

Analysis on the Impact of History on Economic Development and the Entrepreneurial Map in Romania

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AS A discipline, based on research methods, history studies all the political, social, economic and cultural aspects of human society along its evolution. The archaeological discoveries, official, administrative documents, manuscripts, printed books, various types of images and art representations are important sources of historical research. As a social practice, there is no synonymy between real history, i.e. past history, and written history, i.e. historiographical production, as historical writing has a certain degree of subjectivity, and also from the perspective of the documentary sources that have been preserved. However, our paper will not deal with a topic pertaining to the history of philosophy or to historical methodology.

Until 1859 (the moment of the union of the Romanian Principalities), one cannot speak of a modern state of Romania. Moreover, Romania even becomes an example of the importance held by our historic past in understanding the economic discrepancies that have existed so far in the Romanian space. The different economic development in Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania is the result of internal and external political evolution. It is known that Moldavia and Wallachia were under a predominantly Oriental influence, first of the Byzantine Empire, then of the Ottoman Empire, and Transylvania, which became a part of Hungary, evolved according to Western rules. From the same perspective, within each of these “administrative-territorial elements” there were, in turn, areas with different levels of economic evolution and growth.

For an overview of the economic growth of the Principalities, we have to start our analysis with the Middle Ages, with the tenth century¹, a period from which dates the first documentary reference to a medieval urban settlement on the territory of Moldova (940-965), the first written indication of social differentiation on the Lower Danube (943), as well as the first known written reference to the Vlachs (Romanians) in the Balkan Peninsula (976)². The eleventh century records the first settlements of the Saxons in Transylvania, in 1050³, with all the consequences of this colonization on the entire Transylvanian space.

At the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth century one can talk about the moment of consolidation and expansion of the rule of the Hungarian

kingdom, as well as about the introduction of administrative units, the counties, specific to the Western organization. The thirteenth century begins with records of Transylvanian border regions, similar to Maramureș, which becomes a royal domain, with intensified actions meant to lure Transylvanian Romanians to Catholicism and with the first measures restricting the Romanians' rights.

All these anti-Romanian and anti-Orthodox policies were connected with the policy of the Holy See in the Orthodox world. After the conquest of Constantinople, the center of the Orthodox world, 1204 saw the unification of the Christian world, with political and social effects on the Transylvanian Romanians as well. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in the south of the Danube appears, develops and expands a new political and military force, namely, the Ottoman State. Gradually, Wallachia from the late fourteenth century, and Moldavia after the middle of the fifteenth century, came to pay tribute to the Porte. In order to cope with the Ottoman pressure, the Romanian rulers alternated an appeasement policy with resistance⁴.

From the early fourteenth century⁵, the three provinces interfered with and influenced each other in all respects. One must not forget that the Romanians from Făgăraș and Maramureș contributed decisively to the founding of the medieval states of Wallachia and Moldova⁶. The opening of the commercial roads led – besides strengthening the links between them – to an economic growth reflected mainly by the increase in the number of cities on the current territory of Romania.

Three events from different fields and places were to mark the social and economic, as well as the daily life of the Romanian provinces and the entire world. Chronologically, they are as follows: a) around 1430, Gutenberg's invention – the mobile-lettered printing press (the first printing press with mobile letters in the world had been invented by Bi Sheng), which was used without major changes until the 20th century. The moment is important as an element of innovation and technical, economic, cultural progress, but, above all, for its impact on social life. In terms of this paper, the inventor's entrepreneurial spirit and management were flawed, Gutenberg soon losing his rights over both his invention (the intellectual property rights) and his workshop and house. b) 1453, the conquest of Constantinople by Mohammed II symbolically represented the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the birth of a new empire that expanded to the detriment of the Christian world. The expansion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe helped engender feelings and strengthened Christian solidarity in front of Islamic expansion. c) the discovery of America during Christopher Columbus' three expeditions. By the Santa Fe convention, Columbus was given the title of admiral, an almost princely distinction and, most importantly, the title of the commodity trade with the discovered lands. Despite this convention, Columbus was going to die forgotten and in dire poverty.

The beginning of the sixteenth century was marked by the strong rise of the Ottoman Empire, and the situation of the two extra-Carpathian provinces changed radically with the increase in the tribute paid, followed by a clear economic decline manifested by widespread impoverishment. The fights for the succession to the throne and the wars waged in Asia by the Ottoman Empire at the end of the sixteenth century triggered an economic, political and social decline which also affected life in Wallachia and Moldova, causing their economic decline until the early nineteenth century⁷.

From beginning to end, the seventeenth century saw a constant confrontation between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire, manifested either by armed confrontations, or by quiet times under the peace treaty that ended the 15 years-war (1591-1606). An anti-Ottoman revolt of Transylvania in alliance with Moldavia and Wallachia began shortly after the middle of the century, in 1659. Transylvania would undergo an increasingly oppressive Ottoman domination until the end of the seventeenth century, when the old connections with the Porte changed and the province passed under the control of the Emperor in Vienna⁸.

The beginning of the eighteenth century was marked by a new separation of the three sister-countries. Each of the Principalities had its own statehood, besides the fact that Transylvania belonged to a world different than the one of the other two provinces. In the meantime, Transylvania remained under one authority, while the extra-Carpathian territories also had Phanariot rulers. The different evolution of the three Principalities was also often noted by foreign travellers crossing the Romanian space⁹.

With the Unification of the Principalities under Cuza and the nineteenth century independence, the fate of the Romanians beyond the mountains seemed to change. The premises were favourable to them, while the Romanians in Transylvania continued to be under foreign domination. The 1918 Union found a Romania fragmented not only by the Carpathian borders, but also by huge economic discrepancies between one area and another, with a population already impoverished after the war and by a decree for land expropriation in the Old Kingdom. Thus, the economic situation in unified Romania after WWI was a disastrous one, as in all the countries involved in it, with an economy affected by the Great War and having as a priority the re-establishment of the economic sector, as well as the integration of the new provinces.

A particular problem for Romania was the national integration of the included territory, also affected by the large-scale conflict and by the foreign occupation in the case of Transylvania, much more developed economically, but nevertheless disconnected from the economic model of the Kingdom. The integration of Bessarabia, with its underdevelopment, was another matter to be taken care of. The whole recovery process of Romania was affected by regional issues. The structures of the State needed to be integrated in order to achieve economic harmony. The 1920-1921 monetary unification, one of the first measures necessary for economic recovery, had the effect of opening an ample field for the development of large-scale businesses.

The agrarian reform in the Old Kingdom, initiated in July 1917 by the Parliament of Iași, supplemented by various decrees aimed especially at expropriations, was completed in 1921 and applied also to Transylvania and Bukovina. As for the 1921 agrarian reform, it seemed to be a way of solving the economic development, since in both parts of Greater Romania agriculture was the economic base of the new State. A significant number of peasants were thus allocated land as a result of this reform, while the property of the landlords was maintained in diminished proportions. As the allotment was made possible through the redemption of landlords' land, the State did not provide the peasants with the credit needed for the right to property or the required technical assistance. Redemption fees varied from one area to another¹⁰. Forests were expropriated only in Transylvania, and only in a small proportion.

Despite the measures envisaged by the agrarian reform, Romania remained independent from the Western countries, as a commodity market for agricultural products as both raw materials and finished products. Therefore, rural areas declined compared to urban ones, leading to the decline in the integration between the Romanian regions as well as in Romania's integration in the world. Most importantly, post-WWI Romania was dependent both in agriculture and industry, and in terms of the investment capital.

The economic policy was aimed at creating a legislation for the development of the industry, especially for the crediting and financing economy branches: in 1924 – mining; the Law on marketing and control of State enterprises; the Law on Energy; the Law on the water regime; the Customs Tariff a.s.o., which allowed the State to act directly for the financing and granting of credits. The entire development of the industry after 1924 was based on the industrial structure consolidated after the 1918 Union¹¹. As for the regions, we can not help noting that important capital was allocated to companies in Bucharest (Malaxa) and Transylvania (Cugir, Copșa Mică, Brașov, Arad, and Timișoara), to the detriment of Moldavia.

The whole rapid progress of the economy was shaken by the 1929 economic crisis, and the development trends experienced a decline confirmed only by Transylvania, which regained its historical role within the Romanian space. In spite of the great economic crisis, between 1923 and 1938 the industry grew at an annual rate of 5.4%, one of the highest in the world. For Romania, the beginning of WWII meant, first of all, the loss of the territories in the east (Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina), in the west (North Transylvania) and southeast (the Quadrilateral). In 1944, Romania's economy was on the verge of collapse. Significant economic losses were also due to Anglo-American bombardments in the oilfield area of Prahova Valley, which reduced production by over 50% compared to the period before the outbreak of the war.

Romania's economic and political situation worsened after the end of the war, with the establishment of communism. The nationalization of industrial, mining, and banking companies as well as of real estate, and the collectivization of agriculture, all following the Soviet model, were but a confiscation act without any moral or material compensation. The economic situation of postwar Romania, when the entire legislation was imposed by the Soviets, was ruinous for all Romanian areas¹².

State ownership of material means led to forced urbanization, which started with the former industrialized centers of the interwar period, confiscated by the communist State. As everything was owned by the State, there could not be an entrepreneurial development. The economic policies were not based on objective economic criteria. The ultimate goal being industrialization, the manufacturing industry was favoured over the consumer goods industry. All these led to an artificial and forced urbanization of Romania, with unqualified staff. The industries and the industrialization had no prospects, and service development was almost nonexistent.

The misdirection of the economy was bound to lead to an economic slowdown and a trade blockage among the countries of the communist bloc, gathered in the CMEA (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance). The most disadvantaged continued to be the area of Moldavia, as a result of the poor distribution of resources and low productivity in the agriculture.

After the 1989 Revolution, the State was perceived internally as hostile to development and citizens, and externally Romania was almost unknown due to its lack of business experience. Stimulating consumption led to the '90s crisis, with possible effects on the current economic crisis. Private companies, especially with foreign capital, started very hesitantly. Joining the European Union, Romania was integrated into an institutional complex, with remarkable advantages as well as a series of constraints that no longer allow for the economic deviations occurred throughout history.

Regional discrepancies can be found anywhere in the world, as they are universal. In each State, however developed, one can identify discrepancies between regions¹³. According to data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, if we analyze the period between 1992 and 2002 according to an important indicator, i.e. the GDP, the country's macro-region 1, comprising the North-West and the Center Regions, is the second after macro-region 3, which includes the development regions of București-Ilfov and South-Muntenia. Analyzing the same period in terms of another indicator, the number of companies, the macro-region 1, comprising the North-West and the Center Regions, comes second after macro-region 3.

Were we to compare only three macro-regions of the country, excluding the macro-region comprising the capital, as the factors favouring the economic development and entrepreneurship are obviously more intense in the capital, one can note that macro-region 1 had a population below the level of macro-region 2, comprising the North-East and South-East development regions. Nevertheless, at the level of macro-region 1, in the analyzed region, the resident population employed by private companies was larger than in any other macro-region, so the entrepreneurial spirit seems to be more manifest, more developed in macro-region 1.

1. Study context

DEALING WITH entrepreneurial issues requires approaches to the economic growth of the nations in the process of sustainable development, which we wish to analyze in Romania. Among the early investigators of this phenomenon on a national level, Neagoe Basarab and E. Ion Nechifor have made an important contribution to the development of the concept of entrepreneurship. Later, and on another level, D. Gusti, Gh. Ionescu-Sisești, V. Madgearu, Gh. Marinescu, Gh. Țițeica, C.D. Busila, N. Popescu, C. Filipescu și V. Madgearu, to a certain extent, developed a series of theories on entrepreneurial activity¹⁴.

The period between the years 1000 and 1500 saw the introduction of new entrepreneurial activities in areas such as architecture, engineering and agriculture. According to Breban¹⁵, the first entrepreneurial and most important writings in the Romanian space are *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Teodosie* (Neagoe Basarab's teachings to his son Teodosius). They contained words of advice on leadership, in general, army leadership, messenger coordination and other similar things of military interest. However, Neagoe Basarab's work is not an original one, being inspired by Byzantine writings.

In his book, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)* [Romania and Europe. The accumulation of economic gaps (1500-2000)], Bogdan Murgescu¹⁶ dis-

cusses various factors influencing the accumulation of the investigated gaps. By addressing the issue at the level of various historical provinces of Romania, he makes a significant observation on the Ottoman domination over Wallachia and Moldavia, with a different duration and more difficult both politically and economically¹⁷.

Entrepreneurship started to be increasingly accepted by society and to bring ever more significant economic benefits. For instance, collecting the lease rates—an activity consisting of collecting and paying these rates to the king in return for the exclusive right to collect them. In this case, the entrepreneurial risk came from the fact that the amount of collected rates could be smaller than the amount the collector had to pay for the right to collect them.

However, the amounts collected were often higher, and the difference constituted the entrepreneur's profit. For artisans, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, entrepreneurship became a way to earn a living. Compared to modern times, the number of people involved in entrepreneurial activities was rather small. Many people lacked the opportunity of using their skills and knowledge in an innovative and entrepreneurial setting due to religious restrictions or craftsmen guilds.

Using the data in the representative survey entitled *Life in Transition* (LITS), applied in 28 countries and Turkey in 2006, Grosjean and Senik¹⁸ investigated the real estate and financial legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Using very accurate socio-economic data on income and economic occupations, and combining location data with historical maps to reflect the duration of the Ottoman control in each locality, they found that Ottoman domination was associated with a lower contemporary financial development. The negative effect of Ottoman control over the financial development, albeit diminished, persisted in the countries partially occupied by the Ottomans, such as Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece¹⁹.

In Transylvania, the Ottoman domination continued until 1687²⁰, but the other two historical provinces remained under Ottoman domination as distinct States but vassal to the Porte until the nineteenth century (1877-1878). After 1541, Transylvania became an autonomous principality under the suzerainty of the Porte. It was only in the late seventeenth century, with the imperial counter-offensive, that the Habsburg dynasty took control over Transylvania²¹.

Historians note that the Habsburg Empire made great efforts to boost demographic growth and productive activities in the newly conquered provinces. Thus, Transylvania benefitted from privileges for the entrepreneurs who had manufactures or worked in trade²². Economic growth phenomena were more than obvious. Although the other two historical provinces also knew a period of troubled and divided economic growth, much debated by historians, Transylvania was more advantaged from the entrepreneurial perspective. The art and culture in the Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian Empires also played a major role as a “bridge between the recent past and future”²³.

As for the urbanization rate, according to Paul Bairoch's calculations²⁴, in Europe (without Russia) it was of 15.1% in 1500, and 17.5% in the 1800s. According to data from Murgescu's book²⁵, in the 1500s, this urbanization rate was of 3% in Moldavia, 3.5% in Transylvania and 4% in Wallachia. In the 1800s, the highest urbanization rate

was identified in Transylvania, with 7.1%, followed by Moldavia, with 5.8%, and Wallachia, with 5.7%. Looking over time, the urban population in Socialist Romania reached 53.2% at time of the 1989 Revolution, despite having been less than half that in 1948, namely, of 23.4%²⁶.

How can we explain this? Easily. At first glance, massive industrialization was a favourable factor. In 1989, the industry received 43.7% of the investment funds, the most important part being allocated to the extractive, metallurgic, machine building industry, a.s.o. Agriculture was allocated 17% of the funds, and forestry 0.5%. However, sectors considered essential in our days received an extremely low percentage of the investment funds, namely, 0.3% for healthcare and only 1.1% for education, culture and art²⁷.

Given the precarious level of the country's development at the onset of the communist regime, the socialist system²⁸ mistakenly had industrialization as its major objective.

Closer to the present reality, there is no pride in the fact that Romania is on the second place in the order of difference between the rate of highly urbanized areas and those of less urbanized ones (large cities and villages), at a short distance from Bulgaria, according to the European Statistics Bureau. The study analyzes several indicators related to poverty, the most important one being the poverty and social exclusion risk, i.e. AROPE. Romania is first in this ranking, if we take into account only the risk of poverty, not the AROPE composite indicator, a worrying fact. The same study showed that in Romania it is more difficult to find a job in a town than in a large city or in a village. We believe that the ease of finding a job in a village is a myth²⁹.

2. Can Entrepreneurship Be the Solution to the Abovementioned Issues?

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS an economic phenomenon generally refers to the process by which new opportunities are discovered and implemented. A series of researchers, such as Alfred Marshall, Schumpeter, Knight, Max Weber, Lewis, and Hewitt contributed to the development of this concept. According to the authors of ACS³⁰, entrepreneurship offers a unique and valuable contribution to economic growth by spreading and marketing knowledge and ideas that otherwise would remain unknown. Audretsch and Thurik³¹ point out to the fact that “entrepreneurship has become a driving force for the economic growth and social development world wide.”

We will analyze Romania's macro-regions starting from a series of relevant statistical data, the first concerning the occupied population in the different macro-regions of the country.

According to the reports of the National Institute of Statistics, the share of the occupied population by macro-regions, in 2011, in agriculture, was the smallest one, i.e. 17%, in macro-region 3 which comprises the capital. Among the 3 remained macro-regions, the lowest share of the population occupied in agriculture was located in macro-region 1, respectively 20.1%, followed by macro-region 4, with 34.3% and, finally, macro-region 2, with 40.9%. Thus a very large difference can be observed between the analyzed macro-regions³².

The share of innovative enterprises at national level was at 30.8%. At the level of the macro-regions, there was a share of 26.2% in macro-region 1, 39.7% in macro-region 2, 32.8% in macro-region 3 and 23.4% in macro-region 4³³.

History has, thus, influenced the economic development in general, and business development in particular. Transylvania was favoured by the fact that it had been less time under the Ottoman domination. The Habsburg domination, although regrettable, had positive effects in terms of boosting business in the region.

In fact, after a period of consolidation of regulatory and institutional systems, business demography grew steadily between 2005 and 2008, by more than 508,000. At the end of 2008, the SME sector reached the highest level of demographic development, the decline in 2009 leading to the disappearance of 247,435 businesses by 2010³⁴.

Over the last quarter century, Romania's economy has grown on average by 1.2% per year. This growth rate is inferior to both the Eu-15 average, which has advanced by 1.6% over the same period, and to many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which had a growth rate of between 1.5% and 2.3%³⁵. The demographic evolutions of enterprises have known a dynamics natural for Romania's private business environment, relatively new and marked by the deep systemic changes of the last two decades.

3. Research Design and Findings

IN ORDER to outline a portrait of Romania from 1989 up to now, we have used projective methods, used predominantly by psychiatrists and psychologists, which are aimed mostly at the unconscious. The conclusions are, obviously, valid only at the level of the investigated universe, without any claim to representativeness and extrapolation.

The qualitative research based on a range of projective techniques was applied to mini groups of five subjects each, undergraduate and postgraduate students in Engineering and Management. A total of 45 students were investigated using the "Chinese portrait" and sentence completion technique. The research was conducted between October 2014 and April 2015.

The way in which the history of post-1989 Romania influenced the business environment was dealt with using the sentence completion technique. After analyzing the obtained results, it resulted that the history of post-1989 Romania has positively influenced business, most of the respondents completing the sentence with the following words: have increased, economic growth, innovation and democracy.

The following topic referred to the post-1989 period compared to the previous periods in the 20th century (before WWI, the interwar period, and 1944-1989). The received answers showed that, for Romania, the post-1989 period was a favourable one, as it was chosen by 42% of the respondents, while 20% of them answered that the situation was an unfavourable one and the rest refrained from responding.

The technique of the Chinese portrait was then used to personify post-1989 Romania. The challenge was the following:

- "If post-1989 Romania were a person, it would have the following: a) age; b) sex; c) education level; d) occupation; e) monthly average income; f) mood; g) car brand".

Other questions for the subjects:

- If post-1989 Romania were an animal, which one would it be?

- Suggest a person compatible with the image of post-1989 Romania as a source for a commercial.

The answers to the “Chinese portrait” showed that, were it a person, Romania would be 37, female (57%), with a high school level of education (28%), unemployed (26%), with an average monthly income of 1482.45, sad (46%) and owning a Dacia car. To the next question, the subjects responded that Romania would be a wild animal, namely, a fox (35%). After analyzing the answers, it became apparent that a person compatible with the image of post-1989 Romania, as an advertisement source, would be an athlete, Simona Halep.

The largest discrepancies between regions are to be found in agriculture (17%-40.9%) and innovation (23.4%-39.7%). In terms of urbanization, there are still consistent differences between the rate of highly urbanized areas and the rate of very little urbanized areas in Romania.

4. Synthetic conclusions

STUDIES SHOW that history has a significant influence on regional development, so its effects, whether positive or negative, are still felt today. The Ottoman influence had a negative effect on the economic development of the previously dominated regions. However, Transylvania was favoured by the fact that it had been less time under Ottoman domination. Habsburg domination, although regrettable, had positive effects on booting business in the region, as well as education, which had and continues to have an important role in supporting entrepreneurship, a fact noticed in the investigated universe (28%), where most of the answers were that Romania was a graduate student.

As 26% of the investigated students answered that if it were a person, Romania would be unemployed, we can conclude by saying that the entrepreneurs in Romania have reached maturity and only a small part of them start businesses which do not meet the demands, their offer being very little accepted or appreciated.

We can, therefore, say that the Romanian market is suitable for starting a business, as the age of the country is considered to be a “young” one (57%) when it comes to the way in which entrepreneurship is viewed in society. The attitude is negative in terms of the probability of becoming an entrepreneur and the level of support received by the new companies, whether it is access to financing, partners or mentors (46%).

In the era of globalization, economic shocks are particularly prevalent at local levels, and joining a club is not necessarily a protection factor. The role of domestic economic policies in ensuring a higher economic growth rate becomes crucial for entrepreneurs. And for this there is an acute need to set up structures to support the accumulation of expertise needed for the coherent and comprehensive development of these economic policies in the 21st century. In order to reduce the development gap between Romanian economy and the European average, Romania needs to support local entrepreneurial initiatives, taking into account the specific situation of each region.

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Notes

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Abstract

Analysis on the Impact of History on Economic Development and the Entrepreneurial Map in Romania

The aim of our study was to investigate the role of entrepreneurship in the socio-economic development of various regions in Romania. Our research focused on a quantitative analysis based on a projective techniques grid applied on a number of 45 students investigated using “the Chinese portrait” and sentence completion technique. This study answers a series of questions, such as: a) Can history be a significant catalyst for economic development at all levels? b) Can there be big differences in the economic development of various macro-regions of the country caused by their more remote past? c) Except for the macro-region comprising the capital of our country, could history be an important factor in explaining gaps between macro-regions, or even one favouring macro-region 1? d) How is Romania perceived after 1989? The results of our research show that the Romanian market is on an upward trend, favourable to the development of business and, as for the manner in which entrepreneurship is viewed in society, it is considered a catalyst for the development of local economy.

Keywords

history, regional development, economy, business, entrepreneurship