

Book review: Preoteasa A. M., *Multiple facets of precarious work in Romania*, Bucharest: Pro Universitaria Publishing House, 2018, ISBN 978-606-26-0883-5

Simona Maria Stănescu ¹⁺

¹ Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy

Abstract. *This book review is written for the volume Ana Maria Preoteasa (2018) Multiple facets of precarious work in Romania, Bucharest: Pro Universitaria Publishing House. The book addresses precarious work through its characteristics as atypical employment. Simultaneously, in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis focus on the main sources of vulnerability for the rural population, youth, Roma minorities in general, and Roma women in particular. The book's added value is the mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods in emphasizing employment-related factors for one of the most vulnerable groups in inserting in the labor market in Romania: youth from the social protection system, Roma population, and Roma women.*

Keywords: precarious work, vulnerable groups, employment policies, Romania

JEL Codes: Y3

1. Introduction

The main drivers of labour market vulnerability are low incomes, low job offer, kind of labour contracts, their duration, and general living and working conditions (Cace *et al.* 2010, Stănescu 2011; Ilie and Preoteasa, 2017). From this perspective, identifying vulnerable groups and their survival strategies is extremely relevant for stakeholders in charge of designing the national coping public policy frameworks (Cace *et al.* 2010, Ionescu and Stănescu 2014). Through its general principles, the social economy represents a sustainable solution for their employment (Stănescu *et al.* 2013). Within this context, we welcome the bilingual book of Ana Maria Preoteasa *Multiple facets of precarious work in Romania*, which brings significant value to the field's knowledge.

2. Review of chapters

The Romanian-English book is organized into six chapters. The first two are dedicated to the employment dynamic in Romania as well as the specificity of vulnerable groups from the perspective of their labour insertion. The next four chapters are analysing employment in a rural area, for youth from the child protection system, for Roma minority and Roma women from a European comparative perspective (Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, and Spain).

⁺ Corresponding author: Senior Researcher, Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy. Email address: simona.stanescu@iccv.ro

Taking the concept of "employment quality" (Land 1975) as a starting point, chapter 1 „Employment in Romania: general outlook" brings a valuable contribution to the employment dynamic in the transition from a planned economy to the market one. Alongside selected objective indicators, comparative data on contract type emphasize a small percent of both determined period contracts (only 1.5 in Romania comparative to 15% in EU) and part-time labour contracts (10% comparative to 20.4%).

The second chapter, „Vulnerable Groups and Reintegration Behaviours on the Labour Market" point out the complexity of labour relations: employment, unemployment, inactivity, active search for a job, and employment-related vulnerability based on a quantitative comparative approach (Bucharest-Ilfov and South-East development regions as well as a national sample). Main vulnerable occupational types are identified within the chapter: with no occupation (long term unemployed and unregistered unemployed), under-occupation (day laborers, part-time employees, no contract employees „on the black market", subsistence farmers) and the ones inactive (medically and anticipated retired, homemakers).

The third chapter named „Precarious work – last resort for the vulnerable population in the rural area: evidence from qualitative research" overviews conceptual delimitations and analyse through a qualitative based methodology precarious employment models. These cases are mainly due to contextual factors (low job offer in the non-agriculture area) and individual ones (low education level, lack of experience, or professional qualification).

The last three chapters are focus on issues related to labour market integration for youth from the child protection system, for Roma population in general, and for Roma women from a comparative European perspective. The last chapter is of interest for both employment researchers as well as migration ones as Italy and Spain are ranked among the main countries of destination for Romanians.

The fourth chapter focuses on a highly vulnerable group in Romania: youth from the public social protection system. In line with current regulations, they should exist the system at the age of 18 except if they continue their studies. This chapter is dedicated to their insertion into the labour market and into an independent life. Based on an in-depth qualitative approach, the results emphasize the strategic role of individual resources of youth comparative with institutional support assessment rather us residual.

Another vulnerable group represented by the Roma population is addressed in the fifth chapter from the employment perspective. As part of a comparative international project, the study uses a quantitative approach similar to Labour Force Survey in Households run by the National Institute of Statistics that allows both international comparisons as well as with the national population. In terms of the main findings, the Roma employment rate is lower than the majority of the population. Vulnerable groups in accessing labour market are represented by Roma women, youth, and the elderly.

The last chapter is dedicated to Roma women and precarious work from an international comparative perspective: Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, and Spain. While the first two countries were seen as countries of origin for migration, the last two were chosen due to their destination countries' quality. Comparative quantitative studies emphasize common elements of their employment in analyzed countries: chronic unemployment, high unemployment, and inactivity. Potential explanatory factors could be related to the poor

human capital of Roma women. Besides, a comparative analysis of employment status by gender confirms the traditional model of Roma male breadwinner.

3. Conclusion

The added value of the volume is the excellent approach of a highly relevant domain for (inter)national public policy agenda, especially as the pandemic COVID-19 crisis has long-term effects on the classical configuration of the labour market. From this perspective, the employment capacity of vulnerable groups is an asset to the design of social protection systems.

4. References

- [1] S. Cace, A. M. Preoteasa, C. Tomescu, and S. M. Stănescu (eds.). *Legal and equal on the labour market for the Roma communities. Diagnosis of the factors influencing the employment rate of the Roma population in Romania*. Bucharest: Expert Publishing House, 2010 <https://bibliotecadesociologie.ro/download/cace-sorin-preoteasa-ana-maria-tomescu-cristina-stanescu-simona-maria-eds-2010-legal-and-equal-on-the-labour-market-for-the-roma-communities-diagnosis-of-the-factors-influencing-the-e/>
- [2] S. Ilie and A. M. Preoteasa, O perspectivă asupra ocupării atipice: România în comparație europeană. *Calitatea vieții*, XXVIII (3): 243-266, 2017. <http://www.revistacalitatevietii.ro/2017/CV-3-2017/02.pdf>
- [3] M. Ionescu and S. M. Stănescu *Public policies for Roma, - Assessment report of national programs financed by the European Union for Roma inclusion*, Bucharest, ProUniversitaria Publishing House, 2014.
- [4] A. M. Preoteasa. *Multiple facets of precarious work in Romania*. Bucharest, Pro Universitaria Publishing Press, 2018.
- [5] S. M. Stănescu, Livezilor alleey, Ferentari – a marginalised occupational structure in F. Botonogu (ed.) *Hidden communities Ferentari*, Bucharest: Expert Publishing House, 182-203, 2011. <https://bibliotecadesociologie.ro/download/botonogu-f-ed-stanescu-s-m-nicolaescu-v-presada-f-berescu-c-nicolae-v-iancu-a-m-oancea-g-faur-a-s-m-serban-d-nicolaescu-d-2011-hidden-communities-ferentari/>
- [6] S. M. Stănescu (ed.), M. Bojincă, A. M. Alexandrescu, S. Ernu, L. Rădulescu *Modele de întreprinderi pentru tineri peste 18 ani care părăsesc sistemul instituționalizat de protecție a copilului*, United Nations Development Programme Romania, 2013. <http://profitpentruoameni.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/MODELE-DE-INTREPRINDERI-SOCIALE-PENTRU-TINERI-PESTE-18-ANI-CARE-PARASESC-SISTEMUL-INSTITUTIONALIZAT-DE-PROTECTIE-A-COPILULUI.pdf>

Manuscript received: 12.10.2020

Manuscript received in revised form: 04.11.2020

Manuscript accepted: 16.11.2020