAT, "Key Figures on Europe. 2013 Digest of the Online Eurostat Yearbook", p. 92, [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ity_offpub/ks-ei-13-001/en/ks-ei-13-001-en.pdf].

"dependence" of impoverished citizens on welfare benefits on the other hand, as if this relationship was not in itself a power relation within which those who have the power to distribute and allocate resources exploited others who were in a more disadvantaged situation. Moreover, the presidential speech put into the same category the people in situation of "welfare dependency", and people who are beneficiaries of "*preferential allocation of resources to small groups of people connected to decision makers (of luxury salary and pensions)*". In addition, the president limited the meaning of social policy to "social assistance for those who cannot work". Associating the need for dismantling the welfare state with the critique of certain electoral/governmental practices that waste public money by allocating privileges to those in power, and reducing the essence of social policy to the production of "dependent citizens", this discourse demonized the very idea of social rights and justice.

From the *Report of the Presidential Commission for the Analysis Social and Demographic Risks in Romania*, the president of Romania learnt that the accountability of policy makers in what regards the needs of the population means developing and implementing "prudent, consistent, well-targeted and effective" social policies that "balance between those needs, on the one hand, and economic realities and socio-demographic disparities in the country, on the other hand". To this end, in 2009, Traian Băsescu promoted the idea of public-private partnerships, which given the state's withdrawal from social roles, is expected to "*concentrate all available resources to reduce social inequalities*". However, he failed to ask himself what should the state – which supports private investors through legislation – do to mobilize the latter to secure human rights, for example in relation to their employees and in what regards labour relations, under conditions in which the state itself fails doing this for its citizens.

The presidential statements from 2011 justified the withdrawal of the state from its social functions resorting to the economic crisis in Romania, or to its financial inability to fulfil this role by saying:

it is one thing to try to impose welfare state in a highly developed country with great economic outputs and quite another to want to impose exactly the same type of state in a country like Romania, with an economy in transformation and not yet powerful enough.

Thus, he turned from the moralistic arguments expressed in 2009 to a financial-pragmatic reasoning, and reached sharp political conclusions: in the next decade Romania needs an efficient state, whose performance and efficiency is measured by the degree in which he gives up, withdraws from its social and welfare tasks. All this happened under conditions in which the post-socialist state have supported and continues to support privatization of public goods, and in which by upholding this system of (re)distribution of resources the state deepens inequality between those who own and control means of production and decision making, and those who are deprived of such instruments. Towards the end of his argument, Băsescu suggested - without expressing the explicit relation between European neoliberalism and the politics of crisis in Romania -, that there is only one strategy financed in Romania and this is the one we should follow: *"we have to apply what we agreed on when we joined the European Union in 1 January 2007."*

The economic crisis in the president's discourse is used as an argument supporting neoliberalism (introducing market principle in all areas of life), a discourse articulated during the structural adjustment program imposed by the IMF loan in 2009. In the context of this program a series of changes were introduced: a new Labour Code was elaborated (which, under the pretext of "flexibilization" contributed to the precarization of labour); the administration of police, hospitals and schools was transferred to municipalities; the requirement for cost efficiency was introduced in the sphere of education and healthcare; and the general claim for reforming the social assistance system became the order of the day. The president expressed the need to create a *"powerful state that gives perspective for its citizens"* and an *"efficient state instead of one that can no longer cover its own costs"*, and mobilized the following warnings: *"the state was excessively generous in terms of various forms of aid "; "too many hospitals with too many beds, with little prevention activity and too much activity in hospitals"; "all the help you give to those who need them, and to those who are not eligible for them is packaged in the 'welfare state' phrase and we have a clear conscience that we wasted some resources again and reduced the appetite for work again"; "social policy should not be focused on those who have land, but expect welfare and the land remains uncultivated, and should not target those who do not accept any kind of work at certain times"*. Complementing the statements of the president,

Prime Minister Emil Boc – the administrator of the austerity measures and of the agreement with the IMF, which consecrated the integration of Romania into the neoliberal order – suggested in 2011 that "modernizing" Romanian legislation at that time had the aim to "*create a competitive labour market in relation to what is happening in Europe and in the world.*"

1.2. Convergence policy as a means of advancing neoliberalism in Romania during 2011-2014

In March 2011 the Government approved Romania's participation in the *Euro Plus Pact*, announced by the European Council in the same month. A month later the government launched the *Convergence Program 2011-2014*. This program summarizes all those governmental measures that have accommodated in Romania in an exemplary manner the EU policies regarding "*budgetary surveillance and coordination of economic policies.*" The document presents the assumed objectives (also called "anti-crisis measures") as part of the promotion of "*fiscal and structural reforms to boost flexibility in the Romanian economy*" in the context of entering the Eurozone. Observing the larger political context of the production of this document, one should note that in the period 2012-2014 Romania signed "*a new joint EU/ IMF precautionary financial assistance program that will strengthen the medium-term reform program started in 2009-2010*".

Skimming through the *Convergence Program* document, we find all the standard requirements of neoliberal capitalism regarding entrenchment of privatization (its extension on energy and transport sector) and marketization of education and health; reforming state owned enterprises in the spirit of corporate governance (which aims at maximizing profits); transforming the state into a policing instrument that oversees public spending in areas that affect the already impoverished population. Several other measures such as "*increasing control over applications for social benefits*" or "*monitoring and evaluating cost effectiveness in health*" or more generally "*limiting expenditure on goods and services, and reducing subsidies*" were added to the provisions related to stimulation of investments in the private sector and to the consolidation of stability in the banking system.

"Competitiveness" and "fiscal sustainability" are the key terms of this vision of development promoted under the auspices of "economic recovery". In its chapter on "competitiveness", the *Convergence Program*

2011-2014 refers to the elimination of legal and administrative barriers to trade in electricity and gas, and to the elaboration of a plan for the deregulation of energy prices. The measures promoting "flexibility", as stipulated in the new Labour Code, enhanced employers' "competitiveness", while - on the other side - the labour of the dispossessed became regulated through, for example, legislative control of day-labour and apprenticeship. The discursively articulated idea of active life, active inclusion and financial discipline supported the "sustainability of public finances". The Convergence Program translated the ideal of "active life" into several measures such as: gradually increasing the retirement age, and the increase of full contribution period to 35 years for women and men by 2030; tightening conditions for benefiting of partial early retirement; and freezing the pension point for 2011. In the social field, "financial discipline" translated into central and local governmental measures to "*rationalize social benefits*" and to "*eliminate programs that are not subject to testing financial means.*" The public sector was targeted with the expectation that the share of GDP spent on salaries should be reduced: this meant the continuation of the "*prudent policy started in 2009-2010*" as far as, according to the envisaged plan, the share of these expenditures has to "*be reduced to a level around 6.5% of GDP in 2014 (from 9.4% of GDP in 2009).*" Further, although the indicator of healthy life expectancy at birth clearly shows that in 2010 the Romanian population was lagging (with 57.5 years among both women and men) behind the EU-27 average (61.7 years for men and 62.6 years for women),²² the state subjected healthcare to financial rationalization by measures such as: the introduction of co-payment for medical services; limiting the number of contracted hospital admissions by 10% compared to the level in 2010; reducing the value paid by the government for drugs in national healthcare programs; reducing the number of financed hospital beds.

The legislative measures taken by the Romanian Government in 2010 adopted in advance the economic policy sketched in the *Convergence Program 2011-2014* also in what regards the sources of revenues for the budget, and continued to protect the privileged social categories by maintaining the flat tax system and reducing taxation of profit by 4.9%.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 52.

1.3. Conclusions – entrenching neoliberalism by transforming "anti-crisis measures" into a permanent economic politics

Compliance with the *Convergence Program 2011-2014* and with the agreement with international financial institutions became the first and most important benchmark of contemporary Romania's economic policy, including the direction its development should take. We have already seen how discourse on global economic crisis justified the imperative of "macroeconomic recovery" and of "making public policies efficient." In the same time, discourse on crisis transformed the problem of crises into a weapon used by parties in their political struggles. Economic crisis has become the new engine of neoliberal ideology and policy, complementing (but not entirely replacing) the previously dominant topic of anti-communism as the main red thread of capitalist restructuring in Romania after 1990.

On the level of everyday life, the current effects of debts to the IMF and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (to which Romania joined in 1972) resemble the policies of "economic adjustments" and "rationalizing consumption" from the 1980's (the decade of consolidation of neoliberalism worldwide), a policy that implied a dramatic worsening of living standard for the population of Romania. Moreover, the socialist state sacrificed quality of life and the living standard of the population on the altar of major public investments of that decade (House of the People, the Danube-Black Sea Channel, urban systematization, etc.). The new post-socialist stage of neoliberalism deepened and aggravated previous social inequalities and material deprivation generated by the dominant economic policy promoted by the Romanian nation state in close connection with international financial institutions. Austerity measures that have deprived citizens of resources necessary for the reproduction of their labour force and for the sake of profit-generating benefits, and that have penalized them if they resorted to informal strategies (in housing, employment, and migration) for securing their self-sustenance have always been in at the core of a politics of economic development based on relations of indebtedness.

We live in a stage of neoliberalism, where "anti-crisis measures" have become the essence of Romanian economic and social policy. Once "anti-crisis measures" are made permanent, hopes for the population in

terms of improving living conditions are projected on the stage of competition for European funds. Thus, social justice promised by the European Social Agenda becomes a field of competitiveness and merit, since neoliberal policy extracts it from the sphere of human rights. Those who do not succeed in becoming "competitive" in this market are supposedly "not deserving" social welfare, quality education, decent jobs and housing, and even high life expectancy. Thus, apart from structuring economy and the relationship between state, market, and citizens, neoliberalism creates the new ideal of human being (the 'new man' of our epoch) who is competitive and entrepreneurial, and as such qualifies as 'human' and benefits from human rights (including rights for housing, labour, etc.), but it also produces social categories that are perceived as 'undeserving' citizens or even sub-human.

2. Entrepreneurial development and entrenchment of neoliberalism on local level

Based on the discourse analysis of documents related to development programs promoted by the municipality of Aiud and Calafat, in the following I illustrate how local decision makers translate into local schemes neoliberal ideas on development reiterated today by the European Commission and the World Bank. Finally, I point out that these models based on entrepreneurial ideology transforms development into a business of local authorities, private companies, consulting firms or NGOs, and I also suggest that these models are far from being based on rights and from serving social justice. The analysis identifies key terms of this model (competitiveness, entrepreneurial culture, public-private partnership, and marketization), and the way they acquire local meanings during the process by which the local decision makers offer public support to market and private investors, and foster the withdrawal of state from its social responsibilities to citizens.

2.1. Development perspectives for Aiud (2007-2013): entrepreneurial culture, competitiveness and marketization

The Development Strategy for Aiud City defined "community interest" supposedly served by this strategy through the following key terms: sustainable development, urban regeneration, fostering

competitiveness, and improving local governance²³. The City Council developed and adopted the strategy in February 2008 in the spirit of Romania's accession to the European Union. Action plans of the Strategy articulated and heavily focused on directions and operational programs defined by the Structural Funds in Romania.

The Strategy disclosed prevailing institutional thinking about the responsibility of local authorities and about the priorities they set regarding the following negative characteristics of the city: disadvantaged geographical position, poor infrastructure, labour migration, poor use of the given agricultural potential, lack of involvement on the part of community actors in local decision-making processes. This strategy reinforced on local level the generally accepted entrepreneurial vision according to which public authorities must support private businesses by creating investment opportunities for them, creating fiscal facilities and allocating land and infrastructural conditions. The ideal of a state that creates market trickled down into these local plans to create an industrial park and an information office dedicated to investors, providing them with information on the economic potential of the settlement, including its labour force. The strategy identified 60 action plans to ensure "city competitiveness" in the hope that economic agents and small and medium enterprises in the first place will attract European funds for the implementation of plans in industry, agriculture, tourism and environmental protection, while public-private partnerships will organize programs for training individuals who will work for them. On the other hand, the Strategy noted that the competitive advantage of the settlement was that it provided cheap labour for local and foreign investors. It expressed the belief that the key to economic modernization is marketization of tourism and of agriculture (the latter currently producing

²³ PAEM Foundation Alba from Alba Iulia elaborated the strategy in the name of the Municipality [<http://www.paemalba.ro/>]. PAEM Foundation was established as non-governmental organization at the end of the 1990s. It benefited from partnerships with local and county level authorities. Consultancy in European projects and technical assistance in designing public policies make up their domain of expertise. However, they implement also development programs (they collaborated with PAKIV Roma Association from Alba Iulia in one of their projects, ROMA-RE, on developing social economy for Roma in the area of recycling packaging materials. For the text of the Strategy access this link: [http://www.aiud.ro/AplicatiiOnline/Hotarari_2003_2008/2008/02.februarie/h50_2008.pdf].

mainly for subsistence). Economic modernization is defined as transformation of an economy based on intensive work into an economy based on intensive capital investments and technology.

Regarding social services, the Strategy defined only six action plans and emphasized that they should be outsourced to private partners. The arguments behind this choice were manifold: lack of funds and the need to prevent the ever increasing cost of social services; the idea that local government cannot provide for the full range of social services people would need; 'concern' about the consequences of assuming full responsibility in this field that allegedly could reduce the degree in which citizens and communities would participate in the life of the settlement. Regarding the development of human resources, the Strategy mentioned that the municipality of Aiud saw its role in cultivating entrepreneurial and managerial culture among its citizens: "entrepreneurial culture and spirit and entrepreneurship are key to reversing the negative effects of structural adjustment and restructuring of industry, because they can generate economic and social alternatives and improve the economic status of social groups under risk of unemployment."

Based on the information available about the implementation of Structural Funds in Romania,²⁴ one may observe that in 2008-2013 the Municipality of Aiud has implemented several major infrastructural development projects to extend water and sewerage networks, rehabilitate the medieval fortress, to valorise tourism in the Valley of Aiud by modernizing roads (a project of about 7 million Euros), and to rehabilitate the structure of Bethlen Gábor College (through another project worth 7 million Euros). Proppers Humanitarian Foundation Aiud²⁵ in partnership with the County Agency for Employment and several consulting firms and non-governmental organizations specializing in vocational training implemented four projects on human resource development. Local companies in the field of precast reinforced concrete, construction, and

²⁴ For example, on the Structural Project's website, [<http://www.proiecte-structurale.ro/Proiecte.aspx?cuvCheie=Aiud&cID=5>], or in the Guide of City Halls [http://www.ghidulprimariilor.ro/list/cityHallDetails/prim%c4%82ria_aiud/129445].

²⁵ Working from 2010, the Foundation's activity was based on contracts with the County Agency for Employment and with the Municipality of Aiud. It provided services for public authorities (for example through its office for consulting citizens).

garden furniture implemented three projects for small and medium enterprises.

2.2. Development perspectives for Calafat (2012): public-private partnership, competitiveness and preservation of rural heritage

Taking advantage of the European Union's funding opportunities and development policies, particularly of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) the Municipality of Calafat in partnership with 19 villages (most of them from south-east Dolj county and a commune from Mehedinți County) has designed in 2012 a Local Development Plan for a territory called Calafat micro-region. The "Calafat" Local Action Group (LAG) was established as an NGO²⁶ in accordance with the procedures established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in November 2012. Its main goal is to contribute to raising the attractiveness and competitiveness of the area as well as of its products and services. "Calafat" LAG is a public-private partnership with 25 members: seven municipalities, nine companies and nine NGOs are enrolled as members of the partnership. In addition to its mayor, the following organizations represent the city in "Calafat" LAG: the private company SC Tradex Industries Ltd, the Local Association of Small and Medium Employers (PLIMM), the Organization of Fishermen, and the Association for the Integration of Roma in Oltenia.²⁷ The municipality outsourced the design of the Local Development Plan to a company that is not named in the document. The company has collaborated with the

²⁶ Information about "Calafat" LAG can be found at: [<http://calafat.org.ro/>]. Besides the presentation of the Plan for Local Development, those interested in "Calafat" LAG can find on this page documents of the organization and information about project calls. However, there are no information about implemented local projects, or submitted project. In the chapter "implemented policies" the page presents a project of 2 million euros in the domain of fishery.

²⁷ According to the webpage containing the catalogue of non-governmental organizations in Romania, the Association was established in 2009 [<http://www.stirion.ro/detaliu-csc/vrs/IDcsc/3362>]. It defines itself as a non-profit organization that delivers humanitarian aid and social services, and as an organization dedicated to combating discrimination and poverty, as well as to integrate vulnerable groups on the labour market, and also to community development. The Association does not have its own virtual interface and I did not find relevant information about its activities.

Spanish LEADER experts, while "Calafat" LAG expressed its desire to outsource further expertise related to this Plan.

"Calafat" LAG was empowered to implement the LEADER program as a consequence of being selected by the Ministry of Agriculture and Local Development together with other 120 similar micro regions with a population between 10,000 and 100,000 people. The LEADER program is based on the premise that public authorities do not have institutional, human, and financial resources for developing and implementing local development plans. Therefore, private-public partnerships such as the Local Action Group must provide these kinds of resources. The model promised to expand citizen participation beyond administrative decentralization enshrined by the Public Administration Act of 2001, which in turn stipulated the establishment of Associations for Inter-Community Development to coordinate the development of the so-called Metropolitan Areas or micro-regions. However, we can see that LAGs have limited capacity. In fact they can only reproduce the structure of local power relations being already under the control of strong organizational structures (such as local authorities, private companies, non-governmental organizations established for attracting European funds, organizations that often had already been interconnected in previous years). In fact these local groups do not extend decision making mechanisms toward the system of participatory democracy or real citizen participation. Participatory justice promised by this system cannot be real because LAGs act more as technical managers of European Funds, and even if they are responsible for drafting Local Development Plans (the frame program of individual projects), plans are designed according to already established operational programs agreed by the Government and the European Commission. As such citizens are unable to exercise control over these processes.

The concept underlying the idea of LAGs in post-socialist Romania has another important aspect worth mentioning: LAGs promote a development model supported by the condemnation of communism. The planning document "Calafat" LAG repeatedly appeals to this argument, saying that difficulties in establishing partnerships between various actors can be explained by the communist legacy, which has diminished confidence in collective initiatives and in particular in the formal, institutional forms of association; on the other hand it argues that under-

development in the region owes much to forced and artificial industrialization during socialism, which in turn was restructured during transition to market economy after 1990 and the collapse of public companies. These arguments seek to justify the eligibility of Calafat for the LEADER program (originally tailored for rural areas) using the following logic: the settlement was artificially turned into a city, local development is rather poor, the local economy is based on agriculture, and in fact Calafat is a city with rural outlook in terms of services, however it does have the potential or capacity to promote an urban model in this micro-region.

During the elaboration of the Local Development Plan for the territory covered by "Calafat" LAG, the municipality reported three infrastructural development programs included in its Development Strategy for 2007-2013. Having a total budget of approximately 17 million covered by PHARE and European Funds for environmental protection, these programs have aimed to improve public utilities, to extend water and sewerage networks, and to modernize waste management. The conclusions of the Local Development Plan in 2012 focus on the following immediate priorities in the area: development of small and medium rural economic and tourism enterprises through skilling people in entrepreneurship; development of social infrastructure, local heritage, and services provided to communities and maintaining rural heritage and identity of the region; capitalization, modernization, and technological improvement of agriculture so that subsistence agriculture practiced by households will be transformed into agricultural production for markets; training programs; and supporting the Local Action Group itself. Despite these ambitious plans translated into 64 project ideas, the Local Development Plan identified a relatively small budget of about 3.5 million euros, but anticipated an annual cost of about 300,000 euros for the operation of the LAG itself.

2.3. Conclusions – neoliberalization through entrepreneurial development

Reconfiguring state's role in development and thus its relationship with the market on the one hand, and citizens and society on the other hand is one of the core dimensions of development promoted in Romania, a trend that is also (re)produced on local level (as we have seen above in

the example of Calafat and Aiud). The way in which local authorities define themselves as powerful agents working for private economic investors, and as weak actors who cannot (and should not) address the social consequences of economic restructuring, is a sign of the broader paradigm that reconfigures post-socialist Romania in a neoliberal tone. Based on the concept of entrepreneurship, the economic and social development model supports the entrenchment of neoliberalism in Romania, as elsewhere in the world. The model is based on and in the same time promotes the idea that "human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade."²⁸

In a post-socialist context, arguments that favour this model of economic and social organization and development strongly relate to the condemnation of communism and the welfare state, which is discursively associated with communism. Anti-communism is the main attitude that informs the efforts to reconfigure the role of the state, so that state becomes the creator and maintainer of an institutional framework, which extends the principles of market competitiveness into all areas of life, including development strategies. The cost of this change is that public officials become allegedly unable to provide for social services, a phenomenon that is not perceived as something that (re)produces social injustice, but as a type of (desirable) governance. Such processes unfold also on local level - as the above analysis related to Aiud and Calafat showed. Their immediate result is that cities cease to constitute spaces of social reproduction and become territories of competition and competitiveness (Jessop 2002). In this process, not only that the idea of the need to cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit guides the discursive construction of development, but also the design of development plans becomes a business in itself. Municipalities outsource this task to companies and national NGOs that benefit from the support of government or presidential administration and secure their existence from funds gained from World Bank, the European Union, and other transnational institutions. Many local NGOs are created in order to attract funds usually through consulting firms specialized in project application and management. In this system, the ability to attract external

²⁸ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 2.

funds becomes a feature of a desirable of self, i.e. the enterprising self (both in the case of individuals, and that of legal bodies). The system stigmatizes those who do not meet this requirement as 'undeserving' subjects of development processes. In these circumstances, local development strategies, even if they are very ambitious in terms of planned programs, are at risk of not being translated into effective interventions since for various reasons local actors (let alone marginalized people) are unable to design 'competitive' projects on the market of private funds.

Besides all this, we should recall the conclusions formulated in Chapter 1 of this study, which affirmed that practices of neoliberal governance in Romania became prevalent and highly visible with the austerity measures imposed on the population from 2010 as a nicely packaged condition credited in the structural adjustment program of the International Monetary Fund. Nowadays one may see how this trend is maintained and continued in the "*competitive cities*" development model the World Bank recommended to Romania at the end of 2013. The model defines competitive cities as the engines of development.²⁹

Final conclusions – "state reform" from neoliberal governance to governmentality

Development policy for the period after 2014 is shaped by two main strategies agreed by Romania in relation to the World Bank³⁰ on the one hand, and with the European Commission³¹ on the other hand. The World Bank took the role of consultant and advisor for the Romanian Government

²⁹ See the Report on "Competitive Cities. Reshaping the Economic Geography of Romania" [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/02/20/000456286_20140220151016/Rendered/PDF/843240v10Full00s0Box382123B00O0U070.pdf]. The report has been written and presented to the Romanian Government and in particular to the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration as a proposal for regional development for 2014-2020. Its aim would be to improve absorption capacity of Structural Funds. Proposals formulated in the Report of World Bank were fundamental for the elaboration of the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 between Romania and the European Union.

³⁰ World Bank, "Country Partnership Strategy for Romania for the period 2014-2017" [<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2014/04/19552473/romania-country-partnership-strategy-period-fy2014-2017>].

³¹ Partnership Agreement România adopted by the European Commission in August 2014 [<http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/propunerea-oficiala-a-acordului-de-parteneriat-2014-2020>].

in designing the proposal for using European funds in 2014-2020. Thus, the relationship between national and international actors in terms of development planning, or conceptualizing development strategy in relation to what European funds have to offer is reproduced again.

Along with the Report on *Competitive Cities* Report, which in turn meant the application of the *World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography* program on the case of Romania, the World Bank has prepared another study (which seems to become an important document for development in Romania in the next decade). The latter affirms: "Romanian cities continue to face a number of critical challenges: they have significant pockets of poverty, with poor and marginalized groups working under their productive potential; [...] they suffer with respect to basic service provision and overall quality of life."³² In April 2014, the World Bank released the report containing the findings of research on marginalized urban communities³³ and a practical manual on strategies for integrating marginalized urban communities in Romania.³⁴ The latter presents the approach named *community-led local development* (CLLD), which is the model of local development that falls under the responsibility of the community, a model that European Commission recommended to Romania for 2014-2020. In turn, the LEADER paradigm discussed in the present study in relation to perspectives on development promoted in Calafat provides the base for this paradigm too. These models are based on the neoliberal approach to community development. CLLD promises social change by increasing community participation in local governance, but practically replaces social justice with procedural justice³⁵. Along with allocating the problem of solving social exclusion to European funds

³² World Bank, "Competitive Cities: Reshaping the Economic Geography of Romania. Integrating Urban Marginalized Communities and Making EU Structural Funds Work for the Poor" [<http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2014/04/11/reshaping-the-economic-geography-of-romania>].

³³ The report on "The Atlas of Urban Marginalized Areas in Romania" is accessible here: [http://backend.elard.eu/uploads/wb-project-in-ro/atlas_24april_en.pdf]http://backend.elard.eu/uploads/wb-project-in-ro/integration_strategies_a4_en_print.pdf].

³⁴ The manual on "The Elaboration of Integration Strategies for Urban Marginalized Communities in Romania" is accessible here: [http://backend.elard.eu/uploads/wb-project-in-ro/integration_strategies_a4_en_print.pdf].

³⁵ Morange and Fol, *op. cit.*

without framing the individual projects in the local development strategies, this 'community development' - that under the attractive pretext of empowerment transposes the responsibility to solve the problem from those who create the problem to those who suffer from it - reproduces social exclusion by stigmatizing those who are not 'competitive' on the market of funds classifying them as 'undeserving' or even unable to develop.

In this very current context we see a new phase of entrenching neoliberalism, which is seen by some as a sign of a post-neoliberal (or post-Washington consensus) trend to the extent that these strategies promise the recuperation of the social dimension contained in the European agenda. Others³⁶ think that these adjustments actually reinforce neoliberalism through a false neo-Keynesianism, being in fact an adaptation of capitalism to the crisis it created. In the spirit of the latter, I note that the key terms of "poverty alleviation" actions remain those familiar to us from the neoliberal ideology of the previous decade. They aim at developing competitiveness and entrepreneurial culture among the population (including disadvantaged groups), or empowering individuals to solve problems they face (case studies in Chapter 2 reveal how this global vision of development translates into local idiom). Economic and social development promoted in these strategies remains the job of public-private partnerships or "local community" without changing the main trend regarding neoliberal governance in which the state serves the market at the expense of the social. It will continue to support private investment attracted in Romania because of "its competitive advantage" (cheap labour force) and to justify/ naturalize deepening social inequalities.

The existence of two perspectives on development in Romania (entrepreneurial development based on competition, and a model of inclusive development, which, as we have seen, is also conditioned by competitiveness) can be explained by the interpretation proposed by Morange and Fol³⁷. The authors show how entrenchment of neoliberalism

³⁶ Jamies Peck, Nik Theodore, Neil Brenner, "Neoliberal Urbanism Redux?" in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2013, pp. 1091–1099; Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore, "After Neoliberalization?" in *Globalizations*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2010, Volume 7, pp. 327–345; Sheppard and Leitner, *op.cit.*

³⁷ Morange and Fol, *op. cit.*

operates in different parts of the world on a continuum of roll-back and roll-out sequences of social justice and redistribution. They note that, in general, after the roll-back phase during which neoliberal policies of structural adjustment widens social inequalities, capitalism try to ameliorate the effects by roll-out measures, which consist primarily in facilitating greater citizen participation in the name of procedural justice. For this reason "entrenchment of neoliberalism is often accompanied by reformulating discourses of justice"³⁸. However, the question is whether participation (the improvement of procedural justice) can or cannot or to what extent it can produce corrective social outcomes. This phenomenon can be studied in Romania, by following for example the impact of the "Community Led Local Development" (CLLD) model on reducing (the effects) of social marginalization. Experiences in other parts of the world show that however wider participation may lead to forms of power sharing, its mechanisms remain compatible with neoliberal management system ³⁹, which delegates standard public service roles to "local community". In other words, the great expectations from this model of development actually disguises how the "rhetoric of social inclusion may be distorted in favour of material exclusion" or how "low paid labour can be exploited in the name of fairness"⁴⁰. By analysing the perspectives on local development promoted in the two cities, I could already detect such hidden developments in their logic. The argument that development depends on attracting private investors to the city on the one hand, and on the competitive advantage of low labour cost in the locality on the other hand, transforms the labour into a factor, which serves capital and not social inclusion in the sense if increasing access to resources and participation on their distribution.

Consequently, the entrepreneurial model of development supported also by state reform as described in this study may at best lead to the adverse incorporation⁴¹ of those marginalized by the neoliberal order.

³⁸ Morange and Fol, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

³⁹ Marie-Hélène Bacqué, Carole Biewener, "Different Manifestations of the Concept of Empowerment: The Politics of Urban Renewal in the United States and the United Kingdom" in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 37, no. 6, 2013, pp. 2198-2213.

⁴⁰ Morange and Fol, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁴¹ Sam Hickey, Andries du Toit, *Adverse Incorporation, Social Exclusion and Chronic Poverty*.

Adverse incorporation has a special role in this system because of way how neoliberal governance produces material effects and because neoliberal policies work (also) as political technologies and technologies of the self⁴². Anthropology of policy⁴³ and theory of governmentality⁴⁴ are tools that allow us to demonstrate how neoliberalism entrenched also by reforming post-socialist states leads to unequal development⁴⁵, or a sort of development that privileges profit at the expense of people⁴⁶ and promotes market to the detriment of social citizenship. Besides, interlinked with economic racism, neoliberalism classifies poor people as 'non-person' or 'sub-human' explaining their 'inferiority' by their alleged individual or cultural (group) traits. "State reform" fulfils its role in the entrenchment of neoliberalism when beyond the top-down public policies and their structures and activities, it creates subjects who perceive themselves as such, thus contributing themselves from bottom-up to the maintenance of the social order that transforms them into subaltern.

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⁴²Hubert Dreyfus, Paul Rabinow, *Michael Foucault: Beyond Structuralisms and Hermeneutics*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982.

⁴³Cris Shore, Susan Wright, Davide Però (eds.), *Policy Worlds: Anthropology and the Analysis of Contemporary Power*, New York: Bergham Books, 2011.

⁴⁴ Foucault, "Governmentality" in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.

⁴⁵ David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism. Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London and New York: Verso, 2006.

⁴⁶ Noam Chomsky, *Profit Over People. Neoliberalism and Global Order*, New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999.

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