

The impact of the archival revolution in history and entrepreneurship

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Abstract: After the year of 2000, a major event would take place, that would reshape the way we see the past and allow us to even find out about our personal pasts. This event bears the name of <<archival revolution>>. Through it, many new collections and funds have entered the research circuit. This would have a big impact not only for historical research, but also for normal people. This would allow them to right the wrongs that have been done to them by the communist regimes and to find out where they came from. That being said, this would allow researchers to monetize on this work outside the academic realm and create new entrepreneurs. Historians such as Dumitru Lăcătușu and Mihai Burcea have previously explained the importance of the liberalization of the archives. Still, up until now, nobody showed its entrepreneurial potential.

The aims of the paper are to present the archival revolution and its impact in history and entrepreneurship. The author uses qualitative and quantitative methods of documents research. Also, in order to fulfill the goals of the paper, an interdisciplinary approach was absolutely necessary. In this respect, the author makes use of other sciences, such as economy, sociology, anthropology and law.

Keywords: archival revolution, entrepreneurship, communist era, liberalization.

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Introduction

Nowadays, the archives represent one of the greatest treasures of a country. Not only is it the institution that safeguards its past, but it also allows each individual to know where they came from. Not too long ago, the situation was different in the former communist states. During the dictatorial regimes, the legislation would not allow for the recent history to be researched so easily. Sure, there were some loopholes, but those wouldn't apply to any researcher or to anyone who would want to learn about his past.

In 1971, a new law of the archives has been passed. It would state that the documents from the national archival fund could be researched after 30 years. For years after this law, "a special archive fund" has been created. The document that would order the creation of this fund can be found at CNSAS (fund Ministerul de Interne, Direcția Secretarial-Juridică, no. Inv. 6, available online at http://www.cnsas.ro/documente/acte_normative/3632_006%20fila%20030-031.pdf). The documents from this fund were especially concerning Romania's frontiers and the relations with its neighbors. Another important part was represented by the documents that concerned the activity of the underground communist movement. That being said, this fund had a really limited access, because its documents had a "special value". In order for a researcher to be able to see documents from it, they had to have a particular recommendation from the institution where they were working. Moreover, the content of the documents would have had to be verified beforehand by the head of the general Direction. This was a way of making sure that no researcher could find information that could somehow be used in order to "harm the state's interests".

Of course, after the fall of the communism, things started to change, but in a different time span from a country to another. Sure, the change was inherent to a new democratic regime, but what made the biggest difference when it came to the historical research was what remained known as "the archival revolution".

The new political regimes brought a change in historical paradigm, especially because many documents would see the light of day from then on. Also, the political bias would disappear for most of the new historians. This would later lead to a new field of historical studies in Romania, Hungary and East Germany, that would focus on the history of the secret polices and their mechanisms (Shkandrij, 2014). Clearly, a researcher would not even think to talk about the structure of the secret police or about its victims during a communist regime. Moreover, researchers would become more and more interested in studying the communist parties and how they really took over the political power when it seemed almost impossible. In Romania, no one would ever have guessed in the interwar period that a communist party could ever be legal again, let alone that it could have ever rule over the country.

Another great thing about this event was that now, people could ask back the lands that the communist regime has taken from them. Also, they could find out where they came from. Because this could be a difficult task for someone who is untrained in the field of history, it can give life to a new entrepreneurial field.

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Literature review

Although nobody wrote about how the entrepreneurial side of history could help common people in Romania, there are a few papers on the archival revolution matter, concerning other countries, such as Hungary or Russia. It is worth mentioning the in 2011, ICCMER (The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of Romanian Exile) held a workshop called *Revoluția arhivelor. Accesul la sursele istoriei recente* (The archives' revolution. The access to the sources of recent history). Through this, the historians Dorin Dobrinu, Dragoș Petrescu, Stelian Obiziuc, Luminița Giurgiu and Adrian Cioflancă discussed about the access to the documents.

For those who would ever want to study the archival revolution, there is a very important paper, that bears the value of a document. This is The Final Report on Romanian Communism, presented by the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, also known as the Tismăneanu Commission (Tismăneanu, 2006). Instituted by the President Traian Băsescu, its main goal was the condemnation of the communist regime and of the institutions that helped to its enforcement. Romania would then be the third country, right after Czech Republic and Bulgaria, to be able to take this highly important step (Stan, 2013).

The condemnation of the communist regime was not its only purpose. It also served as the long awaited liberalization of the archives access. This was particularly important for the study of the Romanian Communist Party. Before 1989, we only knew the party's rhetoric regarding its own history and its members. Sure, after the change of regime, things were a little bit more transparent, but not nearly enough. Researchers

could see certain archival funds, but they could not take pictures of the documents. Also, they weren't allowed to bring a laptop, or any electronic device, for that matter.

Research methodology

In order to see what the archival revolution brings to the table for the historical research, and also how it could help common people, and therefore exploit its entrepreneurial potential, the empirical qualitative research is necessary (Simon, 2003). Most of the time, the documents have a different meaning than it meets the eye and the sources must be corroborated in order to validate their accuracy. Also, no matter the use of these documents, the final result will always require an interdisciplinary approach. We can't learn about someone's past without making use of other sciences. In this case, the ones that would help are Law, economy, sociology and anthropology.

Results and discussions

As important as an archival revolution was, this change has taken place slow in Romania and it was for two main reasons, as Dorin Dobrinu explained in an interview (Pătrășconiu, 2017). Firstly, the only ones that would even think of researching the communist parties were the one that were allowed, therefore everything that they would write would be in a way that would fit the main rhetoric. Take for instance the strikes from Grivița. They represented Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's legitimization of the "revolutionary" past. This meant that he would have had to be portrayed as a hero of the masses. His involvement in this event was highly overrated by the literature during his regime (Diac, 2012).

On the other hand, there was a shift after 1989 and historians that researched the

interwar period of even different eras, starting to show interest in the communist party. This couldn't have happened over night, therefore it took a while for them to specialize in this field after. Secondly, even if they wanted to study it more closely and faster, it would be quite difficult, since the access to the primary sources was so limited and selective. Practically, it took 15 years for some archive holders to transfer to documents to the National Archives of Romania, or to the National Council for the Study of Securitate's Archives (Timăneanu, 2006).

Now that we settled how the change took place, we must show how this could turn into a profitable business. Nowadays, people are more and more eager to learn about their past. In fact, history can help any field and any science. It can help the field of entrepreneurship as much as it can help back history (Gabrielsson & Rose, 2010). But how exactly could a historian help someone and at the same time make a business out of it. The answer is simple, yet complex.

In this case, the research experience comes in hand. The regional division of the National Archives hold funds and collections of civil status. For someone who is unexperienced, these documents could be taunting and hard to piece together. For someone experienced, it wouldn't be hard to make a thorough job. Education does give one the means to be better in his field and this way help the growth of economy (Groescu & Oancea, 2014)

On the other hand, things are a bit more complex when it comes to the process of retrocession. After the fall of the communism it was a bit easier for people to get their land back. Still the legislation was not clear enough at that point (Bucur, 2010). As a matter a fact, that was also the case for the people who wanted to get back the businesses that they used to own before the process

of nationalization started. Surely, it was not going to be easy to make their former companies have success once again, after being controlled by the state. For this, a good strategy would have been the saving grace (Marinescu and Toma, 2015).

After the archival revolution in 2006, the process of retrocession seemed to be getting better, but it had some flaws. In some counties, some people saw this as an opportunity to try and steal land that didn't belong to them or to their ancestors. This is the main reason why those documents must be put to good use by a professional who knows not only history, but also Law. Nevertheless, through this process, we can build new and successful entrepreneurs who can do good and help people in their quest to find their past, their family and what once belonged to them as in other countries (Toma, et al., 2017; Toma, 2019; Catană, et al., 2020). Surely, these researchers must be ready to take some risks that are inherent to the entrepreneurial world (Bolcaș and Ionescu, 2019).

Conclusions

The archival revolution represents one of the greatest achievements of a country that endured an extremist regime. Firstly, it allowed historians to researched forbidden topics, such as the political parties or the perpetrators and shed light on the cruelties done by the representatives of the regime. Secondly, a wider access to historical documents allowed people to find out where they came from and to repossess the properties that have been taken from them. Also, this would allow researchers who could not work in the academic field to think outside the box and make a business out of they love doing.

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