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**CHALLENGES FACING THE FORMER
MONO-INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITIES: UNEMPLOYMENT,
LACK OF INVESTMENTS – A STUDY ON ROŞIA
MONTANĂ**

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Keywords: unemployment; poverty; mono-industrial area; Roşia Montană; community investment.

The article aims to present the opinions of the inhabitants of the Romanian local community Roşia Montană, who are coping with challenges arising from the closure of mining investments. The analysis focuses on prevalent challenges affecting populations of former mining communities, namely high unemployment rate and poverty. The case of Roşia Montană, a former mining community, is noteworthy as a foreign investor (Roşia Montană Gold Corporation – RMGC) planned a new mining project. Nevertheless, the proposed investment would only create jobs for 20 years only and lacked solid plans for employment stability after the exploitation period. Environmental problems and civil society protests put an end to the project, resulting in an additional number of redundancies of people working on the

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launch of the new project. The study's methodology involves two surveys which present the perspectives of the Roşia Montană community members on the current post-RMGC state of affairs (2020). Additionally, views obtained from ex-RMGC staff in 2015, a year after their dismissal, were considered. Presented considerations conclude that sustainable development plans should be adapted to the needs of the local population. The study on the case of Roşia Montană shows that investors implemented strategies to improve the locals' situation.

WYZWANIA STOJĄCE PRZED BYŁYMI SPOŁECZNOŚCIAMI MONOPRZEMYSŁOWYMI: BEZROBOCIE, BRAK INWESTYCJI – BADANIE NA TEMAT ROŞIA MONTANĂ

Słowa kluczowe: bezrobocie, ubóstwo, obszar monoprzemysłowy, Roşia Montană, inwestycja społeczna.

Artykuł koncentruje się na przedstawieniu opinii mieszkańców rumuńskiej społeczności lokalnej Roşia Montană, stojącej przed wyzwaniami wynikającymi z zamknięcia inwestycji górniczej. W analizach skupiono się na największych wyzwaniach, przed którymi stoi ludność byłych gmin górniczych, a mianowicie wysokiej stopie bezrobocia i ubóstwie. Przypadek dawnej gminy górniczej Roşia Montană jest szczególnie interesujący, ponieważ inwestor (Roşia Montană Gold Corporation – RMGC) planował nowy projekt wydobywczy. Nowa inwestycja dałaby jednak zatrudnienie jedynie przez 20 lat. Problemy środowiskowe i protesty społeczeństwa obywatelskiego położyły kres temu projektowi, co spowodowało dodatkowe liczne zwolnienia pracujących przy uruchamianiu nowego projektu. Podstawę empiryczną artykułu stanowią dwie ankiety, pierwsza z nich zrealizowana w 2020 roku prezentująca opinie mieszkańców Roşia Montană, druga zrealizowana w 2015 roku odnosi się do opinii pracowników zamykanego przedsiębiorstwa wydobywczego. Wyniki wskazują, że plany zrównoważonego rozwoju powinny być dostosowane do potrzeb lokalnej społeczności. Studium przypadku Roşia Montană pokazuje, że inwestorzy wdrożyli strategie mające na celu poprawę sytuacji mieszkańców.

Introduction

The main purpose of the article is to characterise the social consequences of the functioning of a mono-industrial community after the closure of the industry (as reflected in the opinions of the community inhabitants). The

challenges on which the reflections focus are set in the context of poverty and unemployment, which translate into the daily functioning of the inhabitants of such communities.

Sociologists and professionals from other research fields have shown particular interest in the issue of poverty characterising industrial localities, especially the mining areas of post-communist Romania. They have emphasised the discrepancy between rural and urban areas, or between areas formerly dependent on the industry and urban regions where the service sector is developing, taking into account aspects such as the dynamics, expansion and severity of the poverty phenomenon, as well as structural and individual regional factors, specific to mono-industrial areas. At the same time, it has been pointed out that the residential environment of the community might determine poverty (Paraschiv 2008, p. 424; Mucea 2022, pp. 96-97). The expansion of poverty is evident in areas that used to be thriving in the past but have become mono-industrial and poor due to the restructuring of the mining sector. It is in this context that I want to place my considerations.

Mono-industrial communities rely heavily on a single industry or business for their economic livelihood. These communities can face significant challenges when that industry declines or closes, leaving many residents without jobs or economic opportunities. One of the most critical challenges facing former mono-industrial communities is high unemployment. When the dominant industry in a community closes or relocates, it can leave many workers without jobs. This can have a domino effect as businesses that rely on the spending power of these workers also struggle, further exacerbating the economic downturn.

Additionally, the loss of jobs can have a ripple effect on the local economy, with reduced tax revenues and less money circulating in the community. Another challenge for former mono-industrial communities is a lack of investment. Attracting new businesses or industries to the area can be difficult when a society is dependent on a single sector. Investors may be wary of putting money into a community with a history of reliance on a single industry, especially if that industry has recently declined or failed. This lack of investment can make it difficult for communities to diversify their economies and create new employment opportunities.

To address these challenges, former mono-industrial communities may need to focus on economic diversification and attracting new businesses and industries. This can be challenging, but some strategies can help. One approach is to identify the community's strengths and assets, such as natural resources or a skilled workforce, and use them to attract new businesses.

Another strategy is to invest in education and training programmes to help workers develop new skills that are in demand in other industries.

The considerations begin with a description of the context of the mining industry in Romania and the local community, taking into account the historical perspective. The next part is devoted to social poverty, which is a burning social problem related to the consequences of investors' decisions in mono-industrial areas. The third part contains a description of the methodological framework. Then, the obtained research results are described, followed by a summary.

Local context

Over time, the mining industry has fully contributed to the development of Romania's national economy. Decision-makers need to understand the complexity of mining activities and their essential role in the country's economic sector. The characteristics of the mining industry in Romania and of the selected local community will allow us to set the context for the considerations and to answer the question of what factors contribute to the exacerbation of the problems resulting from the closure of such an industry.

After the fall of communism in Romania, major transformations occurred in the mining sector through reorganisation, restructuring, concessions, cessation of activities and finally, the closure of mines, which had a significant adverse effect on the economy and social life throughout the country (Mucea 2018, pp. 218-219). Mining communities were greatly affected, both in terms of their quality of life (Pascaru 2013, pp. 71-79; Pleșa 2011, pp. 240-242; Pleșa 2012) and in terms of the level of interpersonal relations specific to community life (Pascaru 2007, pp. 28-38). In Romania, as well as in other countries, mining activity represented an opportunity for development and employment, and thus a path to modernity and sustainable development; producers used to focus on technology and development rather than on the impact of mining activities on the environment and nature (Krueger 2002, pp. 872-875; Mucea 2020, pp. 101-102).

The focus was not on the destruction of the environment by mining, but on the transformation of the environment by mining (Bridge, McManus 2000, pp. 12-15). Therefore, the mining communities had to bear the consequences of mining activities (Egresi 2011, pp. 59-61). Nowadays, mining companies are subject to much stricter scrutiny. In addition to their own profitability and sustainability, they have to seek solutions for the community in which they operate (Mucea 2018, pp. 218-219). The old gold mining community of Roșia Montană had to adapt to the changes

that occurred with the globalisation process and to the consequences of the presence of Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) in the area (Mucea 2020, pp. 101-102).

When RMGC reduced its activities in Roşia Montană, the inhabitants of the mining town found themselves once again without wages and facing the consequences of the closure of mining activities. In other words, they had to cope with unemployment after the restructuring of state-owned companies and the closure of foreign companies. Based on the idea that RMGC provided the locals of Roşia Montană with the opportunity to have a job and contributed to a slight development in the region, we carried out a study aiming to highlight the opinions of the inhabitants of Roşia Montană (some of them former employees of RMGC) regarding the importance of jobs for their community.

Poverty in rural mono-industrial areas as a social problem

Poverty is one of the world's most critical problems, and Romania, as an EU member state, still faces high levels of it. The phenomenon of poverty is not unique to Romania. Highlighting this context is essential for understanding the issues raised. In 2018, the National Institute of Statistics of Romania defined poverty as "the situation experienced by those people whose incomes are so low that they cannot reach a standard of living considered acceptable in the society in which they live, who face multiple disadvantages related to unemployment, low income, poor living conditions, inadequate health care and barriers to access to education, culture, sports and leisure" (INS 2018, p. 13) In the present discussion, the perceived poverty of the population in the Romanian villages reflects the general concept of poverty. Still, all the above-mentioned manifestations associated with global poverty are mainly the result of the population living in rural areas. As development opportunities are limited in villages, people living in rural areas are more vulnerable to poverty than people living in cities, although this is not a general, widespread phenomenon (Mucea 2022, p. 99).

According to the National Development Plan, 2004-2006, and the development plans drawn up at the county level, the problems associated with the rural environment and the issues related to rural poverty are real threats to the efficient and sustainable development of the villages. Most socio-economic studies focus on the difference between urban and rural areas. Poverty is more pronounced in the rural population than in urban communities. At the same time, the more people live in urban areas, the richer the countries are. The changes that took place in Romania after 1989 widened the gap between urban and rural areas. Villages

became increasingly disadvantaged due to the difference in the national power regime regarding infrastructure, public utilities, housing comfort, and access to education and health services. All the above indicators show a precarious quality of life in most Romanian villages (Paraschiv 2008, p. 440; Petre 2006). Compared to the urban environment, the rural setting is disadvantaged in several ways. Firstly, in Romania the infrastructure is much better developed in urban areas. By infrastructure, we mean access to certain areas or regions (road, rail, etc. infrastructure) and public utilities (street lighting, sewerage, running water, etc.). We assume that household comfort is limited due to the absence of public utilities (Mucea 2022, p. 97).

Continuing the comparison between urban and rural regions, one can observe that the rural population has a lower income than the urban population; at the same time, the proportion of the unemployed and the number of persons without a job are higher in the countryside. Many persons included in the last two categories (unemployed and without employment) work, but without legal status, as day labourers (working “during the day”) in various households, for small amounts of money, for a hot meal or for alcohol and cigarettes. Although such day workers also exist in urban areas, this form of work seems to be more common in rural areas (Mucea 2022, p. 98).

Poverty is even more visible in mono-industrial areas than in rural areas in general, because these regions have enjoyed periods of prosperity. However, with the restructuring or de-structuring of the industrial or the mining sector, communities living in the mono-industrial areas have experienced job cuts, lower wages and rising unemployment. Such problems are difficult to solve without the development of a coherent vision and the active, responsible involvement of the authorities. There seems to be a lack of a sustainable development strategy based on economic recovery in the mono-industrial regions. After the restructuring or de-structuring of the industrial sector, no system seems to have been implemented to ensure a stable income for the population and the prosperity of the community.

In the case of mining communities, the most visible type of vulnerability is represented by high unemployment rates, which can be considered a chronic phenomenon and is difficult to address (Radu 2015, p. 32). The poverty of mining regions makes people and investors reluctant to settle or start activities there, even though investors could benefit from people’s readiness to accept lower wages in areas with limited job opportunities.

The problems faced by Romania’s mono-industrial communities are many and diverse. In addition to the ones mentioned above, we could also mention the pollution resulting from previous industrial activity or the

lack of infrastructure. The mining localities are probably the most eloquent example in this respect.

For example, we can mention here the problems faced by the inhabitants of Roşia Montana, which are similar to those of other people in the Apuseni Mountains (Plăiaş 2012, p. 59): high unemployment, lack of investment and jobs, poorly developed infrastructure and poor access to services, due to the remoteness of the area. All this, combined with a perceived lack of vision on the part of the authorities regarding the sustainable development of the region, contributes to the massive depopulation of the locality (Mucea 2022, p. 32).

Although the case of Roşia Montană is not isolated, the situation is similar in many other mining regions. This study will focus on Roşia Montană, especially since the case has generated much debate in Romanian society.

Methodological background

The results of two research projects are used to achieve the article's fundamental purpose which is to characterise the consequences of the closure of a mining investment in a mono-industrial area of the local community. The primary purpose of both surveys was to determine the predominant type of organisational commitment that former employees had to the RMGC project, but also to capture the influence of the amount of time that employees spent at the company on organisational commitment to the project. The data collection of the first study was carried out in the spring of 2015 in a quantitative exploratory study, using the sociological survey as the research method. The questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The sample of the sociological survey consists of all the people employed by RMGC who were dismissed as a result of the restructuring process of the company. In addition, only former employees of the company who come from Roşia Montană or at least had their permanent residence in this village were included in the research. In other words, people who consider themselves and are considered by the community to be locals. The sample chosen is a non-probability sample, or a snowball sample. This sampling method was chosen because the RMGC representatives did not provide any information about former employees. Therefore, 49 people were interviewed.

The data of the second study were collected at the beginning of 2020, in February, March, April, and May, again using the sociological survey based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered directly, with a period of interruption due to the state of emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, when telephone questionnaires were used. The

sample used for this research was intentional, non-probabilistic and specific to case-study research. It was formed taking into account the distribution of the total population in the region of the main villages of the Roşia Montană commune. Thus, the number of inhabitants living in the main villages of the commune is as follows: Roşia Montană – 778 people; Cărpiniş – 1448 people; Gura Roşiei – 233 people; Vârtop – 224 people; and Corna – 168 people, including persons under 18 years of age. Thus, the sample size was established based on the number of inhabitants of the commune. The questionnaire was administered to at least 10% of the people living in the locality (each village in the commune), who were at least 18 years old at the time of the survey. After data collection and validation, the number of respondents in each village in the commune is 282 people, distributed according to the village of affiliation as follows: Roşia Montană – 79 people (28%); Cărpiniş – 130 people (46.1%); Gura Roşiei – 31 people (11%); Vârtop – 23 people (8.2%); and Corna – 19 people (6.7%). Of the total number of respondents, 51.1% were men and 48.9% are women. In terms of current occupation, most respondents, 45.2%, were employed, 33% were retired, and 11.5% were unemployed or performed household activities. Small percentages were registered as students (3.9%) and as entrepreneurs or certified self-employed (3.2%). Even lower percentages were recorded for the following categories: unemployed persons who receiving compensation, persons on maternity leave, or students. For each type, the percentage was 1.1% of the total number of valid answers.

I also focused on another issue of great importance: the percentage of persons from the mining locality who worked or are currently employed – they or other members of their conjugal family (parents and their children) – in the state mining enterprises (Roşia Min and Cupru Min) or in the investment company in the commune (Roşia Montană Gold Corporation – RMGC). This question allowed each respondent to choose between several options. Thus, we recorded cases where a person worked for only one of the three employers mentioned, for two of them, or even for the three employers mentioned in a similar situation for their family members.

The table below shows the frequency distributions according to the percentage distribution of respondents, but does not take into account the period during which the respondents were employed by the three companies.

Table 1

The percentage of persons (and these persons' family members) who worked for state-owned mining companies, for RMGC or none of the two aforementioned categories of institutions

He/she/they worked for:		RoşiaMin	CupruMin	RMGC (Gold)	None
Respondent	In the past	29.9%	15.1%	26.3%	44.2%
	currently	2.2%	3.3%	4.4%	90.5%
Members of the respondent's family	In the past	41.5%	22.2%	35.3%	27.4%
	currently	1.9%	13.9%	10.5%	76.4%

Source: own study.

As shown in Table 1, in the past the mining sector employed a larger number of people compared to the current situation, whether we are talking about employees of the company that extracted gold and silver or the company extracted copper. Thus, 45% of the respondents used to be employed by the state-owned mining enterprises (Roşia Min and Cupru Min), while now these two enterprises employ only 5.5% of the total number of respondents. The percentage is even lower because Roşia Min has only three direct employees. Still, the survey also included some people employed by the security company that oversees the former premises of the company, which is a separate entity from the mining company, although it is employed by Roşia Min to provide security services. The proportion of those who currently work for Roşia Min is even smaller. The situation is similar for the persons in the respondents' families: while in the past 63.7% of them worked at Roşia Min and Cupru Min, today only 15.8% of the respondents' family members work at these mining enterprises. The percentage is higher for respondents' family members currently employed at Cupru Min (13.9%), perhaps the only state-owned mining company that extracts and processes metal ore in Romania. The other state-owned company was being de-structured with the closure of the Romanian mining sector, and the need for jobs in this area became increasingly urgent (Mucea 2022, pp. 59-60).

Research results

The research projects indicate the opinions of the inhabitants of the selected area on the importance and consequences of the closure of the mining industry. The research results also allow us to answer questions about the challenges facing these communities.

Before focusing on the current situation of the inhabitants of Roşia Montană, it is worth presenting here the results of the research conducted in the spring of 2015 among former RMGC employees who were laid off as a result of the restructuring of RMGC's operations. To understand the importance of employment in the region, it is crucial to correctly perceive the attitude of former RMGC employees towards work in general and the work they did for the foreign company that invested in the area. It can be observed that the availability of jobs in the region, associated with the presence of RMGC, has contributed to the development of the local community.

The respondents (former employees of RMGC) were asked to define the importance of work for their particular case. As expected, none of the respondents argued that work was unimportant or unimportant to them. 90.4% of the respondents (47 people) felt that work was important to them, and only 9.6% (5 people) said that work was perceived as effective. Therefore, most respondents felt that work was an important factor. The responses demonstrated that job stability was perceived as a factor of great importance. The foreign company benefited from the fact that people needed jobs and was able to attract them by offering them stable employment.

The need for any form of investment in the Roşia Montană region is reflected in the answers provided by the persons who participated in the research (former employees of RMGC), of whom only 30.8% (16 people) managed to find another job at the time of the survey (approximately after two years after being laid off), while 69.2% (36 people) were still unemployed at the time of the sociological study.

Among the unemployed respondents, 69.4% (25 persons) thought that it would be challenging for them to find a job in the near future as good as the one offered by RMGC; 22.2% (8 persons) thought that it would be rather difficult for them to find a job as good as the one offered by RMGC in the near future; only 8.4% of the respondents (3 persons) expected it would be rather easy or easy for them to find a job as good as the one offered by RMGC.

For the respondents who were employed at the time of the survey, their perceptions of their current workplace, compared to the job they had at RMGC were also recorded. For example, 43.8% of the respondents felt that the position they held at the time of the survey was as good as the one they had had at RMGC, 37.5% thought that their current job was better than the one they had had at RMGC, and 18.8% of the respondents perceived the position they held at the time of the survey as worse than the one they

had had at RMGC. The answers to the question regarding the respondent's perception of their current job indicate that the persons who perceived their current position as being as good or even better than the one they had at RMGC were willing to be integrated into the labour force and to have a stable income, regardless of whether it was offered by Roşia Montană Gold Corporation or by another state-owned or private company, whether in the mining sector or not. Thus, it appears that for the community in the region of Roşia Montană, the availability of jobs is considered necessary, irrespective of the company providing employment, on condition that their environment, heritage and local specificity are not influenced negatively.

The importance attributed by the people living in Roşia Montană to the job they used to have at RMGC was also a point of interest for our research. The results obtained are very suggestive: 48.1% of the respondents attributed a very high importance to the former job they had at RMGC; 48.1% of the respondents considered that their former job had a high significance in the context of their lives, and only 3.8% of the respondents believed the job they had at RMGC was unimportant and very unimportant. In other words, for 96.2% of respondents, the mining company offered a very important or important work opportunity. The high percentage can be explained in different ways: from the lack of a job at the time to the lack of a strategy on the part of the authorities, which highlights the importance of employment in the Apuseni Mountains region in general and in Roşia Montană in particular.

As regards the extent to which the population of Roşia Montană relied on the job they used to have at RMGC, 30.8% of the respondents considered that they were still dependent to a large extent on the job offered by RMGC, while 21.2% argued that they depended on it to a considerable extent. 28.8% of the respondents considered that they still relied on their former job to a minimal extent. Even lower percentages were registered in the case of Roşia Montană residents who believed that they depended on the job offered by RMGC to a small extent (9.6%) and in the case of persons who argued that they relied on their former job neither to a large nor to a small extent (9.6%).

To understand the need and importance of investments in mono-industrial areas, as another research question in this study, we extended the data presented so far with other data that focused not only on the employees of RMGC (since 2015), but also on the entire community of Roşia Montană (in 2020). We intended to give an accurate picture of how individuals from the locality of Alba County perceived the results of the restriction of the investor's activity in their region.

The closure of the state-owned mining operations in the locality (Roşia Min) caused significant problems. Due to the lack of jobs in the region, the locals welcomed the employment opportunities provided by foreign companies interested in investing in the locality. In fact, for many residents of Roşia Montană, the period during which Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) operated in the locality represented a period of stability, not only in terms of employment. In addition to the economic implications (resulting from the presence of capital, as RMGC employees benefited from the income), the company became involved in community-related activities and community-support projects, even ensuring sponsorship in some situations. The reasons behind such socially concerned actions are unknown to us and beyond the interest of this research.

We are not analysing here, and we do not know exactly what the reasons are for such actions. Nevertheless, we specify that for a long time RMGC adopted the strategy of glocalisation in an attempt to attract the community of Roşia Montană, a process that proved to be successful (Pascaru, 2013, Mucea, 2018). On the one hand, most of the respondents, 79%, think that the main effect that the reduction of the company's activity had on the community was the reduction of jobs. At the same time, 54.7% feel that after the company's activity was reduced, the people of the commune were no longer helped by the company. This fact has profound implications at both individual and community levels, including the lack of stable jobs in mono-industrial areas.

On the other hand, 33.3% of the respondents think that the case has not been brought to the public's attention by the restriction of the company's activity. This fact may have implications for only a part of the population, more precisely for the locals working in tourism and hospitality, since an area that is brought to public attention in the media attracts tourists and people interested in visiting the site. However, the famous town in the Apuseni Mountains has not benefited much from advertising and media coverage, as tourism is a very underdeveloped industry in the area. In recent years, however, some locals have taken the initiative to provide accommodation for tourists.

The reduction of RMGC's activity had some implications for a part of the community, more precisely for the people living in the area of the company's acquisition; after RMGC ceased its activity in the regions, the locals from Roşia Montană no longer had the opportunity to sell their property, as highlighted in the sociological survey. Thus, 48.6% of the respondents in the locality declared that locals could no longer sell their

property after the activity of the foreign company was reduced. The inability to sell the property had many implications, some of which were beneficial at the individual level but detrimental to the community. For example, if the sale of the property had continued, the locals who chose to sell their properties could have obtained significant sums of money in exchange for the property, which could have ensured, at least for a while, sufficient resources to help them live a better life, as happened in the case of the locals who sold their property in Roşia Montană and subsequently settled in other regions. However, such actions have been detrimental to the community and have led to increased depopulation, which has occurred as a result of displacement.

On the other hand, since the presence of RMGC in the area has caused conflicts at the community level, the restriction of its activity in Roşia Montană has improved relations among the locals, according to 39.9% of the respondents. Although this aspect is not discussed in the present study, the presence of an investor in mono-industrial areas with high unemployment or an acute shortage of jobs, who decides to employ only part of the community, generates conflicts between those who support the investment and those who oppose it.

The questionnaire also revealed additional aspects relating to the closure of RMGC's activities in Roşia Montană. For example, in addition to the standard response options in the questionnaire, 5.8% of the respondents provide an additional personal opinion. These opinions are generally against RMGC, arguing that with the restriction of the investor's activity in the area, the life of the locals returned to normal, corruption and enmity among people decreased (1.8%), and pollution has been reduced (0.4 %). The chances of state-owned enterprises restarting their activities increased. However, some respondents felt that the cessation of RMGC's activities in the area had reduced the attention given to their locality (1.4%), while unemployment in the region had increased (2.2%). At the same time, 0.4% of the respondents considered that the reduction of RMGC's activity in Roşia Montană did not have a considerable effect (Mucea 2022, p. 204).

While the older population in the area benefits from a retirement allowance, younger persons, who do not have employment opportunities, are forced to migrate either to urban regions in Romania or abroad. This situation is characteristic not only of Roşia Montana, but also of other mono-industrial regions in Romania. According to 65.2% of the participants in the survey, the depopulation of the area was a result of the cessation of RMGC's activities in the commune. However, the depopulation was also strongly influenced by the fact that local people sold their properties in Roşia Montana and chose to move to other areas. This process took place

at the same time as RMGC was acquiring properties in the locality to start the proposed investment project. For some locals, more precisely for those living in the area of the company's acquisition, the sale of the property was a chance to capitalise on land and housing in a poorly developed area and to migrate to more developed areas, depending on their preferences. In most cases, the areas chosen were those that offered more opportunities for the families of Roşia Montana.

Conclusions

The depopulation of rural areas due to the migration of the younger population to urban areas is widespread. In this way, villages become unattractive areas for investors and young people alike, and poverty is a consequence of this situation. The elements in our study represent poverty indicators in the towns (Mucea 2022, p. 98). The challenges facing former mono-industrial communities are significant and can have a long-lasting impact on the local economy. However, with careful planning and strategic investment, these communities can overcome these challenges and build a more resilient and diverse economies.

The anti-poverty strategies implemented by the authorities in rural areas must be adapted to the specificities of each community, and the development measures and policies implemented require a high degree of adaptability to local specificities. Therefore, the efficiency of local institutions in these areas is essential to solve the problems caused by poverty. On the other hand, the education and employment of locals in these areas might have direct positive results in combating poverty in the regions. Thus, any policy focused on local development and poverty reduction must take into account the educational component as well as the integration of the unemployed into the labour market through sustainable economic development (Paraschiv 2008, p. 449; Mucea 2022, p. 98).

Recently, the situation in several local regions has improved, mainly due to the availability of European funds and the excellent capacity of local leaders to organise and attract such investment funds. The non-reimbursable funds, earmarked exclusively for the rural environment, have contributed to the modernisation of villages and the development of efficient community and agricultural infrastructures, which in turn has attracted investment and the relocation of company headquarters and production facilities to these areas. Such development strategies, which are part of a process of durable reorganisation of rural areas, determine a reverse migration towards rural localities (Mucea 2022, p. 100). Villages close to cities generally have more advantages in terms of development. In the case of more remote or

isolated rural areas, the presence of an investor might have consequences such as a slight increase in the population. In the specific case of Roșia Montană, the population increase was partly determined by the presence in the area of the company's employees who were not from Roșia Montană. They came from different regions of the country, worked for the company and changed their residence in the commune.

In conclusion, we reiterate the need to invest in mono-industrial areas as the only way to prevent depopulation. At the same time, investments or sustainable development plans should be adapted to the needs of the local population. The studies carried out in Roșia Montană, from 2015 until 2020, show that no strategies have been implemented to improve the situation of the local population. However, the dependence felt by the people of the commune on the RMGC is decreasing. The persons who have decided to stay in the area seem to be getting used to the current situation in the area and are trying to make a living from other activities not related to the mining sector. At the same time, the expansion of employment opportunities in the state-owned company Cupru Min has been beneficial for the inhabitants of Roșia Montană. However, the situation for the people living in this old mining town is far from stable.

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