

The Third Millennium Development Goal

Romanian case



Alexandra Guzu

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Supervisor: Wolfgang Zank

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FOREWORD

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Front picture collected from <http://www.behance.net/Raouia>

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I. Introduction

Background

The main purpose of this paper is to provide readers with an accurate understanding of the Millennium Development Goals and how effective are the targets of the goal I chose to work with. The Millennium Development Goals are being described as “*the world’s time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty*”¹, however this thesis deals with the question why Romania has not been totally successful at fulfilling the Third Millennium Development Goal.

I concentrate in particular on a stand-alone goal that has in its attention gender issues by focusing on the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. Furthermore, the Third Millennium Development Goal seems to be a complex goal due to the diversity of areas it covers, for instance domestic and non-domestic violence, equal payment in labor market, women’s limited access to rights and resources and women’s representation in politics.

During the last decades, scholars worldwide have been studying and analyzing how gender has progressively become a priority in most of the government’s initiatives. Additionally, the females' representation in governments represented a controversial debate subject as well. Nonetheless, the number of academics that have been published books regarding women’s active role in politics is relatively limited and it is worth mentioning Bauer and Tremblay’s book “*Women in Executive Power: A global overview*”², which is considered of interest for all scholars and ordinary people that have an curiosity about “*comparative politics, gender and women’s studies*.”³

The Millennium Development Goals Report from 2010 contains a special section based on “*the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament, related to Goal 3 – Promote gender equality and empower women*”.⁴ Since Romania faced several challenges in achieving this target, one part of this project is dedicated to this

¹ www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/ accessed 16.05 2016

² Women in executive power, pg.3

³ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁴ UN, Government of Romania, Millennium Development Romania, Bucharest, 2010

matter as well. Likewise, it is essential to acknowledge that indicator 3.3 of Global MDG 3 has not officially been involved within the revised indicators that have been attributed to Romania. As a matter of fact, the Romanian Government highlighted the importance of women's representation in politics and substantial efforts have been made in order to increase the number of women in Parliament. It is of a great importance that gender issues have become an international priority and governments from 189 countries engaged to empower women and also to support gender parity.⁵

Furthermore, Sandra Budis - Pralong from the UNFPA Romania indicated that the Third Millennium Development Goal appears to be *“the right catalyst to help boost the self-confidence of Romanian women and empower them to move their country forward by establishing a more equitable gender balance, to the clear benefit of both the men and the women of Romania.”*⁶ Since she expressed her optimism regarding Romanian situation on gender issues and the necessity of the MDGs, Romanian former Prime Minister, Adrian Năstase explained in 2003 the importance of the United Nation initiative in the Eastern country;

*“Romania, having achieved over the past decade a series of economic and social reforms, now stands prepared to tackle this ambitious long-term millennium strategy. (...) The Millennium Development Goals Report is a clear-cut instrument for harnessing skills and sustaining change, for generating solidarity between citizens and governments around vision of the prosperous society we all want to be part of.”*⁷

Problem formulation

Based on the considerations that have been presented in the introductory part, the purpose of the present paper is to find answers regarding the Romanian progress on the Millennium Development Goals and which were the barriers that prevented the realization of the MDG 3. Therefore, my aim is to answer the following question:

⁵ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁶ <http://eca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/en71.pdf> accessed 16.05.16

⁷ “Millennium Development Goals Report”, Produced by the Government of Romania with the assistance of the UN system in Romania”, Bucharest 2003

Why could not Romania completely fulfill the Third Millennium Development Goals?

Once the research question has been formulated, I will go further to the next part, which is the methodological framework.

Methodological considerations

This chapter comprises the methodological framework that has been used for the present paper. Moreover, I find it relevant to present a guideline of the project, so it will be easier for all readers to have an idea of what this paper work is about. Therefore, in the following lines I will briefly present the chapters of this project and what it will contain.

The first part of the project consists of a short introduction, where basic characteristics of the main subject are presented. Due to the complexity of the subject, the research question has been formulated after a very careful research. The following section seeks to explain the methodological framework that will be conducted along with the data collection and the selection of the actors that have been chosen for this thesis.

The theoretical framework contains scholars and researchers that have played an essential role in finding the right theory that could be applied to the present project. The first part of this chapter will include a short explanation regarding the terms that are met in the research question: *gender*, *women's empowerment*. Besides, I chose to include here the concept of *representation*, which is related to our last part of the third chapter. Since the idea of "*women's representation in politics*" is highly used in the present paper, I found it relevant to elaborate a bit about this concept. The last part of this chapter comprises the theories that have been chosen in order to find possible hypothesis of the problem formulation.

The third chapter focuses on the empirical case study and it contains three sections. Firstly, an overview about the Millennium Development Goals will be presented,

including historical background, general presentation of the UN framework, along with the explanation of each goal on a global context. Secondly, a linkage is created between the UN 15 year strategy, and the country that has been selected for this empirical case, Romania.

Furthermore, the Third Millennium Development Goal is adapted to the Romanian context and the progress of this goal is besides explained in this part of the project. As I have mentioned in the introduction part, the thesis contains a special focus, which is determined by women's representation in politics and is largely explained at the end of this chapter.

The fourth chapter contains the analysis section, where I bring into discussion all the hypotheses that have been presented in the second chapter.

Section five presents the conclusion of the project, based on the assumption that has been made in the previous chapter. In the last part is the bibliography that has been used in order to create this thesis.

Data collection

The present project contains qualitative data, which means that the research and analysis sections are mainly based on the reports from intergovernmental organizations, predominantly United Nations, as well as papers from Romanian public institutions, newsletters and books. I consider that a quantitative research, as well as a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data would have given a different shape and consistence to this paper than it was initially intended. I do believe that it would have made an interesting project to use both types of data, but this would have been possible in a team-based project or in a broader research paper. So, due to the lack of time and limited number of pages, I decided to use a qualitative research.

As Flick has stated in his book *“An introduction to qualitative research”*,

“the central ideas guiding qualitative research are different from those in quantitative research. The essential features of qualitative research are the

correct choice of appropriate methods and theories; the recognition and analysis of different perspectives, the researchers' reflections on their research as part of the process of knowledge production; and the variety of approaches and methods."⁸

Being a paper that is strongly supported by official governmental and intergovernmental reports (e.g. Romanian Government and several branches of the UN), the *credibility* and *authenticity* of the materials should be based on the transparency of the institutions that are in charge with providing the right information for its citizens. On the opposite side, media also plays a fundamental role in this process. One cannot deny the fact that media could undoubtedly have some bias and I am aware of this fact when using newspapers and online articles.

The reading materials that I have used are mostly in English, with a few exceptions of articles and documents that are in Romanian, my maternal language. Therefore, when it was necessary I have directly translated those documents.

Selection of actors and motivation for the chosen subject

Each actor of this paper has been carefully chosen since they all have a vital role in finding the right answers for the problem formulation. The Millennium Development Goals under the United Nations framework catalyse the former organisation as the main actor of this paper. Furthermore, the implications of Romanian Government in the MDG framework make it a direct actor as well. Since it is all about the country's efforts that have been made in order to fulfil all the MDGs, I would classify it as the main actor of this paper.

Regarding the selected topic, I have chosen to stick on the MDG 3 since this goal had an unusual track in Romania. As a matter of fact, writing about a specific goal means that all the other goals are left behind. Studying for almost one year "Global Gender Studies" had a strong influence on my decision in writing my final project on gender issues and I became more captivated to these particular issues. Romania seemed to me

⁸ Flick, Uwe (2009) *An introduction to qualitative research*, Fourth edition, Sage publications Ltd, pg. 14

a good empirical case due to the progress that has been made on gender issues since the communist regime.

Even though the target on women's representation in Romanian Parliament has not been officially added in the MDGs framework, this focus represents an interest to me. The reason for according a significant importance to this section also lies behind the attention that has been drawn to Romania regarding this issue (e.g. UNDP on "*Gender equality and women's empowerment in public administration*", Romania case study).

Moreover, the year 2015 signified the end of the MDG framework; therefore, I found it relevant to write about this topic.

II. Theoretical framework

Defining the chosen concepts

Based on the problem formulation that has been presented above, the first part of the theoretical framework will include a set of definitions, which has the role to provide a better understanding of this present chapter. Therefore, the concepts of *gender*, *women's empowerment* and *women's representation* will be described in the next pages. In order to define these concepts, feminist scholars, such as Christine Sylvester, J. Ann Tickner, Cynthia Enloe or Hanna Pitkin have been used.

A. Gender

The feminist movements from 1960 and 1980 represented a step forward in achieving "*political, economical and social equality for women*".⁹ Moreover, as stated by Sylvester in her "*Feminist International Relations*" book, after 1980s "*feminists were numerous enough, confident enough, as well as sufficiently weathered, titled, and*

⁹ Baylis, John. Et al. *The Globalization of World Politics: an introduction to international relations*, 6th edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pg. 259

published to have women's studies programs in place, women and politics specialists on staff, and a stable of writing to consult – and internal debates to display.”¹⁰ By making this statement, she highlighted the idea that women's movements played an essential role in society, fact that lead to an enormous expansion in different sectors (e.g. education).

Over the past decades, feminist scholars have defined the concept of gender as “*a set of socially and culturally constructed characteristics that vary across time and places.*”¹¹ These characteristics they have been referring at are represented by the concepts of *masculinity* and *femininity* and how people perceive the idea of gender.¹² A major problem in this case is represented by people's misperception regarding “gender” and what it actually means. For most of them, gender is just a synonym for women, femininity. Cohn gives a clear and simple definition of this concept and he explains that gender refers to both women and men; therefore this concept is absolutely based on the interrelation amongst the two parts.¹³

The feminist international relations theorist Tickner pointed out a very interesting idea according to which ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ are two terms that have been attributed to particular characteristics. For instance, people associate masculinity with characteristics such as “*power, autonomy, rationality, and public*”, but when we think of the opposite sex, words as “*weakness, dependence/connection, emotionality, and private*’ comes naturally to their minds. To a certain degree, feminist scholars consider that the feminist standards are not appreciated as much as the masculinity ones.¹⁴

To put it in a nutshell, the concept of gender is described as “*a system of social hierarchy*” where the inequality between men and women dominates.¹⁵ Gender and

¹⁰ Sylvester Silvia, *Feminist international relations*, pg. 9

¹¹ Baylis, John. Et al. *The Globalization of World Politics: an introduction to international relations*, 6th edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pg. 260

¹² *ibid* 11

¹³ UN, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet2.pdf> (accessed 17.05.16)

¹⁴ Baylis, John. Et al. *The Globalization of World Politics: an introduction to international relations*, 6th edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pg. 260

¹⁵ Baylis, John. Et al. *The Globalization of World Politics: an introduction to international relations*, 6th edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pg. 260

feminist studies have signified an interesting topic what came into the attention of numerous academics from all over the world. It is worth mentioning that over the past years, the focus on man has significantly increased. Nonetheless, moving attention through male identities and masculinity could *"have significant impact on future strategies for working with gender perspectives in development."*¹⁶ Needless to say, if people would have become more aware of the power of gender equality in society, then the fulfilment of the MDGs wouldn't have been a problem in most of the countries.

B. Women's empowerment

The women empowerment concept became popular and begun to be part of world's biggest institutions agenda since the last decade of the 20th century. It is worth remembering *"the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 1993 Human Rights Conference, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and the Regional Preparatory Conferences for the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women."*¹⁷ As one could notice, all these conferences and summits had a focus on gender issues and human rights since the beginning of 1990s.

From a sociological perspective, empowerment *"often refers to power acquired by members of groups that have been excluded from decision-making processes, on grounds of disability; race; ethnicity; religion or gender."*¹⁸ The concept of empowerment came as a consequence of social exclusion and besides; it gathered all vulnerable groups to fight for a common right or purpose, indifferent to religion, nationality or gender.

According to feminist scholars, in modern times empowerment is frequently related to gender and feminist movements. Young pointed out that empowerment allows women to stand up for their rights and take control of their personal and professional life.

¹⁶ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet2.pdf> (accessed 18.05.16)

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Anser, Layachi "Women's empowerment: Concepts and contexts", <http://www.difi.org.qa/app/media/693> (accessed 20.05.16)

From her perspective, this process should be understood through the sphere of people who did not have any alternatives or choices until that moment of their life.¹⁹

Following the same idea as Young, Kabeer has also given a valuable meaning of empowerment, which she thought to be *“the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.”*²⁰

As stated in Siwal’s paperwork *“Empowerment of women – Conceptual framework”*, there are four general characteristics regarding this concept that are accepted in the universal literature.

In line with Kabeer’s statement, the first aspect is based on the idea that in order to be empowered, one must have experienced the disempowerment.²¹ As a matter of fact, this concept has been created as a consequence of people whose rights have been denied.

On the other hand, *“empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party.”*²² In other words, women should empower themselves by accepting the support and chances that are given by a third party, such as intergovernmental institutions or development agencies. Siwal asserts that these bodies *“may be able to created conditions favorable to empowerment but they cannot make it happen.”*²³

Furthermore, since the concept of empowerment is related to how people are involved in the process of decision-making, one can argue that empowerment is mostly about power and who detains it.

At last but not least, empowerment should be seen as an *“ongoing process, rather than a product”*, which means that it is no supreme feeling when someone is feeling empowered.²⁴

¹⁹ Rahman, Aminur “Women’s empowerment: concept and beyond” in “

²⁰ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/MalhotraSchulerBoender.pdf> (accessed 20.05.16)

²¹ Siwal, B. R. “Empowerment of women – Conceptual framework”

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/19166610/Empowerment-of-Women-Conceptual-Framework> (accessed 20.05.16)

²² *ibid*

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ *ibid*

C. Representation

I will move on to the last notion that will be explained in this part, which is characterized by **the concept of representation**.

Hanna Pitkin is one of the few scholars that have drawn the attention to the concept of representation. She has identified four different but interrelated *dimensions and meanings of representation*, which are *formal representation, descriptive representation, substantive representation or responsiveness* and *symbolic representation*.²⁵

Firstly, the formal representation refers to the legislations and procedures to which people are selected and/or removed from the role of representatives. Secondly, the descriptive representation is mostly about “*the compositional similarity between representatives and the represented*”, which means that it should be a noticeable correlation between all the parts that are involved in this process. In regard with the third dimension, Pitkin pointed out that it is “*acting in the interest of the represented in a manner responsive to them*”²⁶, and according to Pitkin’s position, the substantive representation is the most important dimension of all of them. Lastly, through symbolic representation it is comprehended the way in which the representation is being understood and what is the role of symbols in this process: “*the symbol’s power to evoke feelings or attitudes*.”²⁷

Regarding the concept of representation, Childs and Krook have been associated this idea to the “**critical mass theory**”, whose aim is to clarify “*why women do not always appear to represent women once they are in political office*.”²⁸

As stated by Dahlerup in her paperwork “*From a small to a large minority: women in Scandinavian Politics*”, this idea of critical mass originated from the realm of physics “*where it refers to the quantity needed to start a chain reaction, an irreversible take-off into a new situation or process (...) In political science literature the concept of*

²⁵ Bayer, Mishler “An integrated model of women’s representation”, The Journal of Politics, vol. 67, No. 2 (May 2005), pg. 407, Cambridge University Press

²⁶ *ibid* 25

²⁷ *ibid* 25

²⁸ Childs, S. and Krook, M. L. (2008), Critical Mass Theory and Women's Political Representation. Political Studies, 56: 725

critical mass infers that the election of an adequate number of female politicians will result in governance more responsive to women.”²⁹ This concept appeared as a consequence of the present situation in politics regarding women’s representation and it became a controversial subject for scholars and academics from all over the world.

During the years, this theory has been used as a justification to create more legislation and measures for bringing women into politics. Furthermore, as the years were passing by, scholars that have been studying this theory have become uncertain towards this concept “*as they have discovered other relationships between the numbers of women elected and the passage of legislation beneficial to women as a group. One scholar finds, for example, that women make a difference – and, indeed, perhaps a greater difference – when they form a very small minority*”.³⁰

Theories

The following subchapter contains two different theories that have been chosen for this present paper: liberal feminism and modernization theory. The first one is a feminist theory that has a special focus on gender, while the second one is considered a more complex theory that in this case, has a sociological and historical meaning.

What is feminism and who are its proponents?

As pointed out by Tickner, feminism is “*an academic discipline grew out of the feminist movement of the 1960 and 1970s – a movement dedicated to achieving political, social, and economic equality for women.*”³¹ The theories that have been studied by International Relations feminists during the years are based on the women’s position in society and how they can influence the political sphere. In a world

²⁹ Grey, Sandra “Women in Parliamentary politics’, Paper for the 51st Political Studies Association Conference, Manchester, United Kingdom, 2001, pg. 3

³⁰ Childs, Krook “Critical mass theory and women’s political representation, Political studies: 2008, Vol. 56

³¹ Baylis, John. Et al. *The Globalization of World Politics: an introduction to international relations*, 6th edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pg. 259

where women do not have the same rights as men, trying to find answers and solutions regarding the gender gap can represent one more step towards development.

J. Ann Tickner is an international relations feminist known for her contribution to the feminist literature with the books as *“Gender in international relations”*, *“Gendering world politics”* or *“A feminist voyage through international relations”*. Sylvester has been writing about Tickner in her *“Feminist International Relations”* book, where she described her being *“a specialist in IR (international relations) who recognizes its shortcomings and wants to infuse the field with feminist sensitivity”*.³²

Additionally, it is worth mentioning scholars as Jean Bethke Elshtain and Cynthia Enloe since they have played an essential role in the feminist studies. Their work has been highly appreciated on a global scale and it is still used in gender studies field. Enloe’s most famous book *“Bananas, Beaches and Bases”* appeared in 1989 and is considered one of the most fundamental feminist academic papers. In her book, she underlines the role of women in society and focus on making women’s role and perspectives visible in these sites, which have not traditionally been the focus of International Relations.

Gender and liberalism

Liberal feminism is one of the theories that have been greatly used in order to understand and define gender discrepancy and gender issues. As noticed by Parpart et al. in *“Theoretical perspectives on Gender and Development”*, liberal feminist has its roots back *“in the tradition of 16th and 17th century liberal philosophy, which focuses on the ideals of equality and liberty.”*³³ These concepts have remained the same over the years, even though the time had a strong impact over the ideology. From Wollstonecraft point of view, *“the biological sex difference were irrelevant when comes to the granting of political life (...) and the reason women appeared to be intellectually inferior was due to their inferior education and, therefore, was a result*

³² Sylvester, Christine *“Feminist international relations; An unfinished journey”*, Cambridge studies in international relations, pg. 13

³³ Parpart et al. , *“Theoretical perspectives on Gender and Development”* in the International Development Research, 2000, pg. 139

of inequality, rather than a justification for it.”³⁴ In the present days, liberal feminists still believe that through education, women will have more chances and opportunities in society.

Furthermore, the establishment of feminist schools represented an essential factor regarding the promotion of gender equality and empowering women worldwide.

As stated by Tickner, scholars and academics that have been studying this theory “*have investigated problems of refugee women, income inequalities between women and men, and the kinds of human rights violations incurred disproportionately by women, such as trafficking and rape in war.*”³⁵ Most of the writings and documents elaborated by the adepts of this theory are based on the women’s subordination and what initially cause it.

Professor of Sociology Giddens puts forward a description of the liberal theory “*feminist theory that believes gender inequality is produced by reduced access for women and girls to civil rights and allocation of social resources such as education and employment.*”³⁶ Furthermore, there have been identified several characteristics of liberal feminism and it is worth specifying some of them:

- a. Education is a key factor in the “*battle against discrimination*” which is often associated with unawareness and lack of knowledge.³⁷ The tendency to criticize and to have convinced prejudice is usually a consequence of ignorance, and as Plato has stated “*ignorance is the root of all evil*”.³⁸
- b. Needless to say, women’s position in society has been increased over the years. Even though women gained the same rights as men, one can observe the discrepancies between men and women regarding the working place. The

³⁴ *ibid* 31

³⁵ Baylis, John. Et al. *The Globalization of World Politics: an introduction to international relations*, 6th edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pg. 261

³⁶ <http://gjar.org/publishpaper/vol2issue7/d238r10.pdf> accessed 22.05.16

³⁷ “Feminism: basic principles”, www.sociology.org.uk 2005 (accessed 23.05.2016)

³⁸ Pigliucci, Massimo “Ignorance today”, accessed 27.05.16 on <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/07/2011712145927650899.html>

liberal feminists are often imagining how a world with more women in the decision-making power would look like.³⁹

- c. Perhaps one of the core ideas of this theory is based on the beliefs that *“women’s equality can be achieved by removing legal and other obstacles that have denied them the same rights and opportunities as men”*.⁴⁰
- d. These theorists believe in fair societies, where people are behaving naturally and free.
- e. Furthermore, *“the main problem of liberal feminism is its tendency to accept male values as universal values. All women should want to become like men, to aspire to masculinity values. Liberal feminism often did not include an analysis of class or sexuality (the sex/gender system).”*⁴¹

To sum it up, liberal feminism is often met in government’s policies which are highlighted by development programs or, as it is the case of the Millennium Development Goals, through measured targets with a global impact.

In Romanian context, the hypothesis is that education represents a vital factor on a long term, since in the present times it is compulsory to have at least a bachelor degree in order to have a job. During the communist regime, the Romanian dictator has tried to promote gender equality in educational sector, due to the benefices it could have had over the economy. But after 1989, when the regime has fallen, Romania has been confronted with serious problems in the labor market. It is a certain fact that the Romanian labor market is instable and for this reason the country is facing another serious problem, which is related to the number of students that are choosing for overseas education.

Furthermore, one of the serious problems in Romanian education is related to one of the biggest minorities, the Roma population. Statistically, only a few percentage of the total number of seats is dedicated to the Roma people and if they are accepted,

³⁹ Baylis, John. Et al. *The Globalization of World Politics: an introduction to international relations*, 6th edition. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, pg. 259

⁴⁰ ibid 39

⁴¹ “Theory, Feminism, and Feminist Theory”, http://faculty.ypc.edu/~dweiss/phl380_feminist_thought/what%20is%20feminist%20theory.pdf accessed 24.05.2016

they are tracked to particular needs. Unfortunately, from my experience as a university graduate in Romania, there were not enough Roma candidates to occupy it.

Now I will move on to the next theory, the modernization theory, following that, at the end of this chapter to make an assimilation between these two theories and how they can be empirically applied to this study case.

Modernization theory

Initially, the modernization theory originated from the biological sphere, focusing on how different species grow under certain circumstances. As Joshi has stated in her article *“Theories of development: modernization vs. dependency”*, this *“biological metaphor was transferred to the social sciences: societies, political institutions, economies were deemed to be growing organisms progressing according to an order natural to them.”*⁴² Since the middle of the 20th century, modernization has been considered a dominant theory, especially in the Western countries. Over the years, the modernization theory symbolized the core concept in the social sciences domain and it still represents a challenge and a fundamental factor to deal with in many societies.

One of the followers of this ideology, Karl Marx stated in 1973 that the developed countries could have an enormous impact over the underdeveloped countries by showing the right direction to development.⁴³ During the communism regime, the URSS and Western countries have promoted modernization *“from above”*, which means that those countries did not have an adequate idea of what this process is.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, as a consequence of this fact, the socialist countries met, what Sztompka would call, a *“fake modernization”*

⁴² Joshi Sharmila, “Theories of development: modernization vs. dependency”, accessed on 24.05.2016 on <http://infochangeindia.org/defining-development/theories-of-development-modernisation-vs-dependency.html>

⁴³ Inglehart, Ronald, Baker Wayne. *“Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values”*, American sociological review, 2000, Vol. 65, pg. 19

⁴⁴ Sztompka, Piotr. 1994. *The Sociology of Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, pg. 147

*“What I mean by ‘fake modernity’ is the incoherent, disharmonious, internally contradictory combination of three components: (1) imposed modernity in some domains of social life, coupled with (2) the vestiges of traditional, pre-modern society in many others, and all that dressed up with (3) the symbolic ornamentations pretending to imitate western modernity.”*⁴⁵

As stated by Inglehart and Welzel, the process of modernization should be observed from three points of view:

1. *Socioeconomic data.* When referring to it, one should take into consideration the historical and traditional factors as they had an essential role in defining and understanding the socioeconomic aspect.⁴⁶
2. *“In a non-linear approach, meaning that the process goes through different phases, and does not follow the same line as others have done; in other words its uniqueness to each case has to be taken into account.”*⁴⁷
3. A complex process that embodies the interrelation between development and egalitarianism.⁴⁸

Along with Inglehart, Baker also believed that the modernization theory still has some concepts that have remained “untouched” during the decades, since all the proponents of this theory have been contributing to its development by adding their beliefs and experiences.

Nevertheless, one of the concepts that still appear effective nowadays is based on the idea that *“industrialization produces pervasive social and cultural consequences, from rising educational levels to changing gender roles. Industrialization is seen as the central element of a modernization process that affects most other elements of society.”*⁴⁹ Since the beginning of its formation, modernization theorists such as

⁴⁵ Sztompka, Piotr. 1994. *The Sociology of Change*. Oxford: Blackwell, pg. 147

⁴⁶ Andersen, Christoffer “Nationalism and modernization in post-socialist Romania”, pg. 17

⁴⁷ *ibid* 46

⁴⁸ *ibid* 46

⁴⁹ Inglehart, Ronald, Baker Wayne. “Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values”, *American sociological review*, 2000, Vol. 65, pg. 19

Weber and Marx have discussed the influence of industrialization on dissimilar sectors, such as *“wealth, urbanization and income inequalities.”*⁵⁰

In the 1970s, adepts of the modernization theory have to deal with the changes that have occurred after the transition from an industrial society to a post-industrial economy. Furthermore, from Inglehart and Welzel point of view, *“post industrialization brings changes in mass education and work-life relations and converts public attitudes towards the family, authorities and life priorities.”*⁵¹ The changes they are referring at are mostly concerned on services and the fact that more efforts have been made regarding *“communication and processing information.”*⁵²

One characteristic of the modernization theory from that time was represented by the changes that have been made regarding the *“gender roles and transformations in gender relations”*.⁵³ The women’s role in society has significantly changed during that period and Inglehart has stated that there are two major steps that led to this transformation.

On the one hand, the transition from agrarian to post-industrial society had an enormous impact on gender, since during that process, women gained social responsibility they did not possessed before, such as the right to vote. As stated by Inglehart, the first phase has produced a *“gradual erosion of traditional gender roles that formerly severely inhibited political action by women.”*⁵⁴

On the other hand, *“the post industrial phase has brought a change toward increased equality as women have shifted to higher-status economic roles in management and earned influence in civil life.”*⁵⁵ This was a huge step regarding the recognition of women’s values in society and furthermore, it was the moment when the communities were ready to accept women in the decision-making role as well.

⁵⁰ Stockmer Daniel , Sundström Aksel, *“Modernization theory: how to measure and operationalize it when gauging variation in women’s representation?”*, Published on 12 december 2014, Springer

⁵¹ ibid 5

⁵² Inglehart, Ronald , Baker Wayne. *“Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values”*, American sociological review, 2000, Vol. 65, pg. 19

⁵³ ibid 50

⁵⁴ ibid 50

⁵⁵ ibid 50

Regarding the first stage of this process, Boserup has identified a decline in “*female labour force participation*”. However, she added afterwards “*gender equality would increase in later stages when countries mature into modern economies, fertility rates decline and female education rates increase*”.⁵⁶

As I have mentioned above, the communist countries, including Romania, did not experience the real modernization as it happened in the URSS and Western countries and for this reason an accentuated progress in development was likely to happen. One possible hypothesis that can be extracted from this situation is referring to the gender gap that could not evolve to its full potential over the last decades. The long-standing values that have been extremely promoted in the 20th century were deeper rooted in Romanian mentality. This could be the reason why women’s representation in politics is so low compared to other European countries.

In order to understand how the modernization process function in the society, different measurements have been created, such as Human Development Index and, more related to gender, the Gender Equality Index 2015 “Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2012”. Both provide useful information of how the development has been occurred on a specific area. Regarding these types of measurement I will elaborate in the analysis part.

Both theories that are used in this project have the aim to explain what are the barriers Romania is facing in order to fulfil the Third Millennium Development Goal. On the one hand, as it is already specified, liberal feminist scholars do believe in power of education and the fact that the academic formation has an impact regarding the job career. This could be the reason why women are underrepresented in higher-qualified and decision-making jobs, including Parliament sets. On the other hand, in order to achieve academic education, the society should overcome the mentality issue. Here come the proponents of the modernization theory and say that development could not successfully been achieved in the communist regimes and due to this fact, the gender

⁵⁶ Dilli, Selin “*A historical perspective on gender inequality and development in the world economy, c. 1850-2000*”, pg. 11

issues had suffered a decline since that period. The social barriers are usually difficult to combat and the process of modernization is slowed down by all these factors. It is somehow exaggerated liberal feminists' idea according to which all women should seek for men's power in order to be more valuable in society. Besides, the modernization theorists have insinuated that changing people's view regarding gender stereotypes could create more opportunities for both women and men.

III. Empirical Overview: Romania's achievements to reach the MDG and the major problems;

Short history

The year 1945 represented the moment when all the founding members gathered together in order to adopt and sign the United Nations Charter. At that time, there were 51 member states and altogether contributed to the establishment of a great intergovernmental organization, which came as a consequence of the unsuccessfulness of League of Nations. As stated by the Office of the Historian from the U.S. Department of State, League of Nations *"was grounded in the board, international revulsion against the unprecedented destruction of the First World War and the contemporary understanding of its origins."*⁵⁷ Officially, on 24 October 1945, the United Nations came into existence after the ratification of 5 significant states: France, China, the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom.⁵⁸ The guest participants that have attended ceremony have been presented as follows:

*"It was presided over by President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, and attended by representatives of 50 nations, including 9 continental European states, 21 North, Central, and South American republics, 7 Middle Eastern states, 5 British Commonwealth nations, 2 Soviet republics (in addition to the USSR itself), 2 East Asian nations, and 3 African states."*⁵⁹

⁵⁷ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/league> (accessed 25.03.2016)

⁵⁸ <http://www.un.org/en/sections/history/history-united-nations/index.html> (accessed 23.03.2016)

⁵⁹ <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-united-nations-is-born> (accessed 23.03.2016)

In a world that has been affected by two significant Wars: World War I (28 July 1914 – 11 November 1918) and World War II (1 September 1939 – 2 September 1945), the goals that were valued at that time were based on the promotion of human rights, creating and maintaining international cooperation, while finding solutions and mediating economic, public, cultural and humanitarian issues.⁶⁰ President Franklin Roosevelt, who “*sought to convince the public that an international organization was the best means to prevent future wars*”, has also, stated the necessity of such organization on a global stage, especially in crucial situation that ask for cooperation and empathy.⁶¹

Establishment of the Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goals represents the most important and essential component of the Millennium Declaration. No less than 189 countries have adopted this Statement including Romania, during the “Millennium Summit” which took place in New York “*from 6 to 8 September 2000, at the dawn of a new millennium*”⁶². After the implementation of this ambitious project, the General Assembly reasserted its believes in the United Nations as an international organization that promotes peace, development and security worldwide. The Millennium Declaration is a unique global strategy that has involved 147 State Leaders and Governs, as well as 189 nations in order to create a more developed and prosper place to live in.⁶³ According to the official webpage of the United Nations, the core of the Millennium Development Goal is based on the “*eradication of poverty through sustainable development*”.⁶⁴

The World Summit from 2005 represented another powerful event, which can be considered as a follow-up of the 2000 Millennium Summit, where the main target was the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals.⁶⁵ In the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, one can notice that many of the 2000 Millennium

⁶⁰ Idem

⁶¹ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/un> (accessed 23.03.2016)

⁶² <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm> (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁶³ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁶⁴ http://www.un.org/the_millennium_development_goals.html (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁶⁵ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/A-RES-60-1-E.pdf> (accessed 26.03.2016)

Summit values and principles are basically reaffirmed. As mentioned in section “Values and Principles” from the same Resolution, it is still believed that cooperation and globalization are the main keys for eradicating and solving international issues.⁶⁶

“We believe that today, more than ever before, we live in a global and interdependent world. No State can stand wholly alone. We acknowledge that collective security depends on effective cooperation, in accordance with international law, against transnational threats.”⁶⁷ (A/60/L.1)

During the same summit, significant arrangements have been made, such as:

- The establishment of the “Peacebuilding Commission”;
- A clear condemnation of the terrorism in “all its forms and manifestations”;
- Financial increase in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.⁶⁸

Overview about the MDG

From the beginning of its establishment, intergovernmental organisation the United Nations defined an amount of worldwide objectives with the purpose to eradicate the most fundamental issues at that time. The abolition of colonialism, the smallpox eradication, which was “*an acute contagious disease caused by the variola virus*”⁶⁹ or accelerated financial growth by providing substantial international support are just several examples of the concerns that have been a priority by the middle of last century.⁷⁰

During the Millennium Summit from 2000, the goals that have been set-up for the following 15 years were created with the purpose to increase people’s lives with the help from all the government bodies’ from all the corners of the world.

⁶⁶ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁶⁷ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁶⁸ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁶⁹ <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/smallpox/en/> (accessed 27.03.2016)

⁷⁰ Idem 10

According to the UN Millennium Project, *“The internationally agreed framework of 8 goals and 18 targets was complemented by 48 technical indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. These indicators have since been adopted by a consensus of experts from the United Nations, IMF, OECD and the World Bank.”*⁷¹ Nevertheless, the goals that have been chosen have the purpose to eradicate diverse issues from different areas of work, as education, health, human rights or environment.

The eight Millennium Development Goals that emerged from the Millennium Declaration are:

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- To achieve universal primary education;
- To promote gender equality and empower women;
- To reduce child mortality;
- To improve maternal health;
- To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
- To ensure environmental sustainability; and
- To develop a global partnership for development. ⁷²



Source: www.thelancet.com/video?startPage=2

⁷¹ <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm#goal1> (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁷² http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/about/en/ (accessed 26.03.2016)

Furthermore, the United Nations have been described this framework as

*“The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions-income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights-the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.”*⁷³

In the following part, I will present the “Millennium Development Goals” by giving a short explanation of each goal, altogether with its targets and indicators.

The MDGs

1. MDG 1

Did you know...?

- Almost half of the people who are living in extreme poverty are young people?
- 50% of the South-Eastern Asia's children are malnourished?

The first Millennium Goal is based on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, being supported by three targets.⁷⁴ According to the Millennium Development Goals fact sheet, the targets have been described as follows:

1. *“Halve, between 1990 and 1025, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day”;*
2. *Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people;*
3. *Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.”*⁷⁵

⁷³ <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/> (accessed 26.03.2016)

⁷⁴ http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Goal_1_fs.pdf (accessed 12.04.2016)

⁷⁵ *ibid* 74

Extreme poverty has been represented a major problem in most of the developing countries. There were several factors that contributed to the slow development of the regions. The conflicts between nations, the big numbers of refugees or the rising price of food are just some examples in order to understand the severe consequences that can lead to poverty.⁷⁶

2. MDG 2

The second Millennium Development Goal comes with one powerful target, which is to *“Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”*.

The Universal Declaration of Human Right from 1948 specifies that education is a human right, *“like the right to have proper food or a roof over your head.”*⁷⁷ Not only it gives people numerous possibilities, but it is also considered a development goal at international level.

Education is considered an open door, which *“ contributes to fostering peace, democracy and economic growth as well as improving health and reducing poverty.”*⁷⁸ As one can notice, the Millennium Development Goals are related to each other. Poverty has a negative influence over the education process and it has always been considered a major challenge worldwide.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the military conflicts and political instability have also played a negative role within the educational process.⁸⁰

Did you know...?

- Globally, 123 million youth (aged 15 to 24) lack basic reading and writing skills; 61 per cent of them are young women. (Un.org)
- In 2011, 57 million children of primary school where not in schools. (Un.org)
- The sub-Saharan area is extremely vulnerable and most of these cases are happening in this region. (apd.ro)

⁷⁶ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 03.04.2016)

⁷⁷ <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/efa/> (accessed 03.04.2016)

⁷⁸ ibid 76

⁷⁹ ibid 76

⁸⁰ ibid 76

3. MDG 3

Within the Millennium Development Goals, there is only one gender goal, whose aim is to “Promote gender equality and empower women”. The target that has been attributed to this goal is presented as follows:

“To eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and in all levels of education by 2015.”⁸¹

Did you know...?

- 53% of the world's out-of-school children are girls and 2/3 of the illiterate people in the world are women; (dosomething.org)
- Uneducated women are tending to have more children than the ones who have access to education; (ibid)
- Each MGD is influenced somehow by the Women Rights;
- In 2008, only 7 out of 150 head of states and 8 out of 192 heads of Governments were women;

As the United Nations Millennium Declaration states in the paragraph number 20, the MDG 3 has a fundamental role in this initiative since the achievement of this goal could help the realization of the rest of the goals,

“We also resolve: To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.”⁸²

World Bank Group qualifies gender equality as being “the key to achieving the MDSs”.⁸³ In other words, the same organization emphasized the importance of empowering women and young girls in order to fulfill all the goals that have been set at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000.⁸⁴ One could ask why is it essential to empower women. A possible answer could be that, by encouraging women and giving the girls the chance to attend school, the probabilities for that girl to have access to health information and to have the ability to control material resources in the

⁸¹ <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/mdg-3-promote-gender-equality-and-empower-women/> (accessed 16.04.2016)

⁸² <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm> (accessed 16.04.2016)

⁸³ <http://www.worldbank.org/mdgs/gender.html> (accessed 16.04.2016)

⁸⁴ ibid 83

future could significantly rise. Furthermore, the country's economy could also be positively influenced.⁸⁵

4. MDG 4

Did you know...?

- *Children in rural areas are about 1.7 times more likely to die before their fifth birthday as those in urban areas; (UN source)*
- *Every day in 2015, 16,000 children under five continue to die, mostly from preventable causes;*
- *Children of mothers with secondary or higher education are almost three times as likely to survive as children of mothers with no education; (UN source)*

The forth MDG covers a single target, which is to *"reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under five mortality rate"*.⁸⁶ As stated by the UNDP, the under-five and infant (under one) mortality rate, along with the proportion of 1 year – old children immunized against measles are the three indicators attributed to the MDG 4.⁸⁷

It is not the first time when the United Nations has set a goal regarding the infant mortality rate.⁸⁸ It dates back to 1977 when the World Health Assembly established a goal on *"reducing the IMR to 30 per 1000 live births*

by 1990, at a time when the global IMR averaged above 80/000, and above 120/000 in Africa. (Moser et al., 2005: 203) One year later, another goal has been added during the International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma Ata Declaration; goal whose aim was to provide health care for every single human being by the year 2000.⁸⁹ Later on, during the same conference, it was the first time when the term "health" has been recognized as being

"A fundamental human right and that the attainment of the highest possible level of

⁸⁵ http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/gender/en/ (acc. 16.04.2016)

⁸⁶ <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm#goal3> accessed 16.04.2016

⁸⁷ http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/mdg_goals/mdg4.html (accessed 03.05.16)

⁸⁸ <https://cdn2.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2013/09/The-Questionable-Power-WP-92413.pdf> (accessed 17.04.2016)

⁸⁹ http://www.who.int/publications/almaata_declaration_en.pdf (accessed 19.04.2016)

*health is most important world-wide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector”.*⁹⁰
(Declaration of Alma-Ata, 1978)

5. MDG 5

The MDG framework contains one goal that is totally dedicated to the maternal health. Two targets compose the MDG 5.

On the one hand, the first target has been created in order to *“Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio”.*⁹¹ Through ratio it is understood *“the number of maternal deaths during a given time period per 100,000 live births during the same time period.”*⁹²

On the other hand, the second target, which is to *“Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health”*⁹³, is strongly interrelated to the first one. Having skilled persons when giving birth, assisted by emergency obstetric and gynaecological care when necessary, it could diminish maternal mortalities by about 75 per cent.⁹⁴

Did you know...?

- *There are more than 10% of all women around the world that do not have access to or are not using efficient method of contraception;* (WHO.it)
- *It has been estimated that 289000 women died during pregnancy and childbirth in 2013.* (WHO.it)
- *One of the reasons was the lack of access to the basic health care and also emergency care, which in some area is inexistent.* (WHO.it)

⁹⁰ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/maternal.shtml> (accessed 19.04.2016)

⁹¹ *ibid* 90

⁹² *ibid* 90

⁹³ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/maternal.shtml> (accessed 19.04.2016)

⁹⁴ *ibid* 90

6. MDG 6

Did you know...?

- *Daily, about 7000 young people are being infected from HIV/AIDS. (lumea mea creste)*
- *About 1 million people die from malaria each year. (Millennium Development Goals Millennium Development Goal 6 – To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases)*
- *About 15 millions of children have lost one of their parents because of HIV*

Goal 6 refers to prevention and treatment of maladies that represent a struggle nowadays, especially in the areas where the treatment for these diseases cannot be easily reached. The countries that signed for the MDG framework engaged to “*combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*” by 2015⁹⁵.

The United Nations presented three targets of the MGD 5:

Target 6.A: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 6.B: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those

who need it

*Target 6.C: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases*⁹⁶

Needless to say, the developing countries are facing a bigger challenge in regard to the eradication of HIV/AIDS and malaria. According to Oxfam International, the worldwide association whose aim is to combat poverty, the access to proper medical care and education are indispensable factors in this matter.⁹⁷ Through education people will be more aware of the diseases’ effects and will learn how to prevent it and to protect themselves from such severe maladies. A real help in this case is provided by national and international organizations that are carrying out various educational

⁹⁵ http://www.cepal.org/mdg/noticias/paginas/4/35594/ficha_odm_6en.pdf (accessed 20.04.2016)

⁹⁶ <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm> (accessed 20.04.2016)

⁹⁷ Oxfam International “Millennium Development Goal 6 – To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases”

programs, with the purpose of spreading information to areas that are not so easily to be reached.⁹⁸

7. MDG 7

The world governments that met at the United Nations Millennium Summit have agreed to integrate the values of sustainable development within their organisational programs.⁹⁹ Goal number 7 aims to “ensure environmental sustainability” in a world where climate change has a huge impact over the world. As stated by Al Gore when delivering his Nobel Speech in 2007, the humanity is confronting a real problem, which needs to be solved in a short time in order to avoid environmental disasters:

Did you know...?

- About 58 per cent of people in sub-Saharan Africa region are using improved sources of water; (UN.org)
- The 1987 Montreal Protocol has been proved to be a successful implementation, since it has resulted in the phasing out of over 96% of all ozone - depleting substances (ODSs) (UN.org)
- 1.6 billion have no access to electricity. (UN.org)

*“We, the human species, are confronting a planetary emergency – a threat to the survival of our civilization that is gathering ominous and destructive potential even as we gather here. But there is hopeful news as well: we have the ability to solve this crisis and avoid the worst – though not all – of its consequences, if we act boldly, decisively and quickly.”*¹⁰⁰

The targets of this goal are mainly based on the inclusion of environmental development ideologies into the country policies, for instance indicators regarding the diminution of biodiversity damage, reducing the rate of people who do not have clean drinking water and improving the condition of at least 100 million people living in slums. The MDG 7 has the following targets:

⁹⁸ <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/Health/health-mdgs-en.pdf> (accessed 20.04.2016)

⁹⁹ <http://www.unfoundation.org/assets/pdf/unf-fact-sheet-mdg-7.pdf> (accessed 23.04.2016)

¹⁰⁰ https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2007/gore-lecture_en.html (accessed 25.04.16)

7.A: *Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.*

7.B: *Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the rate of loss.*

7.C: *Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.*

7.D: *To have achieved, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.*¹⁰¹

8. MDG 8

The last Millennium Development Goal is covering a global partnership for development.¹⁰² It is extremely important for all the countries to cooperate in order to help the developing countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals as well. Though cooperation another important target is revealed: the development of an open and fair trade system, which would follow certain rules and respect human rights.¹⁰³ The core idea of the last MDG is “*to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty.*”¹⁰⁴

Did you know...?

- *Eradication of extreme poverty worldwide can be reached through a global partnership between the developed and developing countries; (UN.org)*
- *In sub-Saharan Africa, 74% of the population lacks access to electricity; (UN.org)*

Seven targets form the MDG 8, each target being followed by several indicators:

“Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

Target 8.B: Address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries

Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small

¹⁰¹ <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/175162/ki2015-mdg7.pdf> (accessed 25.04.16)

¹⁰² <http://www.unfpa.org.br/lacodm/arquivos/mdg8.pdf> (accessed 29.04.2016)

¹⁰³ <http://www.unido.org/en/what-we-do/mdgs/mdg8.html> (accessed 29.04.2016)

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm> (accessed 03.04.2016)

island developing States

Target 8.D: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Target 8.E. In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth

Target 8.F: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

*Target 8.G: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications”*¹⁰⁵

Romanian development

At the beginning of this century, Romania still had to recover from the prolonged and traumatic transition from communism to pluralistic democracy and market economy. According to the paper “*Political changes and economic development in Romania*”, the reforms that have been adopted at that time were “*complex and needed both the adoption of measures of macroeconomic stabilisation and structural reform measures in the economic system*”.¹⁰⁶ Being a country that has faced one of the toughest communism regimes (Nicolae Ceausescu’s regime) one could have noticed the economic discrepancies between this country and the other European nations.¹⁰⁷

In the early 2000s, Romania commenced to implement principles and practices that could lead to a development in a global context. During the same period, the country has significantly been improved and it has also been referred as “the Tiger of Eastern Europe”. But with all the progress made in the last years, not witnessed by the country for so many years, Romania’s development inevitable suffered a decrease in its economy and it is a reality now that Romania has an economy based on the excessive

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm> (accessed 03.05.16)

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.u-picardie.fr/eastwest/fichiers/art109.pdf> (accessed 06.05.16)

¹⁰⁷ *ibid* 106

resource consumes, an affected natural capital and a society and public administration that is always looking for a unitary vision.¹⁰⁸

Regarding Romanian GDP, the statistics from 2000 to 2016 show that *“the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Romania expanded 1.60 percent in the first quarter of 2016 over the previous quarter. GDP Growth Rate in Romania averaged 0.90 percent from 2000 until 2016, reaching an all time high of 3.94 percent in the first quarter of 2008 and a record low of -6.16 percent in the first quarter of 2009.”*¹⁰⁹

Romania and the United Nations

On 14th of December 1955, Romania became the 74th member of the UN by Resolution no 995. Romania’s partnership with one of the biggest international organisation of the world represented a huge step toward a successful cooperation. Since it has become a member to the UN, the Eastern European country has been active in various programmes, such as *“the Conference of Disarmament in Geneva, the Special Committee for UN Peacekeeping Operations, the Human Rights Council, the International Law Commission, the Information Committee, the Committee on Contributions, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Program for Environment, etc.”*¹¹⁰

The necessity of the Millennium Development Goals

Romania was one of the countries that have joined the “Millennium Summit” in September 2000 at the UN Headquarters in New York and together with the world’s leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration.¹¹¹ Since its implementation, the MDG became a priority for most of the Governments and NGO’s around the world. Romania made no exception in this case. As stated by the United Nations, *“Romania’s MDG framework was designed in 2002 – 2003 and presented in the*

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/IDDT%202012/StategiaDD.pdf> (accessed 05.05.16) pg. 4

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/romania/gdp-growth> (accessed 28.05.2016)

¹¹⁰ http://www.un.ro/the_un_and_romania.html (accessed 07.05.16)

¹¹¹ <http://www.undp.ro/mdg/> (accessed 06.05.16)

baseline report released in February 2004. (...) All associated targets are also country-relevant and many were regarded as highly ambitious."¹¹²

Likewise, reaching the Millennium Development Goals framework signified a significant priority of the Romanian strategy for international development.¹¹³ The necessity and the uniqueness of these goals lay in numerous factors, which are very well presented by Pro Democratic Association from Bucharest, Romania. They remind the following considerations:

- On the one hand, the Millennium Development Goals involve all the major economic actors of the world. It is worth mentioning the monetary institutions around the world that have an enormous impact over the countries involved in the project, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and other global and national institutions that have been taking the responsibility to give a hand in the achievement of these objectives.¹¹⁴
- On the other hand, the world has never seemed to be so prosper.
- Furthermore, with support from the Governments, national and international organizations, the progress of the MDGs has been carefully monitored. The UN's project is not just a plan, but also an initiative that needed solid mechanisms in order to give impeccable results. By country, there have been created no less than 60 reports that would keep people informed regarding the countries' real situation.¹¹⁵

IV. The Third Millennium Development Goal in Romanian context

The MDG 3 is considered one of the most essential goals that have been created within the UN framework. Supporting gender equality and empower women could have a positive outcome on economy, especially in developing countries where

¹¹² http://www.un.ro/the_millennium_development_goals.html (accessed 06.05.16)

¹¹³ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/pdf/commitments/romania.pdf> (accessed 07.05.16)

¹¹⁴ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 27.03.2016)

¹¹⁵ Ibid 56

workforce is highly needed. Besides, the MDG 3 is considered a fundamental driver in the achievement of the other MDGs. As stated by the USAID in 2012,

*“Gender equality and female empowerment are core development objectives, fundamental for the realization of human rights and key to effective and sustainable development outcomes. No society can develop successfully without providing equitable opportunities, resources, and life prospects for males and females so that they can shape their own lives and contribute to their families and communities.”*¹¹⁶

In Romania, as in most of the countries, women are still categorized as a vulnerable group being often exposed to discrimination or emotional and physical violence.¹¹⁷

Based on the predominant gender issues from all the countries, specific targets have been attributed to each goal from the very beginning of its establishment. As far as Romania is concerned, the Third Millennium Development Goal intend to increase women’s level of employment, however there are also other gender issues which cannot be ignored, such as domestic violence or women’s representation in politics.¹¹⁸

In the following part it will be presented a brief description about Romanian progress regarding women’s level of employment.

Furthermore, a special focus of this paper is characterized by women’s representation in politics. It is worth giving a short overview about the general status of women in the Central and Eastern Europe, following by women’s representation in Romanian politics. The last part of this section will include the progress that has been made in this Romania.

Target: Increase women’s level of employment

In the following part, Romanian situation concerning women’s participation in the labor market will be explain, followed by the progress that has been made over the years in order to fulfill the MDG 3.

¹¹⁶ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/GenderEqualityPolicy_0.pdf acc 11 05 2016

¹¹⁷ http://www.apd.ro/files/proiecte/Suport_de_curs-Lumea_mea_creste.pdf (accessed 27.03.2016)

¹¹⁸ http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Romania/Romania_MDG_2004-rom.pdf

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women



Target 8: Increase women's level of employment

Indicator 9: Women's employment rate

Women's employment level has decreased.

(Source: UNDP.ro)

The transition from school to the labor market constitute one of the most critical and difficult problems in Romania due to the strong impact it has on economy and social mobility. Unfortunately, the young people have to face several obstacles in order to get a work place after graduation.

On the one hand, the lack of experience constitutes an essential factor in finding the right job, since most of the companies are inquiring at least one year of experience. On the other hand, the experienced people tend to keep their jobs even though they have reached retirement. Unfortunately, graduates that have a specialization tend to adapt to job availabilities even though it is not in their area of study. The situation is even more dramatic for women, since they are the most affected such cases, especially when trying to follow a career in male-dominated industries, such as engineering, mechanics, construction or IT.

The Romanian progress on women's employment has been affected from a long period and it dates back to the communist regime. Even though education has been considered a priority in Romania and both women and men were encouraged to follow specialized courses in order to have more possibilities finding a job, this fact did not influence what would come in the next years. Nowadays, the statistics show an increase in women's involvement in educational process: *"The number of women above 15 with higher education increased from 5.9 percent to 9.2 percent between 2000 and 2009"*, but unfortunately this does not mean that the chances to have a professional stability is higher.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/mdg-progress-romania-europe-cis/> (accessed 16.05.2016)

Jim Yong Kim, The World Bank Group president has presented his view regarding the Romanian situation, by making the following statement *“If Romania is going to achieve its goal of a 70% employment rate, it must increase employment for women. Gender differences exist in employment, wages, entrepreneurship, and pensions. Statistically, a gender gap of 15 percentage points exists between men and women in labor force participation rates - larger than in the European Union as a whole.”*¹²⁰

Romania is one of the European countries that have made a significant increase in employment over the past decades. Despite this progress, due to the fact that the companies do not take the best of Romanian citizens, this country has an employment rate below the other European Union countries. If the average in more or less rated at 58.5%, Romanians employment rate is estimated to 52%.¹²¹

4.1. Women representation in politics

The Second World War brought numerous changes in Central and Eastern Europe. As stated by Forest in his chapter from “Women in executive power”, the CEE (Central and Eastern Europe) countries suffered *“a process of Sovietisation, defined as the nationalization of most sectors of the domestic economy and the elimination of political opposition to the benefit of communist parties.”*¹²² The ending of the WW2 represented a new hopefulness for women who wanted to initiate movements and take action in order to enter in the labour market.¹²³ In countries like Romania, Bulgaria or Yugoslavia, women gained the right to vote only after 1945 and by the year 1950, there were 15 women in charge with governmental offices.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/04/02/world-bank-champions-equality-for-women-in-romania> accessed 28.05.16

¹²¹ *“The current situation of gender equality in Romania - country profile”*, accessed 28.05 on http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/epo_campaign/130911_epo_country-profile_romania.pdf

¹²² Bauer G. & Tremblay M. (2011), “Women in executive power: A global overview”, Taylor & Francis e-library, 2011, pg.

¹²³ Cîrstocea, I. (2002) “Inventer un acteur politique: le régime communiste roumain et la ‘question femme’ (1945–1965),” *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, 40 (1–2): 233–56.

¹²⁴ Ibid 123

Nowadays, women's participation in political life represents a right that should be encouraged by all the Governments, Parliaments, and NGOs all over the world.

The following table shows the progress of governmental positions by country, starting with 1949 until 2009.

	<i>1949–59</i>	<i>1959–69</i>	<i>1969–79</i>	<i>1979–89</i>	<i>1989–99</i>	<i>1999–2009</i>
Bulgaria	2 (2) ^b	3 (4)	4 (7)	3 (5)	11 (27)	14 (53)
Croatia	2 (–)	– (2)	– (1)	1 (–)	4 (3)	18 (18)
Czech Republic ^c	4 (3)	1 (–)	1 (2)	3 (3)	7 (21)	14 (33)
Estonia	3 (n.a.)	2 (n.a.)	– (n.a.)	2 (n.a.)	10 (n.a.)	11 (n.a.)
Hungary	4 (1)	1 (–)	2 (1)	3 (1)	4 (12)	12 (14)
Latvia	– (–)	2 (–)	2 (–)	3 (1)	8 (5)	21 (7)
Lithuania	– (–)	3 (1)	2 (–)	1 (–)	7 (8)	8 (13)
Poland	1 (1)	– (–)	1 (–)	4 (–)	10 (9)	20 (27)
Romania	3 (–)	3 (–)	2 (1)	14 (7)	2 (12)	18 (49)
Slovakia ^d	– (–)	– (–)	1 (1)	1 (3)	12 (19)	6 (12)
Slovenia	1 (1)	– (1)	– (–)	– (1)	5 (16)	15 (40)
Per decade	20 (8)	15 (7)	13 (13)	35 (21)	80 (132)	157 (266)

Source: Bauer G. & Tremblay M.

As shown above, Bulgaria and Romania are presenting a noticeable increase of women that have been playing an active role in politics since 1949. On the other hand, Latvia, Slovakia, Lithuania and Hungary are on the bottom of this table, showing little progress during these years.

4.2. WOMEN IN ROMANIAN POLITICS

It is extremely important to have an overview about the women's role before and after the communist period in order to understand the actual situation in Romanian politics. Needless to say, gender stereotypes are a consequence of the URSS occupation. The difference between women and men was a very visible one, since the man was considered the "head" of the house, with full authority over his wife and children for a

long time. Considering this, it makes easier to understand why these women did not have the chance to be involved in administration or any other public work.¹²⁵

Furthermore, women's participation in Romanian public administration has strongly been influenced by the mentality where women should care responsibilities at home, while taking care of her children and being totally dedicated to the family life.¹²⁶

It is worth mentioning that in Romania, women started to have an active political life when Ana Pauker was designated the head of Communist Party in 1948. Romanian population also had a clear example about women evolution by observing the evolution of Nicolae Ceausescu's wife, Elena who, until 1971, has been considered by her husband a hostess. From this moment on, Ms. Ceausescu was not a hostess anymore, being presented in the newspapers as *"the first woman of the country, the comrade academician doctor engineer Elena Ceausescu, outstanding activist of party and state eminent personage of Romanian and international science."*¹²⁷

As the years were passing by, women started to stand up for their rights and to be active in politics. The end of the communist system in 1989 represented a decline regarding women's active role in politics, even though the Romanian Constitution has guaranteed an equal participation of women and men. The section of "Equality of rights" within the Constitution specifies *"(1) citizens are equal before the law and public authorities, without any privilege or discrimination."*¹²⁸

Due to the fluctuations and changes that have been made during all these years in Romanian politics, the engagement of achieving the Millennium Development Goals seemed to be the key factor in putting the country on the right track. Furthermore, by taking the responsibility of realizing the MDG 3, Romania also engaged itself to create more opportunities and a better working place by "promoting gender equality and empower women".¹²⁹

¹²⁵ UNDP, Gender equality and women's empowerment in public administration", Romania case study, , pg. 10

¹²⁶ "Gender equality and women's empowerment in public administration", Romania case study, UNDP, pg. 10

¹²⁷ Stokes, Gale "The Walls came tumbling down: The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe", Oxford University Press, pg. 54

¹²⁸ Constitution of Romania

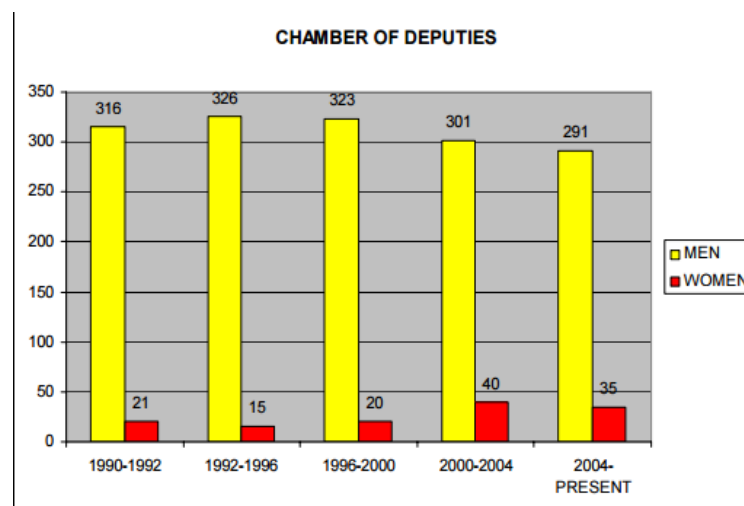
¹²⁹ MDGR Report 2010

4.3 PROPORTION OF SEATS HELD BY WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENT – ROMANIAN PROGRESS

As it has been mentioned before, Romanian women got involved in politics in mid-twentieth and their activities suffered several impacts since then.

“Overall their numbers have been small, and they have appealed in traditionally feminized socio-cultural areas such as health, education and sports.”¹³⁰

The following picture gives us a better understanding on how the things have changed in the Chamber of Deputies from 1990 until now.

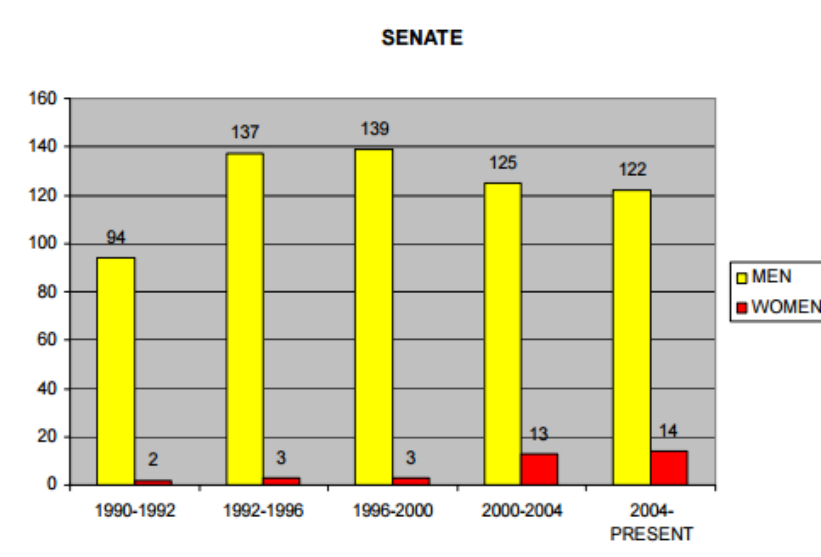


Source: Romanian Government

As we can notice, the men's representation in Chamber of Deputies is extremely high compared to the number of women that are acting in the same administrative body.

The situation is even more dramatic when looking at the following table, which indicates the people's representation in Romanian Senate. During one decade, there were only 8 women out of 378 political activists. For the present time, the situation is not a lot much better and it does not represent a motivational factor for women that are aspiring to a politic life in Romania.

¹³⁰ More Women in Senior Positions: Key to economic stability and growth (2010) European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities



Source: Romanian Government

Recent statistics show that the actual situation is presented as follows: on 1st April 2016 there were 13.7% in Chamber of Deputies and 7.7% in Senate. In other words, women occupy 55 out of 401 seats, respectively 13 out of 168.¹³¹

V. Analyses

In the analyses chapter I will try to find answers to the problem formulation, upon which this project is based on. In order to move further, I have selected three questions and I will try to answer them by giving examples of barriers that could have been an impediment to the fulfilment of the Third Millennium Development Goals in Romania.

The first part of this chapter is related to the modernization process in Romania since the communist regime. Furthermore, the question I seek to answer is

How did communism affect gender equality at the end of the 20th century?

¹³¹ <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> accessed 28.05.2016

I would start by mentioning that during the communism period, the process of modernization has been “*conducted according to the needs expressed by the political regime*”, furthermore, “*the modernization process was forced upon the whole Romanian society according to what was perceived to be the national interest and strict ideological criteria.*”¹³² As in many societies, the countries’ citizens have differently perceived the modernization process. The educated minority from that period has been playing an essential role since they were “*representing, at the same time, the social, professional and political elites.*”¹³³

The fact that the communism regime was trying to control the modernization process, had a negatively impact on gender equality. As stated by Suci, “*During the communist era, due on the one hand to their egalitarian ideology and on the other hand to their rejection of any other ideology, the feminist movement could not develop further. Feminist voices were rare (Ecaterina Oproiu, for example) and the few feminist organizations were controlled and manipulated by the Communist Party.*”¹³⁴

The barriers upon gender inequality that have been enforced are still present in Romanian society. During the communist regime the feminist movements were not promoted and, as Suci has stated, “*communism, while forbidding any form of sexual discrimination, annihilated feminism and forced it to silence. Therefore, because of communism, the second wave feminism failed from the point of view of historical integration.*”¹³⁵ There were three waves of feminism in Romania, but the movements could not follow the same trajectory as it happened in the Western countries, being influenced by the Romanian ideology from that time.

Despite all the progress and changes that occurred over the last decades, Romania still has to fight for gender equality when referring at sectors such education, professional achievement and family life. As Hurubean has stated in her research project, “

“The gender asymmetries and inequalities are social constructs, being generated and maintained by conservative social and cultural mentalities and

¹³² Martinelli, Alberto; He Chuanqi “Global Modernization review: new discoveries and theories revisited”

¹³³ Ionescu - Ruxandoiu, Liliana “*Parliamentary discourses across cultures: Interdisciplinary approaches*”, Cambridge scholars publishing, 2012, pg. 199

¹³⁴ Suci, Giulia “*Feminism and gender in/equality in Romania*”, University of Oradea, Romania, pg.3

¹³⁵ ibid 132

mechanisms, largely perpetuated in the communist period, which maintain the traditional roles and gender stereotypes, thus restricting women's choices, opportunities, development and participation in the social and professional life."¹³⁶

The ideas that have been imposed for so many years remained somehow embedded in people's mentality, especially in those that have experienced the communism governance. Unfortunately, that period left deep-rooted marks on Romanian society and it is a long way towards a proper governmental and non-governmental mobility regarding the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

I will move further now to the process of modernization, which is interrelated to the first question. In order to have a better understanding on modernization, it is necessary to know how this process works and which are the procedures to which this process is monitored. In order to find answers on why Romania could not fulfill all the MDGs, the following question has been created

How can we measure the process of modernization?

In order to answer this question I will use the UN's Human Development Index (HDI) and Gender-related Development Index (GDI). Both measurements are based on the process of development with the remark that the GDI has a specific focus on gender.

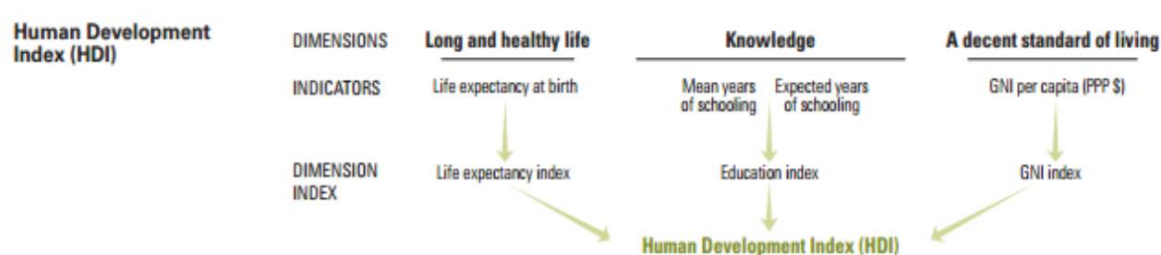
As stated by the UNDP,

"human development refers to the process of deepening the degree and enlarging the extent of development so as to enlarging people's choices. Therefore, human development also reflects the achievements people have made in terms of full development and extend of development. It is both a process and a goal. The three most basic requirements for human development are: health

¹³⁶ Hurubean Alina "Public policy and social-cultural mechanisms to preserve the patriarchal gender regime in the Post-communist Romanian Society", Iasi, Romania, pg. 14

and longevity, being knowledgeable, and the access to resources needed for a decent life.”¹³⁷

As one can notice, the HDI is a measurement tool initiated by the UNDP with the purpose of emphasizing that the level of development within a country is not totally dependent on the economy, but it is also in people’s power to accelerate this process. According to the definition, the key dimensions of the HDI are based on health, knowledge and creating a decent living. The next picture represents the composition of the HDI.



Source: hdr.undp.org

The scheme explain how the HDI tool is measured according to the dimension presented above, followed by indicators and finally, the dimension index. Putting it together and analysing all the factors that are presented in the picture, it results the annual index for each country.

It is worth specifying, “*The HDI simplifies and captures only part of what human development entails. It does not reflect on inequalities, poverty, human security, empowerment, etc*”.¹³⁸

The next table shows Romanian contribution to the HDI since the communism regime until 2014. If the life expectancy at birth did not increase during communism, from the beginning of this new millennium the progress has been meaningfully increased. By analysing the HDI value for all these years, the index from 2000 until 2014 shows a rise from 0.703 to 0.793.

¹³⁷ He, Chuanqi “*Modernization science: the principles and methods of national advancement*”, Springer, Beijing, pg. 488

¹³⁸ UNDP <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi> Accessed 27.05.2016

Table A: Romania's HDI trends based on consistent time series data and new goalposts

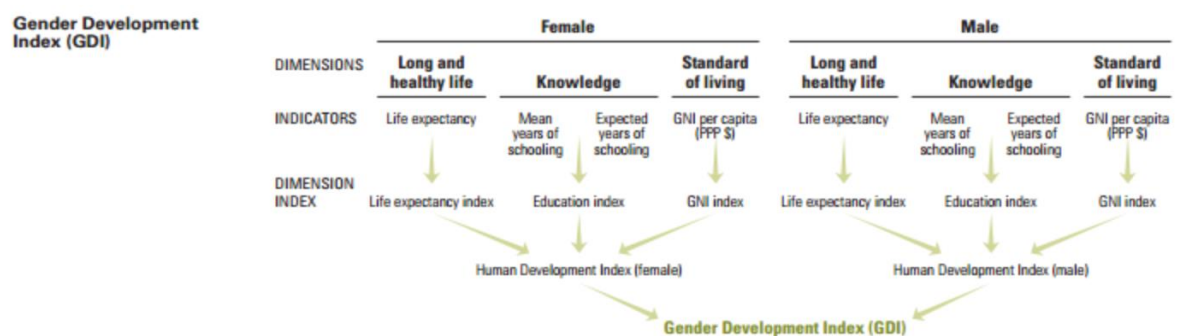
	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (2011 PPP\$)	HDI value
1980	69.7		7.9	11,203	
1985	69.6		8.6	12,803	
1990	69.5	12.1	9.0	11,460	0.703
1995	69.5	10.6	9.5	10,494	0.690
2000	70.5	11.7	9.9	9,939	0.706
2005	72.3	13.4	10.1	13,559	0.751
2010	73.8	14.5	10.6	16,641	0.784
2011	74.1	14.2	10.7	17,071	0.786
2012	74.3	14.2	10.8	17,068	0.788
2013	74.5	14.2	10.8	17,731	0.791
2014	74.7	14.2	10.8	18,108	0.793

Figure 1 below shows the contribution of each component index to Romania's HDI since 1990.

Source: Human Development Report 2015 Romania

Based on these measurements, Romania's HDI has significantly increased since the last decade of the last century. Romanian government has tried to provide a better living place compared to the communist era and one could observe by them the trajectory of HDI in this country.

The second measurement tool is the Gender Development Index (GDI) “*measures gender gaps in human development achievements by accounting for disparities between women and men in three basic dimensions of human development - health, knowledge and living standards using the same component indicators as in the HDI*”¹³⁹



Source: UNDP.

¹³⁹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-development-index-gdi> accessed 27.05.2016

As presented in the scheme, the GDI has followed the same dimensions and indicators as we could notice in the last picture provided by the UNDP official website. The difference in this case is that the index is calculated separately for both men and women in order to be able at the end to compare and make observation in regard to gender equality.

As stated by the UNDP, *“The GDI shows how much women are lagging behind their male counterparts and how much women need to catch up within each dimension of human development. It is good for understanding the real gender gap in human development achievements and is useful to design policy tools to close the gap.”*¹⁴⁰

The Gender Development Index from 2014 is showed in the following table from the UNDP.

		Gender Development Index		Human Development Index (HDI)	Life expectancy at birth		Expected years of schooling		Mean years of schooling		Estimated gross national income per capita ^a		
		Value	GDI group ^b	Value	(years)		(years)		(years)		(2011 PPP \$)		
				Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
		Country	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014 ^c	2014 ^c	2014 ^c	2014 ^c	2014	2014
i2	Romania	0.989	1	0.787	0.796	78.3	71.2	14.6	13.8	10.3	11.1	15,250	21,117

Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GDI>

According to the GDI from 2014, Romania was situated in the *“high human development”* category, occupying the 52 positions out of 188. Taking a look at this table, the expected years of schooling for female are higher than the men’s ones. But if we look at the last section, the estimated gross income per capital for women is much lower than it is for men. One of the challenges Romania is facing with is regarding women’s participation in the labour market and the fact that they are facing discrimination at the work place.

As stated by the European Commission, *“The employment rate of women in the Romanian labour market (52.0%) is below the EU-27-average (58.5%). In addition,*

¹⁴⁰ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-development-index-gdi> accessed 27.05.2016

*the share of women actively looking for work in Romania (7.1%) is below the EU-27-average (9.8%).*¹⁴¹ The same institution identified that despite all the efforts, Romania still remains below the average of the other European countries.¹⁴²

In the following section I will try to find answers to another issue, which is also related to the women's access to the labour market, but in this case the focus will be on women's representation Romanian Parliament. Therefore, the next question is

Why is women's representation in Romanian Parliament so low and which are the causes?

It is interesting to notice that, despite the high educational level and women's participation in educational process, Romanian Parliament has a very low number of female representatives. During the communism regime, the few women that were in politics were seen as *"figureheads, while men wielded the real power."*¹⁴³ It is a reality that nowadays, women are not been seen as being suitable for a leading role and, therefore they are discriminated. This is, perhaps, one of the most crucial barriers when comes to women's representation in politics in Romania.

According to Turcu, *"Thus, by the end of the communist era, the woman decision-maker or woman politician was perceived by most Romanians as a travesty, a symbol of unrealistic policies and an object of communist propaganda. These perceptions may in part explain the hiatus of women's participation in public life that immediately followed the downfall of communism."*¹⁴⁴ Fundamentally, the rights of political representation were denied and not promoted, fact that still has consequences on Romanian society.

The Millennium Development Goals Report from 2010 mention that in order to be able to eradicate gender inequality in politics, more support from Romanian Governance followed by sustained efforts are highly needed. Furthermore,

¹⁴¹ European Commission "The current situation of gender equality in Romania – case profile", 2012

¹⁴² *ibid* 139

¹⁴³ Fischer, Mary Ellen and Harsanyi *"From tradition and ideology to elections and competition"*, ed. M.E., Sharpe Inc, London England, 1994 pg. 204

¹⁴⁴ Turcu, Anca *"Women, political participation and electoral quotas in Romania"*, 2009 pg. 1

Romanian's participation to important gender-based events represents a step forward in achieving gender equality:

“The UN Millennium Development Goals Summit (...), the 15- year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the elaboration of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Report are only three of the top global events in 2010 that require Romania's increased attention on setting new relevant, challenging national targets on MDG 3 to better contribute to the achievement of the internationally - agreed Millennium Development Goals.”¹⁴⁵

Despite all these efforts, Romania is still below most of the European countries regarding women's representation in Parliament. The policies that have been adopted in order to solve these issues seem to be inefficient.

It is worth mentioning on initiative that has the purpose to encourage women also in giving birth and returning to their jobs *“Women have been encouraged to return to work after child birth by a host of incentives, such as paid child care leave which can be claimed for two years after birth, calculated (since the middle of the decade) on an earnings-related basis, equal to 85% of the 12-month average earnings prior to birth”¹⁴⁶*

VI. Conclusions

The aim of this paper is to provide possible answer or answers to the problem formulation that has been mentioned at the beginning of this document:

Why could not Romania completely fulfill the Third Millennium Development Goals?

In order to be able to answer this question, I have started with the explanation of the concepts of *gender*, *women's empowerment* and *women's representation*, which lead to the presentation of the theories. Once the theoretical framework has been

¹⁴⁵ Millennium Development Romania, Bucharest, 2010

¹⁴⁶ *ibid* 145

explained, in the analysis part will be found possible answers to the problem formulation, by giving examples of the barriers upon which the MDG 3 could not be successfully accomplished.

The three questions that have been formulated in the analyses chapter have the purpose to present the barriers that represented and still represent an impediment in fulfilling the MDG 3 in Romanian context.

Firstly, we have the gender issues during the communism regime. As we already know, the feminist movements have not been encouraged in that period and this was an impediment for women who wanted to follow the Western model in fighting for their rights. Moreover, the fact that women have been seen for a long time housekeepers and the role of mother was understood as a mandatory responsibility, the access to the labour market has been restricted. People's mentality and the social perspectives are perhaps, one of the biggest barriers in achieving gender equality.

Secondly, I have presented the measurements of modernization by using the UNDP indexes HDI, respectively GDI. We could observe the statistics and Romanian position based on the measurements tools.

Thirdly, as it is specified in the introduction part, I have dedicated a subchapter to the women's representation in Romanian Parliament, due to the dramatic situation within my country regarding this subject. The statistics are extremely depressing and Romania is below the average in the European Union regarding female's participation in politics. An argument for this situation is related to the second question. During the communist period there were few women in politics. Even after the collapse of communism in 1989, women were still not encouraged to apply for a decision-making position.

Drawing a conclusion from all these factors, the historical and sociological perspective seems to have a negative impact on gender equality. Romania could unfortunately not fulfil the MDG 3, this goal remaining an uncertain subject and a struggle for Romanian governance. Despite all the efforts to achieve the MDGs, it seems that the government have failed in achieving gender equality and empower

women as most of the European Union countries did. There is undoubtedly need for better policies, initiatives and last, but not least, people's willing to change their perspectives regarding feminism, gender equality and women empowerment.

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