



2015

STRUCTURAL EMERGENCE OF THE  
MANAGERIAL CLASS IN ROMANIA  
*Perspectives on managers from  
Iași City*  
**ABSTRACT OF DOCTORAL THESIS**

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2015

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Key words: *manager, management, organization, emergence, managerial class*

The importance of management development has been visible since the beginning of the 20th century and was associated with powerful men, those who became overnight „ *the heroes of economy*”. Management fulfills the function of organizing the internal rules of the company, of management practice.

For a society to function properly and to prosper, both materially and morally, for its evolution to be really possible, it is imperative that every individual is fully aware of the necessity of personal development, of searching the best methods to achieve this development, thus taking the first step towards individual evolution. In the following we set out to analyze this complex process viewpoint of the manager profession, tracing its emergence in our society. Being a manager implies a constant capitalization of one’s own resources with the purpose of evolution. At the same time, these resources are engaged in a frequently spectacular dynamic caused by the major changes in social structures, prone to exercising pressure on the manager. The discrepancies between his image and the implementation of the principles that support it have been, these past decades, subject to criticism more than once. The classic theories, the modern ones and the ones currently shaped are tangible evidence of extensive changes in management. The mechanisms of the changes were and still are discussed, debated and researched.

This research addresses the problem of the *new manager* in Romania, focusing on one city alone: Iași. The target group selected may present the general characteristics of any other manager in Romania.

The significance of these efforts determined aspirants to this profession to assess their own professional skills as superior to other organizational positions.

The sociological approach of certain dimensions of organizational and management theories, as well as theories from domains pertaining to these disciplines - economic sociology, social psychology, history- rounded off the approach of this research.

The analysis of this professional class is even more exciting, since each subject has a personal specificity, a different profile and cultural and educational baggage. Although this study set out to use a limited viewpoint, as a micro-research, diversity expressed by a multitude of manager categories from various domains was desired: cultural, educational, technical, humanities and social sciences, services, sales. Another difference imposed by the activity domains is the type of organization managed: public or private sector; national or multinational. The impact of globalization that imprinted a certain pattern, depending on the type of

organization and its domains, is quite visible. What I consider to be a challenge is this paradox: although individuals are obviously different and each organization has, by nature of its activity, a certain type of management, managers can be singled out by some common behavioral patterns.

Managers in Romania, especially those from multinationals, seem to have borrowed, copied, standardised even the practice habits of their counterparts from the company's country of origin. This becomes visible when reading their interviews in the press. Those given by foreign managers are very similar to the interviews of the local ones, including those conducted by me, during the research, with managers from Iași. It seems that the region of the country is of no disadvantage whatsoever: a manager in a „multinational” company in Iași (in Moldova, a less privileged region), interviewed by me is paid as much in sales or even better than his colleagues from other regions of the country (statement based strictly on the declarations of certain subjects). This draws attention to the managerial qualities of the interviewee; he stands out despite of the identical company type, structure, management policy, mentality and managerial reasons throughout the country.

The thesis is divided into five chapters, each chapter with an area of interest assigned to it, so as to develop and bring arguments for each pursued perspective.

The main idea is that of an entire emergence process of a managerial class, based on the social mobility of members pertaining to certain socio-professional categories.

In order to conceive a theory concerning the emergence of managers in Romania we chose deduction, deducing the hypotheses from the previously existing theoretical statements, hypotheses that were later confronted, for approval or rejection, with the observation-based empirical data.

The research project comprises:

### **Introduction**

- ✓ The significance of a study focused on the emergence of the managerial class in Romania and its structural mobility;
- ✓ Building the theoretical model;
- ✓ Describing the methodology.

### **Research Purpose**

- ✓ The purpose of the thesis is to offer an overview on structural emergence in Romania, based on the Grounded Theory Methodology and to identify the characteristics of structural mobility of managers.

### **Research Objectives**

Within this paper I am pursuing:

- ✓ The creation of a preliminary framework within which the mobility of the managerial class in Romania can be defined;
- ✓ The emergence of the managerial class in Romania;
- ✓ The underlining of the characteristics describing those in the position of manager.

### **Research Questions**

1. *What are the main characteristics of the managerial class in Romania?*
2. *What are the particular values characterising the managerial class in Romania?*
2. *What positions do managers occupy, in their viewpoint, within the political field in Romania?*
3. *Based on what and how can arguments be made for the managers' belief that they represent a dimension of power in Romania?*
5. *Which are the common and the specific properties of Romanian managers, compared to those in Western Europe?*

### **Research Hypotheses**

- ✓ The studied *top managers* and *middle managers* believe that they belong to the elite of Romania;
- ✓ Managers in Romania could represent a dimension of political power, if only their social involvement would be more extended;
- ✓ The managerial class in Romania represents the middle class from Romania.

### **Methods and techniques used**

Interviews. The research method is a qualitative one, using the semi-structured interview, the case study or, sometimes even the unstructured interview, when the speaker prefers a dialogue used when recounting *a life story*. The interviews amounted to 20 and had a duration spanning between 45 minutes and 200 minutes.

The case studies - analysis of the two case studies presented and selection of subjects who underwent an indepth analysis to better understand the effects of mobility, of social and professional performance on social recognition. I tried to outline that leapfrogging in order to obtain rapid financial funds may cause, within a short period of time, the failure of the individual.

The first chapter, „Concepts, Theories, Definitions”, represents the theoretical basis of the paper. This chapter submits an overview on managerial theories, definitions of the manager, while the subchapter „Manager vs. Director” presents *at full length* the route of emergence for

this profession in Romania, over the decades towards the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, from a sociological, political, historical and economic perspective.

The emergence of this professional class, of managers, comes forward as a natural cause of transformations that occurred after the Revolution from 1989. Theoretically as well as with managerial practice, paradigm changes are obvious in the first chapter too, where the antithesis between classical theories and modern and postmodern ones is presented.

The emergent manager in the Eastern European capitalism is not necessarily the carbon copy of his counterpart in the Western capitalism.

The observation according to which in Central and Eastern Europe a new type of capitalism appeared, without any capitalists, is the reason behind an extended international debate<sup>1</sup>. The post-communist trajectory of Romania entailed changes within organizations, and thus the people who run them, the managers, become key elements in the understanding of the mobility process.

To understand the new category of managers it is necessary to study the mentalities of this leading class, the ideologies, the philosophy, the values, attitudes and relation with the political world, but also to run a deep analysis of the privatization process and the operation mode of Romanian capitalism logic.

Emergence in this situation represents the arrival of a new category of managers. The phenomenon concerning the appearance of managers in Romania has distinguished a few stages:

- First of all, the adoption of an identity;
- Defining the status of the manager in relation with criteria of an economic nature, without limiting it to these;
  - To the economic criterion is added consideration for the professional, occupational, educational status, the lifestyle and values;
  - The criteria concerning the interests within the same class are placed in relation with the specificity of the society it belongs to, the type of society development and the level of development at the time of analysis.
- Another stage in the appearance of managers in Romania was the one when others labelled them as belonging to a superior social class, which correlated with the speciality studies and literature contributed to the reinforcement of the structural emergence of managerial class.

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<sup>1</sup>Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, EleanorTownslly, *Capitalism fără capitaliști. Noua elită conducătoare din Europa de Est*, Editura Omega, București, 2001.

The second chapter – „Social class or professional group?”- comprises presentations of terms and definitions of the managerial class, social class, professional class, class inequalities, as well as a study on generation gap in management.

In this chapter are catalogued different types of managers, their classifications and their background, within a common framework.

The concept of emergence is approached again in an exposition, starting from the social change, viewed as a „rethinking of the social” but also as an effect of the transition from one type of society (the communist one) to another, a more dynamic one (the post-communist society). This transition was classified as a trigger of ideological changes, of a new type of organizational system. The chapter concludes with an analysis of what it means to achieve managerial success.

The third chapter deals with the analysis of values and attributes belonging to the managerial class: the power of managers, regardless of their manifestation forms, consumption and models of consumption assigned to this professional category, the narcissism of the specialized group, stereotypes, forms of manipulation and professional secrecy.

Chapter IV comprises estimated statistical demographic data for this professional category. The estimation for the number of managers in Romania was deduced from the statistics provided by the National Statistics Institute of Romania (NSI 2013), starting from the study „Distribution of employees according to groups of salaries - October 2012”. For Iași County was used the figures from the analysis conducted by the National Statistics Institute, County Branch for Statistics Iași, as presented in the Yearbook. This analysis globally describes the economy of Iași County, without making any direct reference to the managers in the county. The data regarding them was deduced from the classifications and nomenclatures in the Yearbook, used in the updated CAEN version, CAEN Rev. 2 respectively, implemented with the Order no. 337/2007 of the National Statistics Institute’s President, published in the Official Gazette.

In the same chapter the reader may conduct a comparative analysis of the specialized education system MBA in Romania and other countries in the world. The statistical differences indicates once more, from another perspective though, the distinction in vision between Romanian management and that from other countries.

At the same time, these differences may be interpreted as a beginning for the emergence movement of the economic market in Romania.

In chapter V, „ Field Work”, are debated the work methods approached during this sociologic study.

In conclusion, no definition for the structural emergence of the managerial class from Romania can be quoted, since the speciality books offer no operational definition for the

emergence of managers. On the contrary, there are references to other concepts, general ones that can be linked to this process.

The actual references to the emergence of Romanian managers are not to be taken as final definitions, but rather temporary, timid definitions of the concept, viewed mostly from the humanistic and sociological perspective.

The profile of the Romanian manager is undergoing a process of full development and change. This study represents a start in the examination of characteristics pertaining to the managerial class currently being shaped, in which I endeavoured to understand what drives these managers in their activity.

At the moment, the activity of managers in the dynamic world of globalisation is no longer marked by sharp differences between domains, areas to the extent to which they did decades before.

The exploring character, of discovering the specific particularities of this professional category's emergence, of managers from Romania, set the multidisciplinary approach of the study, using qualitative techniques, semi-structured interviews, case studies and content analysis.

During the research, the concept of *emergence* was debated at length, assigning to it the idea of personal evolution of the individual desiring professional advancement (and more), a condition for managers to be up-to-date in their organizations and businesses, and a specific characteristic imposed by the competition in the field.

The profile of the Romanian manager changed alongside the emergence of the capital market in our country, assigning to him an emergent character as well. Similar processes took place in other countries from the former Communist Bloc, with differences in evolution and distinct results that can only be comprehended after a detailed regional analysis.

The main characteristic of this type of emergent manager is that he suffered an identity change shaped on the model of the new class structure in Romania. Identified by the economic dimension and the professional, educational and occupational status and lifestyle, managers consider themselves as belonging to the same social class.

The professional identity for the emergent manager is juxtaposed with the social identity. Stereotypical thinking associates the manager not only with leading an organization but with a certain lifestyle also, ostentatious consumption and an image specific to managers ( for example, the elegant attire).

The emergent manager can also be recognised by his management style. He is always active, curious, eager to update the knowledge in the domain he is working in. Therefore, he attends courses, schools, conferences.

A smooth running of the activities in a company is ensured when the authority is held by the manager and not by those he supervises. In the case of private companies, where the entrepreneur does not hold the position of manager, decisions must belong to the managerial body, because it has the best understanding of the economic, administrative and recruiting system of the personnel. Therefore, in the private sector, the manager represents the link between the interests of the management and the workers. The constant desire of the entrepreneur to gain income from the organization he manages and the interest of the worker to have satisfactory salary entitlements is mediated by those who run the business.

From the results obtained in the field the best rationality in the running of an organization is ensured when the conditions described above are met. In 9 out of the 20 studied subjects that fit this situation (in which the manager is the employed by a private company) the top professional achievements are achieved by those interested in the evolution of the organization, both economically and from the perspective of human capital. On the other hand, the management's lack of direct involvement in the work process represents an advantage for the managers reaching these achievements.

Another significant aspect is authority. Managers who do not have clearly defined criteria when managing authority in relation with the workers or do not exercise it directly towards them, preferring instead a „descentralization” of its manifestation, are unable to gain a real contact with the „pulse” of the organization they run.

The lack of empathy, the distance imposed by certain managers towards the people in his team determines a depersonalization of the position the manager fills. This phenomenon prompts the manager to lose touch with the reality from the organization he manages. At the same time, there is a rupture between the employees and the managerial body. In the absence of a direct contact and communication, distrust, discontent and lack of motivation are likely to appear. From the perspective of managerial practices, a further danger is that of losing sight of the company's real objectives or the implementation of unachievable goals, without any precise knowledge of its resources and liquid assets.

These practices used by some managers render the professional aspects as less important, focusing more on objectives that turn, in time, into personal ambitions.

Following the analysis of the interviews four characteristics of managers were outlined for analysis : values, narcissism, consumption and power. The originality of these analyses lies in distinguishing new elements, specific to managers and their activities.

One of the conclusions extracted from the qualitative analysis is that the emergence of this professional class, of managers, is a natural consequence of transformations that took place after the Revolution from 1989. The emergent manager from Romania presents specific

particularities as a result of the post-communist trajectory, with its changes in all the institutional and organizational systems. Therefore, those who run them, namely the managers, become key elements in understanding the emergence process.

An appropriate environment in the organization, the social space and in the family depends on the manager. Any individual increasingly demands that the workplace provides recognition and identity. Each person's intention is to gain prestige of all types.

The manager will always be the meeting point between the interest of the company, the employee and the offers on the market. The emergent organizational system is a very dynamic one, and not any manager can succeed. Those who oppose change will be eliminated by their own resistance. Managerial emergence represents the process of identity change, at an individual as well as an organizational level.

The structural emergence of the managerial class in Romania represents a necessity for any manager or company that sets out to reach a top level of performance. The tendency to speed up the rhythm of professional development has effects mainly for all the emergent economies. Individually, the need to know more within the field of activity increases alongside the rising complexity of companies and all this entails.

Managing a company has become a complex, engrossing and competitive activity and those who do not know how to handle it or do not invest all their energy into it are swiftly replaced by those closing in on them: the emergent managers of the generation.

My thesis aims to demonstrate that the phenomenon of manager emergence in Romania is undergoing a full expansion and restructuring, still far from being confined to fixed theories, thus permissive with new interpretations and perspectives, open to daring questions to which we will, in time, find new answers.

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