

## THE LIFESTYLE OF ACTIVE ROMANIAN INTELLECTUALS IN A *HYBRID* SOCIETY

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### Abstract

This paper aims at identifying the specificities of the active intellectuals, an important social category for the evolution of any community, during the lockdown imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have tried to understand how this category of the Romanian society adapted to a situation it had not faced before and that substantially changed the daily routine of everyone. The research premise was that this social category can determine the appearance of specific behavior in a so-called contemporary hybrid society, based on the habits acquired in isolation. The active intellectuals, beyond the intrinsic intellectual level certified by their education, are immersed in subtle ways in the social life, which they influence most often from high positions. The confrontation with an unprecedented situation, namely the physical distancing (publicly promoted as social distancing) caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, generated different reactions. At the observational level, most of them accepted the rules set by authorities. Some revolted; others took refuge in humor (which circulated on social media networks with impressive productivity). Yet, the daily life of each representative of this social category – whose behaviors are a role model for others – has remained almost unknown. Through this paper we set out to fill the gap and to make an inventory of the active intellectuals' daily activities (a questionnaire-based survey), in order to approximate whether any changes have occurred as a result of the lockdown. Moreover, we intended to identify the imprint that the pandemic and its associated measures may leave on the patterns of the postmodern Romanian society, characterized by hybridity. These behavioral patterns of the Romanian active intellectuals during the period of isolation may be the outline of future guidelines in the post-pandemic lifestyle and, therefore, can shape the reorganization trends of society, but these trends can be confirmed by further studies.

**Keywords:** *postmodernity, hybrid society, digital literacy, COVID-19, new normal, active intellectuals, lifestyle.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Romanian society is a *hybrid society* as a result of the overlapping of different waves and forms of hybridization in time, for the last thirty

years. In 1989, the Romanian society abandoned the communist organization and proposed a series of 'formulas' for a democratic reform extended over time in a so-called 'transition period'. The transition years meant maintaining the society in a diffuse reality. Although part of the intellectual elite was aware that the transitional regime overlapped, chronologically, a paradigm shift (the transition from modernity to postmodernity, characterized by discontinuity/fragmentation and hybridization (CIUPERCĂ, 2011), the society associated it with all the effects of political transition. In other words, during the global paradigmatic earthquake, the Romanian intellectuals of the first post-communist decade did not fully understand the nature of seismic movements, associating it with socio-political trepidation caused by the fall of the communist regime and, by extension, the fall of the Iron Curtain. The fragmentation of trust was understood as the source of socio-cultural fragmentation. Currently, in relation to unforeseen changes in the pandemic context, we can identify a form of re-hybridization as a mixture of norms and values of open society and partially closed society – state of affairs to which the society will probably become accustomed in time. In this context, we propose to define the *hybrid society* as a society in which the mixture of norms leads to a higher degree of viscosity in relation to postmodern liquefaction (foreseen as 'solidification' 15 years ago, in the book *Postmodernitatea. Un posibil model de structurare a mozaicului a-valoric*, LESENCIUC, 2005). Finally, this resettlement presupposes a resumption of debates on postmodernist non-determinism, described from its interior in terms of hazard, chance, discontinuity, fragmentation,

hybridization, and from its exterior as a phenomenon that can be included on a macro scale in a continuum, of a certain identity and a tendency toward “a kind of uniformity, fixity and general predictability”, as the Romanian-American professor Virgil Nemoianu anticipated (NEMOIANU, 2018).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1981, the Romanian scholar Mihai Nadin, established in the United States, opened the series of texts dedicated to the topic ‘civilization of illiteracy’ through an article published in *Semiotics* (NADIN, 1981). The 1997 book identically entitled remained the reference in his studies, through which he proposed a unique design of the epistemic reorganization of society. The illiteracy in the title referred, in essence, to the result of the inadequacy of the individual who belongs to modern civilization in terms of his education (writing civilization or ‘strong literacy’ civilization), to the new digital literacy (NADIN, 2016). The illiteracy is a symptom of the modern world: in relation to the aforementioned postmodernity that produced the hybridization of the society, the individual, unable to keep up with the evolution of technology and information, adapts to minimum requirements, losing the coherence of the sign systems of the old modern paradigm and not properly understanding that of the digital postmodern world. Ironically, given the delayed effects of postmodernity on the Romanian society under political change, the book of professor Nadin from the University of Dallas was translated and published into Romanian 19 years after, maintaining its topicality and coherence (and becoming for the Romanian elite an indicator of the real ‘delay’). The concept of *digital illiteracy* proposed by professor Nadin began to be studied at a distance of ten years after the publication of the English edition of *The Civilisation of Illiteracy*, especially in America and to a lesser extent in Europe, especially as a result of computational research and lesser as a result of social studies, for example: HAYASHI *et al.* (2008), NERIS (2010), SIMANOWSKI (2016), KABIR & KLUGMAN (2019). The study of digital illiteracy

was done, starting with the same period, without a precise identification of the source – the reference to Mihai Nadin’s work – but on coordinates similar to those previously mentioned: MCGANN (2008), CORTINA-PÉREZ *et al.* (2014), FALCO & KLEIHANS (2018), DATTA *et al.* (2018).

The social perspective on the role of intellectuals in reconfiguring the framework of digital literacy has been analysed, starting with Nadin’s studies, in numerous works. The focus on this area includes a series of specialized articles on narrow geographical areas. In Romania, for example, the scholars Dumitru Iacob and Ștefan Stănciugelu analysed mainly the relationships between digitization and the social confrontations generated by reduction to binary language (IACOB & STĂNCIUGELU, 2018). Similarly, the digital literacy design in pre-pandemic period meant vague theoretical references and case studies. The previously mentioned article of researchers Cortina-Pérez *et al.* (2014) limited itself to the study of digital skills assimilation within the Spanish education system. In a broader area, E.J. Helsper and Al. J.A.M. van Deurster extended the study on digital skills to entire Europe, although it is in fact limited to the case studies in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (HELSPER & VAN DEURSEN, 2019). This study provides relevant interpretations regarding our research, such as, for example, the use of the Internet in Romania in relation to the level of education or the age of users (HELSPER & VAN DEURSEN, 2019), even if data is not exactly new. In the same narrow field of digital literacy in the humanities and social sciences, John Hunter projected his research starting with the studies of the previously mentioned Canadian scholar Jerome McGann (HUNTER, 2018). All these papers bring to the fore the role of intellectuals in reconfiguring the hybrid society, undergoing transformation.

During the pandemic, numerous studies describing trends in terms of social reorganization or change were published. Most of them consider the central concept is re-literacy (in order to overcome the stage of digital illiteracy). Numerous specialized papers have been published on the general subject of our study,

not on the specific one. The work coordinated by Otilia Todorean, Sergiu Celac and George Scutaru- especially the study „Pandemia la români: comportamente sociale și impact psihologic post-criză” written by Dragoș Iliescu (2020), included in it - remains a reference for the geographical area under scrutiny (TODERAN et al., 2020; ILIESCU, 2020) . However, a paper in reference to the distinct influence of the active intellectuals’ lifestyle on digital literacy and implicit social change has not been written yet. In the multiple-layered hybridization within the Romanian society, those who should offer the landmarks of society resettlement are the active intellectuals. From this perspective, because of the limitations imposed by the pandemic context, we analyzed the lifestyle of the Romanian active intellectuals - the category from which elites are born - to identify possible nodes in the social network, around which the new network of norms specific to this form of re-hybridization is to be coagulated.

### 3. ACTIVE INTELLECTUALS AND THE HYBRID SOCIETY. SOCIOLOGICAL QUESTIONNAIRE-BASED SURVEY

Intending to fill the gap regarding the studies focused on the role of active intellectuals in the pandemic time, when people were isolated (more precisely during the state of emergency established in Romania, March 15 - May 16, 2020), we developed an explanatory model for the behavioural pattern of the Romanian active intellectuals in relation to the use of technology in the context of the trend of postmodern social hybridization. The objectives of the research were:

- (1) identifying the adaptive styles of the Romanian active intellectuals in the hybrid society;
- (2) building appropriate scenarios to encourage technological progress in Romania and
- (3) providing solutions to increase social resilience during the state of emergency.

The research included 328 people aged 21-65, with higher education (137 undergraduate and 191 postgraduate), 188 women and 138 men.

**Table 1. Structure of respondents by gender and age**

	age					
	21-35 years old		36-50 years old		51- 65 years old	
Gender	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	40	20	118	84	30	30

In our study we used the sociological survey, data being collected by means of a computerized questionnaire applied through the Google Forms tool. The Questionnaire consists of 51 questions (two of them being open-ended questions) and it was self-administered in the period 1-12 May 2020, during the Romanian state of emergency because of the SARS-COV 2 pandemic. The legislation imposed very strict rules of physical distance and isolation at home, only a limited number of situations being accepted for leaving one’s home.

In accordance with the content validity criteria, answers to the questions will provide arguments for accepting / rejecting the research hypotheses. Items are measured by interval scales, using the Likert scale for 29 questions, but also ordinal scales for 16 questions and 4 questions related to the identification date. In addition, 2 open-ended questions were asked in order to gain qualitative information relevant to the interpretation of quantitative answers.

Our research is designed 1. deductively, from theories with a high degree of generality, exposed in the literature review, to the particularity of application under the conditions of isolation in the emergency situation in Romania generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also 2. inductively, from current observations.

Our working hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 1: The orientation of active intellectuals towards telework, during the isolation period, depends on their degree of digital literacy;

Hypothesis 2: The degree of digital literacy of the Romanian active intellectuals depends on their ages;

Hypothesis 3: Previous digital experiences condition the quantity and quality of telework;

Hypothesis 4 Work orientation and hedonistic orientation of active intellectuals do not correlate;

Hypothesis 5: Undergoing adaptation to the new conditions depends on the active lifestyle of intellectuals.

Comparing the results in terms of parametric and nonparametric tests, the statistical analysis highlighted correlations between questions, but also elements which allow the customization of certain subcategories of respondents, which allowed us to formulate conclusions whose level of generality will be proven in our further research. Thus, based on the answers provided by the respondents, we constructed several categories of active intellectuals, which we further analysed: (a) work-oriented intellectuals, (b) hedonistic intellectuals, (c) progressive intellectuals, and (d) pragmatic intellectuals. In the economy of our research, it is important that each of the above-mentioned categories has its own way of relating to technology, as well as different degrees of accepting it in their own lives.

### **3.1 Work-oriented active intellectuals.**

A first category of active intellectuals identified is that of intellectuals oriented toward work, hereinafter referred to as Faber intellectuals. In their case, significant correlations appear between the amount of work submitted by respondents during the isolation period and the financial possibilities they declare. Thus, the answers to such questions as: "How much time did you spend working from home during the isolation period?" correlates with those to the question "To what extent do revenues allow you to purchase state-of-the-art technology?" (Spearman  $\rho=0.133$ ,  $p\leq 0.017$ ). Also, the answers to the question "How often did you do telework during the isolation period?" correlates with "To what extent do revenues allow you to purchase state-of-the-art technology?" (Spearman  $\rho=0.136$ ,  $p\leq 0.014$ ). For those who experienced online activities before the isolation period, the lifestyle seems to have been maintained, while they continued to work from home. It can also be hypothesized that those who were able to buy modern technology were already accustomed to working outside their regular workplaces, namely, to teleworking. In fact, they were also the ones who declared that they would maintain these habits after the period of isolation was over.

We remarked an intense online professional activity depending on the respondents' age: there is a preference of young people (21-35

years) for online workshops ( $\chi^2 = 20.20$ . DF = 10,  $p = 0.027$ ). On the other hand, the statistical analysis of the responses regarding involvement in online meetings by age highlights surprising situations - there were higher frequencies than expected for active intellectuals aged 51-65 who often use online meetings, while young people (21-35 years) were involved either very often or very rarely ( $\chi^2 = 22.28$ . DF = 10,  $p = 0.014$ ). The nature of profession may explain the involvement in such activities - regarding the case of 51-65 aged intellectuals, the high proportion may be the result of the hierarchical positions held by this age group, positions that most likely involved coordinating teams and monitoring them from a distance. The statistical observations in support of this hypothesis are on the purchasing power of respondents. Thus, higher-than-expected frequencies occur in those who often and very often use online workshops ( $\chi^2 = 58.28$ . DF = 24,  $p = 0.000$ ) and online meetings ( $\chi^2 = 59.67$ . DF = 24,  $p = 0.000$ ) and who stated that they could afford to purchase the latest technology.

Another element worth discussing correlates the maintenance of the activities specific to the previous period with high financial possibilities (Spearman  $\rho=0.151$ ,  $p\leq 0.008$ ;  $\chi^2 = 28.82$ . DF = 16,  $p = 0.025$ ). It is possible that they are people who work on their own, within their own companies; they may have a high level of financial gain, but also an urgency to continue the previous activity in order to avoid bankruptcy. Another possible profile is that of respondents who are part of more progressive, more innovative companies, able to manage the lucrative effort at a distance and receive financial rewards accordingly - respondents may have been part of relocated teams prior to isolation. The maintenance of previous activities is reflected in the low consumption patterns of digital leisure services, while maintaining the regular habits. Work-oriented, they show a negative correlation with the answers to the question "How much time did you spend on movies and series during the isolation period?" (Spearman  $\rho=-0.116$ ,  $p\leq 0.040$ ). Also, this category of people is open to using online public services: the more they worked under the conditions similar to those of the previous period, the less difficulties they encountered in using online public services

during the isolation period (Spearman  $\rho=-0.120$ ,  $p \leq 0,043$ ). As for the future, men declare they prefer remote interaction with state authorities ( $\chi^2 = 23.22$ .  $DF = 14$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ).

In order to understand people's motivation to interact or not with authorities online, we formulated an open-ended question asking respondents to detail the encountered problems - the answers highlighted (1) difficulties in connecting due to the large number of people accessing a site in the same time and (2) because the sites were not user-friendly enough to be easily accessible. Such answers show real alarm signals for the authorities responsible for Romania's digitalization. Although most respondents manage to navigate the complicated sites of public institutions, it is worrying to note that even people with higher education face difficulties when interacting with those pages or platforms. The reluctance of the rest of the population to use digital services is all the more explicable.

An analysis performed according to respondent age highlights a gap in digital training between generations: 9.85% of 36-50 years old respondents stated that they have such difficulties often and very often. Also, for 15% of 21-35 years old respondents and 18 % of 51-65 years old the situation is similar. These facts are at least surprising: if the percentage is not surprising in the case of the most mature, there is an expectation for young people that, due to their digital immersion, the situation be different. Unfortunately, their current online activities do not seem to equip them with those digital skills that will allow them to function institutionally as well. Therefore, the solution is the generalization of digital training programs in order to equip each person with skills suitable for functioning in the institutional online environment with a focus on the training of middle-aged people, along with redesigning institutions' websites according to principles of accessibility and ease of use.

### **3.2 Active hedonistic intellectuals.**

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At the opposite pole to active work-oriented intellectuals during the period of isolation, a category that we labelled as Hedonists was

highlighted. It is necessary, however, to clarify that all our conclusions relate strictly to the specific behaviours for the considered period. In support of the previous statement, we appeal to the concept of pressure of the situation (ASCH, 1951; DOISE & MUGNY, 1997) and to the importance that the context can have in the life of each individual and in the evolution of society as a whole. People are trapped in the "psychosocial net" (NECULAU, 2010), and the fact that some people were more oriented toward leisure or productive activities can be determined by free will and their own personality, but also by a context that guided them in that direction.

Their main activities during the isolation period are specific to leisure: discussions with friends, neighbours, watching TV shows, movies and series. There is a clear orientation toward spending time in front of a screen, highlighted by a strong correlation between "How often did you watch TV shows during the isolation period?" and "How often did you watch movies and series during your isolation?" (Spearman  $\rho=0.467$ ,  $p \leq 0,0001$ ). There are differences depending on age within this category, because watching TV shows correlates more with older ages (Spearman  $\rho=0,148$ ,  $p \leq 0.008$ ). Higher than expected frequencies occur in young people aged 21-35 and 36-50 who watch TV shows once every two weeks or not at all ( $\chi^2 = 16.25$ .  $DF = 8$ ,  $p = 0.039$ ).

The results obtained using the Chi Square test highlight a significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies for women and men. If women state that they have talked to their neighbours once every two weeks or not at all, men declare frequencies between three times a week and daily ( $\chi^2 = 18.13$ .  $DF = 8$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ). From the perspective of social stereotypes, this result is surprising, although it supports the finding that men are more socially involved than women (FISKE, 2010). Also, people who said they can afford to buy cheap digital technology have higher frequencies than expected when watching news and TV shows for approx. 2 hours, while respondents who can afford to buy products belonging to the latest technologies more frequently allocate only 30 minutes for watching TV ( $\chi^2 = 52.90$ .  $DF = 28$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ). Leisure activities indirect correlates with those dedicated to the profession. For example, the

answers given by those who stated that they worked from home only a little during the isolation period correlate with those who had frequent discussions with neighbour's (Spearman  $\rho = -0.119$ ,  $p \leq 0.035$ ), with those who often followed TV shows (Spearman  $\rho = -0.120$ ,  $p \leq 0.034$ ) or those of those who have largely watched movies and series (Spearman  $\rho = -0.148$ ,  $p \leq 0.009$ ). At the same time, those who responded that they watched more movies and series during the state of emergency indirect correlates with the magnitude of the professional activities carried out in a similar regime to the previous ones (Spearman  $\rho = -0.148$ ,  $p \leq 0.009$ ). The change in the way people spend time is also reflected in the reports of streaming channels for the period considered. Netflix announced that in the first quarter of 2020, the number of new subscribers doubled their most optimistic estimates (MĂNCILĂ, 2020). On the other hand, being leisure-oriented, this category of isolated people is not very interested in household activities: those who prefer to watch movies and series are less interested in allocating more time to household activities (Spearman  $\rho = -0.143$ ,  $p \leq 0.011$ ).

Respondents who stated that they made little use of online work sessions, however, used the technology available for online shopping (Spearman  $\rho = -0.220$ ,  $p \leq 0,0001$ ). Based on this correlation, it can be concluded that, despite our expectations, people with more time are more inclined to shop online. The time spent searching for the necessary products on different websites seems to be a cost that busy people are not yet ready to pay. Campaigns to encourage online shopping should consider this finding. In fact, to ease the process, there are companies that use artificial intelligence algorithms to offer the visitors products similar to those sought after or that retain the pattern of the last purchases to make it easier for the next ones. Hedonists are characterized also by the correlation between those who have largely watched movies and series and those who estimate that they will use online payments even after the end of the isolation period (Spearman  $\rho = 0,124$ ,  $p \leq 0,024$ ), highlighting once again the relaxed orientation, specific to this category of people.

The digital world also has a number of unpleasant consequences. Relaxation in front of

the screen (TV or computer) causes a sensory stimulation that leads to a reduction in the level of melatonin in the brain, the hormone responsible for regulating the circadian cycle. Thus, subjects who consumed several films and series during the isolation period allocated fewer hours for sleep (Spearman  $\rho = -0.135$ ,  $p \leq 0.017$ ). Within this category there is a particular pattern that we called Ludic, with a special profile. By adopting professional activities different from those previously practiced one spend one's time on computer games (Spearman  $\rho = -0.113$ ,  $p \leq 0.050$ ), but one is also oriented to activities with a high degree of social desirability, such as volunteering (Spearman  $\rho = 0.127$ ,  $p \leq 0.0023$ ).

### **3.3 Progressive active intellectuals.**

Another category with a distinct profile among respondents is that of people who have maintained an active lifestyle, characterized by flexibility and rapid adaptation to the pressures of the situation. These are people who have tried to stay active and safe, through frequent walks, exercise and involvement in volunteering activities. They have high financial possibilities and have a lifestyle that not only does accept technology, but also uses it - they make online payments, online shopping and donations. We called them Progressives. Significant correlations emerged between the answers to the question "How often did you walk during the isolation period?" and to "How often have you done exercises during isolation?" (Spearman  $\rho = 0,228$ ,  $p \leq 0,001$ ) or to "Did you volunteer for humanitarian purposes during the period of isolation?" (Spearman  $\rho = 0,121$  /  $\rho = 0.031$ ). As expected, the middle-aged generation is less active - higher-than-expected frequencies occurred in 21-35-year-olds (once and three times a week) and 51-65-year-olds (three times a week or daily) ( $\chi^2 = 20.83$ . DF = 8,  $p = 0.008$ ).

The answers to the question regarding their revenues which allow them to purchase state-of-the-art technology correlate with those given to the question "How often did you use online payments during the isolation period?" (Spearman  $\rho = 0,245$ ,  $p \leq 0,0001$ ) and "How often did you use online shopping during the isolation period?" (Spearman  $\rho = 0,239$ ,  $p \leq 0,0001$ ). The

answers of the respondents who stated that they had previously made online payments and could afford to purchase the latest technology show higher frequencies of occurrence ( $\chi^2 = 64.75$ . DF = 24,  $p = 0.000$ ). The habit of making online payments before the isolation period has strengthened their trust in digital financial services. There is a significant correlation of the answers to the question "How often did you use online payments before the isolation period?" and "Did you make cash donations during the isolation period?" (Spearman  $\rho=0.168$ ,  $p\leq 0.002$ ). They trust their donated money is used correctly and reaches those in need; online altruism is included in their profile, in the case of this category.

### **3.4 Pragmatic active intellectuals.**

Another pattern that has been defined among the respondents is that of the **Pragmatists**. They are people oriented toward the development of professional or domestic skills, toward activities of high immediate utility, such as volunteering or donations for those in need, but also domestic activities in their own homes. The answers of those who stated that they developed professional skills during the isolation period correlate with questions regarding online activities - probably the skills developed were those related to digital immersion and the widespread use of technology (for example, those who developed their professional skills in the isolation period stated that they intend to use the online work sessions after the end of the state of emergency (Spearman  $\rho=0,241$ ,  $p\leq 0,0001$ )). An argument for this is provided by the fact that before the state of emergency they were not used to solving their problems online, a fact highlighted by a negative correlation with the answers to the question "How often did you have remote interactions with state authorities before the isolation period?" (Spearman  $\rho=-0.160$ ,  $p\leq 0.005$ ). Involvement in personal development activities correlates with altruism and helping others. Thus, Pragmatics stated that they made money donations (Spearman  $\rho= 0.111$ ,  $p\leq 0.046$ ) and helped the elderly (Spearman  $\rho= 0.142$ ,  $p\leq 0.011$ ). We notice the orientation toward pragmatism, but also the rapid adaptation to the requirements of a

situation they have not faced before. Probably this type of mental flexibility also led them to develop new skills and accept new uses of technology. Cash donations are more common for those who have the opportunity to buy the latest technology ( $\chi^2 = 40.14$ . DF = 24,  $p = 0.021$ ). Although explainable, such a result contradicts the popular wisdom expressed paremiologically by: "The rich do not believe the poor."

## **4. CONCLUSIONS. VALUES IN MOTION**

The current research is a static picture (during the period of lockdown caused by the state of emergency established on the Romanian territory) of a very complex dynamic perspective regarding the role of the active intellectuals in the reorganization of the Romanian hybrid society. Future research will confirm or infirm the correlation between the pandemic lifestyle and the involvement style of active intellectuals. For now, our results show that, excepting no. 2 (The degree of digital literacy of the Romanian active intellectuals depends on their ages), our hypotheses are confirmed. Intellectuals that previously experienced digital work had no problem to adapt to telework and the more they experienced this kind of activity, the more they are willing to work more this way. In fact, when they are used to cyber space, according to their identified lifestyle, they even try to get new digital competences. Our hypothesis that *the degree of digital literacy of the Romanian active intellectuals depends on their age* was infirmed and it was surprising to find that middle ages are less accustomed to technology compared with the elder ones. We explained that in terms of their success and responsibilities but further research should clarify the reasons which may be linked to generational specific or societal crisis that urged them in this direction.

Therefore, the results of the research are limited within the boundaries of the restriction period. They cannot be directly extended - as trends - to the current state of the art, except for subsequent researches able to reorganize the identified behavioral profiles of intellectuals: Faber (work-oriented), Hedonist (pleasure-oriented), Pragmatic (purpose-oriented), and

Progressive (adaptation-oriented) in relations with a set of values – for example, in relations to the values included in the table of M. Rokeach, adapted and used in Romanian research by: P. POPESCU-NEVEANU (since 1983); S. CHELCEA (since 1988); L.M. IACOB (since 2003) and A. LESENCIUC (since 2012). In addition, with the return to a partial normality – keeping the imprint of the *new normal*<sup>1</sup> social hybridity – the study needs to be continued from the perspective of reorganizing the groups of active intellectuals based on different criteria, such as the picture of generations (“by generation’ referring to “a group that lives in a certain time”, SCHIFIRNEȚ, 1985), which includes active intellectuals from Romania (Generation X, of those born between 1965 and 1979; Generation Y, between 1980 and 1994; and Generation Z, after 1995), with a parallel analysis of the particularities of some specific Romanian generations, such as the Generation of ‘decreței’<sup>2</sup>, juxtaposed to X and Y generations. From this perspective, once we can understand that a generation produces social change by itself, as long as there is a “consciousness of generational unity” (SCHIFIRNEȚ, 1985), the consciousness of belonging to the Generation of ‘decreței’ (individualized in our study) is stronger than that of belonging to Generation X, while Generation Y is more consistent as self-identification in relationship to the Generation of ‘decreței’ (especially in the last period). Therefore, in the case of generational waves juxtaposed in relations with different criteria, and in the case of waves of hybridization of the Romanian society, the study of the lifestyle of the active intellectuals during the isolation period is necessary in order to design future research. For these reasons, having certain expectations from generations Y and Z (the latter partially included in the category of active intellectuals) – for example in terms of reporting to information technologies and digital literacy: “The ability to use the information technology is probably the most important and visible. In fact, this ability produces rapid changes in the working style of organizations, and the representatives of Generation Y are often the initiators” (VOICU, 2016) or to the short adaptation time and the need for immediate reaction: “Generation Y requests real time feedback” (HOBART &

SENDEK, 2016) – we expected more consistent differences between behavioral profiles in relation to different generations. In general, these differences were insignificant (for example, in the case of Faber intellectuals, where the percentage differences between generations were minor compared with the use of online meeting technologies; it was also surprising the adaptive capacity and openness of the representatives of Generation X; this only partially confirms the second hypothesis), but they became manifest especially in the category of intellectuals least represented, the Hedonists. It should be mentioned in this respect that in our research the predominant category of active intellectuals was that of Progressives (rank 1), followed by Fabers (rank 2), Pragmatics (rank 3) and Hedonists (rank 4). This allows us to design the future research directions in accordance with a series of rigid and stable norms within a *hybrid society* in alignment with the *new normal*. We hope that an elite of active intellectuals (especially Progressives and Fabers, i.e. the best represented categories) to coagulate in order to change the Romanian society towards the *new normal*.

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup>The *new normal* is a term first used in computer science since the middle of the last century, and in social sciences since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; the World Health Organization has imposed this term by a series of informative materials for the general public and published under the concept of *The New Normal*, based on the statement of the general director of the organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in which the new state of the art was described as follows: “We need to prepare for a ‘new normal’ require all of us to change our behaviours for the foreseeable future” (LACINA, 2020).

<sup>2</sup>In Romania, the Generation of ‘decreței’ is the generation of people born between 1967-1990; by the term ‘decreței’ (derived in Romanian as a diminutive from the word ‘decret’, i.e. ‘decree’), there were defined, in a pejorative and ironic way, the unwanted children born after Decree no.770 of October 1, 1966, given by the communist leader Nicolae Ceaușescu, who aimed at accelerating the population growth by prohibition of abortion.