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Divorce Cases Among the Gentlefolk of Săliște within the Second Half of the 19th Century*

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Abstract. The article recasts the divorcing phenomenon at the level of the Romanian elite from Mărginimea Sibiului. The time framing comprises the second half of the 19th century, when ending the marriage and settling the marital divergences used to fall under the purview of the church. Starting from the example of the 13 church communes from the Orthodox archpriestship Săliște, the article establishes the causes of marriage dissolution and the demographic features of the local front-rank people (age of divorce, period of marriage, locality of origin and residence, marital and socio-professional status, number of children). At the same time, we shall explain the historical sources available, their relevance and the manner in which we have laid down a database in *Airtable* format. Divorcing used to be a long, costly and complicated process from the perspective of canonical law. At the level of the local elite from the southern Transylvania, the main divorce reason used to be “aversion and mutual hatred”.

Keywords: marriage dissolution, local elite, Mărginimea Sibiului, “aversion and mutual hatred”, adultery, family history, Orthodox church.

For historians and demographers, Săliște represents an exceptional town as it has an archive resource of utmost importance. The Orthodox Archpriestship preserves excellently a considerable fund of historical documents due to the 19th and the 20th centuries (Deteșan 2006, Abrudan 2020). Having discovered a few years ago this ecclesiastic archive, we have built up an electronic database in *Airtable* format comprising 528 divorce files for the interval 1860-1890.

*A Romanian version of this study was published in *Acta Terrae Fogarasiensis* (2020) 9: 143-156.

Almost half of them ended in total divorce sentence - 223 to be exact – while the rest were matrimonial disputes/dissensions (114), incomplete files (49), unsolved files (54), "bed and table" separation (19), cases where partners reconciliation was achieved (40) and cases denied by the court (29).

This article aims to provide information on the divorces which resulted in a final sentence within the highest places of southern Transylvania. The strategy has been to choose only those couples from the society's elite within our database. We have been searching for answers to questions such as: What were the factors influencing the local elite to file for divorce? What were the reasons behind the church authorities granting the divorce to the upper class? Were the individuals with an upper social status the ones asking for marriage dissolution more often or was divorce also granted in the case of individuals with poor income and education?

1. General historical framework

Săliște used to be one of the small but rich archpriestships¹ of the Archdiocese of Ardeal². The population reached 24.000 inhabitants in 1874, but then decreased due to emigration to 18.000 inhabitants in 1884 (APORS 55/1874, 78/I/1885). The archpriestship used to have 13 parishes: Aciliu, Alămor, Amnaș, Cacova, Galeș, Gura Râului, Mag, Săcel, Săliște, Sibiel, Tilișca, Topârcea, Vale. These church communes bordering Valea Sadului to the south and Valea Săliștei to the north are located at the foot of Sibiu Mountains and form the so-called "Mărginimea Sibiului", an area in the Transylvania habitat customized by specific features. We are talking about a region comprising about 1.200 sqkm. (Hașeganu 1941), firmly Romanian and orthodox. An exception is represented by Amnaș, where three quarters of the population was made up of Evangelic Saxons.

Transhumance grazing, processing the sheep products and the transit trade used to be prevalent production undertaking. Every fifth household used to have a sewing machine and three fractions of the women from Săliște would live on tailoring, sewing and weaving (Moisin 1904). "The country-style apparel from Săliște was set and upgraded as adornment up to the royal table" – righteously said the writer Ioan Slavici. The creator of a foundation of 30.000

¹ The archpriestship (protopresbiter) is a church administrative division comprising several parishes from a geographical region and is led by a protopope as administrator (protopresbiter).

² The archdiocese of Ardeal used to comprise, as per the general statistics from 1882, a number of 41 archpriestships, 983 parishes, 663,480 believers and 787 religious schools. In 1884, the archpriestship of Săliște used to have 13 church communes, 20 parishes, 17,799 believers and 13 religious schools. See A.P.O.R.S. 78/I/1885.

crowns for the sick and the invalid protection, Ana Jițian, originating from Săliște, worked on a country-style suit for Queen Elisabeth of Romania. Later on, upon the occasion of her visit to Săliște (July 1919), the wife of the English business charge d'affaires in Ardeal, Mrs. Rattingan, asked to that she be manufactured, just like Queen Marie, a Săliște country-style suit (Deteșan 2020).

The inhabitants called *mărgineni* (*mocani*, *țuțuieni*, *ungureni*) wandered through villages, fairs, towns, reaching Serbia and Constantinople, but also Ukraine, the Crimea and Caucasus to the East. They would return home from “sheep and cattle trading” about once a year, loaded with information and open to the new ideas of the age. They were enthusiastic about work, intelligent and honest, owning goods which granted them a high living standard. They were individuals with a well-developed national sense, creators of some institutions such as *Casina română* (1878), *Reuniunea meseriașilor – Tradesmen Union* (1882), *Reuniunea pompierilor voluntari – Voluntary Firemen Union* (1882), *Casa de păstrare – Trust House* (1884), *Reuniunea de cântări – Songs Union* (1899), *Reuniunea de înmormântare – Funeral Union*, *Reuniunea de înfrumusețare – Beautification Union*, *Reuniunea economilor – Peasants’ Union*.

The occupational structure would reveal a consistent tradesmen group (*bolțași*, shopkeepers), people born and raised in an environment with powerful scholarly traditions. One of the oldest and most famous Romanian businesses from Ardeal, the company *Ioan Comșa și fiul – Ioan Comșa and Son* (*Casa Comșa – House Comșa*) was established in Săliște in 1852. It used to serve the population from the locality and nearby, as well as 5-600 customer-tradesmen with goods - sugar, rice, colonial goods (coffee, tea, spices), southern fruit (figs, olives), soap, tobacco sheets, candles, linen drapery, textiles, cotton, silk, ironware. Petru I. Comșa, the founder’s son, would leave a 100.000 Crown foundation (1919) for the theoretical training and the practical guidance of the youth willing to pursue a commercial career (Deteșan 2019).

2. Historical sources

The files of the matrimonial lawsuits are less documented than other demographic sources (marital status parish registers, censuses, family papers). The major issue is that the historical sources are dispersed in various localities and preserved in storehouses held by the state or the church. We are missing a detailed inventory of the sources and there still are archive funds whose stock has not been taken yet, which makes them unavailable for research.

The quality of documents differs, here and there the divorce files are incomplete and the number of pieces may vary from one-two up to 35-36. Of the 7,300 photocopies made in Săliște, there are files with over 100 pages - Petru Tempenariu versus Maria Pușchilă, both from Săliște (APORS 154/1872) or Maria Tempenariu from Galeș versus Bucur Lupea from Săliște (APORS 147/1876) – while others contain only the decision (*witting paper*) dissolving the marriage.

The historiographic references have focussed to this day upon the micro-analyses carried out especially at the village-level. Ever since 1999, from the book on the Romanian family in Transylvania signed by Sorina Paula Bolovan when the early marriage pattern and the inferior position of the woman compared to the man within the family was revealed, we have clear inklings that in the middle of the 19th century a low level of the divorce was preserved. Simion Retegan estimates that the number of divorce cases does not exceed 1%, that, just like everywhere else, the rich would marry the rich, the poor would marry the poor, the aristocrat would marry the aristocrat, the general tendency being to get a position as good as possible within the existing hierarchy (Retegan 2009).

The major advantage provided by this type of sources is represented by the background information about the married couple and implicitly the largest and deepest vision upon the individuals' life. Not only do we get vital demographic information, but we can understand better the machineries of divorce and the factors affecting the dissolution of marriage (legislation, economic development and upgrading, education, religion, social-cultural environment, number of children, women economic emancipation, urbanization and industrialization). These files have been created and preserved with the ecclesiastical authorities, which constantly impel to reconciliation according to the Biblical principle *whom God has put together, let no one tear asunder*.

3. Case study. The Archpriestship of Săliște

Divorcing did not bypass the headmost families from Mărginimea Sibiului. It can be found within archive documents affecting with the lives of doctors, lawyers, teachers, tradesmen, sheep owners. Theoretically at least, these had to be role models and exhibit a high moral standard in the community. Divorce trauma affected the family owning the barrelhouse from Tilișca, the family of the head butcher from Săliște, the family of priest Iacob Popoviciu from Sibiel³.

³ Eufrosina, the priest's daughter, lived with her husband for 11 years without any misunderstanding, but two years after the man go to Romania (1880) for economic purposes,

Marriage dissolution undoubtedly had a dramatic impact on life and individual experience, affecting the social and economic welfare of the couples. The statement made by attorney Ioan Popa is representative in this sense: "My wife turned marrying me into a financial business. My love became a hatred I never thought I would be capable of. And the reason for not breaking up right away was due to fear of public scandal. Turning my love into hatred was encouraged by my wife's lack of hard work when it came to spending beyond measure, her fondness for luxury, generating debts behind my back, wealth disposal and her inclination to party socially against my will. I struggled for almost two years to turn her off from her decline, but everything was in vain" (APORS 162/1879).

The documents from the divorce files show a *modus vivendi* dominated by love, jealousy, hatred, pride, guilt, relief, anger, sadness, confusion, threats, psychological pressure, hope. A reading key brings up the dramatic and revolting issue: adultery, bigamy, marriage violence, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction. The divorce reasons are sometimes plausible and serious, while at other times just trifles and ambitions feeding the misunderstanding. Whenever the parents or the parents-in-law interfered, the marriage crises sharpened and very serious insults and accusations were expressed. "My wife's parents brag about spending 4.000 Florins just to separate my wife and me while 3.000 florins shall be offered as dowry to the man marrying her the second time" (APORS 147/1876) – this is how Bucur Lupea, from Galeș, informed against parental pressure and marriage arrangements. The young man had economic business and trading activities, ruling over several shepherds whom he had managed to get close to the Ukraine borders, in the floodable meadow of Prut river. He was used to working ever since his childhood and made a good and Christian living out of "cattle trading". He used to say that he would have gladly stayed by his dear wife if they had had a pension or revenue "to live on at ease and at peace", but they hadn't any, nor had they held such income without working and toil (APORS 147/1876). His young wife, Maria Tempenariu (16 years old) came from a family with 6 children, that of the judge Nicolae Tempenariu. The long absence from home, the little time spent with his wife, the parents' constraints and the aversion of their daughter upon marriage, the punching, "the strong and confused hatred towards the husband" were the reasons of the petition for divorce which the woman forwarded to the matrimonial authority from Săliște. One by one, the complaints were confuted: "I cannot even imagine what paucity my wife could have felt during my absence from home! She may not have had fruit jam or southern fruit which

their marriage fell apart due to the woman's adultery. (APORS 92/1882).

we had not been used to anyway and even when we would enjoy such aristocratic delicacies, we had to stay down-to-earth!” (APORS 147/1876).

Since the parties could be represented by an attorney in court, Maria Tempenariu turned to Iacob Bologa’s assistant, while her husband to attorney Dumitru Răcuciu, PhD.. The former court counselor of Transylvania in Vienna, Iacob Bologa (1817-1888) was related by marriage to the protopope of Sibiu, Petru Bădilă (his father-in-law) and with the protopope of Săliște, Ioan Hannia (his brother-in-law). On the other hand, the young Dumitru Răcuciu (1839-1886) attended the Law Academy from Sibiu and then studied law in Vienna and Graz, where he got his PhD certificate (1866). He was the first Romanian stenographer from Ardeal, author of the first Romanian Stenography Treaty published in Sibiu (1864). Together with Moise Braniște, he was the official stenographer for the Diet of Sibiu (1863-1865). He also held the position of consistorial secretary in Sibiu. He was friends with the family of the 1848 general Gheorghe Magheru (Răcuciu 1938). As Bucur Lupea’s attorney, he would attach to the divorce file a “certificate of public notoriety” or reputation, issued by the office of the mayor from Giurgiuilești, the small rural district Cahul-Prut, Bolgrad county, where the accountant used to live from the beginning of 1872 until the 26th of October 1874. The document specified that Bucur Lupea enjoyed a good reputation, his behaviour being one of the best, not seeking scandal and regularly paying up all that was falling on him (APORS 147/1876).

Petru Iuga (a priest from Tilișca) and Nicolae Răcuciu (a priest from Săliște) were appointed investigation commissioners in the lawsuit. At the school from Galeș, over 20 witnesses were questioned, in the presence of the mayor Irimie Stănilă. Paralel with the divorce, another lawsuit was undergoing litigation at the Court House from Sibiu, with the plaintiff Bucur Lupea against his father-in-law Nicolae Tempenariu, for public violence in the form of home invasion. It all started with an incident from the evening of St. Nicholas in 1872, when there had been a quarrel between the husband and wife where judge Tempenariu, who had been celebrating his name-day, interfered. Maria Tempenariu claimed that her husband had beaten her up and she had kept to her bed for 20 days, while their child, Dumitru, one year old, was screaming with fear and had his legs hooked by the ropes of the cradle.

The matrimonial crises and the violent marriages exposed deep human dramas, diversions from the traditional moral norms, an unhappy life with no love, if there was ever any. The male outlook used to minimize the sin of *severe damages and mistreatments*, the men showing no concern for their physical assaults at all: “My confession of beating her up proves that I had no such evil

intention, but she deserved to be beaten up more. And rest assured that I have not been a man killer so far, nor will I be one, much less the killer of my wife. On second thoughts, after a little scratch, even a chaperon would not consider keeping to her bed, much less a lad from Galeș” (APORS 147/1876).

The divorce lawsuit between Maria Tempenariu and Bucur Lupea lasted for 2 years. It cost 80 florins (APORS 147/1876), namely a quarter of the average salary of a teacher for a year. The sentence was issued on the 9th of January 1876 and established the marriage dissolution due to aversion, abuse, hatred, assumed adultery, leaving the possibility for the couple to remarry. Paying for the legal expenses would be equally split between husband and wife, to which 50 florins were added for the wife’s parents, due to the hatred they inflicted on their daughter upon marriage. The husband disapproved of the resolution and filed an appeal. The case was sent for revision and retrial to the protopresbiterial chamber of Miercurea, which would issue a new sentence on the 14th of August 1876: absolute divorce with equal payment of 80 florins, plus 50 florins to be paid up by the wife’s father. Since both husband and wife were not satisfied, the lawsuit was judged again and the final sentence was issued on the 2nd of December 1876: absolute divorce due to “mutual aversion and hatred”, while the expenses would fall on the wife’s father who bore the biggest blame for this divorce by the aversion inflicted on his daughter (APORS 147/1876).

Attorney Ioan Popa (34 years old) married Agnes Ana Trandafir (18 years old) on the 28th of May 1872 at the “Holy Trinity” church from the town of Brașov, while the priest who carried out the service was Bartolomeu Baiulescu. The matrimonial relation lasted for almost seven years; on the 11th of September 1879 the sentence of the protopresbiterial position of the tract Sibiu I specifying the total separation of the afore-mentioned was issued, with the possibility of remarrying and the equal payment of a 100 Florin penance within 15 days (APORS 162/1879).

Attorney in Mediaș and then in Sibiu, Ioan Popa (1838-1906) was the editor and owner of the humorous paper “Calicul” (*“The Pauper”*) (1881-1895; 1903-1906), one of the best humorous magazines from Transilvania. His wife, a native of Bucharest, filed for divorce with the protopriestship authority of the tract Sibiu I due to “confused mutual hatred”. She confessed to not having loved him from the beginning. That canonical impediment was also associated with difference in personality and temper, age difference, Transylvanian climate, nostalgia and missing the parents which “had begun to affect my peace of mind and to cause a certain degree of dissatisfaction”. The attorney used to behave in a cold and unlovable manner, neglecting his wife, thus they needed

to completely separate from each other, he living in Sibiu, while me with my parents in Bucharest; so, we cannot have a decent and Christian living anymore” (APORS 162/1879).

Agnes Ana Trandafir was represented by attorney PhD. Dimitrie Răcuci from Sibiu (former consistorial secretary), while Ioan Popa represented himself. No matter how hard the parish from Sibiu-Cetate, Zaharia Boiu and the protopope Ioan Hannia tried to reunite them, it all proved to be in vain (APORS 33/1878). The couple was convinced that no matrimonial relation could exist between them any longer, due to “confused mutual hatred”. “And if the woman hadn’t taken the procedural steps, I would have”, states Ioan Popa in his reply to the protopope authority Sibiu I. He went on, claiming that the marriage had been an alliance of true love with imaginary love. “I stand for the loving side, my wife for the lack of it. It is no wonder, therefore, if such an alliance caused our social destruction” (APORS 162/1879).

Her youth, a lack of life experience and the belief that “I may not be forgiven if I refused the hand of a high-class knight” convinced Ana Trandafir to accept the marriage proposal. Had she known that Mr. Popa did not see her as the right person, she would have dared to say no. But she assumed that the attorney, age-balanced, would be a wise knight and would want a parlour lady as a wife, not a countess or an old kitchen maid (APORS 162/1879).

The judicial concrete case of the lawsuit, in amount of 59 Florins, were made up of: paying the assessors, the tax agent and the notary public of the protopresbiterial authority (24 florins), the sentence (15 florins), the revision tax (15 florins) and the tax for the protopresbiterial fund (5 florins) (APORS 162/1879). By comparison, a vest used to cost three florins, a marriage waiver was five florins and a horse used to be worth 115 florins.

Dumitru Popa, a sheep owner and tradesman, belonged to an excellent family from Săliște. He was a cousin of dr. Ioan Borcia’s⁴, tax consistorial and marriage defendant. Alexandru Șteflea was his wedding godfather in 1871 when he married Paraschiva Comșa. There was a five-year age difference between the newly-weds, he was born in 1849, while she was born in 1854. Paraschiva came from a family with four children, “of good parents from our commune”. Upon marriage, she received a dowry of 1.650 florins – an amount which subsequently became the object matter of a lawsuit between Dumitru

⁴Ioan Borcia (1835-1883) a public attorney in Sibiu, fiscal and matrimonial defensor with the Archdiocese Consistory of Transilvania. Born in Săliște, he was the son of priest Dimitrie Borcia. He attended the secondary school in Sibiu; got a Physician Degree in law at the Graz University. He died in Sibiu at the age of 48. See Boiu 1899: 102-107.

Popa and Petru Comşa (his father-in-law). The only child of the couple, Petru, was born in 1875, but only lived for two years (APORS 88/1878).

In the winter of 1874/1875, Dumitru Popa left home for the mountainous region and upon his return he found the house deserted and his wife's chest empty. He summoned his wife home in order to "revive their life and economy and to raise their child at least how provided by the family integrity and standing and also to the use of our nation and church, which our parents had all the aspiration for". His wish remained dead and he found refuge in Romania with his brother Opre Popa, to make a living like all sheep owners from Sălişte and around. Paraschiva Comşa filed for divorce out of wandering conduct (the husband used to be in Cadina, near Călăraşi), "confused hatred", the habit of spending days and nights in saloons and gambling: "I thought my man would try to be just like his parents, a man of good name and fine behaviour. He failed me bitterly, while by gambling and indulgence he wasted his inheritance from his parents and my dowry, arriving at his finger ends. Because of this, I have hated him deeply and refuse to live with him" (APORS 270/1879).

Petru Iuga, the priest from Tilişca and Ioachim Muntean, a priest from Gura Râului were appointed "Investigation Commissioners". During the research carried out by the commission, Dumitru Popa admitted having longed for fun time now and again in Casina Săliştei, where a lot of gentlemen used to go and both himself and others had a good time, drank together and sometimes even played cards. Nevertheless, he would not accept as divorce reason something which all intelligent people from Sălişte used to do, therefore the protopresbiterial forum had the right to cease that lawsuit ex officio (APORS 57/1880). He denied having travelled throughout Romania on loan, but even if he did that, he could not stop from wondering: "Am I the only one doing this? Isn't my father-in-law doing the same in hard winter times, or is the little lady Rothschild's daughter pretending that I, as an agricultural worker, should look out for her as a Poplaca princess? I sent her all kinds of things a woman may need, I left her enough wool to make whatever she was lacking, I left her wine, plum brandy, I hired her a maid, I got her all kinds of shoes and clothes, I had it all prepared for her as for a princess, like no other young woman from Sălişte was better off and with many necessities. But the young lady, or better said her father, was not satisfied at all! But then it is true that I have not arranged for her to travel, nor have I booked her first-class train tickets to the Paris Exhibition to travel just like Coana Chiriţa" (APORS 57/1880). Haven't I sent her by various witnesses goods from Romania back home in order to fulfil her keen extravagances? Her demands are way greater

than those of a palace countess. We, the agriculturists, if wishing to be ruined overnight just as the lady likes, cannot fulfil all fantasies, all eccentricities and luxuries of a woman wrongly educated by her parents and agitated by them. Nevertheless, I still own enough wealth to care for my wife and to fulfil her most extravagant wishes which no woman from Săliște claims, other than my wife (APORS 50/1879, 43/1879).

The sentence of the protopresbiterial authority from November 1879 dissolved the marriage on the grounds of the canonical law (§113 p. 8 joined with *The Law* chp. 183) and allowed the parties to remarry. The husband had to pay up 100 florins as lawsuit expenses to his wife (APORS 270/1879). Dumitru Popa considered the sentence unfair, lacking justice and invalid. He drafted an *appeal* and a *nullity*: “I am asking the protopope [Moise Toma] to tell me in all sincerity, had he never been to a saloon, and had he never played a game of Preference? And even so, the game of cards is not and can never be a canonical reason to break up. More so as the Austrian Criminal Code valid in Transylvania would establish sanctions for cards games (see Article 522 from the Criminal Code, 1853: 181).

The second court forum, the diocesan consistory, would issue a new sentence in the matrimonial divorce lawsuit between Paraschiva Comșa and Dumitru Popa. The parties agreed to cohabit in the fear of God since no drunkenness, no cards games, no wealth squandering to such extent could be a reason for divorcing (APORS 3444/B1879).

Teacher Ioan Alămorean (23 years old) from Alămor married Maria Hulpuş (18 years old), a Greek-Catholic from Alămor on the 17th of February 1880. After having been separated for five years and after several failed attempts to resume the conjugal living, complete divorce was pronounced by the action from the 30th of October 1881 on the grounds of “confused hatred and aversion on the wife’s part”. Afterwards, on the 12th of November 1882, the protopresbiterial authority of Săliște decided to guide the parties towards cohabitation. The teacher stated his dissatisfaction with the sentence, as “his wife committed adultery with a gendarme and contacted syphilis”. As a result, he would demand the revision of the arhidiocesan consistory decision (acting as second court and revision forum). The second court forum, by the decision from the 17th of March 1883, quashed the sentence of the first court forum and sent the lawsuit to be rejudged again. In the meeting from the 24th of October 1883, the protopope authority of Săliște would grant complete divorce and had the wife pay up all the lawsuit expenses (APORS 52/IV/1885).

Eutimiu (Eftimie) Macrea, the inn owner from Săcel gave his daughter, Sora Macrea (18 years old) in marriage to Dionisie Miclăușan, a sheep owner.

The groom was one of the four children of priest Dumitru Miclăușan (1812-1879) from Tilișca (Bratu, 1913: 79-80) and was wedding for the second time, after he had divorced Dobra Borcea from Săliște. Sora Macrea was the god daughter of priest Ioan Platoșiu from Săcel. Upon bargaining during the first meeting, the father of the bride promised to offer them the saloon (the inn) from Săcel for dwelling and usage, along with a meadow of 30 hay carriages to use. After the wedding (10th November 1874) the young couple moved over to his parents, in Tilișca, then came to live in Săcel. The matrimony would be interrupted several times, as the husband crossed the Carpathians with sheep business. She accused the parents-in-law of not keeping the house clean and that not even the servants could eat the food prepared by her mother-in-law. Step by step, misunderstanding occurred, while he regarded his wife's parents as responsible for the couple's split (APORS 101/1877).

After barely two years of marriage, Sora Macrea demanded the protopope authority Sibiu I – by attorney Iacob Bologna – to declare her marriage null. She bluntly pointed out in the action initiated on the 1st of May 1876 that she had been unwilling to marry “someone who had been abandoned by another woman, and wanted to marry a young lad”. She married Dionisie Miclăușan under pressure. The lack of mutual love caused complete dissatisfaction and his slapping her and her father increased the hatred she had already been feeling for her husband and had rooted it in her heart so that it could never die away (APORS 310/1881).

Protopope Ioan Hania appointed the investigation commission made up of Iacob Popoviciu, a parson in Sibiu, and Constantin Bailla, a chaplain in Vale, who, in the presence of two trustworthy men, listened to the confession of both parties under oath. The matrimonial defense lawyer PhD. Ioan Nemeș (18th August 1878) was of opinion that, after hearing the witnesses from Săcel and Tilișca, the marriage could be annulled, mentioning that the claimant had to pay up the lawsuit expenses as the divorce reason belonged to herself (APORS 101/1878). In the extraordinary meeting, the 26th of August 1878, the protopresbiterial authority Sibiu I began the debate of the matrimonial lawsuit between Sora Macrea and Dionisie Miclăușan. Both parties were present, along with the chairman of the authority, Ioan Hannia, the assessors Daniel Neamțu, a parson from Săliște, Ioan Iosof, a parson from Tilișca, Nicolae Rechițan, a parson from Galeș, Petru Iuga, a parson from Tilișca and the notary public Dimitrie Cunțan. Unanimously, the lawsuit ends in absolute divorce. As for the lawsuit expenses in amount of 52,40 florins, those should fall on the woman's parents, guilty for ending the marriage (APORS 101/1878). Sora Macrea appealed the decision with the metropolitan

consistory (the third court forum). On the 3rd of October 1879, the meeting of the metropolitan consistory passed the marriage dissolution and imposed on the woman's parents, besides the lawsuit expenses, the payment of 50 florins penalty into the metropolitan general fund, for the aversion and the deterrent caused to the marriage (APORS no. 8 bis 101/1878).

The divorce of doctor Vasile Szabó from Sibiu and his wife Olimpia born Teodori from Roman (Moldova) belonged to the frame suggested almost six decades ago by the sociologist William Goode – the divorce used to be the privilege of the elite which could financially afford it (Goode, 1962).

Vasile Szabó was a doctor at the Andreian Pedagogical Theological Institute from Sibiu between 1864 and 1877. Olimpia Teodori was the daughter of a doctor born and raised in Austria-Hungary. Upon the official marriage from the 20th of May 1865, the bride was 17 years old, while the doctor was 48 years old. Highly educated people and free thinkers, with a good financial position, both of them chose to end the marriage because of “confused mutual hatred” (§113, point 8 from the *Canonical Law Abstract*). The wife invoked nostalgia and missing her far-away parents, the climate in Transylvania as well as a frigidity impossible to explain used on purpose by dr. Szabó in order to rip away from her the ultimate affection she used to have for him. Briefly, “it seems that Heaven wanted to fill her soul with hatred and antipathy towards him” (APORS 21/1873). The doctor invoked character and mood differences, but especially diversity of opinions about the living manner and their mutual support. He used to believe that the young woman had been educated according to the circumstances of the time, and that she would fit in with them and by taking up with his mood and character, she would work not only towards the conservation but also towards increasing the material estate. Yet, his wife's claims, reaching the point of spending almost 20.000 florins during their time together and thus becoming almost completely materially ruined, paying for significant debts which she was creating without his awareness or will and not for the close family interest, convinced him that their beliefs on education, temper, opinions on living together were so different that his life was completely depressed and made it impossible for them to continue to live together” (APORS 21/1873).

The amount of 20.000 florins exceeded far more than the normal limit of those times and confirmed the reality that a divorce would involve important costs. Keeping things within bounds, a complicated and costly divorce affected the Count Boni de Castellane, a member of the high French aristocracy and Anna Gould, the daughter and heiress of the American millionaire Jay Gould. We can read in the pages of “The Tribune”, the

newspaper founded by Ioan Slavici in Sibiu, that after 11 years of marriage, the daughter of the great industrial and railway baron filed for divorce for several infidelities and scandals of the count. The interesting thing is the huge money waste on his part: 50 million francs during marriage. Their palace from Paris (Palais Rose) cost nine million francs (The Tribune, 1906: 5).

The divorce sentence issued on the 10th of February 1873, sent to the parties in authenticated copy, admitted that, although the Orthodox Church did not acknowledge the education difference or the nature and character difference of the couple as canonical reasons for divorce, “the unassailable mutual hatred of the parties” was admitted in this case and the marriage dissolution was allowed, with the possibility to remarry. The blame for the factual marriage cancellation was borne by the wife, as she had left the matrimony, taking refuge in her parents’ house. That is why she had to pay up a 100 florins penalty into the poor churches’ fund (APORS 21/1873). The 70 florins lawsuit expenses were equally split between partners.

The tradesmen reunion from Săliște organized in February 1906 “a theatrical production with playing and raffle” in the auditorium of Săliște School. The programme contained *Surugiul (The Coachee)*, a vaudeville by Vasile Alecsandri and *Scara Măței (The Moggy’s Ladder)*, a comic opera by Vasile Alecsandri (People’s Page, 1905: 60). A year later, in the center of the archpriestship, in Săliște, the sketch *Năstrăveniile divorțului (The Rogueries of Divorce)* (24 October 1907) was being played. The manuscript *Năstrăveniile divorțului*⁵ comprised 33 pages and is preserved at the Cultural Museum of Săliște (Villa Peligrad) under no. 1741. The short single act play, with eight characters, has a simple intrigue and a comical character. It is probably a Romanian translation of the three-act comedy *Les surprises du divorce (Surprizele divorțului – The Surprises of Divorce)* written by Alexandre Bisson and Antony Mars, Paris, 1891⁶.

⁵My thanks go to professor Marius Boromiz, the principal of the Technological High School “Ioan Lupaș” from Săliște, for copying and sending the manuscript.

⁶The main character is Nicu Ionescu, author, plays and vaudevilles writer. Aneta, from Mehadia, is his first wife. He does not marry because she wants to, but because her mother Cleopatra wants her to, convinced that all women have to marry. Nicu’s mother-in-law (Aneta’s mother) is left by her husband, who has fled out of the country; “he left home to get rid of her”. Cleopatra, a former actress with an artistic history, is irremovable, just like the present magistracy. It is impossible to breathe without her! Governments change, peoples disappear, the world dies, even the plague dies out, but the mother-in-law is still there, standing! We could yet get rid of her by marrying her. I would fit her up only to get rid of her – says Nicu Ionescu openly. The sweet mother-in-law calls him “a poor rhyme maker because he could not come up with one” and would criticize him for making, in two years’ time, only 127,50 lei with his plays, while *Voievodul țigănilor (The Gipsies’s Voivode)* made a 20.000 lei profit

4. Conclusions

The article offers some divorce cases from the gentlefolk of the Orthodox archpriestship from Săliște. We have obtained clear insights that, in the middle of the 19th century, a low divorce level was preserved. The data set used shows that women filed for divorce more often than men, just like in France and the Netherlands (van der Heijden 2015: 80). In two cases the divorce was granted by mutual agreement of the husband and wife. It has already been demonstrated that when the woman has financial independence, she can file for divorce more often than the man (Brining and Douglas 2000). There were children to consider in all the divorced couples. The main divorce reason was “confused aversion and hatred”. This general phrase would include physical and verbal violence, excessive alcohol mania, wealth squander, arranged marriage, not giving the promised dowry, various diseases or physiologic infirmity. According to Church canons, “the confused hatred” had to be mutual. We are considering a time when people did not have much liberty in making personal decisions, when marriage was arranged by parents or relatives, for economic reasons. This matrimonial artificiality built especially on material recitals rather than on real affection is bound to lead to matrimonial crises associated to divorce. Additionally, it has already been proven that an educated wife had more economic opportunities and could get a divorce more easily⁷. William Goode (1962) argued that the divorce was the privilege of the rich, and the decreasing the cost of divorce made it accessible to the lower social classes, so that in the end the latter would file for divorce more. Valeria Soroștineanu restates for the Orthodox archpriestships Sibiu I and Sibiu II the patriarchal pattern of the Romanian traditional society, the male right of way and the strictly material ground of marriages. Although the members of the rural community starred in most of the divorce lawsuits, the case of Constanța

in a year. It does not refer to Nicu Ionescu’s hostility towards his mother-in-law; he would regard her as intriguing, difficult, fussy and with a volatile disposition. As the income of the Ionescu family amounts to 20.000 lei but they would spend twice as much, they put their villa in Sinaia up for sale. Nicu’s uncle, Gurilescu, visits the family residence after having been out of the country for three years. He proves an admirer of Cleopatra’s ever since she was acting in Brașov. When Guță Flăcăreanu, Nicu’s inseparable friend, confesses his love for his wife, he tries to get him to marry another woman. The perfect candidate, Sofița, seeks refuge together with her father Smochinescu into the beautiful villa from Sinaia, so that the rain could not ruin her new dress. Sofița makes a great impression, but Flăcăreanu turns her down. The ending livens when, after several contradictions, Nicu slaps his mother-in-law and the wife springs to her mother’s defence, being punched by Nicu in her turn. As a consequence, the action goes to court (Nășdrăveniile – Rogueries, 1907).

⁷See the theory of the American economy and sociology professor Gary Becker on matrimonial instability, within Becker et al, 1977.

Popovici-Barcianu (a descendent of the illustrious clerical dynasty from Rășinari) against Iacob Arsenie (absolute theologian) showed that "the moral aversion and unassailable hatred" was no exception among the wealthy gentfolk (Soroștineanu 2010a, Soroștineanu 2010b). Sălișteea had so many gentlemen belonging to the so-called educated class by comparison with towns which only had a few (*Înc-o vorbă despre Săliște – One more word on Săliște* 1906). Diana Covaci shows that, for the Catholics, the Church tried, by a complicated, long-lasting and costly judicial procedure, to enforce the idea that the divorce had to be the ultimate solution to the matrimonial issues (Covaci 2003).

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Images of a Queen at War: Marie of Romania's Evolving Relationship with the Press, 1914-1918

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Abstract. From as early as the first days of combat, the international press became a key player in the development of the great European war. Without exception, all combatant governments understood the imperative need of taking control over the public opinion knowing the relevance of the press in shaping the belligerent nations' wartime beliefs, this article offers a preliminary analysis of Queen Marie of Romania's relationship with the Romanian and international press during the country's two years of active participation in the Great War. The scope of this analysis is to emphasise how the press coverage she benefited from progressively enhanced Marie's prestige and ability to influence the course of events.

Keywords: Queen Marie of Romania, Great War, World War One, press, propaganda, women at war.

1. Purpose and introduction

From as early as the first days of combat, the international press became a key player in the development of the great European struggle. Not only did the national medias across the continent assume an indispensable informative role, but they also actively supported the military efforts of their respective countries and those of the alliance blocks they were assisting. Without exception, all combatant governments understood the imperative need of taking control over the public opinion. Words, photographs and illustrations came to be used as ammunition in an attempt to present a homogenous view and experience of war to all those fighting on the same side of the conflict.

Moreover, as the written press grew to represent the singular link between the mobilised soldiers in the trenches and the civilian population which remained behind the frontlines, its importance towards securing the final victory increased considerably. In spite of losing much of its autonomy by being subjected to censorship and serving the propaganda, the press at large thrived during the war.

Acknowledging the relevance of the press in shaping the belligerent nations' wartime beliefs, this article offers a preliminary analysis of Queen Marie of Romania's evolving relationship with the Romanian and international press, primarily during the country's two years of active participation in the Great War. The scope of this analysis is to emphasise how the press coverage she benefited from progressively enhanced Marie's prestige and ability to influence the course of events.

The Queen considered the media as an important factor to be taken into account even before Romania joined the Entente. However, it will be underlined that Marie's consistent and sustained involvement in matters of press and propaganda between 1916 and 1918 was directly linked to Romania's military course during this period of time. This article uses as primary sources the war press, in particular the two most important propaganda tools of Romania, namely the newspapers *România* and *Neamul Românesc*, as well as one of the most influential French journals, *Le Figaro*. Moreover, Queen Marie's diary and relevant correspondence were also taken into account.

A general observation resulting from the analysis of these sources is that, in the first phases of war, there was no elaborate plan which aimed to transform Queen Marie into an instrument of propaganda. If by the end of the war the Queen did become a veritable national symbol, this was due to a step-by-step process driven by necessity. As it will be emphasised, Queen Marie's war efforts were in constant evolution and the diversity and amplitude of the sovereign's work was always proportional with the hardships which befell the country and its population. Thus, as Romania struggled through the war, Queen Marie struggled to keep the sinking ship afloat and the press provided her with the necessary means to do so. Focusing on three of the four main phases of Romania's history with the Great War – the neutrality period, the autumn of 1916 and the year 1917 – this article seeks to present Queen Marie's first journalistic incursions, as well as her evolving interaction with the press.

2. The war on the side-lines: 1914-1916

During the neutrality years, Queen Marie's unequivocal pro-Entente sentiments had to be kept unknown to the masses in as much as possible. Although she found it difficult and "entirely out of keeping with her character" to be "eternally secretive and diplomatic" (Marie of Romania 1935: 22), the Queen understood the importance of maintaining the pretence of impartiality while in public. Moreover, as she was keenly analysing the war experiences of her fellow crowned cousins, Marie knew how to carefully avoid repeating their mistakes. In 1915, one such mistake turned out to be precisely the indiscreetness of a neutral Queen regarding her country's potential choice of allies. The culprit was Queen Sophie of Greece, who had the mischance of being Kaiser Wilhelm II's sister. In a time of crisis for her country, Sophie made international headlines under the (false) accusation of being a "German spy" who tyrannically controlled her weak-willed husband and worked to undermine the pro-Allied foreign policy of Greece (Gelardi 2005: 211). Taking notice of the growing scandal, Queen Marie wrote to her mother in mid-June: "Sophie must be suffering every torture being German and her country is decidedly not friendly disposed. She is not liked there." (A.N.R. Regina Maria: V/2713)

However, while threading carefully in public, behind the scenes, Queen Marie left little doubt as to where her true loyalties were. In the two years of neutrality, she found herself "begging" the most vocal and belligerent of journalists to "restrain their ardour", often reassuring them that her silence and, more importantly, that of the King were due to caution: "the sovereign cannot precipitate himself into a wild adventure before reaching a safe understanding with his future allies" (Marie of Romania 1935: 42). To a great extent, this was the reason why most Romanian journals refrained altogether from discussing the Queen's political views and preferences between 1914 and 1916. On one hand, for entirely opposite reasons, the governmental press supporting the neutrality *status quo* and the pro-German press which militated for intervention on the side of the Central Powers, had no interest in disclosing the Queen's political position. On the other hand, the pro-Allied journals chose to be discreet, not wishing to undermine the works of their cause's most assiduous supporter.

The few papers which did touch the subject—chiefly *Adevărul*, an independent newspaper of republican views—did so rarely and subtly, most often with the purpose of attacking the 'German King' in the process: "Queen Marie understands the duties of the Crown (...) and what brings her closest to the heart of the country is the discretion with which she knows how to

combine her royal obligations with her [support] for our national ideals. Queen Marie understands better [than her husband] the holiness of our cause. May you live long as Queen in the Great Romania of all Romanians.” (*Adevărul* 1915: XXV/10188) On another occasion, the same journal lamented the Queen’s insufficient influence over political matters. In an article titled “Two Queens” (*Adevărul* 1915: XXVIII/10291) the newspaper’s editor-in-chief compared at length Romania’s “young, beautiful, artistic and educated Queen” with her vile Greek counterpart:

“Whereas in Athens the will of the Queen (...) takes Greece towards disaster, in Bucharest, where the Queen could save both Crown and Country, her will cannot be heard. Is Fritz less malleable than Tino?¹ Does the woman-queen of Greece have more power over Tino, than Marie of Romania has over her big-eared husband? It seems inexplicable why the woman-queen in Athens can rule and govern, she who has none of the shining qualities of Queen Marie of Romania, whereas the latter cannot impose here her truly Romanian politics. (...) It would be a shame, a true shame, for the fate of Marie of Romania to be tied to that of the King, it would be a shame for her to be unable to save her country, her King and the entire dynasty... Poor Queen Marie.”

Although such articles were rare in Romania, the foreign press was less discreet in regards to Queen Marie. Unlike their colleagues in Bucharest, the journalists of the Allied countries considered that exposing the Romanian monarch’s consort as a supporter of the Entente would only strengthen their efforts of bringing Romania into the war. Thus, by 1915, the name of the Romanian Queen became a rather frequent occurrence in British and French newspapers. For example, in February 1915, *The Illustrated War News* published a portrait of Queen Marie captioned with the question: “English and an Ally-to-Be?” (*Illustrated War News* 1915: 26). Of equal relevance is the interest shown by the press of neutral countries, in particular the United States. As early as September 1914, a month before she became Queen, the popular *New York Times* reported: “King Charles is German. Princess Marie is English and with strong attachments and leanings towards Russia and France. He is old and feeble with his life behind him. She is young, beautiful, ambitious and with a long life before her. In the present conflict the Romanians are not in sympathy with him, but strongly with her.” (*New York Times* 1914: LXIII/20683). The

¹ The article’s author uses the stereotypical name of ‘Fritz’ as a pejorative term, an attack to King Ferdinand’s German origins. ‘Tino’ was the nickname of King Constantine of Greece.

idea was reiterated the following month, as the news of King Carol's death made headlines: "The Crown Prince Ferdinand is not as popular as the late King. However, he is said to be altogether under the influence of his brilliant wife, the English-born Crown Princess Marie. She is an extremely able woman and it is to her, it is said, that the Romanian people look for the future of their kingdom." (*New York Times* 1914: LXIV/20714). A year later, amidst ardent international debates concerning Romania's future action, *The Washington Post* published an article titled "Beautiful Queen of Romania Makes King Turn Army Over to the Allied Side". Although the title is self-explanatory, it is interesting to note the optic presented to the public: "Queen Marie, more Russian than English and not at all German, is eager to throw the strength of Romania to the Allies. The beautiful granddaughter of Queen Victoria and of the Tsar of Russia, has marshalled 500.000 well-disciplined troops for the attack on Austria-Hungary. King Ferdinand is pro-German, but wholly under the domination of his beautiful consort." (*The Washington Post* 1915: XXXVIII/13688). It was articles as these which helped endear the Romanian Queen to the pro-Allied public. By 1916, Queen Marie had already gained a strong reputation of being "an ally of the Allies" and, following Romania's war intervention, her great international popularity could be openly used in the advantage of the Romanian state.

3. The war in Bucharest: 1916

When Romania declared war on Austria-Hungary on August 27th, 1916, Queen Marie was well prepared.² Her own experience in the Zimnicea cholera camp during the Second Balkan War of 1913, as well as the example of fellow European consort queens, convinced Marie that it was her utmost duty to set an example of war conduct for women in the Romanian society. Thus, the royal belle with a longstanding reputation of being a great lover of fine and expensive clothing, set aside all extravagance and wore with religiosity a minimalist nurse grab until well into 1918. Ever since her arrival in Bucharest in January 1893, Marie had used fashion as a way of endearing herself to the Romanian people. Whether it was her "hat for the 10th of May which always played a great role" (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/128, 53) in the National Day parade, or pictures of her in traditional Romanian costumes which were circulated as postcards all around the country, Queen Marie understood that when a message had to be delivered and one could not reach individually to

² Until as late as 1919, Romania still used the Julian Calendar. However, in order to avoid confusion with the international sources and taking into consideration that most Romanian sources (newspapers/diaries) also offer the new style date, all dates used in this article are following the Gregorian Calendar.

everybody, appearance became a language in itself. It should come as no surprise that even the style of nurse uniform Queen Marie opted for was symbolic in nature. On the western front, the Red Cross organisations had rather standardised modern uniforms where the colour and cut of smocks and caps was an indicator of the nurses' training level and status in the hierarchy. However, nursing had been a religious practice long before it became an institutionalised secular profession in the 19th century. Knowing she had “no special talent” (A.N.R. Regina Maria, V/2706) for hospital work, Queen Marie sought to capitalise precisely on the spiritual dimension of the ‘sister of charity’ role. Inspired by the image of piety and purity of Sister Pucci of St. Vincent de Paul, the devout Catholic nun who had been her closest collaborator during the cholera epidemic of the Second Balkan War, Queen Marie chose as uniform the traditional, simple white grab which replicated the monastic vestments. However, as queen of an Orthodox country, Marie deviated from the Catholic uniform worn by the sisters of St. Vincent de Paul by covering her head with a headdress that typical for Orthodox nuns. This superposition of images between the ‘medical sister’ and ‘monastic sister’ had a strong symbolic value and appealed directly to the Christian-Orthodox feelings and loyalties of the Romanian soldiers.

Queen Marie never aimed to be merely an image without substance. Therefore, more than just wearing and displaying her medical outfit, she established a grand hospital within the Royal Palace and put in motion the organisation of an ambulance network. In her diary, the Queen mentions both these medical facilities from as early as August 29th, mere two days after the declaration of war. The promptitude with which Queen Marie took action in the medical field is a direct indication of the fact that she had been aware of Romania's political and military situation long before it became public knowledge. For months, with the help of an intimate circle of loyal friends – amongst which Prince Barbo ştirbey, Colonel Ernst Ballif, Jean Chrissoveloni and Cella Delavrancea – Queen Marie made plans and stored resources for when the hour of reckoning would finally come. (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/102, 35-45)

Queen Marie wanted her hospital to become a model of good organisation and practice; however, although she paid special attention to it, she did not neglect the other hospitals in Bucharest, which she strove to visit with regularity. In November 1914, Queen Marie had received a letter from her mother, Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, in which the older woman thoroughly criticised Tsarina Alexandra of Russia and her approach to war: “Alix's only activity is to assist in surgeries. Beyond useless, I would say, even

ridiculous for an Empress, who should be in the lead, not losing herself in details. Visit as many hospitals, speak to the wounded, console, help where you can—yes, but let the physical care to the real medical sisters. This should be the role played by an Empress, but Alix likes only the small things, not the grand ideals.” (Mandache 2016: 205). Queen Marie has always been one to seek her mother’s approval and, in as much as possible, she followed her mother’s advice. Thus, it can be assumed that once the Romanian sovereign was in the situation of taking care of her country’s wounded, she remembered her mother’s letter and strove to avoid the Empress’s mistakes. Moreover, once in exile in Iași, Queen Marie renounced the idea of administrating her own hospital altogether, preferring to lend her name and patronage to a multitude of medical facilities across the province of Moldova.

In the first weeks and months of war, Queen Marie’s pilgrimage through the hospitals of Bucharest, but also through those of Fetești, Câmpina, and Sinaia, which were closer to the frontlines, represented a crucial step in the creation of a strong bond between the Queen and the Romanian soldiers. As Crown Princess, Marie had already established a connection with the upper echelons of the military, enjoying a high degree of popularity amongst army officers, particularly those in cavalry regiments. The war took that connection a step further, by bringing the Queen closer to the common soldiers. Queen Marie’s indiscriminate devotion towards professional military men and armed peasants alike was quick to earn her a large and loyal followership. Thus, on September 12th, 1916, Queen Marie’s diary mentions the first declaration of sacrifice coming from a severely wounded soldier treated in a military hospital:

“One thing touches me more than I can say, brings tears to my eyes: when I ask them if they are suffering, they say ‘yes, I am suffering, but never matter. May you become Empress of all the Romanians’ it is the eternal refrain. Each humble little life is ready to bleed to death as long as I become ‘Empress of all the Romanians’. Why should they be killed so that I should rule over the many, amongst which those simple creatures will probably be no more. Why? (...) a strange weight to carry the look of so many eyes – I never knew it could be so heavy. All those eyes, one after another staring up at me... These days I have bent over so many beds and looked into so many eyes – and they all follow me as I move, each time, I turn I feel them all upon me, hundreds of eyes...”
(A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/102, 83-85).

This one passage from the early days of Romania joining the struggle captures two elements that would become quintessential to Queen Marie’s war

experience: firstly, the ‘Empress of all the Romanians refrain’, which became a leitmotif in the war poetry published in the newspapers; and, secondly, the image of the sovereign leaving over wounded soldiers on campaign beds. To this date, as Romanians, we have engraved in our collective memory the picture of Queen Marie in her white ‘nun-nurse’ uniform making hospital rounds. This is owed to the fact that, understanding the impact such images would have on the public opinion, those in Queen Marie’s entourage who knew how to operate the mechanism of war propaganda, encouraged the sovereign to accept being photographed with regularity. Queen Marie’s diary offers great insight on this matter: “I was begged to allow myself to be photographed in my nurse dress as the public has asked for it” (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/103, 26) or “I was photographed with the hospital by an Englishman for English newspapers.” (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/103, 40). Thus, it can be observed that these images were used not only at a national level, but also to help further Romania’s cause abroad.

Queen Marie’s pictures were published not only in the United Kingdom, but also – and even more extensively – in France. For example, the November 12th, 1916, number of the French illustrated newspaper *Le Miroir*, published two large photographs of the Romanian sovereign in her Royal Palace hospital in Bucharest, with the telling description: “Like the Tsarina and the Queen of Italy, the Queen of Romania dedicates herself to tending the wounded. An exemplary hospital was organised under her supervision in the Bucharest Royal Palace and, every day, the Queen and her two eldest daughters offer their help to the wounded soldiers and encourage them with gentle words.” (*Le Miroir* 1916: VI/155). By the end of 1916, Queen Marie’s name became a common occurrence in the French journals and magazines. So strong was the impact of the Romanian propaganda trying to capitalise on Queen Marie’s image, that the magazine *Images de la Guerre*, which had nearly never featured any stories about women in the two years of war, published its number announcing Romania’s entry in the war with a picture of Queen Marie on the cover—the first portrait of a woman to be thus used. (*Images de la Guerre* 1916: 97).

Nevertheless, observing the work of other Queens, Marie understood that, in order to attract attention and put Romania in the favour of the Allied public opinion, an additional effort was needed as to differentiate her from the other “royal nurses”. Thus, Queen Marie sought to use her literary skills to paint Romania in the most favourable light. Once again proving her foreknowledge regarding Romania’s future course of action, Marie wrote to her mother two weeks before the declaration of war: “I am writing a few sketches

about Romania seen from a picturesque point of view.” (A.N.R. Regina Maria: V/2720) Nevertheless, Marie omitted to mention to her mother what the sketches would be used for. Before the end of the year, a booklet titled *My Country* was published in Great Britain under the patronage of the Red Cross. Marie’s purpose for publishing this book was twofold: on one hand, she wanted to raise funds for the British Cross organisation operating in Romania and, on the other hand, she wanted to popularise the romantic image of a picturesque Romania in the English-speaking countries. The first edition of *My Country* featured on the first page a portrait of Queen Marie in her iconic nurse uniform, accompanied by the Queen’s signature and a message in which she detailed the charitable purpose of her publishing. In her book’s preface, Marie confesses to the public: “[Romania] is a small country, a new country, but it is a country I love. I want others to love it also; therefore, listen to a few words about it. Let me paint a few pictures, draw a few sketches as I have seen them, first with my eyes, then with my heart.” (Marie of Romania 1916: 5). Sixty-four illustrations accompany the fifteen chapters, which depict images of Romanian villages, Romanian peasants, as well as their customs, superstitions and daily lives. *My Country* was first published in December 1916 in London, followed by New York and Toronto. Due to its great success, in 1917 a French edition was published in both France and Switzerland, while the English edition was reprinted (Ciupală 2017: 273).

The success of this book highlights the growing popularity of Queen Marie and acts as an indicator of how the subtle propaganda of Romania’s English Queen has taken root in the Allied countries, but also in some of the neutral European states. In the spring of 1917, *My Country* was also exploited at the national level, being published in Iași in order to be sold to the civilian population in the name of the Romanian Red Cross and freely distributed to the soldiers in the trenches as a way to boost their morale. In her diary, Queen Marie noted: “Iorga brought me a 1000 Francs which had been made in two days with the selling of *Țara mea* [Ro. My Country]. (...) It was really a good idea of Iorga’s to have a cheap version printed here.” (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/108, 13 & 15). Nicolae Iorga, the illustrious Romanian historian and academic who, by the outbreak of the Great War, started having grand political ambitions, was one of Queen Marie’s closest collaborators. Iorga had been involved in teaching Marie the Romanian language and, along the years, translated a number of her works. During the war, Iorga was the leading personality in what the Romanian propaganda was concerned and, with preponderance in 1917, he played a great role in transforming Queen Marie into a national symbol.

However, bringing the focus back on Queen Marie's 1916 activity, another important element in promoting Romania's cause abroad was the collaboration with different foreign war correspondents. The first of these collaborators—and probably the most important—was Robert de Flers, a French journalist, editor-in-chief of *Le Figaro* and France's war correspondent to Romania. *Le Figaro* was, even in those days, one of the oldest and most prestigious French publications, being the leading journal of the conservative and pro-monarchical press. Considering these political views, Robert de Flers had a close relationship with the Romanian aristocrats living in Paris. Through these connections, de Flers reached out to Queen Marie and the two became steady friends. The French journalist thoroughly supported Romania's national ideal and highly appreciated the honesty with which Queen Marie supported the Entente during the neutrality years. Thus, from his position as editor-in-chief, de Flers facilitated the frequent publication in *Le Figaro* of articles or information about the Romanian Queen. In 1916, shortly after Romania's war intervention, two ample articles dedicated to Queen Marie were presented to the French public. Both these articles were printed on the newspaper's front page and addressed the link between Queen Marie, the Entente and the Romanian people (*Le Figaro* 1916: 62(3)/242 & 62(3)/320). It is important to underline that in the first two years of war, no other consort queen had any portrait-article dedicated to their work—and none other would have until the end of the war. Moreover, analysing the frequency with which the European consort queens were mentioned in *Le Figaro*, it can be observed that Queen Marie of Romania's name was by far the most frequently used, followed by that of Queen Mary of the United Kingdom, Queen Elisabeth of Belgium and Tsarina Alexandra of Russia. The royal consorts were mostly mentioned in articles concerning the war activity of their husbands, on the rubrics addressing the home front and those concerning mundane activities. Thus, the rubric *Le Monde & La Ville* often published diverse information concerning Queen Marie's daily activities – for example, Queen Marie's reaction to the German zeppelins bombarding Bucharest, the car accident she had suffered shortly after relocating to Iasi, her attending the funeral of a French Red Cross nurse and the religious service organised to commemorate the anniversary of Romania entering the war. Many of these announcements seem of low importance, however, they played a crucial role in shaping and popularising a positive and vivid image of '*la Reine Marie de Roumanie*' in the French public opinion. *Le Figaro* also organised a fundraising in Queen Marie's name which resulted in a donation of 200.000 francs, money sent to aid the activity of the French Red Cross which activated in Romania and to help the French hospitals

operating in Moldova. Furthermore, the newspaper never failed to mention the fundraising events organised by the Romanian Red Cross which activated in Paris, organisation which was under Queen Marie's patronage. The publication of such information in a highly popular newspaper had the effect of ensuring a continuous financial support for the war efforts of Romania's charismatic Queen – for example, in the spring of 1917, the French Comedy spontaneously decided to dedicate the premiere of their latest play to Queen Marie and to send her the money resulted from tickets and fundraising in order to be used for the maintenance of her ambulance network. To every fundraising event in her name mentioned in *Le Figaro*, Queen Marie replied by sending a telegram expressing her gratitude. Without fail, the Queen's humble words were printed for all readers to see. The presence of Queen Marie in the pages of other French publications does not greatly differ from that of other consort queens, but *Le Figaro*, through the direct and sustained implication of its editor-in-chief, brought a real service to Queen Marie and, implicitly, to Romania. This immense capital of image would be of a real importance in the spring of 1919, during the Paris Peace Conference.

Another renowned journalist, Stanley Washburn, popularised Queen Marie's name in Great Britain and the United States, even before the latter joined the conflagration in 1917. Washburn was a war correspondent attached to the Russian Army (1914-1916) and then to the Romanian and French Armies on the Eastern Front (1917). Queen Marie met him shortly after his arrival in Bucharest and they remained in touch not only during the war, but also in its aftermath—thus, in 1926, during Queen Marie's American tour, Washburn, who had been raised to the rank of cavalry major for his journalistic activity during the Gear War, was put in charge of the sovereign's protection. In 1916, Queen Marie took note of Washburn's advice and mediated his interaction with King Ferdinand: "Received a most interesting correspondent of The Times, a Mr. Washburn. Quite one of the most interesting people I have ever talked to. He has a wide higher view of the war and its consequences and is working to get all the Allies to really respect and understand each other. (...) I begged Mr. Washburn to keep in touch with me and I told him I would uphold his point of view and help him to help my country in as much as possible." (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/103, 35-37)

Through her attitude towards the representatives of the press, Queen Marie demonstrated a good understanding of the importance of attracting the sympathy of the public opinion. In order to increase Romania's prestige abroad and to attract much-needed help, the Queen was eager to cooperate with those who had the means and the power to disseminate information and to push

certain messages towards the wider population. Thus, on September 22nd, she noted in her diary: “Received an English correspondent who wants to make an appeal on our behalf to the English and American public, then a Russian journalist who is very anxious to see Nando, saying he is not at all enough known in Russia. Nando hates newspaper writers, quite naturally, but some are all the same useful well-meaning people whom it would be good to talk to.” (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/103, 17-18)

Therefore, it can be seen that in the first months of war, Queen Marie paid special attention to the popularisation of Romania and its cause abroad. Domestically, the Queen’s activity focused on the proper organisation and functioning of the Royal Palace hospital and on the coordination of her ambulance network and their prompt arrival on the frontlines. Moreover, Queen Marie sought to create a special bond with the wounded soldiers through the reiteration of a symbolic image already known in the Romanian collective memory—that of *Mama Regina*. The image of a Motherly Queen was created during the Independence war by Queen Elisabeth of Romania and came to symbolise the symbiosis between the maternal role of the woman caring for her children and the royal role of a sovereign caring for her nation. The *Mama Regina* figure became one of the most important elements towards the creation and perpetuation of a veritable ‘myth of Queen Marie’ – defined by Alin Ciupală as being the “intellectual and cultural construction, with ideological valences, which has its origins in the Great War and which survived in its aftermath” (Ciupală 2017: 276) However, during the time spent in Bucharest, the mere seed of this image meant to last was planted. Two moments of great importance contributed to Queen Marie identifying on a personal and spiritual level to her role as mother of the nation.

The first of these moments was Prince Mircea’s illness and subsequent death on November 2nd, 1916. Regarding this unfortunate event, I.G. Duca, a Romanian politician who had close ties with the royal family, wrote in his memoirs: “The Queen was shattered. She was not used with tragedies. (...) For the first time life struck her and it did so by striking her in what was dearest to her soul—one of her children. Such immensity her mind could have never conjured before. (...) From that day onwards, the Queen has never walked through life with the same splendid and supreme confidence in her fate as before.” (Duca 1994: 74) Trying to console herself and to regain, in as much as possible, some faith in what she called “her star”, Queen Marie regarded her son’s death as a divine intervention: God had demanded a sacrifice in order to watch over her war-torn country. Divinity had deprived Marie of the right to be the mother of Mircea the child, for the chance to become the mother of a

whole nation. Mircea's death showed her the sacrifice that tens of thousands of mothers across the country were making and helped Marie identify with their tragedy and struggle at a deeply personal level. Last, but not least, abandoning a piece of her being in Bucharest was perceived as a self-guarantee that she would never give up the fight, eager to return to the 'little white grave' left behind. All these ideas might seem exaggerated, filled with symbolism and mysticism, however, they are all ideas in which Queen Marie strongly believed. She reiterated these beliefs in the intimacy of her diary, but also in the press. One of the first articles published by Queen Marie in the newspaper *România* was titled "From my heart to theirs. My child" and it addressed in depth the agony of losing Prince Mircea. In her article, Queen Marie confessed: "Death is crawling on Earth. (...) Every woman must now know the bitterness of separation and has to bow her head in the ashes. At a time when the sons of Queens no longer have the right to give their lives on the battlefield, so that I would better understand the tears of all other mothers, Death snuck into my house, taking my youngest child, my most innocent and defenceless child." (*România* 1917: I/21) Two years later, in November 1918, in order to commemorate the death of Queen Marie's son, *The Washington Post* published an article titled 'Has God Demanded a Sacrifice?', which was based entirely on the ideas Queen Marie sent via the representatives of the American Red Cross.

The second moment which intensified Queen Marie's 'maternal feelings' towards her people was the occupation of Bucharest and the exile to Iasi.

4. *The war in Iași: 1917-1918*

On December 6th, 1916, Queen Marie and her entourage took shelter in Iași, in the house of Army Corps IV, also known as the Cantacuzino-Paşcanu Manor. By that time, the war coordinates had significantly changed for Romania and the conflagration came to mean more than ever a matter of life and death in what the future of the country was concerned. Despite the pain caused by the simultaneous loss of her child, her house and half of her country, Queen Marie understood the imperative need to increase her war efforts: "Today we took possession of our new abode. (...) Hardly had I arrived there that I was overrun by many fold people. Everybody wants to be under my protection—French, English, Americans, doctors, nurses, civilians. It is hard work as my means have become very small and, any day, they may become even smaller. But I try to find solutions, to use my influence. I especially do not want to discourage the foreigners that have come here, we will need their help." (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/105, 19-20). As the days passed, this realisation of

the urgency to work increased: “I always considered myself strong, now comes the time to prove to myself if I am. (...) I sent for Iorga; told him that one must make all efforts to lift the general moral in the army and in the public and that he must help me. He is going to make a little plan of work.” (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/105, 45) Once in Iași, the Queen’s attention turned nearly exclusively towards supporting the armed resistance and lifting the general morale, while the efforts made towards maintaining herself in the graces of the foreign public opinion passed on a secondary plan.

As previously noted, Nicolae Iorga was the one who suggested the translation and publication of *Țara mea* in a cheap edition destined entirely to those fighting in the trenches. Moreover, until this war edition could be published, the chapters composing the Queen’s “little book”, as it came to be known, were published one by one in Iorga’s newspaper, *Neamul Românesc*. This represented the first step in the “little plan of work” he had designed at the Queen’s request.

By the end of 1916, Queen Marie’s popularity was undeniable. However, King Ferdinand was far from commanding the same public support. Thus, the Queen, encouraged by the usual members of her entourage, but also by other political and military actors, put in motion some strategies meant to increase the prestige of her German husband. To begin with, Queen Marie sought to dissociate the image of King Ferdinand from that of Prime Minister Ion. I.C. Brătianu and to put him in closer association to the leaders of the Romanian Army. The Queen insisted on the King’s presence in the midst of his soldiers and on the sovereign’s equidistant interaction with all political parties, not only with the Liberal one which was in government. The constant presence of Queen Marie beside King Ferdinand implicitly brought new benefits to her image – she became, at a symbolic level, omnipresent. This was very well underlined in his memoirs by Constantin Argetoianu, a conservative politician who – ironically – was not a great fan of the Queen’s strong personality and constant meddling:

“We find her in the trenches amongst the combatants of the first lines, we find her in the hospitals and in all sanitary facilities amongst the wounded and the sick, we find her present in all meetings and assemblies which sought to help in a way or another. She did not know the fear of bullets and cannons, nor did she know the fear and disgust of plague, or impatience when her great efforts were futile. Queen Marie fulfilled her duty on all fronts of her activity, and above all on that of encouraging and lifting the morale of all those who surrounded her and who had to

decide, in the most tragic of circumstances, the fate of her country and her people." (Argetoianu 1992: 109).

This concept of the Queen's omnipresence was immediately taken and perpetuated by the newspapers responsible with war propaganda. Thus, as Queen Marie's activity became more diverse and more engaged, the attention she received from the press intensified. As the Romanian Army and administration withdrew in Moldova, many newspapers and journals ceased their publication, particularly due to financial, logistic and political reasons. With great promptitude, the government and military funded a newspaper which was dedicated to both the battle and the home fronts. Thus, the newspaper *România* was founded with writer Mihail Sadoveanu as editor-in-chief, seconded by the poet Octavian Goga and the playwright Corneliu Moldovan. Other literary Romanian personalities, such as such as Barbu S. Delavrancea, Cella Delavrancea, Ion Agârbiceanu or Nicolae Iorga, published articles regularly. The newspaper was circulated in 15,000 daily copied. In a short period of time, *România* became the most influential propaganda tool, especially due to the sustained mobilising efforts of these writers, all passionate supporters of the national ideal and masters of words and style. (Bucur 202: 259-261) The only Bucharest based newspaper which managed to continue its activity in Iași was Iorga's *Neamul Românesc*. Queen Marie's name appeared with high frequency in both these newspapers. On one hand, continuing the already known narrative, the Queen was presented as the 'mother of the wounded' in her white nurse uniform, keeping vigil at the head of the wounded. On the other, many articles presented her as a sovereign fighting for her country and visiting the frontlines. This dual image, intensely popularised in Moldova, represented the perfect symbiosis between the woman's role in society as perceived in those times and the role of a representative of the monarchy – in other words, the fulfilment of the *Mama Regina* role. (Bucur 2000: 43)

In one of her studies, Maria Bucur recounted the interview she took from a war veteran who had met Queen Marie: "A war survivor, Zoanel Gheorghiu, told me his experience. He calmly remembered how his mother made *coliva*³ for him throughout the war. In our two hours long conversation, the only moment when this old veteran shed a few involuntary tears was when he mentioned his other 'mother', Queen Marie, who he had met in a campaign hospital while wounded. This spontaneous reaction reflects a deep sentiment of love towards Queen Marie, whom the veteran described as loving maternal figure." (Bucur 2000: 44) Bucur took the interview in 1996, thus 80 years after

³A special Romanian desert made in order to commemorate the dead.

her interlocutor had voluntarily enlisted in the Romanian Army. The historian was surprised to see that the veteran's reaction to the mentioning of Queen Marie was stronger than that to the mentioning of his own mother. Bucur concluded that the symbolic connection between the Romanian peasant soldiers and their royal mother figure was greatly amplified by propaganda and thus perpetuated as a veritable myth of Queen Marie in the aftermath of war. Perfectly aware of the amplitude her work and image had taken since the beginning of the war, Queen Marie wrote to her mother in December 1917:

“I had become a tremendous worker, I never knew that I had the stuff in me, but necessity develops virtues and mine have certainly developed to my astonishment. Carmen Sylva is nothing to me! She never had such a chance to develop her Mama Regina virtues, her times were paradisiacal in comparison to mine. (...) I led a more or less nomad life, going everywhere, even into the first line trenches which much enchanted and astonished my soldiers. I blush to say that I have inherited now the title Mama Regina – although my people ask me at the same time if I have passed 30! Mama Regina used to be a person with white hair and spectacles and a fat tummy and a constant grin.” (A.N.R. Regina Maria: V/2732).

In the first two months of 1917 the Romanian newspapers published countless articles detailing Queen Marie's activity, while she occupied her time with the multiple crises that seemed to hit the country at once – a political crisis, a health crisis and a refugee crisis. As the situation calmed by the beginning of spring and the typhus epidemic was brought under control, Queen Marie was asked to once again use her literary talent in the national interest. Through the intervention of Cella Delavrancea, a close mutual friend, Octavian Goga managed to secure two articles from Queen Marie, both titled “From My Heart to Yours”. They were subsequently published in *România* (România 1917: I/14 & I/21). Although she had already published written works before, these two articles for the *România* newspaper represented Queen Marie's very first incursion in journalism. It would be an interest which was to last throughout her life, as many articles signed by the Romanian Queen made their way into national and international newspapers and magazines all through the 1920s and 1930s.

Although she had been very reluctant to accept Octavian Goga's editorial proposal, Queen Marie was relieved, even satisfied, to receive her first feedback from the public: "I receive so many telegrams of thanks from all the regiments. What makes the telegrams touching is that many of them make allusions to the articles I wrote which shows me that they have been read everywhere. One so prettily telegraphed that all my soldiers were eager to begin to fight once more and each hoped to be the first to enter Bucharest so as to be the first to lay flowers upon Mircea's grave." (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/108, 3)

These messages from the end of March 1917 are proof that using Queen Marie's image and articles for mobilising purposes was progressively reaching its goal. Moreover, despite some criticism from the high society, which considered that the article about Prince Mircea was too descriptive and too revealing for a royal, the telegrams received by the Queen show that the confession of a mother's tragedy had reached a sensitive chord in the fighting soldiers who were ready to resume their fight in order to reunite their Queen with the tomb of her lost child. Furthermore, the soldiers of a regiment sent an article to *România* as response to the Queen's initial confession. The article which was titled "From our Hearts to Hers" (*România* 1917: I/36) had a profound impact on Queen Marie and convinced her that she had to continue writing for the public as she "have been recompensed for the courage to write so publicly, recompensed much more than I expected" (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/108, 5).

The two articles published in *România* triggered a reaction of jealousy from Nicolae Iorga, who considered he had received for his newspapers only recirculate chapters from a book which had already been published abroad and was in the process of being published nationally. As Queen Marie cared for Iorga both personally and as a collaborator, she promptly promised to write "something special" for the *Neamul Românesc*. Thus, in the spring and summer of 1917, the Queen began writing and publishing a sequel to *My Country*, this time focusing on relating more personal stories about Romania as seen through her eyes along the years. The resulting articles are ampler and more detailed than the chapters of *My Country* and they were written in an infinitely more sentimental and nostalgic tonality than. It can be seen that, unlike the original booklet which was addressed to a public whose knowledge about Romania was rudimental at best, the sequel was addressed to the Romanian people and appealed directly to their patriotic sentiments. In 1925, these articles were published in Great Britain in a book titled *The Country That I Love*. In the preface of this volume, Queen Marie wrote that the initial publication of the

book's chapters as individual articles during the war had a twofold purpose: firstly, it aimed to motivate the Romanian soldiers to fight hard in order to liberate the lost territories and, secondly, it was a way of proving to the population that their Queen was always with them, even in the "thin and dirty pages of a war newspaper" (Marie of Romania 2016: 5).

The articles published by Queen Marie took the readers in a highly descriptive and vivid manner through the territory of occupied Romania – from Bucharest to King Carol's Sinaia and Queen Elisabeth's Curtea de Arges, from plains to hills, riding on the mountain tops or along the sandy beaches of Mamaia, cruising down the Danube, going on pilgrimages to the Oltenia monasteries. In other words, these articles carefully covered all the regions from where the soldiers in the trenches came. The Queen's descriptions did not leave the soldiers indifferent, even more so as they prepared to begin a new offensive in the summer of 1917. At the same time, these articles had a great impact on the author herself and on her family: "I consented [to write the articles] little realising that it would cost me so much. I stirred up all the grief that lies dormant in my soul. I had kept it under by my sheer force of will, but concentrating my thoughts upon all that we have lost, I broke open all the wounds and they bled at once." (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/107, 106) or "I had a touching scene with Nicky, read him the chapter I had just finished about Cotroceni, talking about our garden, our church and about Mircea. Suddenly he throws his arms around my neck and bursts into tears. Then we talked together about his brother and about all the things we had lost." (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/108, 41)

Queen Marie's presence in the pages of the Romanian war newspapers continued with regularity throughout 1917 and it was brought to a stop only by Romania's separate peace of 1918. Marie was very dedicated to writing articles in the benefit of the Romanian Army: "I feel very keen upon writing things for my soldiers now that I know that it brings them a little joy into their days & that it makes them feel nearer me. It is worth while giving them some of my talent (if I can call it talent) of expressing myself." (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/108, 11) Queen Marie's involvement in war propaganda had reached such a peak that the sovereign wondered at the absurdity of the situation in her diary: "It is certainly the last thing I could have ever imagined for myself that I could one day, in times of war, write articles in Iorga's newspaper that the whole world at large could sanction. Well, well, much unsuspected happens." (A.N.R. Regina Maria: III/108, 216).

Amongst the “much unsuspected” things which happened was the fall of the Tsarist Empire, which brought numerous misfortunes to Romania and culminated in the signing of a separate peace. By early 1918, the strength with which Queen Marie believed in the continuation of the armed resistance and in the final victory of the Entente was no longer compatible with the official direction which Romania, forced by circumstances, had to adopt. Within weeks, Queen Marie was abandoned by most of her collaborators, as they found it impossible to control the fervour with which she instigated to resistance. The irony of the situation is that the same burning power and belief in the justness of Romania’s cause, which had made Queen Marie a national icon in the first place, became the reason why the sovereign had to be censored. Nevertheless, Marie’s absence from newspapers did not diminish her popularity. Queen Marie came to understand very closely the needs of simple Romanians, while they had the opportunity to know her directly, to call upon her help and to relate to her in person during her many tours around Moldova. Journalistic censorship could not break a bond which was meant to survive the war, and even to last long after Marie’s death.

In 1918, the separate peace forced Queen Marie to remove her nurse uniform and, in its stead, she took to wearing the Romanian national costume. She retired to her countryside homes of Bicaz and Coțofenești in sign of protest, thus boycotting the pro-German government of Alexandru Marghiloman. During the summer of 1918, Marie continued to visit remote villages of Romania and, in spite of the country’s official political direction, she sought to inspire through the power of mouth the sense resistance she could no longer express in writing.

Ioan Lahovary, Romania’s ambassador to Paris, affirmed during the war that “a foreign dynasty was a delicate plant” (Pakula 1985, 217). This article sought to show that the propaganda efforts of promoting Queen Marie’s war activity and turning her into a national war symbol had a double effect: on one hand, the civilian population and the military were successfully mobilised in 1917, Romania’s worst and most intense year of combat, and the morale of the nation at large was lifted; on the other hand, the position of the Romanian dynasty and the prestige of the monarchy as a form of government were strengthened at a time when Europe was swept by a revolutionary and republican current.

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Building Characters and Territorial Identities during Socialist Romania, in Comics for Communist Pioneers

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the pedagogical role of comics for pioneers in socialist Romania. To achieve this, I identified and analysed representations of space, of people and their activities in a serial comic titled *Vacanțele unui tânăr liniștit* [A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays], from *Cutezătorii* [The Daring Ones] magazine. *The objectives* are then to research the production of iconic places and of model characters in these comics and to reach conclusions concerning the construction or production of space and subjects that fit the ideological discourse of socialist and communist Romania. I use visual and discourse analysis to show how the narratives of comics fit into the metanarrative of the regime, constructing territorial identities, and imagined communities. My conclusion is that the discourse of these comics produces ideological representations of space and people.

Keywords: children, representations, *Cutezătorii* magazine, communist propaganda, construction of space, edutainment, Dim Dunăreanu, political identities, territorial identities

1. Introduction

In this article, I briefly analyse the way a totalitarian regime employs mass-media and a certain form of mass culture for children to manipulate and control their readings of the contemporary world. These readings are meant to uncover the perfect socialist society. Through investing in the ideological education of the future generations of communist working people, the political regime secures its political power.

Thus, in this article, I analyse and interpret the representations produced within socialist Romania by comics for Communist pioneers. This article brings insights into the visual culture created for Romanian children by comics published in *Cutezători* [The Daring Ones] magazine¹. Comics may be provided with multi-layered interpretations, but due to the influence of propaganda on the official mass-media (cf. Morar-Vulcu 2007), a certain interpretation becomes hegemonic.

I research comics for pioneers, enquiring how territorial identities were constructed and used to enable the appearance of place-attachment and transfer of values to children during socialist Romania (1948-1989). I argue that children's visuality was educated through visual and textual representations of space and people, so that they interpret the socialist society *correctly*, as proposed by the propaganda of the Romanian Communist Party. Thus, also the basis for children's political identities was to be built.

My hypothesis is that the narratives of comics fit into the metanarrative of the regime (i.e. the official discourse on past and present realities). Therefore, there are two concepts that underlie my theoretical approach and the methodology used: *discourse* and *intertextuality*. According to Rose, *discourse* “refers to groups of statements that structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act based on that thinking. In other words, discourse is a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it” (Rose 2014: 190). Considering this definition, I argue that the official discourse used images to construct accounts and versions of the Romanian socialist society as a successful political, economic, social, and cultural project. In this framework, the concept of *intertextuality* is useful to understand and underline that texts are connected to other texts and that discourses appear because of this interaction: “intertextuality refers to the way that the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts” (Rose 2014: 191). In addition, studying related visual media creating similar discourses is illuminating to the interpretation of specific representations (cf. Ilovan 2020b), such as those in comics. Moreover, the audience's reading practices of comics were influenced by this intertextuality, for instance when other texts were creating the ideological context: propaganda texts in *Cutezători* magazine (CNOP²1967-1989), in *The Pioneer's Guide* (CNOP 1985), in school

¹ The title *Cutezători*, in Romanian, will be used further on in this article.

² Consiliul Național al Organizației Pionierilor [National Council of the Pioneers' Organisation]. The acronym CNOP will be used for citing in this article.

textbooks underlining the same messages (cf. Ilovan, Bagoly-Simó and Herbstritt 2018), etc.

The aim of this article is to explore the pedagogical role of comics for pioneers in socialist Romania. This aim is achieved by identifying and analysing representations of space and of people and their activities in a serial comic titled *Vacanțele unui tânăr liniștit* [A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays]. *The objectives* are then to research the production of iconic places and of model characters in these comics and to reach conclusions concerning the construction or production of space and subjects that fit the ideological discourse of socialist and communist Romania. Such a study is relevant today, in a post-socialist Romanian society, since representations and education are transmitted through generations and impact development at the community and individual level, as well as the construction of territorial identities, collective sensibilities, and people's place-attachment (cf. Anderson 1991; Holom 2008; Ilovan, Bagoly-Simó and Herbstritt 2018; Ilovan and Maroși 2018).

Another reason for choosing to work with comics is that comic semiotic research argued that comics, as cultural products, and processes, are profoundly spatial (Dittmer 2010). Therefore, I considered comics a rich source for researching the territorial identities of Romania, as these were constructed during the socialist period. The representations circulated by the mass culture and by the mass-media of the period contributed to educating Romanian children's visuality concerning the features of their country and may still influence present representations and understandings of geography and history, of places, people, events and of the cultural geographies of Romania. Moreover, recovering childhood during communism in a positive manner has begun to emerge in scientific and journalistic contributions of the last two decades (Diac 2009; Georgescu 2019; Meseșan 2018; Mihalcea 2009).

Taking into account the above key ideas, I started my research on the cultural geographies of comics for communist pioneers of Romania by asking questions such as the following: In what do the propaganda contents consist? What are the ideological messages? What are the elements whose representation is repeated in these comics? What are the heritage items or valuable assets (i.e. places, objects, intangible values) that pioneers or other main characters in these comics interact with and why, to what purpose? Through what representations is children's attachment to heritage and to contemporary territory and society established? This article aims to answer these questions and other related ones.

2. State of the art

Studies on the population of Romania developed exponentially during the last three decades, significant contributions coming from the perspective of demography (cf. Bolovan 2018; Rotariu, Dumănescu and Hărăguș 2017). In this context, research on childhood appeared as an innovative development, either focusing on the demographical aspects (i.e. in the 19th and early 20th centuries, cf. Dumănescu 2006), on the historical ones (for the communist period, cf. Dumănescu 2015 and Preda 2014; and for a collection of studies on the theme of childhood, from the 17th c. to the 20th c., cf. Roman 2015) or on the social and cultural history of childhood in socialist Romania (Georgescu 2015).

Having representations created for children and of children and childhood at its core, this research is based on the theory of representations, defining these as power-imbued cultural products of the society (Hall 1977b) that inform how we “read” and understand our living environment (Hall 1977a). Representations are produced within a multitude of sources and comics are just only one of these that attracted geographers’ attention starting with the 1980s (cf. Eisner 1985). In Romania, after 1990, attention to the comics created in this country took the form of books exploring the evolution of the genre and of the circumstances of its development (cf. Niță 1992, 2001; Niță and Ciubotariu 2010; Tomuleț and Niță 2004). Then, beginning with 2010, research on Romanian comics emerges on topics such as its modern mythologies, its symbols and messages as modelled by fantasy, politics, and science-fiction (cf. Teampău 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015). Various historical events are represented in comics and decoded with a special attention paid to propaganda and socialism (Hațegan 2016, 2017; Precup 2015). My research contributes to the academic literature on decoding comics through the representations they create.

3. Decoding the image. Methodology

The research material is made of a series of comics featuring pioneers, published in *Cutezători* magazine (CNOP 1967-1989). This magazine for children appeared during socialism in Romania, from 1967 to 1989. Out of these comics, there was a series I considered in particular as historical documentary material (cf. Magnussen 2016) featured in the pages of this magazine between 1968 and 1974 (Table 1). Pioneers are both characters in these comics and their readers (the main audience of the magazine). Besides these, my research material included propaganda texts in *Cutezători* magazine and in the *Pioneer’s Guide* (CNOP 1985).

There are eight missions that Dim Dunăreanu, the main character, takes up to be part of the famous Cutezătorii Club. Episode 9, *Heroic Ballad*, features also a team of pioneers (i.e. treasure hunters). This last comics with Dim Dunăreanu from the socialist period is an unofficial mission, as he did not have to report it to the director of Cutezătorii Club. On this occasion, he is seen helping pioneers and defending the Dacian heritage of Romania.

Table 1. The comics *Vacanțele unui tânăr liniștit* [*A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays*] in *Cutezătorii*, 1968-1974

Publication year	Episodes and authors
1968	episode 1 (no. 5-no. 10/1968) – 5 p., script Alexandru Bogdan, drawings Vasile Baciu; The action takes place mainly in the Vrancea Mountains episode 2 (no. 28-no. 35/1968) – 8 p., s. Ion Corneliu, d. Vasile Baciu; The action takes place in the Indian Ocean episode 3 (no. 36-no. 45/1968) – 10 p., s. Costache Anton, d. Vasile Baciu; The action takes place mainly in the Retezat Mountains episode 4 (no. 48/1968-no. 8/1969) – 12 p., s. Ovidiu Zotta, d. Vasile Baciu/Puiu Manu; The action takes place in a Minithechnic camp
1969	episode 5 (no. 10-no. 14/1969) – 7 p., s. Aureliu Weiss, d. Puiu Manu; The action takes place in Vârșă de Jos commune (rural area); episode 6 (no. 27-no. 32/1969, <i>Manuscrisul pierdut</i> [The Lost Manuscript]) – 12 p., s. Alexandru Bogdan, d. Vasile Baciu/Puiu Manu; The action takes place mainly in the Black Sea
1970	episode 7 (no. 27-no. 40/1970) – 14 p., s. Constantin Diaconu, d. Puiu Manu; The action takes place during a Cutezătorii Expedition in the Apuseni Mountains episode 8 (no. 28-no. 31/1971, <i>Efectul "G"</i> [The "G" Effect]) – 5 p., s. Alexandru Bogdan, d. Puiu Manu; The action takes place during a Minithechnic exhibition and after
1974	episode 9 (no. 25-no. 40/1974, <i>Baladă eroică</i> [Heroic Ballad]) – 16 p., s. Octav Pancu-Iași, d. Puiu Manu; The action takes place around Lake Snagov, part of a complex nature reserve, about 30 km distance from Bucharest

Source: own elaboration

Data analysis and interpretation entailed the use of visual methods involving the analysis of visual representations in comics as well as discourse analysis for the word-text. Comics are a hybrid of visual and textual form, able to engage readers into plurivectorial narrations (Dittmer 2010). In comics, drawings are culturally encoded images. The production of meaning is realized by looking at the images and reading the related text. So, meaning production requires two processes: reading the image-text and reading the word-text. However, the visual component has the key role in creating the core of the official (i.e. propaganda) discourse.

Comics are a “fundamentally visual phenomenon” (Dittmer 2010: 226). Although image-text may seem easy to decode, the accompanying word-text was illuminating in this process. In fact, many times, image-texts had the role of augmenting the word-text messages, of illustrating them. However, a conclusion could be that these two types of text were supporting each other in the making of the intended messages (ideas and values) clearer to the anticipated readership.

I paid attention to the visual, spatial, and temporal elements incorporated into the comics as produced through their representational conventions. Comics bring the visible and written messages in the same “text”, focused on a presentation of events that make the story. They are composed through sequences of represented moments from a story. Representational conventions of space, time, characters produce their complex understandings. In addition, the audience has the role in producing meaning. Therefore, comics are never quite ended stories, as they are brought to life and performed through each new reading (Dittmer 2014; Peterle 2015).

To sum up, I familiarized myself with the visual material, then I identified key themes, places, characters, objects, etc. based on signs (made of the signified and signifier and the relation to the referent; cf. de Saussure 1986) in the images. Finally, I identified the relationships among these, and between these and the accompanying word-text and general geohistorical context. I analysed the comics using three elements: space (visual geographies), time (time geographies) and characters (the construction of their identity – personal and as parts of a collectivity or community). For other propaganda material besides comics, I used discourse analysis. The theoretical perspectives I use are those of Cultural Studies and of Geography (cf. Ilovan 2020a; Rose 2014).

For the relevance of my analysis, I think it is significant that I am part of the Romanian culture when selecting and interpreting the texts of these comics. Also, the fact that I was myself a communist pioneer during socialist

Romania can inform my critical analysis, while being aware of the subjectivity that the researcher's background can induce to any research (Rose 2014).

4. Comics for children in Romania. Brief introduction

Amicul copiilor [Children's Friend] was the first children's magazine published in Romania, between 1891 and 1895, by a writer (B.P. Haşdeu). It had no comics. The first magazine to publish comics in Romania was *Revista Copiilor și a Tinerimei* [The Magazine of Children and the Young], edited between 1913 and 1925, under the title "humorous pages", with foreign (probably American) translated comics (Tomuleț and Niță 2004: 35).

Niță and Ciubotariu (2010) connect the political regimes of Romania to the influences they identified in the creation of comics and consider that three periods can be characterised as such: The Golden Age (1891–1947), Socialism and comics (1948–1989), and the period after 1990 (Niță and Ciubotariu 2010: 11). The same authors distinguish among several periods in the ideological influence on publications for children, during the Romanian communist period (1947–1989). These are the following: (a) April 1947 – April 1953 – marked by the appearance of three magazines: *Licurici* [Firefly], *Pogonici* [Little Child] and *Pionierul* [The Pioneer]; (b) March 1953 – 1967 – a period whose beginning was marked by Stalin's death, with the appearance of the same magazines, with the same contents and ideological stake, under different names: *Cravata Roșie* [Red Tie], *Luminița* [Little Light] and *Scînteia Pionierului* [Pioneer's Spark]; (c) 1967 – 1979 – this period is marked by changes implemented by Nicolae Ceaușescu himself, after Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, who died in 1965. *Cutezătorii*, a weekly magazine, replaced *Cravata Roșie* [Red Tie] and *Scînteia Pionierului* [Pioneer's Spark] starting with October 1967; (d) 1980–1989 – the last change took place in 1980, when *Arici Pogonici* [Little Hedgehog] is replaced by *Șoimii Patriei* [Homeland's Falcons]. During this last decade of the communist regime in Romania, comics appeared not only in magazines, but also in almanacs and other occasional publications intended to support financially a series of cultural institutions (Niță and Ciubotariu 2010).

5. Comics with pioneers in Cutezătorii magazine. An overview

The weekly magazine *Cutezătorii* starts to be published on the 1st of October 1967, replacing the former ideological magazines *Cravata Roșie* [Red Tie] and *Scînteia Pionierului* [Pioneer's Spark], organs of the Central Committee of the Working Youth Union (Niță and Ciubotariu 2010: 60, 64). *Cutezătorii* was part of the official mass-media, published by the National Council of the Pioneers' Organisation. After 1966, the Pioneers' Organisation was subordinated directly

to the Romanian Communist Party (Tabără 2011: 96). However, through the published comics, it hosted “dreams on paper” for children (Niță and Ciobotariu 2010: 157). Therefore, it was a means of ideological propaganda, but also an escape from the everyday life for the young readers (Niță and Ciobotariu 2010: 156).

The editors of *Cutezătorii* magazine introduce what a student says about the new magazine, using the metaphor of the journey for personal fulfilment and societal development:

“Each of you dreams to be as useful as possible to your homeland in your field of work, to open, full of courage, new production paths, in science and arts. We would like our magazine to be a school of courage, of phantasy, whose pages to accompany us on our road to the future” (my translation, no. 1/1967).

The declared aims of this magazine for children was to get them familiarized with the new socialist society, to train them for collective actions and as good citizens:

“to lure the young readers with the benefactions of the new regime, to rewrite the recent history or the farthest one of our people and to motivate less studious students through the example of a whole gallery of negative characters, unworthy of the pioneer’s red tie” (my translation, Niță and Ciobotariu 2010: 11).

Various comics are published in *Cutezătorii* magazine, such as historical, science fiction, socialist work and development or “reality” comics, inspired by contemporary socialist Romania (for the last one, see Ilovan 2021). Inspired by socialist realities are the comics featuring pioneers, published during the entire appearance of this magazine. Such comics are *Flori printre flori* [Flowers among Flowers] (1972) anticipating the series of comics with true deeds of the Romanian pioneers. In Codlea (Brașov County), children (pioneers) and old people help saving the flowers from school’s greenhouses, during a winter storm: “The flowers had been saved. The pioneers were proud of their deed” (no. 1/1972). *Cutezătorii printre noi* [The Daring among Us] (1975) is a comics series that appears sporadically throughout the magazine. In no. 5/1975 we are informed that their stories happened in reality, with authentic facts and characters, based on pioneers’ heroic deeds. Another example is *Florile Carpaților* [The Flowers of the Carpathians] (34/1977). It features a team participating at *Cutezătorii* Expeditions in the Apuseni Mountains. The comics of the 1980 and 1981 are dedicated to pioneers’ lives: *Cutezătorii printre noi* [The Daring among Us] (48, 49, 50/1980), *Fapte de cutezători* [Deeds of the Daring Ones] (51, 52/1980, 3/1981), *Fapte de cutezanță* [Courageous Deeds], etc. 1985

includes other series of comics with pioneers and their heroic deeds: *Detășamentul curajoșilor* [The Team of the Courageous Ones] (25, 26, 27/1985) and *Galeria cutezătorilor* [The Gallery of the Daring Ones] (30-40/1985). The following years witness the publication of the *Cutezătorii Expeditions* comics (5-12/1987). In many of these, the pioneers are represented wearing their red ties. They help to construct the socialist society. They also repair the damage inflicted by fascists or save heritage even years later from the destruction or theft intended by fascists or their family. These tenacious pioneers discover and dismantle networks of villains are during dangerous and courageous actions.

The comics are a form of artistic expression and, at the same time, comics were recognized as subtle tools of ideological propaganda (Niță and Ciubotariu 2010). Political intrusion marked its evolution in a profound and painful way (Niță and Ciubotariu 2010). Socialist realism left its imprint on this artistic product putting it at work for the creation of the New Society and of the New Man under the direct guidance of the Romanian Communist Party. Knowing the criteria for awarding the main distinctions offered by the Pioneers' Organisation, one discovers that the activities portrayed in comics with pioneers reflect achieving those criteria. For instance, for pioneers to be awarded the title *Cutezătorul* [The Daring One], the criteria were the following: "services brought to the defence and security of the homeland; saving human lives; contributions to the defence of personal and collective goods (prevention and damping of burnings, saving material goods during floods or other natural calamities, identifying and exposing malefactors, contributions to archaeological discoveries, etc.); preventing serious road accidents" (Tabără 2011: 104). The title *Cutezătorul*, created in 1968, was the highest distinction that pioneers could be awarded (Tabără 2011: 98).

More about the influence of communist ideology and propaganda in *Cutezătorii* magazine will be presented in the next part.

6. Communist Ideology and Propaganda in Cutezătorii Magazine

Ideology is defined as "knowledge that is constructed in such a way as to legitimate unequal social power relations" (Rose 2014: 106) or as "the knowledge that legitimates the social position of dominant groups" (Rose 2014: 107). Communist ideology and rhetoric are to be identified in comics. The official historical discourse is transmitted through school textbooks (Mârza 2015: 1047), as the school system contributed to the distribution of other propaganda sources (besides textbooks), such as magazines for children. Therefore, their contents were also part of the official discourse. This

presenting, informing, and interpreting of the historical realities influenced in a decisive manner our present world (Mârza 2015: 1049). Falsification of Romanian history under the influence of propaganda (Mârza 2015) and the modelling of Romanians' consciousness was realised through overrepresenting, misrepresenting or not representing historical events (Verdery 1991). Ideological and economic subordination to USSR was refuted by Ceaușescu after 1968, when he condemned publicly the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet troops (Mărginean 2019: 8). The historical discourse changes in Romania according to the evolution of relations between Romania and USSR, with a spectacular metamorphosis between 1958 and 1964 (Mârza 2015: 1046). *Cutezătorii* magazine is published between 1967 and 1989 and overlaps the national-communist period, defined as “an interesting mixture of Marxism-Leninism, Stalinism, and nationalism, each of these elements having a variable weight, according to the political and ideological trends of the moment” (Mârza 2015: 1047). Concerning education, the focus of the regime was on “the activity of communist, patriotic, revolutionary and multilateral education of pioneers, school children, and homeland's falcons” (Tabără 2011: 103).

Communists are defined by their work and overall lives. Their gratitude and love towards the Romanian Communist Party and Nicolae Ceaușescu is to be measured through work deeds above all (CNOP 1985: 9). Referring to the mass-media and propaganda activity, the political regime underlines that pioneers should assess and improve visual propaganda in their schools and become involved in the political-ideological education (CNOP 1985: 72, 76, 84). In addition, fieldtrips to learn about “the socialist present” and “the working people's achievements” are encouraged (CNOP 1985: 84). Learning new information and fortifying their will and character are advocated for. In *Cutezătorii* magazine, a big contest is featured from the beginning, titled: “Comorile Patriei [Country's Treasures]”, a search for the great spiritual and material treasures of our people. These two are to be answered to also in the created comics (*Cutezătorii*, no. 1/1967, p. 2). Like in the content of *The Pioneer's Guide* (CNOP 1985), the focus is on the glorious/beautiful homeland, due to its rich land, and heroic and industrious people.

Competitions realised in reality, such as *Cutezătorii* Expeditions and Minitehnicus Contests are reflected in comics, summarising the main topics of Communist propaganda. “*Cutezătorii* Expeditions, the school for homeland love. [Participants] will have precise tasks, according to the aim of the expedition, their propensities and preferences (geographer, historian, geologist, folklorist, ethnographer, etc.)” (*my transl.*, CNOP 1985: 65). The *Cutezătorii* Expeditions were launched in 1969 by the National Council of the Pioneers'

Organisation and *Cutezătorii* magazine. This turned into a national phenomenon due to the thousands of participants increasing each summer (Meseşan 2018). The Cutezătorii Expeditions proposed patriotism tourism for pioneers, with an ideological framework of nationalism, communism, and socialism:

“Cutezătorii Expeditions took place under the aegis of the National Pioneers’ Organisation, and besides trips to the mountains, in search for ethnographic or other types of treasures, besides the camping and survival techniques that they learnt, in the regulations of these expeditions there were stipulated meetings of pioneers, where they declaimed and sang various lines about the comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu, about the homeland and the Party” (Mihalcea 2009).

Then, the presentation of the yearly school contest below also reflects the topic distribution in the corpus of comics in *Cutezătorii* magazine:

“Action-contest: Romanian homeland – country of heroes. Its aim is to develop pioneers’ and pupils’ love and devotion for the homeland, for the Party and for the people, of respect towards the people’s glorious fight and work traditions, towards the working people’s achievements, realised under the Party’s leadership. The contest action is organised each school year: all pioneers’ units and within each unit as many pioneers as possible will participate at it” (*my transl.*, CNOP 1985: 57).

The normative love in *The Pioneer’s Guide* (CNOP 1985: 38-39, 62-63) is evoked also by propaganda texts in *Cutezătorii* magazine. Published texts in this magazine are useful for the pioneers’ education as members of their organization, such as: *Regulamentul expedițiilor Cutezătorii* [The Regulations of Cutezătorii Expeditions] (no. 13/1970), *Expedițiile Cutezătorii* [Cutezătorii Expeditions] (no. 23/1975), *Expedițiile Cutezătorii, școala iubirii de patrie* [Cutezătorii Expeditions, school for the love of homeland] (no. 50/1988). *Cutezătorii* published propaganda texts, such as *Să trăiești și să muncești ca un comunist* [To live and work in a communist manner] (no. 27/1986), and *Patria, Partidul, Poporul - valori fundamentale ale idealului nostru communist* [The Homeland, the Party, and the People – fundamental values of our communist ideal] (no. 51/1986). This last one is presented below, as it is relevant for the values promoted by the regime.

The three values are explained. *The homeland* is “the geographical space where we were born and live”. This is defined by the Carpathians, the Danube, and the Black Sea. Proofs of the Romanian bravery and heroism are present. These are symbols of social justice and freedom, of independence and national unity. Century after century, people’s thoughts and love were invested into the homeland:

“Thus, the homeland is this ancestral land rich with history; at the same time, it is the hearth where, today, in the most bountiful of the epochs – Nicolae Ceaușescu Epoch – we have built and still build a united, harmonious, dynamic economy, capable of valorising all natural riches of our country, our great resources of creation; it is the hearth where we raise today a new and proud face for our country, showing to the whole world the creative powers imbedded in this free people, master of its fate, who builds consciously and in a dignified manner the present and the future”.

The next value explained is *the Romanian Communist Party*. The Party is part of the people, working for the working people. The Party has always fought for a better, just, and free society, being itself a metonymy of the “long history of heroism, courage and tenacity”. The Party is stronger than ever, having the historic mission to lead the people to build the socialist and communist civilization. Then the communists are defined as examples for work and life, the best sons of the people, working to implement the Party’s politics. The Party is portrayed as very beloved by the people and trusted by the entire nation, the political force mobilizing the social system, as shown by comrade N. Ceaușescu.

Finally, *the Romanian people* are a big and united family. Ideals and values that mobilize the people’s energy to build the “entire work of art for edifying the multilateral developed socialist society and Romania’s progress towards communism”. The people implemented the most daring programmes for economic and social development in the socialist homeland. Self-denial and commitment for the triumph of the communist ideal are features of the Romanians, who are leading the country, contributing to all decisions through democratic consultations.

These are the supreme values giving meaning to the effort of translating into reality the communist ideal, which the Party proposed to the people. This text in *Cutezătorii* magazine encourages all educators to develop in their students the love for the socialist homeland, for the Party and for the people. This is a duty of the educators and an objective of the political educational activity in Romania.

Ideologization was realised through comics in the series featuring Dim Dunăreanu. Inspired by the above-mentioned values and by the socialist realities were the adventures of Dim Dunăreanu, the hero of *Vacanțele unui tânăr liniștit* [A Peaceful Young Man’s Holidays] (1968-1974). The main character is a physicist and decathlon champion. He applies to become a member of the Cutezătorii Club and to this end he must take up twelve missions to prove his worth. He is not a superhero, but he is portrayed as a

regular man whose qualities and actions could be replicated by the pioneers whose friend he is. One key value is work that contextualises the fundamental values of *the homeland*, *the Party*, and *the people*. Comics usually appear on the last cover of *Cutezătorii* or the two pages at the middle of the magazine. However, the comics with Dim Dunăreanu appear on other pages of the magazine, either as short (less than one page) or long episodes. This comics series will be presented in the next part.

7. Values and Places in the comics *Vacanțele unui tânăr liniștit* [A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays]

The ideological project behind the comics is visible in the representations within the comics series *Vacanțele unui tânăr liniștit* [A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays], which was first published in 1968. Inspired by James Bond films (Niță and Ciubotariu 2010: 72) and communism, Dim Dunăreanu is the longest “living” adventure character (1968-1974), the best portrayed and the most popular character of comics in socialist Romania (Niță and Ciubotariu 2010: 72):

“[...] young physicist who, in order to be admitted in ‘Cutezătorii’ Club, must fulfil 12 difficult missions, a series of which nine episodes were published in *Cutezătorii* magazine and two albums [...] Thus, seven scenario writers and two artists who drew the comics collaborated at realising more than 150 pages of comics where Dim Dunăreanu appeared, either in the Vrancei Mountains, where a new mineral ore was discovered, cruising on the Indian Ocean, at the feet of the Retezat Mountains, on the Black Sea, searching for Ovidius’s manuscript of Tomis, in a cave in the Apuseni Mountains, or in a Minitehnicus camp or exhibition, accompanied by his friend Anca, reporter at a big central newspaper³ or/and by brave and inventive pioneers, he exposes and circumvents the plans of an entire series of villains: pirates, thieves, spies, and even a former Hitlerite officer” (*my translation*, Niță 1992: 38). †

The director of *Cutezătorii* Club is a doctor (the only thing that we know about him), who gives orders to Dim Dunăreanu for his missions that could finally lead to Dim’s being accepted in this famous club. For instance, in episode 3, Dim is told by the director on the phone: “On an archaeological site at the foot of the Retezat Mountains, they discovered five golden statues, three platinum trays and several hundreds of coins with the head of the old King Burebista.” ... “Make sure that this old treasure reaches Bucharest”.

³ This piece of information, about Anca’s profession, is not to be found in these comics, however.

All comics in this series are actuality comics, depicting contemporary events/happenings and heroes: Dim Dunăreanu and the pioneers. These comics include some of the most common representations in the comics of the period (cf. also Ilovan 2021). In this series of comics, a hero narrative engages pioneers as both characters and readers. There are staged events selected to be of interest for the pioneers' ideological education, as well as for enhancing their patriotic attachment. These events and activities are concerned with the themes of national identity, the socialist collective, living in a collective, and patriotic and scientific education. They are connected to places and people whose representations are modelled by the official propaganda discourse. Researching this series of comics portraying the useful activities of a young communist amateur detective during his holidays, I identified the following themes: (a) the model intellectual; (b) the model communist pioneer; (c) the Other as the enemy; (d) history-induced patriotic attachment; (e) geography-induced patriotic attachment; (f) science and contemporary economic achievements; (g) the village and folk culture; (h) gender relations and gendered division of labour.

(a) The model intellectual

According to the plots of the nine episodes of this series of comics, the identity of the main character – Dim Dunăreanu (his last name comes from Dunăre – the Danube) – is constructed step by step. Thus, while he is a brilliant physicist and decathlon champion, he is also an engineer who knows how to change chemical formulas, as well as a physical education teacher, a pilot who can build himself a sports plane, but always remains an amateur detective. Dim Dunăreanu is characterised by both intellectual and physical virtues. His father, Val Dunăreanu, was an utecist⁴ lieutenant and collaborator or a secret service of the Romanian Army. He wished to be called “comrade” so that he would be lucky in his missions and sadly he died fighting the fascists, becoming a communist hero. Like his father, Dim is always collaborating with the state authorities (i.e. the militia): “I took care to announce where one should. He will not escape. Thank you, children! You have worked like true daring people” (No. 40/1974).

He reads *Cutezătorii* magazine to relax. He also reads philosophy, mathematics, and poetry. He likes to fish. He is a protector of Anca, his girlfriend and then wife. Popular among pioneers, pictured giving them autographs (Figure 1), Dim Dunăreanu is also a model for teachers. He is loyal

⁴“Utecist” means member of the youth organisation of the Communist Party (Uniunea Tineretului Comunist – U.T.C.).

to the Party and helps socializing the children he interacts with in the same way. The relationship between Dim and the pioneers is a very good one. The pioneers shake hands with Dim and thank him. Dim is shown praising the pioneers. He takes up state approved activities showing that his work with the pioneers is meaningful for their education and useful for the state. Both Dim and the pioneers are depicted collaborating with the state institutions on militia matters.

Figure 1. *Dim Dunăreanu – building the identity of the intellectual in socialist Romania*



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 25/1974⁵

(b) *The model communist pioneer*

The pioneers are presented either as a group (community) or individuals (but still members of a team, having expert roles: geographer, historian, cook, meteorologist, etc.). The features looked for in pioneers are boldness, spirit of initiative, energy, devotement. Male pioneers are mostly portrayed, and they are smart, courageous, inventive, and good detectives. They help Dim in his actions and give him valuable information.

The aim of representing in comics activities that were performed by pioneers in their “real” lives is a political one. Children are represented as having their own agency. They are autonomous, making decisions and having initiatives. They are depicted enjoying themselves while learning and working, playing various roles (as detectives, archaeologists, geologists, historians, scientists, cooks, etc.), mirroring their expeditions during summer holidays. These expeditions were activities of ideological training and for practising tourism

⁵Translation of the figure: “Dim Dunăreanu. Sports teacher and amateur detective, in his free hours. It may be that the ‘old’ readers of the magazine still remember him. Maybe ...”, “For sure he always remembers with pleasure this magazine’s readers. After all, they were the first ones to follow his adventures”.

with clear educational purposes, echoing the Soviet idea that any extracurricular activity should have educational elements (Dulamă and Ilovan 2017; Georgescu 2019; Meseșan 2018).

The ideas of outperforming themselves, a trope of socialist ideology, and of responsible consumption are guiding these pioneers. The plot of these comics develops around a patriotic aim: serving the nation and defending it is a duty of all pioneers and each of them can and should contribute according to their characteristic features. Their free time is spent in a pleasant and useful manner (the same is true for Dim Dunăreanu, an adult) under the guidance of the Pioneers' Organisation. And thus, these comics propose representations of a pedagogy of the free time.

Pioneers are represented as hardworking children interested in science, some of them are champions or awarded for their educational achievements, their ingenuity and inventiveness is praised during *Cutezătorii Expedition* and *Minitehnicus* technical-scientific camps, contests, approved by the Party. They are good at science (i.e. one pioneer in a *Minitehnicus* contest discovered a new principle in Physics; children in the *Minitehnicus* uniforms are pictured making experiments in the science lab). They manage to escape difficult situations. Some have in their family significant people for the Romanian society (i.e. one pioneer's father is an artificer, working in the army). They build all kinds of apparatuses and contact Dim to help them improve.

(c) The Other as the enemy

The Other is represented by the enemy or the negative characters. In this series, the negative characters are:

- historical ones, such as the fascist invaders, the Hitlerite aviation bombing Bucharest: „On the Bucharest-Ploiești road, at Băneasa, at Otopeni, hard battles were being fought. The Romanian troops, helped by the patriotic guards, were trying to stop the fascist invaders” (no. 26/1974). The lesson to be learned here is that the Romanian Army and the patriotic guards are collaborating to fight and defeat the fascists and thus the message is that collaboration with each other and with state authorities is paramount in order to defend the country;
- contemporary: suspect foreign tourists (they are rich, drive expensive cars), foreigners (or individuals with foreign names), bandits (smoking and drinking alcohol; fake archaeologists), strangers turning out to be bandits, firms which know how to reward a service, pirates, and Lady W – their leader, a sculptor, who goes abroad (to the USA) for an exhibition. Usually, those who have contact with people from abroad are not to be trusted or are negative

characters. In episode 7, pioneers voice an irony about foreign products when they find Coca Cola and Kent waste and they comment that those consuming such products are “people with polished tastes”.

These negative characters do not know much about science. When the bad characters are the intellectuals, they are the bad intellectuals (i.e. engineers without ideas or working for foreign interests), and this is in contrast to the character Dim Dunăreanu, who is the good intellectual. The conclusion is that other countries want to steal Romanian scientific advances, or the negative characters want to leave Romania with whatever treasures they have stolen (e.g. chemical formulas, ancient manuscripts, ancient treasures). A usual ending is that the militia come to take the malefactors caught by Dim and the pioneers.

(d) History-induced patriotic attachment

These comics highlight two major themes that create attachment to place and to the national community: natural beauties and national heritage. Both contribute to readers’ attachment to their homeland. For this feeling of belonging to develop, pioneers learn about and engage with the geography and history of Romania. Out of these, certain places and events or historical characters/heroes are selected based on communist and socialist ideologies.

Historical and ethnographic pioneers’ expeditions appear as the most popular along science-driven experiments and actions around which the plot of these comics develop. Historical heritage which induces patriotic attachment is based on tales of a heroic past, as idealised or ancient historical events are evoked for proving the authenticity and worthiness of Romanians’ roots. The past is usually evoked through tangible proofs, such as artefacts (Figures 2, 3 and 4). Because of the material proofs, it cannot be contested. For instance, in episode 3, the reader is presented with artefacts belonging to “a settlement from the period of Burebista, ‘the first king who united the Dacians’”, and his heritage is discussed. The comics present the authorised opinion of a character who is an archaeologist: “All statues are made of gold, and the three trays are made of platinum. They raise for our study an interesting issue concerning the Dacians’ civilisation level and the commercial relations that they had with the ancient Greeks and with the Persians ...” Anca notices that “on all coins is incusted the head of a handsome man” and Dim informs her that “it is king Burebista. During his time, they produced the first silver coins”.

In episode 6, *The Lost Manuscript*, we find out why heritage is relevant through the conference of an academic, historian and archaeologist, a Romanian, member of several Academies of Sciences around the world. In this case, the manuscript of Ovidiu, known under the title of the “Dacian manuscript”, is not lost for ever. It is important for it to be found in order to obtain better knowledge of the language spoken “in our land”.

(e) Geography-induced patriotic attachment

Place-based patriotic attachment is produced through representations of places on the map of Romania and depictions of a beautiful and rich nature. We are provided with representations of Dim’s mappings of Romania, performed during his missions (Figures 5 and 6). Locations are varied: the Apuseni Mountains, Constanta, at the foot of the Retezat Mountains, on the Black Sea, in a Minithecnicus camp, at a Minithecnicus exhibition. This is how the pioneers and readers learn about Romania and the achievements of the socialist society through comics, they reshape and reinterpret their geographical and historical knowledge (i.e. knowledge about space, places, historical and contemporary heroes).

Figure 5. *The Romanian seaside. In Constanța, at the new light tower (built in 1958, in use from 1960)*



Source: A Peaceful Young Man’s Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 8/1968⁸

⁸Translation of the figure: “Dim Dunăreanu, a young and well-known physicist, wants to become a member of Cutezătorii Club. He receives the first mission for him to be accepted in the club exactly when he was getting ready to leave for the Vrancea Mountains, to a friend, the daughter of the well-known geologist Petre Bogdan. Dim gives up leaving, but together with his friend is lured into a trap. They will leave for the seaside while Professor Bogdan, left alone, is more easily forced to speak under the threat of a revolver.” “Anca! What do I see? You, here?”

Figure 6. Travelling by plane to the beautiful Vrancea Mountains, where a new ore is discovered



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 10/1968⁹

Nature is not “simple” nature, but one that engages the reader enforcing his or her national feelings and the pride of being Romanian. For instance, the pioneers in episode 7 are tourists-researchers on a *Cutezătorii* expedition. *Expedițiile Cutezătorii* [*Cutezătorii Expeditions*] is the name of a contest organised by The National Council of the Pioneers’ Organisation through *Cutezătorii* magazine and with the support of the Ministry of Education. It supports an action titled *Căutătorii de Comori* [*Treasure Hunters*]. *Cutezătorii Expeditions* take place in nature, usually within or nearby a forest. The aim of these expeditions is declared in the regulations published in *Cutezătorii* magazine: “Stimulating pioneers and school children to practise tourism in as interesting and attractive forms as possible (trips with self-management and sleeping in tents) and combining this with scientific observation and research from all perspectives for the visited areas in order to get to know directly the beauties and richness of our homeland, of the past and present, for the instructional spending of the summer holidays” (CNOP 1970). Pioneers realise activities involving geographical observations, nature protection and the

⁹ The first part of the abstract is the same as to Figure 5. Then: “Professor Bogdan is attacked by a stranger. Anca and Dim arrive by plane just in time to save the professor”, “I am sorry, but I cannot land the plane in these backwoods ...”, “Don’t you have a rope ladder?” “Father!”

solving of tasks concerning the geography and history of various areas (Figure 7):

“Working to write the monograph of their village, the students of a school in the Apuseni Mountains find almost one hundred year old writings of a primary school teacher, where he argues that, starting from a legend, he had done some research that made him conclude that ‘Lacrimile Dochiei’ [Dochia’s Tears], a string of alpine lakes nearby ‘Imparatia lui Zamolxe’ [Zamolxe’s Kingdom] had been arranged by the Dacians to conceal, for unknown reasons, the entry to an underground area whose plan they will probably find carved in stone. Wanting to be acknowledged within ‘Cutezătorii Expeditions’ contest, ten pioneers from this school – three girls and seven boys – led by their history teacher, Oana Munteanu, make up the team ‘Decebal’s Archers’ and train hard to go to that area in order to uncover the mystery” (episode 7, no. 27/1970).¹⁰

Figure 7. Communist pioneers and nature, in the Apuseni Mountains, during a Cutezătorii Expeditions summer camp



Source: A Peaceful Young Man’s Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 30/1970¹¹

¹⁰ Decebal, Dacian king, whose reign was between 87 BC and 106 AD. Dochia, Dacian princess, Decebal’s daughter or sister. Zamolxe was a Thracian god.

¹¹ Translation of the figure: “Morning in the expeditioners’ camp”, “I think there is no need to repeat once again what each of you must do”, “Don’t worry, comrade commandant. We will give them such a treasure that they won’t be able to carry it”.

Collective narratives were created through comics. Comics focus on adventures that ensure young readers' edutainment. They report on familiar events from expeditions and also invested those events and places, as well as pioneers' lives, with historical and ideological significance. Thus, symbolic local geographies were created. In comics, children are playing the roles they could have had in real life expeditions or camps. They are given a voice in comics, however, modelled into a politically correct discourse which combines "socialist ideology and pre-war national discourses" (Georgescu 2019: 18).

(f) Scientific and contemporary economic achievements

The concern in comics with industry and technological progress is obvious as the pioneers are the future young working class. Scientific and contemporary economic achievements of socialist Romania are presented as relevant for enabling societal modernization and for understanding the world. These comics feature representations of places and objects that advertise contemporary achievements of the socialist society, as well as Romanian ingenuity (Niță and Ciobotariu 2010: 74); they are of a symbolic nature, their message is not neutral, engaging the pioneers (as characters and as readers of comics) at a cognitive and emotional level. For instance, some technological achievements based on pioneers' inventions are presented. Their inventions display science-fiction products, but the message is both entertaining and educational, underlining pioneers' exceptionalism (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Technological invention (i.e. a flying car) in a Minithechnicus camp, in the mountains



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezători*, no. 51/1968¹²

¹² Translation of the figure: "Abstract: Engineer Geo Martin discovered a new fuel type. A group of bandits want to take advantage of this invention. The old engineer is helped by Dim Dunăreanu and by a Minithechnicus group".

A superlative discourse of the modernization of socialist Romania is provided when we see that Dim Dunăreanu, working with and for the Pioneers' Organisation, seems to enjoy all achievements of a modern lifestyle. He has a modern convertible car, a Mercedes¹³ (Figure 9), lives in a new apartment in the city, builds his own sports plane, travelling within Romania (to the seaside, to the mountains), and abroad.

Figure 9. Modern urban life: Dim jumps in his splendid convertible”



A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays. *Source: Cutezătorii*, no. 36/1968¹⁴

These comics mirror the dominant cultural representations of the urban and rural Romania. A train and then a sleigh pulled by horses are represented. Two means of transportation, one modern and one traditional, both defining Romania: progressive, but still authentic (Figure 10).

¹³It should be noted that Dacia 1100 car was produced in 1968 and Dacia 1300 car was launched only in 1969 and only after this year it will be represented in comics (cf. Ilovan 2021).

¹⁴ Translation of the figure: “But not in two hours, but in two minutes Dim jumps in his splendid convertible”.

Figure 10. Modern and traditional means of transport



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 10/1969¹⁵

Socialist development is voiced through territorial metamorphosis – “The old map was no longer appropriate for the new Snagov. Everywhere there were new villas, hotels, camping areas, strands ...” (no. 32/1974) – and through scientific and technological progress, as the reader finds out that Romanian scientists research with computers the pioneers’ discoveries (no. 14/1969).

(g) The village and folk culture

This series of comics uncover an idealized and authentic countryside, not touched by modernisation, as some of the episodes reflect a different kind of interest than that on technological/industrial achievements and urbanization (Figure 11).

¹⁵ Translation of the figure: “Dim Dunăreanu receives a letter from Nelu, Lia and Costel, three Mînitehnicus children from Vârșă de Jos whom he met in a camp for the ‘Fox Hunt’ contest. These three children lost the contest because their ‘hunter’, a detector with junction transistors, led them constantly to the same spot, a deserted well, Dim has a hunch that something peculiar is taking place. He receives the children’s invitation to spend his holiday in their village meaning to solve the mystery of the detector.” “Welcome Dim!” “There are beautiful places here”, “And you can ski as much as you want”, “It is true. There is a beat here. I will follow the new signal”, “The children were right. Here is the deserted well”.

Figure 11. *The modern and the traditional: modern and traditional means of transport and traditional wooden gate in the village area*



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 38/1968 and no. 45/1968¹⁶

In episode 3, the Land of the Hațeg is mentioned. Life in the countryside is conveyed as healthy, with fresh food. In the abstract to the comics, we are informed that: “In the rustic landscape at the foot of the Retezat Mountains ... the two of them have a feast with green cheese, eggs and cold she-goat milk” (no. 39/1968) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. *Traditional wooden furniture on a veranda and interior in a wooden house from the rural area*



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 38/1968¹⁷

¹⁶Translation of the figure: “Monica!”, “Anca! Welcome to you both”, “Where have you been? I thought you’ve lost your way ... I was just about to leave to look for you”.

¹⁷Translation of the figure: “The cheese is green. We were yesterday at the sheepfold and we saw how they prepared it. And the eggs are also fresh ...”, “After a good sleep, the cold she-goat milk will refresh you. Then, come to the archaeological site to see the golden statues that we discovered five days ago. Paul will show you the way ...”

The class of the peasants appears briefly in this series, as a repository of the traditional values of the Romanian nation, but not helping development or modernisation. One could argue that, in these representations, the peasant class and the rural area as background landscape are not only reified, but they also undergo a museification process (Figures 13 and 14).

Figure 13. Entrance to a wooden house with traditional architecture in the rural area



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 39/1968¹⁸

Figure 14. Village boys in traditional costumes, one holding a whistle



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 44/1968¹⁹

¹⁸Translation of the figure: “We’ve slept a lot. It’s noon. Monica’s husband has left. How will we get to the archaeological site?”

¹⁹Translation of the figure: “Do you know the man who sculpts statues in stone?”

(h) Gender relations and gendered division of labour

Anca is Dim's girlfriend and then wife. She is a famous geologist's daughter (a university professor, who discovers a new ore). The reader is told nothing in the comics about her profession. Anca is defined through Dim and her relation to him. She is not represented as an autonomous person; she does not have her own voice. All her actions are accompanying or in support of Dim's, who protects her: "Anca takes refuge in Dim's protecting arms" (in episode 2). She drives their car when Dim is tired. She is pictured packing his (or their luggage) and asking him what to pack. She is also pictured cooking for Dim and the pioneers (who, during that time, are playing by driving cars) (Figure 15). She is shown serving Dim, the pioneers, and their guest with food (Figure 16). Anca is sometimes worried, assists at discussions, and participates. In episode 5, she is pictured using a gun when she comes to save Dim (Figure 17).

Figure 15. Gendered division of spending time in a Minitehnicus camp



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 48/1968²⁰

Figure 16. Traditional gender roles when having guests for a meal



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 48/1968²¹

²⁰Translation of the figure: "After the adventure in the Retezat Mountains, Anca and Dim decided to spend their holiday with their friends in a Minitehnicus camp", "Dim! Children! The pancakes are ready!", "Mr. Dim, only a second!" "I've told you: I am on holiday!"

²¹Translation of the figure: "I don't understand one thing. How did you manage Geo Martin to have that hell of a speed with your old Chevrolet?!" "Nothing simpler than that. I will explain it

Figure 18. Meaningful relationships among main characters: men, women, pioneers, militia, and malefactors²³



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 40/1970

In episode 4, Doina, a girl pioneer, praises Doru for his genius idea of setting up a camera on a kite and spying on the bandits and thus discovering their plan to kidnap an engineer (Figure 19). In episode 7, we see girls cooking, near the fire, and boys bathing, playing archers, and near the tent. In this episode, only the boys discuss or account for 90% of the dialogue. They accuse one of their colleagues, a girl, the chronicler of the team, of the fact that others had an advance over them in their adventure. One boy calls his colleague a goose because she wrote articles bragging about their plans to all publications of the country. In the same episode, a boy pioneer says that he does not believe that people they have met to be archaeologists and looks for more information, while their teacher says she does because she has seen their work IDs. Women seem to believe what they are shown, while men/boys investigate and find out the truth.

²³Victorious endings always have a moral lesson and are celebrated by pioneers or the larger community (e.g. the school, the town, the village, etc.), as in the first panel of this figure. Next, it is the translation of the figure: “The expeditioners enter the village with the bandits tied up. The crowd applauds them”, “Anca, smiling, reports on her progress: ‘Comrade Commander, I accomplished my mission. ‘The Brain’ of the bandits was arrested, too’”, “Thank you Anca, I am proud of you”, “Thank you for helping us. We wouldn’t have managed without you and Dochia’s dowry would have been taken by foreign hands”, “I think you would have managed. With such archers it would have been impossible for you to fail ...”

Figure 19. Girl pioneer praising her male peer for his genius and ingenuity



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 49/1968²⁴

8. Further decoding *A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays*

The key messages of these stories rest both on images and the narrative, in the interaction of characters. In these comics, the fictive geographies partially overlap the real geographies of the Romanian society. Pioneers are made to think that the limit is very thin between reality and representations in comics and thus also the illusion of the reader's detached viewing of the "reality" of these comics is, in general, suspended (partially or totally).

Figure 20. The "reality effect" based on real life events



Source: A Peaceful Young Man's Holidays, *Cutezătorii*, no. 31/1971²⁵

²⁴Translation of the figure: "Doru, your idea to set up a camera on the kite is grand. You are genial!", "Don't forget it too soon. But now I would like to warn Dim!"

²⁵Translation of the figure: "Georgică, your invention was awarded at the Minitehnicus contest! You received the golden medal and the inventor diploma" "Diploma. Georgică ... 'G Effect'"

In the comics, pioneers were provided with familiar ideas from their school experiences and from their holidays. Because of these previous experiences, their beliefs and attitudes could be more easily educated through visual imagery. Involving the pioneers as characters in comics, translating into fiction real situations of their school life, produces the intended “reality effect” and readers enact a certain type of consumption and visuality, merging the proposed fiction of the comics and the reality of their lives (Figure 20). Heroism, exceptionalism, and reality overlapped, rendering heroism and exceptionalism as characteristics of the socialist reality. They induced the belief that these reality comics were authentic, correctly representing children’s life. As “young people seem to want to picture themselves in the way that the media picture them” (Croghan et al., 2008, p. 349), pioneers may choose from their representations in the media: they are inventors; they also fight for justice and catch criminals.

The analysed comics are morality tales, foregrounding how values are learned and defended and how pioneers become attached to them, to places (the settings of their edutainment activities), and attached to the collective they were part of. The combination of the visual and textual communication in comics and their appeal to students’ sensibilities developed through educational outdoor activities, such as those of Cutezătorii Expeditions. Then the partial translation of socialist realities into comics enabled the transmission of ideological key messages in a highly popular manner, concluding with comics creating communities of readers.

Pioneers are, at the same time outside, the comics (as audience) and inside their discourse construction. The visual texts of comics have an imagined and real readership, formed by pioneers. Through the discursive construction created by the Romanian state institutions (political, cultural, educational), the pioneers are defined as people with particular features, and through their desirable actions. The institutional concern about the pioneers reified this social and political class of socialist Romania, as characters in the discourse of comics, and tamed and submissive audience. This reification of pioneers is a result of the disparity in power relations between the institutions producing the literary geographies of comics (The National Council of the Pioneers’ Organisation, the Romanian Communist Party, and the ideology-driven mass-media) and the pioneers themselves, as readers. Despite this, readers are not passive recipients of messages and of authorial intentions. They construct meaning within the context of the reception of ideological and non-ideological messages in comics.

However, these comics were created for an audience with very clear features. These characteristics could be also influenced by propaganda through other media that were rather intrusive as part of the pioneers' education (i.e. in school textbooks or through other mass-media products for children and youth). Activities in school, extracurricular activities, television, radio, etc. were some of the most significant instruments for ensuring that propaganda reached "the masses", including the children and the youth. As a result, besides reader's subjectivity, these contextual factors were paramount for anchoring in the socialist and communist society the reader's construction of meaning during the reading process.

Political ideology is represented through places and characters. These comics produce imaginations of space, events and subjects faithful to the regime. They have a pedagogical message and the necessary force to make it efficient due to the large-scale distribution of the magazine and to the utility of comics as an art form part of mass culture (Adorno and Horkheimer 2020).

What is more precious: life or heritage? Heritage or contemporary valuable assets appear in the form of a new type of ore, their knowledge (how to build a teleporter), an ancient Dacian treasure within ancient galleries, an invention – a fuel – ten times cheaper than gasoline and working for any type of engine, *Ursus spaeleus* and very old human remains, a lost manuscript belonging to Ovidius – titled the „Dacian manuscript”, etc. Contrasting answers to this question are given to the reader, depending on the situation/plot of the comic.

Comics incorporate the propaganda's reconstruction of past and present. The ambivalence of ideology (Meseșan 2018) is reflected in representations in comics. These show the modernizing effects of the socialist project as well as a look back into the heroic or ancient past, which legitimizes the contemporary communist power. Thus, a clash between modernization and traditionalism (Meseșan 2018) is represented also in these comics.

Episode 9 of these comics is a transparent reflection of the impact of propaganda on comics. The theft of the German army and its destructive impact are a common trope in historical comics published by *Cutezători* magazine at which participated Val Dunăreanu, Dim's father. The dramatic representation of heroic deeds at which pioneers take part, and of heroic events from the past through only one story – of Val Dunăreanu – shows that the recent history of Romania is that of the Romanian Communist Party. Comics use events from the past and from the present to instil a sense of continuity between different periods and to legitimise the present. The regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu worked to impose a *correct* interpretation of national

history (Mârza 2015: 1047; Preda 2014). Comics were only a part of the means of taking control over the children's values and attitudes. Children's political identity is constructed through that of Dim and he is defined by his past and his father's actions which add to Dim's, to the glorious communist present. Mythification is a strategy of manipulation used by the powerful ones (Pătraşcu 2013: 690): Dim is the direct descendant of a communist hero of the past, created by the comics. Dim is a contemporary hero, with the right origin.

Comics, through their description of the relationship between pioneers, teachers, militiamen, the Party, etc., mediated the social relations among these categories by means of their message, transmitted through images and text. Pioneers contribute themselves to building a just society, guided by the Party. In fact, Dim Dunăreanu is implementing the Party's will, solving the tasks given to him by the Cutezătorii Club, an organization of the communist youth. Dim Dunăreanu is a model approved by the communist Party. The main idea behind the propaganda was the building of the New Man and Dim Dunăreanu portrays his features. He is representing the achievements of the regime at the individual level: he is educated, his achievements in science and technology are echoing those of the society. He is the image of the Communist intellectual, devoted to educating the young in the same spirit, therefore his involvement in many activities with pioneers: Cutezătorii Expeditions, Minithechnic camp, Minithechnic contest, defending Romania's heritage (historical, literary, geographical, geological) against the internal and external enemies. The homeland needs protection in various situations and this intellectual and the assisting pioneers are its saviours, assisting state authorities. In addition, these comics show how the socialising of pioneers and even their professional options are influenced by activities organised within the framework of the Pioneers' Organisation.

Reading about the same heroes and their actions, visiting the same places using their imaginations, the pioneers understand past and present in a certain way, they are taught a specific visuality (cf. Rose 2014), that delivered by communist propaganda. This partly defines their identities, their aspirations, set of values, it gives them a sense of solidarity and belonging to the community of proud pioneers and to the larger national imagined socialist community.

9. Conclusions

Comics, stories in images and text, are a documentary source that uncovers the functioning of the ideological discourse. The researched series presents mostly realist drawings accompanied by text on socialist realities, propagandistic stories, with information for and about pioneers' lives. Their interpretation

uncovered the patriotic and communist character of these comics. These comics reflect ideas of the national-communist historical discourse, with a national and patriotic explanation of actions and events.

A particular way of seeing was brought to the produced images from two sites: that of production and of the audience, as both were under the direct influence of propaganda. Although it might be that readers constructed their own spatial meaning while reading the comics, this study does not have this process in its research focus. In this study, I do not discuss if the readers of the comics, during the socialist period, were involved as critical viewers or critical thinkers when engaging with the proposed discourse. In fact, I limit myself to analysing the discourse of a comics series in *Cutezători*, a propaganda magazine for communist pioneers.

Pioneers buy the magazine with comics (subscriptions were made through schools) and read it individually, but still together. They form an imagined community. A community of all those reading the respective comics throughout Romania. Images are used as pedagogic devices to teach about the heritage of Romania, about its development and about the New Man. The cultural producer of these comics was the Romanian Communist Party and, the reader, having this in mind, was influenced also in the process of meaning-making, while reading the “text”.

Therefore, these comics can be considered educational and cultural products of socialist Romania, reflecting state ideology concerning children’s education, and where both history and geography of Romania had a significant role in creating the system values of the pioneers as well as their representations about the territorial identities of this country. Comics give an insight into the *correct* reading of the Romanian socialist reality, about the way it was governed and based on certain values and attitudes: (a) the model intellectual; (b) the model Communist pioneer; (c) features of the Other and correct attitudes to those included in this category; (d) history induced patriotic attachment; (e) geography induced patriotic attachment; (f) science and contemporary economic achievements; (g) folk culture; (h) gender relations and gendered division of labour.

My article contributes to studies on representations through visual imagery, to studies on the geographies of comics and on how comics contributed to popular culture in socialism, as well as to the educational role of comics for children in a totalitarian communist regime and space. As a researcher, I consider that an understanding of the power relations embedded in this visual imagery could afford Romanians a forward-looking and critical reconsidering of their multi-layered past and its representations that still impact

lives and society in multiple ways. This research also informs future studies on the histories of childhood under communism.

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Rural and Urban in the Romanian Fiction Film of the'60s

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Abstract: The present paper intends to show that during the 1960s, different films meant to evoke the rural and urban environments were created, which brought to public attention a particular type of men and women whose mistakes were corrected or blamed during the plot; the purpose of the paper is to give examples of certain behavioural types accepted by society and political party. Also, a certain type of problems, different for each environment, is envisaged, along with certain types of solutions which are provided, usually issued from the existing party's policies of that period. The Romanian film production of 1960s – 1969s comprises over 150 titles.

Keywords: film, society, family, urban, rural, propaganda

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will investigate the Romanian film of the socialist period, from the perspective of the urban-rural relation as it is reflected in the main film productions which aim to highlight the social evolutions of the 1960s. Both from the political and social perspective, the 1960s were defined by a series of changes. After the de-Stalinization process, which took place at the end of the 1950s, the Romania's foreign policy of expansion towards the West, several visits and exchanges were organized between the Romanian delegations and other countries from the eastern regions and beyond. One can observe a degree of relaxation of the last decade, which can be defined through other economic measures such as the stimulation of private initiative.

Collectivisation and industrialisation were two of the processes which characterized this period. The progresses obtained in the economic field sped up the migration of people, and especially that of the younger population from rural to urban areas, while also accelerating the construction of a great number of buildings in urban areas.

The hypothesis I started from is that in the cinematographic repertoire of the 1960s one can identify a tendency to structure the topical film into two directions – the films dedicated to the rural universe and to the urban universe. The films, which were an important tool of propaganda at the time, covered various issues specific to each environment and were meant to help convince the population to accept state policies such as the attraction of the individuals from the rural area to collective labour, at the expense of private initiative, even if this latter was allowed. Another purpose was to persuade women to fulfil their role as mothers despite the fact that they were encouraged to pursue courses which could help them to shape a career for themselves.

The main sources consulted were topical films from the Romanian film production of the 1960s and materials from the film literature of that time, mainly the *Cinema* magazine which was the only such Romanian periodical dedicated exclusively to the film industry.

The topical film was a major concern of those who managed the film industry because this type of creation was an effective carrier of the messages coming from the political party. At that time, there was a lot of pressure on producers – screenwriters, filmmakers, actors – to succeed in conveying original, convincing, emotional or comic creations, which also had a powerful ideological component.

2. The '60s – new beginnings

Taking into account the political evolution of Romania, the 1960s can be divided into two stages. The first part of the decade is marked by a return to nationalism under the regime of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, who however perishes at the end of 1965, power being transferred to Nicolae Ceaușescu.

2. 1. Political evolutions

The last years of Romania led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej show a closeness with the Occident, the continuation of the de-Russification process and a removal of Stalinism. The Romanian-soviet cultural institutes, created in 1948, were disbanded, the cities, the streets and the cinemas received their initial naming again (Brașov, for example, came back to its name, after it had been named ‘the Stalin city’ for years). In 1964, during the Declaration from April,

the Dej regime asked Moscow to treat the other communist countries the same way it pretended to the Western countries in their international relations (Sălăgean 2013: 131).

At a cultural level, there was a rehabilitation of the Romanian Latinity made by the Romanian Academy, and new publications appeared, which supported these new political directions. In the *Contemporanul* magazine, cultural figures which were at first denigrated, were subsequently rehabilitated. Thus, important figures such as Titu Maiorescu or Iorga, Eminescu and Blaga and other authors, were mentioned again in textbooks (Popescu 2011:108).

In parallel, we observe a revival of the relations with the Western countries. Ion Gheorghe Maurer had an official visit in Paris, an economic delegation went to New York, and the English and French legations became embassies. Moreover, the weekly magazine *Lumea* began to be released, portraying the international life with information that also came from outside the Soviet space (Tismăneanu 2014).

In March 1965, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej died and, in just a few days, Ceaușescu became the first secretary of the Party. During the 9th Congress of PMR, organized the same year, in July, Ceaușescu denounced the abuses of Dej regime, shaping for himself an image in total opposition with that of the ex-socialist leader. In the report presented by Ceaușescu at the Congress, he made an economic presentation in which he emphasized the importance of the industrial development.

Even if he condemned the abuses of his predecessor, Ceaușescu still kept some measures such as the re-Latinisation –the name of România written with *â* instead of *î* was reinstated, Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu was rehabilitated, while some measures of relaxation were also enacted. These concerned the relations with Western countries, respectively, and the creation of a less restrictive regime in the field of passports so that Romania became the first country from the socialist bearing which opened diplomatic relations with Federal Germany (Sălăgean 2013:313).

In 1967, there is a tendency to free the economy – it is allowed the opening of restaurants, stores and private boarding-houses. Concerning national economy, there was a major concern for heavy industry, Ceaușescu continuing in this case the politics of Dej. As a result, the fields of industry became the most important in education, because there was a considerable need of professionals in this fields and thus, an entire range of engineers of different specializations appeared.

The construction of buildings was also greatly increasing at the same time: from 1966 until 1970, 648.000 apartments and houses were built (Popescu 2011: 109).

In 1968, Ceaușescu made himself noticed at international level after his August declaration in which he condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia, following the invocation of the Treaty of Warsaw by the USSR armies. Several European leaders such as the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, the president of France, Charles de Gaulle, or the American president Richard Nixon became interested in knowing the Romanian leader and invited him on different official visits. Likewise, Bucharest received numerous foreign delegations.

This opening will be soon followed by some restrictions from within the country, through the formulation of pro birth policy represented by Decree no. 770, issued on October 1st 1966, which banned abortion, after 9 years of relative liberalization. In the years that followed, the Decree brought for Romania the image of a country with one of the most absurd reproductive policies in Europe (Dumănescu 2012:63).

2. 2. Cinematographic evolutions

In cinematography, the new political directions were felt with a little delay. During the first years of the decade, there were still productions of the 1950s – films in which collectivization represented an important theme or in which the USSR armies were portrayed as saviours. This is due on one hand, to the new directions that needed some time in order to be assimilated and on the other hand, to the fact that a film production needs up to three years of work until its release.

In the context of these renewals, in 1963 the *Cinema* magazine was released. This is practically a continuation of the old *Probleme de cinematografie* (Cinematography issues), but this new creation, as the title itself suggests it, was specially designed for new times. If the name of *Probleme de cinematografie* had as inspiration a famous Russian book, the name of *Cinema*, closer to the eo-Latin languages and in consequence, to the Western countries with which Romania shared a part of its culture, announces a new approach. The magazine had a new format, was shorter, had short articles, written in a more friendly manner, and dealt with cinematography from outside the Eastern bloc. Moreover, the new magazine was more generous with images, some of which depicted stars from the Western countries in modern poses and were sometimes even provocative.

In the pages of the magazine, the great figures of the Romanian film production explained quite clearly, even from the first issue of the magazine in January 1963, that one of the main qualities of the cinema is given by its capacity to touch a vast audience. The film is seen by them as a popular art – created about the people, with people and problems of people, for the people.

It is a popular art by excellence: the art with the greatest auditorium. After a short and glorious history, independent but not indifferent from other arts, a good film responds nowadays, in its essence and most profound realities, to the esthetical and social demands of a public which is greater in number than any other public arts. The spectator is more able to identify himself with the heroes of the films than with those of the theatre and painting, maybe because all the children of 20th century are somehow, the children of cinematography, declared the president of the Council of Cinematography, Mihnea Gheorghiu, in the first issue of the magazine (Gheorghiu 1963).

The intention of the Party was to turn cinematography into an advantage both for rural and urban areas. If the Party had been focused only on the urban area, then it would have lost the contact with more than a half of the population, considering that over 11 million of the inhabitants from a total of 19 million lived in villages, according to the census made in 1966. The film production was dealing with subjects and issues from both environments. Films such as *Setea*, *Lumina de iulie*, *Un surâs în plină vară* or *Dragoste lungă de-o seară* were dedicated to rural environment and films such as *Aproape de soare*, *Partea ta de vină*, *Puștiul*, *Omul de lângă tine*, *Mândrie*, *A fost prietenul meu*, *Gaudeamus* or *Diminețile unui băiat cuminte* refer to the urban universe. The subjects were very diverse and the concern for the scenery was quite intense in that time, as it was well-known that the story mainly drew the public's interest. Although the screenwriters, lots of whom were writers and publishers, were striving to come up with conflicts and approaches as diverse as possible and very powerful characters, an analysis of films from this era shows in fact the presence of a common set of elements. In essence, almost all films which had as background the rural universe, had as main theme the collectivization, while those from the urban area focused on industrialization.

2.2.1. *The rural space in the socialist film: collectivization and emancipation*

The stylization of propaganda

The plot of *Setea* (directed by Mircea Drăgan, screenplay by Titus Popovici, 1961) [*The thirst*] is placed after the war and targets the moment when communists help peasants of a village from Transylvania, Deleni, to share their lands to the local baron, the Hungarian Papp de Zerind. The film no longer referred to the complicated relation with Russia, compared to other films of

the same period with a similar theme and produced only few years earlier. Thus the 1953 de-Stalinization can even be observed in cinema.

Mitru Moț, interpreted by Ilarion Ciobanu, returns from war to his village, carrying in his bag some German cans. He returns to his hometown but also to his forgotten thought since he left – to find out Iuliana, his great love and daughter of the cheapskate local landlord Gavrilă. However, the village had changed, war had changed people and they did not hesitate to shout their grievances out loud. In turn, the village's rich protect themselves as they can – the baron Papp hires the legionnaire Baniciu as his bodyguard, the landlord Gavrilă tries to lure Mitru, by offering him a dinner and a place to sleep when he returns from war, in order to prove that he's a peaceful and warm-hearted householder. Yet the peasants rebel, sometimes even fighting against each other, only because some of them were working the land of the baron, and in towns, the labourers turn to the streets asking for a 'devoted government'.

It was the time that the communist ideas were spread in the most diverse environments, because they supported the grievances of people. After 20 years of socialism in Romania, the film comes back with arguments about the 'justice' of the communist ideology which triumphed in Romania at the end of WWII.

In a moment of peasant rebellion, Mitru gets involved in the conflict and takes from the mayor șofron the symbols of his power – the keys and the stamp. He sits in his place, but he has no legitimate right. He is found in this stage by the representative of the Communist Party, Ardeleanu (Colea Răutu), who acted the same manner with the Commissioner, whom he forced to leave the bureau and established a new order there.

Mitru was not a communist yet, to be able to say that he represented legitimately a new power. After he used the argument of justice for the locals who must receive the land of the baron, using violence as well so as to eliminate the mayor who opposed the changes, Mitru sends him away and installs himself in the chair of șofron. The self-nomination and the lack of representation weren't valid arguments, and the screenwriter Titus Popovici wasn't an amateur, so he did easily gloss over this scene.

"I am the new Mayor, named just today, by the Communist Party; I do not know if you heard about it", Mitru replies to Ardelean, without knowing his identity. Ardelean smiles and makes Mitru admit his lie – who defends himself saying that he is, for now, a Party member 'only by heart' - and immediately comes with the solution: to enter the Party. Once this problem is solved, the baron's land starts to be divided between peasants, but not before some more conflicts.

In a moment (1961) when collectivization process comes to its end, after 13 years of tough measures against peasantry (Sălăgean 2013:120), this film dedicated to the moment of the redistribution of lands to peasants, after war, appeared on the screens. The film seems to concentrate on the re-argumentation of collectivization by reminding the audience of the initial moment when peasants were redistributed lands with the help of communists. *Lumina de iulie* (d. Gh. Nagy, s. Fănuș Neagu and Vintilă Ornar, 1963) [*July light*] is the first film dedicated to collectivization. The action takes place in a village from Bărăgan and the intention of the writer Fănuș Neagu was to describe the relationship of the peasant with his horse, this wonderful animal that for thousands of years served his master until mechanization became a more practical solution. The poetic vision of the screenwriter didn't match with the task of producing a topic film. In an article published in *Cinema* magazine of 1963, he stated that the screenplay was modified 19 times and that some characters or situational changes were made at the suggestion of the team producers. The rise of the zootechnical engineer Anton Vișan in the screenplay is one of the changes imposed by the employment of the film in the set of topic films. The collective agricultural household from Bozia had cereals as specificity and the presence of a zootechnical engineer was necessary in order to show that in a CAP, all sectors have to be developed. The president of the co-operative, Ilie Manu (George Calboreanu) didn't want to support the engineer's ideas because he regarded it as a loss of time and of financial resources.

Anton Vișan, armed not only with knowledge but also with the precise indications of the Party concerning the increasing of the livestock, must fight on one hand with the conceptions mentioned above and on the other hand with the damaging practices used by the locals of Bozia for animal care (Calotescu 1963).

On the other hand, a conflict arises between the brigadier Luș and the engineer Anton Vișan, because Vișan falls in love with Maria, who was loved also by Luș. In his attempt to set a trap for Anton, Luș hides 15 horses from the herd which was considered to be the pride of the village, but while passing the cliff Râpa Dracului, he accidentally kills a horse. The Party secretary and the co-operative president figured out Luș's mistake, who is then held to account. However, because he is one of the most hardworking brigadiers, he is treated wisely so as to avoid the rebellion of the village against him.

The zootechnician, in spite of being educated, and coming in the village in order to use his knowledge for the good of the community, is received as a foreign element by everyone. The president of the co-operative is

annoyed and feels controlled by someone younger than him, Luș tests his knowledge by putting him to identify the diseased sheep from an entire herd, test successfully passed by Anton, while the amusing Papa Leon (Grigore Vasiliu Birlic), the painter of the village, who is also responsible with feeding the cows, doesn't want to understand that the onion he gave to animals as fodder 'is in fact a stimulant' but doesn't 'increase the quantity of milk', as he knew from his mother.

The young girl Maria Serea, the source of conflict between the two men, takes care of cows in the livestock sector. She's very committed to her work, disciplined and her friskiness is taxed by film critics, because from the beginning, the two characters, the girl and the zootechnician are constructed until that very moment as persons of no frivolity.

The scenes envisage, nearly like an exposition, the advantages of the work in co-operatives which are combined with the poetic images of horses running on fields, and the sparkling dialogues of the screenwriters (*Well, had he his gloves, he wouldn't fall off the horse*). These include an exchange of lines as politically correct as possible, in which Luș and the president Ilie Manu admitted to each other that they wanted to confuse the zootechnician, but that he had handled it well. The text is full of encouragements to work, understanding and cooperation, but it is evident that the screenwriters attempted to transform *Lumina de iulie* into an acceptable film for public, especially through the amusing dialogues and supporting characters who populate the picturesque world of the village. Lines such as 'take your hands off, you destroy the paint', 'nowadays, horsepower is on top, the rest of it, it's only Sibiu Salami' or 'comrades with good heart' (said ironically), attributed to ugly characters, passed throughout time from the screen to the colourful language of the public.

For the film *Un surâs în plină vară* (d. Geo Saizescu, s. Dumitru Radu Popescu, 1963) [*A smile in full summer*] the staff Geo Saizescu – D. R. Popescu tries an approach that resembles to the Romanian fairy-tale. Făniță, the character interpreted by Sebastian Papaiani, who returns home after four years of wandering the world, while he had tried several professions, has something of the energy of Păcală. Despite being amusing with the spirit of a dishonest merchant (he helps a poor country girl to sell an old barren cow that did not have any milk, by hiding the truth and pretending the cow is very young, fertile and gives a lot of milk), he doesn't fool others until the end. Having arrived at home, he is well received by his two brothers and mother, who tell him that there's also a place for him at collective, he only has to choose in which sector he wants to work. But Făniță is decided to become a merchant, as he had

brought with him lots of mirrors that he intends to sell. He exposes the merchandise and shouts loudly that he offers ‘Quality merchandise brought from the capital city with lots of sacrifices. Take the mirror, which makes you beautiful in the morning, during the day and in the night!’. But the business venture doesn’t work, not do the next ones, when he attempts to sell sour donuts at the market or when he goes to the market with some tens of eggs taken from a brooding hen, as on the road, chickens begin to hatch out of the eggs.

The relaxation initiated by Gheorghiu-Dej in the 1960s aimed also a private initiative, but in this film, which promoted the advantages of collectivization, the merchant tendencies of Făniță are caricatured and discouraged by all around him. The story shows the path followed by the character, who wasn’t lacking ideas or imagination, until he finds his place within the co-operative and the community – by working in horticulture. In parallel, the character of Papaiani is struggling also with his sentimental confusions – he wanted but also did not want to take Liorica as his wife, confused by his feelings, while the girl, being wiser, has a lot of patience with him.

The script taxes the individualist tendencies of Făniță, who wants to succeed in life, and captures the struggle of the character not to accept to join the others, to surpass the envy caused by the success of this brother who gain prizes at a piglets’ exposition or to avoid the jokes made by the villagers at his expense.

Placed in a Transylvanian village from Hunedoara, *Dragoste lungă de-o seară* (d. Horea Popescu, s. Alecu Ivan Ghilia) [*One-evening love*] is conceived in a more serious manner, but the main theme is still collectivization, seen as the supreme salvation. Three women originating from a poor family are struggling to create a future together. The eldest was left by a volatile man, the middle one is on the brink of giving birth to a child without a father, and the life of the youngest one is messed up by the inappropriate advances of a boy she liked and who justifies his behaviour by telling her he imagined she was already taught about those things by her sisters.

The figure of the co-operative president does not disappear even now, but this time he also has other characteristics. Gheorghe isn’t just a neutral character who leads others wisely; he falls in love with Victoria, the eldest, to whom he offers an important role within the co-operative. In fact, Victoria is very committed to her work. She teaches the child to read from a book with scientific instructions on how to take care of the birds, which she knows by heart, she shows him difficult words such as antibiotics or avian.

The second sister, Maria, tries to resist the pressures of Ileana, the youngest girl, to reveal the father of the child. The youngest one guessed from the reactions of her sister, that the father is Mihai, Gheorghe's brother.

A chronicler of the time sees in Mihai a young boy undecided to marry, who thinks that everything belongs to him. Although hard-working, Mihai thinks of himself as above everyone, maybe because he had an older brother. Confronted by Gheorghe, Mihai doesn't admit to anything, but his true self is soon revealed when he attends a gathering. The rest of the villagers and his brother bring him to his bearings and Gheorghe calls Maria to solve the problem of paternity. Mihai attacks Maria violently by saying that when several men go to a woman, one doesn't ever know who is the father. The girl comes in front of the crowd and reveals that Mihai isn't the father of her child. Defeated by her courage, Mihai comes to her door in the night, to admit his mistake and to let her see his child. The critic Valerian Sava saw in Mihai a symbol of the 'construction process of a new conscience, a socialist one', but considers the film producers missed this chance. 'The Mihai's regret doesn't last long and Maria refuses it. In tone with her evolution until now, Maria proves to be dignified and determined to get by as mother and woman without him. 'I dreamt of you on one summer night, I woke up and I forgot you', are her last words to him, before going back inside.

The film proposes powerful female characters who outperform all male figures from the film. After the moment in which Victoria receives new tasks from the co-operative, and Maria confronts the man that destroyed her life and dignity, it's Ileana's turn. The girl is led by her sisters to the train station, where she takes the train to go to school in the city.

3. Industrialization and proletarianization of peasants

Partea ta de vina (d. Mircea Mureșan, s. Petre Săcudeanu, Francisc Munteanu, 1962) [*Your part of the blame*] is a film about re-education, assuming responsibilities and the urban-rural clash, between those who lived in poverty and those who lived in prosperity. The action takes place in 1953, when Mihai Brad (Sebastian Papaiani), a young peasant who came from a village in Apuseni, gets a job on the construction site of a residential district. The screenwriter attempts a metaphor in this case: Mihai leaves the village for the city, a recurrent practice in that era, in order to make money that could allow him to return home and continue his life and build his own house – he works on the construction site of a residence, to gain money for his own house. He must live on the site along with other workers, in one of the barracks. Mihai

immediately enters into a conflict with Bejan (Ion Besoiu), a thug who had spent 2 years in prison in Văcărești for theft.

The film is centred around the two young men, one representing the rural environment and the other one representing the urban environment, and the difficult relation between them. Their relation describes the difficulties of each of them to adapt the new socialist society, based on the motto: ‘To enter the UTM, one must have conscience’, a phrase uttered by one of the characters. The film starts with the moment when Mihai’s behaviour is judged by the UTM members. He becomes suspect in a theft whom responsible is in fact Bejan, something that will only be revealed at the end. All his colleagues accuse him, only because he was very careful with money and didn’t spend them. The one who defends him is Dumitrache, the positive character of the film (the kind of character that appears frequently in films of that period, the communist model) – the respected chief, wise and generous, who keeps the order between workers and tries to convince Mihai that he needs a profession in life. Moreover, the Party activist of the construction site condemns the attitude of those who accuse Mihai without any proofs. These two characters symbolize the ideology that socialists wanted to spread among the people, through cinematography. Finally, Mihai’s innocence is proven at the UTM meeting.

There’s also an engineer in the film, educated but egocentric and arrogant. He courts a female UTM member who works in the laboratory of the construction site. The girl is raising alone the child of her deceased sister and the engineer insists the child be sent to an orphanage because it is messing up their relationship. The young girl chooses to refuse the ‘offer’ of the engineer and to keep the child next to her. The character’s negative traits (Constantin Codrescu), favour the protagonist Mihai Brad, because this time, the film is about simple people who can become better by following the communist values.

Partea ta de vina, shows through the evolution of the character Mihai, the path one should follow in order to become a good socialist; his half is the kind and generous young lab assistant.

Aproape de soare – Close to the Sun (d. Savel Stiopul, 1960), a film produced with the collaboration ‘of the work people from the steel mill Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej – Hunedoara’, reflects the peasantry migration phenomenon from rural to urban areas. If in 1948 - because the action of the film takes place shortly after war – there were almost 3,7 million people from a population of 16 million living in urban areas, the census of 1956 showed that the urban population rose to 5,4 million and in 1966, to 7,3 million (insse.ro).

The complex process of industrialization, encouraged both by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceaușescu, needed to move a great number of people from rural to urban areas, hiring them in factories and plants.

The young Petre Orșa (Florin Piersic) leaves his hometown to become a steelworker. *Aproape de soare* represents the headliner of the films with young peasants (Popescu 2011:137) gone to work in plants. The appearance of Petre in the steel factory represents for film producers a reason to show the factory from impressive angles, the same as it appears to the young boy, who came from a small village to the core of the Romanian socialist industry. Petre, a very tough man, is sent to do the grunt work, to shovel, but the young man has greater ambitions, he wants to work on the ovens: *I will melt steel in this Hunedoara* he says furiously after he is refused by the chief.

But working along with the furnace team isn't that easy, warns his work colleague, you *must have conscience* (the conscience – the leitmotif of the Romanian socialist films). The film represents one more tool necessary for the construction of the new man type – the socialist with high moral standards and sense of responsibility.

Petre does not give up and starts to work at the ovens. The framework in which Florin Piersic is filmed next to a great worker of the plant, is representative for the propaganda of the time. The camera is fixed on the character Petre, who is in the foreground, while the face of the worker is not seen very well. Florin Piersic works hard, all his effort being transposed in a strong grimace, to transmit the passion and the difficulty of that work.

In *Aproape de soare* there is also one female character, Livia, a worker who lives in Hunedoara Castle (her uncle is the guardian of the castle), with whom Petre falls in love.

The steel casting activity favours expressive but also difficult footages, light plays, colours and angles, through which the steel factory becomes itself a character, and the workers' team, a collective character. The film also shows the Hunedoara Castle as a fairy-tale element which ennobles the story, both of the steel, thanks to the historic references used once in Cordoba, and of the steel factory which can be seen through all the windows of the castle. This juxtaposition, between steel factory and castle intends to introduce a fairy-tale element, but also the subtle induction of the idea that plants are the nowadays' castles. So, Livia lives, as any other ladies, at the castle, but at the plant, she drives a stacker and more than that, she goes to school. During the short scene in which Petre follows her through the classroom window while she has classes, we see that Livia pursues quite advanced courses of mathematics and later we find out that she's also a reporter for the local journal. Compared to

Petre, Livia is a true intellectual. This type of approach of the female character supports not only the gender equality, but also the elevation of the woman through education, without seeming inopportune for the eventual couple relations. But, for the sake of Livia, Petre starts to read history as well, in order to find out more about Ioan of Hunedoara and his castle.

The proletarianization of the peasantry is a process which mirrors that of sending to villages the educated intellectuals in socialist faculties. If the urban space needed workers for its factories, the rural space needed engineers, doctors and professors. Thus, the socialist film reflects both issues, turning them into a persuasion technique for teenagers to understand the need of these forces exchange.

4. The urban space in socialist film: industrialization and community

4.1. The child as a symbol of hope and social changes

The film directed by Elisabeta Bostan, *Puștiul – The Kid* (1962) appears as a cinematographic definition for the notion of society. *Puștiul (The Kid)* is the story of a mother who raises two boys by herself. Her husband left for Czechoslovakia (Romania had strong economic relations with this country at that time) and she was obliged to bear by herself the difficult decision of a heart operation that one of her sons must receive. Dan, the eldest, is an extremely active kid – he's the class champion at cycling. After he fainted, his mother drives him to Ploiești, where doctors discover a heart problem that must be operated. It is very difficult for the mother to make a decision, so she decides to protect the kid from doing any effort and thus avoid operation. The doctors warn her that she can't protect her child forever, and more than that, she will unconsciously steal his childhood and emotions by acting like this.

The film is a good opportunity for the producer to describe the Romanian society of those times in lightning colours, even if, or maybe just because between the frameworks exposed an element that reminds of propaganda and socialist morale is sometimes introduced.

By using poetic descriptions for presenting the school where Dan studies – the camera is exploring the hallways where the playful light of the sun paints lights and shadows and from within the classrooms we hear voices of the kids who repeat after the teacher, for different subjects – the producers have the chance to introduce the first defining element of the society: school, the place where children learn to respect themselves and to collaborate and forge long lasting friendships. Elisabeta Bostan exposes from the very first the main character of the film: society.

In the discussion between two teenagers, we capture some fragments of conversation: *about society and individual...* 'What's that, "society"?' 'Dan catches rapidly the idea. 'Look, she ran a red light, she'll be fined', says one of the kids – and these words could give already a comment for the mean spectator who will think at the rules and fines which structure a society. 'What's that, "society"?' Dan insists. 'Well, this is for those in 9th grade', explains one of his colleagues.

After amusing the spectator, the producers introduce the first element of propaganda. On their road, the children stop and read something written on a panel: *Before 7th of November, we will give 50 apartments.*

The Revolution of 1917 was a reference for the communist society and it was celebrated both through more or less meaningful events as well as through concrete actions. The State was about to give 50 more apartments built by workers for their fellows, where people could raise their children safely and become educated, productive, and maybe also happy, seems to suggest Elisabeta Bostan in this film. Dan is a very smart and ambitious child, who doesn't give up so easily. Once arrived home, at dinner, he asks his mum: 'What's that, a "society"?'

'People live together, in cities, villages. Others build houses, make food or create toys', his mother answered, and corrects his younger boy by saying that not only his dad built houses but also other workers, 'and we need each other'.

The filming locations – the school, the building in which they live, the streets they walk on, the hospital – are carefully chosen. All of them seem to be extremely clean, and create an atmosphere of optimism and new beginnings. Dan as well is supposed to have a new beginning, when his mother realizes that she cannot avoid the operation anymore and accepts it. 'Will he recover?' she asks the doctor 'You doubt us so much!' responds the doctor with a tough voice as though he addressed the public rather than her. The doctor can be seen here as a representative of the State. He's educated, an expert and has the capacity to solve others' problems. In fact, the rest of the characters - the teacher and the school doctor – try to convince her to make the right choice for Dan and to leave her fate in the hands of those who studied especially for that. In other words, to leave her life in the hands of the system. This is in fact the message of the film – the individuals have a limited power. There's also the possibility for the child not to be saved. And in this situation, the system comes with everything that's needed for one of the most important problems of life – health, home, education – strategic domains of socialism.

The surgery is done four days before the return of the father – a character that is mentioned only in conversations. The State help its members even when their most precious help isn't present.

The message also respects the Constitution of 1952, which reaffirms the State's protection of the family, the protection of the interests of mothers and their children (Dumănescu 2012:48) but also the new Family Code of 1954, which gave mothers the same rights as men in raising their children.

The film is wonderful thanks to the hard work of Elisabeta Bostan to evoke childhood as it was back then. Many viewers will probably remember with emotion, the meeting place for kids which was the building staircase or the important exchanges of trinkets, alliances or fears and jokes.

5. *The engineer, new character in the socialist world*

Industrialization becomes at the beginning of the '60s an inevitable theme, both for the economic policies of Romania and for the films that had to present the reality wanted by the system. The construction site, the plant, the steel factory become either characters as in *Aproape de soare*, or the main framework for a young engineer (*Mândrie, Omul de lângă tine*) who wants to put in practice a new technique, and who is confronted with others' prideful opposition.

Industrialization and its reflection on the Romanian film production creates a new type of character – young, determined, born in a rural area, raised by its own forces, who fights continuously for implementing a new technique for which he spends nights to make calculations, managing to increase the efficiency of work and to create a new cohesive team.

Omul de lângă tine – *The man next to you* (d. Horea Popescu 1962) is a family drama that takes place in the industrial framework of the young engineer's workplace, whose main character is searching for a wife. He finds her in Bucharest – she's young, beautiful, intellectual and bored because of the lack of challenges she faces every day.

The film captures the life of this intellectual couple and represents an attempt by the producer Horea and of the screenwriter Paul Everac to underline the problems the young couple faces in Bicz city, where they have to move to be closer to the construction site.

Corina (Silvia Popovici) is a young and ambitious lawyer in love with the capital city where she also studied at the Faculty. After a reunion with a group of colleagues, she meets Dumitru Popescu, an engineer at the construction site of Bicz.

This method, of placing a story, romantic or not, in the context of infrastructure which was a good propaganda for the Party accomplishments, was practiced for years. One can say that this was in fact the first intention of the party.

In consequence, in the context of the barrage construction from Bicaz, the audience sees this family drama developing, whose protagonists are Corina and Tinu, a modern couple that surpassed their social status and now struggles to adapt to the world around them which didn't change. Corina hardly accepts the proposal of Tinu to move to Bicaz, where her husband keeps her home and encourages her to accept the idea of having a family. The young wife suffers a lot, missing her job which she enjoyed. Tinu is extremely happy because he convinced Corina to be his wife and introduces her to his colleagues like a trophy.

The inadequacy of Corina to the life of housewife and the meeting with the preconceptions of other women around her – a young widow from the village who cleans the house and seems to be in love with Tinu, an old neighbour who gossips she saw Corina with a colleague of her husband – bring her to despair. She's pregnant but, mad because of the situation she's in, she decides to discuss with a doctor and choose abortion. Later, because of an infection she had, she finds out that she could never have children again. She realizes that her decision was reckless. She manages to recover from her physical and psychological suffering, she starts searching for a job and then she confesses to Tinu about her mistake. Her confession comes in a moment when Tinu is dismissed from the position of engineer who runs his team because his other colleagues did not support his proposition of steel casting. The Party representative refuses to support his idea or to check whether his solutions could lower manufacturing prices or not, by keeping the same quality, and accuses him of insubordination.

During the forced vacation in which Tinu is sent, the two lovers have the chance to save their marriage. Tinu confesses that it was not the child who was important in their relation but the proof that she is determined to stay next to him.

Finally, a specialist is called from Bucharest in order to solve the problem from the construction site and Tinu is called back to work. While coming back home, Tinu is challenged by a good friend in a race car and in order to avoid an accident, he goes off the road. The film has an uncertain end, though apparently optimistic. We don't know if Tinu survives or not, but Corina proves to be mature and surpasses her fear of change.

This type of hero – the engineer who comes from a family of peasants and enrolls in university studies – is a recurrent figure in the Romanian socialist cinematography. Ilarion Ciobanu succeeds in finding a balance to interpret through Tinu both the traditional man, trained for the tough life of the construction site, and the kind husband who understands that once he married an educated woman he must keep up with her. His persistence to keep her home is viewed as a mistake – the lack of activity pushes Corina to anxiety, while the rest of the women look at her with contempt. On the other side, the Corina's decision to have an abortion is showed as a warning for the family harmony (the Decree no. 456 of 19th of October 1955 cancelled the criminal character of abortion, on condition that it is made by a doctor). Thus, with two-three years before the famous Decree no. 770 of 1966, Romanians could see on screens stories that criticized this aspect (the Decree no. 463 of 30th of September 1957 which allows abortion), but it didn't incriminate abortion. Of course, this type of films intended to stop the intention of women to give up on being mothers which was difficult to harmonise with the professional statute.

The message of the film of Horea Popescu, who produced in 1961 his first cinematographic creation, aims to depict the two characters in such a way as to suggest the idea of gender equality in family, legalized through the Family Code (1954). The film is a generous attempt to suggest that, in a country with a high degree of traditionalism, equality in a family couple can exist, and that it must be maintained by both parties.

6. The reflection on screens of the educational development in the communist society

Gaudeamus igitur (r. Gh. Vitanidis, 1964, s. Vasile Rebreanu and Mircea Zăciu) captures the emotional climate during the admission exams for the faculty. A group of teenagers arrives in Cluj to pass one of the most difficult exams of their life. The teenagers also discuss elections as well as faculty, and ask themselves philosophical questions.

What are we going to do if after some years we will need just one professor per country for each discipline?, says a young boy who's wearing glasses. As reply, the girl in front of him starts laughing out loud. *Why are you laughing, is very simple: 12 classes, 12 television channels, big screens. It is thousands times cheaper. And in your old age you requalify.*

Each of them comes to university with fears and hopes. Emil, the boy dreamer, very confident and a little bit arrogant, the timid Valerică or the veteran Mihai, who comes to admission for the third time, represent just some

of the typologies of teenagers that go each summer to universities for admission exams.

From some points of view, the film, watched after 50 years since its release, appears as a revelation: certain things are still valid. Ioana invites the teenagers to her home, where she has a big garden, but Mihai refuses her – he has an aunt in Cluj with a beautiful house who accommodates him all the time. But not everyone is so lucky. On the platform, there's a great crowd and an older character distributes cards to everyone – *Agency of student apartments, please note, affordable prices, agency of student apartments...*

But the teenagers arrive even from the start at the university campus, in the dormitories built in Cluj just few years earlier. Hundreds of young people could be accommodated in new buildings, equipped with everything they needed. But the comfort ends here. The colleagues are sarcastic, the competition is tough, the field of study difficult, and the teachers very tough. Some of them are more intrepid and follow their dreams, others choose an easier path – *I will go to Agronomy, there are more places*, Pia tries to convince herself that this is what she wants. *I made my decision, if I do not pass I will go to the construction site...*, says another one on the hallway of the University, where all of them wait for their turn.

Those full of great ideals and ambitions choose the most difficult profiles – Physics, Chemistry, Letters – while for others, the screenwriter gives some options – Agronomy, construction site, teacher in the village. After all, the film was meant to reach a certain group of people, in this case, the teenagers. And the Party needed specialists in all fields, while all over the country there was a place for everyone. Despair wasn't a problem with no solution, as this film seems to transmit from the beginning until the end.

All university buildings from Cluj, the Library with its great lecture halls, and the dormitories with hundreds of illuminated windows in the night, the student restaurants, and the city full of beautiful streets are in fact an open invitation for every young man of province.

The Faculty of Philology, amphitheatre no. 5, Hungarian section, amphitheatre no. 4' - announce a voice. At that moment, Victor Babeş University had been unified for 4-5 with the Hungarian University Janos Bolyai, a fact which the film underlines well. The producers also chose to film in the amphitheatres of the University of Medicine, even if after the Educational Reform, the university separated from that of Cluj. A traditional practice of medical students was also captured– the serenades played by students to professors at the end of the faculty, a custom kept even nowadays. Some footages are taken at the University of Bucharest. Either way, the entire

university structure of the country could create a decor if the production team needed this; the idea was important, not the description of a city.

Emil and Mihai are characters created in opposition, both of them candidates at the Faculty of Physics. Mihai (Sebastian Papaiani), a country boy, who spent his last years learning continuously after he didn't successfully pass his exam, finally gets good grades but Emil, despite his good grades from high school and his confidence, gets a subject he doesn't master.

'But I know, professor', tries Emil to defend himself. *These are generalities. I can't say you didn't read but this is not enough. You told me for half an hour about the importance of ultrasounds but you don't know any elementary scheme for the generator of ultrasounds*, says the Physics professor.

The third candidate, Valerică, who came with a letter of recommendation from his father, has the courage to lie and not to mention this aspect when the supervisor asks him if he's the son of professor Pașcu, his ex-colleague from university. After he finds out that he passed, Valerică receives the letter from his colleague (Ștefan Iordache), lost in the dormitory: *Well, you took the admission exam, you knew the discipline but you didn't know your father. Look, introduce yourselves*, says his colleague, giving him the letter.

My dear colleague, if my son gives this letter to you, then, I lost my quality of professor and father, I failed, - is what was written in the letter. The intention was to attack a cliché related to the university world, where professors supported their children, and to impose a certain level of morality.

After the exam, Emil criticizes Mihai for not helping him and giving him the answers to questions. Furiously, he shouts out loud to him: *You nobodies are accepted!* The film opens a new road for the young people coming from rural areas, for whom university studies represent a proof of courage, while also giving a warning to arrogant people, who were shown that they could fail. Equality, seen from the perspective of society, could be one of the messages of the film, specific to socialism.

The film captures the effervescence before exams, considers the critic Călin Căliman, who nevertheless criticizes the portrayal in clichés of characters and of some false situations.

6. Anxiety attempts

Diminețile unui băiat cuminte (r. Andrei Blăier 1966) [*A nice boy's mornings*] is the first film about urban industrial reality produced after Ceaușescu took over power (Popescu 2011: 162).

It keeps the same film model with engineers: a young man arrives on the construction site where the concrete signs of socialism are shaped, and

then integrates in a group from where a very positive character appears (Tudor Popescu, 2011:162), Fane, who meets a girl and creates a conflict with the engineer because of her. Blaier creates a story where all characters are distorted. Vive (from the latin word *vivere*) is a hero with no qualities: 22 years, military service finished, he had failed his admission exam, a hero troubled by graver existential questions similar to other fictional heroes of the Romanian cinematography. Maybe Andrei Blaier left a sign, by choosing the scene played by the workers from the theatre group of the construction site, to be *Orfeu în Infern* [*Orpheus in Inferno*] by Tennessee Williams. Or maybe there's another source of inspiration, as Florian Potra saw, *1 Vitelloni* of Fellini.

Everybody knows that Fellini released the theme of the provincial young man menaced by spiritual sclerosis and failing and yearning for the Capital city which is his salvation. At the beginning, Vive and Romache from Diminețile...are only some vitelloni, some teenagers menaced by involution, living with a certain fear of failure (Potra 1968).

Vive and Romache are two bored young men who accept the fact that not everybody is meant for university studies, and that they are part of that half who did not succeed. Compared to Romache, who accepts his fate, Vive is searching for a solution. *Something has to be done*, he says while watching a boxing match, just thinking about something else.

Vive is pushed to a crisis also because of living with his father, who is very brutal with his son, reminding him all the time how weak he is (*'Exhausted, very exhausted, the workplace is far away. I heard that buses don't run today'*). The father criticizes his admission failure and it seems to be quite a pleasure for him to do that to his son. Vive tries to escape from this vicious circle – he won't be capable, especially now that he couldn't be admitted to university, to overcome his condition. And thus, armed only with his high school diploma, he's neither engineer nor worker. Comparing to the old film propaganda, which has as background the work on the construction site, this time the characters from *Diminețile unui băiat cuminte* are distorted and not so multilateral. The engineer Ștefan is shown as a weak and cowardly character, coming from a decadent bourgeois family, from whom his fiancée tries to separate, the master Cioba is an old man who can't keep up with the new times, Romache, an indifferent man. Practically, the screenwriter Constantin Stoiciu taxes the characters' immobility (Romache, Ștefan or Vive's father), who refuse to change their old perspective toward the world. In fact, the story is based on the film *Ia-o din loc* [*Take a hike*], and its title represents both the troubling thought that haunts Vive and the message for the public. The character of Mariana is constructed

with the same interior troubling of running from a place to another. Both characters, Vive and Mariana, fear that their life will be the same without accomplishing anything.

Evading, getting rid of the unfortunate path and starting something new – this is the noble signification of this argotic expression. (...) Between the two (Romache and Vive), Vive is the most willing and capable of saving himself. This time, it isn't about the mirage of the metropolis but about the work on the great socialist construction site, able to mesmerize the purest minds and hearts (Potra 1968).

Diminețile is a film with no references to Party, ideologies, to class struggles, to productions and innovative techniques, it is a film with occidental music, with girls who appear to be less than well-behaved, kinky scenes, even featuring a priest at a funeral (the old man Cioba). After we know what happened with *Meandre*, or *Un film cu o fată fermecătoare*, the path of this movie to its restriction is half made. Maybe the end of it saved it from that, because the struggle of Vive finds its healing at the construction site.

The key to understanding this abrupt change can be the character Fane, that Sebastian Papaiani, with his talent of making him extremely credible – the welder pleased by his life who avoids conflicts because he doesn't know how to fight, but admits he would like to watch a fight and who doesn't know what he will do with his life, but doesn't even ask himself that, his constancy being the work on the construction site. *What will you do with your life, Fane? Vive asks. Well, what will I do? What I do now. I will weld tons of spherical reservoirs, that's what I will do.*

Workers like Fane were well paid, as it is mentioned in the movie, and this is maybe its propagandistic message. Happiness can be found even in stability, in the little things given by life, in the guarantee that you know what you do tomorrow.

The fact that Vive doesn't manage to enter university and loses in this way a path in his life, is seen in this movie as a chance to truly live (Popescu, 2011:163).

Cristian Tudor Popescu thinks that *Diminețile unui băiat cuminte* is an anti-intellectual movie. *The workers that work with material are the true Jedi knights of Socialist Romania in 1966* (Popescu 2011: 163).

Personally, I think the method of creating this film has a purpose. In those times, the producers were criticized that they did not produce appealing movies to the public, while critics were writing about Western film productions with a certain aesthetic, with less confident characters, with introspection problems, who were constantly asking themselves existential questions. It is

possible that Blaier tried to adapt this kind of film to the classic structure of the worksite, in his attempt to get a movie appreciated by critics and public.

In his book about the history of the film, published after the Revolution, the historian and critic Călin Căliman considers that the placing of the moral healing of Vive on the construction site is just a detail which, as years goes by, becomes less important, the attention being focused on the emotions, feelings, fears and bewilderments of the character.

The construction site, as I saw, was one of the main 'characters' of that time, but the theme of the scenery and of the movie – supported by actors (...) – keep their general-human availability, beyond circumstances (Căliman 2000: 212).

7. Conclusions

The films of this period which describe the Romanian rural space share a set of elements which define in a visual form the social policies of those years. One of the main common elements is collectivization, the nucleus of the films mentioned in this paper. The scenery, the dialogues and the relations established between characters convey the idea that everyone has their place in the community but that he/she must make an effort to discover it and put it in practice afterwards. In general, the characters who represent the authority – the presidents of co-operatives or the Party secretaries – are gentle and understanding, they support the main character on their path to fulfil their destiny, which inevitably is related to the adherence to collective. This vision fits to the non-repressive regime of 1960s, when both Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceaușescu adopted less repressive social policies.

There are explicit verbal and visual references in films (the money for salary is counted) concerning the idea that work is rewarded and that family or origins don't matter as long as there is diligence. Thus, the characters have a chance to succeed in life and even to satisfy their wildest aspirations through the fruits of their labour, such as buying a motorcycle if that's what they want. The films capture in detail the situation and the status of several agricultural and zootechnical sectors, and their diversity, from mushroom farms to beekeeping and horticulture and even to raising horses, cattle and poultry. The scenery involves also some expertise knowledge – the creation of conditioned reflexes at calves or the use of antibiotics in order to combat the avian influenza – knowledge that is given to more or less erudite characters. Even if the screenwriter makes some fun of this kind of all-knowing peasant, the message about the importance of the expertise knowledge has been conveyed.

The Romanian village is captured in full process of civilising transformation. This aspect is showed either by the camera – the high voltage poles which help at illuminating the houses or the telegraph poles which move the message to distances of hundreds of kilometres, the shining colour of the black pavement (most probably wet before each filming to look better), or the characters say it -‘We have had a bus in our village from a long time’ or ‘Where have you been that you did not hear about the changes that happened, did not you hear of collective?’.

Furthermore, the films have a strong educational component, condemning individualism, offering to women, in accordance with the gender equality promoted by communists, powerful roles, either primary or secondary, which shows that they can manage without the patronage of a husband or that they have access to expertise information that help them to develop and improve themselves.

The films that evoke the rural space have been produced rather in the first half of the decade, a timing that can be explained through their strong link with the collectivization theme, a process that has been ended at the beginning of the 1960s.

The films that have as theme living and industrialization, while those produced in the 1960s can be considered a kind of birth certificate for the Romanian urban space. The same recipe is used as the one used for the rural space only that decor is different. The movies which describe the urban space in this era focus on presenting the efforts of industrializing the country – the steel factories, viewed as the new aims of socialism, or the construction site of a hydroelectric plant or a residential neighbourhood represent the background of the story. The social diversity of characters (from doctors to engineers, unqualified workers, aviators or even circus performers) represents a great difference from the films that describe the rural space. Moreover, the child is a recurrent and very important character: he has a name, a certain behaviour and lots of lines and he isn’t just an accessory anymore. The idea of the emancipation of women is also present. The woman is no longer shown just as an obedient wife but rather as an equal partner with her husband, with university studies and the right to express her ideals of being not just a simple mother but also a successful woman. But sometimes, this ideal is taxed and still allowed to be expressed. Individualism is seen again as a default. In each film there’s a hyper-positive character who helps everybody and mediates conflicts and most of times this character has an important position in the Party. The engineer is another important character for the promotion of industrialization and infrastructure, because his voice announces the public about the major

challenges of technical innovations in the modernization of the country. For this reason, a great part of the movies have as main character an engineer.

During the 1960s the topic film was a great bet for the Romanian cinematography, for it represented a very powerful tool of persuasion, meant to increase the peoples' trust in the Party, to expand the communist ideology, and to inform about the great development directions of the country.

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Health-related Determinants of Demographic Ageing in the European Union

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Abstract. The main goal of this research is to identify some health-related determinants of demographic ageing in European Union (EU-28) countries over 2004-2019. Some panel data models are built for explaining overall ageing index and the ageing index by gender. In EU-28, the life expectancy growth and self-perceived health were determinants for overall ageing index over 2004-2019. There are differences between older people by gender. A good and very good self-perceived health for women ensured a higher ageing index while for males the increase in life expectancy is a determinant of demographic ageing. The active ageing is a concern of the policy makers that developed and implemented suitable strategies to ensure a high active ageing index. Some clusters are constructed according to ageing indexes values and some recommendations are made for certain countries in the clusters.

Keywords: ageing index, active ageing, self-perceived health, life expectancy

1. Introduction

The proportion of people age 65 and over has grown faster in last 30 years than any other age group. There are global trends of growth in population ageing and many countries developed healthy ageing policies for these people in order ensure them a better life.

Population ageing consists in the decrease in the proportion of children and young people, while the proportion of people age 60 and over increases. The decrease in fertility rates simultaneously with the increase in longevity will support “greying” of the world’s population.

In both developing and developed countries, the population ageing brings many concerns about whether or not a shrinking labour force can support this older population who are commonly believed to depend on others.

In developing countries this fast ageing is followed by dramatic modifications in family roles and structures, but also in migration and labour trends. Smaller families, urbanization, large migration of young people to towns for jobs, and more women in the field of formal workforce are factors that ensure fewer people for caring about older people that need assistance.

The research question refers to the health-related factors that favour the increase of the ageing index in the EU-28. In this study, some determinants of ageing were tested for EU-28 countries (self-perceived health and life expectancy at one year) for overall older population and by gender. The results indicated that a good and very good self-perceived health for women contributes to females' ageing more than a high expectancy life.

2. Determinants of ageing in literature

Active ageing is a process that is design to optimize the opportunities for security, health, and participation for enhancing the life quality of old individuals. There are many determinants of active ageing: gender (in many countries, women have lower social status and a limited access to education), health services (diseases prevention, health promotion, long-term care), nutritious foods (malnutrition might affect older people), culture, economic factors (income, work, social protection), social and health services, personal factors (genetics and biology), social determinants (social support, education, violence and abuse), physical environment (safe houses, falls, clean water and air), behavioural factors (physical activity, health status) .

The pension policies were adopted in Europe in order to diminish the risk of older people to live in poverty. Social protection and health care were developed to include the needs of this category of people. The active contribution of elderly is required by maintaining a good lifestyle during their entire life.

Active ageing supposes more aspects of older people:

1. Fostering for being in good health;
2. Being a full member of the society;
3. The implication in social life and in different jobs;
4. Being independent in the personal life;
5. Being more engaged as citizen with full rights.

The aim of the active ageing strategies is to make changes in the old people attitude and ensure a positive way of pass through ageing problems. The old age should benefit of an environment where the people are less dependent on state or family.

All the determinants of active ageing are based on convergence on culture and gender that are cross-cutting determinants. Culture encompasses all the people and models the form of ageing because it influences all the other factors of active ageing. The appropriateness of different policy strategies and their effect on men and women's well-being, are determined by gender.

The behavioural determinants of healthy ageing are described by some authors (Peel et al., 2005). These determinants come from various domains: sociology, medicine, psychology, gerontology. The most frequent determinants are: body mass index, level of physical activity, diet, health practices, obesity, smoking status, and alcohol use. The policies for ensuring healthy ageing should refer to people's lifestyle improvement.

Ageing is considered in medical approach a genetically determined disease based on ageing genes which regulate critical biochemical pathways (Bostock et al., 2009). Discovering these pathways and genes can bring treatments to slow the ageing process and prevent age-related diseases. This could have an important social and economic advantage. The nuclear and mitochondrial genomes instability is also a major determinant of ageing (Rattan, 1996).

In assessing health, the World Health Organization recommends the utilization of indicators that describe quality of life, like healthy life expectancy that is a measure for active ageing. Active ageing is oriented towards the healthy life expectancy and quality of life of older persons. The life quality is largely measurable, such individuals' ability to maintain autonomy and independence.

The term of "Successful Ageing" is utilized in gerontology and geriatrics to show the maintenance of mental and physical function of old people, who have enough psychological and physical "reserves" necessary to pass through stressful experiences over the rest of their life. Successful ageing for Chinese older people was determined by gender, higher education, better housing, religious beliefs, physical activities and low nutritional risk (Ng et al., 2009).

Factors like income accessibility, functional limitations, loneliness and low self-esteem, small family and limited peer interactions, and HIV/AIDS determined active ageing in Zambia (Mapoma, 2014).

For a group of older people from Brasil, the statistical analysis reflected the following factors influencing ageing: healthy food, physical exercises, social support networks, access to information and to health services, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, correct utilization of medications (Vicente & Santos, 2013).

An econometric model for identifying the socio-economic determinants of population ageing was made for Russian older population by considering as predictors the labour activity, the economic and the social activity, life satisfaction and health status (Kolosnitsyna and Zasimova, 2013). In European countries the ageing process has many effects on actual and future economic and social policies. It is required an active public and social policy to fulfil the objectives of active ageing (Walker and Maltby, 2012). Some social and economic determinants of active ageing in Macedonia are: gender, housing, healthy lifestyle, income (Milevska-Kostova and Chichevalieva, 2013). Family support is essential for older people, mostly in less developed countries where the social protection is less adequately ensured. In developed regions, with almost universal social security coverage the decline in labour participation brings modifications in national policies.

In some Italian regions, for older people a relationship between malnutrition and inability to prepare meals, cook and shop was observed. The main causes are low income, high distance from markets or shops, incapacity to use the public transportation or drive a car (Donini et al., 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to implement nutritional education of older individuals and to reduce the economic, social, clinical, and functional risk factors of malnutrition (Peña-Casas, 2017).

A similar study at city level was done for the EU countries by Lewandowska-Gwarda and Antczak (2020) in the period 1990-2018 for males and females. The authors observed significant differences between women and men and by groups of countries (Western and Eastern countries). Lower shares of older people (women and men) in the population are obtained due to growth of crude birth rates per 1000 inhabitants. Higher shares of older people in the population are due to the increase in the proportion of lone-pensioner households and in the number of nurses, medical doctors, physiotherapists and midwives per 1000 inhabitants. Differences between women and men were noticed also by Zaidi et al. (2017) who proposed different social policies to support each category. Other studies focused on other types of factors different from demographic ones. For example, Liotta et al. (2020) showed that demographic ageing is conditioned by environment, physical functionality, and social inclusion. Kashnitsky (2020) explained the

role of economic development in the enhancement of demographic ageing in the EU. Developed countries from the EU that received many immigrants slowed down this phenomenon due to young immigrants (Livi Bacci, 2018). Better expenses for healthcare contribute to well-being and prolong people life (Jakovljević, 2017). Peng and Yeandle (2017) attributed the increasing number of older people in Europe to rising female employment low fertility, and higher mobility and distancing of families. Geographical determinants of demographic ageing were identified by McCann (2017) in the OECD and EU at regional level.

Compared to previous studies, we employed self-perceived health instead of other indicators related to physical status of people. For example, Wahrendorf et al. (2017) used the indicator of physical and mental health for which data were collected between 2009 and 2011 from 17,625 older men and women across 16 European countries through the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe. Life expectancy was previously used in other studies and also in our research (Mosquera et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1. Data

In order to explain the health-related factors of ageing in European Union countries some panel data models are constructed using data from Eurostat. A proxy for demographic ageing is the ageing index. The explanatory variables are: life expectancy at one year old and self-perceived health as good and very good. The data are registered for all the countries in the EU-28 for the period from 2004 to 2019. The analysis is conducted per total and by gender for the mention variables: demographic ageing index (ageing index for total number of older people, ageing index for males, ageing index for females), life expectancy at one year (life expectancy for all older people, life expectancy for males, life expectancy for females), self-perceived health (self-perceived health for all older people, self-perceived health for males and self-perceived health for females). The data series for life expectancy per total was once differentiated. The new variable is denoted by life expectancy in the first difference (life expectancy growth).

From Table 1, one might observe that Italy presents the highest values for the share of older people in the total population in 2004 and 2019, while Ireland registered the minimum values of this indicator. The tendency of increase in the share of older people is observed for all the EU countries. Italy

is followed by Finland, Portugal, and Greece. Actually, Italy is the second country in the world with the largest percentage of older people after Japan.

Table 1. The share of people of 65 years and over in the total population (%) in the EU member states in 2004 and 2019

Country	2004	2019
Belgium	17.1	18.9
Bulgaria	17.3	21.3
Czech Republic	14	19.6
Denmark	14.9	19.6
Germany	18	21.5
Estonia	16.2	19.8
Ireland	11.1	14.1
Greece	18	22
Spain	16.8	19.4
France	16.2	20.1
Croatia	17.1	20.6
Italy	19.2	22.8
Cyprus	11.9	16.1
Latvia	16.2	20.3
Lithuania	15.4	19.8
Luxembourg	14	14.4
Hungary	15.5	19.3
Malta	13	18.7
Netherlands	13.8	19.2
Austria	15.5	18.8
Poland	13	17.7
Portugal	16.9	21.8
Romania	14.1	18.5
Slovenia	15	19.8
Slovakia	11.6	16
Finland	15.6	21.8
Sweden	17.2	19.9
United Kingdom	15.9	18.4

Source: Eurostat database

Knowing these tendencies, the ageing index will be analysed for the EU countries in the period 2004-2019.

Table 2. The ageing index in the EU member states in 2004 and 2019

Country	2004	2019
Belgium	1.68	1.98
Bulgaria	1.92	2.44
Czech Republic	1.50	1.97
Denmark	1.38	1.97
Germany	2.03	2.90
Estonia	1.61	2.13
Ireland	0.89	1.14
Greece	1.93	2.81
Spain	1.97	2.38
France	1.50	1.98
Croatia	1.61	2.45
Italy	2.31	3.16
Cyprus	0.96	1.65
Latvia	1.64	2.26
Lithuania	1.38	2.35
Luxembourg	1.24	1.55
Hungary	1.59	2.19
Malta	1.16	2.20
Netherlands	1.27	2.01
Austria	1.66	2.30
Poland	1.19	1.90
Portugal	1.74	2.84
Romania	1.21	1.99
Slovenia	1.64	2.28
Slovakia	1.06	1.62
Finland	1.50	2.29
Sweden	1.76	1.91
United Kingdom	1.52	1.78

Source: Eurostat database

As expected, Table 2 suggests that Italy presented the highest ageing index in 2004 and 2019, while Ireland registered the minimum levels. The maximum value of the ageing index was observed in Italy in 2019 (a value of around 3.16) while Ireland started to register values higher than 1 since 2016. All the countries had a tendency of increase for the ageing index.

3.2. Indicators

The dependent variables in the models are represented by: ageing index per total, ageing index for females and ageing index for males. The independent variables are: life expectancy and self-perceived health per total, life expectancy and self-perceived health for females, life expectancy and self-perceived health for males. Three models were constructed for overall population, for females and for males. We used only two explanatory variables in the models since we are conditioned by the data availability and by our objective of proposing only health-related determinants.

The ageing index is computed as the number of persons 65 years old or more over number of persons under 15 old.

Life expectancy at a certain age represents the average number of additional years that someone at that age could expect to live in case that the levels of actual mortality for ages above that specific age were to continue until the end of that person's life.

Self-perceived health is a categorical variable that count for the number of people with a certain health state. This state is appreciated by them. In this study we selected only those with a good and very good health, because they have the highest chances to live more than those with a bad health. We selected only the people with good and very good self-perceived health since these persons have more chances to leave more than people presenting diseases. We expect to have a positive correlation between the health status of these elder and the ageing index.

3.3. Methods

The methodology framework starts with a regression model based on cross-section and time series data- pooled ordinary least squares. The fixed or random effects from panel approach are not considered in this case:

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \sum_j \beta_j X_{jit} + e_{it} \quad (1)$$

$i=1,2,\dots,N$

$t=1,2,\dots,T$

y_{it} - dependent variable at time t

X_{jit} - the j -th independent variable corresponding to i unit at time t

e_{it} - error

β_j - parameter

β_0 - constant

This type of model is transformed for making the estimation using panel data methods with fixed effects that permit to check for individual effects. Considering the hypothesis of specific spatial effect being constant in time, the unobserved characteristics are modelled as fixed effects that are present in the constant of the model having different values for each unit (). The unobserved heterogeneity will be controlled considering that it does not change in time and it is eventually correlated with the model regressors. The one-way fixed effects model has the following form:

$$y_{it} = \beta_{0i} + \sum_j \beta_j X_{jit} + e_{it} \quad (2)$$

$i=1,2,\dots,N$

$t=1,2,\dots,T$

y_{it} - dependent variable corresponding to i unit at time t

X_{jit} - the j -th independent variable corresponding to i unit at time t

e_{it} - error

β_j - parameter

β_{0i} - unobserved individual effect corresponding to i unit, being constant in time (it includes spatial fixed effects)

The model is developed by adding fixed effects for time and two-way fixed effects model is obtained:

$$y_{it} = \beta_{0i} + \gamma_t + \sum_j \beta_j X_{jit} + e_{it} \quad (3)$$

γ_t - time fixed effects

A selection should be made between the initial pooled ordinary least squares model and the mentioned fixed effects model. Therefore, F test is applied to verify the existence of the absence of the individual effects. The test is based on the assumptions:

H0: $\beta_{0i} = 0$ (there are no fixed effects)

H1: $\beta_{0i} \neq 0$ (there are fixed effects)

This statistic of the F test is:

$$F = \left(\frac{ESS_{POLLS} - ESS_{FE}}{N - 1} \right) / \left(\frac{ESS_{FE}}{(T - 1)N - K} \right) \quad (4)$$

K- number of regressors for the fixed effects model

N- number of spatial elements

T- number of time periods

ESS_{POLLS} - sum of square errors for POLS model

ESS_{FE} - sum of square errors for fixed effects model

Fixed effects model contains only individual constants, while random effects model considers constant as being a random variable of mean. In addition, spatial differences are considered as random deviations from the mean.

$$\beta_{0i} = \beta_0 + \varepsilon_i \quad (5)$$

ε_i is the error term with null mean and constant variance equalled with σ_ε^2 .

The composite form of the errors is given by:

$$u_{it} = \varepsilon_i + e_{it} \quad (6)$$

ε_i - error corresponding to cross-sections

e_{it} - random error

The random effects model is written as:

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \sum_j \beta_j X_{jit} + u_{it} \quad (7)$$

$i = 1, 2, \dots, N$

$t = 1, 2, \dots, T$

Hausman test is utilized for the selection between fixed effects and random effects model.

4. Results

The highest proportion of older people in the entire population was registered by Italy (22.8% of population), while the minimum percentage was obtained by Ireland (14.1% of population).

Five groups of countries were selected according to the values of the proportion of older people (65 years and over) in the total population in 2019. In the last cluster, corresponding to the countries with dark brown surface, the highest values for this proportion were registered (values in the interval [19.1%; 22.8%]). In this group of countries with high values of proportion of older people (65 years and over) in the total population 9 countries were identified: Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Finland, Sweden, and Estonia.

The active ageing index (AAI) is designed to aggregate more aspects regarding ageing improvement: protecting employment, sustaining engagement, and diminishing poverty, improving health and life conditions. Different policies were implemented to achieve these objectives. AAI is based on 22 indicators from 4 domains: employment, independent living, social participation and potential for active ageing. AAI for countries should be understood as the limit to which older people's capacity is used and the limit to which these people are allowed and encouraged to live independently and to participate to economic and social life. The scores are located between 0 and 100. A higher score is preferable.

Using the values of demographic ageing index and active ageing index per total and by gender in 2019 for EU-28 countries, some clusters were identified and a comparison was made. The data for active ageing index are provided by "Active Ageing Index 2019: Analytical Report" (<https://unece.org/population/publications/active-ageing-index-analytical-report>).

In cluster 1 are located countries with low values for ageing index, in cluster 2 countries with middle values while in cluster 3 are countries with high values for ageing index.

In case of active ageing, cluster 1 is attributed to countries with low scores. Middle scores are given to countries in the second cluster while in cluster 3 we have countries with high scores (Table 3).

Table 3. Clusters of EU-28 countries according to ageing and active ageing indexes

Country	Ageing index (total)	Ageing index (males)	Ageing index (females)	Active ageing index (total)	Active ageing index (males)	Active ageing index (females)
Belgium	2	1	3	1	3	3
Bulgaria	3	2	2	2	2	2
Czech Republic	2	1	1	1	3	3
Denmark	2	1	3	3	1	1
Germany	3	2	2	1	3	3
Estonia	2	3	1	1	2	1
Ireland	1	3	3	3	1	1
Greece	3	2	1	2	2	2
Spain	2	1	1	1	3	3
France	2	1	3	1	3	1
Croatia	3	1	1	2	3	2
Italy	3	2	2	1	3	3
Cyprus	1	3	3	1	3	3
Latvia	3	1	2	1	2	3
Lithuania	3	1	2	1	2	3
Luxembourg	1	3	3	1	3	3
Hungary	2	1	1	2	2	2
Malta	3	2	1	1	3	2
Netherlands	2	1	3	3	1	1
Austria	3	2	1	1	3	3
Poland	2	3	3	2	2	2
Portugal	3	2	1	1	3	3
Romania	2	1	1	2	2	2
Slovenia	2	1	1	2	2	2
Slovakia	1	3	3	2	2	2
Finland	2	1	1	3	3	1
Sweden	2	1	3	3	1	1
United Kingdom	2	1	3	3	1	1

Source: own calculations based on Eurostat data

K-means method was used to construct the clusters. A number of 3 clusters was selected. Low values for ageing index per total were obtained by: Ireland, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Slovakia. 14 countries registered middle values for ageing index per total: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, France,

Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and United Kingdom. The highest values were obtained by Portugal, Austria, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, Croatia, Greece, Bulgaria, Germany. The results by gender are quite different from the situation per total. For example, for Belgium the ageing index for males had low values, while for females high values were obtained. Per total, Belgium, Denmark, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom are placed in the cluster with middle values. For both genders, Finland, Slovenia, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Spain, and Czech Republic had low values for ageing index, but the situation per total indicated middle value for the index.

Half of the countries obtained low values per total for active ageing index: Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, and Portugal. Only 6 countries had high values for active ageing index: Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Ireland, and Denmark. There are many cases when high values were obtained on gender, but low values per total: Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, and Austria. There is a high risk of material deprivation and risk of poverty for old people in United Kingdom. In the group of countries with middle scores for active ageing index, we have in general a good life expectation. A higher social participation is required for Germany and Estonia. Employment problems are met in Austria, Italy, Belgium, and France. In the group of countries with low scores, Spain, Malta, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia had employment problems in 2019.

All in all, countries with high scores for active ageing index per total in general have very good employment. Ireland is the country that needs policies for stimulating employment. On the other hand, Finland should increase men's employment. However, some improvements should be done in the rest of the countries. For example, a higher relative median income is need for Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

First of all, the stationary character of data in panel is verified using unit root tests. All the data series, excepting life expectancy per total, were stationary. The statistics values are higher than critical values and the p-values are less than 0.05. This means that at 5% level of significance, the null assumption is rejected and we have at least one panel that is stationary (Table 4).

Table 4. The results of Fisher-type unit root tests

Variable	Statistic of modified inverse chi-squared	p-value
ageing index total	17.5494	0.000
ageing index for males	14.645	0.000
ageing index for females	23.5984	0.000
life expectancy total in the first difference (life expectancy growth)	18.2234	0.000
life expectancy for males	12.4779	0.000
life expectancy for females	14.1252	0.000
self-perceived health total	4.8907	0.000
self-perceived health for males	5.728	0.000
self-perceived health for females	4.4197	0.000

Source: own computations based on Eurostat data

More panel data models were estimated to explain the ageing index in EU-28 during 2004-2019. The ageing index represents the dependent variable. Beside the F test for global model, the other types of tests (Modified Wald test for groupwise heteroskedasticity in fixed effect regression model, Breusch-Pagan Lagrangian multiplier test for random effects, Pesaran's test of cross-sectional independence) were applied in order to select the valid models. Model 1 has Driscoll-Kraay standard errors while the other models have robust errors (Table 5).

Table 3. Panel data models to explain the ageing index in EU-28

Model	Coefficients	P> z
Model 1- dependent variable: ageing index total (fixed effects model)		
life_expectancy growth total	0.0566	0.000
self-perceived health total	0.00023	0.000
constant	-3.355	0.000
Model 2- dependent variable: ageing index for males (fixed effects model)		
life expectancy for males	0.0042	0.000
constant	0.5008	0.000
Model 3- dependent variable: ageing index for females (random effects model)		
life expectancy for females	0.00014	0.65
self-perceived health for females	0.0061	0.006
constant	0.7126	0.000

Source: author's computations

A fixed effect model was built for the total ageing index. There are some particular characteristics of the older people that are not measured and that influence their age. For example, genetic features or health status influenced the ageing index. The impact of growth in life expectancy on ageing index is higher than the impact of self-perceived health. An increase in life expectancy growth with 1 year will determine an increase in ageing index with 0.05 units (an increase in ageing rate with 5%). An increase in males' life expectancy with one year will increase the males ageing index with 0.0042 units. For older females, the health influence is higher than life expectancy. So, there are differences between older people by gender. A good and very good self-perceived health for women ensured a higher ageing index while for males the increase in life expectancy is a determinant of demographic ageing.

5. Conclusions

Individuals and their families have to prepare and plan for the old age. Therefore, they should make considerable effort at personal level by adopting an attitude that supposes healthy practices in all the phases of their life. The ageing process involves many types of factors that are inter-correlated and affect individuals' health in all phases of life. The World Health Organization considered the following factors as main determinants of active ageing: economic determinants, social factors, behavioural determinants, social and health services, personal factors, physical environment. There is not a direct cause that can be attributed to these determinants. These factors themselves and the connections between them reflect the population and individuals ageing.

In EU-28, the life expectancy growth and self-perceived health are determinants for overall ageing index over 2004-2019. There are differences between older people by gender. A good and very good self-perceived health for women ensured a higher ageing index while for males the increase in life expectancy is a determinant of demographic ageing. It is recommended for older men for EU-28 to pay a greater attention to the improvement of their health status. Some clusters were built, according to the values of ageing index and active ageing index (high values, middle values and low values).

The political strategies should promote active ageing by ensuring the support for good health in the entire life of people. Older people could significantly improve the quality of their later years if they stay active and if they are fully engaged in life.

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BOOK REVIEW

Spinney, L. (2020) *Gripa spaniolă din 1918. Pandemia care a schimbat lumea / The Spanish flu from 1918. The Pandemic that changed the World*. București: Corint. ISBN: 978-606-793-778-7. 400p.

The publication of the book *The Spanish Flu. The Pandemic that changed the world* was stimulated by the medical situation of the human kind from the year 2020. The book represents a detailed synthesis of data taken out of newspaper articles or documentary funds, but also on scientific studies focused, directly or indirectly, on similar subjects. Masterfully associated by the author, these pieces of information create a fusion between ideas and literal facts that make up a complete image of the phenomenon. The book represents a symbiosis between multiple domains – historical, medical, sociological and geographical – that offer a wide image that revolutionizes the view of this global sanitary phenomenon.

Laura Spinney was born in 1971 in Yorkshire and graduated from Durham University specializing in Natural Sciences. A novel writer and not only, Laura Spinney has also been fond of journalism which led to her collaboration with popular publications such as: “The Economist”, “Nature”, “The Telegraph”, “New Scientist” etc.

One of the reasons behind the appearance of her aforementioned work about the Spanish flu is named by the author herself in the eighth part of the book, “The Inheritance of Roscoe”. In her perspective, for people to be able to willingly accept the measures regarding the prevention of any kind of disease, in this case, those related to flu, they have to be well-informed in regards to the potential effects of the disease and the risks involved by the contamination with the virus. The limitations regarding the obligation to respect the preventive rules have inflicted intolerance amongst the population and, at the same time, led to the inefficiency of the measures regarding the prophylaxis of the flu. As a result, the author pleads, through this very book, in favor of information and awareness, rather than for aggressive persuasion.

The book is structured into eight parts, each of them containing a number of subchapters, which help structure the narrative, thus offering a sort of lightness to the text, keeping the reader on the edge of their seat.

The book, written in accordance with the methodological existing norms, contains a preface signed by the historian Adrian Cioroianu (pp 1-14), an introduction (pp. 19-26) in which the reader is familiarized with the subject of the book and a postface signed by Ph.D. Emanoil Ceasu (pp.365-368). In order to add a plus of information, the author uses illustrations and maps. A single fault shadows the undeniable quality of this work, in a sense that the inscription of the critical device at the end of the book makes the sources more difficult to follow.

In spite of the text being conventional, the title chosen by the author is particularly designed to plant a seed of curiosity in the reader's mind, thus making him want to discover the real dimension of the effects provoked by this pathologic global phenomenon. At the same time, the title that come with each one of the eighth parts of the book, as well as the subchapters, contribute as well to the stimulation of the excitement.

In order to familiarize her readers with the pathology of the flu, the author directs the lecturer's attention towards the time of Hippocrates. By using the teachings of The Father of Medicine, she manages to explain the etymology of the term epidemic (on the people), invented by Hippocrates himself, from which the term "pandemic" is drawn, which is, in fact, a global epidemic.

After a deeper study of the problem, the author analyzes the evolution of the Spanish Flu epidemic and observes that at the moment of its appearance, humanity was more preoccupied with war, making the flu a secondary priority, which allowed it to rapidly transform into a pandemic. Hopelessly treated, in spite of its virulent aggressivity, the Spanish Flu was almost undetectable at the moment of its emergence and became visible only in relation to each individual's personal experience, who suffered the loss of a beloved one because of this destructive virus. Its repercussions have only been visible post factum. Having happened between the two great wars, and other big political and economic events from the 20th century, humanity didn't perceive the flu as an important matter, in spite of the fact that this very flu had produced more victims than both of the great wars, thus taking the lives of approximately 2.5 and 5% of the global population (it's only in India that the flu killed more than it did during World War I).

After a presentation of the pathological manifestations of this disease, the author continues her speech in a rather logical and chronological manner, directing the attention towards the beginning of the flu in the Spring of 1918 (the first human host was the American Albert Gitchel) and continuing with its evolution until the very end.

Given her extreme professional experience which allows her to come up with a very well-argued opinion, the author remarks the fact that the effects of this virus were fluctuating, and its variation regarding the fast spreading and aggressivity were influenced by geographical factors and by the population's genetical structure. It has been speculated that some of these inequalities in front of the virus were a consequence of the "organic inferiority of the races". It is those exact variations that make the flu unpredictable, which worry and upset the medical world, which was confronted with one of the biggest sanitary challenges in history. In order to emphasize the message, the writer exemplifies the situation by using different stories placed in a distinct time and space, showing characters that share from their experiences in the confrontation with this scourge. From this perspective, the text promotes a form of narrative that commutes the characteristics of the scientific text towards the artistic side, which eases the reading process.

Fine observer of the events, the author notices the ungrateful position of the medical societies, completely perplexed and incapable of offering a solution. With a rudimentary pharmaceutical industry and a far from efficient treatment scheme, doctors were overwhelmed by the situation. This fact amplifies the lack of trust of the population in the medical system. People were rather seeking divine consolation and searching for natural remedies instead of medical advice. The isolation, the quarantine, the social distancing were all part of the prevention measures package. However, the flu encouraged the scientific societies to intensify their research actions in order to find a remedy.

As expected, the author explores, in the seventh part of the book, the consequences of this pandemic on the human kind. The flu has indeed attacked the more vulnerable ones, leaving behind a less numerous population but one more powerful and capable of reproducing at a higher rate. A profound analysis of the phenomenon leads to the conclusion that the flu has more strongly impacted the evolution of births than war ever did. Also, the difference between the life span of women and men comes to a balance.

The biggest win of this epidemic was represented by the initiative of more and more governments to embrace the concept of *social medicine* which meant free medical services for all the members of the population. Also, the medical assurance system has started to take shape, its purpose being to assure the finance of the system, and governments had started to better prepare for eventual further epidemics by planning an early awareness system.

In the subchapter “Peace and War”, the author has a rhetorical approach regarding the flu’s effect on the outcome of the war. She reiterates the most common opinion of the historians who are mostly skeptical about the flu’s influence on the destiny of the war. Although, it is unanimously accepted that as a result of its disastrous effects on the soldiers, this flu has accelerated the end of the war. This being said, the Spanish Flu episode highlights the succession of some of the most important historical events, all the way from reconstructions of the political regimes to the beginning of independence moves towards the colonial powers.

It is obvious that, after spreading the awareness on the repercussions of this pandemic, its dramatic episodes were meant to leave a trace in history, thus becoming a theme not only approached by historians, but also by novel writers, painters and musicians. Practically, ever since 1920, artists start breaking out of the romantic era which, related to the current realities, looked like an era of regret and disappointments. So, a period of pessimism and sadness was bound to begin because of the flu which had affected even the psyche of contemporary individuals.

One thing remains clear while reading the work of Laura Spinney: in spite of humanity’s efforts to monitor and prevent the spreading of the virus, its danger is permanent, and the presumption of a new possible pathological kick flies above humanity.

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