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CONTENTS

NOTES ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATIONS IN POSTCOMMUNIST ROMANIA[1]

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ABSTRACT. The article presents a few of the demographic transformations in Romania in the period after the fall of the communist regime in 1989, when the new social circumstances, along with legal changes, had an undeniable effect on the manifestation of the demographic phenomena and thus on the volume and the structure of the population. The present article summarizes and also describes the transformations, with a few attempts at explaining them, without, however, aligning to any major theory that attempts to explain what has happened and to predict what will come next. In order to avoid entrapment within an enclosed discursive universe, there will be references to the situation of other countries, mainly in the geographical area of Romania and, more widely, in the European Union. The demographic phenomena that are analysed individually are fertility and mortality, which have a direct impact on the natural growth of the population. There are only a few suggestions on transnational migration in the section devoted to the changes of the population. Last, but not least, the text is a critical analysis of some of the official demographic statistics put forward by the National Institute of Statistics and even by EUROSTAT – data that is questionable or outright false and risks misleading the reader that is less familiar with the demographic situation of Romania.

Keywords: demographic transformations, fertility, mortality, population, postcommunist Romania

The numerical and structural transformations of the Romanian population, 1990-2017

The definition of the various types of population and their transformation

A basic precondition in order to accurately describe the evolution of a population is, one is bound to agree, that the definition of that population and the manner in which the demographic events that contribute to changes in the

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volume of that population are recorded remain constant throughout the entire period under analysis. Regrettably, in the case of Romania after 1989, there were several changes in the definitions of the terms, a fact that came about firstly in the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one and secondly due to the integration in the European Union and the consequent adoption of its standards.

If we look at the volume of the population, up until 1989 the annual numbers were based on the population registered in the previous census (the surveyed population included those officially living abroad), which was subsequently adjusted annually based on the natural growth and on the net permanent migration rate (immigrants to the country and emigrants from the country that had changed their permanent address and/or citizenship). Thus, starting off from the last census conducted under the communist regime, that of 1977, it was calculated that the population of the country on the 1st of January 1990 was 23,211,395.[3] This is the number used as a reference point by most of the calculations regarding the subsequent evolution; it is also the number that I will use myself, despite well-founded doubts regarding its accuracy.[4]

On the January 7th, 1992 census, the first after the fall of the communist regime, records show what will be hereafter called a "settled population"[5] of 22,810,035, that is to say a drop of 400,000 individuals, way beyond the official loss of population for the years 1990-1991. This is explained by the settled population no longer including those temporarily[6] abroad for a period of more than six months. The same phenomenon will happen in the next census, that of March 18th, 2002, when the population, 21,680,974, was about 700,000 individuals

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[3] In what follows, unless otherwise stated, the numbers are taken from the publications of the National Institute of Statistics (statistic yearbooks, demographic yearbooks) or from the database (TEMPO) available on the website of the Institute. I will specify the source only when necessary.

[4] The lack of confidence is caused by the long time interval since the latest census, which leads to the accumulation of errors and typically an overestimation of the population. For instance, those that have emigrated illegally have not been deducted from the volume of the population. Also, as previously indicated (Rotariu, Dumănescu, Hărăguș, 2017:84), basic calculations done on the basis of annual official data on births, deaths and legal migration indicate a population smaller by about 100,000.

[5] This concept is related to that of "usually resident population" that would be used after Romania joined the European Union. The main difference is that in the case of the settled population the time interval taken into account is six months, while in the case of the resident population it is one year (for example, a person with a Romanian domicile that is abroad for more than six months is not part of the settled population, while for the same person to be excluded from the resident population, they would have to be abroad for more than a year).

[6] Hereinafter we will use the following terminology for migrants: those who have emigrated without changing their domicile will be called *temporary migrants*; those who establish their domicile in another country will be called *permanent migrants*.

fewer than the volume of the population calculated based on current statistical data, using as a starting point the numbers from the 1992 census. This was a period in which temporary transnational migration increased and the number of Romanians abroad grew significantly larger, while the national statistics institute was not able to estimate annually the migratory flows. Moreover, the fundamental demographic events, births and deaths, were still calculated for the entire population with a Romanian domicile.

The October 20th, 2011 census was conducted according to the methodology required by the European statistical institution, introducing the concept of "usually resident population" of Romania („populaţie cu reşedinţa obişnuită în România") – hereinafter "resident population". Leaving aside the doubtful quality of this census, that has faced numerous criticisms at the time, let us mention that, according to the newly introduced criteria, the resident population of Romania at the time of recording was 20,121,641.

This number was used as a baseline to determine the population in the years that followed. This time, the calculations took into account the flow of *temporary transnational migration*, without however giving clear information about the way in which the number of emigrants had been calculated. Therefore, we can not evaluate the reliability of this data. The numbers from the latest census also served as a baseline for the National Institute of Statistics (Institutul Naţional de Statistică, hereinafter INS) to reconstruct the demographic data on the basis of the resident population for the period 2003-2010. The data for the resident population for the previous years is established based on the previous criteria: those of 1990 and 1991 based on the number calculated at the end of 1989, those for 1992-2002 based on the 1992 census adjusted to take into account natural movement (for all the population with a Romanian domicile) and permanent migratory movement (only for migrants who had changed their domicile). INS publications use two versions for the resident population, namely that from the start of the year (1st of January) and that from the middle of the year (1st of July). The latter is to be found in the TEMPO database; the first appears in the same place as well, starting with 2003, and in the 2006 Demographic Yearbook, for the previous years (in the previously mentioned understanding of settled population).

Probably aware of the problems raised when it comes to interpreting a series of data where criteria had changed and the conditions for coherence had not been fully respected, the INS specialists have also put together a different statistical series regarding the movement of *the population with the domicile in Romania*, which we will also call, for convenience, *the legal* or *de jure population*. This is the same with the settled population only for the years 1990 and 1991. The legal population is larger than the settled population starting with the

following year and for the period 1992-2001, and larger than the resident population since 2002. I believe presenting this series is very important, since it is the only one that is logically coherent when we need to calculate the indicators for the demographic phenomena, such as total fertility rate (TFR) or expectation of life at birth – more so because, as we will see, the attempt to distinguish solely the events for the resident population is unconvincing at best.

We must also mention that the volume of the population of Romania can be found in the EUROSTAT databases as well, where for the 1st of January the numbers are retrieved from the first INS series, as defined above, while for the middle of the year[7] there are minor differences as compared to the INS data. In what follows, I will use the INS numbers and I will list in Annex 1 the data for the two series, each of them both for the beginning and the middle of the year. The ones in the beginning of the year will be useful to calculate the growth of the population for every year, as well as for longer periods of time. The ones from the 1st of July are used by INS to calculate the annual rates for the various demographic phenomena.

To sum up, we have statistical data for "the population of Romania", with the concept used to describe: (i) *the resident* or *de facto population* (which until 2001 is the settled population) and (ii) *the population domiciled* in Romania or, to use different terms, *the legal* or *de jure population*. It is however obvious we can introduce a third meaning for the same concept, when it refers to all of the individuals with *Romanian citizenship*. This understanding refers to a larger population than the previous two, since it includes, on top of the individuals with the domicile in Romania and with a residence abroad, those Romanian citizens that no longer have a Romanian domicile, but have held their citizenship; in principle, they hold a special type of passport for *Romanian citizens with the domicile abroad*. The volume of this population can not be found in the current statistics of any of the national institutions, but is often present in public debates, since it makes up the base for selecting the population with a right to vote. Let us just say that the Permanent Electoral Authority has made an announcement that in December 2018 the number of all of the individuals appearing on the electoral lists that have the type of passport mentioned above came up to 670,927[8], out of a total of 18.94 million electors. If we take into account the fact that this number includes only electors, that is, individuals at least 18 years old, as well as the fact that there are Romanian

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[7] I am not sure about the source of these differences. It might be a minor difference in the way in which the calculations are made, since EUROSTAT speaks about the "average population" and INS of "population on the 1st of July".

[8] Number retrieved in a statement found at http://www.roaep.ro/prezentare/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Anexa-nr.3-31.12.2018.pdf, accessed on 02.02.2019. It must be said that the main stock of this population is made up of individuals with their domicile in the Republic of Moldova (about a third of the total).

citizens without such a passport, then we can infer that the number of Romanian citizens domiciled abroad is considerably higher than this. In what follows, I will not refer to the population consisting of Romanian citizens, since there is too little information about it and there can be no analysis on it beyond simply estimating its volume.

Going back to the two main populations and taking a look at the numbers in Annex 1, we can see that for the 28 years for which we have the data, that is, between the 1st of January 1990 and the 1st of January 2018, the resident population of Romania has declined by about 3.68 million (from 23.21 to 19.53 million), and the population domiciled in Romania has declined by about 3.68 million (from 23.21 to 19.53 million). We can also see in the last column of the table in Annex 1 that the difference between the population domiciled in Romania and the population that is resident in the country has increased constantly and has reached, on the 1st of January 2018, 2.66 million. This number is often interpreted as that of individuals with a domicile in the country, but resident abroad, that is to say – *the stock of temporary migrants*. But I will come back to the issue of the stock of emigrants from Romania, since things are a little more complicated.

Sex and age distribution

In what follows, I will present briefly the transformations in the sex and age distribution, as well as the structural differences between the two population categories for which we have such data. As is customary, structure analyses use the average or 1st of July population, according to the Romanian statistics. The populations that will be compared are those from the middle of the years 1990 (23,206,720) and 2017, in the two versions – the population domiciled in Romania (22,213,586) and the population resident in Romania (19,591,668), the difference between the two being 2,621,918 individuals.

As far as the distribution by sex is concerned, there are no spectacular findings. Just like all the other populations in our cultural area, the Romanian population comprises a larger proportion of women. The share of the female sex was 50.7% in 1990 and it went up in 2017 to 51.2% of the legal population and 51.1% of the resident population. What needs to be mentioned, however, is that women are the majority (51.8%) when it comes to the category of population obtained as the difference between the two previous populations and interpreted, not very rigorously, as *the stock of temporary migrants.* [9]

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[9] We will discuss below the precise significance of the population that results as a difference between the legal and the resident population. For now, as far as the sex and age distribution is concerned, we can consider it as the stock of temporary migrants.

As far as the age distribution is concerned, it is evolving as expected; that is to say, as is the case with all the populations in our region, the demographic ageing process continues after the end of the demographic transition. To illustrate the extent of this change in the analysed time interval, I present in Annex 2 the percentages showing the structure of the population (in total and for women) for a few of the large age groups in the middle of the 1990s and in 2017. For the latter case, I differentiate the three populations mentioned above: by domicile, by residence, and that resulting from the difference between the two (temporary migrants). The general results are obvious. The 2017 population, whether domiciled or resident in Romania, is clearly aged as compared to the 1990 population. For example, the weight of the individuals 65 years and older soars from 10.4% to 16.1% in the legal population and to 18% in the resident population. Let us keep in mind that this ageing process bears a direct influence on the number of deaths and on the death rate (and therefore on the natural growth) of the population, regardless of the evolution of mortality.

The emigrated population clearly has a specific age distribution, with the working age population overrepresented. In order to estimate the extent to which these departures have influenced the age distribution, I have introduced in the table in Annex 2 a column that shows the proportions in the absent population as compared to the domiciled population. Overall, according to the INS data, 11.8% of the legal population is missing. However, in different age groups the demographic absences are more significant (more than 20% for the 25-40 years old) or a lot less significant (for children and the elderly). For the women 25-35 years old, the weight of those abroad is even more significant (about 24%), a fact that, as we will see, can not be neglected in interpreting the fertility data.

Demographic ageing is a universal phenomenon in the current stage of the evolution of the populations and there are two main causes for it: (i) the large contingents of population born before the decline of fertility in the recent decades have joined the ranks of the elderly; these contingents have reached this age in large numbers not only because they started off with large numbers, but also because they have benefited throughout their lives from a substantial drop in mortality (especially infant mortality), and (ii) the increase in the life expectancy of older persons, that is to say, the better survival probability for the elderly. The first factor has ben the most important by far until now and will remain so for a while longer, until the large cohorts from the years immediately after the war disappear. Romania, as already mentioned, is part of this process, but lags behind many European countries. Indeed, if we look at the resident population alone, of which, as we have seen, about 2.6

million individuals of relatively young ages are missing, the proportion of the elderly in our population (of about 18%) is, as the EUROSTAT data indicates, smaller than in other countries – 22.3% in Italy, 21.5% in Greece, 21.2% in Germany, 21.1% in Portugal. Some of these countries are precisely the ones that have benefitted from strong immigration, including from the stock of younger population in Romania, a factor that has put a halt to their ageing process. We should also note that Italy, for example, had reached the ageing level of Romania at the end of the 1990s. We can therefore anticipate that the process will continue in Romania as well, both for the legal population (a little younger) and for the resident population (more aged). The generations born before 1989 are relatively numerous and will gradually feed and enlarge the age group of 65+, even if in the near future the cohort to cross the official old age threshold will be those born in the age of free abortion, which are slightly smaller cohorts.

Natural growth and net migration

Traditionally, Romanian statistics record the children born to women domiciled in Romania, which undergo civil registration in Romania (regardless of the country where they were born), and the children are automatically allocated the same domicile as well. The deceased accounted for in the statistical and demographic yearbooks are also distributed by domicile; therefore, all of the deceased individuals with a Romanian domicile are taken into account. The natural growth has been calculated based on these numbers. The data obtained is presented in Annex 3, in the first columns of the table.

Starting with 2012, there was an attempt to calculate these events (births and deaths) for the resident population only – the one that, as we shall see, is taken as a baseline in the recent years to determine the indicators of the demographic phenomena. To this purpose, for the years 2012 and 2013 those who have been born and respectively those who have died abroad have been excluded from the total population, so that an annual number could be calculated for the events that characterize the resident population alone. In both situations, it is difficult to accept the data for what it wants to represent. The version for the years 2012-2013 is actually embarrassing for INS, given that, for anyone at least a bit familiar with the context, the fact that a child was born abroad is not a criterion to exclude them from the population that is resident in the country. Considering the underwhelming facilities in the maternity hospitals in Romania, many women from the upper classes travel abroad to give birth, and so do many living near the border, especially near the border with Hungary. As for the numbers in the following years, starting with 2014, it is difficult to comment, considering INS does not release the clear

criteria for placing newborns in the resident category. The inconsistency of the numbers becomes obvious if we differentiate between the two categories. The number of the children born in the domiciled population is larger than that for the resident population as follows: in 2012 and 2013 by 20,000 and 26,000 respectively, while in the following years the difference dropped to only 3-4 thousand. This means on the one hand that the three categories of data (those for before 2012, those for 2012-2013, and those for the years after 2013) can not be joined in a statistical series and, on the other hand, that the very tiny difference of the last years can not be taken seriously considering the women resident abroad are, as we have seen, generally younger women of fertile age. Given their larger proportion in the fertile groups (20-25% of the legal population, according to INS data), even if, due to their status, we can assume they give birth to fewer children than the women in the country, their contribution to the total of births can not be as low as presented in the statistics. Their exclusion from the population of Romania would have to imply the exclusion of a much larger number of newborns than those attributed to the resident population. For the deaths, the annual differences between the stocks from the two populations are a lot smaller, of a different scale altogether, so they do not influence the indicators.

Under these circumstances, it is absolutely normal to analyse the evolution of the *natural growth* by referring to the population domiciled in Romania, since this is the only series of data that is reasonably consistent. Natural growth was a positive number only in the first two years after the fall of the communist regime, 1990 and 1991, and this situation was never to be encountered again. With the exception of a few previous isolated situations, the greatest population losses in the last years happened due to negative natural growth.

In Figure 1 I present the evolution of the two phenomena, using the absolute numbers of the live births and the deaths, to have a clearer perception of the natural growth. Looking at things through the lens of the absolute numbers, we can see that as far as the live births are concerned, the numbers seem to stabilize somewhere around 200,000, with some fluctuations after the year 2002, but without the clear downward trend that was visible in the 1990s. On average, across the years, the stock of live births appears smaller and smaller; this was to be expected, since the cohorts of women reaching fertile age are themselves smaller. The number of deaths is also quite stable, after the year 2000, settling at a level a little over 250,000. This stock is determined by the transformations of the age structure and the evolution of mortality. The two factors have had, at least after 2000, as we will see when looking at mortality, divergent influences on the number of deaths: an increase due to the ageing of the population and a drop due to the positive changes in the field of mortality.
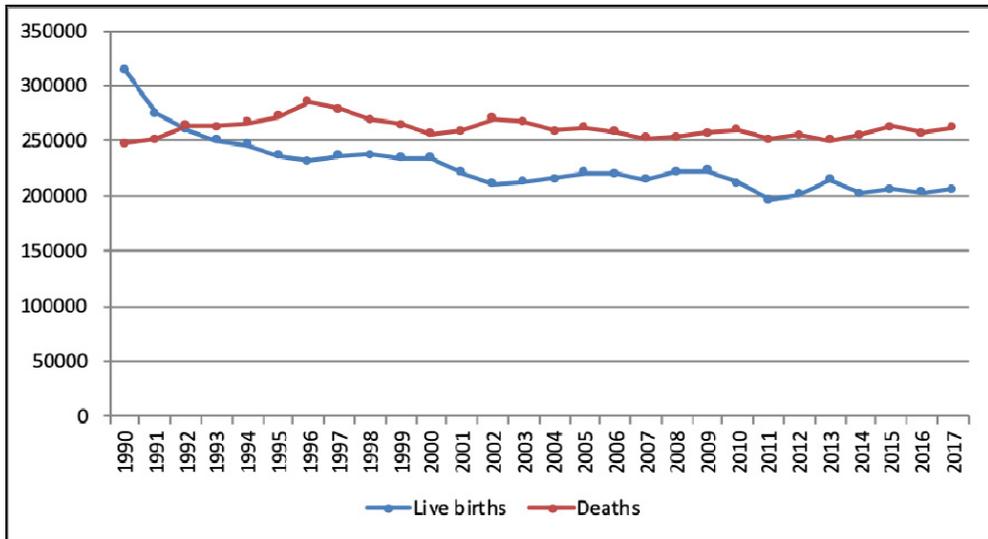
Figure 1. The evolution of live births and deaths for the population domiciled in Romania, 1990-2017

If we look at *net migration*, then for the population with a domicile in Romania we need to take into account what we have called *permanent migration*, which is to account for the people that have established their domicile in Romania and the Romanians that have given up on their domicile here and moved to other countries. We present on the first columns of Annex 4 the data needed to calculate the balance of migration. The data for the numbers of migrants in 1990 is unfortunately missing from the INS statistics.[10] We will omit this number, considering it is modest and does not significantly impact the general balance.

The series for definitive migration is extremely interesting. Annual variations are frequent and rather broad, and explanations would be needed for sudden changes. Unfortunately, such information is lacking from those who produce the data. What we can safely say is that the massive emigration in the first years after the regime change can be explained through the previous constraints placed on Romanian citizens regarding transnational mobility (and

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[10] It is likely that in 1990 the "tradition" from the communist times was still preserved: for transnational migration, the official statistical publications only gave the numbers for emigrants, and not for immigrants. This data, managed throughout by agencies of the Interior Ministry, clearly exists and could easily be reconstituted, if there was an interest for this from INS.

in particular going abroad). The switch of the migratory balance in the last few years from negative to positive is also understandable, taking into account the fact the country has become attractive after joining the European Union.

Temporary migration, through changing one's residence, has been registered only for a few years, as can be seen in Annex 4, where we have the data for the migratory flows since 2008. Since I have serious doubts about the ability of INS to evaluate correctly this kind of data, I will make no comments about those numbers and I will not use them to learn about the stock of emigrants or the general balance of migration for 1990-2017. To this purpose, I will instead do a basic calculation using the data on the natural and migratory movement through *the change of domicile*. In this manner we will obtain the numbers for the population domiciled in Romania on the 1st of January 2018 and we will compare it with that from the INS publications. Here are the calculations for the period 1990-2017:

- Live births: 6,359,811
- Deaths: 7,311,803
- *Natural growth: -951,992*
- Immigrants: 320,414
- Emigrants: 550,326
- *Net migration: -229,912*
- **Population growth (natural growth + net migration): -1,181,904**

Using this data and starting off from a population of 23,211,395 on the 1st of January 1990, we should end up with a population of 22,029,491 on the 1st of January 2018. A small difference – due to small errors and to the fact we did not include the 1990 immigrants (probably around 2,000-3,000) – should clearly be expected. However, as we can see in Annex 1, the number put forward by INS for this date is 22,193,562, about 160,000 higher. This difference should be given a plausible explanation by the data provider.

If we accept the number provided by INS for the legal population at the beginning of 2018 and implicitly the 2.66 million difference from the resident population put forward by the same institution, then I will return to the interpretation already mentioned above, namely that this difference can be understood as the stock of Romanians that are temporary migrants abroad. Even if the numbers are calculated correctly, we need to make slight adjustments when it comes to interpreting them. In theory, the resident population of Romania includes the foreigners living here for a period of at least one year. INS, however, does not give this number in any of its publications and we could be tempted to leave it out of any calculation and assume it is negligible. Nonetheless, EUROSTAT data shows that on the 1st of January 2017, there were 114,527 foreign

citizens in Romania, which indicates that the difference between the number of Romanians domiciled in the country and the number of Romanians resident in the country is larger than 2.66 million. Assuming that the number of foreign residents in Romania has gone up a bit until the 1st of January 2018, we can estimate that *the stock of temporary migrants, thus calculated, would be around 2.8 million on that date.*[11]

In order to check these numbers, it is recommended that we look for other information as well. Going back to the EUROSTAT database, we will see that for the countries mentioned there alone (EU, including the UK, and a few European countries with few Romanians) there were, on the 1st of January 2017, 3.22 million Romanian citizens, who can therefore be included in the stock of emigrants. On the other hand, a report on migration of the United Nations (UN, 2017:13) lists Romania among the top twenty sending countries of immigrants, with a total of 3.6 million. This number includes both the Romanian citizens domiciled in the country and those domiciled abroad[12], the latter adding up to about a million, as we have seen. Therefore, if the 3.6 million number is accurate and we take into account a stock of only 800-900.000 Romanian citizens domiciled abroad, it becomes apparent that the number of those abroad, but with a domicile in Romania is about 2.7-2.8 million. This confirms the estimation of the resident population by the INS, of about 19.5-19.6 million in 2017. Finally, let us note that the number of citizens listed by the electoral register was, at the end of 2018, about 18,942,000.[13] If we take into account the age structure of the population domiciled in the country, we will see that the stock of individuals 18 years old and older makes up about 82% of the total population, which means that the number of electors above is extracted from a total population of about 23.1 million, number resulting once we have added the approximately 0.8-0.9 million Romanians domiciled abroad.

To sum up: the safest population number to use from all those mentioned is the one referring to those domiciled in Romania, also called the *de jure or legal population*, which, on the 1st of January 2018, was *22.2 million*. From the electoral register I have deducted that in 2018 the *population of Romanian citizens* must be around 23.1 million or maybe a little more, if we

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[11] This number includes the children born and resident abroad, who are incorporated in the legal population (at the mother's domicile). Because they have not actually moved, they cannot be considered *stricto sensu* as migrants. We have no information about the stock of this population, but in any case they can be included in the category of emigration, if we widen a little the meaning of the concept.

[12] In the INS statistics the numbers describing the stock of emigrants refer to long term temporary migration only (change of residence of at least 12 months).

[13] According to the Permanent Electoral Authority, http://www.roaep.ro/prezentare/stire/numarul-total-de-alegatori-inscrisi-in-registrul-electoral-la-data-de-31-decembrie-2018.

accept that not all of them are listed in the electoral register. Finally, the resident (or de facto) population released by INS for the 1st of January 2018, 19.5 million, seems to be confirmed, if we accept the number of 3.6 million of Romanians abroad, out of which 0.8-0.9 domiciled abroad.

The 23.1 million number clearly raises questions, even if it is supported by the calculations mentioned above, considering it is only 100,000 smaller than the population of Romania at the beginning of 1990. The country has lost almost 1 million in this period through natural growth, plus negative net migration (permanent migration) of more than 200,000. This loss could only be compensated by the number of Romanian citizens already abroad before 1990 and still alive (not included in the population of the country), as well as the stock of individuals who have become Romanian citizens after 1990, but are still domiciled in their countries of origin (mainly citizens of the Republic of Moldova). These two categories are not included in the official statistics.

The evolution of the main demographic phenomena

Fertility

As is widely known, Romania has been affected in the last decades of the communist regimes by one of the toughest pronatalist policies in the Eastern Block, following a period that was rather ultra-liberal, including the full judicial and moral decriminalization of abortion in the 1955-1966 period, on the footsteps of the Soviet model. The measures taken in 1966 and the following years attempted to maintain a high fertility. Without these measures, Romania would have completed the fertility transition at the beginning of the 1970s, when the level of the total fertility rate would have dropped below replacement level fertility. Due to these measures, fertility stayed above that level and was conducive to constant population growth, generating a population about 3-4 million more numerous than expected on the basis of the fertility level in 1966.

After the fall of the communist regime, one of the first decisions taken by the newly installed leaders was to abolish all of the previous measures in this field, mainly by decriminalizing abortion and by permitting the sale and use of contraceptive means. In this situation, it was to be expected that fertility would drop suddenly, and this did happen in the first years: from 2.2 children born per woman in 1989, the total fertility rate dropped to 1.8 in 1990, 1.4 in 1993 and go to 1.3 in 1995. In the following years, there was a long period where the rate stabilized at this level, occasionally dropping to 1.2.

Whoever looks at the INS publications, such as the statistic yearbooks, will be surprised to notice that the fertility of Romanians has grown suddenly to 1.4, 1.5 and even 1.6 children born per woman, starting with 2012. This is obviously not a turnaround of fertility, but simply a change in the way in which this indicator is calculated: the fertility rates by ages (the sum of which amounts to the total fertility rate) are calculated by relating the number of live births to the resident population. But, as we have seen, the stock of live births attributed to this population is almost identical to the one attributed to the population domiciled in the country, while the stock of women of fertile age in the resident population is about 20% smaller than the population actually responsible for all the live births. This is clearly bringing up the value of the fertility rates by age and *eo ipso* of the total fertility rate. If we check the EUROSTAT databases, we will see that they use a similar procedure and started using it longer ago, therefore showing an increase of the fertility rate since about 2006.

We can also see that the shift in fertility is artificial and has no correct statistical base if we check the INS information in the TEMPO database. Unfortunately, the annual total fertility rates are not presented here, but the specific ones for five years intervals are, and they can approximate TFR. The important thing here is that the calculations are done for the *de jure* or legal population as well, since 2012. If we compare these rates for the last year for which we have the data at the time of writing, 2016, we can see that for the age groups from 20 to 40, the five year rates for the resident population are sensibly higher than for the legal population – by 13% for 20-24 year olds and by 30% for the 25-29 year olds. As we stressed above, only the series that has as a base the legal population can be followed across time, and it is only for this population that we can compare annual values and judge the trend of the values. Nothing points out to changes after 2011 (or, in the case of the EUROSTAT data, after 2005) in the fertility quantum of the Romanian women.

The unfolding of this phenomenon has clearly undergone many transformations, some starting in 1990, some later, but they did not have an impact on the general level of the phenomenon. Romania is still part of the group of European countries with lowest-low fertility. The transformations have takes place on several dimensions, of which I will mention just a few.

Probably the most important from the point of view of the demographic consequences, including the general level of the reproduction of the population, is the change regarding the tempo of fertility, which is the fertility curve by age. As we know, Romania has been characterised – along with the other countries in the area – by early fertility, as compared to the western countries, which was largely the result of the eastern European marriage patterns. Thus, the curve of the women's age at childbirth was asymmetrical, with the modal value to the left, in the 20-24 years old interval, and with a significant share of

mothers under the age of 20. In the time interval we are looking at here, there was a clear move of the births towards the right, which can be seen in Figure 2. Not only has the curve gone flat, due to the drop of the fertility rate, but its peak has moved a lot to the right, with the maximum number of births now due to women 25-29 years old.

The transformation can also be seen by comparing the annual values for the average age at birth. Thus, in 2017 as compared to 1990, the average age[14] for all the births has increased from 25.0 years old to 28.6 years old, while for the first births it has increased from 22.3 years old to 27.1 years old, with the specification that in 1990-1993 the first value decreased, due to the decline of the birth rate because of the decline in higher order births. Only after 1994, the average age for all births began to rise, while the process has been constant for the first births. This explains the larger increase in the age of women at the first birth – 5 years as compared to the 3.6 years increase in age for all the births. In spite of all of these significant changes, the average age of mothers in Romania is still lower than in the majority of the EU countries. Thus, according to the EUROSTAT data, in 2016 average age at birth was over 32 in Ireland and Spain and more than 31 in several other western European countries. In 2016, women in the majority of the EU countries were on average over 29 years old at their first birth.
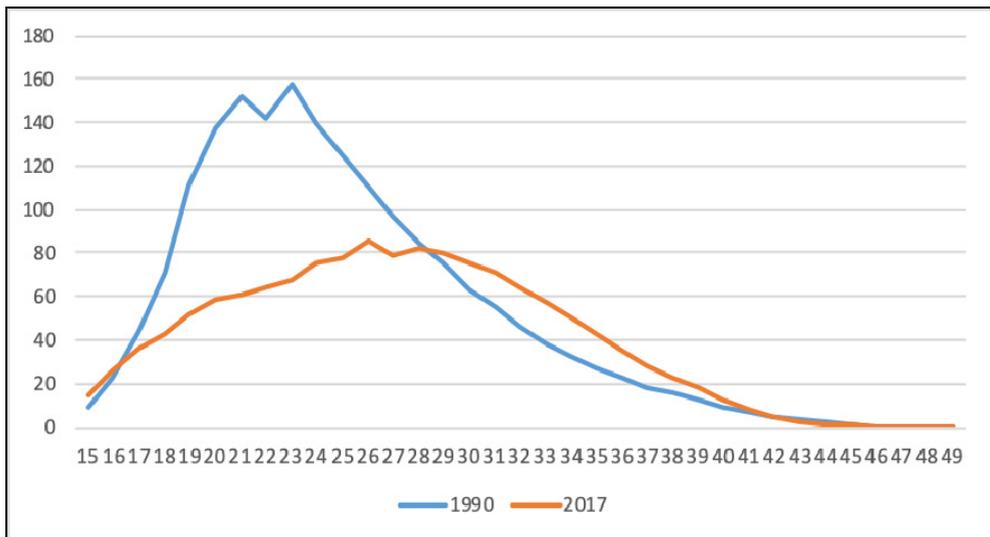

**Figure 2.** Fertility rates by age in 1990 and 2017 (per one thousand, in the legal population)

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[14] These are simple averages, calculated on the basis of the actual frequencies, and not standardized, calculated on the basis of the fertility rates by age.

The relatively large proportion of births by very young women, under the age of 20, plays an important part in the lower average age at birth in Romania. Indeed, even though it has dropped from the post-1989 high of about 18% in 1993-1994, to about 10% in the last years, it is still high by European standards, considering that in countries such as Denmark, Switzerland, the Netherlands, or Slovenia, young women under the age of 20 contribute a maximum of 1% of the number of births. It must be noted that in none of the countries in the EUROSTAT databases is there such a high percentage of children born to teenaged mothers as in Romania, not even in countries such as Moldova, Ukraine, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, or Macedonia.

Another important matter related to births, which has emerged after the fall of communism, is the rising proportion of *births outside of marriage*. Unfortunately, our statistical publications do not provide any information on this phenomenon during the communist period, nor for the first years afterwards, but only starting with 1994. As I have shown elsewhere[15], the first data found in other sources is for 1992, namely that 15% of births were outside of marriage. This leads us to the assumption that before 1989 the proportion must have been 10% at most. The trend was of fast growth until 2004, when it reached 29% and stayed at the same level until 2010. In 2011, it started rising again a little and currently there are small oscillations between 30-31%. With these numbers, Romania is one of the European countries with a relatively small proportion of births outside of marriage. Indeed, there are many countries with larger proportions, some at more than 50% for several years. Fewer births outside of marriage are to be found in some of the catholic countries (Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Italy), but the lowest proportion in Europe (less than 10%) is in orthodox Greece.

Using an INS database with data for the 2006-2017 births, we can say that the phenomenon is typical for younger women. Thus, in the case of mothers younger than 20, the proportion of those not married at the time of giving birth is in the last years 87%; those between 20 and 24 years old give birth outside of marriage in 43-44% of the cases, and for older ages the proportion drops below the average. Out of all the births outside of marriage, the largest proportion is due to women under the age of 20 (about 27%), followed by those 20-24 years old (26-27%) – the two age groups cumulate a total of more than 50%. In order to visualise more clearly the age difference between the women that participate in the two types of births (within marriage and outside of marriage), I present in figure 3A the respective distributions for all the births, cumulated, in the recent years – 2014-2017. The difference between the shapes of the two curves is obvious as well, with births within marriage of a profile close to the normal curve, with the modal value at 28-29 years old, while the curve for the births outside of marriage is deeply asymmetrical, with maximum frequencies between 17-20 years old.

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[15] Rotariu, Dumănescu, Hărăguș (2017:250).
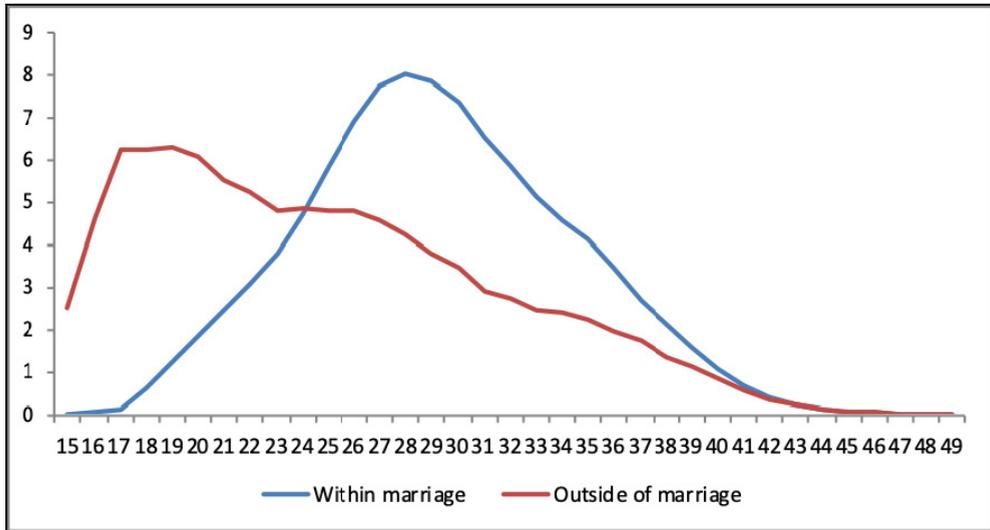
A. All births
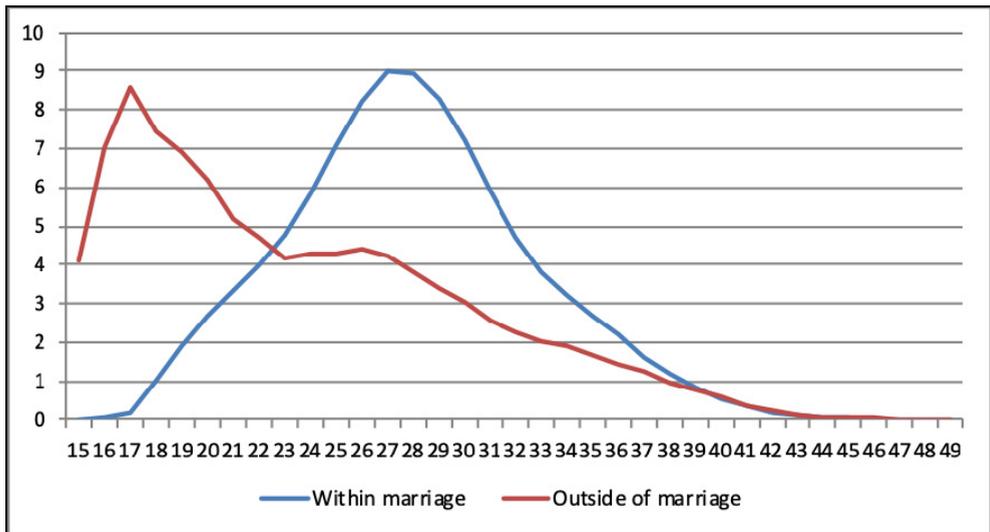
B. First births

Figure 3. Age distribution of mothers at birth, 2014-2017, by marital status
(% of total births of each type)

As far as birth order is concerned, there are a few important observations to make. As is to be expected, since fertility is on a downward trend, there is a higher proportion of first births out of yearly births. In the last years of the communist regime, firstborns were 39% (in 1989), second births – 29%, third births and higher order – 32% of the total. In 1990, the percentages are: 44%, 29%, and 27%. The situation is stabilized once the drop in fertility is completed, so that for the last 12 years (2006-2017), the values oscillate around the following averages: 53%, 30%, and 17% respectively. It is therefore quite obvious that *the drop in fertility happened mainly due to the drop in higher order births* (3rd and higher), with second order births basically unchanged.

The distinction by the order of birth is even more interesting in the case of births outside of marriage. Based on the previous observation regarding the lower age of women giving birth outside of marriage, one could imply most of the births outside of marriage are first births. And indeed, the proportion of births outside of marriage is slightly higher in the case of firstborns than the average for all births over the last 12 years (32% as compared to the average, 30%), and lower for second order births (just 22%). The twist comes from noticing that in the case of higher order births, the proportion of unmarried mothers soars again above average: 33% for third order births and 38% for fourth order and higher.

For a comparison with all births, I introduce in Figure 3B the age distribution of the mothers of the firstborns, within the two birth categories: within marriage and outside of marriage. We can see how asymmetrical the curve for births outside of marriage is; the first births outside of marriage are not of older, educated, professional women, with a penchant for postmodern values, but of young women who did not yet achieve the knowledge and the practice of birth control.

Another aspect related to fertility that I will refer to briefly refers to *the social profile of the women who give birth*. Based on the data collected upon the registration of births, we can get information, even if not very in depth, about the occupational and educational status of the mother. This information can be retrieved from the already mentioned database for the period 2006-2017. When it comes to occupation, the way in which the data is presented allows us to make the distinction between employed and non-employed. The first category includes the few cases of entrepreneurs (about 1%) and the second the very few (less than 1%) cases of agricultural workers, most such situations being accounted for under the label of homemaker – which adds up to 42% of the women who have given birth over those years. The analysis of the data on the basis of this distinction shows that over the last years in Romania about half of the women who give birth every year were employed. For the whole

period of 12 years, the proportion of those employed is about 48%, rising slightly, so that for the last two years it has increased to just over 50%. This dichotomy is essential, since it reveals two worlds with distinct needs, which claim two types of different policies if the aim is raising the fertility rate.

From the point of view of education, there is a clear trend: the education attainment of the women giving birth in the recent period is rising. Between 2006-2017, the weight of the poorly educated mothers (8 years of education at most) has dropped from about 45% to 31%, and the weight of those with superior education (more than 12 years of education) has doubled, from 18% to 36%, this latter category being wider than that of mothers with average education (vocational school or high school), about 33% in 2017.

Nonetheless, it is very clear that a large proportion of the Romanian children are born to the underprivileged categories of population, who can not provide them with the best opportunities while growing up. If we look at the poorly educated women with no jobs, they have given birth over this 12 years period to 34% (just over one third) of the newborns in Romania. Another argument for the vulnerability of the children in this category is the fact that 54% of their mothers were not married, only 25% of their fathers were employed, 48% had no occupation and 27% of newborns were unacknowledged by their fathers. As for the married mothers, only half had husbands in employment. There is no doubt that the situation and the educational prospects of the children are underwhelming in the case of other categories as well, especially where none of the parents is in employment or there is a single, unemployed mother. Therefore, I believe we could say that *more than a third of the children born in the last years live in high risk families*, which makes one ask whether the priority should not be rather for improving the situation of these people, and only afterwards raising the birth rate. Or, even more so, to see what social policies are suitable for raising the birth rate without raising the ranks of these disadvantaged categories.

Since we discussed births outside of marriage we must also mention that they are typical mainly of women with lower education and no clear occupational status. Indeed, if we stick only to the wide education and occupation categories mentioned earlier, we see that the proportion of births outside of marriage varies from 8% in case of the highly educated (more than high school education) women in employment to 54%, as noted, in the case of poorly educated women not in employment, with numbers in between for the other categories. It is easy to see that the data shows that both factors – the educational and occupational status – are strong predictors for the proportion of births outside of marriage, but not in the sense suggested by the so-called "theory of the second demographic transition", according to which attachment

to postmodern values influences the demographic behaviours, including a rising proportion of births outside of marriage. A similar argument arises from noting that the weight of the births outside of marriage is larger in the case of the higher order births, which means there is a category of older, unmarried women, who, probably for economic reasons, give birth to more children.

Similar arguments arise from analysing the social situation of women by the order of the birth. Out of women on their first or second birth in the period 2006-2017, less than half were in employment (46% and 47% respectively), and out of the mothers on higher order births the great majority were not in employment: 71% for third order births and 86% for fourth or higher order births. The situation is similar from the point of view of education: the proportion of those with poor education attainment is 32% of the mothers of firstborns, 36% for women on their second birth, 61% for women on their third birth and 79% for women on their fourth or successive births.

In brief, then, in Romania there is a significant contribution to natality by two vulnerable categories of population: on the one hand, very young, poorly educated women, with no employment and mostly unmarried, who contribute to the number of firstborns in particular, and on the other hand slightly older women, with similar educational and social profile, who are by far the main source of third and higher order births.

Mortality

As compared to fertility, mortality is a phenomenon with an evolution that is a lot easier to predict. This is due to a general positive trend caused by improvements in the means of preventing and treating illnesses; diseases are by far the most important cause of mortality, with external causes (injuries) the source of less than 5% of the total number of deaths. Also, in large populations, the indicators of the phenomenon have a much smoother evolution. For this reason, we can say that a brief analysis of mortality, one that can be accommodated by the space of the present paper, is less interesting: the situation is well-known by similarity to other countries in the area and, if not, still does not hold major surprises. However, there are some particularities of mortality in Romania that deserve to be mentioned even in this context, where we observe only the most concise indicator of the phenomenon – expectation of life at birth – and a few death rates by age, including that for zero years old, which is infant mortality.

Looking at things from the perspective of expectation of life at birth, we must stress that Romania has made minor progress between the end of World War II and the instauration of the communist regime. Thus, in 1938, the

average lifespan for both sexes was only 42 years, the duration that was recorded in the western countries at the beginning of the nineteenth century, before entering an era with medical progress. At that point, the lag behind the developed countries was enormous; for example, as compared to the Netherlands, in 1938 the difference was 25.5 years! Favourable circumstances after the war, which I have discussed in more detail elsewhere[16], made it possible to make up for most of this lag until the mid-1970s, with the difference from the most developed western countries reduced to only 5-5.5 years and only 2-3 years from many of the western European countries.

Unfortunately, however, there was no progress in the period that followed, with 69 years as the average for both sexes still constant until the end of the 1990s. The 70 years threshold has been crossed only in 2000. As we can see on the graph in Figure 4, a clear upward trend started in 1996-97, with the average lifespan overall reaching 75.7 years in 2017. [17] This upward trend is common to both sexes, while the relative stagnation mentioned above is the result of a mild increase in the life expectancy of women and a slight decrease in the life expectancy of men, visible in particular after 1980 and lasting up until 1996-1997. This also led to a larger gap in the life expectancy of the two sexes. The advantage of women over men increased from about 5.5 years in the beginning of the 1970s to almost 8 years in the period 1996-1998 and then went down again to about 7 years in the recent years.

The long period of stagnation of this indicator has meant the difference between Romania and the western European countries has gone up again, reaching about 10 years in 1996 (the average for both sexes) from the most advanced countries. The recent evolution has reduced the difference a bit. According to the most recent data, our country is eight years behind the most advanced European countries and 5.5 years behind the European Union average.

I will not delve in depth into the differences generated by the social conditions in which people live, but I will mention the lag between the urban and the rural, the only variable for which we have official data. As expected, there is an inequality of chances in facing death between the people living in the two types of environment, to the advantage of the urban dwellers. The difference in life expectancy still exists; moreover, I think it needs stressing, it has gone up – from 1.5 years at the beginning of the 1990s to almost three years in 2015-2017 (average for the two sexes) – in spite of the fact that a

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[16] See, for example, Rotariu, Dumănescu (2014)

[17] I use in this article the values of the expectation of life at birth provided by INS, calculated as an average for three consecutive years and attributed to the last of those three years. Thus, the value of 75.7 years is the average of the death rates for the years 2015-2017, but is attributed to the year 2017. For this reason, the values used here can differ slightly from the values from other sources, where the calculation is done for one year only.

non-negligible part of the rural population already lives in large settlements, especially the periurban areas around the large cities, with living conditions similar to the urban environment. There still is, no doubt, a category of settlements that belongs to the remote countryside where the state of the medical and sanitary system is very precarious and the quality of life of the inhabitants has not made progress as in other areas. It is interesting to note that the increasing difference mentioned is due mainly to the male sex, while the difference between the women in the rural and urban areas have stayed the same in 1990-2017.

The inequality between the lifespan of women and men observed at the level of the population, is valid for both the urban and the rural environments, but is larger in the rural areas. According to the data for the recent years, women in the urban areas are expected to live about ten years longer than men in the rural areas.
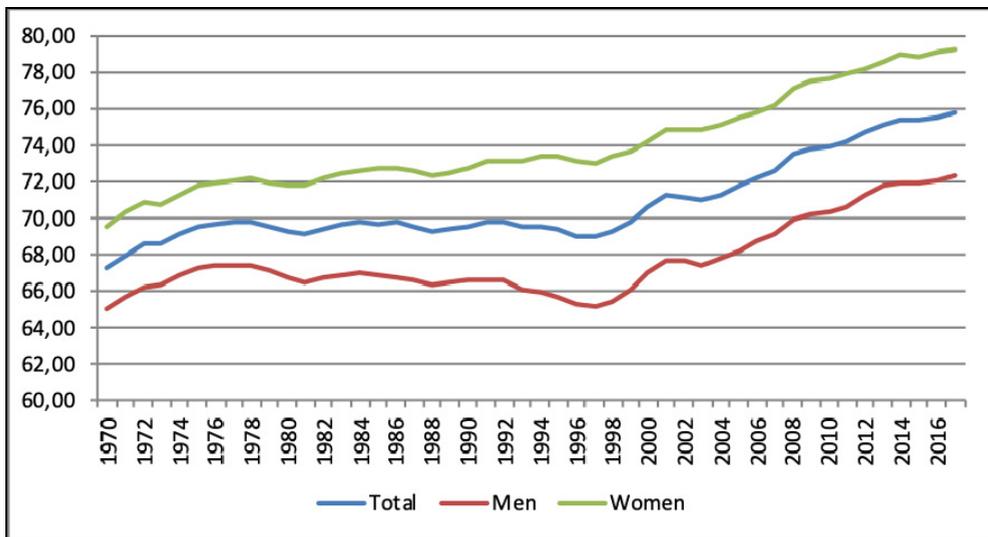
Figure 4. Expectation of life at birth (in years), by sex, in 1970-2017

To look a bit more in depth at the transformations outlined above, we will see how the *death rates by age* have changed over the last decades. I will comment briefly on the death rates at zero years old (infant mortality) and on the age groups above 50 years old, which contribute the great majority of death cases – and therefore it is to be expected that they will have changed similarly to the expectation of life at birth. We will see, however, that there are particularities in terms of age and sex that can not be inferred from the general model.

When it comes to *infant mortality*, things are relatively straightforward. The indicator that measures mortality at zero years old has dropped a lot in Romania throughout the communist period (although the rhythm was not constant), since its values were enormous before the war – about 175-180‰. It reached 26.9‰ in 1990. As indicated in the graph in Figure 5, in 1991 infant mortality dropped a few points suddenly, as a result of the drop in natality, and then, in 1992-1994, it stayed at approximately the 1991 value. Later on, the downward slope was constant, with current values at 7-8‰. These are still higher than in most developed countries, but nonetheless indicate a massive change in terms of infant mortality, not only when contrasted with the interwar period, but also as compared to the communist period.
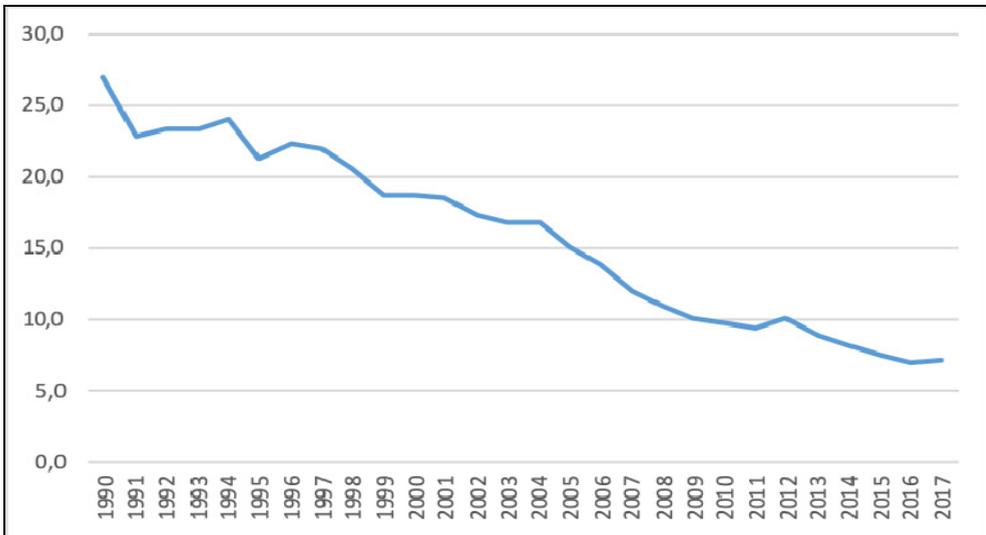
Source: INS, TEMPO series

Figure 5. The evolution of infant mortality in 1990-2017
(deaths under one year old per 1000 live births)

As I already anticipated, death rates are higher after the age of 50, when the incidence of the cardiovascular and neoplastic conditions is higher. These factors are responsible for 58% and 20% respectively of the total deaths (or 51% and 22% if we take into account a population of standard age, according to the OMS methodology). Since we can not look at the situation and evolution of mortality by age in detail here, we will note in brief that after 1990, in the case of the elderly (75 years and older) the rates have dropped

constantly for both sexes and they did so more steeply after 2005. For people between the ages of 50 and 74, the situation by sex is different: in the first years, up to 1996, the mortality of women has stayed relatively constant (if we exclude the small increase in 1996), while that of men had clearly increased. After 1996, there is a drop for both sexes.

The large inequality of chances in the face of death between the two sexes for the older ages is constant throughout the whole period analysed; it has gone up in the last years of the communist regime and in the first years of the postcommunist regime and it is still very significant. If we look at the age groups over 50 and calculate the average of the values for the last three years for which the data is available (2015-2017), we can see that for the individuals between 50 and 60 years old the inequality in terms of report value is over 2.5, which is to say that the death chances for men is more than two and a half larger than for women. After this age interval, the inequalities dwindle gradually, but it is only after the age of 85 that they become similar.

To sum up, mortality in contemporary Romania is still high (in terms of expectation of life at birth or death rates by age) as compared to the majority of the EU countries, even though things have been improving since the mid-1990s. There still is place for substantial improvement when it comes to the deaths caused by cardiovascular illnesses, which are very numerous, especially in the case of the middle-aged and slightly older individuals (45-75 years old), and in particular for the male sex. There is also place for improvement when it comes to infant mortality.

Concluding remarks

The transition of Romania to the postcommunist era, at the end of 1989, has been accompanied by a sudden and substantial demographic decline. The transnational balance of migration already turned negative in 1990, and in 1992 natural growth became negative as well. The status of natural growth was largely dependent on fertility, which has reached after the first five years the lowest level in Europe – 1.3 children per woman. While other countries that have undergone the same transformations have returned to higher fertility rates (reaching 1.6-1.8 children per woman), the numbers for Romania have remained steady and the recent numbers issued by INS or EUROSTAT, which show a growth to 1.5-1.6 children per woman are misleading and a result of live births reported for the resident population (with a smaller proportion of women of fertile age), even though they come in fact from the legal population.

It must be noted that this "frozen" indicator covers a quarter of a century dense in socioeconomic transformations, which did not manage to produce changes in fertility. There were, however, changes in the tempo of fertility, with births due to older mothers. It is also worth mentioning that no political leadership in the postcommunist period has had any clear, consistent demographic policy to stimulate natality, although the public discourse is almost unanimous in judging negatively the state of the birth rate. Measures were isolated, taken *ad hoc* and were not at all efficient in stimulating the birth rate; they might have contributed at most in putting a brake on the initial downward trend, to maintain the current status. Because they consisted mainly in providing financial incentives, the measures have stimulated natality mainly in the poorer social groups, for which the increase in financial support was perceived as a boost to the income of the family. In the recent years, working, more educated women have contributed more substantially to the birth rate. This would require measures fitting for this category, which would also benefit the future of the children and would lead to a growing proportion of children born in families with no risk of poverty.

Less than a third of children in Romania are born outside of marriage, and many of them will eventually live with their parents. Unlike many other European countries, marriage remains the site where children are born and receive their primary socialization. I could not describe here the evolution of the phenomena that refer to the formation and dissolution of families (nuptiality and divortiality). I have done so in detail elsewhere[18] and it is worth mentioning that there were no important transformations of these phenomena after the communist period, with the exception of the rising age at marriage. This institution – marriage/family – always needs to be taken into account whenever there is an intention to intervene with measures for the stimulation of fertility.

Unfortunately, there are no practical models to follow in order to achieve demographic objectives such as the one mentioned above, since the diversity of situations across the world is disconcerting. Theoretical models are not of great help either. Rational choice theory and other theories related to it, based on the cost of raising a child, can not predict accurately the behaviour related to fertility, although the influence of the economic factors (cost and benefits) can not be excluded. But there are always counterexamples too, the most recent that of South Korea, where fertility dropped below one child per woman in 2018 in spite of the pronatalist policies on which the government has spent in the decade leading to 2018 about 70 billion dollars

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[18] See, for example, Rotariu, Dumănescu, Hărăguş (2017) and the contribution of the author to the book coordinated by V. Gheţău (2018).

(Poon, 2018). As for the so-called theory of "the second demographic transition", I mentioned it above and will not expand here on the arguments, presented in many previous papers.[19] In brief, this is not a consistent theory – there have been epicycles added to it constantly. There is no transition – a transition presupposes the shift from one state to another, both of them well-defined, but in this case we do not know when and how the transition ends. Finally, this is not a demographic theory, since it refers to much wider social matters. In a nutshell, it was not capable to predict the trajectory of fertility at the end of the actual demographic transition in any region of the world. Meanwhile, the target and the central element to be explained and predicted by this theory was precisely the drop of fertility to very low numbers in the post-transition period of the years 1970-80, in the western countries.

Going back to the situation of Romania, there is an increasingly more substantial contribution to the birth rate by the smaller cohorts, born after 1990, which will lead to fewer births, *ceteris paribus*, and therefore to a steeper negative natural growth. The reduced mortality will also not be accompanied in the next few decades by a drop in the number of deaths, as the relatively large cohorts born after the war are reaching the older ages. Consequently, it is not very likely that the deficit of the natural growth will decrease in the future.

For migration, the second most important factor in the drop of the population of Romania and a topic in many recent analyses[20], I have presented only an approximation of its effects on population growth. The only number that is relatively reliable from the INS data is that regarding permanent migration, which, for the 1990-2017 period, has a negative balance of about 230,000. It was, however, temporary migration that led to the dramatic demographic plunge described for Romania (in terms of *resident population*). I estimated the stock of those living abroad, but with Romanian citizenship and domicile at about 2.8 million, on the basis of the INS data about the *legal population*. Moreover, I have shown there is a stock of migrants of about one million that hold on to their Romanian citizenship, but have neither their residence, nor their domicile in Romania (these are called Romanian citizens domiciled abroad).

As a result of the deficit of the balances of natural growth and of net migration, the resident population of Romania has dropped to about 19.5 million in 2018 (out of which 100,000 to 200,000 foreigners with their residence in Romania), down from 23.2 million on January 1st 1990. This drop is often seen as catastrophic, and is the base of projections up until 2050 or beyond.

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[19] See, among the works published in English, Rotariu (2006, 2009, 2010, 2011).

[20] I will mention only Dumitru Sandu, with noteworthy contributions, including in the volume coordinated by V. Gheţău (2018).

What is missing from this kind of projection is the hypothesis that not all of the "temporary" migrants are "permanent" losses for the population of Romania. A similar phenomenon happened to the population of some of the European countries in the decades immediately after the war, when an impressive number of people from Italy, Spain, or Portugal have migrated to the more developed western countries, only to eventually return to their countries of origin. Today, these are some of the main destination countries for Romanian emigrants. Improvements in the quality of life and other social factors in Romania would very likely draw a larger number of foreigners, as well as some of the Romanians who have emigrated and are still connected to the country, thus increasing the volume of the resident population.

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ANNEX 1

The evolution of the usually resident population and of the domiciled population in Romania, on the 1st of January and 1st of July, starting with 1990

YEAR	Usually resident population		Population domiciled in Romania		The difference between the domiciled population and the resident population on the 1st of January
	On the 1st of January	On the 1st of July	On the 1st of January	On the 1st of July	
1990	23,211,395	23,206,720	23,211,395	23,206,720	0
1991	23,192,274	23,185,084	23,192,274	23,185,084	0
1992	22,810,035	22,788,969	23,143,860	23,126,797	333,825
1993	22,778,533	22,755,260	23,118,745	23,098,108	340,212
1994	22,748,027	22,730,622	23,093,262	23,078,952	345,235
1995	22,712,394	22,680,951	23,062,448	23,033,618	350,054
1996	22,656,145	22,607,620	23,009,075	22,962,740	352,930
1997	22,581,862	22,545,925	22,938,405	22,903,955	356,543
1998	22,526,093	22,502,803	22,885,802	22,864,721	359,709
1999	22,488,595	22,458,022	22,852,905	22,825,196	364,310
2000	22,455,485	22,435,205	22,825,288	22,809,610	369,803
2001	22,430,457	22,408,393	22,809,546	22,791,655	379,089
2002	21,833,483	21,675,775	22,779,441	22,748,121	945,958
2003	21,627,509	21,574,365	22,733,751	22,702,149	1,106,242
2004	21,521,142	21,451,845	22,688,392	22,656,570	1,167,250
2005	21,382,354	21,319,673	22,648,514	22,621,457	1,266,160
2006	21,257,016	21,193,749	22,614,980	22,594,368	1,357,964
2007	21,130,503	20,882,980	22,582,773	22,562,913	1,452,270
2008	20,635,460	20,537,848	22,561,686	22,542,169	1,926,226
2009	20,440,290	20,367,437	22,541,941	22,520,477	2,101,651
2010	20,294,683	20,246,798	22,516,004	22,492,083	2,221,321
2011	20,199,059	20,147,657	22,480,599	22,441,740	2,281,540
2012	20,095,996	20,060,182	22,433,741	22,401,865	2,337,745
2013	20,020,074	19,988,694	22,390,978	22,359,849	2,370,904
2014	19,947,311	19,916,451	22,346,178	22,299,730	2,398,867
2015	19,875,542	19,822,250	22,312,887	22,286,392	2,437,345
2016	19,760,585	19,706,529	22,273,309	22,236,059	2,512,724
2017	19,644,350	19,591,668	22,230,843	22,213,586	2,586,493
2018	19,530,631		22,193,562	22,177,605	2,662,931

Data source: INS (Tempo Online, www.insse.ro; *Demographic Yearbook*, 2006).

ANNEX 2

The age distribution of the Romanian population in 1990 and for three categories of population in 2017, as well as the proportion of Romanians living abroad and domiciled in Romania (in %)

Age group	Total population					Women				
		2017					2017			
	1990	Domicile	Residence	Difference	*Percent abroad*	1990	Domicile	Residence	Difference	*Percent abroad*
	Five year age groups									
0- 4 years old	7.78	4.65	5.01	1.98	*5.03*	7.52	4.42	4.77	1.83	*4.95*
5- 9 years old	7.32	5.05	5.22	3.79	*8.87*	7.06	4.79	4.96	3.57	*8.90*
10-14 years old	8.47	5.11	5.37	3.15	*7.29*	8.17	4.85	5.11	2.96	*7.28*
15-19 years old	8.10	5.17	5.43	3.19	*7.28*	7.82	4.91	5.17	3.05	*7.40*
20-24 years old	8.51	5.30	5.29	5.38	*11.97*	8.23	5.06	5.06	4.99	*11.79*
25-29 years old	6.01	7.23	6.38	13.55	*22.12*	5.79	6.91	5.96	13.90	*24.02*
30-34 years old	7.36	7.59	6.66	14.58	*22.68*	7.15	7.24	6.26	14.46	*23.85*
35-39 years old	7.41	8.32	7.50	14.38	*20.41*	7.25	7.94	7.18	13.49	*20.29*
40-44 years old	6.19	8.29	7.80	11.94	*17.00*	6.10	7.92	7.45	11.43	*17.23*
45-49 years old	5.16	9.11	8.50	13.65	*17.69*	5.17	8.84	8.10	14.31	*19.34*
50-54 years old	6.21	5.47	5.71	3.64	*7.85*	6.31	5.37	5.50	4.42	*9.82*
55-59 years old	5.83	6.13	6.22	5.48	*10.54*	5.95	6.21	6.24	5.95	*11.45*
60-64 years old	5.25	6.49	6.91	3.36	*6.11*	5.49	6.80	7.25	3.52	*6.18*
65-69 years old	4.23	5.37	5.95	1.03	*2.26*	4.69	5.83	6.49	0.99	*2.04*
70-74 years old	2.10	3.57	3.99	0.43	*1.44*	2.48	4.05	4.53	0.48	*1.41*
75-79 years old	2.30	3.19	3.58	0.26	*0.97*	2.73	3.84	4.31	0.34	*1.07*
80-84 years old	1.22	2.31	2.60	0.15	*0.78*	1.45	2.88	3.25	0.21	*0.87*
85 years old and above	0.55	1.66	1.87	0.05	*0.36*	0.65	2.14	2.42	0.08	*0.45*
Total	100	100	100	100	*11.80*	100	100	100	100	*11.94*

Age group	Total population					Women				
		2017					2017			
	1990	Domicile	Residence	Difference	*Percent abroad*	1990	Domicile	Residence	Difference	*Percent abroad*
	Four large age groups									
0-14 years old	23.57	14.81	15.60	8.93	*7.12*	22.75	14.06	14.84	8.37	*7.10*
15-39 years old	37.39	33.61	31.27	51.07	*17.94*	36.24	32.05	29.63	49.88	*18.58*
40-64 years old	28.65	35.49	35.15	38.07	*12.66*	29.02	35.14	34.53	39.64	*13.47*
65 years old and above	10.40	16.09	17.99	1.93	*1.41*	11.98	18.74	21.00	2.11	*1.34*

Data source: Personal computations based on data from INS (Tempo Online, www.insse.ro).

ANNEX 3

Natural movement in the period 1990-2017, by domicile and residence

YEAR	Population domiciled in Romania			Population resident in Romania		
	Live births	Deaths	Natural growth	Live births	Deaths	Natural growth
1990	314,746	247,086	67,660			
1991	275,275	251,760	23,515			
1992	260,393	263,855	-3,462			
1993	249,994	263,323	-13,329			
1994	246,736	266,101	-19,365			
1995	236,640	271,672	-35,032			
1996	231,348	286,158	-54,810			
1997	236,891	279,315	-42,424			
1998	237,297	269,166	-31,869			
1999	234,600	265,194	-30,594			
2000	234,521	255,820	-21,299			
2001	220,368	259,603	-39,235			
2002	210,529	269,666	-59,137			
2003	212,459	266,575	-54,116			
2004	216,261	258,890	-42,629			
2005	221,020	262,101	-41,081			
2006	219,483	258,094	-38,611			
2007	214,728	251,965	-37,237			
2008	221,900	253,202	-31,302			
2009	222,388	257,213	-34,825			
2010	212,199	259,723	-47,524			
2011	196,242	251,439	-55,197			
2012	201,104	255,539	-54,435	180,714	253,716	-73,002

YEAR	Population domiciled in Romania			Population resident in Romania		
	Live births	Deaths	Natural growth	Live births	Deaths	Natural growth
2013	214,932	250,466	-35,534	188,599	247,475	-58,876
2014	202,501	255,604	-53,103	198,740	254,965	-56,225
2015	206,190	262,981	-56,791	201,995	262,442	-60,447
2016	203,231	257,547	-54,316	200,009	257,215	-57,206
2017	205,835	261,745	-55,910	202,151	261,402	-59,251

Data source: INS (Tempo Online, www.insse.ro).

ANNEX 4

Transnational migration in the period 1990-2017

YEAR	Domicile change			Residence change		
	Immigrants	Migrants	Balance	Immigrants	Migrants	Balance
1990		96,929	-96,929			
1991	1,602	44,160	-42,558			
1992	1,753	31,152	-29,399			
1993	1,269	18,446	-17,177			
1994	878	17,146	-16,268			
1995	4,458	25,675	-21,217			
1996	2,053	21,526	-19,473			
1997	6,600	19,945	-13,345			
1998	11,907	17,536	-5,629			
1999	10,078	12,594	-2,516			
2000	11,024	14,753	-3,729			
2001	10,350	9,921	429			
2002	6,582	8,154	-1,572			
2003	3,267	10,673	-7,406			
2004	2,987	13,082	-10,095			
2005	3,704	10,938	-7,234			
2006	7,714	14,197	-6,483			
2007	9,575	8,830	745			
2008	10,030	8,739	1,291	138,929	302,796	-163,867
2009	8,606	10,211	-1,605	135,844	246,626	-110,782
2010	7,059	7,906	-847	149,885	197,985	-48,100
2011	15,538	18,307	-2,769	147,685	195,551	-47,866
2012	21,684	18,001	3,683	167,266	170,186	-2,920
2013	23,897	19,056	4,841	153,646	161,755	-8,109
2014	36,644	11,251	25,393	136,035	172,871	-36,836
2015	23,093	15,235	7,858	132,795	194,718	-61,923
2016	27,863	22,807	5,056	137,455	207,578	-70,123
2017	50,199	23,156	27,043	177,435	242,193	-64,758

Data source: INS (Tempo Online, www.insse.ro).

SOCIOLOGY AND THEATRE, A TOO SHORT BEGINNING. PAVEL CÂMPEANU'S STUDIES[1]

MIRUNA RUNCAN[2]

ABSTRACT. In Romania, sociological investigations on theatre are mere illusions that drift further and further away into the sky. In the last 30 years, a few theatres commissioned surveys to measure, as best as they could, the structure and the preferences of their own audience, over shorter (in the case of the 2003 first survey draft at Odeon Theatre, the research lasted no more than one weekend) or longer spans of time (in 2015, at Nottara Theatre, IMAS conducted a survey during a month; the survey applied at the Bucharest National Theatre in 2013 remained a legend, or a rumour rather, as the management treated it with mysterious silence). This paper tries to follow the intentions and the destiny of the researches and surveys dedicated to the theatre sociology by Pavel Câmpeanu and his small team between 1968-1974.

Keywords: Sociology, Theatre History, Television, Audience Studies.

The reason for the mutual disregard between theatre and sociology (beyond the superficial economic explanations like "there is no funding") remains merely a mystery. While in the second period of the "Ceausescu era" this disinterest is easily explicable, as both the faculties in Bucharest and Cluj, and the Sociology Institute of the Romanian Academy were suppressed in 1976, the three post-communist decades seem to offer no explanation - except for the fact that every government seemed ever more incompetent and that, on average, the ministers of culture changed every 1.3 years.

Thus, the sociological studies on theatre conducted by Pavel Câmpeanu are singular in this bleak desert which has become a tradition. They all date back to the same interval, 1968-1974, and testify to a targeted and consequent endeavour, that can only be explained through the fact that, at the time, the author ran a small team of researchers at the Office for Studies and Polls of the National Radio and TV Broadcasting company. It is possible that this activity, that is clearly collateral to the Office's normal work tasks, was part of a complementary project, about which the management of the institution may or

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may not have been aware. Considering the fact that Pavel Câmpeanu published, in 1972, *Radio, televiziune, public/Radio, Television and Audiences* (Editura ştiinţifică), in 1973, *Oamenii şi teatrul. Privire sociologică asupra publicului /People and Theatre. A Sociologic Landscape on Audiences* (Meridiane Publishing House), in 1979, *Oamenii şi televiziunea: privire sociologică asupra telespectatorului/ People and Television: A Sociologic Landscape on the TV Spectator* (Meridiane Publishing House), and six years later, together with Ştefana Steriade, *Oamenii şi filmul. O privire sociologică asupra spectatorului de film/ People and Film. A Sociologic Landscape on the Film Spectator* (Meridiane Publishing House), it's clear that this was a personal project and, at least to a certain extent, an institutional one, but strangely and sadly pushed to the edge of the cultural life.

The period when Câmpeanu's first studies dedicated to theatre, film and television (sometimes interconnectedly) are published is a highly dynamic one in the country's political history. After the 9th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, the country experienced rapid economic growth and a relative openness in terms of ideology, culture and external policy, raising high hopes, both inside and outside its borders. Legislation went through an accelerated process of reforms at all levels, as in 1968, the country's administrative organization changed from the cumbersome regions to the much flexible counties. A lot of industrial, as well as housing buildings had been erected (the industrialization process saw a new impulse, which caused a new major migration from rural to urban areas, after the one that took place in 1950-1960); internal and international tourism, including towards the outside of Romania (with an emphasis on socialist countries) was favoured by small and relatively stable prices: the Romanian seaside had broadened its seasonal accommodation offer and was always full.

In this context of apparent prosperity and openness, for a long time, the television broadcasting company (officially opened in 1956-1957, with a second national channel starting 1968) would play a central role as a unique, controlled instrument, not just for propaganda, but also for education and entertainment purposes, at a never-before seen level of mass consumerism. That's why, placed in the social and political context of the time, the sociological studies conducted by Câmpeanu's team look like natural and necessary scientific endeavours. Nevertheless, the paradox is that he and his team had an interest to paint an encompassing landscape of cultural consumption, in which television (and to a much smaller extent, the radio) is a mere contrast and control element, not the central topic of his project, in its entirety.

Pavel Câmpeanu, an Adventurous Thinker

According to the spelling rules in effect until 1990, Pavel Câmpeanu (1920-2003) signed Cîmpeanu. As a young man, he was an underground communist (the Communist Party was declared illegal in 1924) and was imprisoned at

Jilava and especially Caransebeș alongside almost all the members remaining in the country (a good part of members escaping persecutions by flying to USSR); in the latter prison, he even shared a cell with Nicolae Ceausescu at some point[3]. The biographic notes we've had access to so far do not mention anything about his studies, but he probably graduated from the Bucharest University after the war. After 1944, he took up rather minor jobs in the party, as a university assistant and then lecturer, then starting 1967, he led the Office for Studies and Polls of the National Radio and TV Broadcasting company[4], a department established ten years after the television company was born. During those years, he published complex articles, especially in academic journals in Romania and abroad. However, his studies on theatre are first published in cultural magazines, such as *Contemporanul* and *Teatrul*, while a chapter dedicated to the sociology of audiences is included in *Teatrul Românesc Contemporan 1944-1974 (Romanian Contemporary Theatre. 1944-1974)*, an extensive work commissioned by the Academy for Social and Political Studies to mark 30 years of communist rule[5].

Yet, from a historical viewpoint, Câmpeanu proves to be a very interesting character. Like other communist intellectuals, he was disappointed with the post-1977 economic and political evolutions and, of course, shocked by the dissolution of the psychology and sociology faculties, as well as of the research institutes after 1976; thus, during Ceausescu's last decade, he started gathering material and creating cards for a secret study on political science dedicated to Stalinist totalitarian regimes. After his own memoirs[6], he started writing this paper in 1971, the same year he met and befriended the American sociologist Jerry Klein at an international congress. In 1976, Klein visited Romania and, despite Ceausescu's interdictions on home visits to Romanian citizens, Câmpeanu himself. As a whole, until 1976, the secret paper was around 1,000 pages long and was kept in three copies at three different addresses, for fear of an unannounced Securitate raid. In 1977, when Ștefana Steriade, his collaborator and partner, received her first visa to see her daughter who was studying in the USA, Câmpeanu had a bewildering

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[3] Al. Cistelecan, "Pavel Câmpeanu" in Al. Cistelecan and Andrei State, *Plante exotice. Teoria și practica marxiștilor români* (*Exotic Plants. Theory and Practice of Romanian Marxists*), Cluj-Napoca, Tact Publishing House, 2015. Regarding his detention years, the illegal party apparatus and the "Ceausescu era", Câmpeanu published a book of memoirs, *Ceausescu, anii numărătorii inverse* (*Ceausescu, the Countdown Years*), Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2002.

[4] In his *O tribună captivantă. Televiziune, ideologie, societate în România socialistă (A Captivating Tribune. Television, Ideology, Society in Socialist Romania) (1965-1983)*, Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, Alexandru Matei includes brief information about this Office, though he does not make a careful review of Câmpeanu's books.

[5] Alterescu, Simion, Zafirescu, Ion (coordinator) *Teatrul Românesc Cotemporan (Romanian Contemporary Theatre). 1944-1974*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1975.

[6] See Pavel Câmpeanu, "*Povestea unei cărți apărute în Statele Unite*" (*Story of a Book Published in the United States*), *Observator cultural*, no. 102, 12.02.2002.
https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/povestea-unei-carti-aparute-in-statele-unite/

idea to narrow the huge material down to an acceptable length (about 300 pages), translate it into French and send the manuscript to his buddy Klein through Ştefana Steriade; the original goal was not to publish it, but to have an informed opinion and feedback (information sources in Romania were obviously very precarious). After the manuscript was handed to Jerry Klein, the author heard no news about the fate of his paper.

In 1980, as his son, Gheorghe Câmpeanu, had emigrated to the USA, our sociologist was forced to leave the National Broadcasting Company. He was 60 years old. In autumn however, both he and Ştefana visited their children in New York and were, of course, invited to visit Klein at home. This is where the coup de théâtre took place: Jerry handed him a recently published book, *The Syncretic Society* by Felipe Garcia Casals, with a foreword by and under the care of the renowned American sociologist and political expert Alfred G. Meyer, the director of the Russian Center of the University of Michigan. Klein and Meyer had translated Câmpeanu's book from French into English and carefully published it under a fake name, so as not to cause any harm to the author when he would return to his country.

In the second half of the 9th decade, *The Syncretic Society* (politely declined by Humanitas Publishing House and published by Polirom as late as 2002!) was wonderfully received in both the USA, and Europe. This little miracle (considering the difficulties of the times) brings the author invitations to conferences and to classes of the world's biggest universities, as well as a chance to create his true big project compared to which the adventurous book published by Sharpe Publishing House in 1985 was but a draft. Over the following years, he would publish a trilogy based on his own political theory about dictatorial Stalinism and post-Stalinism, from a very personal Marxist perspective[7]: *The Origins of Stalinism: From Leninist Revolution to Stalinist Society*, (translated by Michel Vale) Taylor & Frances, 1986; *The genesis of the Stalinist social order*, (translated by Michel Vale), Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe,1988; *Exit: Toward Post-Stalinism*, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1990.

Back in Romania, Pavel Câmpeanu was a founding member of the Group for Social Dialogue, where he set up a centre for sociological research, analysed the first free elections of 1990 [Pavel Câmpeanu, Mihne Berindei, Alina Combes, *România înainte şi după 20 mai* (*Romania before and after 20 May*), Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1990], and in the following years, published *De patru ori in faţa urnelor* (*Four Times at the Ballots*), Bucharest, All Educaţional Publishing House, 1993, *România: coada pentru hrana. Un mod de viaţă* (*Romania: Food Queues. A Way of Life*), Bucharest, Litera Internaţional Publishing House, 1994, *Ceausescu, anii numărătorii inverse (Ceausescu, the Countdown Years)*, Polirom Publishing House 2002.

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[7] See Al. Cistelecan, quoted chapter.

Articles in *Teatrul* Magazine

The first study by Câmpeanu's team published in *Teatrul* magazine came out in a rather happy context. We're in the fall of 1969, when Romanian culture had enjoyed a few years of ideological relaxation, causing an effervescent re-synchronization with international lines of thought and aesthetics at all levels. The October issue of the magazine ambitiously aims at opening an extensive debate on spectatorship, putting together longer or shorter texts, all of them very personal, dedicated to theatre audiences. The first part of this journal brings together an impressive number of contributors willing to be a part of this file: the editor in chief, Radu Popescu, the Academy fellow Victor Eftimiu (with funny recollections of audiences' reactions from all around the world), poet Nina Cassian and playwright Aurel Baranga, a rather chaotic vox-pop investigation with replies by cultural names, TV stars, sportsmen, etc

Câmpeanu's study is preceded by another sociologic intervention[8], a type of essay/statement of intents written by Dimitrie Gusti's former student, Octavian Neamțu[9], at the time, the founder and leader of the Centre for Research on Youth Issues. The most important piece of information arising from his essay is that, according to the data in the statistics directory, between 1938 and 1948, the theatre public increased by 75.8% (sure, first and foremost due to an increase in the number of subsidized theatres all around the country, from 6 to 40); and that, in 1968, 4,303,000 had gone to the theatre, seeing no less than 12,889 representations. About this simple numerical data, a correction must be made, for they are based on the number of tickets sold: it is easy to understand that a consistent spectator may go to a higher number of shows in the same year - thus, it is evident that the number of individual spectators is infinitely lower than that of sold tickets.

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[8] Octavian Neamțu, "*Sociologia publicului de teatru*" (*Sociology of Theatre Public*), *Teatrul*, no. 10, 1969, p. 39-41.

[9] Octavian Neamțu (1910-1976), Romanian sociologist, collaborator of the legendary sociologist Dimitrie Gusti in his teams of monographers in 1930-1946; director of the "Prince Charles" Royal Foundation, founder of the magazine Romanian Sociology; after 1948, he was removed, became a teacher at a school on the outskirts of Bucharest, then worked in the glass industry, was involved in Lucretiu Pătrășcanu's political trial and arrested for a year and a half. During the short thaw period, he was recruited as a researcher at the Academy's Institute for Economic Research (a research group whose very name avoided any references to sociology, even if it did undertake such studies) in 1956-1958. From there, he was transferred to the Academy's Institute for Documentation, and after 1960, together with Ovidiu Bădina, he started editing the series of *Opere* (*Works*) by Dimitrie Gusti. When this essay was published, he led the Centre for Research on Youth Issues, According to http://www.cooperativag.ro/octavian-neamtu-sau-valoarea-devotamentului/.

From our standpoint today, "A Sociologist in Search of His Spectators" should be read as a first study with a double purpose: on the one hand, to convince theatre managers, the artistic world and party leaders that the sociological research of the artistic environment brings clear advantages to understanding the audiences; and, on the other hand, that such research could offer scientific perspectives on the elaboration of optimum repertory policies, and even on strategies to develop already existing audiences.

> For a long time, sociology was destined for distrust - especially among those who could have used it. Why would theatre people disregard this rule? Anyhow, so far, sociologists in our country have not given them any reason to do otherwise. Thus, the first and most undeniable reason of distrust is the absence of sociological research from theatre life. To this, we add the element of novelty, so the fact that people are not used to the nature of sociological investigations: the ambition to measure the immeasurable (sensitivity, taste, uncontrolled reactions). [...] Sociology's grandeur and modesty consist [sic!] in the fact that it may give answers based on concrete investigations and on verifiable analysis. But until the flight of sociologists to planet Utopia is organized, until each theatre - or at least the Theatres' Department - has its own sociologist, until the inherent means - derisory in value, but fabulous in accomplishment - of such investigations are identified, we can only speak of tangential or fortuitous accomplishments.[10]

The content of this work aims at comparatively explaining the evolution, and then the contraction, of theatre and cinema audiences after 1960, a year when television sets had already been distributed in extremely high numbers, indicating mass consumption. In 1969, the population most affected was made up of adults between 25 and 59; evidently, cinema audiences dropped more, as it had been substantially (almost six times) higher. I think that it is important to mention that, for non-specialized readers, Câmpeanu felt compelled to make a crucial distinction, between audience and audiences. He defined the *potential* audience and the differences between this and the *real* audience. He even tried to categorise the particularities of the audience. How could sociology investigations benefit theatre? From his point of view, it could concretely measure how the repertory influenced consumption, how frequently a targeted audience was present, it could help breach the gaps between audiences, serve audiences with optimum products, etc.

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[10] Pavel Câmpeanu, "*Un sociolog în căutarea spectatorilor*" (*A Sociologist in Search of His Spectators*), *Teatrul* no. 10, 1969, p. 42-44.

The study, inherently limited to the urban area (Bucharest, Bacău, and Codlea), simultaneously makes use of the statistical directory (which causes clear limits, recognised by the team itself), as well as questionnaires by age and professional groups. This is certainly not subtle enough, just like the sample isn't very convincing either, but it already causes a surprise: percentagewise, at the beginning of 1970, the most stable theatre audience proved to be the young audience, mainly made up of high school and undergraduate students. Modestly, Câmpeanu concludes with some dilemmas regarding the in-depth reasons (besides the competition induced by television) underlying this contradiction between different types of audiences, as well as with salutary strategic proposals: theatre directors should make sociological investigations about why loyal audiences come to their theatre, and what those who gave up have to reproach.

One year later, Pavel Câmpeanu was back in *Teatrul* journal with a broader, two-part study which would also be included in the 1973 book in an improved form, as we shall see. The first one was modestly entitled "Sociological Studies on Theatre. Authors and Plays" and was dedicated to the preferences (or rather to the theatre knowledge turned into preferences) of a sample of (just) 392 subjects, all of whom lived in Bucharest. Bizarrely enough, the author omits mentioning the numerical values of the professional or of the age groups, even though these values, only known to the team, were later used to elaborate the percentages included in the graphs. However, from the very beginning, he points out that this research is experimental and unprecedented, and thus raises multiple methodological and/or technical questions.

> This investigation may rightfully be considered an experiment, a pre-test for a future research which, taking advantage of certain incipient shortcomings, can paint a more valid and more nuanced picture of the inclinations of our theatre audience.[11]

The first psycho-social details he felt the need to make before confronting the reader with statistical data, referred to a correct differentiation between personal taste and the expression of preferences, as long as the two concepts were in a dialectical, not in a derivation or subordination relationship. Preferences depend on a specific context, taste is a hierarchical process, conditioned by the subject's emotional memory. Educating one's taste obviously depends on the consistent broadening of the spectatorial accumulated and crystalized experiences.

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[11] Pavel Câmpeanu, "*Studii de sociologie a teatrului. Autori și piese*" (*Sociological Studies on Theatre. Authors and Plays*), *Teatrul*, no. 11, 1970, p. 81.

Nevertheless, the advantages of the methodology employed are to be appreciated, despite that the total sample is far from being truly relevant: it hierarchizes and motivates preferences, offering data about information / communication with spectators. The focus was on preferences about time, theatre, favourite plays, beloved authors and actors.

When it comes to the preferences arising from consumption practice, Câmpeanu questioned the intervention of both theatre, and extra-theatre criteria (proximity to the theatre, transport, ticket cost etc.). Considering the fact that performances were chosen mostly on actors' fame, he explains this through emotional memory, but also through

> ... the difficulty, for certain segments of the audience, to distinguish between message and messenger, hence the tendency to confuse the interpreter with the character.[12]

From here on, the sociologist succumbs to the need to generalize, emphasizing the audience's superior capacity to remember the most easily perceptible and sensorially accessible side of a show, "that can be translated into a vast personal, extra-theatrical and even extra-artistic experience". Based on a sample of 392 subjects, while the population of Bucharest was drawing close to two million, we must admit that such statements seem rather intuitive, perhaps even rash.[13]

Anyhow, the results of the research and the author's interpretations are much more interesting. To reduce dispersion and show cohesion points, the most frequent answers were considered: for the question about authors, answers show a cohesion of 60%, for plays, 31%, and 26% for actors. This seems paradoxical, as the results show a picture that is almost inversely proportional to the number answers, the funnel mentioned at the beginning. Maximum dispersion falls on actors, which can be explained by the fact that contact with authors is related to the degree of school education, and with canon, while the actors' presence in public life and in the media induces more diverse preferences.

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[12] Idem, p. 83.

[13] Remember that, quoting the statistical directory, in the above-mentioned article published in *Teatrul*, Octavian Neamțu stated that, in 1968, a total number of 4,303,000 tickets were sold at national level. Considering the ratio between the number of theatres in the country and those in Bucharest, we can estimate that, out of these four million, at least a third of the tickets had been sold in the capital city. Surely, the fact that the sample used was so small was directly connected to the very small number of researchers in the team and, evidently, to the lack of material resources that could have allowed for a broader, therefore more relevant sample.

In short, when it comes to authors, Romanian classic playwright I. L. Caragiale scores 30%, contemporary Aurel Baranga 20%, and Shakespeare only 10%. When these results are corroborated with their frequency in the table of occupations, results are explicable: playwrights were first introduced to the subjects via schools, and only later as spectators, which is why cohesion results depend on the sedimentary memory of childhood and adolescence.

> The influence of school over these preferences is the more sustainable, the shorter the school cycle and the more limited the experience in terms of theatre or of dramatic literature after leaving schools - and vice versa.[14]

Romanian authors hold a dominant position compared to foreign writers (21 vs. 9 out of all the answers), but it's explicable that, in the case of this result, Pavel Câmpeanu avoids any political considerations – even if we can realise now that the unbalance is directly related to the education system of the period. Instead, in the theatre play section, despite the fact that it represents the area with the smallest number of results (226 subjects, 58 titles, out of which only 54 refer to real theatre, and the rest are errors, books, operettas, etc.), the results seem to support the author's above-quoted statement: Caragiale' *A Lost Letter* gets 16%, Delavrancea's *Apus de soare* 10%, Caragiale's *D'ale carnavalului* and *Năpasta,* Baranga's *Opinia publică, Romeo and Juliet,* G. B. Shaw's *The Millionairess*, and *Hamlet* score 5%.

In the case of plays, autochthonous ones are also indubitably dominant, and Câmpeanu does not highlight, once again, the relation between repertory constructions and Communist Party and press directives regarding original dramaturgy. Conversely, he notices the constant preference, throughout all age groups, for comedy and entertainment, which he (consistently, as we will see below) treats as indicative of a rather precarious theatre culture. In fact, carefully counting the gaps and contradictions between the indicated favourite actors and plays, as well as those between taste and preferences, he does not hesitate in throwing rather rash accusation.

> *… the inadequate understanding of the theatre phenomenon by a part of the audience - channelling the need for entertainment towards theatre through an unjustified or partly justified transfer.* [emphasis mine][15]

The last two parts of the study, published in the following edition of *Teatrul* magazine, dedicated to theatres and actors, must have seemed much more interesting and more effective for that time. The editors decided to place this article in the first half of the publication, not at the end, as it happened in

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[14] Ibidem, p. 85.
[15] Ibidem, p. 87.

the October number: this shows that they thought the content was important; or maybe the fact that the publication of the first part (in which the editors felt they had to include some "explanations" in a box) had generated certain reactions from the theatrical milieu.

This time, the research aimed at outlining the "personality" of each theatre in relation with the audience's declared preferences. Still, the author promises at the very beginning that, in the end, he will correlate the facts referring to theatres with those about actors. Since the entire material is about Bucharest, the global order of preferences is as follows: National Theatre 60%, Bulandra Theatre 21%, Comedy Theatre 7,5%, Nottara Theatre 7%, Giuleşti Theatre 5%, Teatrul Mic 2%. As we notice, the distance between the first and the last positions is significant, while the other theatres (Vasilescu Theatre, Ion Creangă Theatre, etc.) got a bizarre score of 1%, despite the fact that, when the analysis was conducted, their repertories were based on popular, widely appreciated performances. A plausible explanation is that a significant part of the respondents only rarely went to the theatre, and the National Theatre was the first name that came to mind. On the other hand, however, as respondents do not differentiate (by their own fault, or the questionnaire's) between dramatic and musical theatres, Constantin Tănase Theatre and Opereta Theatre score a significant 27%, which, as far as the author is concerned, shows that:

> ... there is an urgent need to conduct thorough studies about the social function of entertainment, about certain delimitations between theatre performances and (specialized) entertainment shows in relation to a potential audience profoundly marked by the broad urbanization process unfolding so vigorously in our country.[16]

The team is not satisfied with global data, but confronts data related to the age group with that related to occupational groups. The necessary corrections in relation to the first result are thus obtained. The National Theatre and Bulandra Theatre dominate the groups over 35, Nottara Theatre obtains a relatively higher percentage among under 35-year olds; the same for Giuleşti Theatre. From an occupational standpoint, workers are naturally dominant in the case of Giuleşti Theatre (situated in an industrial neighbourhood) with 50%, followed by the Comedy Theatre - 37%, and the National Theatre - 28%. Intellectuals are dominant in the case of Nottara Theatre with 36%, Bulandra with 27%, while the National Theatre obtains a strange 23%. The same three theatres are also preferred by a relevant group of high school and undergraduate and students: Nottara - 27%, Bulandra - 20%, National Theatre - 23%.

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[16] Pavel Câmpeanu, *Studii de sociologia teatrului II. Preferinţele spectatorilor: teatre şi actori* (*Theatre Sociology Studies II. Spectators' Preferences: Theatres and Actors*), *Teatrul* no. 12, 1970, p 18.

Considerably increasing the consistency of the analysis, Câmpeanu notes that the preference for a certain theatre also depends on extra-theatrical factors; consequently, the study also aimed at investigating the motivation for these preferences. The set of reasons included the venue, the group of actors, the repertory, access to tickets, the location of the theatre. The motivation questionnaire was also moderated by questions regarding how often the respondent went to the theatre over the last 3-4 years (1 performance, 2-4, 5-6, more than 6). It is thus obvious that, the more frequently the spectator goes to the theatre, the higher the percentages obtained by the actor's team and the repertory, i.e. the artistic factors per se. The group of actors determine preference for a theatre in the case of 56% of spectators going to 2-4 shows, of 44% of those who responded 5-6 shows, and of 53% of those over 6. Along the same lines, the repertory is a determinant factor in the case of 31% of those in the 2-4 group, of 39% for those who responded 5-6, and of 41% for those over 6.

> *The most attractive factor determining preference for a certain theatre is, for all audience categories, regardless of how familiar they are with the theatre - so possibly of their theatre culture - the team of actors.* [emphasis mine][17]

In what regards the section dedicated to actor preference, dispersion reaches maximum levels. However, it is absolutely necessary to keep in mind extra-theatrical factors: a tendency to create models, the actor's iconic/star reputation, how often they appear in films or on TV. The research also categorised preferences based on sex and occupation, not just age. Ranked by the number of preferences, in the global count, the first place was held by Radu Beligan, followed by Florin Piersic, Ştefan Bănică, Octavian Cotescu, Carmen Stănescu. Toma Caragiu, Coca Andronescu and Silviu Stănculescu shared positions 5-8, Stela Popescu and Victor Rebengiuc were ranked 9-10, while positions 11-13 were held (astoundingly, I might add, if one considers the enormous difference of age and style between them) by Irina Petrescu – best known as young film star, George Calboreau – an old drama and tragedy actor, and Dem Rădulescu – specialised in light/commercial comedy.

The author notices how few women made the list (4 out of 14), but his explanation is rather confusing (as he says that women mostly voted for men actors). But, of course, "... when it comes to actor preferences, occupation is an active socio-demographic element".[18] In the case of intellectuals, actresses hold higher positions, except for Stela Popescu, while Dem Rădulescu is totally

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[17] Idem, p. 21.
[18] Idem, p. 23.

absent. Here, we should reflect on the classification in which the two are seen as preponderantly entertainment artists, i.e. who cannot be taken seriously - schooled intellectuals are evidently rather snobby.

Another point to discuss is how Câmpeanu refined his explanations regarding the differentiation between drama actor *vs.* comedy actor, as the extra-theatrical representation variables result in confusions that majorly impact the results. In our case, the perception that Irina Petrescu is a "dramatic" actress probably stems from cinema, while Coca Andronescu and Octavian Cotescu are likely associated to the characters of *Tanța si Costel,* from the TV humour show; Toma Caragiu is associated to TV sketches more than theatre roles, in contrast with Rebengiuc (theatre, as well as film), who paradoxically does not make it into the first five positions.

So many decades later, we should also reflect (for the authors don't do this) on the formidable cohesion, in the case of all age and occupational groups, when ranking Radu Beligan first. His formidable popularity in 1970 (and of course for a long time after) is based on a series of combined reasons, prevailingly extra-theatrical I would say: he was not just an actor (ingrained in collective memory as Rică Venturiano character, in both film and radio), but also a highly influential public figure: a theatre director and member of the Central Committee, an international official of the International Theatre Institute, who appeared a lot on television (not necessarily as an actor, but as a cozeur intellectual and institution manager who was popularly charming, as he talked to spectators and listeners about everything and anything from a civilian position). Still:

> From the public's perspective, the same actor - at least from the standpoint of the preferences he induces - gains an image which is sometimes considerably different from one age group to the other. Each actor, seen as the same person and thus having invariable value, is painted by the audience into extremely varied pictures.[19]

The analysis of the full list of actors (45 names in total) also includes those who didn't score high enough to make it among the first 13 positions. Here, results change: there are 28 people in the drama group, and just 18 in comedy, while actors under 35 are dominant. This corrective can offer a much clearer image, as the very dispersion of preferences broadens the landscape and testifies to a certain dynamic of the spectator's horizon, despite the small size of the sample. Furthermore, at this point, the study shows one of its great merits, as it precisely captures (as other studies will confirm) a mutation, a generational turning point. Pavel Câmpeanu thus takes the liberty to reflect on this with a certain enthusiastic kind of lyricism:

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[19] Idem, p. 26.

... the spectators who are most open from all viewpoints and most violently worried about the juvenile need for projection and identification, for which a model or a star becomes a hope for integration into a so far unknown life - youngsters between 15 and 24 - make up the only age group that more frequently opts for drama, rather than comedy actors. Therefore, beyond these extravagant and sometimes slimy clothes, beyond the long hair, the beards and the goatees, beyond these too short, too long or too colourful skirts, beyond these eyes covered in too much make up, this worrying need for rhythms, screams, cigarettes and loud processions, beyond all these conducts that cause elderly people's frowning, suspicion, disapproval or even aversion - lies a cloudy consciousness about the gravity of life, a respect for sadness, the need for an inexorable and disturbing theatre in its searches, totally different from the type of theatre that seems especially appreciated by people who are well-dressed, who wear proper haircuts and make up, for whom the doubts of integration are in the past and who, on their way to see *A Flea in Her Ear,* harshly admonish beard-wearers on their way to the so small Cassandra hall to see the stirring youth play *Chips with Everything*.[20]

Not least, the correlation between theatre and actor preferences, as promised early in the introduction to the study, is also surprising. The National Theatre holds supremacy in this case too (with 42 names), the Comedy Theatre drops dramatically, with just 2 actors (not Beligan), as does Nottara, with just 5; on the other hand, Giuleşti Theatre increases to 13 actors, while Teatrul Mic holds 12 preferred actors. This is a good opportunity for Pavel Câmpeanu to highlight once more the dialectics between taste and preferences, as well as the fact that the mostly young team of Teatrul Mic proves solid among devoted theatregoers, despite not including TV stars.

Interestingly, the author explains Beligan's absence from among the preferred names at the Comedy Theatre by the fact that some actors travel a lot between theatres and are not always identified with the group of the theatre that employs them. As mentioned above, the actor's strong position in the top of preferences is primordially connected to notoriety, not acting. However, this dominance is contradicted by the preferences of young intellectuals, as well as of students, who rank Florin Piersic first, perceived as dramatic actor (probably because of highly resonant shows like *Of Mice and Men, The Idiot,* etc.). Therefore:

A look at these graphs shows that hopes for concordance were very much derisory. [...] **It's likely that, when forming an opinion about this or that theatre, the group of actors contributes less, or anyhow**

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[20] Idem, 27-28. *A Flea in Her Ear* by Georges Feydeau, a voudeville from the XIX century was, at the moment, one of the most popular shows in Bucharest the season Campeanu made his research. *Chips with Everything* by Arnold Wesker is a political anty-war drama, and was recently staged, with a great critical and audience succes, at the theatre of the Theatre and Film Institute.

less directly than what the spectators themselves believe. It's also possible that the public prestige of an actor is very much cultivated outside the theatre he works for, and independently of himself (especially through public manifestation tools, such as film, television, radio, mass media, etc.). [emphasis mine][21]

Compared to the analysis basis, the author's conclusions at the end of the study seem to a great extent based on personal impressions, rather than demonstrated or demonstrable. For example, this hierarchy of the audiences as a whole:

Theatres have a consistent, competent, but small audience - and another one, fluctuating, accidental, less informed, but very broad in its entirety, pushed towards theatre by mainly extra-theatrical aspirations and requirements, which, among others, show improper ways to understand the stage message. Finally, there is a third type of audience, characterized by theatrical insertion, who do not say no to talking about their very own kind of theatre, but that theatre lives more in their imagination rather than in reality.[22]

Still, these conclusions are offering possible ideas and projects, very sensibly suggested to the theatres; they seem to target the cultural leaders who could have wanted (or would have been wise enough to wish for) truly relevant investigations, beyond improvisation, focusing on the core of the theatrical praxis:

... theatre does not need testifying, but participative sociology. In this sense, I think it is necessary to move from studying the audience globally (as it happened in our inquiry) to a differential study on the audience, starting from general response to the pressure system mentioned above. [...] As far as I am concerned, I believe that the most interesting approach would be a profound psycho-sociological study on the mechanism of a theatre success at artistic, social and individual level.[23]

Since no authority actively encouraged or supported these proposals, as we will see, Pavel Câmpeanu tried to continue his project, with the few resources he had. As much as it was possible.

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[21] Idem, p. 29.
[22] Idem.
[23] Idem.

People and Theatre

The volume *People and Theatre. A Sociological Outlook on the Audience* was published in 1973 by Meridiane Publishing House in Bucharest. It contains several studies conducted between 1969-1972, including those published in *Teatrul* magazine, revised and enhanced to a certain extent. That is why we shall not go over them again, except to mark the differences. The book follows a logical organization, into several sections made up of a varying - both as structure, methodology, and perspective - number of subchapters, each of them a self-standing research. We assume that all these (with one bizarre exception to which we shall return) were made by the same Office for Studies and Polls (OSS) of the National Radio Broadcasting company. Nowadays, it's difficult to estimate to what extent those investigations, except for the one about television theatre shows, were conducted with the knowledge and consent of the institutional leaders.

The first chapter, entitled *În căutarea titlurilor (Searching for Titles)*, is a research based on a big sample of 7,500 people, in which the team[24] aims at investigating how titles of theatre plays are assimilated and structured in people's memory. Despite such a big sample and the fact that the subjects mentioned 500 titles, the results are trivial, very similar to those in the article about authors and plays, published in *Teatrul* Magazine. Therefore, we have the same *Lost letter*, the same *Apus de soare (Sunset)*, but also satirical comedies by Aurel Baranga that are sometimes ranked very high, such as *Mielul Turbat (The Furious Lamb)* and *Opinia publică (The Public Opinion)*.

The section *Publicul mamă* (*Mother Audience*) has various subchapters which make up distinct investigations: "*Un deceniu într-un teatru*" (*A Decade in a Theatre*) analyses the accounting and coverage data of the Bulandra Theatre in relation to its repertory between 1960-1970. This is quite an interesting research, as the host theatre is compared both to the other theatres in Bucharest, and to those at national level. In this case, one may suspect that if this wasn't commissioned (institutionally impossible), at least it proves a good collaboration with the theatre management, especially with the legendary literary manager, Tudor Steriade[25], but also with the general manager, theatre director, Liviu Ciulei.

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[24] In the introduction of this chapter, Pavel Câmpeanu is kind and open enough to mention his young colleagues in the National Radio and TV Broadcasting company OSS: Petre Baron, Octavian Buia, Simona Herșcovici, Jean Popovici.

[25] Tudor Steriade (1926-2015), translator, working alone or in collaboration with his colleague Lia Crișan, of tens of theatre plays, most of them from Russian. He was the literary manager of the Bulandra Theatre for well over three decades.

Here, Câmpeanu makes the same mistake as in the 1969 article, assimilating sold tickets (on average, approximately 255,000 per year) with the number of spectators. On the other hand, we must admit that, since the research is solely based on the theatre's administrative papers, he could not have instruments based on which to approximate the relation between the number of tickets and the number of actual spectators. Even so, the theatre had reasons to be proud: the average percentage of spectators/tickets sold by drama theatres, at country level, was 2.4% in that decade, while Bulandra's average figure was more than double, 5.5%, with a room occupancy coefficient of approximately 70%.

The team aimed at analysing the success (based on a correlation between the total number of spectators, the number of shows per season, and the number of spectators per representation). They thus compared the performances played for one season only, with the productions that made it through 5-7 seasons. The resulting ratio was 1/6, or 15 performances out of 88 titles, to be more exact, were qualified as great successes. Still, in the season1966-1967, we notice a particularity in terms of great successes.

> In terms of Romanian original drama, unsuccessful shows are predominant, while in foreign dramaturgy, things are different. *In the seventh decade, the audience rarely preferred original plays to foreign ones.* [emphasis mine][26]

The seasons when successes are predominant are 1964-65 until '68. The most favourable season is 1965-66 (evidently, corresponding to the implementation of Liviu Ciulei's fresh managerial programme). Yet, numerical data is not always converging. The team of sociologists thus decides to centre the comparison on the first criterion, related to the total number of spectators, correlating the others criteria. Therefore, it becomes clear that, compared to its public success, Bulandra Theatre's repertory profile is a cosmopolitan one, asking a certain theatre culture from spectators, even if its most important shows address general audiences:

> The general quality of this repertory of great successes resides in their literary quality: Shakespeare and Shaw, Brecht, Tennessee Williams and Caragiale make up an encouraging landscape of preferences established through facts, characterizing both the Bulandra Theatre, and its audience in a complimentary manner.[27]

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[26] Pavel Cîmpeanu, *Oamenii și teatrul. Privire sociologică asupra publicului (People and Theatre. A Sociological Outlook on the Public)*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1973, p 57.
[27] Idem, p. 60.

The study looks at the very life of successful performances, with its ups and downs, through specific tables and graphs. The analysis of the seasons, only based on the performances that have been saw by over 10,000 spectators, shows that 3/5 of the chosen titles score higher - which we must admit is a proportion that would be envied by most current theatre managers. Anyway, the team also investigates the differences between two theatre's halls (The Isvor Hall and the Studio) in terms of audience: the results show that the Studio Hall has an uncertain and somehow neglected repertory. This probably led not only to different shows being staged in the big hall compared to the studio, but also to the renovation and redesign of the Studio by Liviu Ciulei and Paul Bortnowski[28].

The research brings forward an interesting phenomenon: the theatre had offered 7,004 representations in 11 years, which on average means 636 representations per year. But these dropped significantly after 1966, both at home and on tour/on the road. Pavel Câmpeanu does not investigate the reasons behind this decision to reduce the total number of representations (a phenomenon which took place not only at Bulandra, but everywhere around the country), nor does he comment on this observation.

We believe that the main reason has to do with the changes in Communist Party's state politics concerning culture in the first years of Ceausescu's rule: the intense cultural activism strategies, with a Stakhanovite dimension, imposed to performing arts institution are gradually replaced (yet, with no public statement on the topic) with a more relaxed policy, in terms of the rhythm of producing shows, and of the distribution obligations, both at home or in road shows. This is also the period when the time allocated to performance production increases significantly (for instance, some shows at the Comedy Theatre are finalized in months, which gives rise to snide comments in the press and at official gatherings of the State Committee of Culture and Art). At the same time, we must establish a connection, even an indirect one, between the lower number of representations and other two related phenomena: the national spectatorial contraction caused by the emergence and the generalization of TV show consumption, on the one hand; and the (silent but, in the end, irreversible) transition from socialist realism to socialist aestheticism[29].

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[28] The Studio, later renamed Toma Caragiu Hall, next to Grădina Icoanei Park was the festivity hall of the Central Girls High-School (at the time, the Zoia Kosmodemianskaia High School); it was damaged in the 1940 earthquake, repaired by the great architect Horia Creangă, and then turned into a cinema hall after the 1948 nationalization. In 1955, Lucia Sturdza Bulandra (1873-1961), the theatre manager and leading actress, convinced the authorities to entrust it to the Municipal Theatre to be used as a studio hall. Director Liviu Ciulei fully redid the inside of the hall in 1973, when *Oamenii şi teatrul* (*People and Theatre*) was published.

[29] See Mircea Martin *Radicalitate şi nuanţă (Radicality and Nuance)*, Bucharest, Tracus Arte Publishing House, 2015, and Alex Goldiş, *Critica în tranşee. De la realismul socialist la autonomia esteticului (Criticism in Tranches. From Socialist Realism to the Autonomy of Aestheticism), Bucharest, Cartea Românească Publishing House, 2011.*

The chapter *Memoria publicului* (*The Memory of the Audience*) resumes, with a few improvements, the articles published in *Teatrul* magazine in 1970. It's likely that, due to the pressures arising from the paradigm changes in cultural policies caused by the theses of July 1971, Câmpeanu adds into the study an essay-chapter entitled "*Teatrul politic*" (*Political Theatre*), which is very strange considering the economy of the book. This focuses on Aurel Baranga's comedies, "read" quite artlessly, just from their socio-political dimension, and somehow shown as exemplary. For example, the reader encounters strained eulogies like:

> This tragicomedy fragment so excellently interpreted in Bucharest by the People's Artist Radu Beligan had both the value of an evocation, and of a warning. The author and interpreter - both of them members of the Central Committee - address consciousnesses with the same pathos specific to comic satire[30], asking for a deep and severe consciousness examination of everybody's attitude.[31]

This essay seems in no way connected to the previous study, except for a few mentions of some of by Baranga's comedies among those preferred by spectators, and, stylistically, it falls into a totally different type of writing; one can suspect that this was used by the author as precaution/shield, or perhaps that it was a corrective intervention by the censorship during the publishing of the book (something like: "Comrade, you must include something nice in the conclusions, for people to understand the political relevance of your analysis!").

Conversely, *O stagiune într-un oraş* (*A Season in a City*) is a rather more ambitious comparative research, probably conducted along the same time and based on a similar sample (370 people in the first case, 400 in the second). The small size of the sample, despite the note that the subjects were interviewed at home (400 subjects by maximum 5 people in a single season? Such huge effort!) raises questions regarding the interpretation of the results, just like in the case of the articles in *Teatrul*. However, they added something that was missing back then: the reference sample for professional groups.

Pavel Câmpeanu admits to the limits of the study from the start: the audience is not familiar with investigation techniques, the instruments are scanty and deficient, they lack a comparative dimension as no other studies were conducted before this. Worse, out of 400 people, only 31% saw at least one show in the 1969/1970 season. In the case of the professional groups, 53%

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[30] The author refers to Chitlaru's monologue in *Opinia publică [The Public Opinion]*, staged in 1967 at the Comedy Theatre, directed by Mihai Berechet.
[31] Pavel Câmpeanu, *Oamenii şi teatrul (People and Theatre)*, p. 156

of high school and undergraduate students saw at least 1 show, followed by 47% of intellectuals (an embarrassing percentage, compared to France, where it reached 60%), 28% of workers, and 22% of retired persons. This could constitute the first clue as to the generational turning point in Buchearest audiences' composition (also noted in *Teatrul*).

Yet, when mentioning the performances, we see a great dispersion, 60% of 105 subjects only mentioned one or two titles. Just 40% mentioned three or more. Still, the best-known show is *A Flea in Her Ear*, a sensational 19th-century play very successfully staged at Bulandra Theatre; but in the case of high school and undergraduate students, it only obtains 11-12%. In original dramaturgy, the percentage is as low as 2.8-3.8%, with *Opinia publică* on the first position. But things seem irrelevant in this case too: "A small number of the shows mentioned are part of the season under study: the great majority are replayed from previous seasons."[32]

The team deems it necessary to also talk about the reasons behind the appreciation for a certain show. But the author (rightfully) draws our attention that:

> The audience barely dissociates between the actors' interpretation and the director's mark, so that, when explaining why they liked a chosen performance, more than 50% of the subjects think that the main contribution resides with the actors, while just 5% confer this privilege to the director.

The generational mutation is visible here too, as 11% of young people motivate their preference through directing quality, compared to just 5% of intellectuals. Paradoxically, the percentage is similar in the case of devoted spectators, who saw the show over 6 times.

Câmpeanu and his colleagues wish to investigate the factors keeping spectators away from theatres: the most frequent answer is "lack of time", and the author skilfully ridicules this inertial response, a symptom of pure idleness. Otherwise, the extrinsic hindering factors are completely comparable with those in France (purchasing tickets, distance from their house, late hours to return from the play), except for the price (invoked by 7% of Romanians vs. 31% French).

The competitive factors for theatregoers are naturally very interesting: television scores 31%, reading 7%, and cinema 6%. But the differences highlighted in the occupational and age table are major: here, television obtains 45% in the case of respondents older than 55 and retired persons, and just 18%

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[32] Idem, p. 105.

among students (14-24 years old). The biggest shock comes from the low score obtained by the competitor cinema, considering the almost insignificant difference in tickets prices. However, in the case of the 14-24 sample, we already see an indication of films being consumed by 19%. But in fact, theatre/cinema spectatorship does not seem in opposition, on the contrary - which says a lot about fictional availability in the field of entertainment for the devoted audiences of 1970.

> Theatregoers visit the cinema more often, while those who do not go to the theatre are less interested in the cinema too. Instead of an inversely proportional ratio, we notice a directly proportional one. [...] Tackled from various angles, the relation between cinema and theatre shows a consonant, rather than competitive character.

In order to prove that such a sociological research is useful, despite the precarious sample and the almost voluntary logistics, the investigator draws a series of conclusions, hoping that central decision-makers and, most especially, theatre directors take the results into account. For instance, he deems it necessary to redesign the ticket distribution system:

> *Theatres in Bucharest should remember that their most devoted spectators* (those who go to the theatre more than 6 times per season - our note) *seem to think the ticket distribution system is a hinderance.* [emphasis mine][33]

This final piece of advice seems to have been heard, as at the beginning of eighth decade, performing arts institutions in Bucharest changed their sale strategies: they started offering subscriptions, even distributing monthly tickets, through marketing agents, directly into factories and research institutions, in schools or military units etc.

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A special and fully predictable section is named *Teatrul și televiziunea* (*Theatre and Television*), and includes several surveys, two of which are genuinely interesting. The first one refers to television theatre shows as a major educational and entertainment factor at the moment of the investigation. This time too, the research is based on an investigation of the spectator's memory. The author pragmatically avoids questions about the structural and aesthetic particularities

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[33] Idem, p. 115.

of television performances, so as to not confuse the minds of the subjects with complicated evaluations; and, at the same time, to make it easier for non-specialized readers to understand the study. But his starting point about the dissemination power of television is firm:

> This is not a hypothesis, but an indubitable fact: television acts like an active mediator between the play and the audience. It has the necessary technical means to do this. We shall see to what extent these technical means can carry and even amplify the text's aesthetic values (which I believe to be an obligation for any interpretation) or in other words to what extent its technical potential can become artistic.

The investigations were conducted in 1970 and 1971 and, once more, the published study does not mention the size of the sample for any of the two years, which raises some questions. More than that, to our astonishment, we find that methodological errors were identified, which to a certain extent altered the results, but these mistakes were corrected:

> The TV share in securing the most consistent theatre satisfactions varies from year to year because, in 1971, the research only included people who owned a TV set at home, while in 1970, this only happened by chance.[34]

Nevertheless, nowadays we find much more relevant the concrete data showing the expansion of consumption at national level:

> Due to the number of *TV sets, televised theatre strengthens its position as main source of information and theatre satisfaction* [emphasis mine]. [...] At the beginning of the last decade (in 1961), the number of people over 15 who owned a TV set at home was only around 240,000 at national level - while that same year, the number of spectators present in theatre venues was 5.1 million. At the beginning of this decade (in 1971), around 4.5 million people owned TV sets, while the number of physical spectators dropped to 4.3 million.[35]

To reduce dispersion in the analysis of subjects' preferences, the team chose to classify them based on the first 7 most-mentioned performance titles in both years, and to organize them according to how the subjects came into contact with that play. The percentages obtained by television were thus overwhelming.

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[34] Idem, p. 164.
[35] Idem.

For instance, a top theatre preferred drama for those years, *Ciuta* by Victor Ioan Popa, had become known to 0.9% of respondents by actual theatregoing, to 0.4% through radio, to 2.2% by reading, and to 96.5% by television.

The study offers precious information on the repertory of televised theatre for the 2 years under discussion: 35 plays had been staged, of which 30 dramas, 10 classical plays, 7 interwar plays, 19 contemporary, 12 foreign, 24 Romanian, while plays staged for the first time in Romania exceeded 50%. Câmpeanu reiterates some statements rooted in his previous studies, once again jumping to generalizations:

> Most Romanian sociological studies focusing on the audience [*which studies?* - our note] show that, unlike film (where melodrama is prioritised), when it comes to theatre, spectators are constantly inclined towards comedy. In this respect, we could talk about a certain inconsistency between the audience's expectations and this inclination of TV theatre repertory, both in its entirety, and particularly from the viewpoint of contemporary original dramaturgy.[36]

I could assume that, in reversing the drama-comedy relation in terms of the dominant preference for comedy, the National Television aimed a strategic purpose - the central objective of television (a public, unique body, with two channels starting 1968, though the second channel did not yet cover the entire country) being educational-ideological. Using theatre shows, that were so loved by consumers, as an aggregate to increase the level of culture throughout all social categories, the leadership of the institution had in mind the necessity of a repertorial projection dominated by drama, which was proportionally compensated by the presence of entertainment shows (including moments of humour, dance, music, etc.) in all the weekends. It may be worth placing this strategic decision into context, by reminding that, starting 1970, the television's offer also included *Telecinemateca* every Tuesday, which broadcasted old movies from all around the world, preceded by specialized presentations, thus increasing the level of film culture among spectators of all ages and social backgrounds[37].

Pavel Câmpeanu comments on the results of the preferences for the first 10 positions in audience (over 50%), ascertaining that high audience shares are recorded in quarters 1 and 4, i.e. in autumn-winter (when potential theatregoers probably prefer to stay in their warm homes). He then compares the samples of

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[36] Idem, 166.

[37] Substantial information with regard to this, including about the fact that TV theatre and the Telecinemateca dominated the audiences' preferences, can be found in Pavel Câmpeanu's book *Oamenii și televiziunea* (*People and Television*), Meridiane Publishing House, 1974.

the best shows as mentioned by the audience, to those preferred by the experts; from my knowledge, this is the only such comparative attempt in Romania (not just in the case of television theatre, but of theatre per se).

> As far as the adequacy of a value of judgement depends on the competence of those who make it, we can say that the appreciations made by theatre experts are the closest to the objective value of the mentioned performances. The corollary of this argument, applied to the above-mentioned competences, is that, in this light, the theatre taste of the general public looks very precarious. [...] The differences are so clear, that it seems unlikely that the expert's options may supply elements for an efficient repertorial model. In terms of educating the general audience's theatre taste, the most useful recommendation is to carefully select and artistically create the texts for which they seem to have a real interest - original dramaturgy, comedy. [...][38]

Anyway, as mentioned earlier, we think that the decision-makers within the television management at the time, even if they were politically appointed, applied a different propagandistic and educational-artistic philosophy when selecting the repertory of TV theatre, at least for a while; still, due to the political changes after 1971, Romanian dramaturgy would increase a lot over the following years compared to foreign dramaturgy.

A different subchapter in this volume is courageously dedicated to "*Theatrical Culture in Villages*" (*Cultura teatrală la sate*). This proves to be a separate investigation, aimed at following the differences between the urban and the rural environment in perceiving and assimilating television theatre. About this much broader inquiry we are told that it is based on a sample of 7,500 subjects over 15 years old. The sample had a balanced proportion of men and women from all around the country, of all ages, professions and levels of training. At present, it's hard to imagine how the team efficiently managed such a big project (number of field operators, the logistics, etc.).

In the urban environment, which is used as reference system, 4,506 people provided complete answers, that means over 50%. The cities chosen for this investigation were Cluj, Iaşi, Timişoara and Sibiu. No answer at all was provided by 36% of the subjects. Later, the investigation was reconducted in the urban environment, in smaller towns, adding 979 subjects from Babadag, Titu and Vlăhiţa. In this sample too, 50% of interviewees provide no answer at all.

The results show that, when it comes to both accessing information, and formulating preferences related to theatre shows, information comes from television (40%), the radio (12%), reading (12%), but also actually going to the

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[38] Ibidem, p. 169-170.

theatre (36%). When looking at this percentage in an objective and detached manner, it raises serious questions, even for the big cities in the first part of the inquiry - it is possible that the results were artificially raised for political reasons.

In the rural environment, 3,318 subjects were interviewed, of which 45% did not respond. Of those who identified as farmers, 38% indicated real preferences for television theatre, a percentage which nowadays seems rational, if we consider the novelty and the "exceptionality" of the new means. In any case, Câmpeanu's conclusions are of course in line with the Communist Party policies.

> For now, the little information available seems to indicate a likely current of theatre initiation spreading into villages, including for the historically levels of people for whom this difficult, fruitful, and dignifying art was the less accessible. Should this data be validated by subsequent investigations, I consider true the statement that the theatrical culture expansion process reaches a new level.

<div align="center">***</div>

The final section of the book is entitled *Publicul grup (Group Audience)*, and is made up of three different experiments, each raising certain methodology and interpretation questions. Their common factor is Câmpeanu's combination between ethnography, psychology and semiotics, both in his objectives, and the discourse analysis - at the time, structural analysis and semiotics were the new beginnings of humanistic academia (and not only).

Experimentul I: Mimica (*Experiment no. 1: Mimicry*) seems to be the author's first collaboration with Ştefana Steriade, alongside whom he later signed the book *Oamenii şi filmul* (*People and Film*). In order to analyse the actors' facial expressions, 4 pictures of actors were used, some dressed as civilians, others in performance costumes The experiments used two groups of subjects: one made up of apprentices from the vocational school of locksmiths from the Railway Company's Workshops 'Grivița Roșie', and the second of the Institute of Theatre and Film (IATC). Pavel Câmpeanu states that methodologically speaking, the experiment is badly flawed, a failure, irrelevant. However, from inexplicable reasons, he publishes it.

Experimentul 2: Spectacolul (*Experiment no. 2: The Performance*) is an interesting and brave initiative, that seems based on a deep level of involvement by the entire team. It tests the reception, how meaning and value judgements are constructed in a target group that has no spectatorial experience in theatre. The same classes of apprentices from Grivița Roșie were invited to see the

show *The Disappearance of Galy Gay*, by Bertolt Brecht, at the Comedy Theatre. They watched the play on 14 February 1971. Four researchers in the team accompanied the youngsters to the show and, with the text in their hands, they noted their reactions. At the end, the subjects filled in a five-point survey. Five days later, they were invited to give an account in class, and answer to a much more detailed questionnaire. Three months later, they were asked to rewrite the account. To a great extent, the study published is based on the second account, as the team was interested in the assimilation process of the spectatorial experience.

Anyhow, the entire material reveals that, if we turn the mirror around, the experiment conducted by Pavel Câmpeanu's team in 1971 created a special kind of enthusiasm among CFR apprentices. I wonder what happened with these boys later on.

Perhaps the most debatable and the strangest experiment made by Pavel Câmpeanu is the last one, entitled "*Publicul ca individ. Ion*" (*The Audience as Individual. Ion*). For present-day readers, this chapter raises numerous suspicions and methodological and ethical reserves. Câmpeanu describes this action as an individual, "experimental qualitative investigation". The anonymous character in this chapter was also chosen from the apprentices in Grivița, and the author says he followed him in 1969-1971 (from 16 to 18 years of age). Ion was apparently chosen for his incipient interest for theatre, qualified as "availability". In the end, it turns out that his availability was in fact well-managed histrionism, and Câmpeanu's choice is only justified by the particularity that the subject could write more coherently and grammatically more correct than his colleagues.

A first objection that must be made about this experiment refers, in our view, to the author's essayistic, almost intimate tone, that betrays a very unscientific attachment to the subject of his investigation. In this sense, some fragments show almost uncontrollable lyricism:

> In relatively similar conditions as his colleagues' - and this is mysterious - the fabric that makes up Ion's being seems to provide a special resonance to the message brought to him by theatre. Why does this unique vibration of the theatrical message suit Ion and another small number of his colleagues?[39]

In short, on the same tone, Pavel Câmpeanu describes the subject's origins, life, informing us about his father who was a countryside tailor, the head of a family with many children. Ion was a good pupil, but he was not allowed to go to high school because of material hardships (but in the subtext, the author suggests several times that this is first and foremost a mentality issue). Ion is a fan not of the Rapid football team (despite being a CFR apprentice), but of Steaua, as he has a brother at the military school; he loves Elvis Presley. Obviously, he

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[39] Ibidem, p. 225.

doesn't like the profession he was pushed towards, nor the conditions in the boarding school, so he lives with a cheap landlord in a slum; he doesn't like the school he goes to either, and every year he dreams of becoming something else - a locksmith, an officer, a kindergarten teacher. He wants to go to university, of course. At this point, the author's lyricism reaches pathetic peaks:

> I will only say that, unlike the road to hell, the road to the profession of train locksmith at the big, revolutionary plant in Bucharest is not paved with good intentions.[40]

Evidently, this biographic cameo must at some point lean towards motivating the decision to conduct this experiment.

> How are all these connected to theatre? They are, because - unlike football and pop music and, to a much more relevant extent, film - theatre can give Ion the occasion to assimilate direct human experiences, theatre can clear his self-consciousness, contribute to the crystallization and social exploitation of this personality.[41]

The sociologist first investigates Ion's evolution over three years, from the standpoint of his models: his dad is gradually replaced by his best friend: "Ion identifies with his friend, who is endowed with gifts that he doesn't have." From the data obtained during the experiment, we find out that the subject's total spare time is 3-4 hours per day, that his usual entertainment consists of reading newspapers, listening to the radio, walking with his friends (later, girlfriend), sports. The costs of other types of entertainment largely render them prohibitive. Ion's favourite songs are, as the years go by, *Doar băieții sunt de vină*, a trendy hit by Luminița Dobrescu and *Lună dă-mi o scară de mătase*, sung by Dan Spătaru. The author believes that the subject's need to project himself in the cultural object justifies most of Ion's preferences. But to our surprise, the text includes some of the boldest critical statements against the system, which escaped censorship almost inexplicably:

> With limited efficiency, middle school instilled in Ion an almost congenital inclination towards language sensitivity. The vocational school, the Union of Communist Youth (UTC), the atmosphere of urban life and his ascent on the sinuous roads of adolescence manage to debilitate even this poor literary breath ingrained by 8 years of school. A literary temperament, Ion remains far away from literature.[42]

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[40] Ibidem, p. 227.
[41] Ibidem, p. 230.
[42] Ibidem, p. 243.

In terms of theatre, up to the age of 15, Ion had seen three performances at the Community centre in his commune. His first year in Bucharest, he went to the theatre four times, to Bulandra and Giulești (but the verification with titles shows that he mistakes Bulandra for the National Theatre). In 1970-71, he went to Giulești, to Sala Palatului, and the Comedy Theatre. He went to Giulești twice (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Comedie cu olteni*, which he'd seen before). He forgets about *Ulise și coincidențele*, avoids mentioning *Dispariția lui Galy Gay*, which leads to a number of five plays (three of which he saw at Giulești, close to the school and the CFR Workshops). His favourite actors were Toma Caragiu in 1969, and Silviu Stănculescu in 1970 and 1971. Evidently, he likes Silviu Stănculescu as a masculinity model, especially considering that Pavel Câmpeanu always mentions that Ion is obsessed with nice, elegant clothes.

By analysing Ion's answers in the previous experiment, the one with *Dispariția lui Galy Gay*, the sociologist concludes that Ion didn't fill in the initial survey after the show. Instead, he wrote the review five days later, filled in the second questionnaire and the review/account three months later, plus the related survey. Pavel Câmpeanu opted to combine all these dimensions, as revealed by the data he collected, in an essay, which once again raises serious methodological questions. In this line of thought, his very aim in this experiment seems risky:

> The topic is not how well Ion assimilated Brecht's message, but how the connection between his inner world and this type of outside message, i.e. the theatre performance, is established.[43]

Ion doesn't mention any actor in *Dispariția lui Galy Gay*, he just refers to actress Stela Popescu, not saying her name (he of course thus sublimates a natural erotic drive). He just describes the roles from a situational standpoint. Yet, the author notes Ion's original way of interpreting the performance, but gives no examples in the form of quotes:

> ... the first characteristic of this vision's originality: instead of the chronological flow, Ion builds a hierarchical structure. Descriptive discourse gives way to analytical comment, and the comfort of sequence to decoding effort.[44]

It's interesting that "For him, action is more important than the situation."[45] This suggests to the author that Ion might be, sui generis, Brecht's ideal spectator. Strictly in relation to his accounts of this performance,

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[43] Ibidem, p. 247.
[44] Ibidem, p. 249.
[45] Ibidem, p. 250.

Câmpeanu notices (and we can't contradict him, as long as he doesn't present fragments of his raw material, just his own interpretations) the ethical core of reception, which is perfectly in line with such a dramaturgical offer:

> Here, it's not personality that prevails over the theatrical message, on the contrary. And when Ion perceives this message, feeling substitutes pleasure. His affective participation is ethical rather than aesthetical, for he had built a hierarchy of moral values but - as we've shown - not one of aesthetical values.[46]

Paradoxically (here Ion's character, whom we now see as a literary one rather than the subject of an experiment, shows a certain availability to theatre), his accounts settle down and the review he makes three months later becomes more consistent and profound than that made five days after the show. Culturally placing this endeavour as not entirely sociological, nor totally ethical (considering present-day research ethics), Câmpeanu concludes philosophically:

> Marcuse says that constraints are not efficient in the moral domain - an ethical rule only becomes operational when the exterior drive is internalized. I think this observation is largely valid in the aesthetic domain too.[47]

All in all, the strange "scientific" meetings between the sociologist and his subject, instead of causing us great revelations regarding the generic theatre spectators, actually sell a story with a disquieting degree of mystery. Here and there, Ion is vaguely histrionic, like any teenager, a little rebellious, but seems to create a fairly controlled picture of himself in the eyes of the interviewer. But who studied whom? And what became of Ion's dreams? Did he end up an officer, or a teacher? For he most likely didn't stay with the Railway Company as a locksmith[48].

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[46] Ibidem, p. 252.

[47] Ibidem, p. 260.

[48] The files dedicated to Pavel Câmpeanu as a subject for the Secret service investigations, as they actually are at the National Council for the Study of Securitate's Archives, have 7 volume with a total of more than 2000 pages. Their content focusses on the interval 1980-1982, but also enough references to previous investigations whose traces completely disappeared. Still, according to the information I received from researcher Ana Teodorescu, PhD candidate, in the seventh volume (I 0064759, File ‚Pavo') we can find an official note, from 1973, sending to a previous file opened in 1971. One of the informants in 1971 is covertly named Petre Giuleşteanu – and offered intelligence on Campeanu's family, research interests, his opinions and state of mind etc. The note specifies that Giuleşteanu is a co-worker of Câmpeanu, but the fact that the fake name chosen by the secret service uses the root ‚Giuleşti' - a boulevard where the School of Apprentices of the Railway Company was based, also the name of the neighbourhood Ion was living – seems a good reason for our suspicions concerning Ion. Could the young man be a "rat"?

Beyond this dilemmatic end, the sociological studies on theatre conducted and synthetized by Pavel Câmpeanu at the beginning of the 1970s, though they didn't cause any significant echoes in the theatre world, nor over the government's cultural strategies because of the political evolutions of the time, nowadays have more than scientific value (despite certain inherent, contextually explainable inadvertences). They testify, from grassroots level, to an effervescent moment of cultural history which was captured in a snapshot and put into a frame thanks to his team's efforts, largely made against the current. The brutal interruption of this generous endeavour, as well as the oblivion that fell upon them are part of a sad tradition shared by us all, sociologists and theatre people alike.

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PHANTASMIC DEVICES: WEDDING VIDEOS AND THE CREATION OF AN IMAGINED TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITY BY BULGARIAN MUSLIMS IN SPAIN

NEDA DENEVA[1]

ABSTRACT. For the Bulgarian Muslims in Spain wedding videos are a popular device for socializing, overcoming nostalgia and keeping pace with the news and events that take place back home in Bulgaria. The mediatization of the ritual allows an extension of the ritual across time and space. Watching the videos is a re-enactment of the celebration and has become part of the ritual itself. Subsequently, this extension of the ritual through a mediated device has led to its subtle transformations. At the same time, wedding videos and the particular mode of use produce a social effect beyond the structure of the ritual. They contribute to the extending and re-creating of a migrant community that spreads over space transnationally and temporally between the past of home and the present of life in migrancy. Drawing on ethnographic material and using the analytical tools of actor-network theory, the main aim of this paper is to trace the uses and effects of wedding videos for transforming the wedding ritual through postponing and re-enacting it on one hand, and for sustaining the phantasm of an imagined virtual community on the other. The broader problem that this paper seeks to address is the specific role that material devices play for producing social effects for migrant communities.

Keywords: transnational migration, transnational rituals, small media, actor-network theory, wedding videos

> *Have you watched our wedding video? No? I'll play it for you now, while we are talking, then!*
> *Have you seen my daughter's wedding? Wait, I'll show you, so that you know better how she looks like when you go to Spain.*
> *Have they showed you already last month's wedding of Selim and Sebi at home? You should see it by all means. Sit, we'll watch it again, the DVD's with us right now.*

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I would hear one of these lines at almost every visit I made to Bulgarian Muslim migrants in Spain or their relatives in Bulgaria.[2] What followed was a stint of at least 3 hours long session of watching of a video recording of a wedding that took place in Bulgaria, with a lot of re-winding and fast-forwarding to find important moments, important people, important places. At first, I thought watching wedding videos is just a background encouraging the flow of conversation or a way to show me a person or a place. But with time, it became apparent that this is a common practice when people gathered together. Sometimes they would re-watch old videos of their own weddings, other times there would be a special gathering to watch a new wedding that just took place back in Bulgaria. If the video was initially played for me during a visit at a migrant's home, others would soon join, and it will turn into a social event. I soon started noticing that watching wedding videos was an important tool for creating and sustaining the idea of a tight-knit transnational community spreading over time and space. After attending a few weddings myself, I also came to observe how the ritual itself has ben transforming to adjust to the subsequent watching. Watching the video had become part of the ritual itself, extending and transforming it. But it also brought something else – the event of watching was part of re-creating communal life and of creating and sustaining the connections between the different villagers some still in Bulgaria, others in the small Spanish town. Watching weddings was experienced as participating in a communal life and as overcoming the ruptures that migration brings about.

With this paper I seek to analyse the social uses of wedding videos for creating and sustaining the idea of a transnational community on one hand and the role they play in transforming the wedding ritual itself and how it is enacted. Thus, my argument is two-fold. First, I explore the role of the wedding video as a device which has become an agent in the process of transnationalizing a village community. I argue that the practices related to producing and using wedding videos generate a performance and an experience of an imagined virtual community. In this way I show how wedding videos are devices for transcending spatial and temporal ruptures between the past of home and the presence of life in migracy. Thus, they are active part of the process of crafting a phantasm of coherence, order and wholeness of the transnational community. Second, I claim that the use of the visual device of the video and

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[2] Bulgarian Muslims is a term used to refer to a group of people also referred to as "Pomaks", "Bulgarian speaking Muslims" and "Bulgarian-Mohamedans". The question of their labeling is complex and controversial and there is no agreement neither among academics, nor among political representatives. Emically, different terms are being used, differing from village to village. I have decided upon Bulgarian Muslims because this is one of the ways my informants referred to themselves for outsiders. And while some of them referred to themselves as "Pomaks" internally, it is a term considered by many offensive when used by an outsider For a detailed history in English of renaming and identity formation among Bulgarian Muslims see Neuburger, 2004; Todorova, 1998.

the technological evolvement from VHS to DVDs bring about changes in the way the ritual unfolds, leads to the introduction of new elements, occasionally changes the flow and accentuates the ritual in new places. [3]

The article draws on ethnographic materials collected between 2007 and 2008 in two sites – the village of Brushlyan, in the South Western part of Bulgaria, and the small town of Tafalla, in Navarra, northern Spain. I have lived with a migrant family in Spain and with a family with relatives in Spain, back in Bulgaria for extended periods of time. I have watched numerous wedding videos both during informal visits and gatherings and on formally arranged interview sessions. I have also participated in two wedding celebrations in Bulgaria during this period. The specificity of this type of migration allows to make an analysis of the community life. Migrants from this region in Bulgaria tend to concentrate in one or two towns abroad. At the time of my research more than one quarter of the former village inhabitants were residing in Tafalla, while a small number were in the neighbouring bigger town of Pamplona. Migrants to other locations were individual cases. In this way the village community is effectively divided in two or three geographical localities and continues to reproduce social relations, rather than being dispersed in multiple places. The social life in Spain actively replicates village social relations, hierarchies, solidarities, even conflicts between families. Celebrations and rituals contribute to this reproduction of the social across borders. In this sense wedding videos are instrumental in this process.

In what follows I first lay out the conceptual grounds for my analysis expanding on the issue of how devices produce social effects inspired by actor-network theory. Then I describe briefly the migration life of my informants, before moving to the specifics of the wedding ritual. Part 3 is devoted to the analysis of the two types of devices used and the way technological innovation resulted in transforming the ritual itself and the use of the device for new purposes. Finally, I conclude with a closer look at the role wedding videos play in sustaining the phantasm of a trans-local and trans-temporal migrant community.

Wedding videos as devices and the cult of family and community unity

Taking the vantage point of wedding videos to analyse the performance and enactment of a migrant community prompted an approach grounded in a

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[3] In this text I chose not to focus on the performance of the wedding as such, nor on the concepts of relatedness and kinship that are reproduced through the ritual, which would have taken me in a different direction and a theoretical investigation. Instead, I only look at the community level and explain how the mediated ritual allows a group of people to perform as a community.

theoretical perspective that takes seriously material objects and technology. I use as a starting point the approach proposed initially in actor-network theory by key authors like Bruno Latour, Michelle Callon, and John Law. In this framework I think of wedding videos as devices which are part of a heterogenous network (Callon and Latour, 1981; Latour, 2007; Law, 1992, 2009) made of human and material actors that enact and are enacted to produce social effect. While ANT started as a study of how science and technology work and how knowledge is a product of and an effect of a network of heterogenous materials, it grew as an approach to be used in a variety of fields to explain the interaction between human and non-human agents and the different modes of ordering or logics produced by this interaction.[4] The radical claim of ANT is that network are composed not only of people, but also of durable materials like machines, texts, money, architectures, and other devices and objects. The metaphor of heterogenous network is at the heart of actor-network theory and is a way of suggesting that society organizations, agents and machines are all effects generated in patterned networks of diverse (not simply human) materials (Law, 1992:2). For the purposes of this paper, I think of the process of producing and imagining a transnational community as an effect of the workings of a heterogeneous network, in which wedding videos as devices are one of the actors.

The notion of device allows to bring objects into the social analysis by considering they have agency, "Whether they might just help (in a minimalist, instrumental version) or force (in a maximalist, determinist version), devices do things. They articulate actions, they act and make others act," say Muniesa, Millo and Callon (2007:2). In this sense I take wedding videos as devices which act by associating with other actors in the network, or as Annemarie Mol (2010:260) puts it: "Actors are enacted, enabled, and adapted by their associates while in their turn enacting, enabling and adapting these". By these associations devices also reconfigure the initial relations. The transnational community, the relations between co-villagers, the wedding ritual itself would be different without the participation of the video as a technological tool. The question then is not simply what is the effect of a device, but also what would be the effect if the device was not available.

Many observers agree that 'technology' includes not only the built devices, but also the practices and knowledge related to them and the social arrangements that form around those devices, practices and knowledge (e.g. Howcroft et al., 2004; Latour, 2007; MacKenzie and Wacjmann, 1999; Suchman et al., 1999). Thought of this way technology is dynamic and has to be looked at in a processual relational way. In this text I show how the technological change

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[4] See for example Callon et al., 2007 on economic sociology; Mol and Berg, 1994; Akrich and Pasweer, 2000 on medicine; Gommart and Hennion, 1999 on music amateurs and drug addicts; Hui, 2015; Sánchez-Querubín and Rogers, 2018 on migration.

from VHS to DVD triggers transformation both of the experience of the ritual and of its structure. Following further insights from the anthropology of things at the intersection with Actor Network Theory (e.g Gell, 1998; Navaro-Yasin, 2007; Strathern, 1999) I trace how this is triggered not simply by the new technology for recording and re-playing, but also by the concrete ways people decide to use this technology and what is more, how they relate to it in a specific social context. Thus, this article is an attempt to explain how the phantasm of social order and coherence that is threatened by migration is reinstated by a heterogenous network of human actors, technology and material devices.

Wedding videos in particular, or indeed other small media materials like recordings, photographs, etc., have not been analyzed specifically through the lens of actor-network theory so far. Video recordings of life cycle rituals (religious and status initiations, weddings, funerals etc.) can be traced in several analytical fields – visual anthropology, anthropology of media, migration theories, studies of the role and meaning of ritual. The main focus in visual anthropology studies is on the photographs or the ethnographic film as an evidence for social and cultural processes. Images are either thought of as a research method of gathering data, or as a way of representing certain aspect of the researched groups of people. The more critical approaches discuss the contradictory nature of these images in regard to their objectivity and representativeness (e.g. (Banks, 2001; Grimshaw, 2001; MacDougall, 1998; Pink, 2001). The question of authorship and knowledge productions is also scrutinized which has resulted in an already established tradition in cooperation in the films and image productions between the ethnographer and the subjects of his study (see Aufderheide, 1995; Carelli, 1988; Prins, 1997; Ruby, 1991; Turner, 1992). But even though more than twenty years ago Banks and Morphy (1997) insisted on a wider understanding of visual anthropology including all visual systems and visual culture, most research remains focused on the production of images by the active intention of the ethnographer, and not as a result of a spontaneous internal production and use of visual system like the wedding videos discussed in this paper.

Anthropology of media studies pays more attention precisely to the uses of visual media (for a detailed overview see Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, and Larkin, 2002). The topics vary from cultural activism and the role of media for empowering minorities (Asch et al., 1991; Ginsburg, 1997; McLagan, 2002; Philipsen and Markussen, 1995; Weatherford, 1990), through the role of newspapers, radio, television and cinema for creating national self-consciousness (Anderson, 1991; Abu-Lughod, 2002; Hamilton, 2002; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, 1994), to the changing conditions of cultural productions (Dornfeld, 2002; Faraday, 2000; Himpele, 2002; Marcus, 1997). In their intersection with migration studies, media analyses predominantly focus on

how minorities are represented in media, on the role of the migrants' audience for the formation of media policies, as well as on the influence of private and public media for the cultural and social minority integration (Aksoy and Robins, 2000; Caglar, 2001;Cunningam and Sinclair, 2000; Karim, 1998; Kosnick, 2000; Vertovec, 2000). None of these approaches focuses on small media like videos or pictures produced for private use.

Studies which focus on the use of private use of media, and more particularly on photography, concentrate on the social function of pictures, especially in relation to their role for the construction and the integration of the family (see studies on family photography of Marian Hirsh (1997) and Annette Kuhn (2002). Along similar lines, already in the 1960's Bourdieu (1990) analysed the practice of taking family photographs and their role for keeping the "cult of unity" of the family, as well as the ritualization of taking photographs itself. More recently, in the field of migration studies, Olena Fedyuk (2007) contributes to the discussion with an insightful analysis of how Ukrainian migrants use photographs for measuring time in migration and for maintaining the family as a unit. Photographs are seen as a 'glue' that bonds together transnational families. The metaphor of the glue can be quite well taken further to analyse the active role objects can play. What Fedyuk does at the level of the family, I take further to demonstrate at the level of the community, emphasizing the aspect of the phantasm of unity and coherence, that exists in the imaginaries of migrants and villagers alike. At the level of ritual representation there are two notable examples of analysis of wedding videos as used by migrants. Barbara Wolbert (2001, 2008) and Gulsum Depeli (2009) both worked on Turkish migrants in Germany and the ways small media contributes to the creation of community cohesion. Both Wolbert and Depeli show how videos produced by migrants during rituals taking place in Germany are then used in Turkey by relatives to create connections between separated families and kin. Wolbert calls this a 'visual production of locality" and coins the idea of 'virtual neighbourhoods'. My analysis takes this one step further by first, introducing a strong emphasis on the role of the device in this process, and second, by pointing to the imaginary virtual community created by these devices used by migrants.

The rest of this text is divided in three parts. I first describe the typical wedding ritual. The second part is devoted to the analysis of the different types of recordings and the variations in their use. I focus on the differences that the change of technology brings about (from VHS to DVD) and trace the role that the device plays for creating social relations between migrants and villagers and for the idea of a transnational community. In the last part I point out the transformations in the substance and in the essence of the ritual and of its distinct practices due to its virtualization and reproduction under migration conditions.

The wedding ritual

The weddings in Brushlyan take place in the winter. From November to April every weekend there is a wedding, sometimes two. Everyone gets married in the village, even the migrants. *"The summer is the work season, the winter is the weddings season,"* say people in the village. And indeed, even though most migrants have their long holidays in July and August, they usually organize their wedding around New Year's. The wedding in Brushlyan is a much more public event in comparison to other major rites of passage and other ritual events (like birth, circumcision, death etc.). While other turning points in the life cycle are being conducted in the narrow family circle, the wedding is the event in which the whole village participates. Following Bourdieu (1990) I would argue that there is a strong co-dependence between the centrality of an event and its mediatization and image commemoration, in this case, video recording , while in Bourdieu's case – taking photographs. The image capturing of certain events and not of others marks the distinction between the public and the private. Therefore, rituals considered as more private and confined to the narrow family remain unrecorded, and hence single events, never re-used or re-enacted, in contrast to the public event which continues to be re-used in the future through the visual traces of the video.

The wedding itself comprises of two stages - a private, religious ritual, and a public, secular ceremony. The first stage is referred to as *getting married (zhenene)*, the second one is the actual *wedding (svatba)*. Only the second stage is video recorded. The first stage is only for close family members and the Imam, who conducts the ceremony. The first stage importantly signifies the change in the status of the couple and is marked by the woman moving in the home of the man. This is the social validation of the new bond. Nonetheless, the two stages are essentially part of the same 'ritual'. Neither of the two can be skipped. The two parts are essentially inseparable, even if separated in time. Thus, the ritual is divided in two parts, i.e. it is extended, and a period of liminality is inherent to it. The mediatization of the ritual and the further re-enacting it in a different place and time, then is yet another extension of this liminal stage between the start and the final closure of the ritual.

After the couple is already *married*, begins the planning of the second stage – the *wedding.* The event is centred around the civil marriage procedure in the town-hall and the celebrations in which usually the whole village takes part. It is this public ritual that is recorded in detail and then reproduced and used over and over again. The ritual has several turning points: taking the groom from his house, a procession with him and his relatives to the house of the bride, picking up the bride, endowing the bride's parents with gifts, displaying the dowry publicly, a second procession with both kin to the main square, ring dances (*hora)* at the square, civil marriage in the town-hall, again

dances at the square, and finally, two shifts of guests in the restaurant, in between which there is one more round of dances at the square.

There are no special invitations for the wedding guests, because it is assumed that everyone from the village, who is over 18 and not mourning, will be present. It is a rule that there should be at least one representative per family. Guests usually do not bring presents but are expected to 'pay' for the feast. This in itself is turned into a rite. After several dances in the restaurant the bride sets off on a 'greeting tour' (called the *'tax collector tour'*), in which she passes by every single guest to receive congratulations and a note of ten or twenty leva (five or ten euro), depending on the gender. The money is collected by a bride's maid in a large plastic bag.

After the lunch is over, there are more unstructured dances in the centre of the restaurant. This is the moment, in which every song is a special request with a greeting line from a relative or a friend (for which the orchestra is compensated additionally by the guests per song). There is a strict order starting with the witnesses and the parents and moving to more distant relatives, finishing with friends. This is an especially alluding point for discovering the migrant connections of the young couple.

This wedding ritual structure is repeated at every wedding. The possible variations depend on the financial situation of the family, and whether there are any migration influences. The particular migration variations (in case there is a member of the family who is a migrant) can be traced in several directions: the types of presents, the dresses of the bride and the witnesses, in the currency of the notes attached to the bride and groom clothes, in the amount and type of dowry, and the type of orchestra invited. The most visible difference is manifested in the currency and amount of money given to the couple. At migrant weddings the money attached to the clothes is in euro and the amount is bigger. Thus, migration is clearly fixed as an affluence marker. These variations, albeit subtle, are closely inspected later when re-watching the video and have become central points for the audience.

Making the wedding videos

Over the last fifteen years every wedding in Brushlyan has been filmed on video, which has become part of the wedding ritual itself. The wedding videos are produced exclusively by the head master of the village school. This has elevated his status to one of the most influential people in Brushlyan to a far greater extent than his position as a head master.[5] A wedding video would

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[5] This is very similar to what Turner has suggested about the Kayapo, where being a cameraman and having access to visual media technology are forms of cultural capital and ultimately a question of power relations within a community (Turner, 1992:7).

cost about 350 euro at the time of the research – a substantial sum of money for the village standards. Nevertheless, this was an indispensable part of every wedding's budget, which did not depend on the financial situation of the families. The school head master in his role of a cameraman follows every step of the wedding processions, enters in the house of the bride for the special internal close kin celebration and drinking in the morning, and later on, tracks all the guests during the ring dances at the square, and then all the main turning points in the restaurant. In addition to this, there is a special filming tour, recording every single guest greeting the newly wed while in the restaurant.

There are two types of videos produced over the years – the old videotapes and the new DVD's. The old videos are a full real time recording of the whole wedding day starting at the groom's house and ending with the last dances at the main square after the two shifts of guests in the restaurant. They often last up to seven hours and are comprised of several videotapes. The first one always opens up with thematic panoramic view of the village from afar in winter and summer. This is followed by a staged walk by the soon to be wed, most often in the nearby meadows, finishing with a drink in the most popular road restaurant. This adds to the particularly nostalgic note of the old wedding video tapes. The new ones, recorded on DVD, are cut and edited and are relatively shorter, lasting between three and four hours, again with very long uninterrupted shots of processions and dances. This differentiation is to a great extent conventional in order to get more clarity. The different technical carrier signifies a different moment in time of the production of the video, hence of the wedding itself, which in its turn points to a different attitude towards the wedding video. There is more to this however. The VHS videos were multiplied in a few copies distributed among the relatives, while the DVD videos being much more easily reproducible, are multiplied and distributed in much greater numbers both in Brushlyan, and among the migrants. In this sense, the technical parameters of the video contribute to the practical transformations of its use and clearly demonstrate how the different technical devices produce different social effect. I come back to this point in the second part.

The two types of technical production of the videos reflect two aspects of their consumption and of their meaning. The old videotapes brought to Spain contain exclusively own wedding recordings from the past. The same videos are watched in Bulgaria by close family members. In contrast, the new DVD's are of recent weddings that took place in the village and are watched by close and distant acquaintances alike both in Spain and in Bulgaria. This differentiation also defines the practices of watching and experiencing the videos. While the old ones assume a more private use, mostly directed towards creating temporal links between past and present, which overlap with building spatial visual bridges between "the home" and "abroad", the new DVD's are much

more publicly shared and play a stronger social cohesive role. The old videos are considered as more intimate and aim at re-creating the unity of the family. The new ones serve as a medium for participation in key village events both by close relatives and by the wider village community. In the next section I will demonstrate these two aspects of the use of wedding videos.

The social use of wedding videos: meanings and transformations

The old wedding videos: practices of reinforcing the cult of the family unity

According to the site and audience, the old wedding videos can be divided in two types. The first type are the videos brought by migrants to Spain of their own wedding. The second type are the children's weddings watched by elderly family members in Bulgaria. This division also reflects the generational split in the two geographic sites.[6]

Although migrants arrive to Spain with a small number of personal belongings, the wedding video tape is an indispensable object. The old wedding videos are played usually by the women who work part time or in shifts and thus spend more time at home by themselves. Often, the occasion to play the video for me was a distant question about their relatives or something connected to the village. Badie[7], a 34 years old migrant, who joined her husband in Spain in 2004, worked in shifts in the central restaurant. I remember meeting her for the first time in her house one afternoon. I was not sure whether I had met her husband. She immediately took out the wedding video from under the TV set (the only video tape there!) and played it, instead of simply showing me a picture:

> Watch carefully now. This is a real Bruslyan wedding. We have really good wedding in our village, such big celebrations, the dances at the square… You'll see me, how I used to look eight ears ago. I was a bit chubbier then, but now I have lost quite some weight. I know how to live like the Spaniards do, I eat healthier… And you'll see my parents, my brothers, the cousins. Actually, the whole family gathered at one place. Now that I think about it, we haven't gathered all of us, like this, since then.

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[6] Even though the group of the ageing people, who come to Spain for shorter visits, is growing constantly, in general there is a clear tendency of age division among migrants. The ageing would normally come to Spain if asked by their younger relatives to help them with caring for children. These short-term stays are recently more and more often developing into long term relocations. See more on this in Deneva (2012). Nevertheless, the major part of migrants in Spain are still the younger generations.

[7] All names have been changed.

We started watching and gradually Badie introduced me to all the important moments of the wedding ritual, forwarding the tape just as to skip to the next one. She showed me her parents' house and the house of her husband's family, where they used to live in Bulgaria. Then she indicated her family members, the wedding witnesses, and all the rest of her wide kin relatives. She paid special attention to the outfits and commented on how people changed since then, who died, who moved up in their career etc.

Badie's example demonstrates a typical practice of watching wedding videos. One of the possible uses of the video is as a document and evidence of people (including oneself) from the past and of particular practices and images from the village. The recording replaces the photo album, as well as the physical presence. Moreover, reproducing the ritual in real time opens up the opportunity to re-experience it in every minute detail. When I asked Badie how does she knows where to find the exact place of each episode on the three videotapes, she told me:

> Well, I play the tape quite often. Here in Spain, when I feel sad for home and start missing my parents too much, I play it to see the village, the views, the steep streets, our house. And it makes me feel a bit better.

Re-experiencing the ritual then is a strategy to cure nostalgia. It is not only relatives and close friends who had remained in Bulgaria, that are being remembered in such a way, but also more distant village acquaintances. Watching and commenting becomes a mechanism for normalizing the traumatic experience of the ruptures in the social fabric. At the same time, the video follows not only the presence of the people, but also the landscape of the village, pausing at key sites. Thus, the practice of re-watching and re-experiencing creates not only temporal, but also spatial bridges between home and abroad. In this sense, Loewenthal's (1985) metaphor of the past as a foreign country is reversed. Here, the temporality and spatiality overlap in such a way that the past becomes equivalent with the space of home.

The own wedding videos are watched not only by women in the privacy of their homes, but also by groups of relatives on family and festive occasions. On Ramadan Bairam a large group of relatives gathered to celebrate in the home of my landlord in Tafalla. At some point they decided to play the ten-year-old wedding video of one of his brothers. At first everyone kept chatting about recent everyday issues from their life in Spain, casting only sporadic glances towards the screen. Gradually though, everyone started watching closely and the whole conversation turned to the wedding video. One line of comments was related to what happened over the last years in the village, who built a new house, which places have changed, which streets were

paved. Another line of discussion was the people seen on the main square dancing: who had changed in what way, what happened to each and one of them, who married whom, who migrated to Spain, who's successful, who failed. The conversation quickly moved to more political topics, when the video reached the point of the civil marriage ritual in the town-hall, which was led by the mayor at that time. This part of the ritual also bears evidence to whom is the mayor at the time, which opens up wider commentaries on the recent political developments in the village and the success or failure of the particular mayor and his/her successors. Finally, a huge scandal erupted between two cousins over the present mayor and his decision to buy a new scanner for the medical centre rather than improve the sewerage system, and someone had to stop the video causing such a heated debate.

In this way, the use of wedding videos creates a sense of continuity and participation in an imagined village community, which albeit spread over space, keep being informed of and connected to each other. The diversion of the conversation from the past event to the present political situation in the village generates an even more intense feeling of participation. The personal function of the video as a document for an important event intertwines with the social function of the recording as an archive of the community life and of the village as landscape and consequently as a visually produced locality, to use the term of Wolbert (2001).

On another occasion, the brother of the groom whose wedding we have been watching said:

> When I watch this wedding, when I watch our village, I know that one day I'll go back. I'll never feel Spain as close as the small streets of Brushlyan. Now they paved the main street already, we are building new houses. You must have seen them when you went there. There are street lamps almost everywhere. Now, the new mayor has to work on the water supply a bit and it will be heaven, this village of ours. Here in Spain, this is not life, renting a place, being a foreigner. We are here just for a short while. For the wedding of my sons, we'll be back in Brushlyan, you'll see.

This quote is rather symptomatic of the more general opposition between home and abroad/normal and abnormal life, which is constantly present in the migrant discourse. The initial wedding of the parents at home and the final wedding of the sons, again planned at home, are the two points in time which will bracket the temporary unstable and negative migrant experience and will restore the normality of being, which migration has disrupted. In contrast to the Turkish wedding videos described by Wolbert (2008), which take place in Germany, here the direction is one-way. The

wedding is in Bulgaria, just as the home and the community are perceived in Bulgaria, even though many of the migrants have been living in Spain for about eight years and the small village community have long ceased to be concentrated spatially in Brushlyan. Celebrating the wedding ritual in Bulgaria itself is a sign that Brushlyan is thought of as the home par excellence, which is the place for the significant events, while Spain is perceived as a temporary experience, which only deserves the time of the mundane practice. The feast and the ritual only happen at home.

Watching wedding videos at the other end of the field, by parents in Bulgaria, is used in a slightly different way. The videos are used as a cure for their sadness induced by the physical absence of the children. My landlords, Ismet and Ayse, would usually play one of the wedding videos of their three children, all in Spain, after the usual Sunday evening phone call. Even though parents at home have plenty of photos of their children hanging on the walls, the videos offer a moving image, which seems closer to the authentic image. "When I look at Sabrie, dancing at the central square, it's as if she's still here," is what Ayse is telling me, while watching her daughter's wedding with tears in her eyes. And even though there are video recordings from other events in their children lives in Spain (celebrations of Bayram, birthdays, good bye parties for someone leaving back to Bulgaria) the weddings are what is periodically being played as a true signifier for the reality of the children. The significance of the wedding as the most important and festive event in the life cycle reinforces the feeling of co-experiencing the children's lives who are far away. As in the other cases, what can be observed here is what Bourdieu (1990) calls the "cult of the family unity". The recording of the feast has not only a documentary and preservation function, but also accentuates the integrity of the family, which is regarded as especially important under conditions of migration. The video, which contains all family members, does not only represent the wedding ritual, but in itself becomes a ritual of the family cult.

The new wedding DVD's: sustaining a transnational village community

Technologically the new wedding DVD's are much more easily multiplied and distributed among a wider audience immediately and simultaneously, which has deeper implications for their uses and functions. During my stay in Tafalla all the weddings which took place in the village in the meantime were disseminated among a wide circle of people in Spain within days. Two types of watching practices can be distinguished here: showing the own wedding to close relatives in Spain and watching distant acquaintances wedding by migrants. The own wedding videos are usually played for close kin members

who did not manage to go back to Bulgaria for the event.[8] The young couple gathers the relatives on both sides who are in Spain and plays the video in a celebratory and festive manner. Watching the video becomes a celebration in itself. There is a lot of food and drinks in the home of the new couple, music, usually played at weddings, plays along, the relatives bring small presents and often give money to the young couple. The video is watched in full, and the celebration afterwards might last until early morning. In this sense, this is a continuation of the wedding celebration, postponed in time and space. In this way the absence of the important kin members is compensated through the repetition and re-enactment of the ritual. The detailed recording serves as a tool to re-create a close to the original type of experience. Even though the guests cannot dance the typical *horo* dances in the living room, they sing along and clap their hands in rhythm while watching.

The ritual watching of the videos explains the length of the videos and the big number of real-time episodes. Long real time shots are not due to technical limitations, but to a filming convention.[9] Documenting every moment of the ceremony is significant part of the quality of the recording[10]. The subsequent show of the video becomes a ritual event, close to the original one. Moreover, video film is a strategy of enhancement of status and prestige

Lili is a 22-year-old woman, who had lived in Spain with her parents since she graduated from high school. Her husband was her high school boyfriend with whom she kept in touch over the summers. After they got married, he arrived with her to Spain and moved in with her parents there. Her uncle and his two sons, as well as several other more distant cousins did not have the opportunity to go back to Bulgaria for the wedding. Therefore, on the third night of their arrival to Spain, everyone was invited to watch the wedding video. Lili commented on the event, while running back and forth from the kitchen bringing out all kinds of food brought especially from Bulgaria:

> It was so sad that we couldn't be all of us in Brushlyan for my wedding.
> I almost felt that some part of my body is missing. Now that we have
> the rest of my family here with us, watching with us, sharing it with us,

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[8] These are wedding in which at least one of the two has established themselves in Spain formerly or right after the wedding. It is very common that the boy goes back to Bulgaria over the summer and "get married" to his long-term girlfriend. She then would join him in Spain, and at New Year's they would go back to Bulgaria for the big wedding. Another very wide spread practice is that the young couple decides to migrate right after the wedding. In both cases usually there are rather close relatives in Spain who do not manage to go back to Bulgaria to be present at the wedding.

[9] For a detailed discussion of the use of real time filming see for example Charles Gore (1997) on televised ritual in Benin.

[10] See also Gillespi (1995) on religious rituals in South East Asia, Depeli (2009) and Wolbert (2008) on Turkish migrants' wedding videos.

only now do I have the feeling that it is real, that I indeed got married. It was unfinished somehow before this evening here. And you know, my relatives here, they didn't know my husband that well. They haven't seen him in a suit, leading the horo, dancing with me. How can they just look at him with his ordinary everyday clothes and know that we got married? But now, after tonight, after watching the video they will accept him as my husband, I know!

The wedding ritual is completed only after every important kin member has participated in watching the wedding video. In this sense, the wedding video is the final stroke which validates the official marriage ritual. The digital repetition of the ritual widens the opportunities for participation and experience of the ritual. The physical absence is compensated by a repeated and detailed visual sharing post factum. The divided family is being reconstructed through the postponement and extension of the ritual. As with the old wedding videos, but to a far greater extent, the repeated use serves for the restoration, albeit partial, of the damaged family fabric, which migration has caused. The cult of the family unity is reflected in Lili's words. The wedding does not become fully real, until every important kin member has seen it. The aspect of extending the ritual as to include all the essential participants leads to a level of transnationalization of the community and a sustenance of a transnational social field, which cannot be reached through other media of participation.

What is more, this extension of the ritual which adds one more stage in the actual ritual, before it is completed, creates in fact a longer period of liminality, which was not part of the original wedding ritual. Unlike the period between the '*getting married*' and the '*wedding*', this is a new aspect of breaking the ritual into more parts. Thus, the period of time between the wedding in Bulgaria, and the final chords of the video recording in Spain, is an extension of the transition between two states. Not accepting the husband, until all the relatives have seen him in full wedding attire signifies the need for accreditation of all family members, before the final transformation (into officially married). Lasting sometime up to two weeks, this period bears the traits of indeterminacy and ambiguity, typical for the liminality period, discussed by Turner (1969). Thus, migration brings out a new aspect into the traditional wedding, which changes the texture of the ritual in spatial and temporal terms – from a two-step, into a three-step transition.

Another aspect of this practice of watching is the transformations in the meaning of the ritual which come along. The migrant relatives put different emphasis in the flow of the events than the usual main turning points. Through relatives that were present at the wedding, they have sent special greetings - songs ordered from the band. The greeting my landlord required from the band on behalf of his two sons who were in Spain was: "Hot greetings from the

cousins Ismet and Mehmed, from far away Spain." This moment was then awaited with eagerness, while the respective cousins were watching the wedding already in Spain. They re-winded and played this spot several times and commented on the particular phrasing and the chosen song. I will come back to this modification of the important points of the ritual in a moment.

The second use of the new wedding DVD's is by wider audience. Once a wedding DVD is brought to Spain by a recently wed couple, several copies are being circulated among the wider community of migrants. They do not watch it in the same ritual way as the close kin, but watch it with certainty nonetheless. Here the idea of restoring the family unity is brought to the level of the community. Watching is accompanied by comments on various participants in the wedding and their recent live development. Those who were recently in Bulgaria, inspired by the images, share the latest news and gossip. In this way, one of the most important aspects of being part of a wedding in the village - the gossiping - is being delayed and recreated from afar. At this level, watching substitutes the participation. As a result, the videos reinforce the idea of an imagined village community, which includes the migrants. The weddings and the celebrations which go along are an occasion for a recurring experience of the whole village community sharing certain events every week. The wedding video grants an opening into this experience. As in the case of the old video, it disrupts the flow of mundane time by inserting the festivity time of the home into the realm of migration.

This imagined village community, however, is an idealized version of the community as such, which covers all the rupture and social distances caused by migration on one hand, and all the existing conflicts and power relation in the village itself, on the other hand. In such a way, watching the videos covers and even smoothes in a bizarre way the unevenness of the social horizon in the village and creates an idealized version of the village social life and of home. At the same time, this particular aspect creates an even stronger feeling of absence of those who are in Spain and cannot participate. Similarly, for the migrants the idea that there is an occasion for celebration every weekend, which they cannot attend, emphasizes the feeling of rupture between life at home and life abroad. The fear of falling out from the broader village community while becoming confined in the limited migrant community is palpable and is being verbalized exactly in moments of watching a video. The video here serves to recreate the idea of integrity at the level of the community. Atidje's words illustrate this point:

> These videos help me at least a bit to imagine life in the village. I haven't been at a wedding since I arrived here four years ago. I feel as if I am completely uprooted that way. When I watch a video, even if it's

of someone I don't even know that well, I feel as if I am back. The same songs, the same dances, the same streets. Plus, some people I wouldn't have even recognized on the street, if I hadn't followed all the videos lately.

In her comment, we may read an additional aspect in the process of imagining the community. Both the own wedding and the more distant wedding videos are being used to recreate the feeling of unity by weaving a specific type of more flexible connections between the members of this transnational field. In this sense, the videos as a technological medium support the virtualization of the ideal community. With the absence of any well-developed internet fora or virtual social network, the wedding videos are the only means of virtual links between the migrants and the inhabitants of Brushlyan.[11]

There is a subtle transformation in the way videos are used, but also in their meaning, which goes along with the technological aspect of their production. The old videos are produced for the married couple and their closest relatives. The new videos are directed to the whole community, transterritorially and temporally spread. The aim of the video is not only to remind people of an event, but to signify for the actuality of the event. In this sense, the new videos become evidence, not only a reference. At the same time, the ritual is not only being watched after the fact by those who were absent. It is newly experienced, re-enacted, and only thus finally completed. This re-enactment of the wedding becomes the actual closure, without which the ritual is not perceived as finished. Thus, the video is not just a sign of the wedding, it has become part of the wedding itself.

The extended ritual: when the invisible becomes visible

The public and multi-fold use of wedding videos transforms the dynamics between the visible and the invisible in the ritual. Being present at the wedding permits direct participation in the ritual, partaking in the dance, in meeting people, in consuming the food and drinks and in this sense, sharing the physical and sensory participation. On the other hand, the purely visual insight into the wedding post factum offers a different kind of entrance into the ritual. The camera offers a different point of view to the event both for those who experience the wedding for the first time through the video and for those who re-watch it, after being part of it. Observing the ritual through the camera enables access to moments otherwise invisible for most of the guests

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[11] Facebook was not yet popular while I was doing my fieldwork, and only a few people had internet connection at home. Clearly, with the spread of home internet and smartphones the use of social network sites like Facebook have become a powerful channel for community building.

present. Such moments would be the procession to the bride's house and to the main square, the dowry display and the ram exchange. These points albeit public, are not shared with the whole village community as opposed to the dances at the main square and the restaurant feast afterwards. Another more concealed moment, inaccessible for direct observation by the wide audience, is the gift giving by the witnesses and the parents in the restaurant. Without a video, the only people who see this are those sitting in close proximity to the centre. The speeches and the central dance floor opening dances are also to be directly observed only by those who sit nearby or directly participate. Thus, the wedding video provides an all-encompassing view from above, which opens up the opportunity to look into these otherwise hidden and invisible moments.

It is this simultaneous closeness and distance generated by the mediation of an event through its video recording, that Sarah Pink describes in her analysis of televised bullfights. She argues that live and televised bullfights do not fit the ritual/spectacle dichotomy, on the contrary, they become an interweaving of media and ritual agendas, constituting each other (Pink, 1997:133). In a similar way, the personal participation in the wedding with its limited view is intertwined with the total view of the spectator, which penetrates in every corner, but is only present virtually. However, what makes this different from the mass television records of rituals, is the interactivity and creativity of the spectators in the more private video reproduction of the ritual. The spectators are not just passive viewers, but participators who control and direct the process of watching, which has become a second order ritual experience. The repeated watching activates the event again, but in a different way by introducing new accents. Rewinding, fast-forwarding, choosing certain points to go back to and watch over and over again, while skipping others, creates a different version of the ritual. The moments that gain importance by being commented upon and re-watched, are not necessarily the main turning points of the ritual as conceived by the main participants in it. While the town-hall civil marriage ritual and the speeches in the restaurant might be regarded as the most central ones by the family and the local village community, the relatives or the other migrants in Spain often emphasize different points. Consequently, watching the wedding is not simply a passive reproduction, but becomes an active part of the ritual, which opens it to new interpretations.

This reveals another difference with public rituals shown on television. The level of intimacy in watching the private wedding videos, in which if not the married couple itself, then at least many of the guests are friends or relatives of the viewers, introduces an additional aspect of indexing and referencing in the process of watching. The special camera tour, documenting

each and every guest and their greetings to the newly wed offers a very precise statistics of the wedding guests, of their presence, their table position, their clothes and their codified (for the camera) behaviour. The viewers exhilarate when they see a kin member and do not miss to note if someone is missing. There is a need of visual reference of the existence of village members, exactly because this is what cannot be reproduced through memories or gossip, while away from home. Moreover, the aspect of indexicality is complemented by the subtle transformation of the behaviour of the ones who are recorded. While in the older videos the guests were directing their congratulations to the new couple, in the new ones, the greetings are addressed to the whole village and the migrant community, which will follow every gestures and word later on. The constant visibility awareness changes the behaviour of the guests and they become much more formal or witty in the new videos.

An example for the change in status of a mini-event within the wedding was the case with one of the latest wedding DVD's brought to Spain during my stay there. Both the bride and the groom were very young, under 20, just out of high-school, hence most of their peers and friends from school were in Bulgaria, while the migrants in Spain were mostly older than them. However, their wedding video became quite popular because of one particular case. As seen in American movies, the cutting of the wedding cake is usually accompanied with the groom and bride feeding each other, and subsequently spreading cream on their faces. In this case, however, the fun game became a bit aggressive with both of them slapping each other with huge pieces of the wedding cake and giving each other rather angry looks. For the regular wedding participant, this small incident would have remained invisible due to the position of the main wedding table. The video recording and subsequent wide circulation of the DVD made this instance visible and public not only for the whole village community in Bulgaria, but also for the migrants in Spain. This particular DVD became quite popular, travelling from house to house with a small note on it, pointing to the exact minute in which the incident is taking place. This otherwise insignificant for the ritual event was watched, re-watched, and discussed for many days in the migrant community.

The inappropriate slaps in the face opened the floor for all kind of comments as to the personalities of the newly wed, which consequently spread to more general discussion of the two kin sides. Someone remembered that one of the grandmothers was particularly bossy when she was young. At the same time, an older woman shared with me, that she did not approve these new inventions in the wedding ritual. This small event, not at all central for the main wedding ritual, would have remained unnoticed for the direct participants. Through the multiplication and the distribution of the DVD however, it turned into the most discussed and commonly shared moment

which evoked comments about several generations of people and even about the transformation of the wedding ritual over time. In this way the emphasis is shifted, and a new parallel version of the event is created by the postponed secondary consumption.

Conclusion: the transnationalization of the ritual and the ritualization of the transnational migrant space

The visual recycling of the event leads to transformations of its substance. From a ritual here and now, for which participation is sine qua non, it turns through reproduction into a ritual, taking place in more than one place in more than one time. Thus the ritual deterritorialzes, and the time of its total completion unfolds as to include both the physical participants and the migrants. The links between what happens in the village and the absent ones who are in Spain, already are thought of as part of the practice itself, which consequently allows to call this a transnational ritual.

Following Victor Turner (1969) then, I have argued that the ritual process is an active thing. It is not an invariable restatement of a static or even cyclic state of affairs, but equally capable of making and marking shift in a situation. The extension of the ritual and the subsequent transformations expresses the change in the overall migrant situation by adjusting to it while at the same time it also normalizes the otherwise ambivalent migrant existence. Moreover, as Moore and Myerhoff argue, ritual is a declaration of order against indeterminacy (1977:17). Migration poses a threat to order, it creates a rupture in the neatly conceptualized community fabric. The wedding ritual, extended and re-enacted, restores the idea of order but at the same time it also emphasizes the absence, the distance and the fragmentation that migration brings about. The extension of the ritual made possible by the use of technical devices sutures these ruptures and ritualizes the migrant space, as an act of normalizing the abnormality of the migration experience.

The phantasm of the ideal community prior migration which has to be recreated becomes activated by the social use of wedding videos as devices. The recording of the ritual and the performance of the ritual have mixed to produce a new version of the ritual. The mediated re-enactment happening through the device has become part of the ritual itself. As such it has transformed the ritual extending it, including new participants, allowing for shifting of the emphasis on different points. The extension and transformation of the ritual through the device of the video produces in its turn a new type of community – translocal and trans-temporal. Through asynchronous and mediated interactions those in Bulgaria and those in Spain become part of one community

that is imagined. The oneness of the community is a phantasm that is perpetuated by the devices. In this sense, the wedding videos are phantasmic devices that allow order and coherence to be reinstated at the level of the imaginaries of a community spread over space and time through migration.

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SUBURBANISATION AND MIDDLE CLASS IMAGINAIRES IN THE POST-SOCIALIST CITY. A ROMANIAN CASE STUDY

GABRIEL TROC[1]

ABSTRACT. The article is a contribution to the debates on the topics of class divide and urban development in the ex-Socialist Bloc after the 1990 regime change. In the first part, it renders the roots and limitations of the middle class concept and shows the role the concept played in the transition narrative. After it elaborates on how the middle class can be understood within the broader discussion on contemporary global class restructuring under the neoliberal forces, in the second part the article provides, using qualitative data, a micro social and economic history of the city of Cluj-Napoca, which reveals and explains how flows of capital investments grant the economic conditions for a strata of people to embrace the middle class's ideal and values, and how this new material basis is reflected in the spatial restructuring of the city.

Keywords: middle class, post-socialist city, Cluj-Napoca, critical anthropology

The study explains how the recent urban development of a Romanian city has produced the conditions for a particular materialisation of the middle class ideal, as some of its inhabitants' aspirations met national and transnational capital interests, as part of regional and global processes associated with neoliberal politics. In this respect, it addresses the more general subject of class reconfiguration and social stratification specific to the countries of the former socialist bloc, but also relevant for other countries and regions enmeshed in the rapid neoliberal urban transformation world-wide. More narrowly, the study depicts, by using the methodological and rhetorical techniques particular to the field of social anthropology, a micro-history of suburbanisation as a central locus where class distinction and class solidarity became visible. This micro-history also provides the facts and the backdrop which enable both directions of class analysis - based on the labourers' place in production and on their patterns of consumption - to be engaged. The study is a contribution to the debates on the transformation of the post-socialist city, providing an analysis based on a world-system viewpoint on cities' development within the centre-periphery contemporary dynamic. Challenging the sociological line of thought that understands middle

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class through a culturalist perspective, which analyses and measures income levels, lifestyle typologies and consumption patterns within a local, regional, or national configuration (Mills, 1951; Bell, 1973; Low, 2003, etc.), my study focuses on objective material processes, related to the global capital flow in search of profit maximization, which produce opportunities for certain strata of workers to live and define themselves as successful social groups.

Middle class concept and the transition narrative

Unsurprisingly, in the decades after 1990, the public concern for social classes in the former socialist countries has almost vanished, while in the academia it became "not very popular" (Buchowski, 2001:142). Ironic as it was, the class conflict, *nomina odiosa* belonging to the repertoire of the recently deceased official ideology, had just re-emerged in the open, with different groupings of the ex-socialist societies trying to impose themselves or to resist one another. Reviewed from a temporal distance, we cannot help but understand some of the events and movements of the '90s as class conflicts, as for instance the episodes of the Romanian miners' squads marching towards Bucharest when they were threatened to lose previous privileges and jobs, or the more widespread privatisation of large parts of public goods everywhere in the Eastern Bloc (Karnoouh; Drweski, 2005). It is well-known that the transition narrative had not described the emerging social order as a "capitalist society" (which would have raised class-related issues), but as a "market society", a model that would have allegedly conciliated (at "the end of history") most of the social conflicts that had previously justified ideological fights and societal prospections. While this model was all that the citizens could have hoped for, the new society was to be neither equitable, nor classless. Yet, if talking about class was somehow still legitimate, the only class entitled to be talked about was the "middle class". In a Freudian slip, middle class talk inevitably reminded people that everything is, once again, about class, but, at the same time, obscured the plurality and predicaments of the class system. Above all, the middle class was not about class conflicts and class struggles, and while defining other classes has lingered as a fuzzy matter (or even "class" itself was to end up as a "fuzzy category", as Buchowski suggested, *op. cit.*:165), the clarity of the middle class has remained largely unquestioned.

This is not surprising if we comprehend the ideological role this concept was playing for the CEE societies' post-socialist transformations. Like elsewhere, the middle class ideal was also imposed here as an imagined panacea viewed in most political parties' and reformists' narratives[2] as the "solution for whatever

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[2] The largest Romanian political party, PSD (Social Democratic Party), which won the 2016 elections, opened the government program with the motto "More Romanians in the middle class" (http://psd.ro/assets/pdf/Programul_de_guvernare_al_PSD_-Masuri_pentru_mediul_de_afaceri_-_16.11_.2016_.pdf.).

political, economic or social problems we face in the globalised present" (Lopez; Weinstein, 2012).[3]

The anthropology and sociology of post-socialism addressed the new social divide and the new social formations in a conceptual range intimately linked with the transition narrative: they described a "new feudalism" (Humphrey 1991), a "capitalism without capitalists" (Eyal; Szelenyi; Townsley 2001), emergent social formations dominated by local Mafias or by a re-centralising "predatory spoiler state" (Verdery 1996), a realm dominated by "epidemic crime and corruption" (Gustafson, 1999), or simply as a "chaos", dominated by "wild capitalism" (Nazpari, 2002), to mention just a few. The main actors of these analyses were the new elites, the former nomenklatura, the nouveaux riches, the civil society, the local "barons", the ethnic groups, the winners/losers of transition and other similar entities, all of them being enmeshed in a battle for imposing their values and for maintaining or gaining access to central material or symbolic resources.

Captive to the idea that the future of these societies is already written in the western societies' past (Buden, 2009), the focus and main questioning of the transition analyses was if, and what pace and variation, these societies would become true market societies, integrated in the liberal democratic order, highly productive and consumption oriented. And the by-product, main asset and sign of success of a society's healthy transition would have precisely been represented by the amplitude of its "middle class". This imposition to eastern countries was intimately linked with how western societies were imagined in the second half of the '80s. Precisely when the neoliberal turn had started to produce deep social fractures, the idea of the various classes (especially of the working class) being absorbed into a vast middle class became preeminent. The fact was in no way accidental: as Boltanski and Chiappello have shown, sociological imagination has gradually renounced to represent society in terms of collective socio-professional categories and identities (which was dominant from 1960 to 1980), mainly because the new form of capitalism diminished the power of the canonical classes' representatives (especially the labour unions) to make the classes visible (Boltanski; Chiappello, 2005: 302-311).

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[3] It is important to point out that "middle class" is not an indigenised term in Romania: it is not used by people to refer to themselves, to categorize others or to mark the social division. While during the '90s people addressed linguistically the recent social differentiations by using the term "employee" (*salariat, angajat*) versus "private employer" (*patron*), the latter term being applied to small entrepreneurs (mostly shopkeepers), and slightly maintaining the negative meaning of the officially criticized category during socialism of the "profiteer" (*speculant*), later on, after the private sphere of the economy was enlarged, people rather evaluated their own social and economic position with reference to an imagined "decency" of living, while they assessed others, fiercely in some groups, through standards of living incarnated in various valued material possessions. If class categorization is not a means for evaluating social position in common interaction today, occupation still is. However, if highly priced during socialism, in Romania, like in Russia (Patico, 2008), the occupational prestige ladder has been significantly blurred after socialism's hierarchies collapsed.

The roots and limitations of the middle class concept

The historical avatar of the "middle class" concept is to be found in the category of the European "petite bourgeoisie" of the *Belle Époque*, which at the end of the 19th century developed a style of life based on material consumption and comfort, doubled by obeying social conventions and by having status concerns. The life of its members gravitated around the house, relocated from the city proper to its outskirts (in London, Vienna or Berlin), into detached streets and colonies situated in miniature parks or gardens, so planned as to recapture the small-town spirit, and which could both provide the tranquillity of the private living and the search for controlled social interactions. This class liberated itself from the puritan values of the bona fide bourgeoisie, and had the resources, if limited, and the knowledge, to spend for comfort, enjoyment and emancipation (Hobsbawm, 1987: 166-167). A significant occurrence of this category emerged in the United States, where its contemporary meaning had also been shaped, at the beginning of the 20th century (Moskowitz, 2012). Intimately linked with the American dream, which attracted millions of poor European migrants, the ideas that personal efforts and abilities searching to meet available opportunities would metamorphose into material success were, in fact, a reflection of the new place of the United States as economic hegemon (Arrighi, 2010). In contrast to the European society, still dominated by statuses, which at the time when Weber produced his view on class were still entities with rigid, legally ensured privileges (Carrier, 2015: 36), the American society provided the social mobility and material wealth that would later define the profile of the middle class: not based on inherited positions or income alone, but also on education, white-collar work, economic security, owning a home, and having certain social and political values. In Western Europe, on the other hand, this collective subject has been created not by an unleashed free market, as suggested to the Eastern Europeans by the transition narrative, but under the tutelage of the welfare state, in the first three decades after WWII, an epoch dominated by social-democratic policies informed by Keynesian economic principles (Judt, 2005).

Thus, what should be remarked in the light of this background is that the emergence of a middle class in Eastern Europe after 1990 mirrored neither the American historical conditions of economic affluence, nor the situation of states guided social policies, specific to post-war Western Europe. By imagining a middle class as a societal goal for the ex-socialist countries, the transition narrative imposed a new ideological landmark to replace old ends, defined previously in terms of culture ("civilisation") or economy ("development"). In doing so it falsely reinforced a particularistic, "national" ("country by country") outlook on the subject of social divide, in a historical moment when this divide was replayed on a global scale. On this larger scene, the social divide is resettled,

due to the neoliberal dislocations, both in "the West" and in "the East" or "South", with affluent categories being dispossessed in the West, while new abundant strata, as well as new impoverished groups, emerged elsewhere.

Accordingly, the sociological search for depicting the emergence of a national middle class remains a futile statistical game of reporting medians (indebted to the transition narrative's delusional object of an everlasting western middle class), if not linked with larger processes related to how the contemporary mobility of capital and people reshapes local social relations within an international framework still defined by centres and peripheries. This focalisation asks for a more classical interrogation of the subject of class (rooted in the world-system theories, the new social history and Marxism), which seeks to contextualise the classical culturalist representations of the middle class (in terms of life-style, status and consumption), by looking after objective material processes that produce opportunities for certain segments of workers, clerks or small entrepreneurs from different locations to live and define themselves as successful social groups. This analytical perspective highlights the structural factors, determined by the new varieties and trajectories of capitalism, which put in opposition different groups of population, producing new forms of polarization and segregation. Embraced by anthropology as a "critical anthropological political economy" (Kalb, 2015), it is concerned with the full global dominance of the capitalist value regime and, consequentially, with the process of a global class formation, a process that could be researched ethnographically through the local manifestations of world-wide undertakings like urban development, de-industrialization or re-industrialization, production outsourcing, etc. Class, in this perspective, is less a stable contractual relation between capitalist employers and employees in a particular place, but more an unstable configuration of spatialized social relations of inequality, power and extraction and of the mythologies associated with them (Kalb, 2015: 14). Going beyond the poststructuralist and postmodernist explanations, this perspective seeks to bring back class as an identity linked both with labour per se, and with the present global reconfiguration of work.

Under these assumptions, in the following I will see the middle class as both a myth, an ideological ideal, and a social entity under construction. I will analyse how the recent urban development of a Romanian city has produced the conditions for a particular materialisation of the middle class myth, as some of its inhabitants' aspirations met national and transnational capital interests, as part of a regional and global process of class re-arrangement.

Methodologically, the study is based on various procedures for collecting qualitative data: in situ observation, informal and in-depth interviews, life histories and public information analysis. More than 80 semi-structured interviews and life histories were collected and analysed during the 2012-2016 period. Particularly resourceful data was openly available on a number of

Internet forums and chat rooms, which were built and administrated by the suburbs' residents, and whose thousands of treads and topics for discussions constituted genuine chronicles of the making of the suburban life.

The city: Cluj-Napoca

Being the second-largest Romanian city after the capital, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca also became, in the last few years, one of the most economically dynamic cities from the CEE[4] . Particularly interesting is its evolution after 1990, which can be divided into a period dominated by a nationalist ideology incarnated by a mayor who was in office between 1992 and 2004, who promoted an ethnic public agenda and kept the city closed to foreign investments (Brubaker at al, 2006), and a period of economic development, fostered by national and international investments, which started around 2002, grew rapidly[5] till the economic crisis hit the city in 2009, and experienced a renewed growth from 2012 up to the present.

The city also embodies the present-day *modus operandi* of the neoliberal global economy and the type of development it produces: investments of different sorts (national, foreign, EU funds) flock to localities where business opportunities (in terms of legal regulations, quality and price of labour force, rate of capital return) are highly favourable, and avoid the localities with less favourable conditions. This produces noticeable regional discrepancies with regard to development and quality of life. With a constant influx of the younger population which attends its six universities, and its educated and skilled inhabitants inherited from the socialist era, Cluj-Napoca has become a regional centre that successfully attracts investments in relatively high paid sectors, especially in communications, finance, automotive, services and, more recently, and extensively, in computer programming.

In fact, the city "has succeeded in managing a transition from a predominantly manufacturing town to a city with a strong and balanced economic mix" (Ionescu-Heroiu et al, 2013: 122).

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[4] The population of the city at the last national census was 324,576 (National Statistical Institute [INS]); however, an important number of recent inhabitants did not register officially (a more truthful assessment would gravitate around 400,000). Notably, Cluj-Napoca is one of the few Romanian cities which has shown, in the last decade, a population growth. With an unemployment rate of 1,9% at the county level in 2016 (AJOFEM, Cluj), compared to a national average of 5,9% (INS), Cluj-Napoca represents, next to Timișoara, a growth pole that outpaced by far other larger Romanian cities with respect to attracting new investments and encouraging new firm formation. The city has succeeded in developing an eclectic economic base after 2000, with both large and small companies, in manufacture as well as in the services sector, with a tendency of constant growth of the latter after the economic crisis (Ionescu-Heroiu et al, 2013).

[5] The economic growth of the city was constant after 2000, with a boom around 2005 and with a quick recovery after the slowdown of the economic crisis of 2008 (Ionescu-Heroiu et al, 2013).
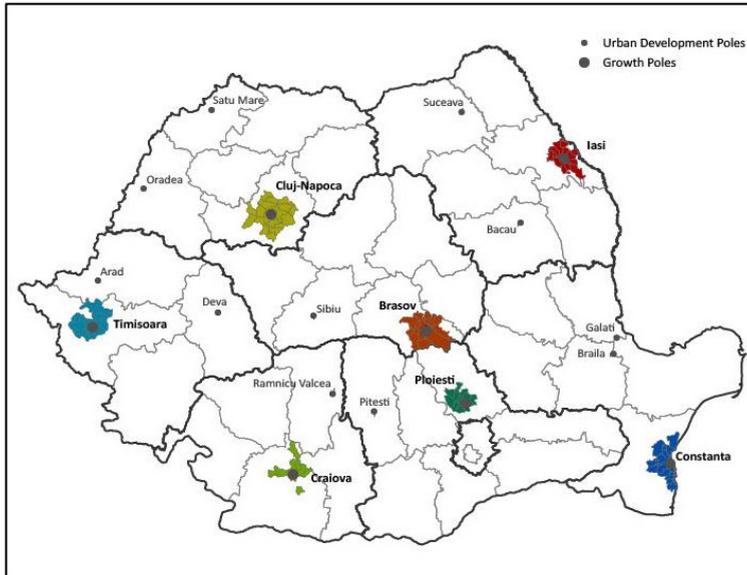
Source: Ionescu-Heroiu et al, 2013:5.

Figure 1. Growth poles and urban development in Romania (except Bucharest)

As a result, the city also became a magnet for qualified young inhabitants from inert smaller towns in North-Western Romania (Petrovici, 2012). The pressure on urban environment, as a result of this dynamic, steadily grew starting with 2005, and produced important consequences: increasing density in terms of habitation and transportation, increasing rent prices, expensive real estate market, high living costs. Rising salaries also made possible the emergence of a functional consumption market and consumption-oriented lifestyles.

The interconnections between class restructuring and urban development can be understood by analysing a) some of the main city's development trajectories and b) the recent transformations in residential patterns.

Urban development

The urban post-1990 restructuring of Cluj-Napoca is intimately linked with its urban heritage: both with the pre-socialist strata, dominated by its rather typical Austro-Hungarian pattern of a central burg with narrow streets, and some baroque and neo-classical public and residential buildings raised in the 18th and 19th century (to which the Romanian administration added, after gaining Transylvania in 1918, a layer of symbolically meaningful buildings and a central residential area), and with the socialist strata, consisting mostly of large workers' block-of-flats neighbourhoods built from the '60s to the '80s,

which surround the central area in all directions, plus an industrial zone located in the North-Western part of the city, in the proximity of the railways. The gradualist economic policies of post-socialist Romanian governments allowed the city's economy to recede in the '90s without major disruptions, with the consequence that the city was neither depopulated, nor impoverished in particular areas, like other post-socialist towns (Stanilov, 2007). The extension of the city outside its socialist limits was rather slow at the time, with a few scattered individual housing projects being implemented on the outskirts. What happened, though, was a strong deregulation in construction, doubled by a decisive change in the property regime, both with regard to the huge housing stock belonging to the state, which was almost entirely privatised to their occupants at lower prices, and to the surrounding lands, which were claimed in court and generally gained by private actors using various legitimisations. These evolutions paved the way for a bold laissez-faire development in the next period.

The urban development that followed the economic boom of the mid-2000s had to answer to a number of crucial problems: a) to respond to the population pressure, namely to provide housing for people resulting from the natural growth of the city and for the newcomers; b) to find spatial solutions for new productive spaces, specific to the new economic profile, and c) to provide conditions of expression for the new life-styles enabled by the economic growth. Like elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the local administration faced these problems by embracing the market mythology (Bodnar, 2001), unleashing the mechanism of demand and supply in regard with most urban issues, and maintaining for itself a loose (but often partisan and corrupted) position of mediator between private actors. Ten years later, this policy has, as a result, a bundle of habitation predicaments: dysfunctional suburbs, traffic chaos, cramped city centre, poor public services.

Middle class residential patterns and their change in time

Appropriating spaces, raising borders, limiting access are all strategies in class segregation that can be found wherever the economic bases for class dividing are met. In Cluj-Napoca these processes were fostered by manoeuvres like thickening the city centre (with both productive units and residential buildings), appropriating the city's surrounding land for new industrial facilities, and the erection of suburbs on the city's margins.

I will discuss in the following the latter aspect, which I researched empirically on the cases of two new suburbs, and for which I provide an ethnographically informed perspective on the emergence and spatial dispersion of a local middle class.

The new suburbs are both entirely new structures, detached from the past city margins, and thus proper "post-socialist" enterprises. Compared to the

socialist neighbourhoods, which, at the time of their construction, were entwined with the city's previous structure, these districts, both located at a certain distance from the city on former agricultural lands, can count as suburbs. The first, and the largest one, Floreşti, is located about 4 km from the city's western end and, from an administrative point of view, is an independent commune (as part of an older locality it colonised). According to the censuses, the population here grew from 7.504 in 2002 to 22.813 in 2011, being the fastest growing suburb in Romania (Ionescu-Heroiu et al, 2013: 119). The unofficial estimations raise the numbers to over 40.000 in 2016. The second one, Borhanci, is located closer to the city, at its southern end on a hilly area, and consists in the present of about 3.000-4.000 inhabitants.
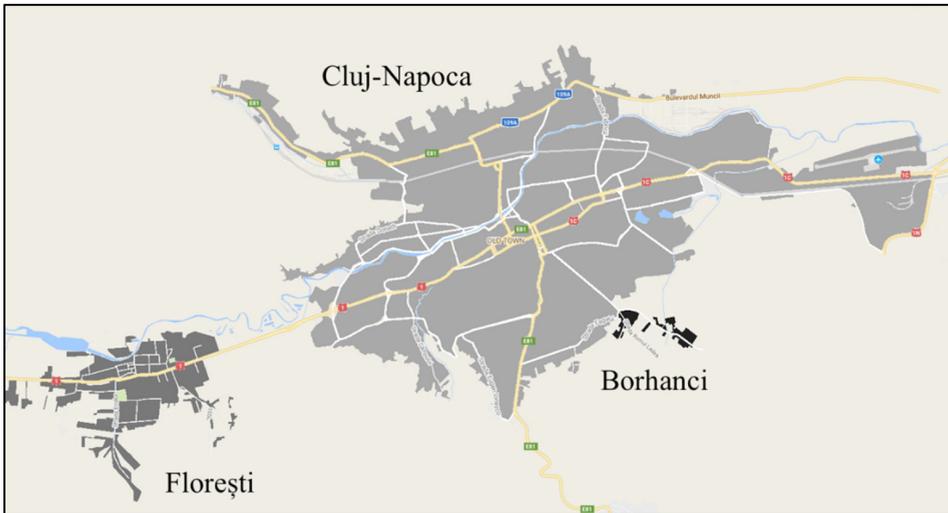
Source: Google Maps (edited).

Figure 2. Map of Cluj-Napoca with the locations of the analysed suburbs

The building of the first district started around 2000, while of the second began more recently, specifically after the effects of the economic crisis of 2008 has been alleviated. Both districts had similar patterns of evolution and passed through similar phases: it all started with individual initiatives of raising family houses, scattered here and there, often on pieces of land they privately owned beforehand. Later on, other individuals started to flock to the areas, buying parcels of land that became pricier by the day, and erected separate houses or duplexes, for themselves or for the market. Importantly, they connected their houses to the (rather poor) infrastructure (roads, gas, sewerage systems) already provided by the first inhabitants. Even later, private construction companies

penetrated the areas and started to build block-of-flats, wherever unoccupied terrains were available and setting a construction site was possible, and, in turn, modified the existing infrastructure.

> We were among the first to build in the area. We bought the parcel in 2003; there was no infrastructure at the time. We brought ourselves the water pipes from an old colony from the hill, and we paid 500 $ to a nearby group of houses to let us connect to their gas pipes. We brought electricity from a closer cottage that belonged to a former director of a state company. In 2006 we started to build the house on an almost bare landscape (C.V., female, 62, pensioner, former high clerk in the state aviation company; Borhanci, 10.10.2015).

> There were few houses when the developers came. I asked my neighbours to apply to the town hall for a zoning plan (PUZ) that would restrict the tallness of constructions and types of buildings allowed. But that was costly and they didn't want to pay. Therefore, the developers ended up zoning the area as they pleased. They connected to our pipes without paying a dime and started to raise their buildings. (A.M., male, 58, entrepreneur; Borhanci, 16.11.2015).

Technically, the new districts are not suburbs in the typical (i.e. American) sense: they did not result out of an important growth in population, doubled by innovation in transportation technologies and by governmental investment in infrastructure (Baldassare, 1992), but out of the more general logic of post-socialist development, defined by a lack of regulations, ad-hoc solutions to population needs, corruption and by mythologizing the virtues of private property and private initiatives. In terms of city planning, the suburban development abandoned all tenets of the modern urbanism: an urban plan, which takes into consideration the collective habitation needs (public transportation, institutions, parks, etc.), a rationally conceived unit of collective habitation (as the canonical modernist "block-of-flats" used to be, with apartments rationally designed to meet all living necessities), and the spatial configuration of the buildings and places as to meet the imperatives of "utility, simple geometry and hygiene" (Le Corbusier, 1923). In contrast, Floreşti, in the first instance, became a cramped agglomeration of different types of buildings, from the individual house with garden, at one end of the spectrum, to the large ensemble of interlinked blocks, at the other. All in all, what has resulted out of this entirely private enterprise is a vast array of hybrid shapes, adornments and colours, a collectively inhabited urban area without public institutions and public spaces and few and poor public services. Because of the strict delimitation of properties with fences, roadblocks or other obstacles, the district is impenetrable for the pedestrians otherwise than along the driveways, constraining to a non-communitarian, enclosed inhabitancy.

> We hadn't seen it at the beginning. Probably because I was raised in a different sort of neighbourhood, I assumed free access. We are like the mice in an experiment; because of all the fences, which I praised at the start, we cannot wander on the streets, and if I want to visit somebody I know, I have to make huge detours... (C.S., female, 26, sales assistant; Florești, 14.04.2014)

To make things worse, there is only one road that links the district to the city, where most of the inhabitants work or study, and where they have to commute daily mostly by their private cars, facing terrible traffic[6].

If at present all these predicaments are obvious, this was not the case in 2005-2008, and going back in time to follow the objective facts and the subjectively-lived stories of the districts' manufacturing is providing a partial answer to the middle class formation and profile I am looking for.

The manufacturing formula was quite simple: a new optimism met the availability of mortgage, and the participating actors were mainly young professionals, as the inhabitants-to-be, the entrepreneurs-developers and the banks.

The material base for the new optimism, as I mentioned, was given by the new positioning of the city in the national and global circuits of capital. Not only the number of investments, the capital influx, the greenfield enterprises, the EU funds - which all produced new jobs -, but also emblematic investments like Nokia's enhanced the thrust into the future. The average salaries also grew steadily in Romania from 1999 to 2008, with a higher pace between 2005 and 2008[7], which made possible in Cluj-Napoca, for a category of employees - banking clerks, middle managers in private companies, IT specialists, middle and higher public clerks etc. - to earn higher than average and to expect further increases in earnings. Subjectively this situation was perceived as stability and life predictability, a point of arrival on the society's transitional trajectory[8], and a good moment to embark on long-term projects, both professionally and personally. For many successful individuals this perception, which expressed their new economic condition, was understood less as a moment in social

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[6] The road that links Florești to Cluj-Napoca is actually a national road, DN1, which, with its average workday traffic of 58,666 auto vehicles at the point of entrance in the city, was assessed in 2016 as the most crowded Romanian road (compared to București-Otopeni traffic of 54,135 cars) (Coraian Zoltan, 2016: 7).

[7] Counted in USD, the average salary doubled in this period: from 746 lei (257 USD) in 2005 to 1282 lei (534 USD) in 2008 (INS).

[8] In December 2004 the PM Calin Popescu Tariceanu declared that the post-communist transition has ended (*apud* Romulus Brincoveanu, 2005). The optimism was also fostered by Romania joining NATO in 2004 and being accepted as an EU member in 2007.

stratification, but more as a departure from the past. Already imbued with middle class expectations, the new condition was interpreted as what was already promised and, like elsewhere in ex-socialist countries, as the "normalcy" of a "decent life" (Fehérváry, 2002). In few instances was the desire to overcome the past more concrete and visible than in the realm of housing. Exiting the "grey" socialist workers' districts was constantly invoked during the interviews as the first rationale for buying apartments or constructing houses in suburbia.

> We used to own a really nice three-bedroom apartment in a socialist district, but we reached the conclusion that whatever refurbishment we would make (which we did; we invested a lot of money in it), it would still be an old, dysfunctional home, so in 2004 we decided to sell it. Then my husband got a promotion, and we lived for two years in Bucharest. When we came back, we judged that we could afford a better life, and we hoped that with the money from the old apartment and a bank loan we might buy a house in a different place, not in the old, greyish districts. Still, we didn't have enough, so we opted for this row house, which appealed to us for its multi-storied structure and modern design. Florești was a logical option: they started it from the scratch as a house-only new district, very close to the city. (F.I., female, 35, high school teacher; M.I., male, 38, acquisition manager in a construction company; Florești, 22.10.2013).

It was not the invoked desire for a normal life, though, that made buying a new apartment possible and led to the construction boom of 2005-2008, but the availability of mortgages. This opportunity was also a new thing: having a rather short history in post-socialist Romania (it was made legally possible only in 1999[9]), the mortgage turned popular only after the banking system became dominated by foreign capital, following an extensive banking privatisation in 2000[10]. The foreign banks envisaged a great opportunity for value extraction through mortgages, due to a huge demand for consumption credits and by being allowed to practice a three to four-time higher mortgage interest than in their home countries[11].

Thus, for many young professionals from Cluj-Napoca, be they clients or entrepreneurs, taking a mortgage was very much part of the new "normalcy" they expected, and of the long-time predictability they were hoping for. As an immediate consequence, the real estate market skyrocketed, and the sales made possible for construction developers to gain a high profit rate, which was reinvested in newer

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[9] Law 190/1999.

[10] 90% of the Romanian banking system belonged in 2015 to the foreign capital (Ziarul Financiar, http://www.zf.ro/banci-si-asigurari/topul-integral-al-bancilor-cine-a-crescut-pe-o-piata-in-stagnare-14504025).

[11] http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-arhiva-1242353-creditul-ipotecar-vedeta-anului-2005.htm.

housing projects long before the already contracted constructions were completed. These new consumption opportunities opened the space for a whole range of new habitation ideals, for new tastes and new forms of expressing the self, and for an overall enhancement of the quality of life, which were not available before, but also for new forms of disappointments and failures. In the 2005-2008 period the suburbia became the privileged place for incarnating them[12].

The creation of an imaginary of suburban lifestyle was a complex phenomenon, which mobilised different agents: future inhabitants, construction developers, home decoration magazines, bricolage stores, etc. Together they produced, expressed and fostered middle class expectations and tastes, a whole new lifestyle concentrated around the imagery of the home. First and foremost, suburban life was imagined as being further away from the crowded and noisy city and closer to nature. The clients who bought their homes in the floor plan stage, while waiting for their homes to be completed, narrated their experiences on online forums[13], where they shared their expectations of a more serene future life, dreams of a new equilibrium, provided by a more ecologically integrated living space, plans for apartment's interior structuring and adornment, but also anguishes related to the quality of the constructions, deadlines of contracts being overcome and so on.

> The weather was so beautiful Saturday, when I visited my future house... I was at the last block, just at the forest's edge, and the birds were singing... the wind was blowing lightly, there was a deep quiet and a smell of spring... I can't wait to see myself on the balcony, enjoying my morning coffee, away from the whirring sound of cars and dusty air, surrounded by greenery (Moxut[14]; Floreştionline, 2009).

> The flat I chose has a gorgeous terrace where I will set up a rocking chair (Foxylady; Floreştionline, 2009).

> I will have a beautiful view, I really like to sit on the balcony and hear birds singing (Citroens22; Floreştionline, 2009).

> That's why I like Floreşti, especially the area where the blocks of flats were built: it is more remote, far away from the stir, from cars, and because it will be a younger district (Furduioana; Floreştionline, 2010).

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[12] The quantitative data confirms this general enhancement of the quality of life and the assumed class positioning of the inhabitants of Floreşti: the suburbia was counted among the 20 Romanian localities with the highest LHDI (Local Human Development Index - an index that comprise an aggregation of statistical data regarding change in the levels of education, healthcare, welfare and demography) for the period 2002-2011 (Dumitru Sandu, in Ionescu-Heroiu et al, 2013: 76-77).

[13] I analysed the content of these forums in detail in another text (Troc, 2013).

[14] Usernames of local residents on the Internet forums.

The developers meet those expectations by advertising the new collective housing projects (in reality groups of block-of-flats re-baptised as "ensembles") under exuberant names, that evoke a natural, exclusive, holiday-like and tranquil existence: Sunny Valley, Emerald Garden, Sun City, Luxor, etc. Researching the new gated communities of Gdansk, Polanska (2010: 301) found similar names (Sunflower, Green Slope, etc.) - proof that they belong to the post-socialist middle class's spirit more generally. The recent accessibility of private cars, especially of western second-hand automobiles, also contributed to the imagery of leaving the city behind.

Another aspect that seduced clients was the openness of the apartments. Being sold in a pre-finished phase (reasoning that this would enable the owners to imagine the interior structure as they wished, but in fact minimising the construction costs) the clients were charmed by the illusion of spare space, to which larger windows and opened terraces contributed too. Dreams of American kitchens, or large living rooms made at first unnoticeable the fact that the intermediary spaces, like lobbies, closets or larders were lacking.

> We were very pleased that we could arrange the apartment as we wanted. The places we formerly lived in the city were always dark and crammed... after the child came we felt the [new] apartment as small; there are so many things a child needs and you don't have where to deposit them. Everything stays out in the open now. Is very hard to keep it neat (V.I., 32, female, business consultant; Floreşti, 02.04.2014).

As they moved in, the inhabitants of the suburbia discovered that they were very similar: they were rather young and educated, they had experiences of travelling or working abroad, they internalised the meritocratic values of the epoch, and they have similar jobs. Not unlike the socialist times, when the apartments were distributed according to workers' places in production (being allocated within the factories) to workers with similar rural background, and often coming from the same home villages, the middle class inhabitants of suburbia took notice that they graduated same schools, they have similar occupational tracks, they share same origins in Transylvanian small towns and they may work for the same company.

> ... we are all young and rather educated in this ensemble... (Baby_mic; Floreştionline, 2009).
> ... I was also in Spain for a while, like everybody else from here... (Liviu; Floreştionline, 2009).
> ... half of my office colleagues reside in this ensemble... (Oneill; Floreştionline, 2009).

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They also share the same vocabulary in common interactions, a proof of being tangled in the same social and economic praxis, and a good knowledge of the new cant - the "corporatist pidgin" - where words like *professional management*, *discount*, *echelon payment*, *bonus*, *quality-price ratio, teamwork* are part of the focal vocabulary.

One of the reasons why the 2005-2008 suburban boom was possible was precisely that the involved actors were part of the same class: as clients, notaries, lawyers, construction developers, real estate agents, or banking consultants, they share common interests, world views, languages and expectations, which differ from those of the working class strata, who in Cluj-Napoca makes sense to be identified as either less educated, less skilled and older than the previous group.

The interviews allow to identify in Cluj-Napoca the international conformist lifestyle that incarnates the present-day middle class ideal: like elsewhere, the new suburbia's inhabitants are ready to take risks and to overwork themselves; they feel constrained to marry and have children, they dream of a good education for their children (in private schools, if possible), they buy branded products, spend free time at the mall, go to the gym, buy holiday packages, take photos constantly, communicate online, and so on. However, they meet the working class in their local conformity: they practice canonically a religion, cultivate kinship relations, organise large ceremonies on the occasions of baptisms, weddings or funerals, give bribes where "it is appropriate to give". If economically they represent the most dynamic, progressive category (both as labourers and as consumers), culturally they are rather conservatives, many of their core values gravitating around the "traditional family", religion or spirituality[15], folk culture and ethnic identity, and being less open to different forms of cultural diversity. Accordingly, they tend to embrace all the renewed waves of nationalist ideology and to actively support right-wing political parties.

> In my free time I read a lot, mostly literature. I also enjoy watching movies; I go with my husband to the cinema quite often. Sometimes we eat out, checking out the new restaurants. On Sundays we go to church, and afterwards we often pay visits to my husband's relatives, who live in Apahida [another peri-urban locality in course of suburbanisation]. We sometimes go on small trips in the mountains, but also on city-breaks in Europe. During Christmas and Easter, we either stay at home or go to my husband's parents in the countryside, in the Western

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[15] "We can see among [the younger generation] a growing interest in different types of beliefs (that are syncretically accepted) and a more open atitude towards different types of religious traditions and spiritualities" (Gog, 2016:114). The young professionals' search for spirituality in connection with the personal development courses market, which has developed very strongly in the last decade in Romania, was analysed in detail in the special issue of Studia UBB Sociologia, vol. 61 (2).

> Carpathian Mountains, were our nice traditions are still preserved (M.M., 32, female; together with her husband she owns and manages an international transportation company; Floreşti, 11.03. 2013).

All these values and lifestyles - which can be summed up by the paradox of being individualistic but also longing for the community - made young professionals the ideal actors of the suburbia manufacturing.

They were also its main victims when the economic crisis hit the city in 2009: because there were no new clients, housing projects already contracted could not be completed; construction sites were abandoned, ruining the landscape for years to come; completed buildings remained poorly finished.

> Unfortunately, we are not the only ones who paid all the money and still didn't get the apartment. The gas pipe is not installed yet, and the real estate agency recommended to install it ourselves, because the builder is bankrupt. Even worse, the lot the block is built on is apparently mortgaged! So we cannot inhabit as legal owners until the mortgage is redeemed (Aeknaton; Floreşti, 2010).

The market value of the real estate in Cluj-Napoca dropped with 30-35%[16] and in Floreşti even with 50-55%. With their incomes diminished, competing on a weaker labour market, and indebted to the banks for decades to come, the residents found themselves trapped outside the city, in a suburban area with major urban problems. Suddenly, the socialist neighbourhoods, with their standardised but rationally conceived apartments, their available public transport and institutions and their open public spaces became, by contrast, more desirable. And while construction in Floreşti had not stopped entirely, the simplest block-of-flats with smaller apartments became dominant[17], being bought mainly by a poorer working class strata[18].

> I would move back to the city by tomorrow. But it is so hard to make plans when you have a mortgage for 30 years. I was so content when I bought the apartment, but now I realise the neighbourhood life is not improving. It is dirty and crowded. In fact, it is changing for the worse (A.I, 27, male, HR specialist; Floreşti, 2014).

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[16] http://www.imobiliare.ro/vanzare-apartamente/cu-cat-s-au-ieftinit-locuintele-in-aproape-5-ani-de-criza-topul-oraselor-cu-cele-mai-mari-scaderi_db/.

[17] This trend has increased after the crisis, producing a population density (27 p/ha) comparable to that of the city's centre (Ionescu-Heroiu et al, 2013: 56).

[18] The pressure for buying against renting should be addressed briefly: in the absence of a significant stock of social houses, and due to the lack of a renting-control legislation, the pro-business policy dominates the housing issue. A state-endorsed form of mortgage, *Prima Casă* (The First House), allows (but also constrains) people to buy house properties.

When the city's economic engines restarted in 2012, the residential patterns of the middle class changed substantially. The obvious failure of the suburban projects, coupled with worsening traffic, put new pressure on the city centre. Decrepit courtyards, bleak back streets, areas inhabited by a poorer (often elder Hungarians or Roma) population, have entered a gentrifying phase, being gradually populated by middle and upper-middle class members. The city-council's massive investments in the central area, while justified as preserving the heritage and attracting tourists, responded, in fact, to the newer residential and lifestyle needs of these classes.

However, the suburbia middle class dream has not died out entirely, either because the imagery of possessing an individual house with garden remains as strong as ever, because economic gaining opportunities have become available again, or because the influx in the city of successful young professionals has resumed, due to the high-end services sectors' development. The IT sector, in particular, grew spectacularly after the crisis, attracting skilled people from all over Romania and becoming the largest employer sector of the city (Ionescu-Heroiu et al, 2013: 122).

The suburb of Borhanci came out of these factors. Closer to the city, as I mentioned, it differs from Floreşti in many respects. Hypotheses for how vicinities may develop are carefully weighted now by the inhabitants-to-be when planning to build a house; developers offer individual houses or duplexes that are in the final stage of construction (as nobody would buy a house in the floor plan stage any longer) and with various amenities; the infrastructures are better designed; gated communities are preferred and searched for. The profile of the inhabitants is also different: most of them used to own other housing properties in the past, and, accordingly, they have the experience of inhabiting other places of the city. They have, therefore, a clear mental map of the city, with the advantages and disadvantages of each place, and thus opting for Borhanci is the result of a long process of reflection.

> I came in the city as a student, in 1998, from Mediaş [a small Transylvanian town] and I lived in Cluj ever since. I stayed with rent, after I graduated, in different [socialist] districts, mostly in Mănăştur and Mărăşti. Later on, in 2006, after I got married, we bought an apartment in Grigorescu [one of the first built socialist districts]. It was convenient there; it is one of the best neighbourhoods. Still, we longed for a house of our own, with a garden. I searched all over the city to find a lot to built on, but I realised it was really difficult to find, within the city margins, a place of at least 600 sqm to build what I had in mind. And living in the city became more unpleasant, anyway, because of pollution and noise. Borhanci appeared as the best option, due to its closeness to the city, and relatively good access to work, to schools and shops (N.T., 37, male, engineer; Borhanci, 20.03. 2016).

They are also less fragile economically. Due to the high incidence of jobs in the service sector that offer better salaries, they afford higher living costs. However, they are more cautious, as a result of the experience of the economic crisis: they buy what they can pay for in a shorter run and with less credit money. They also adapt to the city's crammed development: they reconsider automobiles as the only option for accessing the city: they pressed the town hall successfully for public transportation, and they experiment with bicycle mobility. For some, moving to Borhanci is not perceived necessarily as "the final destination", "the fulfilment of the dream", as used to be the case for the first inhabitants of Floreşti. Being more mobile in their work life, they also seem to be more mobile in their housing options. They want and they afford a quality habitation, but they are also ready to change places if the environment changes as well.

> We only have a small bank loan of 10,000 euros, and we hope we'll pay it in four years. We preferred to buy this row house, which we found convenient, well designed and built, and a good investment, even though we wanted an independent house. Who knows, maybe in the future this will be also possible, here or somewhere else (F.I., 32, female, entrepreneur; Borhanci, 22.03.2016).

Still, however cautious and experimental they proved to be, they challenged in no crucial respect the developmental logic of laissez faire. Thus, the more desirable the district seems to be, the more investments come in, with blocks replacing houses in the developers' search for greater profits and, in the absence of legal restrictions, agglomerating the neighbourhood and producing the same difficulties other suburban projects have run into.

> It was really quiet when we moved here [in 2013]. But now, early in the morning and in the evening the traffic is jammed. They should make a roundabout at the neighbourhood entrance, it is not possible to go on like this (N.I. 29, male, IT specialist; Borhanci, 22.03. 2016).

Conclusions

Limited as it is, ethnographical research on class formation through people's spatial dispersion in the post-socialist city can reveal some tenets of the contemporary global class divide. Entering the global circuits of capital, some cities in the CEE became part of the larger scene of value production, accumulation and extraction which produces wealth in localities that momentarily provide the best conditions for capital reproduction, and deprives of wealth and opportunities other localities and regions. Along this process groups of people

may temporarily take advantage of it. Various ideologies - the mythology of the middle class among them - go along the material factors of social action, providing the needed motivation and required subjectivity. With their dreams and aspirations, work ethic and competitive proclivity, educational background and skills, economic autonomy and individual initiative - all these elements being modelled during the "transition" to match the values of the dominant ideology of neoliberalism - the suburban inhabitants analysed here incarnated the successful strata that, being neither simple proletarians, nor petite bourgeois proper (and making these categories unusable in the present altogether), could temporarily benefit - even if exploited in a very classical sense (through production, consumption, credit) - from the new social arrangements. Even if not expressing it explicitly, they constitute a class for itself, the class that seeks to impose its political views, which actively promotes at the local and national level its interests and whose culture is the dominant culture. Still, however proactive and influential it may be, its action range remains fatally limited by the fluctuant influxes of the great capital, which belonged to or is controlled by higher classes linked with the global metropolises.

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FORMS OF REMUNERATION FOR FREE SOFTWARE PRODUCTION: A REDUCIBLE COMPLEXITY[1]

EMRAH IRZIK[2]

ABSTRACT. How producers of free digital goods can be compensated for their labour is a major topic of debate and controversy in Free Software and related fields. This paper analytically disentangles the multiple modes of remuneration in operation in Free Software and presents the implications from a political economy perspective. The outlook of autonomous commons-based production in information goods is situated in relation to capitalism. In the process, certain conceptual contributions are made regarding the nature of information goods and the commodity form.

Keywords: Information society, free software, digital production, commons, capitalism

It is often asserted that since the seventies capitalism has entered into a new stage, variously described as "postindustrial", "informational", or "knowledge-based". This economy is characterized by an increasing emphasis, in terms of value-added, on the input of high-quality knowledge produced by high-skill labour in the production process. Qualitatively, it is also an era where the creation of a significant amount of wealth comes about through what Manuel Castells has dubbed "knowledge acting upon knowledge" (Castells, 1996), in the sense that intellectual effort applied to existing information and previous knowledge results in a new, highly sought-after, higher composition of knowledge. This knowledge, to various extents, can either be privately monetized in commodity form as intellectual property and used as a means of rent-seeking, or become part of the new, digitally representable commons which is shared, immaterial and inexhaustible, distinct from the classical, exhaustible commons like land and water. Under contemporary conditions, the profit principle dominates for the most part, and the distinguishing characteristic of knowledge-based capitalism has been that knowledge and information are

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transformed into a restricted, monopolized, commodified factor of production. The fruits of knowledge-based labour as embodied in works of science, software, literature and art are monopolized via an expansive regime of intellectual property (IP). IP maximalism is legitimated on the individual level by reference to romantic notions of authorship (which is then assumed to be alienable and therefore transferable from the author to an intermediary such as the publisher), and on the collective level by assuming that strong IP protection promotes development by offering the only viable course for compensation.

It must be noted that once produced, knowledge and knowledge-embedded goods in turn act as the materials of labour necessary for the subsequent round of knowledge production, as each is a partial and constantly evolving embodiment of the accumulated cultural and intellectual riches of society. This fact, which has been latent in all eras of production, is only fully expressed in the contemporary knowledge economy. It significantly erodes the distinction between what is a consumer good (Department II product or means of subsistence in Marxian economics) and what is a capital good (Department I product or means of production). The consumer product is now increasingly also a means of production; the consumer is supplanted by the user (user-producer, prosumer, etc).

The strategy of profit-based enterprises so far has been to enclose knowledge on the basis of IP laws, trade secrets and employee regulations so that artefacts of the knowledge economy can be treated as if they were a rival good in the market, akin to material products of industry. A rival good means that one person's use of it necessarily bars another person from using the same, which is not the case for the artefacts of the knowledge economy. On the more ontological level, since knowledge is by its nature inalienable, in the sense that one does not part with it upon transferring it to another, it must be made a commodity by force of law, by way of restrictions placed on its reproduction (copyrights) and implementation (patents), so that knowledge can be treated as if it were alienable, in conformity with the logic of capitalist property. The commodity-form taken by these digitally representable knowledge goods, or digital artefacts, appears as *beyond fetishistic*. It does not merely substitute the appearance of relations between objects for what are in fact relations between persons. It denies, in the process, the material reality of the object (digital duplicability) in favour of legal fiction (copyright restriction). The digital artefact in commodity form not only appears to have value by virtue of its intrinsic physical properties rather than by virtue of being a product of social labour; it is furthermore only able to maintain this appearance because it comes into the hand of its buyer attached to a prohibition. In this sense, digital artefacts as commodities should be properly seen as embodiments of a *tabooistic* economic relation.

There is however, a counter-movement that proposes and practices a different knowledge economy against this arrangement in contemporary capitalism. This is a current which is advancing the Knowledge Commons, advocating and practicing the release of human knowledge in all its creative forms as global public goods, aiming to make this wealth open, shareable and accessible to all. There are diverse actors and avenues relevant to this process. In the software realm, this new intellectual commons takes the form of Free Software, as christened by Richard M. Stallman's GNU Manifesto in 1985.

Free Software (FS)[3], which offers a concrete alternative to the IP regime, is a particular way of organizing the production and distribution of software. It is based on social collaboration and free copy sharing, carried out by the coordination of a number of individuals that form an interactive community of producers and users. In FS, the human-readable programming code, called "source code," is made open and freely available under a freedom-guaranteeing legal license, together with the compiled binary computer software packages, which cannot be modified as is, but can only be executed by a machine. This allows anyone to develop the software by improving existing components and deriving new software, in addition to freely using it. FS thus constitutes an open commons; it is non-proprietary, in other words, held in common by all.

The phenomenon of a digital commons emerging in a limited sphere of production under our general capitalist system raises the question of what the motives to create such a commons could be. As the creator of the Free Software movement, Stallman cites numerous such motives. Some are non-economic, such as fun, political idealism, admiration (prestige), feeling of community and hatred of Microsoft (or large software companies in general)[4]. Others are auxiliary to the dominant commodity economy, such as cultivating professional reputation (increasing chances of getting hired) and education (part and parcel of the training of future software workers). Finally, Stallman cites wanting a better program to use, gratitude and money as motives for writing Free Software. These warrant a closer look, because they encapsulate the modes of reciprocity that are involved in the creation of this universal digital commons: Self-use points to the concern of an independent producer, except this self-use immediately becomes shared use due to free digital reproduction. Gratitude points to the ethos of reciprocity that emerges in this contemporary gift-like economy. Finally we have "money", which is the most controversial and the most interesting motive; what role money plays in a system where the product is not a commodity and no sale takes place is my subject of inquiry.

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[3] "Free Software" (FS) is interchangeable with the term "Free/Libre Open Source Software" (F/LOSS) that is frequently used in the literature. I have settled on the original term Free Software, as defined by the four freedoms articulated by the Free Software Definition provided by the Free Software Foundation. https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/free-sw.html.

[4] Motives for Writing Free Software. https://www.gnu.org/philosophy/fs-motives.en.html.

How those practicing the commoning[5] of software, meaning the free software producers, can be remunerated for their labour is a huge issue of discussion surrounding Free Software. Coding, documenting, designing, publishing and publicizing may require little in the way of means of production, but they take serious amounts of skilled labour to actualize in a satisfactory manner, and the output satisfies only a tiny share of human needs. Therefore, the production of such a commons will have to either be based on a congruently limited share of labour time of each individual producer, or be remunerated extrinsically by society. In practice, both modalities are in operation simultaneously and inextricably. Historically, there have always been a plethora of ways of remunerating labour other than out of returns from the sale of a commodity: communal sharing, gift exchange, elite patronage, public donations, state sponsorship are some that come to mind. What may seem mundane from this broad historical perspective nevertheless merits close inspection due to the near-complete hegemony of the contemporary commodity economy which currently holds sway over not only the material lives of human beings but also over their imagination.

I see the remuneration mechanisms of FS as a series of concentric circles. The unique contribution of this approach is to definitively map out the contemporaneous economic models in operation for FS production: its internal functioning as the kernel of a new mode of production, its point of interface with capitalism, and its potential path to independence and generalization. The origins of each circle are also historically identifiable and have an order of appearance. Circle 0 originates in the small avant la lettre FS communities in the universities and research labs of the '70s, Circle 1 originates in the '80s with the Free Software Movement, Circle 2 originates in the appearance of FS companies in the '90s, Circle 3 originates with the rise of online donations and crowdfunding in the late 2000s, while Circle 4 remains a future prospect.

The innermost circle, Circle 0, is defined by individual FS producers producing FS for their own use, which subsequently is put online for the fortuitous use of others. Circle 1 operates on the level of the community of all FS producers who benefit from each other's work; it may involve explicit cooperation, and the sharing practice contains within it a form of fair reciprocity. Circle 2 functions at the point of interface of the FS mode of production and the larger capitalist economy with Copyleft[6] playing an important role. Circle 3

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[5] Julie Ristau. https://www.onthecommons.org/work/what-commoning-anyway.

[6] Copyleft is a clause in FS licensing which requires derivative works based on FS to also be FS. This restriction on placing restrictions on code is the subversion of copyright law to serve ends opposite to its spirit. Copyleft is enforceable by copyright law because the original author (the holder of copyright) is setting these terms, allowing all software freedoms except the freedom to restrict the freedom of others.

consists of rising direct compensation mechanisms functioning between FS producers and the larger public that uses FS. With the analysis of these already functioning circles complete, I argue in favour of basic income as a new, potential Circle 4 mechanism which can further accelerate the generalization of the FS mode of production.

The expansion of the circles provides a mental image to aid our understanding of the expanding economy of FS. But it is not a solely analytical tool. It also follows the empirical, historical path of FS as its remuneration models diversified. Often, a similar trajectory may also be observed over the lifetime of an individual programmer as the programmer moves between academic settings, from FS volunteering to employment by FS producing corporations, to becoming an independent producer of various forms such as freelancer (e-lancer), donation recipient or public patronage beneficiary, or even a FS start-up entrepreneur.

New outer circles in the concentric circle model do not constrain or immediately negate[7] the operation of the inner circle mechanisms, but include and supplement them. At a given moment, a higher circle operation such as an employee producing FS code for a capitalist company may be simultaneously producing for their own need (Circle 0) and this may also prompt unrelated other individual coders to collaborate and/or spontaneously reciprocate (Circle 1). Circle 0 and Circle 1 operations may be at one point aided by a Circle 3 mechanism such as a crowdfunding campaign. In a hypothetical future where basic income is realized (Circle 4), a FS coder may continue to work as an employee as well (Circle 2). Therefore, we cannot observe these complex practices in delineated fashion, but we can analytically identify them. As the number of individuals participating in FS grows by the inclusion of new people in the outer circles, the inner circles also expand, strengthening the system as a whole. Consequently, it will not do to think of the movement as a mere tacking on of outer *rings.* Each quantitative (more individuals in a given circle) and qualitative (formation of a new circle) expansion furthers the displacement of the market in favour of the commons but with distinct logics that are often operating simultaneously.

The succession of the circles is towards increasing the *extrinsic autonomy* of the FS producing labourers within the historical *interim* between

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[7] If the progression of the FS mode of production continues and generalizes, in the medium term Circle 2 may be replaced by Circles 0 and 1 on the one hand, and Circle 3 on the other. This is an inherent possibility because of the contradiction between FS and capitalism. The shifting of individual FS producers between these circles is the reflection of this contradiction between the two modes of production on to class positions. In a utopian future where labour in the production of digital artefacts is predominant over labour in analog production (through automation), Circles 0 and 1 may also displace Circles 3 and even 4. This would imply a classless, post-scarcity economy.

capitalism and the potential future generalization of the FS mode of production, while the system moves in the same direction as a whole: achievement of economic self-reliance. This movement follows an S-shaped (sigmoid) curve, where Circles 0 and 1 provide minimal extrinsic autonomy, whereas Circle 2 provides almost full extrinsic autonomy, and is then only slightly improved again by Circle 3 (and a hypothetical Circle 4). In other words, the movement is towards the realization of self-reproduction within the FS mode of production; it is the movement from proto to full mode of production and goes hand in hand with the formation of digital producers as an independent class. This is *not* accompanied in the interim by a linear increase of *intrinsic autonomy* from the perspective of the individual FS producer, in the sense of choosing what to work on under which form of governance and with what regime of regularity. I rather claim that intrinsic autonomy follows a well-shaped (inverted bell-shaped) curve where in between the two cases of maximal intrinsic autonomy which are the first and final circles, extrinsic autonomy comes mostly at the expense of the intrinsic. The two forms of autonomy converge at maximum as we move to Circle 3 and beyond.

The addition of each new circle of remuneration to the system increases both the mass of use-values produced (amount of useful software), and thus the non-capitalistically satisfied needs of society, and the number of individuals (communities of software producers and also users) with a stake in the life of the system[8]. As the number of individuals engaged in the sphere of FS in various capacities increases, the *cultural* influence of FS increases as well, giving it the character of a social movement. This is reflected in both the explosion of academic interest in FS, peer production, open-source and the digital commons, as well as the interest of left-wing political movements and mainstream media commentators, whether business-minded, critical or utopian. The cultural influence of FS is sowing the seeds of a mass *political* consciousness of FS, which has already been reflected in the programs of progressive parties, the Pirate Party phenomenon, and FS-related activism.

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[8] It is important to note that this constantly increasing production of new software code must continuously compensate for "bit-rot"; the deprecation and degradation of old software code due to the constantly co-evolving software ecosystem. Thus, we are looking at a field of work that is not simply cumulative, but which is always chasing moving targets in order to stay relevant. "Finished" and "complete" software projects are rare things. Constant improvements, iterations and maintenance requirements characterize the field, demonstrated by versioning. There is however an element of decadence in the world of proprietary software which increases the chances of the FS competition catching up: the inclusion of "anti-features" such as DRM and tracking mechanisms which make the software less useful to the user while more profitable to capital, planned obsolescence, as well as prematurely pushing out buggy, half-finished releases due to cut-throat competition among proprietary vendors.

In the tradition of the Free Software Foundation's (FSF) Four Freedoms Definition of FS, which begins with Freedom 0, I denote the innermost circle in my model as Circle 0. This circle consists of FS produced by an individual coder for their own personal need. This is what Eric Raymond has referred to as "scratching your own itch". The crucial point is that upon completion, the code which is produced in this manner gets shared openly, to the benefit of all others who may have the same need. This is the simplest form of FS production but at the same time it is where the *immanent principle* operating at the core of the entire FS edifice is visible in its purest form. It is a radical phenomenon brought about by the nature of the digital artefact: an individual producer of a digital use-value, by mere willingness to share, which comes at no additional cost to themselves, by the trivial means of digital copying and distribution over the Internet, automatically provides the use-values for potentially everyone possessing the same need for such a use-value[9]. This positive externality is the main driver behind the entire system, and grasping it is essential to understand its resilience and sustained expansion. Also, despite the partial parallel, this already sets apart the FS producer from the traditional subsistence producer who produces on their own what they will *individually consume.* Contrary to the material nature of commodified analog goods, in the material nature of the digital artefact, there is no contradiction and dialectical conversion between use value and exchange value. A contradiction between the individual and the collective does not arise on this point[10].

Circle 1 in the concentric circles model of FS is the so-called gift economy relation among FS coders. I refer to this as the "so-called" gift relation because the nature of the digital artefact was unaccounted for or under-appreciated by those who asserted the identification. Gift exchange economies

[9] They have to be able to actually find out about it though. This discovery process may be commodified. Here are two examples: Certain sneaky, small parties sometimes venture to re-brand and sell FS items to customers who are unaware that they can acquire the genuine product for free online elsewhere. While unethical and frowned upon, this practice is technically legal and is in observance of FS licenses, because FS licenses allow charging for distribution. The scenario in mind in allowing this however was FS CD sales and not this type of scam. Another case is the App Store model that has come to dominate the smartphone and tablet computing platforms, where software installation is mediated by a gatekeeper (Apple's iTunes, Google's PlayStore, etc.) who may collect fees and/or commissions from app makers and/or users of the App Store, including for FS. These are cases of consumers' lack of information regarding alternatives in the market leading to the realization of rents (a market inefficiency). See the concept of the "Attention Economy" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attention_economy) for further inquiry into such issues.

[10] The realization of the use-value of a digital artefact does not take the form of consumption, but instead the form of using a copy. Replication of the digital artefact among its users is just one more instance of the mundane operation of copying which computing as a whole is based upon. In its technical functioning, copying data over the network, i.e. between users, is not categorically different than copying data from the hard drive to the memory of a system that belongs to the same user.

by necessity operate on the basis of an item gifted to someone specific equalling said item being removed from possession in the process of exchange - whether immediately or after a delay - in favour of another. Digital copying, as is the case in FS, means any and all parties, who are mostly anonymous, maintain possession of the exchanged artefact simultaneously. Still, let us ignore this theoretical shortcoming for the moment because flawed as it is, the gift economy perspective is based on an important insight. Early theorizers of FS arrived at the gift economy model because they observed a community of vocational programmers freely sharing code predominantly among themselves (Barbrook, 1998, for example). This implied a practice of reciprocity, even if it was implicit and unstructured. The producer base of software was more or less identical to the user base. This of course was to change dramatically with the PC revolution, leading to a situation where the vast majority of users are not programmers, although their use itself partially contributes to the production of software through the indirect mechanisms of network effects and providing feedback.

Nevertheless, an essential positive externality was in effect in this "gift exchange" among programmers. As a thought experiment, let us imagine now the first act of code exchange between coder Alice and coder Bob, a hypothetical *ursprünglich* moment in the software commons. Let us assume that through their own labour, Alice and Bob have respectively produced codes Foo and Bar. Let us further assume that Alice and Bob are both producers of average skill and it took the same amount of labour time to respectively produce Foo and Bar, making them of equal value. Both interested in the use-value of each other's piece of code, Alice and Bob now engage in exchange, i.e. they provide copies for each other of Foo and Bar. Both are now in possession of both Foo and Bar. Concerning fairness in remuneration, both are now fully compensated for their efforts in producing their respective pieces of code. But something extraordinary happens here due to the nature of the digital artefact, which sets Alice and Bob apart from two simple commodity producers engaged in a direct exchange of equal values. The "exchange" is not a private affair as in the case of market exchange. The exchange occurs over a public network, and there have been no copy protections placed on Foo and Bar of either a technical or legal kind that would limit the exchange to Alice and Bob as the only authorized parties. The result is that now not only Alice and Bob, but in principle every potential user of Foo and Bar have also come into possession of the software. This is the secret behind what Eric Raymond identified as the "Magic Cauldron" (Raymond, 2001: 113-67) of open-source: a common stew, to which each contributes a small bit, yet is able to receive as much stew as personally needed in return, simultaneously and non-subtractively.

In a hypothetical assessment of fairness defined as equal exchange for groups larger than the most basic symmetric schema of Alice and Bob, we

could make the following calculation: On the one hand, we must know the labour-time Alice contributed to coding FS (we ignore non-code forms of contributions for the moment). Then we make an inventory of every piece of FS that Alice uses which has been coded by other FS producers. For each item in the inventory, we assume we know the labour-time that was expended in producing the item and we also know how many copies of the item are globally in use. We divide the former by the latter to arrive at a per-copy value of the item[11]. We repeat this for every item in Alice's inventory of FS used, and add up the values and arrive at a sum. If the labour-time Alice contributed to FS is equal to this figure, we can reach the conclusion that the relationship of Alice to the community is fair on the basis of the law of value within a system of generalized reciprocity. With each new fair participant in the commons, the positive externality born out of the individual's socialistic "exchange" with the collective spreads throughout the system, as in the previous case of the one-to-one exchange between Alice and Bob.

This calculation of what goes on between Alice and the collective is all well and good, except for one problem: putting it into practice would be insanity. Not only would it prove utterly unfeasible to implement, it would hardly be desirable. We would need to install a draconian surveillance mechanism on each and every person's computer that would track every piece of installed FS on their system, as well as a mechanism that would track how much time they spend towards FS production. These would then have to be aggregated and constantly updated in real-time, accounting for the millions of hours worked and millions of installations of FS made every day. The end result would be a major disenchantment in the form of a number spit out on each individual's screen, stating their balance of account towards the commons, a quantified amount of credit or debt. And then what? Presumably after a certain period, a check or an invoice, followed up by enforcement, with all the nastiness that would go along with it.

The point of course is not to actually account for and guarantee such fairness in practice but to transcend it, in the sense that over time and across a large number of individuals, the principle roughly holds without conscious intervention. In fact, the power of the communistic FS mode of production is demonstrated precisely in its tolerance of individual cases of "unfairness": unlike traditional material commons, those who maintain a relatively one-

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[11] The more general purpose the software, the more users, hence the per-copy value of the software tends towards zero. For certain software used in small niches that takes a large amount of labour to develop however, the per-copy value will remain non-trivial. This could possibly explain certain holes (for the time being) in the currently existing gamut of FS solutions, as well as very high price tags on their proprietary counterparts. Examples that come to mind are game engines, professional CAD-CAM software, and Non-Linear Video Editors.

sided relation to the commons do not have a subtractive effect – in fact, recalling the comedy of the commons in which each participant increases rather than decreases a common resource[12], they have an "unfairly small" yet still additive effect. The FS ethos therefore prioritizes the maximum satisfaction of needs instead of obsessing over equality of contributions. We settle for a subjective fairness that leaves it to the operation of the moral urge to reciprocate that springs from the individual's conscience and sense of appreciation, what Stallman referred to as gratitude, which proves to be enough to sustain the system. External motivations for contributing are highly useful but not essential for the system to function.

The real limitation in Circle 1 remuneration *in this historical phase of transition* is not the issue of fairness, but the in-kind nature of remuneration that takes place[13]. Only software needs can be met within this circle (or in the case of digital production in general, only needs for digital artefacts). Although the spending of individuals who benefit from the digital commons is reduced by the amount that they would have spent otherwise on proprietary digital artefacts (software, e-books, digital music files, etc.), they cannot pay for "food and rent" through the operation of Circle 1. They would have to either do something outside of FS to earn money as well and limit the time they spend on FS production, or engage in the higher circles of FS remuneration.

What has truly propelled FS from a small "gift economy" among programmers towards the cyber-communism (Barbrook, 2000) we now observe was the Personal Computer revolution. The PC revolution started in the late '70s, and exploded in the early '90s with the advent of the home internet connection. PC's meant that non-programmers would own their individual computers and use them for tasks other than programming. In fact, personal computer became ubiquitous in production, used in every sector of the economy. The software accompanied the hardware, creating a vast market for what used to be called "packaged software": binary-only software that does not include accompanying source code. The emergence of Microsoft, which focused on serving this personal computing software market, was part of the same trend. The PC revolution has been a massive democratization of computing, which created swathes of computer users that vastly outnumbered the number of user-programmers. The role of programmers shifted from serving each other in academic research facilities where a form of avant la lettre FS had emerged, towards serving mere users. The dominant form this service took has been the market-based proprietary software model, i.e.

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[12] Carol Rose. The Comedy of the Commons.

[13] If we were to imagine a future society where most or all production is the production of digital artefacts, all remuneration could be in-kind, and the issue would not arise.

selling licenses for usage of binary software that came without accompanying source code. However, FS adapted to this new terrain, where a massive discrepancy exists between the number of FS coders contributing code to the software commons and the number of users benefiting from it. It is this new terrain that provided steam to what I call the Circle 2 of FS remuneration.

Circle 2 of FS consists of the contributions made by coders who are employed by an entity such as a corporation to produce FS because it furthers the commercial success of the corporation in a related field, or by a government which employs FS producers with a variety of economic or political motivations. A FS worker operating within Circle 2 is not concerned with what mechanism the capitalist, the government or other entity has devised to benefit from its spending on FS development; the relation of the entity to the FS producer is wage labour. This means that a category of FS programmers is compensated with money rather than with the exclusively in-kind exchanges of the previous circles.

Let me point out that this in general does not reduce the size of Circle 1. Even when individual contributors in Circle 1 are recruited by entities into Circle 2, they are naturally replaced by other newcomers. Furthermore, the volunteer phase of an individual FS coder may in fact have been motivated by expectation of future employment in Circle 2 as a result of volunteer work to begin with, a process analogous to the role internship plays and Stallman refers to as professional reputation. With the Circle 2 mechanism, individuals who at some point might otherwise have to abandon FS or greatly limit their contributions can be sustained. Also, there is the likelihood that the recruiters will hire volunteers to continue working on their existing project (where they have demonstrated their competence), rather than assigning them to different work.

There is a widespread tendency to see capitalist sponsorship of FS as proof of its capitalistic character, but this is a superficial conclusion which ultimately proves fallacious. Capitalist investment in FS production does not turn FS into commodities. Neither are the use-values seized by capitalists and made exclusive in any other way. Capitalist contribution to the FS commons is often a result of the contradiction between the interests of a particular capital and capital as a whole, where one capitalist is willing to reduce the total size of surplus value produced if this enables them to capture a bigger slice of the now reduced whole. Not to mention the fact that the particular capitalist may be dragged into FS production by the desire to build upon already existing Copyleft'ed code (to produce a derivative work).

This process generally follows the following pattern: FS, like all software, may provide a foundation for the complementary commercial business of selling "support and services" around it. All other things being equal, a company that can sell both software licenses and support and services will make more profits than a company that releases its software freely and restricts its profit

generating activity to selling support services. All other things *not* being equal, it is of course possible that a FS producing company may in the end make more profit than a proprietary competitor. This may occur in the following manner: If the FS product is more or less on par with the proprietary rival, by virtue of releasing its software for free, the FS company will have a much larger user base that may translate into more users who go on to buy support and services predominantly from the FS producing company, which, as its producer, is likely to be the company with the highest expertise on that FS (even if not a monopolist). This and similar second-order mechanisms for making a profit in no way negate the fact that in the domain of the relevant type of software per se, profits will have been reduced and the market will have shrunk in favour of the free commons. This means that the wealth of society increases dramatically (more users accessing the FS due to zero price), and as a result, new needs are created, the size of a separate market, the market for support and services for the software at hand, grows. The net result to society is an increase of wealth when compared to the system of selling software licenses, which is characterized less by the creation of wealth, and more by the transfer of wealth from one group in society to another, i.e. rent.

The Circle 2 model allows economic independence to the FS contributor so that they may pay rent and buy food while contributing to the commons which benefits everyone. This is a good thing. Corporate or state direction of FS projects does mean, however, that some freedom in organizing the productive activity and defining its goals (the question of what to work on and how) must be surrendered to the corporate or state managers. The economic independence of the FS developer in this circle comes with managerial strings attached.

Personal economic sustainability in Circle 2 may thus come at the cost of a degree of *alienation* in the work setting, which is the characteristic feature of all wage labour. The mere fact that a labourer is paid a wage in order to produce FS as opposed to proprietary software cannot negate alienation in the production process, when it is managerially organized by corporate, governmental or other non-self-constituted entities. Even within the wage relation, FS does, however, have a tendency to *reduce* alienation compared to analogous proprietary software production. There are two factors that effect this amelioration in the condition of alienation in *FS production under external management:* the first is that the product by definition remains a commons, so producers are not alienated from the fruit of their own labour in exchange for the wage. The wage is received in addition to access to the product that is produced. The second is that FS production has to be open to some degree to the collaboration and contributions of a larger community. To have it otherwise would substantially defeat the purpose of engaging in FS production for the entity – a major objective for the entity is to benefit from free external inputs instead of

developing a solution where the entire development costs would have to be internalized. Therefore, any FS project will engage to some degree in dialogue and partnership with the community in the way it organizes production, taking into account the needs and wishes of this community, of which the waged producers will comprise a (major or minor) subset. If this interaction is deemed to be dysfunctional by the community as a whole, the project's success will be jeopardized and may be threatened by the appearance of a fork. This ever-present pressure of community opinion and the threat that the community will vote with their feet in FS production provides a check on the amount of managerial fiat that a FS producing capitalist or state entity can exert on their waged FS producers (the same applies to any kind of leadership in FS projects). The managerial fiat will be diluted by influence from the community, in other words some characteristics of Circle 1 production will be felt in Circle 2 operations as well.

The interests of the sponsoring entity may overlap with the interests of the public fully or to a partial extent. This is a matter of the use-value of the produced FS. I intuit that as a general rule, the public good will be furthered by capitalist-sponsored FS in similar fashion to the way public goods produced by the capitalist state (such as roads etc.) benefit not only the capitalists but the population as a whole (assessing exactly who benefits how much can be difficult). In cases of government sponsorship (whether at the local, national or international level), the harmonization of public and governmental benefit will be dictated by politics (which no doubt is influenced by economics) rather than direct economics.

Circle 3 contains FS remuneration schemes where FS producers are funded by their users voluntarily and directly, without formalized procedures such as contracts or reviews of work performed. This remuneration is essentially in the form of donations and it can be seen as an example of collective patronage. Donations are made to FS coders either prior to or after/during (as software is rarely "complete", there is no clear "after" but rather continued development) the initial work of development takes place. The simplest form of donation is usually facilitated by posting a bank account number, PayPal button or other electronic currency id on a FS project website. Donors may sometimes receive notices of appreciation such as appearing on a ranked list of donors on a web page. Those that donate over a certain amount may also receive tokens of gratitude like swag items or their name appearing as patrons in the "about" dialog of a software.

As the donation model has gained traction and with the general proliferation of freelance work and the start-up phenomenon in the larger economy, innovations have taken place in the facilitation of donations. There are micro-tipping systems such as Flattr where the donor pre-allocates a

certain amount of monthly donations in their Flattr account, from which donations are drawn in proportion to how many times the user clicks the Flattr buttons on various recipients' web pages during the month. The pay-what-you-want model pioneered by "The Humble Bundle" game sales is another variation on the donation model, where a purchase action is required, but the amount paid can be as low as a single dollar (the requirement forces the user to break donor-inertia).

Crowdfunding has emerged as a systematic method of pooling donations for projects that are in initial or ongoing development. There are a few variations of crowdfunding. In the Kickstarter model, work is premised on the prior promise of donations. The project often presents an introductory video and page explaining what the project aims to be, and a certain target sum of money and a duration limit to gather the donation pledges is stated. If the targeted sum for donation pledges is reached within the given time frame, the project is undertaken. When compared to the usual circulation of commodities in the market, this form of crowdfunding reverses the production first, sales second approach with a seek funding first, delivery second approach. It also shifts some of the risk of enterprise on to the backers because they cannot evaluate the finished product before purchase. In the case of crowdfunding of already existing FS projects, however, the risks are much reduced because trust has already been established and distribution is instant upon completion. In the Patreon model of crowdfunding, "patrons" pledge recurring donations to projects instead of the one-off model of Kickstarter. This increases certainty and regularity of income for the producer compared to impromptu donations. In the more micro-system of Bountysource, users of software post specific feature and bugfix requests and set a monetary bounty for their completion, which is awarded to programmers who complete these tasks.

The beauty of donations when coupled with FS is that each individual decides how much to give themselves, taking into account their own ability to pay. This is much nicer for the user than the proprietary alternative of a one-size-fits-all price tag which will be set at a revenue-maximizing level, shutting out those who cannot afford it. One drawback of donations for users is that it may not be easy to figure out just how much to give to what, which could lead to donor-fatigue / donor-cluelessness. Nurturing the sense of community between producers and users, as well as accounting transparency in FS operations and further systematizations of donation mechanisms can go a long way towards solving this. Another issue may be the relative difficulty of generating donor interest for non-user-visible FS projects. Donation sharing and kickback schemes between upstream and downstream FS projects are being put in place to alleviate this issue. A sore spot in these advanced donation systems so

far is that the platforms are capitalist intermediaries which take a cut out of the donations. An obvious solution is for the FS community to produce non-profit or cooperative alternatives to these existing platforms. A non-profit clone of Patreon called Liberapay is one such attempt. This is a young field which is still seeing major innovations and the best models will be settled on with time[14].

The significance of the improvements in donation schemes and the development of a culture of patronage among the public for FS is that it provides a foundation for FS programmers to take a major step towards becoming a class of independent producers without relying on the mechanism of selling their products as commodities on the market. This means the coupling of extrinsic autonomy with an upswing in terms of intrinsic autonomy because FS producers who can fund their work through collective patronage can self-manage their own organization of production, without the bosses and managers in Circle 2.

This sums up the circles of remuneration for FS that have emerged up to now within the constraints of existing society. It is important to keep in mind that Circle 1 (which contains within it Circle 0) is the defining form of remuneration of FS as a mode of production because it is unmistakably stamped with its own internal logic. If the progress of FS and similar digital production models is not blocked by reactionary forces, the ultimate long-term historical trajectory will be towards the complete dominance of Circle 1, which is an idiosyncratic form of what Marx called the higher stage of communism (Rigi, 2013; 2014). Circle 2 is a product of the interaction of the emerging new mode of production with the old capitalist mode of production. While Circle 3 is a step towards breaking out of the capitalist mode of production, it is still of a transitional nature. The more human labour in production as a whole moves exclusively into the realm of producing digital artefacts through increased automation, the more relevant the FS mode of production will become and the more acute will be its contradiction with capitalism as a historical system. This will take a while, though. In the meantime, we need to keep thinking about the transition. One idea for accelerating this transition is to imagine the institution of a universal basic income as a Circle 4.

"A basic income is an income paid by a political community to all its members on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement" (Parijs, 2004: 8). There is a virtuously circular logic behind my argument. The already existing phenomenon of FS proves that individuals are producing use-values for society as a whole without necessarily being motivated by money; they tend to do it as a matter of self-realization. As a corollary, they deserve

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[14] See Platform Cooperativism by Trebor Scholz for an introduction to the issue of capitalist platform intermediaries and emerging P2P cooperative initiatives intending to replace them.

being accommodated by society in a way that does not reintroduce alienation[15]. On the flip side, by easing the provision of their basic livelihood, the introduction of a basic income will allow more individuals to cross the threshold of economic security in order to be able to participate in FS. Under a regime of basic income, which is an elegantly simple demand, all kinds of free digital production would be boosted by new participants, and as of yet unforeseeable new instances of free digital production may appear.

Another beauty of introducing basic income to a world in which FS and free digital production is ascendant would be that it would not jeopardize the operation of any of the lower circles, although it would strengthen the position of the labourer in Circle 2 and Circle 3 by increasing their options. "Give all citizens a modest, yet unconditional income, and let them top it up at will with income from other sources" (Parijs, 2004: 7).

There are already instances of support for the idea of basic income in the FS and Peer Production literature[16]. Perhaps even more significantly, however, software programmers themselves seem to be arriving at the idea. In a recent essay on his blog titled "Funding FOSS", software programmer Noah Kantrowitz points to the "non-capitalist system" of basic income as "an end game solution". "Provide a basic standard of living so people that want to dedicate themselves to enriching society can do so without putting their own needs in jeopardy"[17]. While Kantrowitz approached the issue from the perspective of funding FS, I find it equally exciting that other software programmers are pointing to basic income as a logical solution to the contemporary looming problem of structural unemployment[18]. Acknowledging the role software plays in inducing technological unemployment, software developer "Jason" of the blog "Practical Elegance" published a post titled "Confessions of a Job Destroyer" addressing the issue:

> We (programmers) all are, on some level or another; we're taking mundane repetitive tasks and automating them with code. In a perfect world, we would be hailed as heroes, freeing the toiling masses from their humdrum routines to engage in more ennobling pursuits... but there's that pesky issue of needing an income. (...) This, gentle reader, is where I make the argument for a basic income. It's just common sense as the amount of socially necessary labour decreases with each

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[15] Not every deserving contributor to the digital commons can currently make a Circle 2 or Circle 3 mechanism work for them.

[16] Cosma Orsi, 2009; Jakob Rigi 2014. Bauwens 2005. See also http://p2pfoundation.net/Basic_Income.

[17] https://coderanger.net/funding-foss/.

[18] http://blog.p2pfoundation.net/why-the-tech-elite-is-getting-behind-universal-basic-income/ 2015/02/24.

> passing year. (...) I'm a job destroyer, and I love what I do. Now if only we had a rational economy, I could stop having mixed feelings about the net effect of my work[19].

I expect that the demands for a basic income and reflections on the expansion of the FS mode of production will increasingly coincide. This hypothetical Circle 4 remuneration mechanism could prove to define the penultimate phase of information society on its path towards "fully automated luxury communism"[20]. Its realization, however, will require mobilizing the cultural influence of FS in order to express it in the sphere of politics, which could take a while. It would also provide a forward-looking solution to concerns with making sure that the capitalists contribute their fair part to the digital commons, because progressive taxation would provide at least part of the funding for basic income. Even more importantly, basic income would leave the communistic cultural experience in the FS mode of production undisturbed; no regressive introduction of the wage or equal value exchange. Furthermore, by looking out for the workers who lose their jobs due to the march of software-based automation (not to mention the software developers employed by proprietary vendors who could lose their jobs due to FS competition), basic income could be the quintessential "non-reformist reform" (Gorz, 1968) demand that unites the "bit-twiddlers" with the rest of the proletariat in a long march towards a post-class society.

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[19] https://web.archive.org/web/20161022094048/http://decomplecting.org/blog/2013/03/11/confessions-of-a-job-destroyer/.

[20] See http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/mar/18/fully-automated-luxury-communism-robots-employment for this humorously serious proposition, and Aaron Bastani, Fully Automated Luxury Communism, 2019.

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LABOUR RELATIONS AND LABOUR STRUCTURES IN MEDITERRANEAN CAPITALISM. *CAPORALATO* AND ROMANIAN MIGRATION IN THE SOUTHERN ITALIAN AGRICULTURE

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ABSTRACT. In this paper I will examine the structural and social features of the gang-mastered labour system (*caporalato*) as it appears in the agricultural production process in Italy. I will discuss the functions of this type of labour regime through an analysis of the role (Romanian) migrant labour plays in the Italian agriculture process and its need for the (informal) labour market mediation in agriculture. My aim is to critically map the function of *caporalato* within a production circuit that starts with the low price imposed on agricultural goods, and ends up at the top of the production process, namely with the food empires and corporate retail and distribution chains. The economic constraint for an ever cheaper labourforce, and its social context, will guide our critique of *caporalato*.

Key words: (Romanian) migration, caporalato, Italian agriculture, labour relations

Introduction: Migration and the gang-master labour system (*caporalato*)[2]

When one says *caporalato* (the gang mastered labour system) what immediately comes to mind are dramatic images of (immigrant) women from all over the globe who are exploited on the agricultural fields of the Mediterranean countries, but also UK, or the United Sates, whose stories about sexual and labour exploitation have circled the globe. Aside from this atrocious dimension of the phenomenon, a critical discussion about the repressive and exploitative regime of labour imposed on agricultural (immigrant) workers requires a theorization of its historical and structural origins, of the functions it fulfils,

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and the larger economic determinants it is subjected to. To understand this type of labour regime, one must first map the vital points of an economic chain of production and reproduction of certain labour relations, which starts with the low price of agricultural goods and ends up calling into question the savage capitalistic model imposed by retailer-driven chains of food distribution and food empires. In between these extreme points, a form of unfree labour becomes diffused calling into question the issue of labour rights and the founding principles of modern economy.

The issue of unfree labour in the context of economically developed Western countries is widely discussed especially because it challenges the wide-spread narrative of its presupposed incompatibility with the functioning of capitalism, and, as such, theories of contemporary cycles of primitive accumulation, or feudal labour relations, or modern slavery have been called into effect in order to circumvent the structural issues that this type of labour regime renders visible. As Tom Brass argues, globalization of free market entails the transformation of the regime of unfree labour into "not just an option, but in some cases a necessity" (Brass T., 2011). The dimension of unfreedom can take many forms: from the forms of bonded labour to the isolation, separation and repressive control of labourers, who are only formally free, but in fact subjected to extra-economic forms of constraint and coercion which over-determine the labour process and labour relations. In this context, the aim of this paper is to map these vital economic-political points that serve as the backdrop of *caporalato*, through a critical discussion of the situation of (Romanian) immigrants in the agricultural sector of (Southern) Italy. Moreover, it is our goal to make evident the historical and structural determinants that render *caporalato* one of the most repressive labour regimes, whilst completely compatible with the functioning of free labour market capitalism. Before advancing any further, a discussion about economic migration becomes necessary, such as to situate the issue in the wider context of the general mobility of the labour force.

For the past three decades Stephen Castles and Mark Miller have argued that we live in the *age of migration*, a period in which international migration "has accelerated, globalized, feminized, diversified and become increasingly politicized" (Brass T., 2011). Modern societies were and are the result of global, long-lasting and recurrent waves of (economic) migrations. Contemporary labour markets of developed economies adjust and distribute the supply of labour force drawing from a global, or at least regional, reserve of (cheap) labour power. As a result, migration studies need to be embedded into the super-structural and sovra-national entanglement of social relations, economics and politics (Castels S., 2008). Understanding migration as a social process of transformation, one that has deep roots in European history, entails

a critical stance towards political and social attitudes that spring out a conceptualization of (economic) migration as a crisis or a social emergency, opposed to which there would be an ideal normal social fabric of society, composed by homogeneous elements that share the same ethnicity, citizenship, social status, religion or cultural background. Following Etienne Balibar's suggestion that the real universality of globalization implies the recognition of "the global character of the social relation of capital at a world level" (Balibar E., 2002), we can also infer that the issue of migration is intimately connected with the issues and the contradictions generated by the process of globalization and a global dialectic between labour relations and property relations.

Moreover, there is a "disjunctive rift" (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015) at the level of migrant labour between the processes of production and reproduction of migrant labour force. Regarding specifically the creation of the large mass of emigrants coming from the Eastern European states, Joachim Becker argued that a *class of dispossessed* people was left behind by the introduction of neoliberal policies and measures taken by the national governments in the Ex-soviet space, a class that had no other alternative but to emigrate in search for a labour market where not only their labour force would sell dearer, but where they could also actually sell it, as the waves of privatizations, flexibilization of labour markets and the general pauperization made it impossible to do so in their countries of origin. Indeed, labour force is the commodity possessed by workers, and this commodity is worthless unless sold. The economic models assumed by the countries in Eastern Europe work on two different sets of fundamental dependency: finance or finance and industry (Becker J., 2016). This situation profited both national and international capitalism, while discarding the needs of impoverished, unemployed, precarious masses of workers. Briefly put, and this is what we have tried to show here in a synthetic manner, there are a set of historical and economic conditions that together form the origin of what is known to be the creation of a global reserve of (cheap) labour force.

Caporalato: definition and occurrences

The case of the gang mastered labour system (*caporalato*), as it appears in the economic agricultural (but also in the services sector, or construction, to name just two other most relevant examples) landscape of Italy, but also UK, Spain, or the US raises a specific set of issues within the general theory of economic migration, as here the question of migration is over-determined by the issues of unfree labour and the set of labour and property relations that bring to the fore the connection between capitalism - as a set of economic norms and practices - , and unfree labour. Regarding agriculture, the imposition of this repressive labour-regime, does not only signal the vulnerability and the inferior position

of the labour force towards the class of employers and middle-men (*caporali*), but it is also an issue connected to the question of the low rate of technological investments in Mediterranean agriculture, where the absolute productivity realized through the employment of cheap labour force serves the role of bridging the economic shortcomings of low technological investments.

To get a clearer image of the magnitude of the phenomenon, it is worth mentioning that, for example, in 2016, 40.3 million people from every part of the globe were victims of modern slavery - slavery being understood as an umbrella term covering the various forms of coercion prohibited in international instruments on human rights and labour standards. Out of these, 24.9 million were in forced labour. Moreover, there are more females (71%), than men in forms of modern slavery. 4.8 million people are victims of forced sexual exploitation. Out of the total number of people in conditions of forced labour, 3.5 percent were in the agricultural sector, and from the total number of 150 billion Euros profit derived from forced labour, 9 billion were the fruit of exploitation in agriculture. In Italy, there have been approximately 80 epicentres identified as contexts of *caporalato* and extreme labour exploitation. In Italian agriculture there are an estimated number of 430.000 people potential victims of *caporalato* with irregular and illegal labour contracts, out of which 100.000 have been identified to be in serious conditions of vulnerability and exploitation. Between 2 and 5 billion Euros are estimated to have been rolled through illegal agriculture, while the economic damage caused by this irregular and illegal dealings in this sector have been estimated to stand at 3.6 billion Euros. The *caporalato* is a diffused regime of labour management that needs a conceptual and historical clarification.

Domenico Perrotta defines *caporalato*, present in agriculture, but also in other productive sectors, as "an informal system of labour mediation, where the intermediary (the *caporale*) retains a part from the worker's salary" (Perotta D., 2015). Such procedures of informal/illegal labour mediation have been legally forbidden in Italy since 1919. The system of *caporalato* relies on a few structural factors such as: the distance (geographical and linguistic) between (immigrant) labourers and agricultural firms, the management of labour teams necessary for seasonal production cycles in agriculture, the monopoly on the labour supply and other services necessary for the management of the (foreign) agricultural labour forces, and the inefficiency of state policies to organize this sector of the labour market and production, to name just a few. In this type of labour organization numerous social and economic relations sprung between the labourer and the *caporale*, between the usually isolated immigrant worker and the community in which the farm operates. Although the *caporale* is seen as exploiter, she/he becomes also a model of social mobility, while most

workers will maintain mainly instrumental rapports with their labour mediators. But, and this is the strongest support pillar of the *caporalato* system, the provision of disciplined teams of agro-laboures to local employers and full responsibility and accountability of the *caporali* towards mentioned employers, especially in situations regarding labour conflicts and worker insubordination are the main functions of the gang mastered labour system (Perotta D., 2015). This last aspect, points beyond the mere economic dimension of *caporalato*, namely to its social function of disciplining and coercing the (immigrant) labour force into a labour regime, which it both highly exploitative and socially toxic for the employees. Also, this last point, together with the physical and social isolation of immigrant agricultural labourers demonstrate that this type of labour management relies of extra-economic authoritative means of worker-control that render the process of profit creation and extraction also as an asymmetrical relation of power.

The contemporary model of gang-mastered has spread from the agriculture of Southern United States to Europe at the turn of the sixties. The United States have ended their *Bracero Program* (employment of Mexican immigrant workers in American agriculture, through contract schemes that formally bonded them to the farm they worked for, and denying them any other social and political rights in the United States) in 1964. This type of labour regime in American agriculture has ended and after this type of labour regime has ended a gradual massive technologization of the agricultural process became necessary, "the lack of this essential labour pool prompted the development of harvesting machines; the transformation was rapid: in 1963, 66 machines harvested 1.5% of California's tomato crops, but by 1970, 1521 machines were harvesting 99.9%" (Perotta D., 2016). The "Californian model"[3] of intensive-labour regime in agriculture has spread to the Western countries since 1960's onward, from France to Greece and from the UK to Spain. The immigrant labour force has supplied these countries relying on this type of agricultural model with the much needed cheap, flexible and vulnerable labour-force, the driving human capital behind the realization of profit margins in this sector. The pressure on the farmers from international trade liberalization norms and "the oligopoly of large scale retail chains" (van der Ploeg J.D., 2009) have pushed toward an ever-growing reduction of the price of agricultural products, this in turn driving even lower the price of the employed labour force. In this context, *caporalato* - the gang mastered labour

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[3] The coinage of the term belongs to Jean Pierre Berlan, who has discussed at length the history of the labour exploitation in agriculture, the "Californian model" in his "La longue histoire du model californien", in *Le gout amer de nos fruits et legumes. L'exploitation des migrants dans l'agriculture intensive in Europe*, Ed. Forum Civique Européen, Paris 2002, pp. 15-22.

system, appears as an informal intermediary between the need for labour force from the part of small and large farmers and farms, and the workers themselves, whom are rendered precarious by the migration policies implemented by national governments, and thus forced to seek the support of the *caporalato* network. In order to complete the structural landscape of the position of the *caporalato* system in today's economic production, one must also address the coercive mechanisms that create and reproduce it from above, namely the fact that this form of labour exploitation has emerged as one of the primary factors behind the "restructuring of global agri-food sector" (Bonnano A. and Cavalcanti J.S.B., 2014).

Regarding specifically the agricultural production, the main change that has occurred regards the pre-eminence of retailer-driven in agricultural intermedium, with big retailers assuming "dominant position in the global chain of food production" (Perotta D., 2016) - over the erstwhile pre-eminence of producer-driven over the agricultural networks of distribution and production. The first and most important consequence of this shift is the global diffusion of the constraint upon retailers to get access to land and labour at the lowest possible cost. We will quote here at length, Perrotta's argument regarding the relationship between retailers and the *caporalato* system, as is it vital in the economy of our article:

> The most recent research on migrant labour in agriculture and on the global restructuring of the agri-food networks bring us to asking ourselves if the retailer-driven agriculture is possible without the exploitation of labourers; regarding this, it is possible to hypothesize that, in Southern Italy (but not only), one of the responses given by the agri-farms to the pressure on prices and the productive standards imposed by the retailer driven networks was the attempt to compress, as much as possible, the price of labour; this reduction of the labour costs was achieved through intensive use of migrant labourers, more vulnerable and cheap, and the efficient and disciplined organization of this labour force by the system of *caporalato*"[4].

To this argument, we can also add that, from the perspective of the labour and land productivity, the use of a massive labour force in agriculture is inversely proportional with the high degrees of mechanization of the labour process. The particularity of the labour cycle that the *caporalato* intermediates resides, on one side, in the temporary character of the production cycles, and

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[4] *Domenico Perrotta, "Il caporalato come sistema: un contributo sociologico", in (Ed.) Enrica Rigo, Leggi, migranti e caporali. Prospettive critiche e di ricerca sullo sfrutamento del lavoro in agricoltura,* Ed. Pacini Giuridica, Pisa 2015, p. 28.

on the other, in the inefficiency from the part of the state to supervise this process and offer protection to migrants. According to Lucio Piscane, the high temporary structural demand for cheap labour force in the agricultural production cycles is also conditioned by the "inefficiency of the formal channels of labour recruitment and the control that organized crime has on one part of the labour force available on the territory" (Piscane L., 2016). Moreover, the socioeconomic function of *caporalato* is not limited to labour brokerage, but also extends to transportation, lodging and protection of immigrant workers. The effects of such economic practices are the lowering of the price of labour, through the deduction from the pay of a day's labour also for the other services, but the exploitation of agricultural labourer is further enhanced through the relative monopoly that *caporalato* systems have on the recruitment of labour force and the crass inefficiency of the public labour inspectorates. Further, we will instantiate our claims about the general features of the gang-master labour system through a critical description of the Italian Case.

Italian agriculture and *Caporalato*

Any discussion about the significance of economic migration for Italy must start from a clear understanding of its economic and social situation. For instance, Marco D'Eramo goes as far as to define Italy as "a state in free fall" (Eramo M, 2017), with productivity, employment and industrial production declining. From a global perspective things look just as bad, and according to the latest report regarding work and employment produced by ILO, given the worsening of the labour market situation in various regions of the planet, the deterioration of economic conditions, the inability of national economies to generate more jobs and betterment of the already existing working conditions in the global East and South, "with global unemployment levels and rates expected to remain elevated and unlikely to dip below pre-crisis rates"[5], the global flows of migration are likely to rise in the following period, while the risk of social unrest is heightened in almost all global regions. According to the same ILO report *World Employment Social Trend 2017*, productivity rates all over Western Europe tend to stall, while unemployment is expected to rise, with only the notable exception of countries like Spain, Croatia, Netherlands, Ireland, and Portugal. In Italy the unemployment rate will pass from an average of 11.4% in 2017 to a hopeful 11.1% in 2018[6].

Italy belongs to the group of Southern-Mediterranean-states pattern of migration, which stabilized itself as a model and direction of migration flows

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[5] *World Employment Social Outlook. Trends 2017*, Report issued by ILO Press, Geneva 2017, p. 9.
[6] Idem., p. 30.

at the turn of the eighties, when historically defined countries of emigration like Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain have become states with positive migration rates, attracting labour force and asylum seekers from Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe. In the case of Italy, the first attesting of a positive migration balance dates back to 1973, a phenomenon that has transformed modern Italian society, especially when it comes to its social composition and labour market workforce distribution. Research has identified three main causes for this sudden and recent increase in the numbers of migratory flows towards Italy: western closure of borders, weak Mediterranean post-colonial ties, and structural pull force of cheap labour (Veugelers J.W.P., 1994).

This sudden and relatively recent change in the status of Italy from an emigration country to an immigration state, has been framed as a type of 'social emergency', a crisis that affected all sectors of Italian society, from discontents of social and cultural integration of migrants, to the reconfiguration of the labour market, to the accentuation of the political, to legal and economic problems created by the rise of the informal economic sector. Situating the issue of migration within the larger frame of the process of globalization, two trends can be discerned when it comes to assessing the particularity of the Italian migration system: "the growth and supremacy of East-West migratory flows" (Cangiano A. and Strozza S., 2008), consequentially, the Europenization of the immigrant population. Since the eighties it has been true that Italy has a particularly large underground economy and a rigid segmentation of the labour market, and this determined the stabilization of a dual labour market Italian system, with profound social implications upon the process of migrant integration and rise of migration related social conflicts and tensions. The low social status associated with an inferior position on the labour market – given the concentration of migrants in labour-intensive sectors of economy – has created a climate of classism, where although the labour market integration has taken place, the social integration of immigrants is an ongoing process hampered by prejudice, racism, sexism and even hatred towards the immigrant community.

Romanian migration to Italy. Data and discussion

Romanians account for more than 1 million immigrants on Italian soil, and they are followed by the Albanian community that numbers only 490.000, and Moroccans (449.000) as the three largest migrant communities in Italy. The Romanians present on the Italian territory come mostly from "the Eastern province of Moldavia, several regions of Transylvania, and some North-Western regions" (Ban C., 2012), from Romanian regions where the balance between agriculture and industry is tipped in the favour of the former. Mostly rural or

semi-urban areas, where the low degree of industrialization and economic investments have impacted negatively the local labour markets. When it comes to the gender difference, studies have shown that migrant men and women list "family motives as the main drivers of mobility" (Mara I., 2012), such as that there is no longer a gender gap between economic reasons and family reasons as main individual drivers of migration. From a socioeconomic perspective the condition of immigrants can be described as precarious, given the fact that they tend to become unemployed more often than the natives, although they tend to find new employment more easily. Nevertheless, the general context shows a deterioration of labour contracts and social relations of production in the case of migrants who are professionally immobilized and restricted to only such areas like the three C's (cleaning, care, and cooking) and the three D's (demeaning, dangerous, and dirty), where they "experience lower levels of job security, earn lower wages, and tend to be concentrated in seasonal industries" (Riva e. and Zanfrini L., 2013).

Italian agriculture is characterized by corporate concentration upstream and downstream of farming, such as under the pressure and costs of large scale production, many small and medium size Italian farming enterprises and farmers turn to the employment of low paid labour force. Thus, in the past three decades the number of migrants employed has increased exponentially. Moreover, when it comes to the situation already described, the lack of regulation is a structural component. The working conditions are: 10-12 hours labour-days, 15-20 Euros a day's pay, dirty, dangerous, demeaning and demanding. The workers live in isolated places in the countryside, this situation exposing them to danger, while the control of employers and middle-men over their working and non-working time becomes almost total. The insertion of Romanian immigrants in the agricultural sector is a relatively recent event, following the previous two massive waves of African (Northern and Sub-Saharan) migration. The arrival of Romanians and their permeation of this sector of the labour market was facilitated because of their status as EU citizens, something that allowed Italian employers to avoid the accusation of exploitation and facilitation of illegal migration, especially in the agricultural sector.

Regarding Italian agriculture, the total number of immigrants working in this sector amounts to 466.111, out of which 200.103 are non-Europeans and 266.008 are Europeans[7]. These numbers are calculated based on the

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[7] Given the empirical difficulty of establishing exact information when it comes to data connected with grey, non-formal, illegal or seasonal labour in Italian agri-system, it must be mentioned that the numbers given here are taken from Lucio Pisacane's, "Immigrazione e mercato del lavoro agricolo", in (Eds.) Francesco Carchedi et al, *Agromafie e caporalato. Terzo rapporto*, Ed. Ediese, Roma 2016, p. 38.

official data elaborated by ISTAT, and must be kept in mind that the real are most probably higher. When it comes to the specifics of this type of occupation and the way it impacts the immigrants, Perrotta argues that

> their work situation is characterized by seasonality, long periods of unemployment, irregular employment conditions, hiring through the illegal mediation of gang-masters, wages lower than those established by the collective bargaining agreements, piece-rate payment, long working hours, high physical exertion, unhealthy working conditions and exposure to occupational hazards[8].

The mediation of labour in agriculture through *caporalato* is a structural feature of the agricultural Italian process of production and organization. The structure of *caporalato* also reproduces and imposes various types of separation: between the teams of workers under the control of various gang-masters and the populated centres of the local communities; economic - because the local agencies of employment are unable to effectively mediate between the agricultural employers and immigrant workers; cultural - immigrants are furthermore ghettoized through their isolation from the cultural and political life of the region they settle in; political - ignored by national and regional politics on account of their inability to vote, immigrants are also cut off from the political means of fighting for the betterment of their labour and social conditions. However, the area of the *caporale*'s intrusion in the life of the immigrant worker under his control can be more or less limited. In some cases, he or she controls completely the life of the workers, but in others they merely act as mediators between teams of labourers and employers. In this sense, the *caporale* is often seen as a *social broker*, who negotiates - and earns a profit upon - between the immigrants and the local farm employers, and this is also precisely why, some authors discuss the issue of *caporalato* in Southern Italy as a sort of *broker capitalism*.

In order to get a clearer picture on the economic and social dimension of the phenomenon of *caporalato* in Italian agriculture, The Fourth Report on Agromafia and Caporalato, produced by The Placido Rizzotto Institute of FLAI/CGIL, in 2018, states that the informal/grey economy of Italy is estimated at around 208 billion Euros, of which the business of irregular labour and *caporalato* in agriculture is worth around 4.8 billion Euros. Around 430.000 labourers in agriculture are believed to be working under the gang-mastered labour system. There are around 30.000 farms that use the services provided by the gang-mastered system.

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[8] Domenico Perrotta and Devi Sachetto, "Migrant Farmworkers in Southern Italy: Ghettoes, Caporalato and Collective Action", in *International Journal on Strikes and Social Conflict*, vol.1, no.5/July 2014, p. 76.

As stated above the gang-master is usually a person in charge of a determinate team of workers for whom he intermediates employment for a local farm. With the arrival of immigrant workers in Southern Italy, the gang-mastered chief figure has replaced the Italian boss, with gang-masters from the countries of origin of the immigrants themselves. This has happened in the case of Northern Africans, of Sub-Saharan Africans, but also Eastern Europeans such as Romanians, the latter exercising the function of *caporale* all throughout the year and for a variety of agricultural labours. Usually, the teams of Romanian *caporali* are composed of relative, acquaintances and enlarged origin-community of the gang-master himself/herself. Before advancing any further another point must be mentioned regarding the particularity of Romanian migration towards Italy, and the specific condition of Romanian immigrants in comparison to other migrant communities. As European citizens, Romanians can move freely on the territory of the Union, and this has come to shape profoundly their economic and political collective strategies, but also their complete disorganization in front of grave forms of labour and sexual exploitation (from the part of Italian employers or gang-masters) present in some farms, under Italian employers. The research on the migratory trajectory of Romanian has shown that this type of unfettered mobility explains why Romanian labourers seem to accept wages much lower than those accepted by migrants of other nationalities, "Romanians can afford low wages that are anyway superior to those they would receive working in Romania" (Perotta D., 2013). (One of the social and economic cost of this easiness of migration, has led to the labelling of Romanian works as untrustworthy by Italian employers.) In the light of what has been discussed, apparently the Romanian migrant strategy is exit, as for the group of migrants under consideration dealing with worsening of labour conditions entails "to keep moving" (Potoc S., 2008). However, the price of this constant movement and adaptability to various contexts is also a loss of collective and political identity, that was replaced by group recognition within external labelling by the host community: as Potoc argues, "collective identity never appeared" (Potoc S., 2008) in the studied Romanian communities. If one can speak of the constitution of a Romanian collective identity abroad, then it must be conceived only in negative terms, as differentiation or distancing from subjectively perceived inferior social groups, such as Roma or other types of minorities back home, or even worse, a form of individual un-identification with an accepted perspective upon the negative labelling of the group of which the individual is a part of.

When it comes to the attitudes of Romanian gang-masters themselves it is particularly interesting to note that they see themselves as "protectors of their co-nationals" (Perotta D., 2013) against foreign exploitative employers, although even the Romanian *caporali* perceive a tax of mediation and charge

for transport, food, housing, and other services to their Romanian teams. From the perspective of the immigrant, his/her relationship to the system of the gang-mastered labour is mediated through different types of narratives such as: the fact that this system creates a sense of community and belonging - an attempt of discursively whitewashing the clear hierarchical structure of *caporalato*; secondly, the gang-master is often viewed as a model of social success; thirdly, in most cases the gang-mastered is perceived as yet another cog in wheel of labour exploitation. Regarding Romanians, they usually have "an instrumental relation to their *caporale*" (Perotta D., 2015). However, as long as the three pillars of the gang-master system remain in place - separation, seasonality, and lack of alternatives, both farmers and workers remain dependent on the mediation offered by the *caporale*.

Differential games of exclusion and inclusion

We will close our paper with a final discussion about the relationship between (Romanian) immigrants and host societies, as it is a final point to be taken into consideration in the mapping of the social world of *caporalato* and the context that allows it to come into being. Within the field of migration-integration studies there is a conceptual differentiation between the concept of "differential exclusion" (Castles S., 1995) and "differential inclusion" (Hall S., 1986) as conceptualized by Stuart Hall. Differential exclusion refers to the integration or inclusion of immigrants in the host country's labour market, while they remain excluded from welfare and citizenship. This was the case with immigration programs such as guest-workers or the *Bracero* program, or rigid seasonal migration, where migrants have a limited working and staying permit that extended only a season of work, after which they were obligated to return to their home country. This description also applies to the condition of immigrant labour in Italian agricultural production. On the other side, differential inclusion deals with "specific forms of incorporation associated with the appearance of racist, ethnically segmented and other social features" (Hall S., 1986). Differential inclusion registers how divisions move to the centre of political life, and "stage a conflict between the containing qualities of inclusion and the capacity of difference to explode notions of social unity" (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015). The problems such a concept raises are connected to the acceptance of migrants as labour force, but also accounts to the limits of the process of larger social, political and cultural integration, on the background of a social space traversed by tensions and antagonisms.

A possible explanation for this situation is that divisions arise as the migration processes traverse various "fields and relations of power practices" (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015).

Here again, we contend that the subaltern position in which immigrants find themselves in relation to employers and middle-men, and their high and complete dependence to a subsistence wage, put them in a social inferior position, which triggers their social rejection by the native population, while assigning them a perpetual demeaning role of mere live labour force, rarely being perceived as Subject in her/his own right.

In order to better illustrate this concept, we shall focus on a more concrete problematic, described by Maurizio Ambrosini as the deadlock of economic acceptance and political rejection. The situation has been created by the Italian economic demands for foreign (cheap) labour that have arisen in the last decades, on one side, and social policies that have tried to restrict and limit the magnitude of migratory flows, but failed in the face of economic actors' demand and the rise of informal economic sector and factual transgressions of labour market regulation, on the other side. Based on this need-rejection pattern, Cornelius et al define Southern-Mediterranean countries of immigration, such as Italy, as "reluctant importers" (Cornelius W.A. et al., 1994). It is a paradoxical situation, as Italy needs foreign labour to occupy the gaps in the national labour market that the local workforce is not willing to fill due to the low wages and low social status associated with specific jobs in the labour intensive sectors, but on the other hand, it has demonstrated strong social resilience against a full social integration of foreigners whom are still regarded with suspicion, prejudice. However, this process of cultural resilience combined with a form of subaltern economic acceptance has been described as a situation in which "having received hands, Italy still has to receive people" (Ambrosini M. 2013). A statement particularly valid for the situation of many Romanians residing in Italy.

In lieu of conclusions.

As we have attempted to show all throughout our paper, the phenomenon of *caporalato* is highly diffused, ingrained and embedded in the history of labour relations in the Italian agriculture. This type of labour mediation between farm-employers and (immigrant) workers, provided by a network of middle men (*caporali*) has transformed labour in agriculture into a form of repressive and highly exploitative regime of labour, where mere economic labour relations are render as asymmetric power and domination relations, exposing vulnerable categories of employees to dramatic forms of labour, and in some cases even sexual exploitation. In order to fully grasp the significance of such occurrences, one must try to map the entire circuit of production and reproduction in agriculture, as the necessity for cheap, flexible, seasonal, docile and plenty labour force is conditioned from above, through the constraints imposed by food-empires and corporate retailer

distribution chains, whom in their quest from larger profit margins, impose on agricultural producers low prices for agricultural goods, and this in turn can be realized through further lowering of the price of labour.

The structure of the labour process and the various types of separation between immigrant labourers and local employers has carved a structural space for the labour brokerage supplied by middle men, a phenomenon that is yet another layer of exploitation and control of the labour force. As we have tried to emphasize in our paper, the gang-mastered labour system does not only offer a neutral mass of workers to the employer, but rather disciplined, vulnerable and unprotected teams of workers, who become caught in a web of unequal social and power relations. When it comes to the social context of this phenomenon, we have shown that an insufficient integration of the immigrant labour force within the social and political life of the community, albeit fully integrate economically, renders the above-mentioned labour force even more vulnerable and prone to the abuses of local employers and the network of gang-masters. Although, many migrant communities have organized and took collective action against the phenomenon of *caporalato*, unfortunately much still remains to be done, and a more powerful collective political and social implication of Romanian immigrants still needs to take place. As we have seen, having the ability to move more freely on the territory of the Union, this has led also to the non-participation of Romanians to the fight against various types of labour and sexual exploitation by the local Italian employers.

As we have tried to show in our paper, the issue of unfree labour - understood as labour employed under conditions that entail some form of coercion, violence, isolation, separation or illegality - raises the bigger issue of its relationship with the economic system and the structural reasons this capitalistic system needs, uses, and reproduces the condition of unfree labour. Moreover, the pervasiveness of such a repressive regime of labour management, such as the gang-mastered system in the Mediterranean agriculture, brings to the fore the productivity deadlock such a sector experiences, and how its market competitiveness relies on broker practices delivered by exploitative middle-men and a constant pressure to devalue even further the price of the immigrant labour force on which has come to be dependent. For the immigrants themselves, the imposition of such an overlapping of exploitative, repressive and parasitical network of labour and social relations weakens its chances for upwards social mobility and denies the conditions for a decent life achieved through dignified work. Unfortunately, such a form of labour regime has come to be embedded in, and rendered necessary, for various economic sectors of the economy of contemporary developed societies, such as a critique of this form of repressive labour and social relations necessarily entails a critique of the general

framework of contemporary political economy of capital, and its domination over labour. In the last instance, it has become clear that a comprehensive and critical discussion about *caporalato* shows that contemporary processes of production have become very efficient in accommodating and managing *labour-hands*, but they still are unable of accommodating *human beings*.

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