4-1-2015

Regime Change in Romania: A Quarter-Century Impact on Libraries

H.G.B. Anghelescu
Wayne State University, ag7662@wayne.edu

Elena Chiaburu
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University

Regime Change in Romania: A Quarter-Century Impact on Libraries

Hermina G.B. Anghelescu and Elena Chiaburu

Abstract

This paper takes a fresh look at the transformative events that marked the development of the library scene at the twenty-fifth anniversary of regime change in Romania. It examines their significance for the country's postcommunist trajectories by linking the past, present, and future of library development. Libraries of all types have been affected in either a positive or negative way during the past twenty-five years. Currently, there is no strategy at the national level to coordinate library development or to establish priorities and directions for growth. Due to significant financial aid from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the public library sector has made significant progress, especially in the diversification of computer-based services offered to the communities they serve. Higher education has witnessed the advent of private universities, although oftentimes not endowed with adequate libraries. The public and academic library network has embraced the new information and communications technology. School libraries, although high in numbers, have remained anchored in the past, with a few exceptions. Many special libraries have disappeared, along with their parent institutions. Despite its moving into a modern edifice, the National Library of Romania is yet to identify its role, goals, mission, and vision for the information society. Two major library associations have elevated librarianship to a professional status, but they act independently of each other and their programs never intersect. Library legislation and other laws provide the legal framework for libraries, the publishing industry, and the information and communications field. Despite the progress reported by libraries, usage continues to remain very low. The public's perception of libraries' role in society has not yet crystallized. Insufficient funding

LIBRARY TRENDS, Vol. 63, No. 4, 2015 (Libraries in a Postcommunist World: A Quarter of a Century of Development in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia: Part 2, edited by Hermina G.B. Anghelescu), pp. 809–843.

prevents Romanian libraries from performing at the same parameters as their counterparts in economically developed countries.

The Historical and Political Contexts

Anniversaries represent opportunities to reflect on past events, reassess their impact on the present, and draw lessons for the future. Together with other twentieth-century historical events, including the two world wars and the communist takeover, the overthrow of the communist regime represented a watershed event for Romania. The most recent extraordinary transformation was constituted by the end of the communist dictatorship, the democratization of the political system, the introduction of a market economy, cultural liberalization, the opening of borders, and a realignment with the West. At the same time, given Romania's persistent problems with political instability, pervasive corruption, slow economic growth, populism, and nationalism, the significance of the 1989 regime change and its outcomes remains a source of contestation.

In his book *The Challenges of Transition: Romania in Transition* (1997), Vladimir Pasti presents three reasons that explain why Romania has gained a reputation as a special case in the literature on Eastern and Central Europe's process of transition, transformation, and development. The first is the Ceauşescu regime, considered to be one of the harshest communist dictatorships, especially during the period from the 1970s to the 1980s when other communist regimes were already experimenting with reforms or were under significant internal pressure to do so. The second rationale is the 1989 turmoil year, when, unlike the other revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe, Romania's was a violent one. The third reason is that while transitioning from the communist to the postcommunist period, the communist elite was quickly able to occupy leading positions in the post-1989 political parties, which allowed it to maintain control of the government through free elections and continue certain features of the communist regime, although concealed behind the supposed openness of an emerging democracy. Romania thus presents a special case of an unfinished revolution. The outcome of the presidential election in November 2014 seems, finally, to have overthrown the neo-communist regime in the country (Gillet, 2014; Pop, 2014).

After forty-five years of communist oppression, the popular uprising of December 1989 led to the bloodiest social unrest in the Eastern Bloc, culminating in the demise of the regime and the execution of Ceauşescu and his wife on Christmas Day. The Carol I Central University Library Bucharest was at the heart of these events. Situated next to the former headquarters of the Romanian Communist Party and one of the top departments of the secret police, the library became one of the first victims of the confrontation between the protesters and the armed forces still loyal to the tottering communist regime. The library's building was engulfed

in flames, and over half a million books and old maps, along with about 3,700 irreplaceable manuscripts, were destroyed (fig. 1) (Carol I Central University Library Bucharest, 2014a). Even today, there is no certainty as to how or why the fire started and who targeted the library; nobody has been held accountable. Moreover, the communist general who led the armed forces onsite was awarded a medal by the first neo-communist government in recognition of "merit" (Laslau, 2006). During 1990–2006, the edifice was restored with UNESCO funding and reopened, with a new wing added to the historic structure and fully equipped with modern technologies. The Carol I Central University Library Bucharest remains the premier academic library in Romania and a symbol of the regime change in December 1989.

The Communist Legacy

As with many Soviet-allied countries prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the government of the Socialist Republic of Romania applied strict censorship during its rule. Censorship was widespread, and virtually every theatrical performance, television show, film, and book to be published had to pass strict ideological control. The purpose of the censorship apparatus was to subordinate all spheres of Romanian culture, including literature, history, art, and philosophy, to communist ideology. All facets of Romanian culture were reinterpreted according to the regime's ideology, and any other interpretations were banned as forms of "bourgeois decadence" (Tismăneanu, 2005).

Content that was considered harmful to the regime, or to communist ideologies in general, was strictly forbidden. The definition of what could be harmful included a number of different categories. Foremost, criticism of communism was not tolerated; this included any criticism of communism in general, as well as discussion of the regimes of Romania and the USSR and usually other Soviet-allied states. Similarly, ideas that were sympathetic to capitalism were not allowed. Negative portrayals of Romania in the foreign press were censored as well (Marino, 2001).

The strictness of Romanian censorship extended to deprecating Romanian authors living abroad, literature published abroad that presented Romania in an unfavorable light, everything related to the Romanian monarchy that was forced into exile in 1947, and all things touching on Romania's history during the monarchy. A special censorship department was established, following the Soviet Glavlit model, and it operated, under a variety of names, between 1946 and 1991, when it was finally dismantled (Corobca, 2010, 2013, 2014). Within this context, every published document, be it a newspaper article or a book, had to pass the censor's approval. Periodically, the censorship department used to publish lists of books to be removed from library collections. Certain lists were quite extensive, amounting to some 8,000 banned books (Caravia, 2000). Oftentimes,

Figure 1. The Carol I Central University Library Bucharest, December 1989. (Photo: Courtesy of the Carol I Central University Library Bucharest.)

the banned books were physically destroyed; in some libraries, however, "purged" books were simply set aside (Comisia Prezidențială, 2006).

Major libraries became repositories of banned documents, which were stored in designated areas with restricted access even for library staff and completely unavailable to the public. In Romanian librarians' jargon, these collections were referred to as "S Fond"—an abbreviation of Secret Fond/collection, not Special Fond/collection as one might assume. All the S Fonds were integrated in general collections in postcommunist Romania. Certain libraries preserve their card catalogs with the "FS" symbol handwritten on cards (Anghelescu, 2001a). Librarians acted as custodians of information and not as mediators to facilitate the public's access to resources; library services were reduced to lending books that had received the stamp of approval from the ideological censor.

The major piece of legislation targeting libraries, adopted during the communist regime, was a government decision of 1951 stating that the library's mission was to stimulate the masses' interest in reading and to disseminate books. Libraries were to be staffed with "adequate librarians from the standpoint of their political, cultural, and professional training" (Council of Ministers, 1951). It is not surprising to note that the paramount requirement was the librarian's political trustworthiness, not her/his professional performance; these librarians were to turn libraries into prop-

aganda tools for mass indoctrination. With collections that abounded in Marxist literature, library usage was very low. Libraries reported doctored statistical data to support their social role. Librarians were engaged mostly in collection processing (cataloging and classification), rather than promoting their collections, programming, or community outreach. Collection growth was due primarily to acquisitions of the country's editorial output from the government-sponsored and government-controlled publishing houses. Only major academic libraries, the Library of the Romanian Academy, and the Central State Library were allowed to engage in international exchanges of publications, which represented the only source of adding books and periodicals in foreign languages to their collections.

With few exceptions, most libraries were located in buildings that had not been designed to serve as libraries. For instance, the Central State Library operated in the building of the former stock exchange from its establishment in 1955 until 2011. The National Pedagogical Library occupied a nationalized building until 2014, when the building was returned to its rightful owners and the library itself dismantled. The headquarters of the Bucharest Metropolitan Library is located in a private residence confiscated during the communist regime. Throughout the country, there are libraries that continue to be located in inadequate spaces, unsuitable for library operations.

While most aspects of the communist legacy in the library field have been attenuated, certain details continue to have a negative impact on library activities. Dedicated librarians have been committed to lessening this legacy with various levels of support from their communities and local authorities.

The Library Network

It was only in 2002 that Romania adopted comprehensive library legislation, when Library Law no. 334 was adopted. According to this law, the Romanian library system consists of national, public, academic, school, and special libraries, each overseen by a different entity (Legea Nr. 334 / 31 May 2002 Privind Bibliotecile, 2002). According to Robert Coravu (2013, p. 436), although the current Romanian legislation recognized the five types of libraries that operate in many other countries (namely, national, public, academic, school, and special), in Romania, they are not constituted into a national system, which "represents only a theoretical construct," and he deplores the lack of coordination within the network. In 2012, there was a total of 11,309 libraries of all kinds, with 4 national libraries (as mentioned above, in 2014, the National Pedagogical Library was closed), 2,663 public libraries, 97 academic libraries, 7,938 school libraries, and 607 special libraries. (In that same year, Romania's population was 20.2 million.) Figure 2 indicates a significant decline in Romania's overall number of libraries during the postcommunist period, from 16,665 in 1990 down to 11,309 in 2012 (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014).

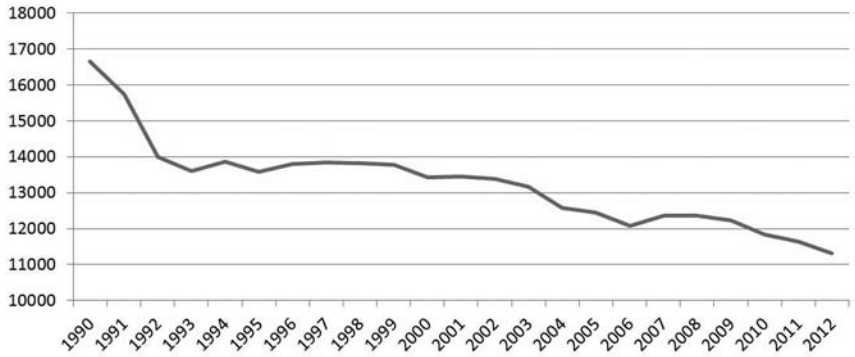

Figure 2. Libraries (all types) in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

Public Libraries

From a territorial standpoint, Romania is divided into forty-one counties (*județe*), including the city of Bucharest. Therefore, there are forty county libraries in addition to the Bucharest Metropolitan Library, which serves both the capital city and its surrounding county. Each county is further subdivided into municipalities, towns, communes, and villages. In Romania, there are 320 towns and 2,861 communes; 103 of the larger towns have municipality status. The Library Law of 2002 stipulates that each of the above territorial entities needs to have a public library, and for cities with a larger population, there should be a library branch per every 25,000 inhabitants. The capital city has the largest public library network, consisting of the main building of the Bucharest Metropolitan Library and thirty-five smaller branches (Rotaru, 2008). Funding for the public library sector comes from local authorities. Romania came out of the communist period with a total of 4,458 public libraries reported in 1990; by 2012, their number had dropped to 2,663, a decrease of almost 40 percent (fig. 3). This decline occurred mainly in rural areas, where drastic budget cuts led to the closing of local public libraries. If in 1990 there were 2,620 rural libraries, in 2012, there were only 2,362, representing a loss of 10 percent (fig. 4).

In urban areas, the numbers look different, but not because the number of municipal and town libraries has increased (fig. 5). The ascending trend is due to the fact that many communes decided to become municipalities or towns and thus the rural library attained municipal or town library status, with no change whatsoever in their budgets, staffing, acquisitions, or quality of service. This discrepancy between municipal and town versus rural library settings continues to exist despite efforts to reduce the

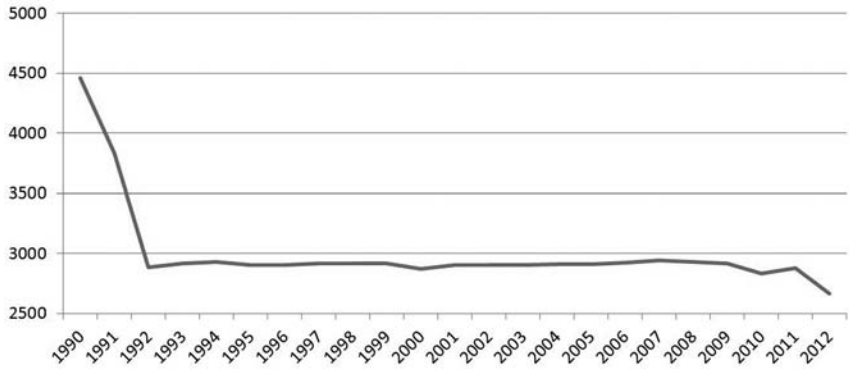

Figure 3. Public Libraries (all types) in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

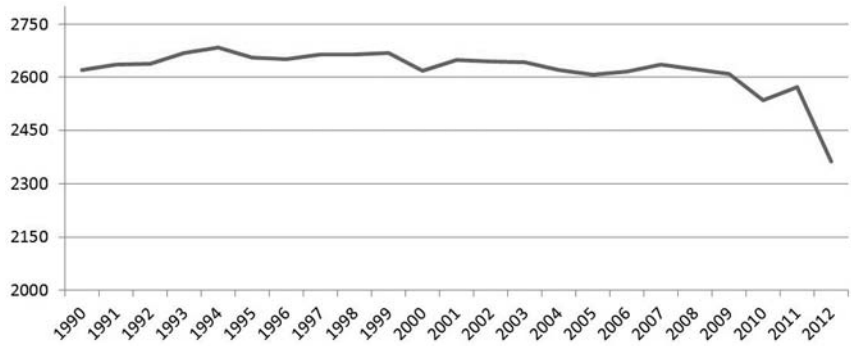

Figure 4. Rural libraries in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

gap (Buhler, 2007). In 1990, there were 204 municipal and town libraries, their number rising to 260 by 2012. This switch from rural to municipality or town partially explains the decreasing curve of rural libraries (see fig. 4). However, the main reason for the loss of 10 percent of rural libraries lies in the fact that libraries were closed by mayors who regarded library funds as a source of revenue for their communities. In terms of usage, the highest number of public library users during the postcommunist period was recorded in 1991, when it reached 2,226,050 users, representing 11 percent of the population. The numbers have continuously dropped ever since, attaining a record low of 7.5 percent in 2012 (fig. 6).

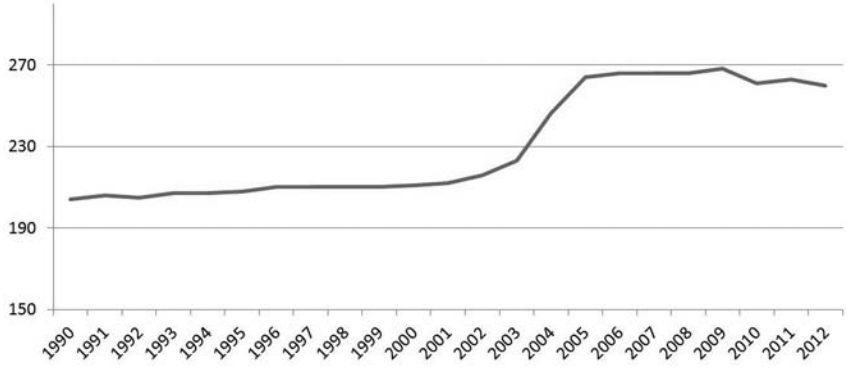

Figure 5. Municipal and town libraries in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

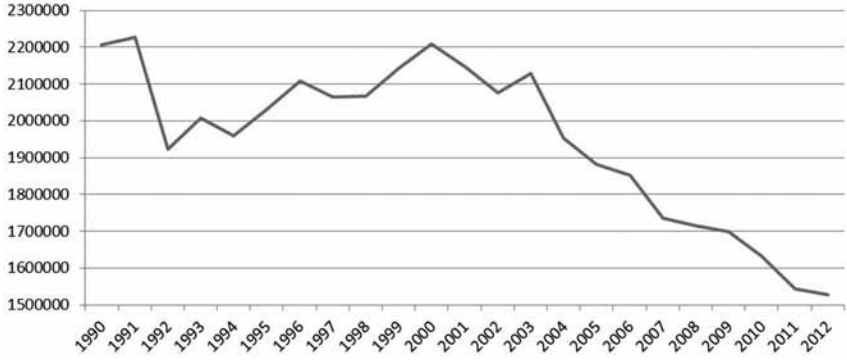

Figure 6. Public library users in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

Figure 7 illustrates the number of volumes checked out by public library users. In 2001, the peak year, 37,436,155 volumes were checked out by 2,146,083 public library users, with an average of 17.44 volumes per borrower. In 2012, public library lending fell to 14.15 volumes checked out per borrower, when a total of 21,619,572 volumes were checked out by 1,527,723 users.

Since 2008, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has been a major player on the Romanian public library scene through the Biblionet program administered by IREX, a US-based NGO. Within the foundation's

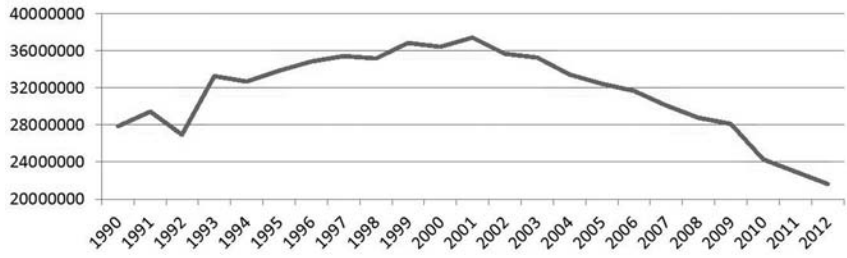

Figure 7. Public library lending in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

Global Libraries initiative, Romania was selected as a country that demonstrated both the need and readiness "to help public libraries provide free access to computers and the internet, and training on how to make full use of these tools. The initiative focused on helping transform public libraries into vital resources that can help improve the lives of millions of people" (Biblionet, 2010). A US$1.4 million pilot program demonstrated Romania's capability to absorb the funding and implement a coherent program of equipping public libraries with new technologies and internet access and of training public librarians as information providers (Chiranov, 2010). This pilot phase was followed by a US$26.9 million five-year, nation-wide program, which ended in 2014. During this period, the program became multifaceted and focused on

- facilitating access to information through the establishment of a network of public access computing in public libraries;
- training public librarians to provide customer-oriented services and facilitate access to online information;
- promoting the value of libraries on a national scale and strengthening the role and operations of the Association of Public Librarians and Libraries in Romania (ANBPR); and
- fostering government support to public libraries through investment in infrastructure, personnel, and facilities to ensure sustainability after the Gates Foundation funding phases out (Biblionet–Global Libraries Romania, 2010).

From a social standpoint, the impact of Biblionet's four pillars has been significant. The program fostered emulation among public libraries to be selected for the early stage of its implementation. In certain cases, the program has created more awareness about the role of the public library in the community, which has forced local leaders and decision makers

to change their perceptions about libraries and to commit matching funds for their refurbishing and services. The goal of the Biblionet program was to establish a training center, equipped with a mobile lab and expertise, within each county library so that public librarians can be trained locally. In an interview, Paul-Andre Baran, Biblionet's director, stated that by November 2014, the program had been implemented in 2,300 public libraries, with computers and peripherals installed and 3,000 librarians trained (Baran, 2014). (As previously mentioned, the Romanian public library network consists of 2,663 libraries, and public libraries in large cities have branches. The number reported by Baran refers to points of access, where libraries and branches were counted as individual entities.) Biblionet has developed partnerships with other entities in Romania, such as the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Ministry of Communications and Information Society, and the EOS (Educating for an Open Society) Foundation. In addition, the Microsoft Corporation donated software worth approximately US$15 million to Romanian libraries. All of these entities constitute the Digital Alliance for Romania, which as been engaged in supporting and promoting the country's e-inclusion endeavors (Alianța Digitală pentru România, 2012).

In 2012, the Gates Foundation commissioned TNS, an independent research company, to conduct a trans-European survey (seventeen countries) to measure users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries. Regarding Romania, the TNS study found that 16 percent of the country's population has used public access computers in a public library setting (Quick, Prior, Toombs, Taylor, & Currenti, 2013). The discrepancy between Romania's official statistical data that reported public library usage of 7.5 percent and this particular study relies upon the fact that official data counted library cardholders who used the public library to check out books, while the study focused on those who went to public libraries only to use their computers. The computers provided by the Biblionet program were placed in areas with easy access, and their use did not require a library card.

During the summer of 2013, Margaret Kavaras of George Washington University investigated the impact of the Biblionet program on social development in Romania. She highlighted the potential that public libraries could have on the communities they serve if they were more engaged in community outreach and program design, were better funded, and if library administrations were free of "political mismanagement" (Kavaras, 2014).

University Libraries

University libraries serve the educational and research needs of those affiliated with their respective institutions: students, faculty, and researchers. There are two types of university libraries:

- Central university libraries, which are of national importance, government-sponsored, and under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (in this category, there are four university libraries: in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Iaşi, and Timişoara)
- Libraries belonging to both public and private universities that are subordinated to and funded by the universities themselves

During the communist regime, there were 48 university libraries in Romania. After 1990, many new universities were established. In the public sector, several smaller higher education institutions added more schools and, with the advent of a free-market economy, private universities came into being. In 2012, there were 97 university libraries—a decreasing trend from 2004, when their number peaked at 110 (fig. 8).

During the entire postcommunist period, the number of university libraries has never equaled the number of universities due to the fact that several universities do not have their own library, in which case students are directed to public libraries to study and conduct research. Many university libraries are reduced to only one room, with dated books; others have more space but are inadequately furnished and unattractive—far from offering an environment that is conducive to study and research. Digital collections are scarce, and even when they do exist, are unavailable for accessing remotely. Many small university libraries do not maintain an online catalog. Many university libraries' websites are poorly designed and not even functional. Only a few university libraries are completely automated and have an integrated system, and their accomplishments stand out as the exception and not the norm. Despite the fact that some private universities have built new campuses, their libraries are far from being modern and inviting spaces because a traditional library design was used, with reading rooms and closed stacks in which students are required to use call slips to access the materials they need. Many private universities received modest gifts of books during their first year of existence; such collections, which meanwhile have become outdated and are good candidates for weeding out, continue to represent their main collections.

Education accreditation standards are lax and not fully enforced; the entire accreditation process is superficial and sometimes corrupt. Within the context of an anticorruption campaign at the national level, the Ministry of Justice issued guidelines to prevent corruption in education at all levels (Ministry of Justice, 2004).

Figures 9–10 demonstrate that Romanian university libraries focus more on collection development rather than on promoting their collections among their constituencies. The services they provide are far from being customer oriented, and faculty members and students use libraries only as a last resort, after they could not find what they needed on the internet. Academic library collections are underused, and libraries serve

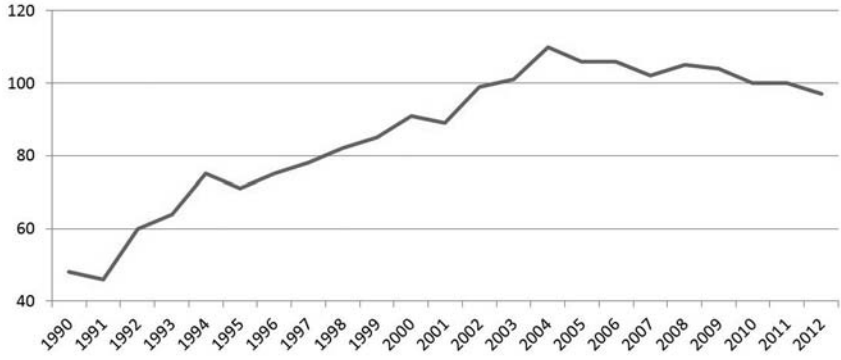

Figure 8. University libraries in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

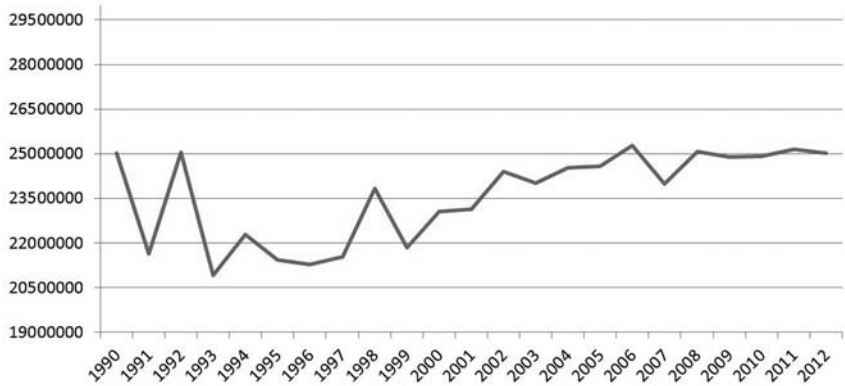

Figure 9. University library collections in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

as noncirculating repositories, many of them with closed stacks, which discourage their use.

The rate of books checked out peaked in 2002, followed by a continuous decline (fig. 11). In 2012, the number of items checked out fell below the level reported in 1990, despite the fact that the number of university libraries, as well as the overall student body, almost tripled. This is an indication that students prefer to conduct research over the internet and do not consider the library as a valuable information resource.

Beginning in 2005, university libraries were authorized by the National Education Law to join efforts and constitute consortia in order to access

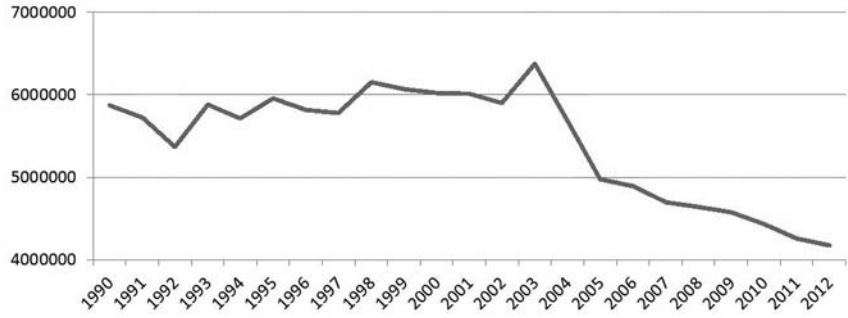

Figure 10. University library users in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

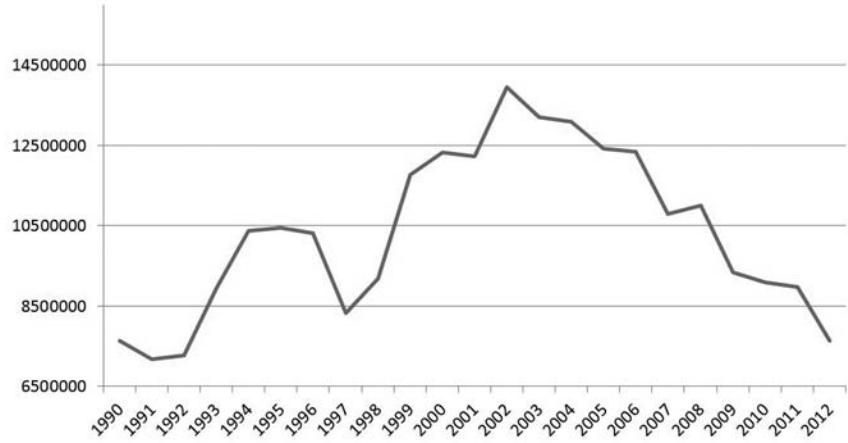

Figure 11. University library books checked out in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

funding from the European Union (EU) to procure access to licensed databases. Usage statistics indicate that Romanian users have not developed the necessary online-searching skills, and consequently these resources have not been utilized to their full potential. Additionally, these databases have not been efficiently marketed by librarians. Information literacy courses would lead to higher usage of electronic resources by students.

Funding in hard currency for the acquisition of foreign materials is scarce. Major academic libraries and the National Library of Romania (NLR) are engaged in international exchanges of publications. Although data are not accurately reported and centralized at the national level,

the disparate figures indicate that in 2000, the Central University Library Iaşi had 345 exchange partners in 45 countries, and that by 2013, it reported 442 exchange partners in 52 countries (Central University Library Iaşi, 2013). In 2013, the NLR had 165 partners in 48 countries, and it added to its collections 1,691 books, 392 periodical titles, and 18 electronic resources through international exchanges (Bibliotecii Naţionale a României, 2014). In 2013, the Carol I Central University Library Bucharest reported 255 partners in 36 countries (Carol I Central University Library Bucharest, 2014b). It seems that the Central University Library Cluj-Napoca is the national leader in this area; in 2005, it reported 1,889 exchange partners in 78 countries (Mateuţă-Tamas, 2005).

Higher education in Romania is severely underfunded. A report issued in 2009 by the Romanian Agency Supervising the Quality of Higher Education (ARACIS) pointed out the shortcomings of higher education and poor outcomes of research conducted in universities based on statistical data and the perceptions of students and staff and faculty members. The report reveals significant discrepancies between the performance of higher education and expectations upon graduation. The agency itself is perceived as having "a rather low, moderate at the most, visibility level among faculty." Its report deplores the persistent underfunding of higher education, and the lack of adequate funding for "information resources (libraries, in particular)" (Romanian Agency Supervising the Quality of Higher Education, 2009).

School Libraries

The school library network in Romania consists of the libraries in schools; the libraries of teaching staff centers; and the I. C. Petrescu National Pedagogical Library (now part of the Carol I Central University Library in Bucharest).

Libraries in Schools

These libraries operate in elementary, middle, and high schools, both public and private, and are funded by the school's budget. During the first two years after the fall of communism, schools that no longer had libraries reinstated them, thus increasing their number; since 1992, however, the number of school libraries has been constantly decreasing. In 1990, there were 10,029 school libraries, but by 2012, their total declined to 7,938 (fig. 12). Despite the drop in the number of school libraries, official statistics indicate that since 2005 there are more of them than the actual number of schools in the country, which makes one question the veracity of the data or else whether this is an indication that many schools operate without a library (fig. 13).

During the communist regime with its highly centralized library system, there were national standards in terms of per capita expenditures

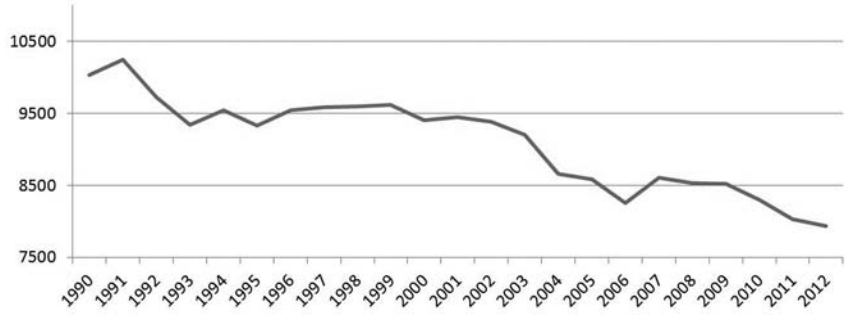

Figure 12. School libraries in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

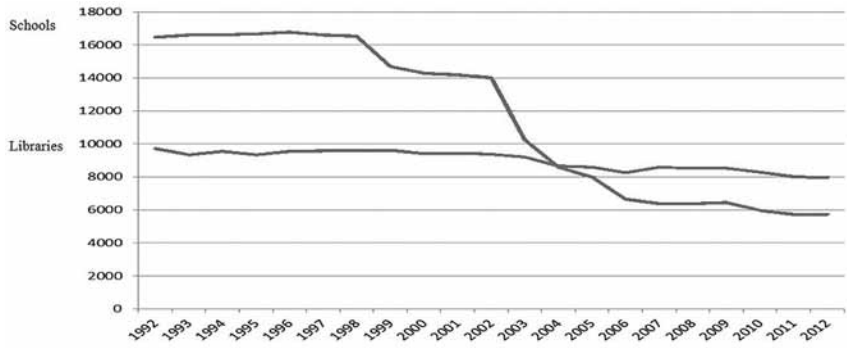

Figure 13. Schools and school libraries in Romania, 1992–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

based on students' ages and their specializations. After 1990, despite legislative stipulations, according to which school libraries were to be adequately funded by the overseeing authority, the Ministry of Education, public school budgets have been diminishing, and their libraries received the smallest portion, always placing behind other school departments. This explains the sinuous evolution of school library collections indicated in figure 14.

School libraries are generally located in inadequate and unattractive spaces, replete with old furniture and outdated books. Usually, they are open during breaks and limit their activity to checking books in and out. School library collections consist of less than a thousand (mostly) outdated books and are unable to support the reform of Romanian education—a goal claimed by the overseeing ministry. Being essentially repositories of outdated books explains why school libraries are experiencing declines

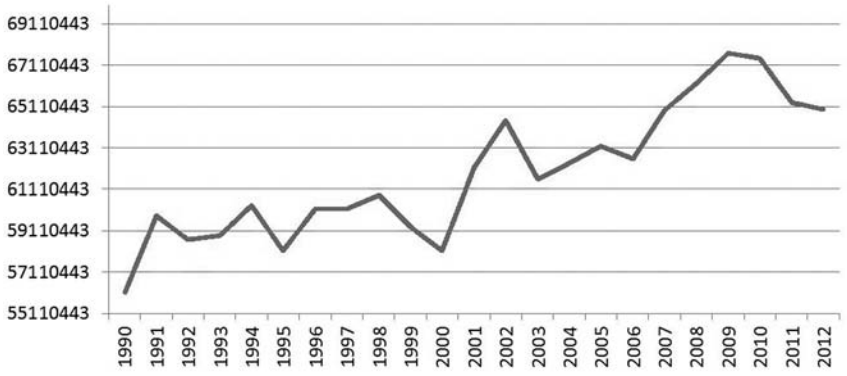

Figure 14. School library collections in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

in both their numbers of users and circulation. By 2012, their numbers of books checked out were lower than in 1990, immediately after the fall of communism (figs. 15–16). All of these statistical data are a clear indication of a steady declining trend in the school library sector in Romania. However, the Ministry of Education does not seem interested in improving this situation.

In 2000, as a result of a multiyear (2002–2008), bilateral Franco-Romanian collaboration project, Romanian schools have established Centers for Documentation and Information (CDI), staffed with a "documentalist-teacher." In France, such centers have existed since 1973, and documentalist-teachers require special education and training to qualify for such a position (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, 2012). Romania has adopted the concept but has failed to provide both the educational framework required to turn teachers into specialists in research and documentation in order to develop skills to guide and assist students with conducting research and to endow schools with the necessary equipment and internet access to enable teachers and students to conduct research in the classroom. After the establishment of these new CDI, the existence of the school library became optional. Now, a school's principal and administrative council have the latitude to decide on its library's future. In some schools, its outdated library and the CDI coexist, but the tendency is for the library to be assimilated by the center. Unfortunately, however, all of these changes are superficial—the essence of schools has not changed.

Research conducted in 2012 indicates that, of the librarians, 485 were full-time, 262 part-time, 248 paid by hours worked, and 104 unpaid volunteers. At the same time, of the documentalist-teachers, 292 were full-time, 13 part-time, 4 paid by hours worked, and 5 unpaid volunteers. Most

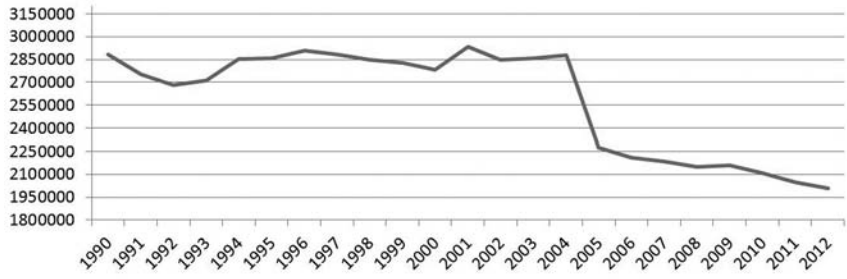

Figure 15. School library users in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

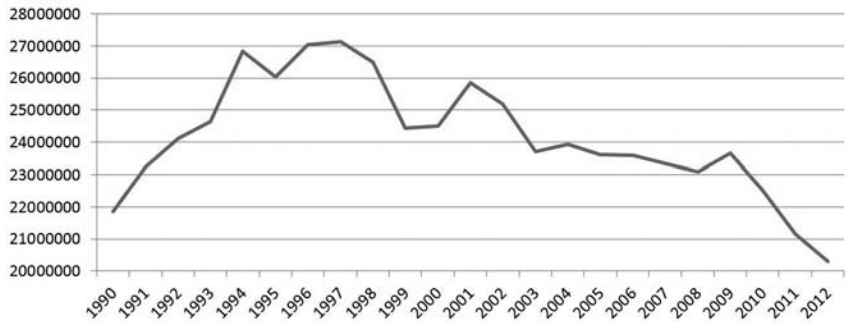

Figure 16. School library book circulation in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

school librarians are teachers who possess a bachelor's degree (689) or high school diploma (409); two librarians have attained their doctorates (Argatu, 2012). During the past twenty years, the student population has decreased by 1.5 million due to low birthrates, dropout rates, and massive migration to Western European countries (Topul declinului şcolar!, 2013).

Libraries of Teaching Staff Centers

A total of forty-one counties and the municipality of Bucharest constitute the official administrative divisions of Romania. Each of these divisions has a library to serve the needs of its teaching staff. There are forty-two such libraries, each located within the building of the Teaching Staff Center and funded by the county's Department of Education. They are restricted, nonpublic libraries, available only to teachers employed within the county, and staffed by teachers, psychologists, other individuals related to the field

of education, and, lately, documentalist-teachers. The collections of these libraries consist mostly of relatively dated books on pedagogy, which can be retrieved by consulting the card catalog. From this perspective, they can be considered traditional special libraries still anchored in the past; their audiovisual materials and educational software are scarce. These outdated collections cannot support the continuing education needs of instructors expected to uphold the educational standards of the twenty-first century.

The I. C. Petrescu National Pedagogical Library in Bucharest

Established in 1880 and mandated by the Ministry of Education to support the continuing education of the precollege teaching staff throughout the country and oversee the activities of the forty-two libraries of the Teaching Staff Centers, this special library, at its peak, housed a collection of almost half a million Romanian and foreign books and periodicals in the field of education, some of them of special value because of their rarity. Called the I. C. Petrescu Central Pedagogical Library during the communist period, its denomination reflected the centralized system specific to the regime. In 1992, its status was officially elevated to national rank. At a certain point, it hosted the US embassy's American Corner in the capital city. Situated in a building confiscated during the communist regime and returned to its original owners after the demise of communism, the library has never kept pace with the developments in the education field and with new technologies. By 2013, it employed fifty librarians, but their activities remained very traditional. The library was not able to develop an online catalog or maintain a website. In January 2014, it ceased to exist on its own, becoming a branch of the Carol I Central University Library in Bucharest.

Special Libraries

"Corporate" special libraries are nonexistent in Romania: few institutions maintain collections that would equate to the concept of a *corporate library* in the West. Special libraries are primarily research institutions that concentrate their holdings in a particular field of scientific research, such as agriculture, animal breeding, machine building, civil engineering, oil drilling, and so on. In general, these libraries are affiliated with and funded by their parent institutions whose employees they serve. State-run companies, such as Romanian Television, Radio Broadcasting Company, Parliament, Chamber of Deputies, Senate, High Court of Justice, National Theater, National Opera, National Archives, State Office for Inventions and Trademarks, and all of the ministries and museums also have libraries that assist their personnel with information and research needs (Zecheru, 2011). Many religious establishments—churches, convents, monasteries, archbishoprics—of all denominations maintain ecclesiastic libraries, some of them rich in old and rare theological book collections and some including valuable items, manuscripts, and incunabula that are part of the national heritage.

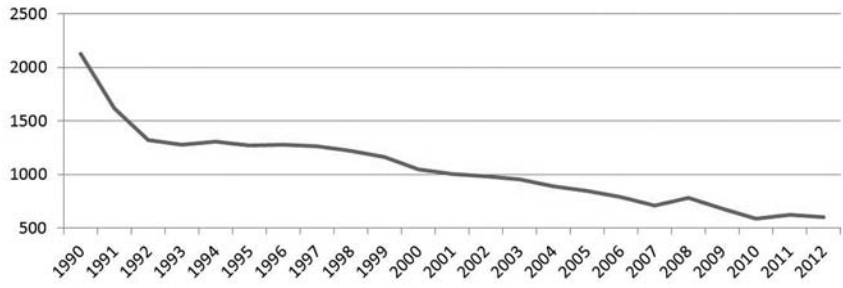

Figure 17. Special libraries in Romania, 1990–2012. (Source: Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014.)

Statistical data indicate that in 1990, there were 2,128 special libraries in Romania. Their number has been declining (fig. 17). By 2000, there were only 1,052; by the end of 2010, the number of special libraries had dropped to 589; and by 2013, they amounted to 574 (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2001, 2011, 2014). The transition to a market economy brought about the demise of a significant number of research institutions that had formerly been government sponsored and, consequently, the dismantling of their libraries. Despite a steady decline in the number of research institutes, and implicitly of researchers (from 35,094 in 1995 to 27,838 in 2012), statistical data reported by special libraries are contradictory. For example, in 1990, they reported 425,914 users who consulted 2,601,000 volumes; a decade later, in 2000, the number of users dropped to 262,409, but the number of volumes increased to 2,978,692. In 2013, there were 92,368 special library users, who consulted 886,325 volumes (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2001, 2014). If statistical data reported during the communist regime were always inflated in any given sector, since communism had to showcase progress and development, this trend has continued in certain sectors during the postcommunist period. Therefore, even if publicly available and officially disseminated, statistical data need to be analyzed with caution.

The holdings of one of the major special libraries of national importance, the Library of the National Institute for Information and Documentation, was packed up overnight and moved to storage in a remote location because the building that was its home was returned to the rightful owners and had to be vacated. Although the institute continues to exist, its employees no longer have access to its library. The library's twenty positions were relocated to the Central University Library in Bucharest (Government of Romania, 2008).

Major academic libraries, in addition to the principal location, maintain off-site branches situated in the buildings in which special schools or

departments are located. These collections are subject-specific and available to faculty members and students who are enrolled in that particular school or department. The government-funded higher education system in Romania also includes specialized schools (called institutes, faculties, or academies) that operate as independent entities, overseen and funded by the Ministry of Education. All of them have subject-specific libraries. A few examples of such institutions of higher education are the Polytechnic Institute in Bucharest, with separate institutes in Iaşi, Cluj-Napoca, and Timişoara; the Civil Engineering Institute in Bucharest; the Architecture Institute in Bucharest; the Fine Arts Institute in Bucharest; the Institute of Drama and Cinematography in Bucharest; the Academy of Economic Sciences in Bucharest; the Institute of Agriculture and Veterinary Science in Bucharest; and the National School of Political Studies and Management in Bucharest. The libraries that serve these institutions are at various stages of implementing integrated systems, if at all. The first ones to introduce automation were the polytechnic institutes due to the sustained support and expertise of their computer science departments.

The medical and pharmaceutical libraries affiliated with higher education institutions in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Iaşi, Sibiu, Târgu Mureş, and Timişoara are also under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. The use of modern technologies in medical libraries in Romania varies from one institution to another due not only to the locally available infrastructure but also to the level of expertise of the librarians who work in these libraries (Porumbeanu, 2009). The premier medical library in Romania is the Library of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Cluj-Napoca. The dedication and expertise of the staff turned it into a model worthy of emulation by other medical centers in the country. This library is no different from its counterparts in the West, as opposed to the Library of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest, which does not even have an online catalog. A special library with collections in the military field has the rank of being a national library. Established in 1860, the National Military Library is directly administered by the Ministry of Defense. It houses a subject-specific collection of some 300,000 items and is accessible only to those involved in the country's defense sector (Militară Naţională, 2010).

In order for special libraries to survive and be able to support the information needs of their constituencies, their parent institutions must place the libraries they oversee much higher on their agendas, otherwise this declining trend will continue.

The Library of the Romanian Academy

Established in Bucharest in 1867, a year after the opening of the Romanian Academic Society, the Library of the Romanian Academy (LRA [Biblioteca Academiei Române]) has the largest and richest collections in the

country. Its mission is to preserve the national cultural heritage and to support the research needs of the members of the Romanian Academy (RA), as well as the specialized research in various disciplines—from ethnography to mathematics, economics to the medical sciences—conducted in its sixty research centers and institutes.

The LRA has three branches, in Iaşi, Cluj-Napoca, and Timişoara. Its collections amount to some 12 million items, including books, periodicals, manuscripts, letters, photographs, archival material, historical documents, maps, drawings, engravings, coins, medals, music scores, and audiovisual materials. Another mission of the library is compiling the national retrospective bibliography for books and periodicals published in Romania's territory from the introduction of the printing press in the region in 1508 until 1830 (Dumitrescu, 2011).

The LRA is funded by the RA and has its own publishing house. Together with the Bucharest Metropolitan Library, the LRA has been engaged in a massive digitization project of Romanian publications. The LRA mostly serves the members of the RA, which has 156 members (78 full and 78 correspondent [nonvoting] members), in addition to 28 honorary Romanian and 85 honorary foreign members (RA, 2014). Researchers not affiliated with the RA are also granted temporary access to the LRA's collections for special projects only. In 2012, the library reported a total of 2,437 onsite users, with an average of about 12 visits per day (29,831 total visits) (Biblioteca Academiei Române, 2013). The LRA has remained an elitist library inaccessible to the general public, and its staff members have participated in Romanian Library Association (RLA) activities only sporadically.

The National Library of Romania (NLR)

The NLR was established in 1955 in Bucharest as the Central State Library (CSL) (Council of Ministers, 1955); it subsequently moved to its new location in December 2011 and opened to the public the following year. The initial CSL collections consisted of confiscations of prominent interwar politicians' and institutions' collections. Although the library traced its beginnings to the first "public" library established in Bucharest in 1832 and opened to the public in 1838 (Buluță, 2011), the CSL was a pyramid-like communist creation meant to oversee, in a centralized manner, all public library activities within the country. It assumed traditional library tasks, such as compiling national bibliographies, maintaining the national union catalog, and serving as the national legal repository. In January 1990, the library's name was changed to the National Library of Romania.

For a period of thirty-five years, from its establishment until the collapse of communism in Romania, the CSL had only one director—a political appointee with a pro-Western orientation in terms of library practices. The demise of the national librarian in 1990, whose name was associated with

the old guard, led to a rapid turnover of managers, all with very limited managerial experience (if at all, and one with no library experience whatsoever). In July 2014, the Ministry of Culture announced its decision to replace the NLR's general manager, who had held the position for four years on an interim basis, and to replace her with another interim manager. At the time of writing, the new appointee's term is only for one year and set to expire at the end of June 2015 (Ministry of Culture, 2014). Such turnovers and political appointments of "managers" with limited leadership skills demonstrate that culture and access to information do not constitute a priority for Romania's government.

Although national in denomination, beginning in the early 1990s, the NLR started losing its supremacy and was no longer capable of maintaining all of its responsibilities at the national level—mainly, the professional assistance it used to provide to the nationwide public library network. Its primary mission now is the compilation of the current national bibliography (although with its coverage reduced to selected periodicals), the national administration of the Cataloging in Publication program, and the coordination of the legal deposit of imprints (Anghelescu, 2001a, 2002). The NLR holds rare book and manuscript collections, many of which are restored in the library's own conservation laboratory, one of the few in the country.

From its beginnings in 1955 through 2012, the library conducted business in the premises of the former stock exchange, a building completely inappropriate for library operations. In 1986, a new edifice was designed to serve as the national library as part of a modernization program for downtown Bucharest. Although Ceauşescu cut the inaugural ribbon at the official opening ceremony in 1989—a few months before the fall of communism and his demise—the building remained unfinished and, during the next two decades, was reduced to a crumbling shell. In 2009, the Ministry of Culture, the NLR's governing body, borrowed money from the EU in order to complete the building within two years (Pandelea, 2011). The initial structure was preserved and transformed into a modern space that currently houses both the NLR and the ministry. During 2012, the library moved its holdings to the new location. Although the building is completed, the NLR has not yet resumed all of its operations, and most of its holdings remain uncataloged and are thus unavailable to users (Anghelescu & Kniffel, 2013). After the structure's grand opening, only a little over 6 percent (some 800,000 items) of the library's collections are retrievable through the OPAC and can only be accessed in situ. One can say that today, the NLR has a modern facility, although it is far from being a functioning institution capable of meeting the information needs of twenty-first-century library users.

In 2009, the NLR reported a collection of 13 million items (NLR, 2010). Annual reports for 2010–2013 indicate a collection that has remained

frozen at 12.5 million (*sic*), although when itemized, the library seems to have added materials to its collections, although collection growth remains quite modest for a library of national caliber. In 2009, the NLR reported 129,754 users, which represented a mere 0.6 percent of the country's population at the time (Institutul Național de Statistică, Anuarul Statistic 2010). The daily usage was extremely slow for an institution of national significance, with an average of about 44 users per day in 2009. This number rose to a little over 67 per day the following year (Bibliotecii Naționale a României, 2011), with no data available for the period 2011–2013 in the library's annual reports.

The modernization of the NLR's operations and services and its transition to the digital age are yet to come. The library's e-book collections are very modest and not accessible remotely; it has no licensed database, and there is no prospect of digitizing its collections for online access in the foreseeable future. The NLR's vision remains anchored in traditional librarianship, focused on managing, preserving, and promoting the nation's cultural written heritage, with no long-term vision or attempt at designing a strategic plan. With no plan and effort in the offing to serve the virtual user, the library's mission and vision have failed to transition into the twenty-first century. It continues to serve mainly those living in the capital city, thus providing services similar to the Bucharest Metropolitan Library.

Since 2013, the NLR has hosted the American Corner Bucharest (ACB) (Vasiliu, 2013), which is primarily an information and resource center for Romanians of all ages, providing materials on topics covering US culture, lifestyle, and values in terms of both their historical evolution and place in contemporary US society. The ACB's programs include speakers and student consulting as well as art exhibits and professional development training (Embassy of the United States, Bucharest, 2014).

Library Legislation

The communist regime annulled the legislative framework under which libraries had operated prior to World War II. Gradually, a centralized system was created, controlled through legislation, rules, regulations, decrees, and ordinances issued by various ministries in the absence of an overarching library law. This lack continued for another decade after the fall of communism (Mătuşoiu & Dinu, 2001). It was only in 2002 that a library law was adopted: Library Law no. 334, which proved to be incomplete, imperfect, and difficult to implement at the national level. The law has been revised and amended several times (last updated in 2012), and even today, there are other proposals for amendments waiting approval by Parliament. Libraries are subject to a series of other laws that govern various aspects of their activities: namely, National Education Law no. 1/2011, Movable National Cultural Heritage Protection Law no. 182/2000, Legal Deposit Law no. 111/1995, Copyright and Related Rights Law no. 8/1996,

and Promotion of Written Culture Law no. 186/2003 (amended by Government Ordinance no. 10/2005).

Development Strategy for Libraries

Currently, there is no specialized entity authorized to delineate and implement a strategy at the national level for library development. A previous version of Education Law no. 84/1995 stipulated the establishment of the National Council of Libraries in Education (NCLE), an advisory board to the Ministry of Education, invested with overseeing school and university libraries in the country. It took three years to implement the council. As a collective body comprising thirty-one members and multiple commissions and assuming ambitious goals and objectives, the NCLE proved to be inefficient, its activities limited "mostly to sterile discussions, and very few concrete accomplishments" (Regneală, 2004, n.p.), thus incapable of fulfilling its mission. The Library Law of 2002 mandated the establishment of the National Library Commission (NLC), which was placed under the joint authority of the Education and the Culture ministries. The NLC was mandated to establish the short- and long-term development strategies for the library system nationwide; to create the frameworks for designing a national shared catalog and the national virtual library; to oversee the research program in library science and library and printing history; and to establish standards for library operations. Unfortunately, according to Mircea Regneală (2004), the director of the Central University Library in Bucharest at the time and current RLA president, a few years after being established, the commission failed to demonstrate its effectiveness:

> The inefficiency of this organism . . . is due mostly to a leadership involved more with politics then with librarianship. . . . Despite the leadership's lack of interest, the NLC members finalized a few useful projects to the field of information science, but they have remained unknown to our fellow librarians as they have not become official, because of indifference or indolence, or because of both. (n.p.)

Both the NCLE and NLC ceased to exist in 2010.

A 2012 country profile prepared for the Council of Europe by a team of Romanian researchers affiliated with the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe addressed cultural policies in Romania. Their report stated: "Starting with the year 2007, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage initiated a proposal for developing a public policy related to the digitisation of the national cultural resources and the realisation of the Digital Library of Romania." The country profile also mentioned a 2009–2010 "Strategic Plan that included public policy on changing the organisation and functioning [of cultural institutions and a] public policy on digitisation of cultural resources by creating a Digital Library for Romania" (Chelcea, Becut, & Bălşan, 2012). This public policy has never been articulated, and the Romanian digital library has yet to become a reality.

A recent 473-page document published on the website of the Ministry of Culture, ambitiously titled *Development Strategy for Culture and National Heritage for 2014–2020*, treats libraries as cultural and educational institutions that foster reading. Libraries are listed as part of ten major "cultural domains" and are considered repositories of "cultural goods." The document is more of a multiyear report that focuses on the past and present rather than a programmatic document to establish future development, even less to articulate a strategy. It recommends that "public libraries need to redefine themselves in alignment with the new technologies that they have to deploy in the organization, type, and content of their collections and in the services they provide to their users" (Centrul de Cercetare şi Consultanţă în Domeniul Culturii, 2014). From such wording coming from above (that is, the authorities), it is hard for libraries to determine in concrete terms what they are supposed to be doing during the next five years.

In 2004, Ana Maria Căpâlneanu deplored the absence of a unified information and documentation system that would have enabled more collaborative work, information exchange, and resource sharing to the simultaneous benefit of library workers and users. She called for the creation of a national information system, databases with Romanian content, and library consortia that would allow better document delivery, interlibrary loans, and value-added services. Ten years later, her vision is yet to be realized.

Shared Cataloging

Romanian libraries do not have a shared cataloging system. During the communist regime, the Central State Library was responsible for cataloging the national publishing output for inclusion in the *National Bibliography*, and for having catalog cards printed and distributed to all types of libraries nationwide. Today, cataloging is no longer centralized; rather, it is inefficiently done in each and every library at a high cost, both time-wise and staff-wise. In terms of the automation of library services, large Romanian libraries use all kinds of systems that do not allow for data exchange, thereby prohibiting the creation of an online shared catalog.

The RoLiNeST (Romanian Library Network Science and Technology) project started in 2004 as the NUSIDOC (Unitary National System of Scientific and Technical Information and Documentation) project, which set out to integrate the online catalogs of the four central university libraries and the Bucharest Polytechnic University. In the years since launching the first OPAC in December 2005, RoLiNeST has expanded to include seven more libraries, as well as online databases like ROMDOC, which specializes in so-called gray literature from the communist era. Under this system, local libraries update and maintain their own catalogs, and the information is retrieved by users via the RoLiNeST portal, which uses a MetaLib

search model. The system has limitations: namely, it is not comprehensive, nor does it provide nationwide coverage.

Also in 2005, with the financial support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the IME Romania company, along with two county libraries and the NLR, launched BIBLIO.RO, a shared digital library with a federated search-retrieval system. Currently, BIBLIO.RO consists of thirty-one member libraries. All libraries that have implemented the TinREAD integrated library system have reduced source cataloging and thus have engaged in shared cataloging on a larger scale (Dediu, 2012). However, the number of networked libraries is small compared to the overall library system in Romania. As for the digital library component, the provision of digital objects and full-text documents cannot meet the expectations of today's virtual researcher.

Digitization

In 2011, the Bucharest Metropolitan Library, in cooperation with the LRA, launched an ambitious digitization project, DacoRomanica, meant to lay the foundation for Romania's virtual library. Later, the project was renamed Bucharest's Digital Library (BDL). It has developed in parallel with the National Digital Library (NDL) and been maintained by the NLR. For three years, the BDL has proven to be a sustainable project, well-funded and operational, while the NDL has never reached a national scale because it mostly contains only NLR publications. Both projects were to contribute digitized items to the European Digital Library. Unfortunately, at present, both projects are on hold, with no digitizing activity whatsoever, due mostly to the lack of funding, no strategic vision at the level of the institutions involved, and no interlibrary coordination or cooperation. Disparate digitization initiatives have led to the existence of locally digitized collections; in the absence of a national registry of digitized collections, it is difficult to locate such items, which often reside on local servers with no access via the internet. There is no digitization strategy at the national level, and there is no communication as to what is underway at the local level. This explains Romania's sporadic and inconsistent contribution to the European Digital Library. The lack of vision and leadership in the Ministry of Culture and its directly subordinated institution, the NLR, percolate further down into the library system and lead to the marginalization of Romanian libraries. A steady, consistent national digitization program would bring Romania more efficiently into the international exchange of information as an active and reliable player.

Library Science Education

Library science education, established in the mid-1920s in departments within faculties of letters, was discontinued during the mid-1970s. At that time, libraries began to be staffed by graduates with degrees in the hu-

manities, supplemented by on-the-job library training. After 1990, library science education was reinstated as a result of local initiatives, but with no coordination and no unitary vision regarding specialization tracks, curricula, or learning outcomes. Library science courses taught by librarians were offered at the post–high school and college levels. Departments of library science were established within schools of all kinds, where traditional library science courses like cataloging, classification, and indexing were accompanied mostly by traditional courses like library history and the history of printing and publishing. It was only in 2000 that the Ministry of Education officially recognized the field of library and information science, but only as a secondary specialization within other schools (such as history, literature, and communications) (Government of Romania, 2000). Therefore, graduates' major specialization area is not library science. Consequently, Romania has no librarian who holds a degree in library and information science, and faculty members who teach this subject do not hold doctorates in this field. Even the chair of the library and information science department at the University of Bucharest admits that "the quality of library and information science education is far from acceptable, [for] sometimes it borders on embarrassing improvisations" (Regneală, 2006, n.p.). This also explains the mediocre quality of library and information science research in Romania.

Library Science Literature

Romanian library science literature has focused a great deal on historical research, tracing institutional development and commemorating significant milestones in the existence of major libraries. Library journals abound in "how-to" articles and highlight success stories from local libraries. Romania's oldest, continuously published journal is *Biblioteca* [Library], which in 2013 celebrated its sixty-fifth anniversary. The journal was founded in 1948 as a propaganda instrument for librarians, who had to become familiar with Lenin's views on libraries and with library practices in the USSR. The journal included "translations of Soviet literature, and especially a repertoire of reports, resolutions, and party documents" aimed at guiding daily library activities (Man, 2013, p. 203). Gradually, the journal veered away from the Soviet context but continued to stay within the communist parameters in Romania. "After the events of December 1989, the publication freed itself from the 'subcultural guardianship' and became a methodical publication under the direction of the Ministry of Culture, changing its name to *Biblioteca: Revistă de Bibliologie* şi *Ştiinţa Informării* [Library: Library and Information Science Journal]" (Man, 2013, p. 203). Currently, the journal's articles include topics of interest addressed to all types of libraries in Romania. It is funded by the Ministry of Culture and is published under the auspices of the NRL.

Beginning in the early 1990s, many libraries started to issue their own

publications, many with professional content. Only a few are published in English, among them the *Romanian Review of Library and Information Science*, published by the RLA, and *Philobiblon: Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Humanities*, published by the Lucian Blaga Central University Library of the Babes Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. This latter publication is distributed internationally and indexed in a series of databases. In Romania, extensively documented studies and original research are scarce; most such studies cover the field of old and rare books as well as the history of printing and publishing. Original research and scholarly publishing in the field of library and information science will develop as a corps of library and information science specialists emerges.

Library Staffs

The continuing education of library personnel in Romania is uneven. The law (no. 128 / 1997) concerning the status of teaching staff members designated school and academic librarians as "auxiliary teaching staff." This was the first law that stipulated that a library science degree was required in order for an individual to be hired as a librarian. The same law stipulates that in order to further their education, school librarians can engage in individual study, take continuing education courses, and participate in exchanges organized by county Teaching Staff Centers and by County School Inspectorates (Legea Nr. 128 / 1997 Privind Statutul Personalului Didactic, 1997). Public and academic librarians attend courses organized by their professional associations; these courses are accredited by the National Council for Adult Education and Training.

Currently, library staffs consist of individuals with bachelor's or master's degrees mostly in the humanities, some with a minor specialization in library and information science, and most of them with a graduate degree in the humanities, with continuing education courses in library and information science. Libraries also employ individuals with high school degrees and some continuing education courses in library and information science.

Due to massive budget cuts and a hiring freeze during the period from 2008 to 2013, libraries have operated with significantly less personnel. Official statistics indicate that the library profession has been losing ground, with a constantly decreasing number of library employees. In 2011, there were 7,736 librarians; in 2012, 7,509; and in 2013, their number dropped to 7,332, which represents a loss of 404 (5.22 percent) over a period of two years (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2014). These numbers do not include school librarians, since they are not considered to be "professional," but instead teachers who have additional duties as librarians. A programmatic document for the period 2014–2020, *Development Strategy for Culture and National Heritage for 2014–2020*, issued by the Center for Research and Consultancy in the Cultural Field and posted on the Ministry of Culture's website acknowledges the fact that this continuing downward trend will

have a negative impact on the quality of library services (Centrul de Cercetare şi Consultanţă în Domeniul Culturii, 2014).

Regneală (2006, n.p.) deplores the library staffing situation in the country: "the absence of specialized education, the disinterest in the profession, nepotism and privileges [upon hiring]," connected with salary discrepancies and the fact that rural librarians' positions are at the village mayor's discretion, lead to the low status of the library profession within the general social context in Romania.

The appointment of library managers is the responsibility of the library's overseeing body and, implicitly, the funding agency. Public library managers are considered public servants. The national librarian is appointed by the Ministry of Culture; county librarians are appointed by the local authority (the county council); the director of the LRA must be an academician; the directors of the four central university libraries are appointed by the Ministry of Education; and the directors of the other academic libraries are appointed by their respective university's rector/president and are either tenured faculty or senior librarians. Often, there is the simulacrum of conducting open searches for the best candidates, who are required to be familiar with a recommended bibliography and prepare a management plan. This procedure does not always guarantee that the best candidate will be hired. The candidate's political affiliation plays a major part in determining who will be appointed as library manager. Needless to say, most appointees lack managerial skills in general and library management expertise in particular.

Quite often, the manager's rapport with the overseeing body determines the amount of funding the library receives. Unpredictable and unstable library budgets affect all library operations: acquisitions of library materials and equipment, remodeling of existing space, personnel hiring, staff members' continuing education, programming, and interlibrary cooperation projects. The ambitiously titled *Development Strategy for Culture and National Heritage for 2014–2020* states that

> the absence of dedicated budgets and the lack of managerial skills prevent the application of specialized marketing strategies that could improve communication and outreach. Despite the fact that there is adequate legislation, . . . many managers prefer improvisation instead of real management, and most institutions do not succeed in implementing adequate managerial procedures for their day-to-day operations. All of these institutions depend too much on their managers' personality; and such major deficiencies of rhythm and even identity usually occur when political mandates expire. Visions on the identity of public institutions are not the result of managerial analyses, but an expression of managers' personal ambitions, which explains these institutions' instability. (Centrul de Cercetare şi Consultanţă în Domeniul Culturii, 2014, n.p.)

In short, there is no specialized management for cultural institutions.

Library Associations

Professional associations were banned during the communist regime. The euphoria of freedom that followed the collapse of communism led to the establishment of two library associations in 1990: the Association of Librarians in Education in Romania (ABIR) and the Association of Public Librarians and Libraries in Romania (ABBPR) (Dediu, 2013). In 2007, the ABIR changed its name to the Romanian Library Association (RLA)—a misleading denomination, since the constituency has remained the same: mostly school and academic librarians, with a few public librarians. In 1998, the ABBPR changed its name to the National Association of Public Librarians and Libraries in Romania (ANBPR). Two major libraries, both located in Bucharest—the NLR and the Bucharest Municipal Library—decided to establish their own library associations (only "to satisfy personal egos" of leaders with false pretenses, as Regneală puts it in her seminal article titled "The Collapse of Romanian Libraries" [2004, n.p.]). In 1990, librarians of Hungarian ethnicity established the Hungarian Librarians Association in Romania, but it has distinguished itself with no activity whatsoever and has no internet presence. Several librarians of Hungarian ethnicity belong to either the RLA or ANBPR.

For a country with less than 8,000 librarians, there should be only one library association, but individual and institutional pride have generated fragmentation instead of uniting forces and working toward a common goal. An attempt to federalize the four major library associations occurred in 1999, when the Federation of Romanian Library Associations (FABR) was established (Regneală, 2009). According to the agreement, the associations were to self-dissolve after two mandates of four years, and the presidents of the two major associations—the ABR and ANBPR—were to rotate the leadership of the FABR after four years. One of the presidents ended up serving for both terms. After eight years, when both mandates expired and he was to step down, he did not honor the agreement, and the FABR was dismantled in 2007. Each member association followed its own path, with minimal interaction with other associations. This federalization would have represented an intermediary stage, gradually leading to the establishment of a unique association that would have brought all librarians together under one umbrella organization to more effectively advance the profession. Twenty-five years later, however, Romanian librarians continue to engage in competing rather than cooperating and speaking with one voice. Most Romanian librarians perceive professional membership as being imposed on them, and they limit their participation to paying the modest membership fee (US$5 annually). This lack of professional involvement denotes poor self-esteem, distrust, and low expectations. The library profession in Romania has yet to mature.

Conclusion

In their endeavor to move away from the communist past, during the past twenty-five years, Romanian libraries have experienced many significant changes: censorship has been abolished, and previously banned collections have become available to researchers. Unrestricted access to information has become the norm; public and academic libraries have improved and diversified their activities; library science education has been reinstated, thus laying the foundations for the profession's prestige; and library legislation has been adopted.

There is much room for improvement, however. There is high need for a visionary strategy for library development at the national level, including a coherent digitization program. A plan for the modernization of library facilities is essential, along with the construction of library buildings with attractively designed spaces and ambiance, adequate funding for computing equipment, and the development of collections. More diversification of library services is necessary in order for libraries to engage in sustained community outreach and programming and more customer-oriented assistance for library patrons. Interlibrary collaboration, coordination, and communication need to be established, as do associative activities. If public and academic libraries have made visible progress, school and special libraries are still lagging behind. Sustained financial support from their funding agencies will allow them to adopt and implement international standards and achieve parity with their counterparts in economically developed countries. The introduction of ICT in academic and public libraries has enabled users to access information via the internet, although Romania is far from having its own virtual library. Romanian libraries have made vast strides in overcoming the communist legacy that still significantly impacts their existence and operations. Dedicated professional commitment and sustained government support will facilitate the country's libraries' successful leap into the twenty-first century.

References

Alianța Digitală pentru România [Digital Alliance for Romania]. (2012). Premisă a accelerării procesului de e-incluziune [Premises for fast e-inclusion]. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://digitalagenda.ro/tag/alianta-digitala/

Anghelescu, H. G. B. (2001a). Romanian libraries recover after the cold war: The communist legacy and the road ahead. *Libraries and Culture, 36*(1), 233–252.

Anghelescu, H. G. B. (2001b). The National Library of Romania's precursors: Early beginnings through the communist period. *Alexandria: Journal of National and International Library and Information Issues, 13*(3), 165–176.

Anghelescu, H. G. B. (2002). The National Library of Romania: From the Central State Library of the People's Republic to National Library. *Alexandria: Journal of National and International Library and Information Issues, 14*(1), 25–40.

Anghelescu, H. G. B., & Kniffel, L. (2013, January 28). Romania's National Library remains a dream yet to come true. *American Libraries*. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/features/01282013/romania-s-new-national-library-remains-dream-yet-come-true

Argatu, D. (2012). *Ghidul bibliotecilor şcolare şi al CDI-urilor din învăţământul preunivesritar românesc. Prezentare* [Guide to school libraries and CDIs in pre-college education in Romania], slide 7. Retrieved September 12, 2014, from http://www.ccd-suceava.ro/index.php?page=biblioteca

Baran, P.-A. (2014, November 26). Un american a obţinut finanţare de la Bill Gates şi a conectat la internet 2.300 de biblioteci din România [An American has secured financing from Bill Gates and 2,300 libraries connected to the Internet in Romania] Interview. Retrieved November 27, 2014, from http://www.digi24.ro/oameni/american+finantare+Bill+Gates+Paul+Andre+Baran+Biblionet

Biblionet. (2010). Biblionet program overview: Mission, values, objectives. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.biblionet.ro/show/index/k/30

Biblionet–Global Libraries Romania. (2010). Biblionet is a five-year program that helps Romanian libraries better serve their communities through training and technology. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.irex.org/project/biblionet-global-libraries-romania

Biblioteca Academiei Române [Library of the Romanian Academy]. (2013). *Biblioteca Academiei Române Raport de activitate pe anul 2012* [Library of the Romanian Academy annual report 2012]. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.biblacad.ro/BAR-RapAct2012Final-act13.02.2013.pdf

Bibliotecii Naţionale a României [National Library of Romania (NLR)]. (2010). *Activity report, 2009*. Bucureşti: Author. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.bibnat.ro/dyn-doc/Raport_BNR_2009.pdf

Bibliotecii Naţionale a României [National Library of Romania (NLR)]. (2011). *Activity report, 2010*. Bucureşti: Author. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.bibnat.ro/dyn-doc/Raport_BNR_2010.pdf

Bibliotecii Naţionale a României [National Library of Romania (NLR)]. (2012). *Activity report, 2011*. Bucureşti: Author. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.bibnat.ro/dyn-doc/Raport_BNR_2011.pdf

Bibliotecii Naţionale a României [National Library of Romania (NLR)]. (2013). *Activity report, 2012*. Bucureşti: Author. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.bibnat.ro/dyn-doc/Raport%20BNR%202012%20.pdf

Bibliotecii Naţionale a României [National Library of Romania (NLR)]. (2014). *Activity report, 2013*. Bucureşti: Author. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.bibnat.ro/dyn-doc/RAPORT%202013%20varianta%20finala.pdf

Buhler, M. A. (2007). Rural libraries of Romania: Libraries and the information infrastructure of rural Romania. *Christian Librarian, 50*(3), 104–111.

Buluţă, G. (2011). Romanian public libraries. In M. Regneală (Ed.), *Romanian libraries* (pp. 143–181). Bucureşti: Asociaţia Bibliotecarilor din România.

Căpâlneanu, A. M. (2004). Repere pentru un sistem naţional de informare şi documentare în România [Landmarks for a national information and documentation system in Romania]. *Bibliorev, 10*. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.bcucluj.ro/bibliorev/arhiva/nr10/info.html

Caravia, P. (2000). *Gândirea interzisă: Scrieri cenzurate, România 1945–1989* [Forbidden thinking: Censored writings. Romania 1945–1989]. Bucureşti: Enciclopedică.

Carol I Central University Library Bucharest. (2014a). *History*. Retrieved October 1, 2014, from http://www.bcub.ro/home/istoric

Carol I Central University Library Bucharest. (2014b). *Report 2013*. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from https://sites.google.com/a/bcub.ro/biblioteca_centrala_universitara_carol_i_bucuresti/home/strategii-si-rapoarte/rapoarte

Central University Library Iaşi. (2013). *Date statistice referitoare la activitatea bibliotecii în anul 2013* [Statistical data on the library activity in 2013]. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.bcu-iasi.ro/statistica.php

Centrul de Cercetare şi Consultanţă în Domeniul Culturii [Center for Research and Consultancy in the Cultural Field]. (2014). *Strategia sectorială de dezvoltare* în *domeniul culturii* şi *patrimoniului naţional pentru perioada 2014–2020* [Development strategy for culture and national heritage for 2014–2020]. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.cultura.ro/uploads/files/STRATEGIA_%20SECTORIALA_IN_DOMENIUL_CULTURII_2014-2020.pdf

Chelcea, L., Becut, A., & Bălşan, B. (2012, July). Country profile: Romania. In Council of Eu-

rope/ERICarts (Ed.), *Compendium: Cultural policies and trends in Europe* (13th ed.). Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.culturalpolicies.net/down/romania_072012.pdf
Chiranov, M. (2010). Real-life impact of the Global Libraries: Biblionet Romania program. *Performance Measurement and Metrics, 11*(1), 93–106.
Comisia Prezidențială pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România [Presidential Commission for the Investigation of Communist Dictatorship in Romania]. (2006). *Raport final* [Final report]. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.presidency.ro/static/ordine/RAPORT_FINAL_CPADCR.pdf
Coravu, R. (2013). Evoluția biblioteconomiei [Development of librarianship]. In M. Regneală (Ed.), *Tratat de biblioteconomie* [Treatise of librarianship]*: Vol. 1* (pp. 435–471). Bucureşti: Asociația Bibliotecarilor din România.
Corobca, L. (2010). *Epurarea cărților* în *România: Documente (1944–1964)* [Book purging in Romania: Documents (1944–1964)]. Bucureşti: Tritonic.
Corobca, L. (2013, October 22). Instituțiile cenzurii în regimul communist [Censorship institutions during the communist regime]. *Revista 22*. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.revista22.ro/institutiile-cenzurii-n-regimul-comunist-32615.html
Corobca, L. (2014). *Controlul cărții: Cenzura* în *regimul communist* în *Romania* [Controlling books: Censorship during the communist regime in Romania]. Bucureşti: Cartea Românească.
Council of Ministers. (1951). Decree of the Council of Ministers, Nr. 1542/29 December 1951.
Council of Ministers. (1955). Decree of the Council of Ministers, Nr. 1193/25 June 1955.
Dediu, L.-I. (2012). "Next generation OPAC" systems. *Romanian Review of Library and Information Science, 8*(4), 35–40.
Dediu, L.-I. (2013). S'associer . . . en Roumanie. *Bibliothèque(s): Revue de l'Association des bibliothécaires de France, 67*(3), 18–19.
Dumitrescu, G. (2011). The Romanian Academy Library. In M. Regneală (Ed.), *Romanian libraries* (pp. 60–78). Bucureşti: Asociația Bibliotecarilor din România.
Embassy of the United States, Bucharest. (2014). *American Corners in Romania*. Retrieved September 29, 2014, from http://romania.usembassy.gov/resources/american_corners.html
Gillet, K. (2014, November 16). Favorite concedes presidency in Romania. *The New York Times*. Retrieved November 21, 2014, from http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/17/world/europe/favorite-concedes-presidency-in-romania.html?_r=0
Government of Romania. (2000, August 15). Hotărârea Guvernului Nr. 645/15 August 2000 privind profilurile, specializările, durata studiilor, precum și titlurile obținute de absolvenții învățământului universitar, cursuri de zi [Decree no. 645/15 August 2000 on profiles, specializations, length of study, as well as degrees received by graduates of higher education]. *Monitorul Oficial Partea I* [Official monitor part I]*, 379*. Retrieved September 30, 2014, from http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act?ida=25429&pag=1
Government of Romania. (2008). Hotărârea Guvernului Nr. 1606/2008 privind reorganizarea Institutului Național de Informare și Documentare [Decree no. 1606/2008 regarding the reorganization of the National Institute for Information and Documentation]. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://lege5.ro/Gratuit/geytomjrgu/hotararea-nr-1606-2008-privind-reorganizarea-institutului-national-de-informare-si-documentare
Institutul Național de Statistică [National Institute of Statistics]. (2000–2014). *Anuarul statistic al României* [Romania's statistical yearbook]. Bucureşti: Author.
Institutul Național de Statistică [National Institute of Statistics]. (2014). Culture. Retrieved from TEMPO-Online database, January 15–September 15, 2014, https://statistici.insse.ro/shop/?lang=en
Kavaras, M. (2014). *Analyzing the impact of public libraries powering social development: Romania as a case study*. Unpublished bachelor's thesis. George Washington University.
Laslau, A. (2006, February 1). Demolatorul bibliotecii, erou al revoluției din 1989 [He demolished the library, now he is a hero of the 1989 revolution]. *Evenimentul zilei* [Daily events]. Retrieved September 30, 2014, from http://www.evz.ro/demolatorul-bibliotecii-erou-al-revolutiei-din-1989-705420.html
Legea Nr. 128/1997 privind statutul personalului didactic [Law no. 128/1977 on the status of the teaching staff]. (1997, July 12). *Monitorul Oficial Partea I* [Official monitor part I]*, 158*. Retrieved September 30, 2014, from http://www.unibuc.ro/n/despre/docs/2012/feb/22_13_33_48Legea_privind_statutul_personalului_didactic_128-1997.pdf
Legea Nr. 334/31 May 2002 privind bibliotecile [Library Law no. 334/31 May 2002]; Legea

Nr. 4/2012 pentru modificarea Legii bibliotecilor Nr. 334/31 May 2002 [Library Law no. 4/2012 to revise Library Law Nr. 334/31 May 2002]. (2002/2012). Retrieved September 30, 2014, from http://www.euroavocatura.ro/legislatie/984/Legea_nr__4_2012_pentru_modificarea_Legii_bibliotecilor_nr__334_2002

Man, R. (2013). Revista *Biblioteca*: 1948–2013—Scurt parcurs istoric [*Biblioteca* journal: 1948–2013—Brief historical overview]. *Biblioteca 7*, 196–203.

Marino, A. (2001). Romania. In D. Jones (Ed.), *Censorship: A world encyclopedia: Vol. 3* (pp. 2042–2048). Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers.

Mateuță-Tamas, A. (2005). Schimbul internațional de publicații al BCU "Lucian Blaga" din Cluj-Napoca: Prezentare generală [International exchange of publications of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library in Cluj-Napoca: General Presentation]. *Bibliorev, 12*. Retrieved September 29, 2014, from http://www.bcucluj.ro/bibliorev/arhiva/nr12/info4.html

Mătușoiu, C., & Dinu, M. H. (2001). *Istoria bibliotecilor din România în legi și documente (1817–1944): Vol. 1; Istoria bibliotecilor din România în legi și documente (1945–2000): Vol. 2* [History of Romanian libraries in laws and documents (1817–1944): Vol. 1; History of Romanian libraries in laws and documents (1945–2000): Vol. 2]. Constanța: Ex Ponto.

Militară Națională [National military]. (2010). *Biblioteca Militară Națională: 150 de ani de existență* [The National Military Library: 150 years of existence]. București: Author.

Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de la Jeunesse et de la Vie associative [The Ministry of Education, Youth and Associative Life]. (2012). *Vers des centres de connaissance et de culture.* [Toward centers of knowledge and culture] Retrieved September 29, 2014, from http://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/Innovation_experimentation/58/7/2012_vademecum_culture_int_web_214771_215587.pdf

Ministry of Culture. (2014). [Comunicat de presă] [Press release]. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.cultura.ro/articol/679

Ministry of Justice. (2004). Ghid privind mijloacele legale de combatere a faptelor de corupție în învățământ [Guidelines on legal ways to prevent corruption in education]. Retrieved September 29, 2014, from http://www.transparency.org.ro/publicatii/publicatiiti/2008/GACInvatamant.pdf

Pandelea, A. (2011, December 15). Biblioteca Națională a României, cea mai importantă investiție de cultură din ultimii 20 de ani [The National Library of Romania, the most significant cultural investment in the past 20 years]. *Capital*. Retrieved September 1, 2014, from http://www.capital.ro/detalii-articole/stiri/emil-boc-biblioteca-nationala-a-romaniei-cea-mai-importanta-investitie-de-cultura-din-ultimi.html

Pasti, V. (1997). *The challenges of transition: Romania in transition.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Pop, V. (2014, November 21). Romania's Obama moment. *EUobserver*. Retrieved November 21, 2014, from http://euobserver.com/political/126609

Porumbeanu, O. L. (2009). The impact of electronic resources and new technology in academic medical libraries in Romania. *Health Information and Libraries Journal, 26*(2), 151–155.

Quick, S., Prior, G., Toombs, B., Taylor, L., & Currenti, R. (2013, March). *Cross-European survey to measure users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries: Final report.* TNS / Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Kirjastot/kansainvaelinen_ja_eu-yhteistyoe/Liitteet/Final_Report_-_Cross-European_Library_Impact.pdf

Regneală, M. (2004, June 17). Colapsul bibliotecilor românești [The collapse of Romanian libraries]. *Revista 22*. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.revista22.ro/colapsul-bibliotecilor-romanesti-949.html

Regneală, M. (2006, April 28). *Care mai e rostul bibliotecarului?* [What's the librarian's mission, after all?]. *Revista 22*. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.revista22.ro/care-mai-e-rostul-bibliotecarului-2671.html

Regneală, M. (2009). *Noi studii de biblioteconomie* [New studies in librarianship]. București: Asociația Bibliotecarilor din România.

Romanian Agency Supervising the Quality of Higher Education (ARACIS). (2009). *Distribuții statistice, interpretări și opțiuni privind starea calității în învățământul superior din România* [Statistical distributions, interpretations, and options regarding the state of higher education in Romania]. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://www.aracis.ro/fileadmin/ARACIS/Comunicate_Media/Romana_-_Interior.pdf

Rotaru, F. (2008). Coup d'œil sur l'histoire des bibliothèques de Bucarest. *Bulletin des bibliothèques de France, 1*, 52–56.

Tismăneanu, V. (2005). *Stalinism pentru eternitate* [Stalinism for eternity]. Iaşi: Polirom.

Topul declinului şcolar! Invăţământul a pierdut peste 1,5 milioane de elevi în ultimii 20 de ani [The top of school decline! Education has lost 1.5 million students in the past 20 years]. (2013, September 13). *Şcoala după şcoală* [*School after school*]. Retrieved September 15, 2014, from http://macrina-europa.ro/topul-declinului-scolar-invatamantul-a-pierdut-peste-15-milione-de-elevi-in-ultimii-20-de-ani/

Vasiliu, O. (2013, June 20). American Corner Bucharest is now opened at the National Library. *Business Review*. Retrieved September 29, 2014, from http://business-review.eu/featured/american-corner-bucharest-is-now-opened-at-the-national-library-45032

Zecheru, M. (2011). Special libraries in Romania. In M. Regneală (Ed.), *Romanian libraries* (pp. 110–142). Bucureşti: Asociaţia Bibliotecarilor din România.

Hermina G.B. Anghelescu is a faculty member at the School of Library and Information Science at Wayne State University in Detroit. She holds a master's degree in foreign languages from the University of Bucharest and master's and doctorate degrees in library and information science from the University of Texas at Austin. During 2003–2009, she served in various capacities in IFLA's Library History section/SIG, and continues to serve on various IFLA standing committees. Her publications include coedited monographs published by the Library of Congress's Center of the Book, research articles, monograph chapters, and dictionary and encyclopedia articles, as well as bibliographies, cumulative indexes, and translations. She is a member of the editorial board of several periodical publications and is the recipient of several awards from the Presidency of Romania and the Government of Moldova in recognition of her continuing and sustained support of libraries in these countries.

Elena Chiaburu is head librarian in the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Al. I. Cuza University in Iaşi, Romania. She holds a doctorate degree in the history of books and printing. Her publications include monographs, collections of notes on old books, and research articles. She participates in conferences and seminars, undertakes research campaigns in the collection of old books in Romania, and is the recipient of several awards in acknowledgment of her activities in Romanian libraries.