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## INTRODUCTORY IDEAS FOR (RE)ADDRESSING PROCESSES OF IDENTIFICATION

The conference on **Renegotiating Socio-Cultural Identities in the Post-Socialist Eastern Europe** was organised between the 28<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 2003 by several academic and non-governmental organisations from Romania. The Institute for Cultural Anthropology (at the Faculty of European Studies, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj), the Interdisciplinary Group For Gender Studies from the same university, the Foundation Desire from Cluj, and the Visual Anthropology Foundation from Sibiu could put together this event due to the generous financial support of the Open Society Institute/Higher Education Support Program from Budapest and of the East-East Program of the Foundation for an Open Society Institute from Bucharest. The participants were scholars and activists from Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary working on several scientific domains, like cultural anthropology, sociology, philosophy, political sciences, history, philosophy, and psychology. But, as planned, the conference had a Western participation as well, in particular from universities from The Netherlands, Great Britain and the United States - financially this was possible due to the existing partnerships between them and our institutions.

Our main objective was to create a framework for a critical and difference-sensitive dialogue between Eastern and Western scholars and activists working on issues of socio-cultural identities and social transformations in the contemporary Europe. The organisers' endeavour was as well to increase the awareness of the Romanian academic, political and public opinion about the social inequalities among different categories within and between countries of the region, and the impacts that the post-socialist transformation processes are having on women and men of different ethnicity,

gender, age and social position. Finally – through this event – we intended to continue and to begin the collaborative work between scholars from Eastern and Western universities, but as well as to carry on the existing co-operation between academics and activists working on issues of discrimination and equal opportunities. According to these objectives our goals were: to identify some of the key theories, concepts and methodologies used in the research of socio-cultural identities and in understanding the ways in which multiple identities are shaped by and are shaping at their turn social changes; to bring to the surface the varied experiences related to the empirical researches pursued in different countries and to create a space for exchanging them; to increase the awareness about the diversity of the issues, approaches, and theoretical and methodological tools regarding the analysis of the impact of the social changes on socio-cultural identities; to discuss the complex relationship between ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and the ways in which these axes of differences are intertwined and are producing different experiences of the social transformations, and the ways in which power regimes are moulding peoples' opportunities to re-negotiate as active subjects their identities and positions in different countries of the region; to understand and to emphasise the importance of the social and cultural research on identities and social inequalities from the point of view of the development and implementation of the public policies regarding equal opportunities; to increase public awareness about the issue of inequalities as linked to identities and social positions; the films presented during the conference (available due to one of the organising institutions, the Visual Anthropology Foundation) offered the chance to a broader public to participate on our event; and last, but not least, our aim was to assure space for a dialog between the participant academics and representatives of non-governmental organisations, working on issues of discrimination and equal opportunities.

We located the discussions about socio-cultural identities in the domain of politics, i.e. in the context of the power relations (understood in the broadest sense of the term), which are structuring the social and the cultural order in all the spheres of private and public life. Considered that individual and collective identities exist as

continuous processes of (self)-identification, consisting both of the practices of cultural/symbolic naming, social positioning and political recognition, and both of the concepts, images and feelings resulting from and/or underlying them.

Understood as processes of (re)-negotiation, identities – as sets of institutionalised practices and personal experiences tied to processes of transformation – and the related issue of social inequalities, are among the central matters of the post-socialist changes in Eastern Europe. They are embedded in nets of symbolic and material power that adjust people's thinking about the nature and the direction of the "proper" changes, define the priorities of the social-economic, cultural and political development, and eventually re-situate individuals and communities in the reconstructed hierarchies of different domains of activity and structure their opportunities both in the private and public life. Throughout these processes, certain social categories are becoming the main actors of the public sites, they acquire the abilities, the legitimacy and the financial conditions of enforcing their self-definition, self-positioning, ways of life and styles of thinking, while others remain the victims, or in the best case the silent objects of the namings, inclusions and exclusions imposed on them by the powerful others. Implicitly, for some, the processes of transformation signify the chance of articulating their own identity – both the forms and contents of their cultural representations, and their social-material interests – and of achieving recognition, while for others these processes imply their muteness and structural inability of displaying themselves as subjects with legitimate demands.

Briefly put, identities are negotiated, permanently remade – on the one hand – on a discursive/ institutional level and – on the other hand – within the context of personal experiences. We planned to discuss our main topic from the perspective of the similarities and differences within and between women and men of different ethnicity, sexual orientation, social position, age and country of belonging, and in particular under the conditions of the post-socialist transformations viewed in the context of the contemporary Europe. Academics and representatives of non-governmental organisations were participating at each session. In this way theoretical issues addressing social inequalities, discrimination and marginalisation, were addressed together with the practical experiences of organisations activating

against these phenomena (besides the studies, our volume presents briefly some of them).

In the Romanian and East European scholarly world, the identity issues understood in this manner started to be addressed from a gender perspective only recently. Our conference aimed to increase the impact of such voices on the academic and public life, and to raise the consciousness about the ways in which the gendered power regimes are defining unequally the chances of women and men of different ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and social position to participate as active subjects in the processes of negotiating their identities and positions. This endeavour was strictly related to the fact that the conference was conceived also as an event, which ended the three year long curriculum development project of the Interdisciplinary Group for Gender Studies from Cluj, fulfilled within a partnership with the Centre for Women's Studies from the University of Nijmegen (The Netherlands) and the Research Centre for Women's Studies from the University of Sussex (Great Britain).

Unfortunately not all the participants sent their papers for this volume, and, as the interested reader may observe, the structure of the latter is different from the way in which the conference program presented at the end of the book was structured in plenary discussions and sessions. Some of the articles are quite well elaborated, but others look more like oral presentations. The coordinators have not changed the way in which they were conceived and presented.

Through the way in which we arranged the contents of this publication we would like to express once again our conviction according to which ethnicity, gender, class and other markers of differences are intertwined in the processes of identification (both in the terms of cultural representation and social positioning), so the gender perspective is not only additive to other approaches. One may decide to address or not to address this phenomenon from a gender perspective, to observe it or not from the point of view of the ways in which gender structures it, but should not forget that the socially constructed gender identities and relations are always central mechanisms of our everyday life.

*The coordinators*

## THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF POST-SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATIONS

## GENDER, POWER AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: SOME KEY ISSUES IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

*Barbara Einhorn*

*'The mission of building gender-inclusive democracies is far from being fulfilled. ... We must ensure that women's voices are a vital part of global politics. Simply put, if women are excluded from democracy, democracy fails' (Posadskaya-Vanderbeck, 2002: 7).*

### Introduction

In the short time available for presentation, I propose to focus on three areas, which I have characterised as: the context, theoretical contestations, and strategies for gender equality in political participation. Clearly, the transformation process occurring in East Central Europe involves for most of the countries several processes going on at the same time: the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy, the transformation of a state socialist to a democratic political system, and the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial economy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It goes without saying that the transformation process has differed in pace and scope within individual countries, and varies across sub-regions. Some of the issues I shall flag up in this presentation – and certainly the trend of changes in the 12 years since the transformation began – varies, sometimes even moving in opposite directions, both within and between the sub-regions of East Central Europe, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and Central Asia. Indeed in terms of formal political representation, the gap between these regions is widening.

The fundamental nature of these changes has resulted in profound social as well as economic and political dislocations. The relative retreat of the state from welfare provision within the externally imposed neo-liberal paradigm has made the impact of change acute (Steinhilber 2002). Some of the negative effects have been huge increases in poverty, and a widening income gap. Such losses are perhaps matched by new opportunities, both in terms of entrepreneurship and the freedom - not always matched by the capacity - to organise politically. Yet in several countries the increased space for individuation and establishment of differentiated identities has led to discrimination and conflict based on ethnic or religious 'otherness'.

Most significantly from our point of view today, however, is the intrinsically gendered nature of the transformation process (Gal and Kligman, 2000a, 2000b). Women have lost economic rights and social entitlements, which were theirs in the past, and their newly won political rights seem up to now to remain largely paper rights. Not only is the gap between rich and poor widening; so too is the gender gap, across a wide spectrum: within the economy, in the polity, in media representations, in nationalist and religious discourses, in terms of reproductive rights, social rights, the feminisation of poverty, trafficking and violence. The political, economic and social aspects of the transformation process were accompanied by a reconfiguration of gender dynamics. Indeed, understandings of what constituted 'masculinity' and 'femininity' shifted in a way that structured as well as reflecting the transformation process (Duhacek, 1998).

### **The context**

The transformation process in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, in all its complexity and multi-layeredness, is occurring within the framework of two further supra-regional transformation processes, both of them exerting a direct impact on the shape and direction of change within the region. The first of these is globalisation, a process setting East European workers and industries into the formerly unknown global market. The impact on heavily

feminised industries in the region such as textiles has been immediate, with the loss of heavily subsidised trade with the Soviet Union and competition with even cheaper female workers in East and Southeast Asia. The second, currently more centrally important process is that of EU enlargement. Like the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War before it, what is little recognised is that the process of EU enlargement and integration has implications for both sides of the process, implying change in the West as well as in the East. Many of the problematic areas in terms of women's rights, which I shall mention in this paper, of course also remain thorny and largely unresolved issues to varying degrees in existing member states.

The first round of enlargement, to be implemented from the beginning of 2004 - will integrate the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, but, as of a European Commission decision in October 2002, NOT Bulgaria and Romania as originally planned. There is a very real danger that this process will create second and third class European citizenship for those countries left out in the cold, reinforcing already widening gaps between the 'in' group of countries in East Central Europe and the Baltic states, and the countries of Eastern and south-eastern Europe (with the exception of Slovenia), not to mention Russia, and Central Asia.

A second danger is that the EU's exclusive focus on the economic sphere will simply elide many of the most crucial problems of political participation and social entitlements faced by women in the region. In a recent conference paper on behalf of the KARAT Coalition of women's NGOs from the region, Regina Indshewa-Barendt stated: 'If state intervention remains limited to the labour market, as was the case under socialism, the most immediate impact is to intensify the exploitation of women on the one hand, and fail to alter the traditional gendered division of labour on the other. We in the region have known this for 25 years, but it is only now slowly gaining recognition in the EU'. The dangers for gender equality inherent in the way that in the EU 'from the beginning the social has been subsumed within the economic and only given a separate focus when this appeared

functional or necessary to economic integration' has been identified earlier by Catherine Hoskyns (Hoskyns, 1996: 207), but not necessarily adequately addressed within EU policy.

The EU policy of gender mainstreaming – even in existing EU countries – hides a lack of conceptual clarity in terms of meaning, intentionality or purpose: is the goal, for example, equal treatment, equality of opportunity, or equality of outcomes? Does it necessitate equal opportunity legislation or anti-discrimination legislation? Is there a problem in the fact that gender mainstreaming is a top-down strategy? Might a crucial political edge in terms of feminist goals of social transformation be lost through this strategy? 'Gender mainstreaming should not replace politics' (Verloo, 2002). Nor should it be used to mask issues of women's rights, or withdraw funding from, or replace, measures of positive discrimination for women. In practice, gender-mainstreaming strategies, especially within the EU context, are often formulated in terms of economic efficiency, hence effective strategies for integrating women into the labour market, rather than in terms of political transformation with the goal of gender equality.

Added to the lack of conceptual clarity is the fact that 'almost all accession countries have commissions or departments on equal opportunities, but, with very few exceptions, they hardly understand the concept, not to mention the initiative they may take or the competence they have to carry out activities in this respect' (IHF, 2000:17). In Poland, the Equal Opportunities Officer appointed in November 2001 does not have an automatic right to attend cabinet meetings, nor to insist that her recommendations are translated into legislation or government policy. Recent attempts by the Parliamentary Women's Lobby to introduce a draft Equal Opportunities Bill into the Polish Sejm, for example, met with laughter and ridicule. The only country to have an ombudsperson dealing with gender issues is Lithuania, which in June 2002 introduced amendments to its 1998 Equal Opportunities legislation allowing resort to 'positive discrimination' in order to ensure women's rights (NWP/OSI, 2002:14). There is a need, recognised in some existing EU

member states, for example Germany, for state institutions to institute a dual strategy of this kind, combining gender mainstreaming with positive measures to enhance gender equality.

Even where the formal mechanisms and legislation are in place, there are questions about the level of implementation. As in Western Europe, many of the countries in the region lack sufficient numbers of women in positions of power in legislatures and in trade unions who are committed to gender equality and might ensure that the legislation, once passed, becomes a reality. The Polish case suggests, too, that compliance or non-compliance with the gender norms of EU legislation is unlikely to impede, or delay, accession for those countries already due to join in 2004 (Steinhilber, 2002).

Moreover, there is a danger that EU enlargement might result in an equalisation downwards, whereby women in Central and Eastern Europe are forced to accept *lower* levels of female political participation, labour force participation, childcare provision, pay equity or reproductive rights than they were accustomed to. This is already evident in some aspects of the German unification process.

### **Theoretical paradigms contested**

One of the aspects of the end of the Cold War and, more recently, of the EU enlargement process, which is often overlooked, is that they are processes involving change on both sides. In this context, it must be noted that we in Western Europe have much to learn from the experiences of women in Central and Eastern Europe. Where change in Western Europe has been achieved through struggle from below, they have experience of rights handed down from above by a paternalistic state, but within a context, which lacked individual rights, and the political and public space in which civil society associations can function. There is therefore a great need for the establishment (and expansion of existing) networks within which there is both the capacity and the willingness for mutual listening and learning. One inspiring example of networking and a 'transversal politics' in which women show willingness to listen, learn, and work

together while respecting and not trying to erase their differences, is the cross-ethnic project coordinated by Cynthia Cockburn in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Cockburn, 2000; Cockburn et al, 2001; for the concept of 'transversal politics employed by Cockburn in this path breaking work, see Yuval-Davis, 1997).

Since the transformation process began, feminists in Central and Eastern Europe have been at pains to stress differences, not only between countries within the region, but also in relation to what are perceived as hegemonic Western feminist theories. Dasa Duhacek ponders the difficulty of definition in constructing a theory relevant to the needs of women in the region. 'How do we speak of feminism which is other *than* Western feminism, if not as a feminism which is the other to it, which would presuppose Western feminism as the parameter?' (Duhacek, 1998: 129).

Dasa Duhacek is one of several analysts who explain hostility to Western feminism as the result of the different significance attached to the private sphere and hence to the public/private divide in the region (Duhacek, 1998; Einhorn, 1993, 2003; Gapova, 2001). Commentators from the region see this as the main explanatory factor in East European women's resistance to feminism, which they interpret as women striving for autonomy *against* men as opposed to the solidarity within the family whilst it was a rump 'civil society' space and hence a kind of substitute public sphere and site of resistance during the state socialist period (Drakulic, 1992; Duhacek, 1998; Havelkova, 1993: 69; 2000; Jalusic, 2002; Zhurzhenko, 2001).

Despite these analyses, several scholars from the region are now modifying their initial reactions, partly as a result of engaging, at conferences and in networks, in the difficult but creative process of East-West feminist dialogue. Hana Havelkova writes: 'I believe that East European women tend to over-emphasise the differences between Western theories and post-Communist realities ... attempting to protect their own authentic experiences against the invading feminist theory' (Havelkova, 2000: 120). Judit Acsady (1999: 407) analyses the media's role in creating hostility to feminism as 'Western ideology', which is 'alien to Hungarian tradition'. Denise Roman speaks of the

'fallacious' rejection of Western feminism by East European feminists. She sees potential for Central and Eastern Europe in Third Wave difference-based feminisms: 'the very Western definition of gender as "socially", "historically", and thus locally and contextually constructed (Scott, 1986), is indeed useful as an analytical-theoretical tool for surveying gender relations *anywhere* and *anytime*, ... - even if the dynamic of patriarchy or women's politics [in any one country, at a particular moment in history, BE] is revealed to be specifically different, thus claiming particular normative propositions'. She sees in such concepts as Mouffe's 'coalition politics' or Yuval-Davis's 'transversal politics', analytical and potentially normative frameworks for the development of a 'democratic, gendered future' (Roman, 2001: 61, 62, 64).

### Strategies for gender equality

An ongoing debate within feminisms globally concerns the merits of top-down versus bottom-up approaches. Post-Beijing, and within the framework of EU enlargement, there has been a tendency to look to top-down gender mainstreaming strategies. However, in the Central and Eastern European region this strategy is hampered by the lack of women at leadership level, and the fact that women's rights are, with few exceptions, not part of political party platforms. There is also a very strongly felt suspicion of statist approaches because of the experience of an all-powerful and invasive state during the socialist period (Szalai, 1990). When Western or Southern feminists ponder whether or not to 'give up on the state' they are, with the exception of Latin American countries recovering from military dictatorships, not speaking from similar experiences of the state. Nevertheless, even within the region, the role of the state was contradictory. On the one hand, it controlled all spheres of life; on the other, it dispensed women's rights and social rights on a silver platter, so that, as Irene Dölling has noted, there was no tradition of struggle for rights; indeed many women were unaware of the rights they did enjoy under the previous regime until they lost them in the process of transformation (Dölling, 1991).

This resistance to state-led solutions has – up to now - expressed itself, among other ways, in rejection of the notion of quotas. Quotas seem to many, including feminists from the region, to smack of the undemocratic manipulation of the political process in the previous regime, and the installation of figurehead, puppet ‘representatives’ in parliaments whose job it was merely to rubber-stamp decisions taken elsewhere, i.e. in the Central Committees and Politburos of the ruling Communist Parties. However, the experience of drastically falling levels of female political representation during the past 12 years has led to shifts in attitude<sup>1</sup>. Women activists in Georgia, Latvia, and Poland, for example, now advocate the adoption of quotas for women as the necessary short-term strategy for achieving some level of critical mass of women, or of gender equity, in parliaments and legislatures. In Poland, strong lobbying by the Parliamentary Women’s Lobby and the adoption by three political parties of a 30% quota rule led to an increased percentage share, rising from 13% in 1997 to 20% in 2001 in the Sejm (Lower House) and from 12% to 23% in the same period in the Senate (Upper House) (Fuszara, 2000; Spurek, 2002).

Another reason for not abandoning the state, which is particularly relevant in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, is the loss of social entitlements, which followed – or indeed characterised – the transformation process. Women’s loss of access to the labour market has been well documented (Einhorn, 1993, 1997, 2003; Lokar, 2000). So also have the issues of discriminatory hiring practices and sexual harassment that have followed. (Einhorn, 2003; Lokar, 2000;

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<sup>1</sup> Women’s political representation fell drastically in the first democratic elections from an average 33% to levels of 10% and below. Even more alarmingly (given the token nature of representation during the state socialist period), the level fell further in several countries in subsequent democratic elections. Thus in Albania, for example, women held 36% of parliamentary seats prior to 1989. Their share fell to 20% in 1991, but much more drastically, to 7% in the 1997 elections. There appears to be an East-East divide opening up, with Central European countries showing some improvement in levels of female political participation in subsequent elections, while Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the Central Asian republics levels continue to fall. However, in several countries where there has been improvement, it is only slight. In Ukraine, women held 4.2% of parliamentary seats in 1994, and 5.6% in 1998. In Hungary, the level rose from 7% in 1990 to 8.5% in 1998 (NWP/OSI, 2002: 11; UNICEF, 1999; in several cases, what has happened is that the East European level has fallen to one comparable with Western European countries).

NWP/OSI, 2002). I have long argued that the neo-liberal market paradigm empowers the male economic actor as the citizen with the capacity to exchange contracts in the marketplace. If one adds to that the nationalist and religious discourses paramount in several countries of the region which allot women sole responsibility for the private sphere and enjoin them to produce babies for the nation (Gapova, 1998; Slapsak, 1997), discourses almost conveniently reinforcing the economy’s need to shed labour, the closure of childcare facilities, and restrictions on rights to abortion, then two things become clear.

First, as I have expounded elsewhere (Einhorn, 1995, 2000), a theory of entitlements rather than one of citizenship rights best enables us to encapsulate the necessary conceptual and practical linkages between market, state and household. Second, we need to reiterate that the state, as traditional provider of services and monitor of working conditions, has a crucial role to play in enabling women to develop the capacity to access both market and polity on an equal basis with men. Whether ‘the state’ in this context remains the nation-state, or this role is increasingly taken on by supra-national legislative and enforcement bodies such as the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice, is a development to be watched.

Finally, I want to address my theory, also expounded elsewhere, of the civil society ‘gap’ and indeed ‘trap’ (Einhorn, 2000; Einhorn and Sever, 2003). KARAT, an advocacy coalition of women’s NGOs in the region formed following the 1995 Beijing UN conference, states that women are active in NGOs on an equal basis with men, and that NGOs have been successful in influencing government policy in several countries. However, they also document the lack of capacity building and expertise, the dependence on foreign donors and the distortions this can produce in NGO priorities and activities (Indshewa-Barendt, 2002; KARAT, 2002). KARAT speaks of the necessity of professionalisation of NGO advocacy work; Sabine Lang argues in contrast that the ‘NGOization of feminism’ dilutes its political and dynamic impact (Lang, 1997).

My civil society ‘trap’ theory relates to the ways in which women’s unpaid labour – often of women made redundant, told they

are 'too old' to work at 40, but determined to remain active – in providing social services such as childcare or care of the elderly, remains invisible, simultaneously depended upon and unrecognised by state agencies. Women's NGOs and grassroots activist groups are filling the vacuum where the state has withdrawn from public service provision. This seems to me a 'trap', which at least in part derives from the idealisation of civil society, which followed the fall of state socialism. Civil society was seen as the epitome of the democratic space, which had been lacking earlier, both by dissident activists and (primarily male) theorists within the region, and by Western analysts and international agency donors. There are debates around the conceptualisation of civil society and its relationship to women's or feminist movements. As Ferenc Misslevitz, a Hungarian academic and dissident activist once commented: 'We dreamed of civil society. What we got were NGOs'.

My civil society 'gap' theory relates to the lack of channels of communication between NGOs and social movements on the one hand, and political power structures and state agencies on the other. How does civil society activism by women translate into gender-sensitive policymaking? KARAT identifies two problems in the region, which precisely exemplify this 'gap': 'Despite the fact that a process of opening the state authorities to the public has started, NGOs are kept outside mainstream policy formation'. .. The main obstacle is the unresponsiveness and unwillingness of the administration to engage in a dialogue with civil society or even with other departments and governmental institutions' (KARAT, 2002). In conclusion, I would argue - not a new insight, but one in need of repetition - that there is a need for both top-down gender mainstreaming policies and for grassroots campaigning pressure on the part of strong women's and feminist movements.

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## BETWEEN STIGMATIZATION AND RESISTANCE: A CREATION OF 'VICTIMIZED GROUPS' IDENTITY IN POLAND

*Michał Buchowski*

Blaming the victims is an old strategy. It takes also place in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. I will now analyze the new practices of it in Poland, but one can easily confirm the wider relevance of this phenomenon (see. Kideckel 2001, 2002, on workers in Romania). I limit my account to a presentation of the views of two leading and internationally recognized scholars, one economist and one sociologist. My critique here is also restricted to its sociological and 'moral' consequences and that does not refer to cognitive vices of such discourses and their anthropological shortcomings.

At least three relatively parallel idioms of internal societal discrimination are easily identifiable: urban vs. rural, educated vs. uneducated, and winners vs. losers of transformation. One can say that the 'Others' are not confined to distant places but can now live side by side with 'us', occupy the same place, speak the same language and believe in the same god. Moreover, in most places in Central Europe this is not yet the question of immigrants settling down in localities, but assumed others living among 'us'. This makes them discrete and pervasive at the same time.

For the troubles brought about by Poland's economic reform, various groups are accused: crooked politicians, corrupted bureaucrats, selfish entrepreneurs and international agencies, including the EU. However, in elite dominant discourses in the mass media and scholarly analyses it is the 'subaltern's' nature' that blames workers, agricultural workers and peasants for their own degraded circumstances and for society's difficulties which generally "trumps

this critique" (Kideckel 2001: 98). Real workers and peasants have largely disappeared from public discourses. Many stories tell about unemployment, black market and economic problems that, while addressing macro-level issues, miss the grass-roots perspective. Underprivileged groups are depicted during situations of conflict like strikes and road blockades. In the absence of rooted in and confronted with details of social life studies, ideological and essentialized images are concocted. Media images encouragingly emphasize new kinds of employment and material culture. Advertisements portray middle-class professionals and high-tech products that have little relation to 'ordinary people'.

The voice of the powerless and the poor rarely makes it through the accepted democratic procedures. Subalterns have to resort to radical methods if they want to articulate their interests and are afterward accused of demagoguery. Then, however, they are described as uncivilized and ignorant of the 'new deal'. Recently, they have been created as 'new others' of transitions. In support of this argument, let me cite an opinion of Jan Winiecki, one of the leading Polish economists who said this in an interview with *Wprost*, the largest Polish weekly magazine:

Q: And, indeed nobody lost in the recent transformations?

A: The former workers of liquidated state farms are the only group that lost in absolute terms (not only in relation to the other groups). They are really doing bad because *they haven't learned how to work* and after the dissolution of these deficient creations they have no place now from where they *can steal*.

Q: Who has benefited the most?

A: People who want and can work to succeed. Now it is entrepreneurship and knowledge that counts—those who have understood this first have become the biggest beneficiaries of the system.

Q: Who has proved to benefit the least?

A: *The problem of Poland is the Poles themselves who wait for a manna from heaven and think that they deserve everything without work and commitment. It is the passive part of society that is at fault. These people are demoralized by the previous system*

and by those they vote for (Cielemęcki and Trębski 1999: 46; my emphasis)<sup>1</sup>.

For this economist, hundreds of thousands of former agricultural workers confined to areas in which unemployment is often well over thirty percent<sup>2</sup>, it is obvious that they are culpable for their own fate. Why? Because they are lazy and the only thing they have ever done properly is stealing. The recipe to cure Poland is simple: Getting rid of 'them' will solve all the predicaments Poland finds itself in. For those who share these liberal economic views, are the people caught in the structural framework, which they cannot really influence, are not people with problems but they themselves the problem. One can easily recognize a strategy of blaming the victims and accusing them for strategic economic failures. But agricultural workers are not the only ones being held responsible for their own suffering.

*"In capitalist industrialization workers coming from the countryside had to accept existing standards of good work, discipline and ordinary fairness. It was easy, by the way, since capitalism by rule strengthened such positive features by rewarding those hard working and innovative. In the case of socialist industrialization it was the other way round. Cohorts of 'socialist nomads', according to the brilliant phrase of professor Surażska, went out of community's control and landed in a moral vacuum. Communism did not have any moral philosophy and created a system of stimuli which rewarded the cheating of superiors, spying and stealing."*

*"This big industry lumpenproletariat during post-communism has become a stronghold of opposition against market capitalism. When it turned out that the price for good work is a submission to the capitalist standards of work, its representatives turned against change..."*

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<sup>1</sup> By the way, it was Montagu Norman, chief of the Bank of England in the interwar period, who said: "it is the misfortune of Poland that she is populated by Poles" (Pease 1986: 12, quoted after Burgess 1997: 53). Winiecki seems to have the same opinion.

<sup>2</sup> In April 2003 unemployment rate reached, according to official statistics, 18.7%.

“Demoralization was not distributed equally under communism in the countryside either. Although demoralizing processes had taken place in all social environments, they had been most prevalent among state farm workers and their families. For several decades they made a living from two sources: *state salaries and what they managed to steal from the farm. This has enormously devastated their ethic.* Members of this group, maybe even more than the big industry *lumpenproletariat*, have also become ‘orphans’ after PPP [Polish Peoples Republic] who are ready to follow any *demagogue* luring them in with the empty promise of easy money without any solid effort on their part.”

“It is not Polish capitalism that has been slowed down in its development, but rather the people who grew up in the *lumpenproletariat* milieu whose lack of standards stopped the process of evolution in the direction of capitalist normality! The demanding attitude makes these people similar to urban and rural *lumpenproletariat*” (Winiecki 2001; my emphasis).

This approach shares all the vices in theorizing ‘transition’. First, it divides societies into *winners and losers*, ultimately translated into those wise and able to adapt and those half-witted and unable to adapt, apt and inept. Of course, the first group defines the modes of adaptation and criteria for evaluation. If individuals or groups cannot follow suit, they simply deserve their poor fate. They have proven to be ‘civilizationally incompetent’ (Sztompka 1993), show a “general lack of discipline and diligence” (Sztompka 1996: 119) and obstruct the efforts of those who are accomplished and the progress of whole societies in the region on its way to becoming ‘normal’. The incapacity to reject old mental habits forms a complex of the legendary *homo sovieticus* (Sztompka 2000: 55) which is characterized by such phenomena as egalitarian and demanding attitudes, ‘disinterested envy’, anti-intellectualism and aversion towards the elite, double standards for public and private life and the acceptance of meagre performance. These people do not know how to make sense of the new symbolic order and cannot fit into the new institutional design in

which ‘civilizational competence’ is king! Some are civilized, while the others are uncivilized, *ergo* primitive. This division into a civilized ‘us’ and primitive ‘them’ reaches back to the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment scientific division of the world. Today we do not have to go to the Andaman Islands in search of primitives. This separation also harks back to the entrenched notion of ‘gentlemen and the mob’<sup>1</sup>. It also promptly associates attributes deemed by the dominant culture as positive with the West, capitalism and progress, and those qualities regarded as negative with the East, communism and backwardness. The *Occident* is contrasted with the *Orient*, but, as I said, the border between the East and the West now runs mostly across societies whereas still by the end of the 1980s it was charted, first and foremost, only on the geographic map. One can ask, how did it happen that after decades of a common historical experience with real socialism in Eastern Europe that some people have been able to curtail ‘bad habits’ within them, and others have not? Is not it a paradox that the members of the Communist *nomenclature* who should have been imbued most with elements of the old system’s *habitus*, proved to be one of the quickest in switching to the new symbolic system, in mastering ‘civilizational competence’?

Second, the world depicted in this way is configured according to dichotomised, *black and white* logic. Communism promoted cynicism, nepotism, collectivism, egalitarianism and a diffused individual responsibility; a feeling of impotence towards destiny and even a kind of mysticism prevailed. In capitalism individualism, realism, efficiency, freedom of creativity, human subjectivity and responsibility are supreme; it is future oriented and along with democracy it demands involvement in public affairs (Sztompka 2000: 55-60). But it is only among those unfit, uneducated, and unable to adapt that progressive traits cannot prevail. Alternatively, learned and clever people, those ‘modern nobles’ who are ‘civilizationally competent’, have immediately deciphered the free market’s *modus operandi*. They do not cause problems and, according to the distorted idea of the

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<sup>1</sup> To trace this issue will demand elaborated studies. It is conspicuous that peasants (and sometime workers) were often treated as ‘potato sacks’, folklore’s European Other, both romanticised and humiliated (for Central Europe see, for example, Conte and Giordano 1999).

survival of the fittest, they are *winners*. However, this dichotomous picture twists the reality of various continuities in social practices before and after 1989 that do not result from the fact that *homo sovieticus* still prevails in people and that the socialist *habitus* reigns in societies, but from the logic of structural similarities in modernist projects and historical connections between an artificially divided East and West.

Third, a view of social practice advocated by Sztompka and Winiecki is, in fact, *anti-sociological*. Social life is treated as the result of political and economic standards imposed upon people. Strategies often cited for dealing with the ‘trauma of change’, such as innovative adaptation, the accumulation of capital, the escape into apathy or resignation, ceremonial retreats into outmoded ‘socialist’ reactions misplaced in the new context, and criminal adaptation (Sztompka 2000: 86-95), cannot do justice to the role of actors in shaping forms of social life. Actors appear as passive recipients of the reality that comes, somehow, like bolts from heaven. Perhaps one could read Winiecki’s statement that ‘the problem of Poland are the Poles themselves’ as recognizing the active role of the people in social life, but the context of his standpoint clearly shows that it is passive obstruction of the modernization attempts from outside that he has in mind. Poor folks are not subjects of change, but its objects.

I am inclined to see social life in terms of Bourdieu’s (1990) theory of practice in which people living in a given historical context co-produce it. The structural framework in which individuals and groups act is constantly reinterpreted and in this way the setting acquires new shapes. Social forms emerge at the interface of the hardware of systemic circumstances and the software of human beings acting within them and upon them, by which they constantly restructure these imminent forms. The actor’s images and deeds constantly modify the reproduction of social practice that should not be evaluated in terms of its correspondence with the assumed ideals of democracy and the free market. It takes on a myriad of forms one cannot simply define as wrong and repeating past wrongdoings. No one has a right to assess social practices in pejorative words that measure the value of millions of people in accordance with prejudged images about what is correct and what is wrong according to dominant cultural standards.

Fourth, it is *teleological*. For Sztompka the current transformation is a period of “cultural ambivalence” between communism and the democratic and free market culture. “Only after the influence of the *Homo Sovieticus* mentality is reduced and disappears will we be sure that the Polish nation would cure itself forever from its post-communist trauma” (Sztompka 2000: 106). Fifth, it is also *idealistic*. There is a universal hope for the generational exchange. Young people “have not become victims of all these issues of ‘learned helplessness’ of ‘civilizational incompetence’, of ‘cultures of cynicism’ and ‘lack of trust’ that threatened the generation of their parents... Their world is relatively still and stable, secure and predictable” (ibid. 107). One may wonder, how is it possible that this generation spoiled by communism created such a tranquillity and prospective future for their offspring? Sixth, it is *ideological*. This praise for the new system and the prosperous future shining on the horizon recalls the promised land often described by communist propaganda that interestingly enough also mentioned the necessity of getting rid of bad bourgeois habits and ‘post-capitalist modes of thought’.

All in all, the salience accorded to the power of tradition and mental habits, a freezing notion of the *homo sovieticus* who is unable to change his or her mind and behaviour, makes this approach *culture-deterministic*. Essentialized culture and custom, perceived as a burden (contrary to the Western positive pattern), condition people’s reactions and society’s destiny. People caught in their modes of thought cannot modify their reactions, are unable to catch up and obliterate progress towards liberal ideals.

Sztompka’s and Winiecki’s arguments can be presented in the form of a dyad (Fig. 1).

*Socialism vs. capitalism and post-socialist vs. capitalist mentalities (Piotr Sztompka 2000 and Jan Winiecki 2001)*

<i>Socialism</i>	<i>Capitalism</i>
Cynicism	Realism
Nepotism	Efficiency
Collectivism	Individualism
Egalitarianism	Subjectivism

<i>Socialism</i>	<i>Capitalism</i>
Diffused individual responsibility	Individual responsibility
Impotence towards destiny	Future oriented
Mysticism and escape from social affairs	Involvement in society via democracy
Learned helplessness	Learned resoluteness
Lack of trust	Trust
Apathy	Innovative adaptation
Waste of capital	Accumulation of capital
Criminal adaptation	Respect for the law
Lack of work ethic	High standards of work ethic
Low productivity	High productivity
Dishonesty	Honesty
Passivity (waiting for manna)	Activity
<i>Homo Sovieticus</i> (PS): - anti-intellectualism - aversion to elites - double standards for public and private life - acceptance of meagre performance	<i>Homo Westernicus</i> (MB, by analogy): - intellectualism - respect for elites - unified standards for any sphere of life - contempt for meagre performance

Is the intellectual and national level the ultimate one for ‘nesting Orientalism’? Definitely not and let me cite what I heard during my fieldwork. Here is what a relatively successful entrepreneur living in the suburbs of Poznań had to say about his fellow countrymen living in the Polish countryside:

In the Polish nation, *homo sovieticus* is deeply rooted ... Look at the last election result [the presidential elections in 1995] that is the effect of this. There is still a disco-polo Poland [a contemporary popular music style regarded as plebeian and typical of rural taste]. This is still a Poland of people lost, confined to state farms, in small-town state enterprises, of people who don’t see any future and rapidly lost their means of subsistence. They feel forlorn and don’t have a ‘gene’ for creating, for looking for something different, for seeking a new road (An entrepreneur in Swarzędz; see Buchowski 2001: 295).

One might ask if he has read or if he is a student of Sztompka and Winiński?

But this is not the bottom of this ladder. In everyday discourses in Poland, rural communities are usually the bottom rungs of ‘nesting

Orientalism’. However, in the rural community of Dziekanowice in Wielkopolska I observed intermittently that there are still other internal Others. My case shows that “‘Community’ is never simply the recognition of cultural similarity or social contiguity but a categorical identity that is premised in various forms of exclusion and construction of otherness” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 13). At least four, however arbitrarily established, social groups can be distinguished: white-collars, agricultural proletarians, village proletarians (blue-collars living in the countryside and working in non-agricultural enterprises) and farmers (see Buchowski 1997). Local white-collars consider proletarians to be a deprived, unenlightened ‘grey mass’. Village proletarians that work in the non-agricultural sector perceive local former state farm workers as an alcohol-abusing lower class. For farmers, the latter are ‘lazy jerks’ or ‘chards’. Are these former state farm workers the bottom rung of nesting Orientalism in Poland or even Europe? Maybe, but there is a false bottom to this pecking order. Agricultural proletarians call the farmers *bambry* or *babole*, metaphorically ‘red-necks’, i.e. their own internal ‘others’. So, who is ‘primitive’ after all? Here seems to be a turning point at which images are reversed, or, in order to be closer to my view of social representations, a reverse side of a network of mutual social perceptions in a huge and intricate hall of mirrors. A beginning that goes further on: deprived and seemingly powerless rural communities that glorify the pristine values of the Polish countryside life; populist politicians that scorn the ruling establishment; nationalists that reject Europe and defend a glorious tradition against the dark powers of global evil; impoverished people in Eastern Europe that present the West as a hell on earth.

This microcosm in which some feel better vis-à-vis others who, in turn feel better vis-à-vis some other others, exemplifies several important issues for anthropological studies. Resistance to dominating images and practices becomes a significant factor in the reconstruction of identity of those who are constructed by those in control. In our case, various orientalized groups oppose the system that is perceived by them, and indeed presented to them, as alien, as a proper of ‘them’. They employ the same language in their description used by the others for the description of the others. Pilfered words, symbols and

images are considered authentic and used in self-defence. The power of the powerful becomes a power of the powerless against the others. Subalterns openly claim that elites are responsible for the troubles of transformation and their poor standard of living. The consolidation of the deprived is further crystallized and then exposes them to even more fierce attacks launched by those powerful and their mouthpieces. Winiecki, for example, accuses the *lumpenproletarians* for blindly following populist politicians. "This leads us to suspect that struggle and resistance are themselves implicated in the reproduction of culturally based class differences that are the necessary condition of inequality" (Kearney 2001: 249). The social mobilization of 'the masses' demands symbols that function as positive marks of distinction and solidarity within them. Contestation, defiance and the reproduction of cultural habits are reproachfully described by Sztompka as a socialist yoke. Signs of solidarity epitomize a harmful capital of those backward and play a part in the process of their segregation, in crafting the image of their social and cultural inferiority. Road blockades, support for movements/parties contesting the 'new deal'—such as 'Samobrona' (Self-defence) or 'Solidarity 80'—and daily resistance to the free market economy are presented as 'primitivism' or populism. Social inequality is thus reproduced not only by the uneven distribution of power and wealth—which is as well a derivative of social relations—but also by the daily routine and opposition to such difference. The situation is thus dialogic: discriminated subalterns mobilized in their movements "promoting a culturally based solidarity... actively participate in the reproduction of difference that is sine qua non of their subjugation" (Kearney 2001: 262).

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## THE PERSISTENCE OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN ROMANIA ACROSS POLITICAL REGIMES

*Enikő Magyari-Vincze*

### **Introducing the issue**

The legacy of the socialist gender equality politics and the post-socialist trends of inequality underlie the need for investigating and rethinking our issue in the post-socialist Romania from a feminist perspective. A complex socio-cultural analysis of the topic needs to be able to approach the production and performance of gender identities and relations both at the level of ideologies and policies, which produce certain gendered subject positions, and that of the experiences of everyday life, acknowledging also the means by which these are shaping each other reciprocally. It also has to be insightful towards the ways in which the intertwined systems of power are creating inequalities across ethnic and gender boundaries, more precisely are locating women and men of different ethnicity in unequal social and economic positions.

But this paper offers only a view on the socialist and post-socialist Grand Narratives on gender equality, which were and are imposing some normative patterns of femininity, masculinity and appropriate gender order.<sup>1</sup> As we know, these norms would not function if they would not be sustained from below, while, at the same time, the social regimes within which people live their lives always structure their positions and representations. Yet, people not only adjust their expectations and performances to these norms, they do not

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<sup>1</sup> The everyday understandings of gender roles, identities, relations, and equality and difference were addressed by our research in the multiethnic city of Cluj done between 2000 and 2001 (Magyari-Vincze, ed., 2001).

automatically take up certain roles, but also interpret, negotiate and act out them within their personal relations with the “significant others”. I am arguing that identifications and social positionings are always shaped by gender and ethnicity and of course by other markers of differences and systems of classification. More properly said, they are shaped by the lived experiences and interpretations of femininity and masculinity which, at their turn, are structured by experiences and representations of ethnicity and ethnic relations, and/or other belongings to certain economic positions, and vice versa. This is why I am considering that gender – both as subject position and lived experience – is a central mechanism, which organizes social life in each of its domains and at each of its levels. But it is also why I am relying on Henrietta Moore’s (1988) conviction according to which a feminist anthropology should make a difference both in feminism and anthropology in understanding differences differently. More precisely by highlighting how ethnic, gender and other differences overlap and relate to each other (function through each other), thus being able to interpret both differences and similarities between and among women and men.

### **Understanding gender (in)equality – a theoretical background**

The analysis of “gender equality” exposes the nature and dynamics of the gender regimes or gender orders, understood at their turn as the states of play in gender relations in different institutions (R.W. Connell, 1995), i.e. displaying the gendered division of labor and power structure, but as well as the underlying notions of gender identities and relations accepted as “normal” within certain social settings. It reveals how power is related to gender, how people recreate and resist inequalities in everyday life, how women and men construct and negotiate gendered power relations within the domestic and public sphere, accommodating to the normative patterns of femininity and masculinity, but also changing them. By addressing “gender equality” as a social and cultural construct, ultimately one may highlight important characteristics of the broader social order in which the gender regimes under scrutiny are embedded.

### *Gender (in)equality in the context of social differentiation and stratification*

Gender (in)equality is a phenomena composed of material and social practices, mechanisms and processes, but as well as of classificatory systems and underlying cultural concepts. As such it is part of the broader fabric of differentiations and stratifications that shape the social and cultural order we live in, prescribe our identities and positions, and hierarchically distributes economic, social and symbolic resources by gender intersected with other axes of differences.

### *Gender (in)equalities and the overlapping systems of power*

Gender (in)equality should be viewed in the context of the ways in which race, ethnicity, class and gender as systems of power interact in the processes of the constitution of social hierarchies. The ethnic and gender orders that create and naturalize certain power relations within and between women and men of different ethnicity and class are affecting unequally their opportunities and abilities to have access to and control on material and symbolic resources.

### *Gender (in)equality at the junction of structure/ system/ gender order and agency/ practice/ personal experience*

The gender order of private and public institutions is characterised by a certain division of labour and power arrangements between the occupants of the roles and positions defined as masculine and as feminine, but also by the classification systems and cultural categories of femininity, masculinity and their “proper” relationships. It is a structure of material and symbolic power, a system of economic and ideological relations that identifies women and men through certain features, duties and rights, locates them in different positions of the social hierarchies and legitimises the such created orders transforming culture into nature. The gender order is embodied in subjects, whose identities and related social locations are produced at the junction of the system in which they live and of their everyday practices of femaleness and maleness. Inequalities are also embodied in subjects, producing the personal experiences as performances of the prescribed normative roles, but as well as strategies of an agency who resists to and silently transfigures the dominant gender order.

### *Gender (in)equality as a social and cultural construct*

Gender (in)equality as a social and cultural construct has diverse but as well as shared meanings for different people at various walks of a particular society at certain moments of their life. As such, it talks about the changing material and social practices related to the symbolic/ cultural concepts of the subject positions of women and men in several realms of societal life. Its sociological and anthropological investigation exposes the nature and dynamics of the gender regimes, but also the gendered assumptions that guide people's life both in the private and public sphere. Eventually it reveals the ways in which material and symbolic power is linked to gendered roles and the ways in which people understand, (re)create and resist inequalities in everyday life.

### **Gender (in)equality in the socialist Romania**

As known, the Romanian socialist regime created a subject position for women from where they were supposed to act as double heroes, i.e. as heroine workers and heroine mothers. Both roles were conceived from above as the condition of their "emancipation", but actually were a set of duties through which women were supposed to serve the paternalist state that coordinated and controlled the ethno-nationalist project of socialist modernisation.

In the context of the socialist industrialisation and extensive economic development, on the part of the state, women were viewed first of all in their productive potentials. At the same time, on the part of the households, their work for wages in the state-owned economy was a necessary element of the family income. The acquirement of women's rights to full employment, education and political participation has not resulted from the movement of women as independent subjects. Contrary, it was part of the broader project of socialist modernisation, and, as such, it was subordinated to the construction of the so-called "multilaterally developed socialist nation". Socialism promised to empower women by considering them as workers and citizens equal with men as long as they contributed to economic production: *"If we speak about the creation of conditions of full*

*equality between the sexes, this means that we must treat all people not as men and women, but in their qualities as party members, as citizens, for which they are exclusively judged according to their work contribution"* (fragment from the Address of Nicolae Ceaușescu to the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, June 18-19 1973).<sup>1</sup> The ideological dedication to the "equality between the sexes in a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' meant that proletarians, regardless of gender, were socially and economically defined through their lack of private property" (Kligman 1998: 27), and it constructed the subject position of working women as the desexualised hero of the labour market. Despite of this false gender neutrality, there were many mechanisms on the labour market that reproduced gender inequality, for example the sectorial segregation.<sup>2</sup> The gender gap was increased by drawing a line between - on the one hand - the "easy work suitable for women" (in sectors like textile and food processing industries, services, education, healthcare). And, on the other hand, between "the hard", better paid work (metal processing, building and mining industries) "proper" for men. The sectors where women worked (the feminised domains of the economy) received less investment and remuneration than the more "masculine" areas, and usually women were positioned at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Beside these inequalities produced by labour policies, there was another major obstacle in the real empowerment of women that is the reductive notion according to which labour force participation was not only a necessary, but also the sufficient condition for women's emancipation.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, in Romania, as the result of the recognition of the potential labour shortage (which endangered the Communist Party's long term plans for economic development) an intensive pronatalist campaign (since October 1966) made abortions and divorces

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<sup>1</sup> Translation by Kligman (1998).

<sup>2</sup> As Fischer and Pasca Harsanyi observed (1994), this typical mechanism of non-communist societies continued under Communist Party rule.

<sup>3</sup> As Einhorn (1993) observed very promptly, this notion resulted from the linkage between socialist revolution and women's emancipation, and was accompanied by a gender blindness towards the domestic sexual division of labor and discrimination on the grounds of sex, which, together, not only reproduced women's subordinated position, but also put on them the triple burden of mothers-workers-housekeepers.

almost impossible to obtain and increased taxes on childless, married or unmarried adults.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, as Kligman puts it, fertility control and reproduction was "fundamentally associated with identity: that of 'the nation' as the 'imagined community' that the state serves and protects, and over which it exercises authority" (Kligman, 1998: 5), as the following quotation shows: "*There is no obligation more noble, more honourable for families, for women, than that of raising and giving to the country as many children as possible*" (fragment from Nicolae Ceaușescu, 1986, Message to women from the Socialist Republic of Romania with the occasion of Women's International Day).<sup>2</sup> The pro-natalist policy, implying fertility control and criminalisation of abortion on the part of the state gained significance not only in the context of labour force policy, but as well as within the framework of the Romanian nationalist ideology which – at its turn – had an important role in the legitimisation of the socialist project as a whole. The socialist nation was defined as a huge family with the Communist Party at its centre. As Verdery (1994) observed, in this context women were viewed as "mothers of the nation" subordinated to the socialist "parent-state". The state "took upon itself some of the more 'traditional' nurturing and care-giving roles that were the responsibility of women in the patriarchal family", and at the same time "it expropriated men's patrilineal 'rights' to the sexual and reproductive lives of their wives" (Kligman 1998: 26). The formerly discussed labour policy – related to socialist industrialization and resulted in an occupational segregation that disadvantaged women –, together with the criminalisation of abortion – which expropriated women's body – transformed women's subject position into one subordinated to the paternalist state in both of their productive and reproductive abilities. On the one hand one may say that in the context of a shortage economy, women and men were equally dependent on the public patriarch (the Party-State, who claimed that He was ensuring the salaries, housing, healthcare, childcare, pensions of all workers), but on the other hand has to mention that in the case of women this dependency was doubled by transforming their body, sexuality and reproductive capacity into a site of patriotic duty.

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<sup>1</sup> As observed, among others, by Fischer (1985).

<sup>2</sup> Translated by Kligman (1998: 113).

## Gender (in)equality under the conditions of post-socialist changes

Searching for the ways in which "women's issues" were on the political agenda of the post-socialist state, one could observe that in December 1989, the anti-abortion law was immediately abolished. This, as a rectification of one of the injustices experienced under the old regime, became instrumentalised by the self-legitimising effort of the new power. Certainly, in Romania, this act was one of the most crucial and direct ways for women to perceive that their life might be changed for the better, and this happened to be linked to the new political leadership. But actually, while "re-giving" women the right to control their reproductive decisions and, at least in these terms, to be liberated from state authority (or delegating this issue to the private sphere), the new state considered women's issues as solved for quite a time. Then again, with the collapse of the state-sponsored childcare system, many women were forced to (re)identify with the woman-as-mother-only subject position and to dedicate their all time and energy to their family life. Nevertheless, by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – under the influence of the politics of European integration, but also under the impact of growing force of women non-governmental organisations the majority of which are focusing their activities on issues that relate to women's traditional roles – some legal initiatives regarding domestic life were made. Like the Law on Paternal Leave (1999), or the modification of some articles concerning the punishment of sexual violence (2000), or the most recent one, the Law against Domestic Violence (2003) – but, of course, their impact on everyday life would be another story to tell. One may also observe how, in the case of many policies, women are strictly linked to family and children. This is also reflected in the creation of the Department for the Advancement of Women and Family Policies (set up within the Ministry for Labour and Social Protection in October 1995) and that of the Department for Child, Woman and Family Policies, which exist within the Ombudsperson institution since February 1998.

As far as the other subject position prescribed for women is considered (women-as-workers), statistical data<sup>1</sup> show that in the

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<sup>1</sup> Presented in the booklet *Men and Women in Romania* (2000) by the National Commission on Statistics and the United Nations Development Program.

post-socialist Romanian context women represent the significant part of the labour force in the poorly remunerated sectors (education, health care, social assistance, textile industry) and even in the well-paid financial and banking sector (where women's presence is of seventy per cent) their salaries are not more than ninety per cent of men's salaries; in each domain women are present in the less paid positions, their income is significantly under the average income (with approximately thirteen per cent), and their percentage as leaders is almost four times lower than men's. As far as the idea of gender equality is considered, starting with the very first stage of transformations, it was de-legitimated as part of the demonised socialist past even if the process of privatisation in Romania was much slower than in other former socialist countries. Parallel with this, the rediscovery of difference seemed to become the new rule of viewing women and men in their public and domestic roles, as if equality would have been the opposite of difference. In the context of the labour market this meant, on the one hand, the opening up of the sex industry and the commodification of women's sexuality, and - on the other hand - the increase of discrimination in the process of women's hiring for and dismissing from certain (mainly the symbolically and materially prestigious) jobs on the grounds of the presumed natural sexual differences. But the post-1989 transformations should be viewed as a multifaceted process. In this sense one has to note that by the end of the 1990s - as far as Romania was approaching the status of the accession country in the process of European integration -, the notion of gender equality (as a rule imposed from outside) had to be (re)put in the context of its normative social and cultural order in each domain of life. This was reflected in the Governmental Ordinance, and later Law on Preventing and Punishing All Forms of Discrimination (2000), in the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2002), but also in the creation of the Sub-Commission for Equal Opportunities, which functions in the Parliament since June 1997 and that of the Consultative Inter-Ministerial Commission on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, that was set up in November 1999. Quite a few legal initiatives, but without a committed institutional strategy of implementation. However, these steps were necessary to redefine the relation between equality and difference, but

- nonetheless some voices are representing it - the opinion according to which the goal should be the achievement of equality through difference did not become yet a well-developed idea.

### **The persistence of gender inequality across political regimes**

Socialism did not liberate women from the oppression of patriarchy, but, as many scholars argue,<sup>1</sup> it only exchanged the patriarchy of the male individual to that of the state. It "emancipated" women while devaluating this condition under the entire context of a shortage economy and severe pro-natalist policy, while neglecting - leaving almost unchanged - the domestic division of labour. As part of this kind of "emancipation" - based on the conviction that its necessary and sufficient (!) condition is women's access to the labour market -, women were not socialized to act as autonomous citizens. They were not empowered as individuals and/or as an interest group, even if the quota system guaranteed their presence in politics (note that this happened in a political life that was about celebrating the Party and its Leader). But rather, practiced a dependency towards the paternalist state (that provided life-time jobs, housing, childcare, pension to "his daughters"), experienced how it was to be at the mercy of the nation-state (which controlled their body and expropriated their reproductive rights), and learned how to survive through informal networks in a shortage economy.

As far as the post-socialist environment is considered, one could observe that despite the fact that (excepting the period between 1996 and 2000) the decision-making institutions in Romania were dominated by the ex-communist forces (by today turned towards the self-definition of social democracy), the treatment of gender equality and difference was shaped by an anti-socialist rhetoric and practice. In this context, the conviction according to which the former regime constructed a gender order contrary to nature, led to the belief that the end of socialism should mean the restoration of the "natural order of things" also in this domain of life. This suggested the "need" to restore men's autonomy and authority in public and private life, to

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<sup>1</sup> For example Verdery (1996), Kligman (1998), and Einhorn (1993).

drive back women into their “natural”/domestic roles, but it also included the re-delegation of the decision on reproduction and abortion into the private sphere (but not necessarily under the autonomy of women!). However, the process of transformations started at the end of 1989 was not ended here, likewise, as part of this story one should note the emergence of women’s movement (more precisely the formation of several non-governmental organisations) in the Romanian public life. In a way, at the beginning, they were also having a contribution to the production of the dominant practice (that of re-orientating women to the private life) due to their focus on issues related to women’s domestic roles (family planning, maternity, sexuality, domestic violence). But it is to note that, at the same time, through this, they were raising the consciousness exactly about issues, which were mostly neglected by the socialist politics, and, most importantly, could make steps towards conceptualising the personal as political. The impact of the negotiation process on Romania’s integration into the European Union should be also mentioned in the terms of the re-legitimisation of gender equality under the rubric of the policy of equal opportunities. In these lines, most recently, one may observe women’s organising for the promotion of women in politics, i.e. in the political parties and on the (2004) election lists.

One may conclude that both the socialist and post-socialist system needed patriarchy to function, or more properly said – on a one hand – the complicity, and on the other hand the fraternal competition between the state and the occupants of masculine roles, of public and private patriarchs. One of the grounds on which the survival of patriarchy across different political regimes was based in Romania is the fact that – on the one hand – gender relations at all times functioned as class relations, and – on the other hand – citizenship was always gendered.

The complicity between the socialist state and the occupants of masculine roles could function against women (situating them in unjust positions) because their unpaid work at home and paid work on the labour market was necessary both from the point of view of the economic production, and both from the point of view of men as the “heads of family” who, for different reasons, refused to have an

increased contribution to housework and children’s education. Today this complicity is reproduced under the conditions of the post-socialist economic restructuring, including also the fact that the dominant trade unions (mainly of the collapsing industries dominated by men) are disadvantaging women in their effort to make a pressure on the way in which the state is redistributing resources.

Further on – during socialism – the relation between state, on the one hand, and individual men and women, on the other hand, was defined as a patriarchal gender relation between the active/dominant and the passive/dependent part. In this system individual women were a silent “minority” in a double sense: partly as members of the feminised society controlled by the paternalist state, and partly as females, who – despite of their entitlement of being modern (entering into the labour market) – had also the responsibility to maintain the traditional family order. The post-socialist regime also knows many divisions between the passive/feminine and the active/masculine subject, like that of the non-profit *versus* the profit sphere, or that of the unemployed or employed *versus* the employer, or even of the poor *versus* the rich people: the existing statistics<sup>1</sup> show that the non-profit spheres (education, healthcare, social assistance, non-governmental organisations) are feminised, that generally among the employers women are present only in twenty four per cent, and single women are having lower incomes than single men. One may conclude that the post-socialist public patriarchy from Romania is one based on what is called “organisational fraternity”<sup>2</sup>. This is reflected by the fact that both the nominal and the substantive fraternalism are well established, i.e. men dominate numerically the state institutions, they are present in core policy areas while women are in the less prestigious “soft” issue areas, the equality policy programs are poorly funded or absent, and the policies of particular significance to women are marginal to the policy agenda.

Nevertheless, one should also note that today there are several women’s organisations in Romania<sup>3</sup> and women have begun to

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<sup>1</sup> As presented in *Men and Women in Romania* (2000).

<sup>2</sup> This concept is discussed by Lovenduski (1997).

<sup>3</sup> According to some estimates, there are about 60 women NGOs in Romania. Here I will name a few which are ready to identify themselves as feminists: “ANA” – Society

organise within political parties.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a few initiatives have arisen to introduce gender and feminist studies into the university curricula.<sup>2</sup> Women have also participated at international women-related initiatives.<sup>3</sup> The National Campaign for Reproductive Health "Women Choose Health" organized in 2000 and the Gender Barometer made in 2000 also reflect the increase of the interest towards women and gender issues. Through these initiatives, women may begin to claim their rights as autonomous individuals and as responsible subjects aware of their interests. They may dare to face the uncertainties that result from resisting paternalist protection and subordination both in the domestic and extra-domestic sphere. By these actions women prove not to be powerless victims, losers or accidental winners who may only hope to win "The Father's" indulgence to entitle them with rights. While claiming rights based on the recognition of gender discrimination, inequality and injustice in several fields, women cannot forget to occupy responsible positions in the public sphere. This demands their awareness of the power relations marked by "femininity" and "masculinity," and a consciousness of the fact that these relations are constituted also through their discursive and material practices.

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for Feminist Analysis from Bucharest, Foundation DESIRE for Social Reflection and Openness in Cluj, Centre ARTEMIS against Sexual Abuse and Violence Against Women in Cluj, Foundation for Equal Opportunities from Iași, Women's Forum in Târgu-Mureș, Association for the Emancipation of Roma Women from Cluj, Partnership Centre for Gender Equality from Bucharest, etc.

<sup>1</sup> More and more parties are setting up women's organisations within their structure. Besides the Democrat Party, the Romanian Social Democracy Party, and the Greater Romania Party, the National Liberal Party has recently laid foundations of a woman's organisation. The Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania, and the National Peasant Christian-Democrat Party still do not seem to conceive the issue of political empowerment of women as important.

<sup>2</sup> The M.A. program in gender studies at the National School of Political and Administrative Sciences in Bucharest, and the development of the undergraduate program "Gender, Society and Culture" at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj should be mentioned here.

<sup>3</sup> One should consider here the following: the Fourth World Conference on Women's Rights in Beijing in 1995; 2000 Reasons to March; NGO Working Session Prior to the ECE Regional Preparatory Meeting; NGOs as Partners. On the Way to Accelerate Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000); Women 2000 - a report resulted from the work of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (the Report on Romania was done by Roxana Teșiu); Women and Men in Romania, 2000 - coming out of a program of UNDP for Gendering Statistics.

As the time goes on, one may expect that more and more initiatives appear under the banner of "feminism." Eventually, this discourse and practice proves to be instrumental and meaningful if constituted from below. It is my conviction that it has to be based on the rediscovery (but not reification) of difference, on reaffirming equality and on claiming autonomy. I consider that a feminist endeavour in Romania today might be concerned by the deconstruction - on the one hand - of the naturalized link between "socialism" and "gender equality". And - on the other hand - of the link that is under way to be considered as taken-for-granted between the post-socialist kind of justice making for women and the return to the traditional (pre-socialist) gender order with an understanding of difference that disadvantages women. Consequently, I suggest that feminism should assume questioning issues like: how patriarchy was practiced by the means of the paternalist socialist state under the surface of gender equality; how the emancipation of women was equalised with their celebration as heroic workers; how their instrumentalisation as heroic mothers produced inequality between women and men, however viewed as two de-sexualised categories of the "new socialist man". And to continue this effort with the analysis of how patriarchy is re-enforced today by the mechanisms of the transition from the centralised to the market economy; how the liberation of women is equalised with "setting them free" from the perplexities of double-burden; and how the "femininity" of women is re-conquered by their assimilation with the traditional roles of womanhood, while "masculinity" being regained through men's empowerment both in the private and public spheres. In this sense I subscribe to Susan Gal's position, according to which our effort of constructing discursively the political category of "women" must be aware of the meanings attached previously to this category and try to define it as something else: "not as a worker-recipient of communist entitlements, nor as the naturalised, sexualised private being of civil society, nor as the sacred and inert mother of nationhood, but as an independent subject whose interests and issues can be publicly defined and debated"(Gal, 1997).

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## "TRENDY IDENTITIES": QUESTIONING THE SOCIALIST MATRIX, MEMORY AND GLOBAL ECONOMY

*Biljana Kašić*

### Facing the question

From the very start of conceiving this paper I have to admit that I felt a bit troubled. Was it a feeling of discomfort concerning this issue? And if so, what was that disturbed me the most? In talking about identities within the post socialist order did I want to prove an already existing stereotyping procedure and process mirroring the paradoxical points of negating and 'seducing' concepts and meanings, imitating and inventing the socialist meta-story within a "transitional" economy of symbolic identification or did I want to approach something completely different?

If at first glance I resisted this imposed view of "imitating the images of socialism" that changed from a dark shape to a day-by-day brighter image, or to an almost potential erotic phantasm in terms of challenge the issue I faced was, of course, much more complicated. This change happened from the perspective of exploring the different Others by those who have the power of naming within a theoretical context and which is also connected with a sort of "discovering" socialism.

The themes that I think provoke the critical edge of an ethical urge of this exploration of socialism are: the politics of memory, the theorization of new movements, identity and gender (identity formations and critique of authenticity, contextualization of feminism(s) and modes of theorizing embodiment).

But let me share with you some general remarks.

First, the theories on socialism in the very context of socialism or communism lacked, to the most extent, their own version of necessary self-critical conversations but instead had an ideological cover and patronizing approach, exclusionary elements of “bourgeois thoughts” and, more and less, the arrogance of “exercising humanity” or modes toward assumed configurations of a “promising” future.

Secondly, since the fall of socialist regimes one problematic and ongoing procedure was already being established beyond any sort of deeper reflexivity into its own past supported by the increasing process of neo-globalization and by the rapid crowding and multiple productions of so-called Western knowledge upon post socialist experiences.

This relies on reduced critical questions being entirely comfortable with reproducing a number of the likely assumptions of socialism(s) or lives in socialisms or myths functionally produced in relation to contemporary interests, both personal and common ones. The practices show us either theoretical attempts for forgetting<sup>1</sup> certain things in order to stabilize a particular pattern of official memory of the socialist or communist past that would serve new indefinable authorities or, in suspicion of previous totalizing concepts, those which would collaborate with the transnational dominant order – without a basis and framework – cutting off the socialist or communist past, or, in other words, building on historical and contextual displacement.<sup>2</sup>

In this very complex framework of disappearance I wonder whether irony might work here in terms of how invisible the post-socialist / post-communist East might be within the framework of an

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<sup>1</sup> The structure of memory based on the forgetting of a certain historical period or certain events actually enables this vast historical discontinuity by signifying the rupture of historical narratives as a legitimate pattern of power of neo-historical knowledge upon the previous one in the same way as the historical sublimation of a certain time looks to be the normality of “human survival” throughout historical time(s) and spaces.

<sup>2</sup> What has happened, however, across a wider spectrum is the negation of communal/communist or socialist pre-belonging as either a shared performance of patterns of behaviour of a group and individual subjects or the loss of belonging as such, or, namely, the loss of community. The first is acknowledged transparently; the second is submissive and closed.

on-going replication of visibility through academic advantages and scholarship for Westerns.

Any critical examination of the relation between unsettling cultural identities within so-called transitional times and socialist figures cannot avoid the power of memory<sup>1</sup> because these processes have gone through varying degrees of consciousness and resistance or self-censorship differently marked, coded and inscribed. Memory goes together with the concern for the present and future as well as with the process of self-censorship or even projects of preservation that postcolonial writers have explored. The fixation on certain events or “frozen” times or gaps in memory or total forgetfulness or distorted gaze towards one’s own past, create a peculiar configuration of the story as a web of potential tensions between the presence and absence, between one’s own perception of the time and the perception through the gaze of others.<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that socialism is an even more restless formation nowadays, both with the increase of attempts for its exclusion as well as its forcible inclusion into the contemporary theoretical scope mediated through a Euro-centric view.

My concern here is not how to acknowledge that the historical past of socialism/communism produced different shapes under different cultural and historical conditions (claims for distinctive and differentiated approach are apparently needed); rather, following the words of Arjun Appadurai, a well-known postcolonial thinker, whether the economy of forgetting is even more striking here than the economy of remembering (Appadurai, 1999:25).

But where on the one hand we have faced a culture of amnesia over the last decade for a number of reasons, on the other hand we have dealt with the contemporary obsession with memory in public,

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<sup>1</sup> The power of memory relies at the same time on the power of selection based on different criteria that dealt with the historical time and on the power of the imaginative (imaginary) future that interlink momentums and events through a very interesting procedure of epistemic constructions, projections and codifications very often following the great ‘tasks’ of wider narratives (political, Euro-centric, ideological, transitional, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> Personal memory, for example, relies both on spoken and unspoken stories, very often on the fragments of identity that long for centrality and coherency throughout re-memorizing life-stories in a sort of “neutral” interconnectedness with its wholeness.

especially within the media debate. Consequently, "(f)or the more we asked to remember in the wake of the information explosion and the marketing of memory, the more we seem to be in danger of forgetting and the stronger the need to forget." (Huysen, 2001:65)

### Facing "trendy identities"

First let me try to explain what I mean by "trendy identities".

Within the interplay of history and the post-socialist response to globalization or to being globalized and "westernized", the only issue which was untouched despite transforming its face was power. As Andrei Codrescu pointed out in *The Disappearance of the Outside. A Manifesto for Escape*: "Power goes unquestioned because our eyes are full of images that obscure it." (Codrescu, 1990:195). A differently shaped power encompassed consumer goods, the expansion of markets, and the cult of commodity of not being critical towards dramatic changes or intensifying entries to the recognition of new shifting within the globalized body. My question then is to what extent can the socialist matrix be a consumable potential, among other issues? Or, more precisely, how might socialism become an explanatory concept through the consumer-oriented industry of knowledge?

On the one hand, we have faced "(...) the recent explosive re-unification of divided European historical narratives" (Rogoff, 2000); on the other hand, there is the hidden desire to keep a real differentiation, or to maintain things just as they are.

As such, the paradoxical points have already been inscribed in the absurdity of "transition" in terms of time and space creating a greater disruption than it seems at first glance.

And what then do I mean by "trendy identities"?

In general, those real or provisional identities which will support this conceptualization of such power relations, that will fit the Western system of significations and desirable images or those which can be reconcilable with Western standards as well as the 'Eastern desire'<sup>1</sup> to

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<sup>1</sup> According to Dupcsik's standpoint: "In 'Eastern Europe', 'civilization' (that is, Western European civilization) has some foundations: 'Eastern Europe' is ready to accept Western patterns, Western influence, and Western domination. In this way, the

be within. Nonetheless, both sides are involved in bringing different power-modes of subject formations, expectations and imaginations of future possibilities.

Along with everything else, the cultural absorption of socialism came as a neo-global need which cannot be understood any longer in terms of pure scientific or political explanatory tools but as an "innocent" market investment or western good which influences new streams in the mapping of global human economy.

Another question to be asked is can we measure "progressive" or "regressive" trends of a time that flirts with an explicit promise: to build its continuity on its immense historical discontinuity in a postcolonial sense of approaching? Or, moreover, is there an unthinkable agenda to include or to work on the ideology of return?

Unacknowledged nostalgia among local intellectuals, if we consider the concept of memory as an important issue, is present as a sublime feeling that instead of opening up a confrontation of possible approaches or readiness to deal with the socialist past, has been almost feeding the global industry of socialist text products.

Therefore, the cultural absorption of socialism came as a neo-global need which cannot be understood any longer in terms of pure scientific, political or utopian explanatory tools but as an "innocent" market investment or Western good which influences new streams in the mapping of the global human economy including the economy of memory.

### Facing "transitional" issues

Let me illustrate this with three examples.

First, sexuality: or, how we face the globalisation of the sex-world economy and sexual imagery. Aside from complex epistemological formations and feminist questions, what mostly appears within media trends, as far as I have noticed, are stereotypical cultural signifiers of sexes or sexualities more so than any creative debates on constructivism and free sexual choices for sexes, or even an alternative

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societies of 'Eastern Europe' were accepted as being part of 'Europe' in a very ambiguous manner; they were seen as being inside and outside at the same time, belonging to Europe, but not entirely part of Europe." (Dupcsik, 1999:3)

that would lead sexual subjectivity into the primary focus that would shift direction. And if I tried to 'measure' the cultural signs of these I would confirm once more not only the commercialisation of sexuality within mainstream media culture and advertisements in particular, but also the intensification of negative paths with regards to particular questions of sexuality very often through the same commercialisation or through a pornographic approach towards sexuality.

My concern is to what extent commercialisation functions as a so-called emancipatory gaze into sexuality, if at all, or whether it is only a false substitution for gender/sex emancipation through its seduction, erotic offers, or more precisely, women as sexed or sexualised bodies.

I would like to postulate this prejudicial obstacle here, which originally comes from Igor Kon, a Russian sexologist, establishing at the same time its peculiar interconnection with the intensification of the sex-market economy in all post-socialist countries. In his paper: *Sexuality and Culture* (Kon, 1993:15-45) he questioned the common opinion that exists in Western culture about post-socialist countries being virtually sexless, arguing instead for a distinctive approach, historical contextualization and the deconstruction of stereotypical clichés. Following his arguments, this opinion could not work in a fuller sense even for the recent socialist period even though that was characterized by certain sexual taboos, the censoring of relevant publications and research concerning sexuality, and lack of sexual freedom and sexual education within schools. Looking at the image of this recent historical time in ex-Yugoslavia, a strange mixture occurs: a mixture of sex/gender arch-roles, especially during the recent war in Croatia (1991-1995) and broken silences around erotic pleasures in more aggressive ways, the mixture of the pornography of war and the sexualisation of the public by sexual metaphors and rape of women's bodies, a mixture of new paternalistic conservatism grounded on the sanctity of the "good Catholic Croatian family" and the explosion of macho behaviour against others.

Dealing with sexuality itself nowadays in its very "discrete essences" (Stanton, 1992:3), both publicly and aggressively, provides obstacles to challenging the aspects of male sexuality or to enabling women to face the "potential power" of female sexuality. Therefore, with regards to this, it is nothing unique for transitional countries to

have their so-called transitional culture functioning almost as a voyeuristic culture of the West in so many terms, by being a part of globalised sexual investments and the world sex-economy as a most influential and profitable one.

Second, women's images in general as well as women's topics that have been prioritised by international founders (such as trafficking, violence against women, sexual harassment, war rape etc...) or connected with the violence of war, including the pornography of the global male gaze, have supported the symbolic order of the naturalisation of female archetypes such as the eternity of the "female victim" or violent or objectified stage of female bodies.<sup>1</sup>

It was interesting how the images of women from post-socialism (in former Yugoslav countries, in particular) through rape, violence, victimization, violation of human rights and, more recently, traffic, have been connected with the images of women from Third World countries, fulfilling the discursive framework of "gender in development" (Chowdhry, 1995:26-42), or the image of the 'weak subject'.

Third, if we glance at images, how can we deal with "East feminism(s)" as a 'post-socialist product' of the Western gaze, when there is no ambiguity or difference or nuance among the approaches, models or feminists' efforts: everything looks just the same, as an ideological cliché in mapping or identifying the issue. Women themselves became so-called exotic creatures of the East, through images and prejudices based on female archetypes and through the concept of victimisation, women's "destiny", through rape or traffic as 'modern slavery', through globalising projects towards their "development" and needy-patterns, through feminist-lags or cutting off their own roots.

In recent years there are inspiring and creative efforts that deal with this, be it from a postcolonial perspective or feminist art praxis in order to de-colonize the issue either to make a linkage with one's own feminist history or to disturb the whole image of the unbearable trivialization of post-socialist life, even more – the ultimate difference

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<sup>1</sup> This despite the fact that male violence against women within the family or so-called domestic violence has been at the core of feminist activism in former Yugoslavia since 1988.

of the Western civilisation toward post-socialist world(s). Many new disjunctures are projected in order to make both chasms and the types of dependencies on economic, political or discursive level.<sup>1</sup>

Although I will not delve further into this issue, I would like to bring up only one example that is quite illustrative for the global cultural process within the concept of feminist 'transition' and travelling – both theoretical and experiential. Namely, what I would like to point out is the imposing procedure of inherent categorical privilege such as "gender", its explicitness, its occupation, and its multiple effects. What I was faced with overall was the "genderisation" of East feminisms, in addition to its anti-creativity, that fixed a hegemonic shift that makes both feminism and socialism as a historically banned identification even more rootless.

There are two questions I posed to myself. The first being how it happened that "gender" became a key notion for feminists in post-socialist countries and the second, why was there a lack of any feminist debate concerning this issue? Going further, I wondered whether gender is only a free-floating signifier for an epistemological-lag covered over by "urgent" topics (rape, trafficking, women's human rights, violence, women's capitalist market) rather than a theoretical self-reflective notion of meaningful use for feminist theory in a post-socialist context. Furthermore, the question of whether "gender" is in itself a sort of "import dilemma" upon so-called southeastern feminists seems to me to be another controversial issue. We are still on the threshold of starting discussions around these issues.

Nevertheless, what is striking here is that all this touches upon the "authorisation" of "social experience as the contingency of history" (Bhabha, 1999: 197) in a postcolonial sense that in these very cases goes beyond the "ultimate" gender concept in post-socialist practices. To encounter the notions "gender concept" or "gender politics" nowadays means, first of all, to acknowledge the formative contribution of "women's question" as a basic Marxist concept to both

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<sup>1</sup> Marina Gržinić, one of the most outstanding critical thinkers nowadays, among others, speaks about a pure need to evacuate 'a gene of socialism' from Europe in order to create a new European identity. In other words, socialism is a disturbing element within the new European imaginary, which is qualified as a hybrid discourse.

the status of women and feminist achievements. Namely, before any specificity in analysis or exploration of the "use" of "gender" can be carried out, the process of identification through the re-establishing and reaffirming of a sense of one's own femaleness and feminist authorisation needs to take place. In other words, to refer or reconnect with one's own history which dealt with the meanings of "woman's issues" and class solidarity at a local and international level as well as with specific historical correspondence and interlinking with a variety of influences including suffragette movements as well as liberal, radical, anarchist and postmodern feminist thoughts.

How then to examine the purpose and the manner of this shift from "woman's question" which was a Marxist concept for more than half a century to gender concepts that occurred in the nineties and how to address the key issues within the feminist horizon nowadays relies primarily on who the powerful agency is which deals with the concept of this re-inscription. Only then might there be a real chance that instead of being in the position where most of us here find ourselves defending the status of gender more than its substantial meaning, would we be able to discuss and renegotiate the meanings we need for the articulation around the ambivalence of authentic positions, concepts or paths.

### Facing "socialism" once more

Finally, the question remains whether socialism itself might become a 'trendy identity' or whether it has already become one. This can also be "Blood and Honey" (which is a reference to the title of an exhibition in Austria during the summer of 2003); a sort of retro-nostalgia that is already commercially formatted.

What makes matters more problematic or more challenging is the "added desire" to replace the "displacement of human alienation" by the illusion of "human belonging" through connecting "post" with "past", continuity with linearity, the process of self-censorship with the projects of preservation.

Therefore, instead of working on raising the awareness of critical sensibility within one's own context(s) to questions such as active forgetting or gaps in one's memory or the identity of resistance, or

even opening up the possibility of renegotiation with one's own roots, we are already caught in the urge of cultural difference as a bizarre marketing investment (Appadurai, 1999:220-233).

And in conclusion, my still unsolved dilemma is how to enable the procedure of reconstructing and exploring socialism and at the same time to 'de-colonise' ourselves from the power of increasingly trendy images of socialism that inject the analytical scope, even the meaning of memory.

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## THE WORK OF GENDER

## ETHNO-GENDER HEGEMONIES AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

*Linda Racioppi and Katherine O'Sullivan See*

We must speak with one voice when what we say has its effect on the Institution, the Province, and the Union. Ours is a Brotherhood, a Fraternal Society. May Brotherliness be more obvious than ever in the days ahead of us. Remember, "United We Stand, Divided We Fall".

Grand Master of the Orange Order Robert Saulters, speaking in Belfast, 1997 (*Belfast Telegraph*, 12 July 1997: 14).

We are disturbed by the fact that the number of marriages between Serbs and Muslims has increased ...because mixed marriages lead to an exchange of genes between ethnic groups, and thus to a degeneration of Serb nationhood.

Biljana Plavsi , speaking in Sarajevo in May 1994 (quoted in Inji , 1997)

...as I read about the women of Sinn Fein I become increasingly depressed. These ladies seem very eager to voice their opinions on contraception, divorce, etc. on which they obviously argue that both should be made available. I believe that the women in Sinn Fein should instead be assisting in the growth of Irish in the movement or in spreading the ideals of Sinn Fein. In this way they will be constructively useful. We are looking for an identity of our won as well as complete independence from Britain. We must repeatedly ask ourselves what are we fighting for. Without our language, culture, up-keep of our moral beliefs, we may as well rejoin Britain under a similar union as that of 1801. What is the point of seeking total

freedom from England if we are just going to turn around and adopt BRITISH MORALITY.

Letter published in the Sinn Fein paper, *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, March 22, 1980 (quoted in Aretxaga 1997: 160)

As self-appointed spokesmen of the nation, the power-holders prescribe desirable forms of “patriotism” and define “homeland”. They have appropriated cultural heritage to such an extent that the cultural heritage of the nation we belong to by birth elicits aversion. What does it mean to be loyal to nations and states based on a mutual agreement of patriarchal brotherhoods? Identifying with any such brotherhood would necessitate severing all ties with the transitional sisterhood.

Stasa Zajovi , speaking at a workshop in Merida, Spain in 1993 (Zajovi 1994: 149)

As the above quotes suggest, ethno-national identities and sentiments can run deep, and ethnicity and gender interact in ways that produce and reproduce complex patterns of power relations. In this paper, we examine the close interlocking of gender and ethno-nationalism and prospects for disrupting male domination, particularly under conditions of ethnic conflict. Two central feminist insights undergird our analysis. First, gender is not merely a variable or factor affecting social behaviours and structures but rather is constituent of all socio-political practices and identities. Second, gender does not develop in a singular way; it is shaped by and in turn shapes ethnicity, class, race, sexuality and other key elements of identity and power. The scholarship has demonstrated that ethno-nationalism as political ideology and movement is deeply gendered: men and women play different roles in nationalist movements, nationalist ideologies construct masculinity and femininity differently and gender identities and rhetoric are often central to nationalist political discourse.<sup>1</sup> Gender dynamics in ethno-national contexts are shaped not only in relation to the “other” ethno-national group but

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989, Enloe 1989, Moghadam 1994, Mohanty, Russo and Torres 1991, Mosse 1985, Parker et al. 1992, Ranchod-Nilsson and Tetreault 2000, Rowbotham 1993, and Yuval-Davis 1997.

also in relation to the “other” men and women of the nation. One obvious pattern of gender dynamics entails male domination and female subordination. The feminist literature on ethno-national conflicts has powerfully documented the myriad ways that men control the polity, the military, and the economy as well as the ways in which women are marginalized in politics and economics and victimized by rape and domestic violence (Eisenstein 2000; Enloe 2000; Nagel 2003; Stiglmeier 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997). At the same time, the scholarship also demonstrates that there is no single template for the gendering of ethno-national conflict: there is variety in men’s competition for political ascendancy, in men’s and women’s engagement in ethno-national movements, in women’s leadership and participation in ethnic parties and politics, in the range and degree of gender victimization; and in the peace activism of men and women (Koonz 1987; Racioppi and See 2000 and 2001; Ranchod-Nilsson 2000; Tetreault 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997). That men and women are both complicitous in *and* opposed to projects of ethno-national domination suggests that patterns of gender hegemony in situations of conflict are not universal, totalising, or necessarily permanent.

Nonetheless, in cases of ethno-national conflict, identities tend to become polarized, as ethnic entrepreneurs strive to encapsulate all interests and identities, including gender, under the banner of the national interest. Ethno-national conflicts generally emerge in contexts of ethnic hegemony where one group seeks to secure control over the polity and judicial institutions, the economy, and/or key social organizations. Ethno-national politics may help to cast identity in essentialist ways, to emphasize the need for group solidarity and consensus and to monitor social norms and practices. Where groups vie for control, gender is especially powerful for forging group boundaries and affinities. Where conflict is protracted, gender often helps to “naturalize” ethnic boundaries: men and women are depicted as having an essential national identity, possessing common interests as men and women of the nation(s) and sharing responsibility for producing, reproducing, and protecting the boundaries of the nation(s). Yet, even a cursory look at conflicts around the globe reveals that despite powerful attempts to essentialize

men and women and to totalise their ethno-national identities and actions, resistance to gender hierarchies persists. And like gender hegemonies, ethno-national hegemonies seldom go uncontested and can be subverted.

Where gender and ethnic identities and interests are closely interconnected, successful subversion of ethnic hegemony might lead to disruption of gender hegemonies. Such disruption is facilitated by what anthropologist Sherry Ortner argues is a “multiplicity of logics” in gender dynamics: “some are hegemonic, dominant; some are subversive, challenging; and some are other, different they do not threaten power arrangements” (1996: 146). How do these multiple gender logics operate in situations of ethno-national conflict? How do they interact with the logics of ethnic dynamics? And in which social arenas are we most likely to find overriding hegemonic *ethno-gender* logic? To answer these questions, we quickly review why gendered ethno-nationalism is such a powerful political force. We examine the ethnic and gender logics in different social arenas in two of Europe’s most notorious conflict situations, the break-up of Yugoslavia and the case of Northern Ireland. And we conclude with some suggestions/observations for overturning gender hegemonies in post-conflict contexts.

### **The power of gendered ethno-nationalism**

Gendered ethno-nationalism is powerful because it melds concrete ideologies, interests and affective ties in ways that secure group solidarity and provide political purpose. Nationalism's global prevalence helps legitimate particular ethno-nationalist claims. The association of states with nations and the principles of self-determination, popular sovereignty and cultural group rights together provide a rubric within which ethno-nationalists can make credible demands. Ethno-nationalism promises the liberation of the “nation” and by extension, the actualisation of its members. But it also defines responsibilities, exacts sacrifices, and restricts individual options.<sup>1</sup> Most generally, it bifurcates ethno-national obligations by gender:

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<sup>1</sup> For discussions of the ideology of nationalism, see Brubaker 1992, Gellner 1983, Ignatieff 1994, Kedourie 1993, Kohn 1967, and Smith 1971.

often asking men to fight for the homeland and lead the polity, and expecting women to bear children for the “nation”, to preserve culture and traditions, and to support the national struggle.<sup>1</sup>

Ethno-national ideologies have emotional salience in part because they draw on claims about group kinship, familial responsibilities, and ancestral ties and descent, and in part because they promise vicarious immortality insofar as a group lives beyond the lifespan of its individual members (Anderson 1991; Horowitz 1985; Smith 1991). As Walker Connor so eloquently puts it.

The core of the nation has been reached and triggered through the use of familial metaphors which can magically transform the mundanely tangible into emotion-laden phantasm: which can, for example, mystically convert what the outsider sees as merely the territory populated by a nation into a motherland or fatherland, the ancestral land, land of our fathers, this sacred soil, land where our fathers died, the native land, the cradle of the nation, and most commonly, the *home* and the *homeland* of our particular people. (1998: 52-53)

The family metaphor suggests a powerful emotional attachment towards one’s own ethnic group. As Connor’s own language intimates, just as familial identities and relations are deeply gendered, so too are ethno-national identities and relations.

When supported by such ideological claims, perceived group interests can provide an important focus for political mobilization and help sustain ethno-national conflicts.<sup>2</sup> Feminist scholarship has documented the gendered dimensions of interest and conflict (Enloe 2000; Peterson 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997) and the ways that the “national interest” and male privilege are nearly always defined as coterminous (Enloe 1990; Nagel 1998). Men compete to determine the polity and citizenship rules, and/or to control economic resources (Lorber 1994;

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Bald 2000, Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989, Koonz 1987, Rowbotham 1992.

<sup>2</sup> There is an extensive literature the myriad ways in which interests are framed along ethno-national lines, reinforcing the competitive bases for conflict. See, for example, Banton 1983, Brass 1985, Gurr 1970, Hechter 1975 and 2001, Hobsbawm 1990, and Horowitz 1985.

Pateman 1990). However, women are not without interest in this largely male competition. In situations of ethnic conflict, their personal security – like that of their male compatriots – often depends on group solidarity. In highly divided societies, women of the dominant group may secure advantages in employment, in political access, and in social prestige or status, thereby reinforcing their dedication to the ethno-national group (Koonz 1987, McClintock 1995, Urquhart 2000). Prestige and status hierarchies are bounded within particular communities, orienting both men and women towards the gender norms of their ethno-national group. Hence, women may perceive that their interests lie in mobilizing with men of their own ethno-national group, rather than in engaging in alternative practices to challenge the gender order.

In situations of ethnic conflict where group boundaries are rigid and social interactions across ethnic groups are constricted, gendered ethno-nationalism tends to permeate communities and infuse the lives of individual men and women. Some respond with enthusiastic loyalty and activism in the name of the nation. For others, the ethno-gender project comes to be seen as “natural” and they respond by accommodating to that project. Yet, even in the most violent and protracted conflicts, we find instances of men and women mobilizing for peace and for gender equity. How can we comprehend the complexities of these diverse responses?

### **Socio-political domains of gendered ethno-nationalism**

We believe that interest, affect and ideology can be seen at work in specific socio-political sites that reflect different gender and ethnic logics: we see these in well-established institutions such as the military, government and party politics, and churches, as well as in the informal sector in, for example, women’s groups and cultural associations. Different logics (hegemonic or subversive) manifest themselves in discursive and social interactive practices in these domains. These logics are not confined to a particular site. Indeed, ethno-nationalist ideology and discursive practices can permeate all socio-political domains. These include government and party politics; the market, business enterprises, labour unions and professional

associations; military, paramilitary organizations, and police; religious associations and churches; educational institutions; charitable groups; sports and leisure associations; media; women’s groups; cultural associations, among others. Ethno-nationalism in conflict situations tends to polarize social relations and to “fix” social identities and practices to comply with ethno-national interests; and at the same time, sexual politics suffuse all domains, as men and women seek to act out defined roles but also to articulate their interests and position themselves in relation to authoritative masculinity. However, depending on the historical and regional context, particular domains will be more or less salient in the production, reproduction or dismantlement of gender and ethnic hegemonies.

Despite the power of ethnic and gender hegemonies, spaces do exist for subversive logics, but the prevalence of such logics may vary from arena to arena. In ethno-national conflict situations, formal politics and the military are always of crucial importance: dominance in formal politics, supported by the military, is essential for control of the state (Horowitz 1985). As central locations for hegemonic ethnic competition, well-established institutional sites, especially the military and formal politics, will manifest a hegemonic *ethno-gender* logic, where ideologies, emotions, and interests about gender and ethnicity are closely intertwined. Rick Wilford argues, “While they [women] have never achieved parity of representation in any political system, deeply divided societies appear particularly uncongenial. Mooted or actual linkages between paramilitary organizations and political parties, coupled with the readiness to sanction force, tend to consolidate the male dominance of public spaces in such societies. Though not providing a sufficient explanation, such conditions do contribute to the conspicuous absence of women from elected office” (1996: 42). Because both the military and politics have historically been bastions of male ascendancy, the process of challenging or subverting ethno-gender hegemonies is daunting. But even well established institutional arenas will offer limited possibilities for subversive logics. The domain of civil society can also reflect the hegemonic ethno-gender logic (particularly in cultural associations tied to a specific ethnic group). Ethnicity and gender will always infuse power dynamics in arenas such as religion, charitable associations, the media,

and labor unions. But because this domain can be less formalized, less historically entrenched, and perhaps less regulated by the state, organizations within it *may* be less subject to ethnic polarization. To the extent that ethno-gender polarization is less encompassing, there may be greater possibilities for counter-hegemonic moves: for gender subversion, for ethnic subversion, and for both.

To explicate our perspective, we now turn to a discussion of hegemonic, subversive logics in the context of ethno-national conflict. We explore hegemonic logic within the military and formal politics as two institutional arenas in which ethno-gender hegemony is pervasive and ethno-national and gender identities are most often the basis for social differentiation and political domination. Here we examine practices through which ethno-gender hegemonies are mutually constituted and reinforced. We also focus on civil society and voluntary association that substantiate and support this hegemonic logic. We then focus on subversive logics, looking at politics and particularly at civil society, a domain where there is more possibility for mobilization against ethnic and/or gender hegemonies and where that activism can exist alongside but separate from ethnic and gender hegemonies.

### **The logic of ethno-gender hegemony**

Ethno-gender hegemony imposes differentiation based on both gender and ethnicity. As we have already argued, it legitimates this differentiation through claims about “natural” and/or “cultural” bases for group belonging and group attributes. The affective appeal of such claims can be very powerful: it invites belonging to an esteemed and morally worthy community of men and women; it invokes a sense of vicarious kinship or familiarity with the men and women of the ethnic group; it provides a sense of security and social place through coherent norms and standards of behaviour; and it promises fulfilment through engagement in appropriate social and personal interactions and sexual behaviours. Ethno-gender hegemony is further secured by harnessing the political, economic and social interests of men and women to the “nation”. In the name of the nation, men in the dominant ethnic group will seek to control political and

civil rights, military and government service, employment, public assistance and social services, and the legal system. Numerous mechanisms may be used to establish and maintain ethno-gender dominance. For example, voting rights may be restricted based on sex, race or ethnicity, or via legal machinations such as a limited franchise based on property ownership, tax rates or literacy. Through nepotistic hiring and promotion practices, job reservation and segregation, employment discrimination may also provide ethno-gendered economic privileges, especially benefiting male “heads of households” in the dominant group and their families. In such a context, exogamous practices often result in a loss of socio-political standing and resources. Although class differences are likely within ethno-gender hegemony, the marked privileges proffered to men and women of the hegemonic group help ensure their loyalty. Thus, the proclaimed “national interest” guarantees male dominance and group solidarity through the distribution of material rewards and punishments. Ideologies of ethnic group loyalty and gender conformity further bolster this hegemony as they normalize and legitimate the process of differentiation. Nationalist discourse and discursive practices represent the nation to men and women, providing them with a sense of historical continuity, myths of belonging, and a political vision of the future. This discourse and these practices further articulate the normative frameworks for ethnicized gender identities and for men’s and women’s individual behaviours within the group and in relation to other groups. A brief examination of the domains of the military, formal politics and civil society illuminates the logic of ethno-gender hegemony.

*The Military.* The eminent scholar of nationalism, Anthony Smith, authoritatively asserts the importance of the military to ethno-national projects: “There is no denying the central role of warfare as a mobilizer of ethnic sentiments and national consciousness, a centralizing force in the life of the community and a provider of myths and memories for future generations.” (1991: 27). These myths and memories can be invoked as evidence of male heroism and “national” honour, of transcendent grievance and historical sacrifice, and thus of the need for group vigilance and political action. The mythologization

of legendary battles and masculinised heroism is evident in a wide range of ethno-national conflicts. In Northern Ireland, Protestant unionists invoke memories of the loyalty and determination of the Apprentice Boys protecting the walls of Londonderry from the incursions of the Catholic King James in 1688, the victory of Prince William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, and the courage of Ulster soldiers at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Today, these battles are evoked on murals, banners, and in speeches to help reinforce Protestant solidarity behind the militant slogan, "No Surrender!" Catholics similarly valorise a mythology of sacrifice and courage by Nationalist defenders: the revolt of the Ulster earls against English colonization, the mobilization of the United Irishmen in 1798, the Easter Uprising of 1916; and the starvation deaths of IRA male hunger strikers in the early 1980s. In Serbia in 1989, Slobodan Milošević stood at the Field of Blackbirds and celebrated the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo; his actions served to mobilize Serbians behind his ethno-nationalist project. As Franjo Tuđman—the Croatian Democratic Union adopted the red and white check pattern of the Ustashi, Serbian nationalist leaders appealed to their brethren to remember the atrocities of the Ustashi during World War II. Not surprisingly, some Croatian leaders emphasized the cruelty of the Chetnik forces.

In violent ethnic conflicts, male-dominated security apparatuses and paramilitaries play a crucial role in legitimating and reinforcing these sentiments. Bolstered by the commanding political power of militarised forces, men profess to be the protectors of the group, sacrificing their own lives for the defence of the nation. One can hear these claims in the words of Serbian rock star Simonida Stanković singing in 1993 about the notorious paramilitary group, the Tigers:

*They're protecting Serb glory,  
They're defending Serb lands,  
Arkan's Tigers,*

*They're heroes without a flaw* (in Ramet 1996: 292).

In protracted conflicts, paramilitaries and security forces portray themselves as defenders of the "nation" and their actions as crucial for the "war" effort, and therefore, their actions take on political urgency and historic proportion. Ethnic leaders propagandise about external

and internal threats to the nation and the need to support the men at arms. Hence, anything that jeopardizes the solidarity of the *ethnic* group has to be subordinated to the protection and security of the nation.

As men are offered up to defend the national interest, so too must women's desires and interests be framed to insure national survival. As wives and mothers, women are encouraged to support their men and to take care of the home front and the nation's children. They may take up positions left vacant by male fighters; they may serve the military and security forces more directly through work in non-combat positions (e.g., nurses, secretaries). Not surprisingly, social and sexual relations across ethnic groups tend to be heavily regulated. Norms of compulsory heterosexuality are reinforced by militarised policing of sexuality: women may be actively discouraged and even prohibited from engaging in sexual relations with men of the other group; and men are discouraged from open homosexuality. An extreme example comes from Nebojša Krstić, President of the Movement for the Fatherland's Dignity in Serbia, "Just force must be used to resolutely strike at all the local damned homosexuals... They should all be punished mercilessly and justly sentenced to death or life imprisonment if we wish the Serbian nation to survive" (quoted in Arsić 2002: 261). Homosexuality and intermarriage raise questions about the primacy of loyalty to the ethnic group; and both are seen as threats to the demographic viability of the group itself. Monitoring sexuality, particularly women's sexuality, thus becomes tantamount to protecting the ethnic group and, in situations of conflict, even to defeating the enemy. In Northern Ireland, women suspected of consorting with "the enemy" have been tarred and feathered by nationalist thugs to signal their disgrace and to discourage others from such social relations. Men and women marrying outside their group have been harassed and driven out of neighbourhoods. Ethnic soldiers frequently claim to serve as the guardians of women's honor and the purity of the ethnic group, simultaneously patrolling the boundaries of women's social behaviour and protecting them from the purported rapacity of the other ethnic group. In some cases, the ability of men to control and defile the other group's women becomes a symbol of ethnic power and virility (Allen 1996, Brownmiller 1994).

As in Bosnia, ethnic soldiers may be encouraged or required to violate women from the other ethnic group as a way to dishonour its women, emasculate its men, humiliate the group, and destroy its “genetic integrity” (Stiglmeier 1994). Indeed, they may be motivated by the claim that women of their group have been defiled (Kesi 2002: 314 - 316).

The logic of ethno-gender domination evident in the military domain is clear. Men and women’s sexuality is directed to preserve the boundaries of the nation and ensure its reproduction. Through militarised and masculinised myths, men are persuaded to become ethnic soldiers who protect the homeland and the vulnerable, especially women and children; women are encouraged to valorise their men’s heroic actions and to sacrifice their own ambition and personal autonomy to the interests of the ethnic group. Thus, soldiers become the incarnation of national manhood and of the nation’s sacrifice and the embodiment of a sovereign future. In all of these ways, ethno-gender hegemony ensures an acceptance of male domination and the primacy of group loyalty.

*Formal Politics.* Ethno-national conflicts are predicated on disputes about the boundaries of, control over, and structure of the state, and therefore, formal politics are necessarily at their heart. Under conditions of ethnic hegemony, government institutions are dominated by a particular ethnic group that uses its power to provide political, economic and social advantages to its own member and to legitimate its authority through claims about the “national” interest (Brass 1985, Horowitz 1985). Political parties tend to be organized along ethnic lines and political entrepreneurs often engage in a process of “ethnic outbidding” to attract support (Mitchell 1999: 114). Donald Horowitz argues that “by appealing to electorates in ethnic terms, by making ethnic demands on government, and by bolstering the influence of ethnically chauvinist elements within each group, parties that begin by merely mirroring ethnic divisions help to deepen and extend them” (Horowitz 1985: 291). In Northern Ireland, the legacy of colonialism and partition produced a clear ethnic hegemony under the mantle of the Unionist Party, which dominated the political regime at Stormont. This Protestant hegemony served to dichotomize

political activity along ethnic lines. The Civil Rights Movement, which sought to develop an integrated, non-ethnicized society, foundered in the face of ethnic outbidding by unionists and nationalists and of the emergence of national chauvinist parties such as the Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Fein, and later paramilitary-associated parties. (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson 1995, Farrell 1980) In Yugoslavia, Tito’s regime contained ethno-nationalism by structuring the federation along ethnic lines, by ensuring representation of various ethnic groups, and limiting expression of nationalist sentiments. As the communist regime collapsed, ethnic entrepreneurs like Milošević and Tudjman mobilized their political parties around virulent forms of Serbian and Croatian nationalism, and some new political parties also took up the nationalist banner. (Glenny 1996, Ramet 1996)

Of course governments, states and political parties are gendered, and women tend to be marginalized as actors in formal politics. In Northern Ireland, during the entire Stormont regime, only 9 women were ever elected to the local parliament and only one ever served as a government minister. During the period of the “Troubles”, women continued to be marginal in formal politics and even with the establishment of a new government following the Good Friday agreement, few women were elected to the Assembly, capturing only 12.9% of the seats (Racioppi and See, 2003). In Yugoslavia, despite the visibility of a few female politicians like Biljana Plavsic, the transition from communism brought a drastic reduction in the participation of women in government and formal politics. For example, with the first free elections in Serbia, women lost significant seats in the legislature, declining from 20 to under two percent and their representation has remained low since then (Cockburn 1998: 61; Bracewell 1996: 26). By the end of 2002, Serbian women still held only 7.2% of the seats in the lower house and 2.5% in the upper house. Women have fared better in Croatia, holding 7.2% of the seats in the legislature following the 1995 elections (US Department of State 1999) and securing 20% of seats in the lower house and 6.2% in the upper house in the 2002 elections (Women in National Parliaments 2002). Women, though rarely visible as high ranking government officials or party leaders, may participate in ethnic political mobilization, often “supporting their men” in electoral campaigns, fund-raising for parties, and in social events

designed to rally political support. In Northern Ireland, women are active in political parties at a rate equivalent to their male compatriots (Miller, Wilford and Donoghue 1996) but tend to hold few leadership positions in ethnic political parties (Racioppi and See 2000). In comparison, the situation in former Yugoslavia was mixed, according to Mili (1993). In Serbia, polls showed that women overwhelmingly resisted joining political parties, and some avoided voting in early elections (117), whereas in Croatia and Slovenia, "women became more politically involved by joining numerous new parties...." (114).

In situations of ethnic conflict, men engaged in formal politics often assert *their* interests by invoking their responsibility to defend the "nation" and protect the boundaries and interests of the ethnic group through their actions. They may adopt policies that support and encourage women to orient themselves towards traditional, domestic social roles and discourage their participation in formal politics. This can be as extreme as Drakuli describes in Croatia where the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) explicitly stated that the primary and "sacred" duty of every woman was to stay at home, take care of her family and be a "lady", instead of being exposed to the market or participating in politics (1993: 124). Or in the equally extreme statement of Ian Paisley, head of the Democratic Unionist Party, who asserted in 1993, "The Lord Jesus Christ certainly elevated women and where the Christian message is heard women will be elevated, but the Bible states clearly that the man is the head of the woman and Christ is the head of the man" (*Protestant Telegraph*, November 1993: 8).

But ethno-gender hegemony can be exercised through more subtle ways of encouraging or discouraging women's participation in formal politics. Because ethnic parties rely on group solidarity, they must secure women's support and that sometimes includes special measures to advance the interests or respond to the concerns of women within their group. Such efforts encourage women to avoid gender-based politics across ethnic lines. Furthermore, in situations of conflict, formal politics may be presented as an arena of high risk and danger, unsuitable for women; ethnic parties are unlikely to prioritise women's inclusion in party leadership or to adopt recruitment mechanisms to draw women into political activism. Often parties may develop women's sections but these are rarely deployed to cultivate

political leadership or to encourage women's input into policy. Instead, these tend to support party activities and to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and the gender division of labour in the ethno-national struggle. Within ethnicised parties, leaders may propagandise about demographic threats, representing women as mothers of the nation, fostering pronatalist campaigns, or advocating restrictions on contraception and abortion.<sup>1</sup> In Croatia, for example, the government instituted the Department of Demographic Restoration encouraging women to concentrate on reproduction and childrearing (Cockburn 1998: 162; Mostov 2000: 99-100); and politicians attempted to use the constitution to make abortion and contraception illegal (Drakuli 1993: 124). In both Bosnia and Serbia, religious leaders called upon women to eschew their "selfish" sentiments, have more children and avoid mixed marriages (Mostov 2000: 98-99). On the other hand, in Northern Ireland where the demographic balance is precarious, there is no discourse about the need for women to produce children for the nation, although both Nationalists and Unionists have opposed the extension of Britain's liberal policies on abortion access to the province.

Despite variations among cases, it seems evident that ethno-gender hegemony functions in formal politics to harness men's political interests and activism to the ethnicised parties. In general, the domain of formal politics is heavily male dominated. Women tend to play auxiliary or supportive roles at best; more frequently, they pursue their interests and devote their activism to the domain of civil society, especially voluntary associations and community organizations.

*Civil Society.* In contrast to formal politics, ethno-gender hegemonies may encourage women's involvement in what has come to be seen as "informal" or "small" politics (Jaquette and Wolchik 1998, Roulston and Davis 2000). There is, however, no singular transnational pattern in the ways in which men and women participate in this domain. Women may be discouraged from any civic engagement on the grounds that such "public activity" is the domain

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<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Gaitskell and Unterhalter 1989, Koonz 1987.

of men. More frequently, grass-roots organizations and voluntary associations may be seen as extensions of traditional familial and domestic life and thus appropriate arenas for women's activism. For example, in Croatia, Club "*Sveti Duh*" (the Club of Pregnant Women) advocates on behalf of healthy pregnancy and motherhood. In Northern Ireland, the Mothers Union of the Church of Ireland is an Anglican organization that promotes the "well-being of families". Through their activism in such organizations, women reinforce the primacy of their identity as "mothers of the nation". As these two examples show, membership in voluntary associations may be restricted to women, but it is also the case that numerous fraternal organizations contribute to ethno-gender hegemonies. While civil society usually provides more space for women to participate in public life, to the extent that it posits a norm of separate spheres of activism (i.e. that voluntary associations and grassroots organizations are an appropriate arena for women's involvement or that men ought to participate in particular organization such as sports clubs and service groups), it complements the ethno-gender ideology found in the military and formal politics.

As in these domains, the informal sector can reinforce affective ties to the nation. Community-oriented organizations and cultural associations, in particular provide members with a sense of ethnic solidarity and common purpose underscore the importance of service to the ethno-national community and generate among their participants a sense of their own usefulness in these endeavours. Hence, civic organizations can be crucial for reinforcing affective ties to the nation and building ethnic identity, even if such organizations are not explicitly targeted at a particular ethnic group. Through their activities, they also may help frame norms of social interaction, implicitly or explicitly signalling the importance of group boundaries and of ethnic social separation. Cultural and language groups almost always explicitly set out to preserve and advance ethnic identity and interests, through activities like ethnic festivals, publications and educational programs. But other groups, whether these are oriented towards community development, sports and leisure, religion, or charity, may be equally involved in sustaining ethnic separateness, especially in contexts of residential and social segregation.

Ethnically based organisations attend to the interests of the community by providing genuine services from childcare to support groups to networks for employment. As a basis for political mobilization, civic organizations also serve the interests of ethnic entrepreneurs and by extension the "nation" as a whole. Indeed, some organizations may even develop formal links to political parties and come to "represent" the "voice of the people". Among the clearest examples of this relationship is the Loyal Orange Order in Northern Ireland. This fraternal organization, which was established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, hosts infamous annual ethno-national parades across Northern Ireland, celebrating Protestantism and the union with Great Britain. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, unionist politicians mobilized Orangemen to oppose home rule for Ireland. Subsequently, the Orange Order became an integral part of the Unionist Party and remains so today. This example suggests the powerful connections that can be forged between formal politics and civic organizations in ethno-national conflicts. In contrast, the Loyal Orange Ladies auxiliary has no formal political role and cannot even independently organize parades. Instead, it functions strictly to support Orangemen and their cause. Yet, Orange Ladies accept the gender hegemony of the Orange Order. The perspective of member Olive Whitten is not unusual: "Although I have attended the Twelfth demonstrations for many years and have been a member of the Association of Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland for over thirty years, I have no regrets at our members not being invited to take part in the parade. I enjoy standing on the sideline, watching the parade from beginning to end although my one desire always was to have been a playing member of a band" (quoted in Lucy and McClure 1997: 150). Explicitly ethno-national, exclusively male organizations like the Orange Order present the most obvious instance of ethno-gender hegemony within civil society. Even if more obliquely, mother's groups, youth organizations, and cultural associations may also serve to support this hegemony.

### **Subversive Logics**

If ethno-gender hegemony seems pervasive and intractable, in fact, there are always spaces for counter-hegemonic discourses.

Although ethno-nationalism combines affective ties, ideology and interest in particularly cohesive and compelling ways, there are alternative and powerful bases for emotional connection, conceptions of political solidarity, and articulations of interests that may erode or undermine the authority of ethno-gender hegemony. For example, feminism provides a vision of sisterhood, of women's empowerment, of gender equality, and social transformation that cuts across class and national boundaries. Similarly, pacifism and human rights ideologies assert a worldview of human interconnection. The presence of alternative logics means that the dynamics of ethno-national and gender politics may be more complex than our above discussion implies. And as Sherry Ortner argues in analysing gender hegemonies, even in cases where there is comprehensive male domination of politics and society, men seldom enjoy monopolistic power and status. "There will always be (for both better and worse) arenas of power and authority that lie outside the hegemony and that may serve as both images of and points of leverage" for challenging male domination (1996: 172). Women may hold high status, for example, within the family, in civic organizations, and in rituals and iconography; and they may use this status to advance their power and challenge male domination. Svetlana Slapsak argues that this was the case in Yugoslavia where women deployed the symbolic cultural of association of "woman", "life" and "death" to legitimate their anti-war and anti-patriarchy activism (2001).

Similarly, even where there is clear ethnic domination by one group, that group's control of the polity and society is frequently challenged. As the very fact of ethnic conflict attests, subordinated groups often deploy resources, however limited, to affirm and assert their identity and interests. Ethnic groups that are tangential to the conflict may also seek arenas in which to articulate their interests and express their identity. And individuals who are not persuaded by logic of ethno-gender hegemony, who see their personal interests and emotional ties at odds with this hegemony, may refuse to engage in the ethno-national project and seek out alternatives. Thus, even in highly polarized and conflicted societies, cross-national mobilization can emerge to challenge the logic of ethno-nationalism. And even

within an arena in which the logic of ethno-gender hegemony predominates, there can be points of leverage for subversive arrangements. As the following discussion will show, such points of leverage are unlikely in the military domain but slightly more likely in formal politics. Given its myriad voluntary and grassroots associations and diverse institutional bases, civil society can provide more spaces than either of these domains for subversive logics.

*Military.* Under conditions of ethnic conflict, there is no possibility within the military to subvert the logic of ethnic hegemony. Indeed, the existence of ethnic paramilitaries suggests the extent to which the logic of ethnic hegemony has precipitated militarisation and permeated all of society. As we discuss below, civil society and to a lesser extent, formal politics, may become key arenas for countering the logic of ethnic hegemony. As we have already seen, in most cases this logic encourages men to become soldiers of the nation and dictates that they exclusively control the military. However, there are instances in which women have become active in nationalist conflicts as members of state security and paramilitary forces, suggesting a potential subversion of the gender hegemony. For example, in the armies of Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia during the break-up of Yugoslavia, women's brigades were established. As Obrad Kesi describes the Serbian women's brigades, the first all-female unit of the war was a brigade formed in Glina, a Serbian-majority town in Krajina. At the swearing in of the unit in December 1991, women shouted the oath "We will fight against all the Serbs' enemies under the protection of God." Another Serbian all-women brigade, "the Maidens of Kosovo", was formed in Bosnia in 1993... The media focus on these women portrayed them as patriots and warriors. They were de-feminised and portrayed as modern-day Amazons whose exploits become legendary" (1999: 189).<sup>1</sup>

Although some women serve in the police force in Northern Ireland, they have been excluded from the British army, and only very small numbers have been affiliated with either loyalist or republican

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of women's participation in military operations in nationalist movements elsewhere see Byanyima (1992), Eisen (1984), Enloe (1993), Ranchod-Nilsson (2000), Seitz (1992), Tetreault (1994).

paramilitaries. For the most part, within these armed forces, subversive ethnic logics are impossible and counter-hegemonic gender logics are rare.

*Formal politics.* Even under conditions of protracted conflict, where multiple parties exist, there can be room, however modest, for the emergence of subversive logics in formal politics. The mere fact that parties can form opens up the possibility for articulation of interests and ideologies that counter ethno-national and/or gender hegemonies. For example, labour parties and women's parties may mobilize to challenge existing ethnic and gender stratifications, or they may mobilize within ethnic groups to subvert the gender order. And lobbying organizations may also challenge the ethno-gender logic. In Serbia, in the early 1990s, a women's party, *Ženska Stranka* (ŽEST), formed to challenge male chauvinism, nationalism and militarisation. The Women's Lobby, comprised of "women from different non-nationalist parties formed an alliance...to put pressure on these male-led organizations from within"; its program contained demands for women's equality in the workplace, in education, in politics, and in the law (Cockburn 1998: 164). Arkadia, a lesbian and gay lobby, explicitly countered the pro-natalist rhetoric of Serbian nationalists, stating that such rhetoric suggests, "that young Serbian foetuses will be immediately baptized, conditioned to hate, and lead the war against the many Enemies of the Serbian nation" (Ramet 1996: 282). In Northern Ireland, as the peace process began, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) emerged as a cross-community party to counter male dominance in public life, ethno-national exclusivity in politics, and militarisation of society. Although this effort to subvert the ethno-gender hegemony had limited electoral impact, the NIWC played an important role in peace negotiations, in the development of new power-sharing institutions, and in the promulgation of principles of social inclusion. The Northern Ireland Women's Political Forum is less overtly counter-hegemonic than the NIWC. Drawing its membership from women in political parties, it seeks to improve the position of women within parties but not to challenge the ethnic bases for party politics.

Although disruptive of the ethno-gender hegemony within the domain of formal politics, subversive political parties and lobbying organizations are seldom successful in gaining political power during a protracted violent conflict. The degree of ethnic polarization mitigates against their efficacy in this domain. Their very existence and impact frequently depends upon the ties they are able to forge with civil society.

*Civil Society.* In contrast to the military and formal politics, civil society may provide spaces for inter-ethnic contact and cooperation and a venue for challenging gender norms. Labour unions, women's groups, civil rights groups, peace and reconciliation organizations may challenge normative ethnic and/or gender relations by appealing to interests that cut across the predominant ethnic cleavage and counters male dominance. For instance, labour unions that emphasize the different interests and rights of male and female workers without regard to ethnic identity can challenge ethnic and gender segregation in the workplace, nepotistic hiring practices, discrimination in pay and promotion, and workplace climate issues. UNISON in Northern Ireland, for example, has been at the forefront of combating gender and ethnic inequalities in employment. Some peace and reconciliation organizations have recognized the connection between male dominance, militarisation and ethnic violence and have worked to address the interplay of conflict and masculinisation of public life. In Serbia, for example, Women in Black Against War (*Žena u Crnom protiv Rata*) was an explicitly feminist group that staged regular protests and direct actions against war and violence. Their protests emphasized the interplay between militarisation and domestic abuse (Cockburn 1998: 168-173). As one of their proclamations stated, "We know that the militarism and domestic violence are interconnected and therefore we have repeated many times: **WHEN THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CEASES-THE WARS WILL STOP**" (Zajovi 1994: 18). In Croatia, the Autonomous Women's House was the first safe house for abused women and their children in Eastern Europe; it worked with women from all ethno-national groups and explicitly aligned itself

with transnational feminist organizations (Women's Infoteka 2003).<sup>1</sup> And in Northern Ireland, Women Together for Peace, founded in 1970, aims A[t]o bring about a cessation of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, to give support to the victims of sectarianism, to give women a voice in society, to create a pluralistic society where there is a mutual understanding and respect of our diversities@ (Women's International Network 2003).

Of course, not all groups that manifest a counter-hegemonic ethnic logic are interested in gender issues. Many anti-war groups, for example, focus strictly on inter-ethnic conflict. In former Yugoslavia, the Balkan Peace Team, associated with War Resisters International and the Croatian Anti-War Campaign, organized against the war and then worked to both document and limit human rights abuse and ethnic intimidation (War Resisters International 2003). In Northern Ireland, Corrymeela Community has protested against ethnic dominance and inter-ethnic violence and has developed programming to combat sectarianism and to promote ethnic reconciliation. Similarly, not all groups that manifest a subversive gender logic also engage in efforts to disrupt ethno-nationalist hegemony. In Northern Ireland, for example, urban women's centres tend to be located within ethnically segregated communities and to orient their activities almost exclusively to those communities. While they may occasionally work with similar groups across the ethnic divide, they are often constrained from directly attacking ethnic hegemony. And many organizations that address domestic violence may see a connection with militarism and patriarchy but do not confront their relation to ethno-nationalism. Nor are civic organizations that oppose aspects of ethno-national or male dominance always explicitly subversive of ethno-gender hegemonies. For example, anti-war groups are often started by mothers who seek to protect their children and who use their status as mothers to legitimate their activism. In Yugoslavia, mothers of soldiers organized demonstrations, first in Belgrade and then elsewhere, to protest the war and the conscription of their sons.

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, feminist activism was not without risk, as the case of the "Five Witches" in Croatia attests. These five feminists were attacked in the Zagreb weekly, *Globus*, as unpatriotic and untruthful because they engaged in a gender analysis of the mass rapes, rather than simply blaming the Serbs (Pavlovi 1999: 136-138).

Precisely because of the way in which women, and particularly mothers, could be seen as symbols of the nation and its future, they were able to use that privileged status to protest against the war and for peaceful negotiation in a way in which men (even fathers) could not. Serbian women could claim a moral authority to speak out for peace precisely *because* they were women and mothers (Bracewell 1996: 30).

However, as Bracewell goes on to note, it is "very difficult to divorce the language of motherhood from the rhetoric of nationalism" (31). Not surprisingly, ethno-nationalists latched onto the symbol of the "mother of the nation" and the "hero mother" and used it to their own militaristic ends. In Northern Ireland, the Women's Peace Movement (later, the Peace People) mobilized as mothers against sectarianism and violence, but the movement collapsed in part because of charges by the IRA that it was insufficiently critical of British militarism (Wilford 1996: 41).

Voluntary associations and grassroots organization, however, are not fixed, static entities. Over time, they may engage in multiple logics in a way that is much less likely to occur in the military or formal politics. Indeed, through their activism, groups may develop new agendas and understandings of ethnic and gender power relations or they may simply collapse under the weight of ethnic particularism. Groups that tackle one form of hegemony or the other have the potential to see and act on the linkages between ethno-nationalist and gender hierarchies and to develop into organizations that can confront ethno-gender hegemony. For example, in Northern Ireland, the Women's Support Network grew out of a coalition of women's centres in loyalist and nationalist neighborhoods when their funding was threatened by Belfast ethno-nationalist politicians. And today, this organization works to combat gender discrimination and sectarianism and to promote women's activism across ethnic lines. However, in situations of on-going conflict, it is extremely difficult to sustain such coalitions. In the mid-1960s, Protestant and Catholic feminists in Northern Ireland came together in a women's rights movement, but their efforts foundered on the ethno-nationalist fault line.

Thus, civil society in ethnically divided societies presents a more complicated picture than formal politics: ethnic-based organizing may

predominate in both arenas, helping to define and redefine ethnic interests and identities. In the informal sector, however, there is often a wider array of associations and possibilities for cross-communal and gender mobilization. And even if such mobilization initially fails, it may provide a basis for counter-hegemonic activism during a period of conflict resolution and political transition. Hence, civil society holds promise for the development of subversive ethno-gender logics.

## Conclusions

As this paper has shown, in situations of ethnic conflict, affect, ideology and interest combine in powerful ways to maintain the logic of ethno-gender hegemony. Myths of kinship shape and reinforce individuals' affective ties to the "nation"; the interest of men in governing the state on behalf of the "nation" generates and supports ethnicised, male-dominated parties; and ideologies of the "nation" and its "people", differentiated by sex roles and united by a sense of group right, sustain loyalty of group members to this political mobilization. This mutually reinforcing interplay of affect, ideology and interest are particularly powerful in the domains of the military and formal politics, but may diffuse throughout society. Anthony Smith argues that ethno-nationalism provides a more unified and politically efficacious basis for identity and action than virtually any other collective identity or political logic. As he writes, ethno-nationalism... does in fact today exert a more potent and durable influence than other collective cultural identities; [because of] the need for collective immortality and dignity, the power of ethno-history, the role of new class structures and the domination of inter-state systems in the modern world-this type of collective identity is likely to continue to command humanity's allegiances for a long time to come, even when other larger-scale but looser forms of collective identity emerge alongside national ones (1991: 175-176).

Despite its pervasiveness, the logic of ethno-gender hegemony is never complete. Alternative affective ties, ideologies and interests will always exist, and those who endorse them may find spaces for counter-hegemonic moves. Most obviously, as protracted ethnic conflict attests, political control by an ethnic hegemon will nearly

always be contested by marginalized ethnic groups. Male dominance may be challenged by women within ethnic parties. Peace movements articulate an anti-militaristic ideology that may stress solidarity across ethnic groups and humankind more generally. Feminist groups formulate understandings of women's interests and gender identities that transcend ethnic and national boundaries. While it may be difficult for such challenges and movements to flourish under conditions of violent conflict, their increasing normative salience globally provides legitimacy and sometimes even resources to confront more powerful ethno-gender regimes.

During peace processes, the ethnic hegemony must renegotiate power arrangements to accommodate the demands and interests of the challenging ethnic group. This necessarily involves reconciling ethno-national competition in the domains of the military and formal politics. But during such transitions, opportunities for subversive groups to challenge ethno-gender hegemony and help shape alternative futures are more likely than during periods of violent conflict. By disrupting "politics as usual", such transitions may disturb the ethno-gender "rules of the game" and make ethnic and gender hegemonies vulnerable to change. Hence, they provide opportunities for strategic challenges and the renegotiation of gender and ethnic power. Under such conditions, counter-hegemonic logics may be better able to take root.

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## SOME THEORETICAL STEPS FOR A GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

*Olivia Todorean*

### **Introduction**

The present paper is an attempt to draw a new theoretical framework for the way of thinking about development, taking into account four criteria: it should be gender-aware and gender-sensitive, it should be equitable, it should (still) be universal in order to have normative power and attract international concern, and it should have an ultimately practical value for development projects and programs.

While reflecting on a feminist vision about gender-equitable development, I have also realized that avoiding the two classical categories of feminist approaches to development, i.e. Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD),<sup>1</sup> would be a necessary step since I cannot decide a true one over a wrong one. This was furthermore the case when my most influential references could, in a simplistic way, be ascribed to the two different lines of thought. I trust my theoretical construction here, which combines elements of both visions, lies yet on firm grounds. In each of them, I find very valuable insights for an outline of an alternate vision about development nourished from my own two contexts of situated knowledge: as a feminist academic and an Eastern-European woman.

The reader will find in the following an analysis of the works of Naila Kabeer and Martha Nussbaum, a discussion about what and

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<sup>1</sup> These two are the major trends in feminist thinking about development. They are a projection of liberal feminists and leftist feminists into analyses of development. The former stresses the role of individuals, prejudices, and stereotypes and therefore, equal education in order to emancipate women. The latter condemns inequalities as features of contemporary economic, political and knowledge structures. For more on the two of them, see Jill Steans (1998), as well as the writings of Elisabeth Boserup and Myra Mies.

how I take their ideas into the proposed new framework and an overview of the evolution of the thinking about women and gender in development processes, in order to point at the general development-thinking context and trends in which my proposal could fit and which this paper argues for.

### **Naila Kabeer for a reversal of knowledge hierarchies**

Beyond the classification into a (new) opposition of the two main trends in gender thinking about development, the field itself is still recent, thus open to any new contribution. The present theoretical proposal is even more valuable when considered in the Romanian research context, only marginally interested in development issues per se, i.e. other than via European integration. These two aspects explain why, in thinking about gender and development, I decided to give a special attention to two of the authors who both theorize this topic through arguments and qualitative field research. Each offers a specific perspective, extremely fruitful for future thinking about gender equitable and sensitive development. Building on theoretical arguments from both works, I will outline some crucial elements for a new thinking about development that could develop in time in a thought full model. The main rationale for proposing such a model, partly along with the two authors, is the attempt to rescue the universalism of the development idea, its promises and values, while cultivating sensitivity to gender and generally, post positivist critiques of universal models.

Before initiating the discussion of the works of Naila Kabeer and Martha Nussbaum, I trust that at this moment in time, after three decades of linking gender and development, the reasons for building and intensifying the feminist research on development issues are clear and perfectly legitimate. However, here I briefly reiterate major arguments for the usefulness and especially, for the legitimacy of feminist thinking about development. To those who claim that such a discourse is normative, while development is a set of scientific, objective processes, this article gives the answer that all development theories are normative, an aspect which in fact is implied by the simple term “development”. The latter means something more and/or

better, be this purely economic (better production, more economic growth), or socio-political (participation, responsibility, democracy), cultural (creativity, flexibility, continuous renewal, preserving diversity). Any of the forms of development thinking is deeply normative. Economic and sociologic theories are normative in a more subtle way (economic growth is good and desirable, the “modern man” is superior to the traditional man, etc.). The normative component became more obvious once the dependency theory was formulated, in the sense that it criticized for the first time the hidden bias of development models promoted so far. The Washington consensus and some of the current dominant paradigms are normative in a hidden way, due to their assumed universalism, rationality, and superiority in terms of economic advice. However, I would argue that for the last two decades, normative stances in development thinking are openly accepted trends, valued as such, for no other reason at least for the fact that development aims ultimately at the improvement of every individual life (see also the ideas of human development, human security, etc.). No official definition can afford to completely skip, when it is more than a simple sentence, the ultimate goal of development efforts, i.e. the human being.

Once we accept that development is unavoidably a normative concept, we only have to see on what bases it should be revised by and for women or, put differently, to what extent development theorists, researchers and planners begin by making gendered assumptions, using gendered values, principles and human figures which they consider universal and neutral. The first step in the process was the revealing of gendered thinking about development, in mainstream presuppositions about the role and capacities of men and women, their proper economic activities and their social contribution. Every gender perspective on development has at minimum this objective of revealing past gendered bias in mainstream development theories.

The second step is the justification of the legitimacy of a feminist thinking about development, i.e. a development that is gender aware, gender sensitive and gender equitable. Here, the fact that today almost every definition of development recognizes the centrality of the human being as the goal of the whole process, with his/her basic

needs, certainly opens the space for feminist development research. As long as the welfare of human beings is the goal, and as the existence of large categories of poor, marginalized people is a fact, seemingly in the rise (of which the majority are women), studying the causes of the lack of welfare, reflecting about specific solutions, researching the meanings and the operationalization of “basic needs” for each of these categories of disadvantaged categories, and finally integrating the result into renewed development policies, should represent legitimately and imperatively necessary activities, not “odd” or “futile”, gratuitous thoughts.

In her book *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*, published in 1994, Naila Kabeer makes an analysis of the economic and political theory sources which laid the ground for the emergence of development thought. In the chapter entitled “Connecting, Extending, Reversing: Development from a Gender Perspective” she goes further to elaborate her own conceptual understanding of development, in a twofold way: summarizing other perspectives and constructing her own arguments, both compared continuously to qualitative findings from India and Bangladesh.<sup>1</sup> The first fundamental aspect in Naila Kabeer’s perspective stresses the idea that development *per se*, as it is planned and thought of at an international level, is a process of power. There are actors who control the resources, there are actors who need resources; there are actors who control the ideas, there are others who accept the ideas and even internalize them. Furthermore, the two types of control are mutually reinforcing, so that “[c]ontrol over resources enables those in power to determine the parameters within which debates and controversies in development can be conducted, which problems are to count within the development agenda, and which subset of solutions will be considered.”(1994: 70). Once a set of development policies is implemented, the power inherent to development processes “has also been associated with the promotion of a particular world-view.” (1994: 72). Power is produced by resources and knowledge. Without

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that both authors whose writings I find crucial for building a personal theoretical framework for understanding development work on their theories and make it a pragmatically relevant tool starting from fieldwork in India.

insisting on the types of resources, what is more interesting is the manner in which various visions/views about development pose for scientific truth, objective discovery, validated by research and scientific methods. Development thought is allegedly universal, neutral, precisely because it has nothing to do with particular people, but with a set of values and indicators that are so abstract that their individual, private consequences are rendered invisible. The same is to be said all the more about their possible gender, cultural, class bias. The economy, the market, the economic growth, the gross national product, the informal sector, the formal sector, macro stability, all these terms have a highly abstract, “universal” character that makes them more powerful, due to their (un)questionable objectivity. In those terms, one cannot recognize daily issues of the people living in development countries, such as low income, the absence of infrastructures that allow a decent living/life (electricity, clean running water, etc.), the sacrifice of children’s education in favor of the survival of the whole family, the absolute need for domestic production in order to survive, so many other aspects that mean development from the point of view of particular communities and private destinies.

Another fundamental feature of development thinking from which Naila Kabeer’s vision departs notes the widespread confusion between goals and means. By that she mainly refers to economic growth, which prevailed as a general development goal in the ‘50s, but also from the ‘80s on. Although when asked, any planner and any theory leaves some space to admit that this economic growth is merely an instrument in order to attain economically, but also socially, the developed stage, the greatest attention in prevailing discourses refers to the strive for economic growth, a fact that most often blurs the final (human) goal, in favor of the immediate, technical, macroeconomic solutions. The redistribution of final development benefits is continuously postponed, on efficiency terms, social indicators are often overlooked, and everything that matters in evaluating the success of development is the rate of economic growth and the gross domestic product. The main problem feminists identify about the gross domestic product is that it only measures those goods and services that are exchanged in the market; it also equates the value of

goods and services to their market value. Yet, the well being of any person is based on many other “services” and “products” which, no matter how crucial they are, are never exchanged in the market. Without them, we cannot fully speak about reaching human development (and here my understanding would name comfort, compassion, socialization, relaxation, processing products from the market as cooked food, well maintained clothing, etc.). This issue becomes all the more relevant when one realizes the fact that most of these noncommercial activities, clearly belonging to social survival and the well functioning of individuals, are never counted in economic development thought and are predominantly performed by women. The focus of mainstream development thinking points toward the market and the work, to products and services that take place in its framework. The role of domestic economy, that of the informal sector, of black economy, are placed in a deep shadow, despite the fact that in most developing and transition economies, they have a substantial weight in the economic life. This hierarchy of social values, with the resource allocation it produces, serves a hierarchy of interest, as Kabeer puts it: “(...) women are underrepresented in activities at the ‘tip of the iceberg’, where development efforts and resources are concentrated; they appear in larger numbers in informal-sector and subsistence activities” (1994: 79). Such a representation of the economy and of the “positive”, “active” roles in society makes sure that “women are positioned within the policy debate as unproductive ‘welfare’ clients, and that their claims on the national development budget, based as they are on activities and resources which are excluded from calculations of the GNP, are rarely heard in debates over budgetary allocations.” (1994: 79).

The first step that Kabeer takes when rethinking development aims, for all the reasons underlined above, at *reversing the hierarchies of knowledge*, meaning a production of alternate knowledge about economy and about development, authored by women and/or for women in various social contexts, based on assuming their own personal experiences. Producing alternative knowledge is thus an elementary step for having a more equitable development. This is precisely the rationale of the present study, even in the sense of generating *situated knowledge* about development from an assumed

feminist and Eastern European perspective. My position at this point is different from that of Naila Kabeer, who continues by advocating a second step, that of *totally reversing* the hierarchies of knowledge by starting *the reflection from the lowest possible level*, i. e. of the most marginalized persons, probably the poorest women of the poorest countries in the (former) Third World. Despite the fact that I understand the author’s point of view and I do not contest its value, in the idea that theorizing from the most excluded perspective has the best chance of understanding precisely that exclusion and of finding the solutions to eliminate it, my approach remains legitimate giving two aspects: the former refers to the fact that gender issues are intrinsic to all development processes, both in poorer, underdeveloped countries and in “richer” developing, countries, so that the reflection on inequalities is worthwhile regardless of the place. The latter aspect refers strictly to Romania, where the gender analysis of development policies, especially those implemented under international influence, is practically absent from the literature, and this is precisely where my own situated knowledge can contribute better than for other parts of the world where research cannot take me, although I fully recognize their “more excluded” status than that of contemporary Romanian society.

The third phase of Kabeer’s proposal for a development model indicates the need for *inversing the allocation priorities*. When we place the most excluded case in the center of development projects, then policy priorities will more likely aim at minimal well being for every person and his/her basic needs (in a broad definition); only after having set the focus this way and only to the extent of practical utility from the new perspective, policies should indeed target economic growth. New knowledge, by adopting the perspective of the most disadvantaged categories and by inverting the priorities, will make sure that the pursuit of economic growth has a purely instrumental and limited role. In such a context, the most valued activities are precisely those of caring, supporting and providing the well being for human life. The extent to which various activities respond to basic human needs is the essential criterion as opposed to the rationality of the market; therefore, those activities which contribute to the health and comfort of the people are to be recognized as socially productive,

regardless of the sphere and even less, of the gender of the person who fulfills them.

Without going into too much detail about the philosophical and practical implications of changing the crucial principle for valuing human activities, I take from this model the necessity of placing human beings at the core of development thought. And at this point I intentionally avoid the (liberal) "individual", and any assumed universal model that, on a closer look, turns out to be very particular. For the moment, I underline the centrality of human beings with their common basic needs and at the same time, in their specific, differentiating contexts, also essential to the existence of every person. Thus, I consider that economic debates of the "efficiency" and "economic growth" kind are necessary, but need to be stated and continuously reflected upon as of secondary, instrumental importance, to development overall. One way of assuring their instrumental character is the perpetual questioning of the manner in which development theories and practices, in every one of their components, connect themselves to the core of development, i.e. human persons in their life contexts. Even if for economists, this argument could sound radical, or utopian, from a political theory angle it represents an assumed normative position, stated as such, with the firm conviction in the value of human beings, of their forms of living and of their particular achievements, situated in diverse socio-political circumstances. A similar vision is to be found in the next model discussed here and will therefore be more nuanced once the model is presented. Moreover, such an approach tends to be more and more present in some official visions about development (like the *Millennium Report* promoted by Kofi Annan, the ideas of human development and human security spread within the UN circles, the Human Development Reports, some pilot-projects of the World Bank).

The last stage proposed by Kabeer is *building alliances* between activist organizations and bureaucratic organizations, for a new thinking about gender-sensitive development and for reshaping the practice. As it is probably apparent at this point, this is an idea, or rather a strategy I argue for as well, precisely due to its final or potential practical usefulness. Alliances should be built in fact between feminist theorists of development, activists from transnational and

local movements, and development agencies. I think that feminist literature gains every year more substance so that, beyond the stage of unraveling the gendered functioning of the economy, development, on politics, epistemic feminist communities could be created; within the alliances suggested by Kabeer, development projects could be transformed and development organizations could be directed towards radically reformulating their paradigms in an equitable gender manner.<sup>1</sup>

### **Martha Nussbaum and the capabilities approach**

The crucial problem of drawing an assumed normative model of development, which has the human being at its core, and which establishes as final goal his/her empowerment with certain capabilities, was not put in its own terms so far, although it is a much debated issue in political theory, with great potential for development theory. The main problem belongs to the theoretical difficulties of the reconciliation of the critique of all universal models proposed during the last decades (if not even centuries), a critique that states precisely their universality as an imposition, a 'forcing' of the reality into differently valued patterns which serve power interests, with proposing another model of universal aspirations. In other words, the difficulty belongs to the willingness of rescuing the idea of a minimal, universal model, at least as a normative goal, despite or in fact, taking into account the attack on all universal models proposed by the development theory to the present day. Martha's Nussbaum work, closely related to that of Amartya Sen, but directly meant for women's emancipation and development, is a strong example of how to solve the quasi-dilemma formulated above. Before analyzing her proposal and discussing the valuable aspects I take on for thinking about gender sensitive and equitable development in Eastern Europe, two notes are needed. First of all, the entire effort of feminist (re)-theorizing of development has no meaning in the total absence of any hope for universality. Development as it was conceived and still is,

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<sup>1</sup> The European Union has witnessed for the last two decades the success of such alliances on common legislation and institutional restructuring (see the remarkable analysis made by Catherine Hoskyns in her book *Integrating Gender* (1996).

beyond remarkable differences, represents at a minimum the aspiration of every society to progress and prosperity. From a pragmatic point of view, development is about a long series of global, international and national processes through which governments attempt to fulfill this aspiration via combined actions at those three levels. These dimensions are inseparable from the idea of 'development' as it emerged in the last six decades on the political and academic agenda; therefore, a denial of universalism can mean ultimately a denial of all efforts related to development. A second observation, when taking the gender approach on development, is that the universalism of previous models was under rightful attack, in as much as it was completely 'blind' to women's existence, to an equitable gendered thinking about development issues and, most of all, blind to its own gender biased nature. Thus, the attempt to safeguard a minimal set of universals, this time 'universal' enough to include at least men **and** women, is not totally compromised but, on the contrary, feminist rethinking only now facilitates it.

In her book *Women and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach*, Martha Nussbaum attempts a double feminist approach, philosophical and sociological, with the clear aim of identifying and promoting a set of minimal universal values that development could and should pursue, a set which creates the conditions of a decent living for human persons, keeping also in mind her main criterion, i.e. gender equity and sensitivity towards women, as opposed to every previous model. And by 'gender equity and sensitivity' I mean a general awareness of women's destinies and, more important, the conceiving of a model which takes for its starting point the acknowledgement of gender differences, of the diversity of existing inequalities and the absence of women, as goals in themselves, as development beneficiaries.

In fact, the book begins precisely by making a few general remarks related to the situation of women in the world, some guiding thoughts for the ensemble of the approach, which should not be overlooked by any theorist or contemporary development planner. In most parts of the world, women lack the necessary conditions for fulfilling their fundamental human functions. They are worse fed than

men, have a weaker health (even in areas where they finally live longer than men), are much more vulnerable to violence and abuse, are less educated and meet more obstacles than men when they attempt to earn their living on the market, all these only due to the fact that they are women (the rest of the differences were eliminated from the comparison). In other words, all things considered equal, a woman will suffer much more and will have to overcome many more obstacles in order to live a decent life. Such a state of facts impacts on the emotional life of a person, a crucial aspect for defining our 'humanity', in the sense that women's chances to live without fear and to enjoy honest and decent emotional relations are less than men's (Nussbaum 2000: 1). The Human Development Report from 1997 concludes that there is no country in this world where women are treated equally with men, by a complex measuring tool, which includes life expectancy, education and wealth (Nussbaum 2000: 2). Against this backdrop, Martha Nussbaum considers, as the present discussion does as well, that political and economic international thinking has to be feminist, in the sense of grasping, researching, reflecting on and theorizing about problems confronting women in various contexts, because they are women. Without this feminist reflection, development will never reach its declared goals, it will always remain partial and unfair because it treats members of several categories of people as ends in themselves and other only as means towards other peoples' goals. The two concepts, of people as ends in themselves and as means are essential for understanding the work of Martha Nussbaum.

What Martha Nussbaum achieves in her book is the construction, through philosophical arguments, based on real life female stories from India, of a proposal that combines universalism, in terms of applicability, sensitivity to particularities (local, social, cultural, economic, political and religious) and is, above all, feminist.<sup>1</sup> Anyway "we need to ask, then, whether it is appropriate to use a universal framework at all, rather than a plurality of different though related frameworks. (...) This challenge is serious because international

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<sup>1</sup> By "feminist" I mean a double sense, of being theorized starting with women experiences and of referring, in their implementation, to the elimination of gender inequalities and injustice.

development projects have often gone wrong through insufficient attunement to cultural variety and particularity.” (Nussbaum 2000: 40). Thus, the author’s proposal will make reference at a minimum set of principles, which should be followed and implemented by every government who declares itself a defender of the citizens’ rights and human rights generally. The argument for a minimal threshold consists in fact in a ‘human capabilities’ approach in the sense of the presence or absence of preconditions and capacities for people to do and to become what they want. Taking the same path, of combining philosophy and life stories, Martha Nussbaum arrives at the point of drawing a list of universal human capabilities. The feminist rationale, which underpins the whole work, is represented by a last theoretical component that aims at promoting the capabilities list, i.e. the principle of each person’s capability or of each person as an end in him/herself; this intervenes precisely in order to avoid the (self) placement of women in an ‘intermediary’ position, as tools for procuring other peoples’ capabilities and development (Nussbaum 2000: 3-4).

Before presenting the proposed list of human capabilities, Martha Nussbaum answers the most significant criticisms raised against universal(ist) projects, grouped by her in three main arguments: cultural specificity, the value of diversity and paternalist imposition. The first argument claims that in its essence, the modesty of women, their self-sacrifice and other aspects of their situation and status in various societies come from strong cultural traditions that women themselves respect, as central elements of their own identity. Nussbaum first points to the fact that these traditions are very much summarized, constructed, ‘re-told’ in a way that operates a selection of the past and justifies, legitimates the present, via its precise resemblance and continuity with an ‘imagined’ past. Literary creations, art works, historical events and other aspects of the past in which women are present(ed) in a different way than in the contemporary period, at any time, in the sense of emancipated, active, autonomous characters, are most of the times erased from narrating the past.<sup>1</sup> Second, the argument of women’s acceptance of their own

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<sup>1</sup> See the invisibility of feminist political texts in Romanian publications, the absence of historical research concerning women’s status and way of life in different phases of the Romanian history.

condition is not very well sustained, according to Nussbaum, in so far as they have no experience, not even imaginary, of a different type of society, and that they are simultaneously socialized following norms of social desirability and propriety, about the adequate behaviour that responds to social expectations and even expectations of individuals in their own life (a good daughter, a good mother, a good wife, a decent woman, all these clichés summarize the model in which many contemporary women are still socialized). When we take into account the fear of change and uncertainty, the absence of any real or imaginary example about alternative social arrangements and the internalization of behaviour models as natural, even desirable, it is completely false to claim that women themselves are the ones who favor the most the preservation of culture, including its strict gender patterns. Finally, the answer to the argument of respecting the culture as a limitation of universalism is completed by Nussbaum’s observation that the autonomy of cultures, in the sense of safeguarding their purity and boundaries, represents itself another artificial construction. Cultures evolve, transform themselves under multiple influences, they are arenas for continuous struggles between old and new, norm and challenge. Change is a feature of every culture, not only the Western ones, and the ‘defense’ of culture from influences is more often the interest of certain social forces who benefit from status-quo, than a real possibility of isolation. If change and evolution of cultures are inevitable, it is all the more legitimate and useful for us to reflect upon them and to think about normative approaches that would channel these processes for the better, than just let them happen without any special thinking.

The diversity argument (as a counter-argument to universalism) asserts that the richness of the present world is due to its diversity, to the fact that we do not agree all of us on one and the same set of categories, regardless of the field of application. Each cultural system and each society has its own beauty; if we destroy it, we destroy something from the richness of the world. At this point Nussbaum evokes a quite frequent analogy, that with the language diversity or species diversity. The crucial problem opening the argument outlines the fact that language diversity does not harm anyone, an aspect that cannot be claimed in favor of the diversity of domestic violence practices, absolute monarchy or genital mutilation (Nussbaum 2000:

50). Thus, before claiming universal value for diversity, it is also necessary to reflect upon the positive versus the negative impact of each and every aspect of diversity that universalism may eliminate. The idea of the value of diversity asserts in fact a norm, which says that every culture, every type of society has an equal value with others due to the fact of being composed by people who are, from a normative point of view, equal. Thus we already have a minimum of universalism fact, which claims that diversity is a positive thing, whereas its elimination is negative. At the end of the day, in order to see which diversity is positive and which is not, which diversity is based on eliminating other criteria and which is not, we still need a minimal set of principles. The one put forward by Martha Nussbaum takes primarily into account the dignity of the human person.

The third argument against the benefits of universalism is the paternalist one, which condemns the use of universal values of changing the values of different societies in an act of imposition, of "telling" people what is right or wrong for them, as if they could not decide for themselves. Their freedom of choice and action is limited, another authority decides what is recommended for them, what they can or cannot decide, and how they can or cannot act. Or, it is precisely the attempt to avoid any paternalist intervention that lays the foundation for modern pluralistic societies, established on the idea of freedom of choice for each man. When taken to its ultimate implications, any freedoms charter and any legal system is paternalistic, in the sense that it limits what people can decide and what they can do. The difference compared to the classical examples of paternalism is given by the ideas of justice that intervene in the legal systems and in the bills of rights. Those who reject paternalism can only do that on the grounds of their own belief in the idea that freedom of choice is a fundamental right of every human being. Therefore, a "brand" of universalism that promotes this freedom of choice does not contradict them; on the contrary, it reasserts their case. Furthermore, as Martha Nussbaum points out, various types of choices and various types of freedom need certain preconditions, hence a universalism that claims in a normative manner the need for freedom and also for its preconditions, is all the more true to itself. "Liberty is not just a matter of having rights on paper, it requires being

in a position to exercise those rights. And this requires material and institutional resources, including legal and social acceptance of the legitimacy of women's claims. (...) That requires yet more universalism and in a sense paternalism, meaning interference with activities that some people choose (...)." (Nussbaum 2000: 54-55).

Hence, the proposal for a universal set of values could avoid respecting the diversity in certain aspects and be paternalistic in the sense of "imposing" more justice and more freedom for all humans, at least due to the fact that it intentionally includes in "all humans", women. In fact, to keep close to a proper understanding of Martha Nussbaum's text, we should speak about more freedom and more justice for every one, not for all; as I noted above, another essential feature of her proposal is the centrality of every human being, i.e. no group and no category of people can be sacrificed for the freedom, justice and development of another group. The programs targeting an improvement in the faith of a social group does not contribute automatically to lifting the sufferance... of a different group. If we do not accept the principle of 'every person as an end in him/herself', the arguments according to which women have to sacrifice themselves, to resign themselves, to accept their roles, for the well being of the family, of the community or of the whole society, are left intact. The universal components of a proposal have to play a facilitating role, of empowerment with liberties and capacities, of providing their preconditions, without intervening over the path that each person chooses to take given these capacities and liberties. This is why, according to Martha Nussbaum, her theoretical project speaks about capabilities, as opposed to functions.

In order to ensure the objectives and requirements listed so far, we need a minimal set of capabilities which are crucial for human life and, equally important, a set which can be activated, "set to function", in a specific human manner. Given its importance, I will begin presenting it again, respecting the original order of introducing the capabilities. The first capability is that of **life** in itself, more exactly of living a life of normal duration, without premature death caused by external difficulties, and without living a life so repressed that it is not worthy. This is the first aspect where the 'human manner' of performing a function appears: it is not only the capability of living

one's own life that matters, but also the idea that this should be a 'human' decent life, worthy of living. The second capability is that of **bodily health**, i.e. health, including reproductive health, of proper feeding and proper housing. The third capability refers to **bodily integrity**, including freedom of movement, respecting the body, physical safety against attacks and assaults (including those of sexual nature, abuses against children, domestic violence) and finally, meaning real opportunities to live a satisfying life and to make choices in reproductive matters. The fourth capability is that of **senses, imagination and thought**, more exactly to enabling the capabilities of using senses, imagination, thoughts and reason in a truly human manner, based on an adequate education that includes, without being limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific knowledge, the capability of self-expression through means of one's own choice (religion, art, literature) and the capacity of developing a personal understanding of life. **Emotions** represent the next capability, taken to mean the possibility<sup>1</sup> of growing affection towards things and persons, of loving, suffering, feeling grateful, longing or feeling justified anger. This capability also enjoys a negative definition, i.e. the rejection of fear, anxiety, traumatic events, abuse or neglect, in sum, every emotional experience that can impede on the emotional development of a person. The sixth capability refers to **practical reason**, which offers the capacity to develop a personal vision about right and wrong and a critical view on one's own life and future.<sup>2</sup> The following capability is that of **affiliation**, summing up the possibility of living together and for other people, to empathize with others, to make friendships and to obtain justice; the same capability includes the provision of social bases for self-esteem, the avoidance of humiliations, and the treatment of each person as of equal worth to any other person. The eighth capability, the most debated among all cultures Nussbaum has investigated, is that of a life **friendly towards other species** and the natural world. The ninth capability, less thought

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<sup>1</sup> For esthetical reasons, I replaced the word capability with "possibility", keeping the same double meaning of "freedom of..." and of "capacity to...".

<sup>2</sup> These capabilities are very complex, including in fact a sum of "freedoms", as they were recognized in the past. I will not extend here the discussion, as an example yet the capacity of practical reason includes the freedom of thought.

of in most approaches, speaks about **playing** and here the author reunites the possibility of laughing, playing, of enjoying spare time. Finally, there is the capability of **control over the environment**, with a twofold meaning: control over the political environment (observed by the participation to political decisions that govern a person's life, the freedom of expression and of political participation) and over the material environment (the capacity of having property, enjoying the rights thereof and the capacity of equal employment).<sup>1</sup>

To sum up, Martha Nussbaum's proposal of political theory begins by arguing the possibility of universalism via rejecting its main counter-arguments, then it goes on to draw some conditions universalism should fulfill in order to be a just 'imposition', to preserve diversity and to remain open enough towards local, cultural and religious particularities and, in the same time, to protect its normative substance. The main goal is to put forward a new trend in thinking and planning development, a trend that focuses on each and every human person as an end in him/herself and that is based on a minimal set of capabilities necessary for a genuinely human existence. The way in which these capabilities are conceived as both a sum of individual rights and also a requirement for ensuring the preconditions of practicing those rights, as well as an analysis of the capabilities listed, guarantees the 'feminist' nature of the proposal. We do not encounter the human person in the sense of classical, liberal individual, but a human person whose capabilities are a synthesis of values, needs, specificities and also resemblances of both genders, by a careful mixture of generalization and details. Once this proposal is integrated into a series of development, freedom and human rights trends, the author hopes for obtaining a (virtual) overlapping consensus, which would make possible new development theories and consequent reforms of the practices.

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<sup>1</sup> The list of capabilities is presented in greater detail in the original text, from page 78 to page 80 (Nussbaum 2000). Although it comes later in the list, the capacity to control environment with its two components is essential: this is the aspect that provides every person with power to control not only its biological and emotional life, but power over the social, political and economic context of his/her life. I am grateful to Barbara Einhorn for having emphasised this to me during our conference discussions.

As I have mentioned already, the central element of my own theoretical understanding, one that I take from Martha Nussbaum, is the central character of the human person. I insisted on the arguments for universalism due to the fact that development, as I showed in the introductory remarks to part 2, risks withering away in the absence of any universal foundation. In the same time though, I recognize that the value of opposing current universal practices and of gender perspectives about development. Crucial from the point of view of my own research projects is also the idea of ‘capabilities’, as well as the list in itself. From this point of view, reflecting about development in Eastern Europe can open some paths for the transformation of theoretical proposals about capabilities into components of new institutional paradigms and new guidelines for concrete programs. This would come as a new example for the bridge I am trying to build between the harsh, postmodern critics of development and the eclectic planners.<sup>1</sup> In itself, this attempt is not an easy one, but it is possible that while doing this, potential changes to the list itself or the ‘operationalization’ of each capability could emerge.

## Conclusions

After the analysis of the two normative positions, that of Naila Kabeer and of Martha Nussbaum, I consider necessary to outline more clearly the valuable points that might be useful for a personal understanding of the feminist thinking about development. A first premise asserts the *need for re-inversing the hierarchies of knowledge* in the field of development. A second step, of a meta-theoretical nature, states the *value attributed to contextual, situated knowledge*, as a legitimate way of initiating and/or re-evaluating the practice of development. This opening comes from both the *influence of feminist political theory* and that of *constructivist theory* of international relations and guides the research towards understanding social, cultural,

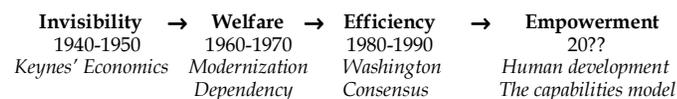
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<sup>1</sup> In her chapter about development from *The Handbook of International Relations* (2002), Sylvia Maxfield classifies current development research in three separate communities: the eclectic planners, the rational choice theorists and the post-modern critical thinkers. Between these three groups she conceives no possible theoretical or practical link.

regional, gender contexts in which norms, values, roles, identities and legitimacy are constructed. Beyond its relevance for a theoretical framework, the recognition of situated knowledge has a pragmatic relevance, as I will emphasize in these concluding remarks. Given these theoretical and meta-theoretical assumptions, *the theoretical model suggested here claims in a normative manner the need for changing the allocation of priorities, in the sense of placing each person in the center of development theories and policies*. In this aspect I bridge the two contributions discussed in this study, in order to emphasize that the approach of development from the perspective of the most disadvantaged is useful as situated knowledge, but as such it finds itself integrated, in the statement of *each person as an end in his/herself* and in the model of *universal human capabilities*, where every word of the sentence has its own philosophical and normative weight, which have been discussed earlier.

If it is to draw the evolution of mainstream development theories, judged by their approach to women’s conditions and existence, also according to their utilitarian or humanist character, my theoretical proposal argues for a move towards development conceived as empowerment with proactive power, i.e. with capabilities (defined both as rights to and preconditions to exercise those rights) for every human being.

The evolution of development supported by the present research:



In other words, I consider that, in order to be equitable from a gender point of view, development has to be conceived as a sum of capabilities that are characteristic and strictly necessary for every human being. By virtue of the explicit statement concerning the equal value of each person, development becomes a right or in fact, a set of rights of every human being. In this case, development theorists and planners should target the recognition, institutionalization and creation of preconditions needed for making use of these rights. To draw a scheme once again, since the road has taken us from the total

absence of women for development visions, in the '50s, to their needs, as victims of development and welfare recipients, then to their merits for economic efficiency, in the '80s and '90s, the future should go, according to my theoretical position, towards stating the rights of women to development, understood as the provision of Nussbaum's capabilities list.

Absence → Need → Merit → Right  
(= the sum of capabilities)

This theoretical framework is not limited to the assumptions and claims stated so far. Based on the study of mainstream development thought and planning, accumulated until the present days, there is a strategic need for transforming the model into a practical, program-oriented set of proposals. Here I join Naila Kabeer in the support for building *feminist epistemic communities* and *alliances* between these ones, activist movements and women or gender departments in specialized agencies. These have a chance of playing a catalytic role for arriving at the overlapping consensus envisaged by Nussbaum in order to mainstream the idea of development as empowerment with capabilities. The value attributed to situated knowledge, to the perspective of the most disadvantaged, as well as the avoidance of cultural subjectivity and unjust paternalism, have a better chance of mainstreaming through the institutionalization of critical thinking, continuous research and organizational flexibility. Another path is treating the relationship between international development institutions – developing countries as a partnership and incorporating the idea of local ownership in institutional paradigms and procedures, not despite the universalism of human capabilities approach, but to its favor.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Local ownership", "partnership" are already terms used within some of UN specialized agencies, also within the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. At the moment they are more slogans, than realities. For their better understanding, see also Todorean (2002). Dependency theory and GAD perspectives left at least one lesson relevant: the lesson of mutual dependency, of connections existing on a global scale between members of hierarchies, between processes that characterize the international system, between its actors, ideas which could turn into a proper basis for integrating the partnership vision, more than a bilateral, paternalistic relation in the common sense,

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taking place between two units of which one is generous and "knows better" and the other is inferior, dependent and obedient

## **THE NEW LEADERSHIP - LEADERSHIP STYLES AND GENDER: IMPORTANT LESSONS FOR ROMANIA**

*Elena Marilena Porumb and Romana Cramarencu*

History remains our major source of inspiration for identifying new symbols, myths and concepts. The experts on gender issues had chosen Athena as the symbol of powerful women and this is our choice, too. Why Athena? Because she is perceived as a respected, appealing, versatile, tactful, balanced and successful goddess, who gave a feminine touch to the male characteristics. And we didn't choose Penelope - the symbol of patience and obedience - or Venus - the symbol of beauty, passion and lust because Athena knew how to make use of the male weapons and privileges. She borrowed the weapons from her father Zeus and she added wisdom, mental agility, mentoring, persuasion, reconciliation instead of brute force and mindless blood lust. So, she tamed the aggressiveness and turned it into power tempered by calculation. According to Joan Claire Silverberg "the Greeks acknowledged, feared, and tried desperately to tame and domesticate female power (be it sexuality, fertility, valour, or intelligence) in order to serve patriarchal purpose".<sup>1</sup>We need Athena in order to challenge the traditional way of understanding women status and to promote a balanced perspective on successful women managers in Europe, and in Romania particularly.

The problem of leadership styles is largely debated, and things look more complicated when we add gender to the equation... Traditionally, women are seen as lacking the necessary attributes for

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<sup>1</sup> Eds. Lynn H. Collins, Joan C. Chrisler, Katryn Quina "A Feminist classicist reflects on Athena" in "Career strategies for women in academic: Arming Athena, SAGE Publications Inc, UK, 1998: ix

leadership - those focusing on differences between men and women based their argumentation on psychological traits and socialization background, different work orientations or career choices and those focusing on the similarities between men and women based their research on sociological, structural explanations. In Romania the stereotypes promote the old traditionalist self-image: *she* - fragile, graceful, the perfect mother, wife and housekeeper; *he* - strong, self-confident, successful. Minimizing the importance of women's values is strongly realized through media, as well. And it is doubled by self-minimizing - women are afraid to adopt feminine concepts for different types of professions, like leader, director, coordinator, president even if the Romanian language is quite generous with feminine concepts. In a society characterized by pluralism, where different political parties are trying to influence the authorities in order to satisfy their interest, we really need a "Romanian feminine voice" as the promoter of women issues on the political agenda. It's high time to forget about fear, rumours, and whispers... Demystifying the myths of women status in Romania- the obedient wife, mother and housekeeper- we finally face the reality by entering the political and business arena.

And we should ask ourselves - who's afraid of Romanian successful women?

Nowadays the gender issues represent a high priority on the European Union's political agenda. Equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of democracy. In this respect, Romania, as a future member-state needs to comply with the European Union accession criteria. However, the sex-based discrimination continues to exist. So, women are more likely to be unemployed than men, are more exposed to social exclusion. And they are more likely to hold contingent jobs and make up the bulk of part-time workers. The European Council confirmed its political will to achieve progress in promoting equal opportunities through the adoption of a series of resolutions and recommendations, the most recent ones relating to the integration of equal opportunities into the Structural Funds and balanced participation by men and women in decision making (Dublin European Council, 13-14 December 1996).

Debating the gender issues in the context of organizations is still a great challenge for academia and for the "profanes" as well. The recent growth in exploring this field has generated a wide range of theoretical approaches as well as active measures and new policies. We are also aware of the fact that much of the literature available blurs the definitions related to gender.

The historian **Joan Scott** defined gender as referring to the social organization of the relationships between men and women and considered gender a principal symbol of power. The relationship between gender and power has always been the "raison d'être" of feminist theories. Gender interferes with other power relations such as manager/employee and mentor/protégé, and the relationship between men and women are also influenced by such factors as: ethnicity, class and age.

The **Romanian Language Dictionary** (DEX) defines the word "man" as adult of masculine gender, grown-up, husband, brave, active, hardworking person and the word "woman" as adult of feminine gender, wife, baggage. As synonyms we can identify man = human, husband and woman = wife, servant, prostitute, baggage. So we can easily notice the differences: the man is defined through positive characteristics and the woman through functional characteristics, some of them holding negative meanings.

In the past twenty years, women have steadily moved into more important positions in the work place. Women occupy now key positions in major corporations and have established themselves as a force in the workplace. Many argue, however, there is still a glass ceiling that prevents women from fully reaching their potential. Other experts talk about women as an untapped resource that has not been exploited by the business world. They assert that businesses need to learn how to manage the talent and power that women bring to the workplace. By doing this, businesses will increase and enhance their success in the marketplace

Both management and leadership skills are needed at the organizational, team, and personal levels. It's not a case of either/or, but and/also. Futurist, **Joel Barker** provides another helpful distinction between the two roles; "managers manage within

paradigms, leaders lead between paradigms". So we may conclude that both are needed.

Trying to run an organization with only leadership or management is like trying to cut a page with half a pair of scissors. Leadership and management are a matched set; they are both needed to be effective. *To manage* is to control, handle, or manipulate. *To lead* is to guide, influence, or persuade. You manage things - systems, processes and technology and you lead people.

In order to understand the evolution of the concept of leadership we need to analyse the four stages of leadership; each of the time periods is associated with a change of prominence. Chronologically speaking we can identify:

*The trait approach* (until 1940) - the main feature of this approach is the search for identifying the personal qualities and characteristics of leaders- in this respect nature is more important than the nurture.

*The style approach* (until 1960) - is characterized by a change of focus from the personal characteristics of leaders to their behaviours as leaders.

*The contingency approach* (until 1980) - the main characteristic of this approach places the situational factors towards the centre of leadership and specifies the situational variables that influence different leadership approaches.

### The new leadership approach

The New Leadership Approach expresses a large number of similar approaches that emerge starting at the end of 1980's. We witness the transforming leadership that slowly turns into transformational leadership. We find concepts as: charismatic leadership, visionary leadership or just leadership.

According to this approach, the leader is a person who defines organizational reality through the articulation of a vision, which is a reflection of how he or she defines the mission of the organization and the shared values that support it (we analyse leaders as managers of meaning). The vision must be communicated and made intelligible and relevant to the leader's followers. We should add that organization's mission/vision is a defining characteristic of charismatic leadership.

Transformational leadership is shaped up by three components:

*Charisma* – developing a vision, inspiring pride, trust, respect

*Inspiration* – motivating by creating high expectations.

*Individualized consideration* – giving personal attention.

The new political leadership concept belongs to **Burns** who proposed a distinction between transaction (an exchange between leader and follower, the former offering different rewards) and transforming leadership (the reunion of leader's followers' aspirations and needs. **Peters and Waterman** in their well-known book "*In search for excellence*" bring illustrative case studies that support the role of transforming leadership of success achievement. **Burns**<sup>1</sup> introduced the concept of transformational leadership, describing it not as a set of specific behaviours but rather as a process by which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). He stated that transformational leaders are individuals that appeal to higher ideals and moral values such as justice and equality and can be found at various levels of an organization. Burns (1978) contrasted transformational leaders from transactional leaders that he described as leaders who motivated by appealing to followers' self interest. Working with Burns' (1978) definition of transformational leadership, Bass (1985) asserts that these leaders motivate followers by appealing to strong emotions regardless of the ultimate effects on the followers and do not necessary attend to positive moral values. The Reverend Jim Jones of the Jonestown massive suicide could be an example of **Bass's** *definition of transformational leadership*. Other researchers have described transformational leadership as going beyond individual needs, focusing on a common purpose, addressing intrinsic rewards and higher psychological needs such as self actualisation, and developing commitment with and in the followers (**AASA**, 1986; **Bass**, 1985; **Bennis & Nanus**, 1985; Coleman & La Roque, 1990; Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992; **Leithwood**, 1992; **Leithwood & Jantzi**, 1990; **Leithwood & Steinbach**, 1991; **Sergiovanni**, 1989; 1990).

So, shall we ask Athena to perform again on stage? Or we should use the symbol of her power tempered by calculation in order to

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<sup>1</sup> Burns, J.M. (1978). "Leadership", New York: Harper & Row.

reveal a new Athena - a successful and responsible manager. The transformational leadership is focused on fostering motivation and commitment to achieve the common goal resulted from a shared organizational culture, on generating and sustaining stability and trust, on team building for an efficient participative management.

In their book, *Women and Work*, **Veronica Nieva** and **Barbara Gutek** indicated that traditionally, women are seen as lacking the necessary attributes for leadership. They are believed to be compliant, submissive, emotional, and to have great difficulty in making choices. However, after extensive review of many studies that examine gender differences in personality traits of leaders, the authors discovered that there are *no significant differences* between women and men. Therefore, Nieva and Gutek suggest that the reported differences simply reflect *socialized perceptions*. In other words, we see what we are socialized to see. Male and female behaviours that are in line with the gender/role expectations of the culture are evaluated positively. For example, kind, considerate female behaviour is valued more by subordinates than kind, considerate male behaviour. And male aggressive/assertive behaviour is assessed more positively than female aggressive/assertive behaviour. It all depends upon who is doing the observing or responding. The authors also propose that the traditional notion of power that evolves from a position or title rather than maleness or femaleness appears to be the critical factor in the response of colleagues or subordinates.

Another difficult task is to define different leadership styles. From all the work devoted to this interesting topic I chose a few that I consider more challenging.

Most of the writings on leadership styles deal mainly with three styles of leadership:

**Directive** (authoritarian, task oriented, task behaviour);

**Democratic** (democratic, people-oriented, relationship behaviour);

**Non-directive** (Laissez Faire, indirect, defer to others).

When a leader is *directive*, that leader initiates action, structures activities, motivates others, delegates responsibility, and praises or sanctions his subordinates. A *democratic* leader gets the best results by leading discussions, asking questions to involve others, encouraging

others to assume different responsibilities, confirming commitments, and asking for a vote to get a consensus decision or a majority decision. A *non-directive* leader refuses to make decisions for others, uses silence until someone in the group speaks out, gives non-verbal support (gesture, smiles) to others who show positive leadership, and gradually fades out of a group when others in the group show an ability and a willingness to take over. Different situations require different styles of leadership such as: evacuation of a burning building calls for *directive* leadership, deciding among several suggestions for an organization's social event calls for *democratic* leadership, helping qualified, experienced, enthusiastic committee heads calls for *non-directive* leadership.

According to L. A. Bittler<sup>1</sup>, we can identify three leadership styles:

*The Autocrat* (The autocratic leader dominates team-members, using unilateralist attitude in order to achieve one goal. Generally, this leadership style is followed by a passive attitude from employees- no relevant feedback. Sometimes this approach is needed - especially in emergency cases, or people prefer this kind of leadership.

*The Laissez-faire* (this approach is characterized by exercising little control over employees, a great delegation of responsibilities, with little direction, motivation or guidance. It is recommended especially for teams made up of experts, specialists, experienced persons who proved to be really motivated and committed to their jobs. It's the most common way of empowering people.

*The Democrat* (the democratic leader makes decisions by consulting his team, whilst still maintaining control of the group. The democratic leader allows his team to decide how the task will be tackled and who will perform which task.

Another approach to leadership styles distinguishes between ten models:

1. The idealist	6. The synthesizer
2. The enabler	7. The partner
3. The star	8. The futurist
4. The mentor	9. The advocate
5. The innovator	10. The diplomat

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mapnp.org/library/ldrship/ldrship.htm>

The numerical dominance of men and the construction of leadership within a masculine frame influenced a great deal the number of women in management.

**Kanter**<sup>1</sup> argues that women's identification with the masculine model of managerial success becomes so important as they move up the organizational hierarchy and they usually start rejecting feminine characteristics.

The main studies on the importance of sex differences in leadership style used three major research methods - laboratory experiments, laboratory simulations and field studies. More recently, the meta-analytic techniques have found only a few relevant differences between men and women managers in terms of initiating structure, consideration, subordinate satisfaction and effectiveness. One important research carried out by Schein <sup>2</sup>in 1973 revealed that the characteristics of men and those of successful managers were highly related and a weak association between women's characteristics and successful leaders. All this "army of stereotypes" is a real impediment for women who try to climb the corporate ladder. Even if we can easily notice an increased number of women entering the ranks of management, the number of those who actually progressed to top management is really small. We may add that recent research support the idea that both men and women currently in management positions resemble a similar management prototype and a very few distinctions in personality, managerial behaviour and effectiveness have been identified. So, there is no reason not to support the advancement of motivated and capable of high performance women in the top levels of management.

Margaret Ferrario<sup>3</sup> argues that despite the increasing number of women in top management and politics leadership this is still a male world. Leaders' style and behaviour are commonly treated as similar concepts, both revealing what leaders do. In gender approach of leadership researches identified two major dimensions:

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<sup>1</sup> Kanter, R., *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Basic Books, New York, 1977

<sup>2</sup> Schein, E.H., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, San Francisco, CA, Jossey Bass, 1985: 76

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Ferrario, *Women in Management Review*, 1991" Sex differences in leadership styles: myth or reality?

Structuring (involving more directive management, rules, procedures, practices, deadlines etc.);

Supporting (involving more participative management and concern for people's satisfaction, motivation and efficient teamwork).

The general assumption is that women are more people-oriented (a special concern for relationships) and men, more task-oriented (a special concern for production, for tasks' accomplishment).

Most of the American studies on sex differences in leadership style were undertaken on students and not on managers (the last approach is more difficult to accomplish). **Brenner and Vinacke**<sup>1</sup> used a questionnaire that found female managers to accommodate more easily to changes (men were found conservative...). More than that Marshall found that female managers are more understanding and sympathetic to others' needs and their relation-oriented style is the result of having access to "softer" techniques in personal relations. Also **Baird and Bradely**<sup>2</sup> focused on communication styles for both genders and they concluded that women managers are more involved in subordinates' satisfaction by encouraging them to fight for their ideas and by displaying a wider range of information.

The other side argues that we overestimate the importance of sex differences in leadership style. **Donnell and Hall** found that female and male managers did not differ in task-oriented or relation-oriented behaviours towards their employees (they even identify a kind of social isolation amongst women) Another interesting discovery was made by **Bartol** and **Wortman** who reported that female rated higher on task-oriented styles than male. (**Helmich** argued the same!)

An Australian study found that despite the lack of major differences in leadership styles, there are some gender characteristics related to managerial achievement, problem solving, cooperation and competition, subordinate satisfaction and communication styles.

It is also important to approach differently this delicate matter. Some experts did it by suggesting that the differences in leadership styles depend on individuals' holding different sex-role, more than their sex. Traditionally, masculinity was perceived as more task-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibidem p.18

<sup>2</sup> ibidem, p.17

oriented, assertive, directive, while femininity was considered people-oriented, supportive, caring for others' needs. We personally agree that both men and women have a mixture of masculine and feminine traits. And we cannot distinguish between leadership styles without taking into consideration the *androgynous* manager, who are more capable to adjust to different situations than those with masculine or feminine style (an important Canadian research held by **Korabik** and **Ayman** revealed that androgynous women rated higher effectiveness than other leaders). We should accept the democratic style of leadership as the appropriate answer to people's needs. Women should take advantage of the recent developments on leadership style-it is their time more than ever. They have to assume their femininity as a valuable asset; they have to make use of their advantage of holding softer techniques for leading and mentoring. The feminist voice should be replaced by a feminine approach, which focuses on networking active and committed individuals.

The impact of external factors on leadership styles is also relevant. **Kanter** in his famous "Men and Women of the corporations" argued that "leadership style and performance by the few women in leadership positions should be studied as a function of membership in a male-dominated grouping which the culture of the organization and work behaviour is shaped by male".<sup>1</sup> A key role is played by the *mentorship*. It was proved that mentors might influence a great deal women's leadership style and we should add that the lack of female mentors is felt as a "weak point" for women's image. Some of the experts suggest that the exaggerated attention paid to sex differences on leadership styles will inevitably lead to the revival of traditionalist perspective- women as passive, gentle, sensitive leaders and men as competitive, motivated, independent leaders. And we go back to ancient Greece to meet the greatest feminine mentor- Athena.

In the same time the allocation of individuals on gender basis will enhance these tendencies, by making the women "the social workers of management" and by limiting their access to the decision-making process. **Rosener** claimed, "Classifying people in terms of gender is a

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<sup>1</sup> Kanter, Rosa Moss, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, New York, Basic Books, 1997:43

shortcut to understanding, in the same way that we classify consumers and voters". And we go back to stereotypes...

Masculinity is performed by women as well as by men. **Fagenson and Jackson** refers to research, which has shown that "the more masculine characteristics possessed by women, the more likely the women are to be perceived as successful managers".<sup>1</sup> The last trends propose a flexible leadership style, which reveals new opportunities for both genders (special programs for men leaders to develop their people-oriented characteristics and special programs for women that will strengthen their task-oriented abilities). These programs will help organizations to adopt more feminine approaches in a balanced way-it will be inefficient to abandon completely the masculine style in favor of the feminine one, the best solution is to create a mix model that helps managers to prove their abilities, talents, attitudes. The "learning organization" needs both male and female characteristics in order to reach high levels of competitiveness in the business world.

The changes of the business world ask for a change of mentalities as well. There are two important reasons to hire, promote and retain talented women: the demographic changes due to the continuously dropping birth rate, and the growing need for diversity.

Women used to be called "the managers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century". Even if gender differences on education access or level and participation in the labor market are almost forgotten, the advancement of women in higher positions and their participation to the decision-making process is the major problem.

Most of the things we already know about sex differences in leadership are the result of co-relational studies and our perception of biological sex connected with a variety of different characteristics and work abilities. It is almost impossible to ignore the relationship between sex variables and status variables (in every Western country, women hold more than 95% of secretary positions and men hold 95% of executive positions).

The following dimensions will help us analyse the sex differences in leadership styles: the physical abilities, and the cognitive abilities, including communication, spatial-visual and mathematical abilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ferrario, 2000:21

## Physical abilities

Generally speaking, women are shorter, thinner and less muscled than men. Men's advantage due to their height and muscle power was demonstrated in athletic competition, but we should add that in their childhood men are more exposed to diseases and they recover slower than women. The famine, shock, fatigue and self-exposure have fewer negative effects on women. Also, even if women have earlier eyes' problems, they are more sensitive to touch, hear and taste. Generally men are more exposed to psychosocial disorders and women to nutrition disorders. Anyway, sex differences related to physical abilities are less relevant than common features, so we should not use discrimination on this basis.

## Cognitive abilities

### *Communication abilities*

Sex differences regarding communication abilities depend on age, too. Girls tend to speak faster, using complex sentences with various meanings and make fewer grammar mistakes than boys. Men are better at analogies, and women excel in verbal tests, vocabulary tests, anagrams and verbal fluency. Also, women are less exposed to dyslexia or stuttering.

### *Spatial-visual abilities*

The spatial-visual ability is defined as the capacity to discern the relationship between form and objects. And they evidently favour men. Both for men and women, the spatial-visual abilities are weaker as they grew older. Sex differences are not related to day-to-day activities: even if driving a car requires these abilities, it is common knowledge that women have fewer car accidents than men. Another example refers to musical abilities – we can hardly identify a tendency that favours women.

### *Mathematical abilities*

Most of the mathematic geniuses are men. If we take into consideration the mathematic reasoning, the results are

heterogeneous. Women excel in this, due to communication skills and men in geometry tests and statistics.

According to **Diane Halpern**<sup>1</sup> the cognitive abilities are interpreted with the support of two types of tests:

- Accumulation tests (they measure what a person knows and learns);
- Abilities tests (it is difficult and expensive to design them and to interpret the data on a long run...). The abilities tests are the following:
- *Ability versus accomplishment* (it is almost impossible to test someone's abilities regardless his/her accomplishments. For example, it is not surprising that men prove better mathematical abilities than women because of the increased number of men studying mathematics);
- *Ability versus motivation* (one important element of any test involves motivation and we should be aware of the impact of stereotyping on motivation levels);
- *Ability versus stereotypes* (As individuals we tend to extend group stereotypes to ourselves and this attitude influences our willingness to explore "the other side").

Some of the most common stereotypes encountered in abilities tests are connected to:

**Social skills** - women are perceived as being more communicative, sometimes just talkative. Women smile more often, are more concerned with visual contact and more sensitive to non-verbal communication. There are three types of communication and also gender differences between them:

*Verbal skills* (The spoken words. Women tend to use more polite formulas, to add more Tag Questions; women tend to qualify their statements, to use more negations, various words – less frequent adjectives, for example- more exclamations.

*Para verbal language* (reveals the way the words are used and pronounced. The research proved that in mixed groups men tend to debate more than women, using more words to express their opinions

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Vinnicombe and Nina L.Colwill, *The Essence of Women in Management*, Prentice Hall Series, 1995, P.23

and make short and orientate comments. They used to interrupt more frequently the others' discourse. Women play the role of those who educate and approve.)

*Non-verbal communication* (Men tend to use one gesture called "Steeple"- the both hands fingers unification as a sign of intellectual superiority. Men also have the tendency to invade someone else's space, more frequently than women. The visual contact is also used all the time and women learnt to use it in order to advance in superior positions and to get the leaders' roles.

The studies on sex differences on leadership styles are not complete. People change, people learn, people have different reactions depending on different circumstances. Persons with similar characteristics search for different types of jobs and jobs because of these similarities and not based on gender. It is really difficult to distinguish between abilities and motivation or accomplishments so, future research should focus on sex differences and different circumstances. Maybe we should reconsider the impact of situational factors and to assume their relevance for the new leadership style.

Some researchers told us that the "time of the woman" is here, due to the unprecedented influence of technology and the Internet on commerce and corporate life resulting in "flatter" corporations. That emotional intelligence more than raw brainpower or specialized skills, is the key to leading organizations into an increasingly networked future and that women, or those who adopted a more feminine leadership style, would be the best choices for top management.

The notion of *feminine leadership* is largely disputed. The most frequent dimensions that support the critique of this concept are:

Women have a different leadership style based on their different experiences;

The problems of integrating feminine leadership characteristics with instrumental concerns;

The danger that ideas about female managers having a specific leadership styles will reproduce all the stereotypes;

The possibility of a specific conception of women managers being used in an explorative way within the framework of mainstream forms of management.

Many researchers argue that skills developed in the private sphere by women are transferable and should be considered an advantage for women leaders. The advocates of feminine leadership claim the bringing up children and managing family responsibilities lead to a higher endurance of stress, ability to adjust to environmental changes, managing conflict situations and intuition. But transferability is the greatest in "family-like" organizational context or culture. So, the idea of feminine leadership may just multiply gender divisions of labor at managerial level and "female managers are seen as suitable for certain sectors and functions and less so for most powerful and prestigious ones."<sup>1</sup>

Despite all the expressions of differences in values, styles or skills it is really important not to exaggerate, to overestimate their relevance because variety within the categories of and women are more profound than a simple sex differences approach. We have to accept women acting in various ways, according to situational aspects of life and work. According to Claartje J. Vinckenburg, Paul G.W. Jansen and Paul L. Koopman suggest that both men and women currently in management positions resemble a similar management prototype. Traditionally, women were described in roles dealing with relations, feelings, climate and conflict resolution while the economic and technological issues were ignored.

The positive aspects that the notion of feminine leadership involves are:

It challenges the traditionalist notions of organizations, culture organization, hierarchy, management and leadership;

It puts gender on leadership agenda by problematising male domination;

It may contribute to the de-masculinisation of management;

It may facilitate the increase of the number of women in top management.

Anyway we should identify another term to define this style because the notion of feminine leadership will just reproduce stereotypes and irrelevant distinctions. We need to assume the

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<sup>1</sup> Due Billing, Yvonne and Mats Alvesson, *Gender, Work and Organization*, London, 2000:148

changes in leadership styles and that both women and men self-esteem may be reinforced by accepting the feminine orientations as a natural element of leadership. Judging each individual-male and female- on their worth and uniqueness, and the strength of their preferred leadership style and the demands of a new century, will make the organizations and communities stronger. It is important to realistically acknowledge that history, culture, religion, and economics have tended to obscure the value of this equality of the genders.

Whatever weaknesses we attribute to this inclusive form of leadership, there are powerful forces that are moving us in this direction. The first of these forces is rapid change. Fast-changing environments end to play havoc with tradition. A second force is the growth of highly independent people; the *Institute for the Future*, in its research of worldwide change, has put forth the following predictions:

People all over the world are becoming better educated. Educational opportunities, which were only available to a few, are now readily available to many via technology and other means;

There is a technology revolution. Advances in information and communication technologies will continue to speed up our lives and add challenges;

There is a growing importance of finance and intellectual property. Trade in ideas (based on royalties and license fees) will grow two to three times faster than the world gross domestic product;

There is a decentralization of big business. Large companies are "farming out" a great deal of work to smaller- and medium-sized companies of every type and description. Surveys have shown that women successfully run these smaller businesses.

The old form of leadership, which gave power and a title to one or to only a few individuals, is rapidly becoming dysfunctional. It is becoming much more difficult to command and control people who are better educated, more informed, and in some cases, possessing more knowledge about the situation than the person with the position or title that designates them as leader. Many experts focused their research on the role of character in defining leadership styles. Being involved in others problems, being emotional, detail-oriented, tactful, imaginative, responsible and able to delegate responsibilities are the key elements for the new leadership.

<i>The Character</i>	<i>Feeling</i>	<i>Seeing</i>	<i>Thinking</i>	<i>Acting</i>
<b>Artist</b>	Emotional	Visionary	Imaginative	Entrepreneurial
<b>Craftsman</b>	Stable	Realistic	Wise	Responsible
<b>Technocrat</b>	Serious	Detail-oriented	Meticulous	Methodical

"Arming" Athena with new "weapons" will help her in the fight for tenure and respect. We don't need affirmative actions or the gentlemen's acceptance anymore; we need stable partnership with our male counterparts. And nobody will fear women on top management, because the business world needs effectiveness despite the gender of the leader. There is a relevant link between the increased participation of women to managerial positions and the effectiveness of their work. According to Farhad Analoui<sup>1</sup>, most of the experts on managerial skills drew the following conclusions:

Managers are aware of their own effectiveness;

Managers can learn from their own experiences and the experiences of others with whom they interact;

Managers can become more effective by the acquisition of managerial skills, which enable them to deal with the task in hand, people and situational demands and constraints;

Managers' perception of the range of skills, which they require to realize their increased effectiveness, reveals aspects of their job believed to play a significant part in their effectiveness;

So, "the managers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century" should measure their effectiveness through the ability to learn from others, from their own past experiences, to share responsibilities in the name of a common purpose and to teach the others the most appropriate way of being successful. The "soft" characteristics of the leadership style are valued now more than ever. The leaders who prove the capacity of promoting these characteristics will have an unchallenged comparative advantage, going beyond the gender approach.

<sup>1</sup> Dr.Farhad Analoui "Increasing women senior managers effectiveness: evidence from Romania" in *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*,vol.3, no.1, p.79

### **The challenge of the new leadership in the post-communist regimes - an insight on Romania**

Discussing the women position in top management in Romania is a “multi-task” attempt. We are aware that we chose a controversial topic and the present analysis should be considered an insight on the present “magic world” of “women in top”. The status of women managers in Eastern Europe is influenced by: the rapid and unexpected collapse of communist regimes in 1989, the structural reforms in economy and the redefinition of Former Soviet Union’s role in Europe. The communist propaganda misled the way Eastern women were perceived by the Western societies but the reality was completely different. Those women willing to advance on career ladder, having the qualifications and the education required, were facing the Eastern version of “glass ceiling”.

During the communist regime, in Romania women and men were officially equal. The woman’s body did not belong to her, but to the Government that controlled the birth rate in order to increase the labour force. By controlling the reproductive behaviour, the Government violated the most intimate aspects of social relationships, taking away the woman’s freedom to choose. Nowadays, the Romanian woman has the freedom to choose, but often she does not know how to make use of it. Some basic changes have been made which are the foundations for the so-much-wanted evolution towards the “third woman”. There are women who tried to achieve all that this “third woman” is supposed to have (career, family, independence, power), but because of the above-mentioned present situation in Romania, they didn’t succeed completely. However, their attempts are remarkable and cannot be ignored.

The European Union has been the most coherent force in articulating appropriate rules and procedures on equal opportunities for women and men. Since this set of law is part of the *aquis communautaire*, the Directives on equal treatment for women and men must be adopted internally and enforced by each candidate state. Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Accession Program seeks to enhance, encourage and complement the European Union accession process by providing new incentives on promoting

gender equality within Central and Eastern European candidate countries. Although gender equality has been achieved “on paper” in all EU candidate countries, women have not yet benefited from this equality in practice since institutional mechanisms are not properly activated.

The principle of equality between the sexes is explicitly regulated under Article 4 of the Romanian Constitution, according to which: “Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political affiliation, property or social origin.” The principle of equality between the sexes is explicitly reflected in *Law no. 92/1992* regarding the organization of the judiciary, which established equality before the law, and in the *Family Code*, which includes explicit provisions regarding equality between the sexes in terms of spousal relations, personal or patrimonial, and in terms of exercising parental rights and obligations.

We should also mention that creating the General Office for Women Rights and the General Department for Family Policies within the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity Romania made an important step. The Ombudsman Office with a department working on issues of the protection of family, children and women, the Sub-commission for equal opportunities within the Parliament and the Commission for equal opportunities founded within the Economic and Social Council are all parts of the national mechanism. At the initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, a Consultative Inter-ministerial Commission on Equality of Treatment for Men and Women (CODES) was established- the mission of this structure is to create a functional network between the public authorities and the civic society. So we may say that *de jure* framework is well articulated and non-discriminatory. Things look differently when we analyse the way the legal aspects are put into practice...

Social-demographic data reveal that women represent 51% of the total population and the feminine population decreased in the urban areas and increased in the rural areas. Women represent the largest share (51.6%) of the population able to work (over the age of 15). However, they only represent 45.15% of the employed population- that’s why we talk about the *feminisation of the poverty*. However we

can identify some common features in Eastern Europe such as: the feminisation of population; the feminisation of poverty; higher rates of unemployment for women; the double/triple burden for women.

All these lead to: the diminution of political representation; the diminution of access to the decision-making process; the perpetuation of paternalist practices in reforming official and unofficial entities.

As Montesquieu said, "the lack of equality and extreme equality could easily break any political system" So any extreme approaches on women issues can turn any serious matter into a ridiculous one. The feminist movement influenced a great deal the women status; however in Romania, there are slight improvements for women in top leadership.

During the twentieth century, there has been a gradual improvement in the status of women. However, women still face major inequalities with men, particularly the conflicting demands of family life and career success. It is essential to go beyond the traditional concept that the women's main role in life is that of a housewife and mother and career comes second! Nowadays women reached high levels of responsibility but they still have a hard time finding a way to balance family and work. Women, it is often assumed, have achieved full participation in society beyond the confines of the home, and equal status with men in most areas of social life. In the category of managers and superior public officials in public administration and economic units, the number of women represented is generally three times lower than the number of men.

I would like to tackle some of the major problems career women face in Romania. The present situation of women in Romania reveals complex factors that influence, more or less, their low involvement in the social-economic life. We can mention here:

Traditions, customs, religion that perpetuate the patriarchal stereotype in men – women relationships;

Balkan- like emancipation of women excels in theory but it successfully fails in day-to-day practice;

The transition economy in all its "uniqueness";

The lack of solidarity and supportiveness among women in politics in promoting women's rights;

The lack of sufficient gender statistics and research to show the fields in which men and women participate or not on equal footing;

The underdeveloped national mechanism for promoting equal opportunities;

The poor communication between public authorities and civil society;

The lack of financial means and resources, as well as the lack of qualified personnel in the field;

The tradition holds some elements<sup>1</sup> that can help us understand the way women are appreciated in Romania;

Gender indoctrination – the educational system promoted behaviours for gender-based roles;

Limited access to education - in the past the access to higher levels of education was restricted. Nowadays we can notice the lack of interest for education for social, personal life!

Women were valued as decent according to their sexual behaviour – the delicate matter of sexual deviance was superficially treated; the so-called ideal of the "virtuous woman"(defined by fidelity or infidelity and not by strength, integrity, firmness;

The lack of women solidarity;

The high need for protection – women as protégée, men as mentor. We are still reluctant to accept successful single women;

The low access to economic resources and political power – women regardless of their economic role and participation, still face difficulties in being accepted as partners in the co-decision process;

Women are not recognized as active participants to the Romanian history due to the absence of private life's history, the traditional pacifist attitude of women and the explicit interdiction to take part in the political process;

The underestimation of women work and creation and the lack of feminine models, feminine mentors;

The lack of qualitative free time;

The male hegemony is supported by: the male monopoly on definitions, concepts, names; the sacred is primarily based on

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<sup>1</sup> Mihaela Miroiu, Laura Grünberg, *Gen și Societate*, Ed. Alternative, București, 1997

masculine image; the man represents the humanity; male existence represents a normative existence; the male version of history represents "the whole truth and nothing but the truth"; the male control over women reproductive capacity.

The cultural factors contributing to women's orientation towards "domestic business" are the most difficult to be changed. The women's poor training in private economic initiative is burdened by the responsibilities that women have in the family. There are many women who place their family before a business career.

Many contradictory aspects characterize the evolution of women status in Romanian society. Even though we cannot speak of direct discrimination of women, the so-called "subtle discrimination" places women in an inferior social status. This "subtle barrier"<sup>1</sup> has extremely visible consequences on the condition of women: The under representation of women in the labour market; The decrease of economic independence and the increase of dependency on the social protection system; The overprotective policies of motherhood have a negative effect on the integration/reintegration of women in the professional life; The low rate of participation of women in the decision-making process.

Although the women's share of the labour force is rather stable, their contribution to the increase of the economic power is not properly appreciated. Most of women's efforts are not recognized, not even in statistics. In Romania, there are more women in the private sector than in the public one. Maybe the main reason for that lies in women's need for freedom after the collapse of the communist regime. Still, the companies created by women are under 1%. So, for Romanian women the problems of economic initiative and company building are not a challenge. Maybe the lack of initiative spirit to build companies is the main barrier faced by women in Romania. The presence of multinational companies in Romania, in a random order, Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, McDonalds, Lafarge, Tuborg, Procter & Gamble, Colgate & Palmolive, Jacobs Suchard, Shell, Ing-Barings, City Bank, Societe Generale, General Electric, Daewoo and more recently Renault, Arthur Anderson, KPMG, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Hilton, Holiday Inn,

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<sup>1</sup> Mihaela Miroiu și Laura Grünberg, *Gen și societate*, Editura Alternative, 1997: 69

etc. doesn't change the situation. The impact of these direct foreign investments in the Romanian economy did not change significantly the degree of participation and involvement of women in business. The companies led by women at the highest level continue to be a rarity. The change that the multinational companies usually induce in a country's transition economy has not proven the global effects in Romania concerning equal opportunities. In the financial and banking sector statistics show that it is a very feminised field. But where are the women?" Most of them are at the inferior level, behind desks. The higher one looks on the hierarchical ladder, the fewer women one sees until they totally disappear"<sup>1</sup>.

It is almost a commonplace to say that people have different sets of priorities. Men prefer to take care of the so-called "hard" problems or business, instead of the 'light' ones, connected with education, health, social policies, the environment - fields given mostly to women, as they are considered to be linked with their dominant preoccupations. The situation of women in the education field is a convincing proof. Most of the teachers (on all levels of professional qualifications) are women, but if we look at the administrative structure in education, we find that women are over represented at the low and middle levels (secretaries, accountants etc.) and men mostly occupy the highest positions. For women, being on top involves huge responsibilities and the continuous struggle to find the "third way" to reconcile work and family. In Romania only 28.4% of top managers are women (*Romanian Labour Market Report*, 1999). Therefore their access to high levels of responsibilities is still limited. Women make up for 53.2% of the total number of graduates in 2000, so there is no doubt that they are highly educated. Access to higher education is not a problem for women in Romania. Equal opportunities in the labour market (especially access to top jobs) are the real problem here. The principle of equal opportunities, which tends to replace positive discrimination, is regarded as a set of rules, regulations and norms by the implementation of which equal access to business and company administration is ensured for both men and women. Creating the premises for equal chances of access in business and top leadership, as

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<sup>1</sup> *idem*, p. 76

leaders or managers in the transition economy of Romania, depends on a series of factors, such as: The way in which property is distributed in our society; The degree of regulating the economic and business environments through normative acts; The degree of development of the private corporate sector; The set of behaviour norms characterizing the culture of work relationships and the organizational culture in a society such as ours.

A successful career woman in Romania means being in the show biz or in the fashion industry. It is difficult to describe a genuine Romanian businesswoman because the real ones who run their own businesses remain in the shadow, partly because the spotlights are on the so-called VIPs (fashion designers, singers, TV hosts) and partly because men dominate the Romanian business world. The same goes for the political life due to the totalitarian experience, the promotion of traditional paternalist behaviour and due to social-economic conditions that favour competition and aggressive-dominating attitudes. The overburdening of women is still a real fact; therefore women are not so keen to get involved in the political system. The last elections brought social democracy in power; so more and more women take part in organizational structures and promote women's issues in the political agenda. Men dominate the political spectrum. In the present Romanian Parliament there are only 47 women. Therefore the Romanian politics is still men's prerogative.

However, women hold leadership of 5 departments: the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Health and Family, the Ministry for European Integration, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Small and Medium Size Enterprises.

Little girls grow up being told that in order to be successful women they have to harmonize family life with professional life. But this myth of superwoman seems to fade away. The growing dissonance between their work and their inner values leads to contradictory relationships between their work selves and personal selves. Many times women's work expresses distress and frustration: they are distressed that their work at home and on the job continues to be devalued, and they are frustrated with the visible and invisible signs of inequality.

If they want to fit into the male culture of business and success they would have to give up most of their own. Therefore, the goal of the feminist movement is to transform that culture so both women and men can have family and work. In Romania, stress at work, job dissatisfaction, and depression are real facts even if it is practically impossible to find any statistics to back them up. Our still traditional society disregards these issues, as they are not considered "real" problems. We should also take into consideration dr. Farhad Analoui's research results – for Romanian female managers, work effectiveness is determined primarily by the managerial skills, knowledge, years of accumulated work experience, seniority and education. So the so-called "feminine" qualities are not decisive for their work evaluation.

Media should avoid promoting over and over again the two extreme perceptions of career woman: one would be a 30-year old superwoman with amazing career and a perfect family life; the other one would be the woman with a monotonous, unsatisfactory career and unstable personal life as an easy answer to the traditional obedient, compliant and passive woman. We should be aware that the real one is the above mentioned two extremes taken together and much, much more... a responsible, committed, emotional, tactful, actively involved in decision-making manager, a team builder, mediator and enabler who brings softer approaches in the Romanian business world.

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## WOMEN'S CONDITION IN THE ROMANIAN TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

*Narcisa-Alexandra Știucă*

"When a baby boy is born, there is so much joy that even the joints of the house are laughing and that's because boys can be easily raised and married; when a baby girl is born, the joints of the house cry, because a girl is a burden and, if she is narrow-minded, pity on her!"<sup>1</sup>

This childlike explanation given by one of the most important Romanian ethnographers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century placed woman's condition in the traditional society under an undesirable stigma. At the same period, another "voice", this time belonging to a woman-folklorist, was commenting more vividly the statements of some Moldavian peasants: "Any reasonable father, while holding his daughter for the first time in his arms, is wondering, thousand times more worried than if the baby were a boy, what will become of her. [...] Life is so hard and unsafe for a girl! The girl doesn't belong to her father, as much as she doesn't belong to herself, because, after getting married, she becomes her husband's possession..."<sup>2</sup>

Beneath this categorical and distant attitude of the father, there lie two contradictory feelings: the fear of his daughter's becoming a spinster and the financial trouble that raising a girl would bring. Actually, these are false reasons because, in any traditional society, celibacy was unconceivable for either sex and the problem of the dowry became a major one starting only with the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when, taking the example of the noblemen, peasants used to give their daughters both land and cattle.

<sup>1</sup> S. F. Marian - *Nascerea la români* [Birth at the Romanian People], 1892/ reedit. 1995, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Elena Sevastos - *Nascerea la români* [Birth at the Romanian People], 1892/ reedit. 1990, p. 139.

I believe that the explanation should be searched beyond the commonplace and selfish statements, in the way of thinking that praises woman's condition in the Romanian traditional village and its social realities.

The preference for the birth of a baby boy is a universal fact as long as he is considered a direct heir. Actually, this is one of the major points of our concern. The sociological reality of the Romanian village presents the wife's movement to her husband's house after the wedding ceremony as a rule of making up a household and paternal lineage as a criterion to establish the right of heritage. Taking all these aspects into account, we cannot believe that the expression "the girl is a burden" is the only justification of the paternal attitude. So, the fact that a girl belongs to her parents only before marriage is a fundamental reality of the Romanian village. This fact is rendered by the complete separation both from family and from the so-called *neam* ("clan"), which is a vast, defining structure for the Romanian traditional civilization. The girl changes her name (even the nickname of her family members), "borrowing", up to her death, the one of her father-in-law. She moves for good to the house of her parents-in-law, where she has to obey, hierarchically, the rules imposed by her mother-in-law and by her elder sisters-in-law. Consequently, as a new comer, she is at everybody's disposal and has to obey the rules of that particular household and to participate at all the social events of her new family. Her life is unconditionally related to the rules of daily or festive behaviour imposed by her husband and parents-in-law and, moreover, she has to change her own ritual or ceremonial behaviour. It's enough to remind two types of relationships that decisively contribute to the complete and defining separation of the woman from her family: stopping the spiritual relationships with her godparents or with the godchildren of her parents, and taking the obligation to fulfil the funerary rituals especially for her husband's family. Neither of these transformations that occur to a newly wed woman is representative exclusively for the Romanian civilization. We discover them both in the Antiquity and nowadays, from the West of Europe to the Balkans. The Romanian folk culture presents interesting reflexes of these realities both in the ritual wedding songs and in the lyrical poetry that has as central themes estrangement, fate and luck. We

don't take as a purpose of the present discussion to talk about this matter, because it is highly complex both as subjective expression and as illustration of the social reality in each geographical region.

Even by enumerating the main transformations implied by changing the status of virgin to that of married woman one can understand that, compared to a male heir, a girl is a "floating appearance" in her own family. So, it seems that what aroused the reactions and commentaries above was not the fear of celibacy (pretty rare in the traditional village), but, on the contrary, the fact that the family will lose one of its members in favour of another family, which will take advantages of their daughter's abilities.

Going back to the quotation with which I started my discussion, I notice the allusion to the possible deviations from the traditional moral ("narrow-minded"). This obviously regards only the daughters, not the sons, and it must have other reasons.

A proverb from Oltenia says: "If a woman drops her head-dress on the ground, she won't take it back, because it's full of dust, but if a man drops his cap, he will take it, dust it, and put it back on his head".<sup>1</sup> The connections with the sexual symbols are obvious and show, in a metaphoric language, that what is allowed and even forgiven to a man is not allowed to a woman.

It's commonplace that, in almost every traditional culture, woman is negatively regarded and, as much as Romanian tradition is concerned, this fact is primarily due to Christianity.

The folk legends shake even the Christian tradition about anthropogenesis and the original sin. Thus, Eve, "the forerunner of all women", was created, by a divine mistake, from the tail of a devil, dog or cat. This fact is placed under the sign of fate, because the demiurge's intention was to create an essentially good being.<sup>2</sup> Eve was also the one who, because of her greed, made Adam work hard on his bit of land for the harvest promised by God.<sup>3</sup> Then, she tasted the fruit of knowledge not only because she was curious and greedy, but also because she fell in love with the devil-snake.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gh. F. Ciușanu - *Superstițiile poporului român* [The Superstitions of the Romanian People], 1914/ reedit. 2001, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> T. Pamfile - *Povestea*.

<sup>3</sup> Elena Niculiță-Voronca - *Datimile și credințele poporului român* [Customs and Beliefs at the Romanian People], 1903/ reedit. 1998, vol. I, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> idem - op. cit., vol. II, p. 177.

Summarizing, we can notice that at first sight woman is genetically prone to evil and this is obvious in her tendency to gossip, disobedience, curiosity and especially adultery. While the flaws mentioned at the beginning affected the life of the couple or, at the most, the life of the whole family, adultery was for the traditional society a capital sin, which could provoke severe disorders: "The woman who comes to her husband after committing adultery brings many misfortunes to her home: the house will catch fire, the cattle will get sick and, moreover, her sponsor will be struck by bad luck because she wedded the couple"<sup>1</sup>, "The woman who is unfaithful to her husband will burn the ground under her feet. Don't send her to plough or to hoe the field, because you won't have any harvest! Wherever she goes, she brings misfortune and poverty"<sup>2</sup>, "A pure girl has a wreath on her head as a gift from God, but if she loses her virginity before marriage, she will lose that wreath and devils will put dog excrements on her head, forcing her to wander like this for the rest of her life. Woman has a wreath, too, if she got married as a virgin and if she is faithful to her husband; whatever girl or woman who is pure wears her wreath for good."<sup>3</sup> Traditional beliefs say that woman's purity influences the fertility of the land: "A virgin may touch anything in the garden, because everything she touches will grow. [...] She should also pick up healing plants, because they will be more efficient."<sup>4</sup> The examples above, as well as many others, help us understand the deep roots of the traditional moral. The relationship with the model, the intimate connection between microcosm and macrocosm, the understanding of the individual or couple condition as strictly related to the well balanced life of the whole community are the deep meanings of these texts.

However, it would be unreasonable to limit judging woman's condition simply to the points of view mentioned above, because, beyond the general statements regarding her nature, one can easily notice a positive image. This has deep and branched out roots and it is well illustrated by the parts that woman played in the traditional

<sup>1</sup> idem - op. cit., vol. II, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> idem - op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> idem - op. cit., vol. II, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

society. I mean that woman used to have ritual and ceremonial positions that maintained the very balance of the traditional society.

Woman was endowed with magic and divinatory powers. She assisted and even controlled the major events in the life of an individual, fulfilled the most important agrarian rituals to stimulate fertility, to mild the spirits of vegetation, land or sky, to offer magic protection and to praise the harvest. The ritual roles, as the one of magician (*descîntătoare* - exorcist, *doftoroaie* - healer, but without the sorcerer's attributions), *moaşă de neam* - family midwife, *socăciţă* at weddings (cook and master of ceremonies as well) and *bocitoare* - mourner at funerals, were indispensable to the community life. I don't intend to insist upon any of these positions, but I will assert that each of them places woman into an intimate relationship with the divine. Thanks to her condition of an expert, woman used to keep in touch with the most frightening and whimsical mythological representations: *Ursitoarele* - the Parcae (fairies of fate), *Zorile* (fairies of death), and the spirits of diseases and other embodiments of the evil.

The fulfilling of these asked for a profound initiation, transmitted in the middle of closed female groups. Such channels of transmission were built up both at the family level - for the ritual and ceremonial competencies implied by the rituals of passing from one state of being to another - and at the community level, for those destined to obtain a rich harvest or for the divinatory and empirically medical practices. Even when it was about getting limited knowledge (e.g. predicting or influencing good luck in love or marriage), the initiation was started early and rigorously, under the strict surveillance of the old women, who knew and performed the tradition very well. The most familiar traditional context in this matter was *şezătoarea* (the social), at which girls used to learn both how to work and how to practice magic.

The social praxis in which girls were implied was very important for the development of the community and placed them on a high rank, because, by a good appropriation of the traditional code, they were the ones who could communicate with the divine. There are some illustrating examples for this: the agrarian customs and rituals like those meant to make rain start (*Paparudele*, *Caloianul*) or to close the cycle of vegetation (*Drăgaica* or *Sânzieniele* and *Cununa de la seceriş* -

the Wreath at reaping), whose practicing was allowed only to women. The condition of purity was hereupon essential, any misbehaviour being considered ill fated for the entire community.

The ritual functions – be they permanent or circumstantial – place woman on a privileged place in the Romanian traditional village. The prestige that the community used to offer to such female parts obviously contradicts the negative statements and categories quoted above.

An important female part was that of a family midwife – *moaşă de neam*, who was a member of both the extended family of the father and the community. Her duties were social and medical, as well as magic and ritual. The integration of the newborn in the family, in the clan, in the village and religious community was decisive both for its future and for the balance of that community. The midwife had to fulfil, besides the condition of expert (i.e. a connoisseur of the tradition), that of a "beloved person to gods", being bodily and morally pure.

The analyses might regard other traditional functions and competencies, too, but I think that the brief references up to now have managed to draw some conclusions concerning woman's position in the Romanian traditional community.

Expressions like *treburi femeieşti* – "female business" or *calendarul babelor* – "the calendar of hags" are always meant to establish the space in which woman used to act and to value her part in the family and social life. Such expressions haven't had a pejorative meaning, but, on the contrary, have showed a certain aspect of woman's competence and have acknowledged the rigor with which woman used to take care of the household, to deal with the daily life problems and to participate at the most important events of the community.

Woman was thought to possess some knowledge that was inaccessible to men; that knowledge was based on an approach to the archaic moulding values, on preserving strict rules of communication to the divine and especially on possessing a complex and, at the same time, spectacular code of communication. All these wouldn't have been possible without adequate spiritual grounds, characterized by sensitivity, selflessness, fidelity, ambition and consistency, as well as by conservatism and faith. In a few words, we could maliciously

summarize all these in the phrase "female weaknesses" (*slăbiciuni femeieşti*).

Actually, the image of woman rendered by anecdotes, legends and moral sentences is completely different from the traditions *in actu* of the village (customs, rituals and ceremonies). It is, perhaps, a way to emphasize the prestige of woman, who, by playing a main part in the Romanian traditional village, was shading the position of man, which was, by definition, primordial. Actually, the historical reality of the Romanian village speaks about another system, based on a balance between sexes, on a harmonious completion and on a constant co-operation meant to perpetuate its existence. From the point of view of the Christian tradition, woman in the Romanian cultural space is a "necessary evil", not only as the owner of the birth secret, but also as an entity intimately and profoundly connected to all the representations of the divine, which the mentality and the existence of the traditional man could not renounce.

## COMMUNITIES OF BELONGING

## SOCIALIST AND POST-SOCIALIST REALITIES: QUEUING UP AS SOCIAL PHENOMENA

*Sînziana Preda*

I do not know if it is true, but for a long period of time I thought that queuing up is a communist invention that must be eradicated (M. Cioată, NET Report no.117/2002). In the 1980's, this „activity” (if you can call it like this) became permanent: the main purpose was to buy food, rationalized at that time. But food was not the only thing obtained with great pains, with a lot of patience and sweat. The queue for gas cylinder usually had hundreds of meters and as a consequence there were always quarrels because of the small number of these gas cylinders. The queues for a cinema ticket, for a newspaper or at a health unit are other examples for „the imposed loss of time”, that marked the existence of the majority. As a consequence, it appeared a general hatred against any total non-productive „activity”, meant only to ensure the survival.

From a certain point of view, the urban territory was much more marked by the communist pathology, in which the “queue” has its well-defined place. In fact, the communism was not interested in time fructification; the old system made everything in its power to diminish the spare time of a person. Actually, there was a time when the existence of majority was divided between the job (often lasting over the usual program – including Sundays and Saturdays) and the actions for survival: first of all, it was about the long queues for food, secondly – the different belongings of common use, like TV-sets, washing machines or freezers, all of these requiring queues postponed for the next day. Obtaining some approbation or other legal papers was, in the same way, a real problem, a fact, which – unfortunately – is still present in our days (V. Vosganian).

One of the jokes, which appeared in that period, is eloquent for the miserable situation of population: "Prunariu, before going into the space, goes home to embrace his wife, but he does not find her. He writes a note for her: *I am going into the space, and I will be back on Wednesday.* Next week, on Wednesday, he returns home and finds a note: *I am waiting at a queue for meat, I do not know when I will come home.*"<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the aggression against free time was a clear target. It is known that spare time creates little by little the nostalgia of liberty. A person that has time reads, thinks, has initiatives, creates his own private space, and feels the need to join in something and to communicate. On the contrary, queuing up stultifies, humiliates, oppresses, and brings a person to the lowest limit of existence. The individual is no longer a human being, he is only a part of a tremendous wheel that crushes him, limits any initiative, and uses him/her as an obedient and unassuming element.

"For me, the queue represented a mental means of torment: waiting for five-six hours to buy thirty eggs...you either dream, or fall into depression" - or you go astray, we could add to this testimony, gathered from one of those interviewed. Or: "I was dreaming to have a big gun to shoot Ceaușescu"...

Queuing up uses time - the most precious resource - like any unprofitable industry. Even the nature and the evolution of a society depend on the way time is used. The year 1989 marks the difference between an obsolete society and a modern one, taking into account that the latter has a new perspective upon time as an economical resource. This is a re-valorisation that gradually becomes a strategy of management and marketing. In the past epoch, losing time meant only discomfort for the Romanians, who were not aware of the economic and political effects.

The fact that time had no value, can also be seen from the way in which, nowadays, people compare today's prices with those of the communist period; it is said that fowl kilogram was twenty two Romanian lei; it is also true that the time lost with queuing up took

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<sup>1</sup> Dana Maria and Niculescu Grasso: *Bancurile politice. Studiu demologic.* Bucuresti, 1999.

around two hours. But this fact is not included in the price, because time as economical interpretation does not exist in the common vocabulary. If the price did not rise, but the queues were one meter longer, then people were glad that the price remained unchanged, without understanding that, in fact, the price was higher with half an hour or longer with a meter at the queue. In the end, we all know that time is money.

With all the visible progress, we have to admit that the behaviour of Romanian society did not change over night after the disappearance of Ceaușescu and of the main wares specific to communism. Although "queuing up" as an ubiquitous phenomenon has disappeared, people's behaviour, as well as their prejudices, seems to have remained mostly the same. Nowadays we are queuing up to take our money - for example from banks, using ATM cards - in order to buy the vital goods; finally, both of them represent sources of survival.

In a country in which even since 1967 the Prime Secretary has also controlled the Economic Council, queuing up represents the measure instrument which gives us details on the society's metabolism, a society that goes slowly, but certainly, towards collapse.

This negative feature of the city landscape reflects several aspects: an economic life marked by centralization, a forced economic growth; therefore we see a strict and rigid internal market, as well as an external market without steadiness, and an acute crisis also reflected by the introduction of food ration books. As the dictator intensified the payment of the external debt, the phenomenon took greater proportions, in the conditions of a massive export (including the food necessary for the population) and of a drastic diminution of imports (for example of medical supplies).

Regarding these aspects, the majority of those who were interviewed thought that before 1989, the products were not expensive, but you could not find them. Today is the other way around. Moreover, the quality (unlike the quality before 1989) is considered by many people to be inferior to that of the mentioned period. An example is the case of some Dutchmen who decided to buy - at that time - as many cheese as they could.

The material conditions and, in fact, the whole way of living, become more difficult in a country that wants to reach the highest point of progress and this led to several restrictions. First queues appeared in the 80's at milk, oil and sugar. The longest queue was at gas. They seemed to be very exhausting, because unless you slept in your car, you could lose your line.

The queue is not a meaningless association of people: it asks for several rules and rites/rituals. One would not find the same situation everywhere, so, on the one hand we have the real and on the other hand we have the virtual ones. Until the goods reach their destination, everything seems to be all right, everybody keeps his place in the line. The problem starts when the goods are to be sold – the crowd got mad and people began to push each other. Usually an athletic person placed in front of the door shop solved the situation.

We speak of a virtual queue when instead of people at line we have their bags. People came early in the morning and because they had other problems to solve (and because the queue asked for many hours to spend there), they left their bags in order not to lose their place in the line.

In order to get a larger quantity of goods, some persons came with relatives (especially the teenagers of their families). If they had no children, they did not feel ashamed to take their neighbours' children or even children from the street. If you ask the teenagers of today, most of them would remember that they had to wake up at four or five in the morning, because they were to stay at queues in order to buy the high quality products. There were cases when people brought their little chairs or when a person kept a place for another fellow (every time this kind of crowd ended in quarrelling). Often, "hunting" a place in the row started an evening before (about nine or ten p.m.) or later on, in the night (starting around two or three in the morning).

This phenomenon leads to various social relationships and extreme interactions. People socialize in a group in different ways; during the period of the old regime, those who spent their time at queue seemed to be united against the communist reign; it seemed to be more like a silent opposition. Everybody talked about all kind of subjects while waiting for goods, but nobody said something bad

about the political system, because they were afraid of the consequences. Nevertheless there were a few people who dared to talk against the communist regime. The persons around them decided to avoid them – at any time the political police could interfere. The way towards socialism seemed to be a total destruction as it can be depicted from the following political joke:

*Two old men were talking while staying on a queue:*

*- This miserable regime led us in this situation.*

*A man in uniform asked them to come with him. They were interviewed a whole night. Towards morning, a superior officer came and asked them about their problem.*

*- Well...you see...it was a misunderstanding ...we spoke about a regime, a diet prescribed by a doctor. It is this regime the one who has led me to this situation.*

*The officer apologized and offered them a cup of tea: then he led them to the exit. When the two old men reached a certain distance, the officer asked them:*

*- Please, tell me the name of the doctor who prescribed this regime?*

*- Dr. Petru Groza.*

Those who stayed or are staying at queues are people without any possibility, without other chance. They have to stay at queue because they have no social relationship to rely on, further on they do not have "acquaintances". This phenomenon is common for the period before and after 1989. Nowadays there are also queues, but with important differences: many of us are obliged to lose precious hours to pay our taxes to the state. There is another odd thing: one stays in line, in order that the state receives one's money. The institutions of the Ministry of Finance, real bastions of bureaucracy, are practically assailed by people anxious to get the reduction, granted only in the first three months of the year. The queue at taking your papers (ID or passport) reflects the bad organization of the Romanian administrative system. In this last case, the implications are deeper, are having an impact on the people anxious to have freedom, who were deprived for so many years of the Western influence, and could not find their way towards progress and knowledge.

## **SOCIAL INTERESTS AND REVOLUTIONARY IDENTITY IN THE ROMANIAN REVOLUTION OF DECEMBER 1989**

*Sidonia Grama*

In this paper I shall discuss a meaningful aspect of the December 1989 Revolution, the founding event of the post-communist Romanian democracy, as reflected in the collective memory. Particular emphasis will be placed on the social construction of 'revolutionary identity' as a newly emerging social identity in the Romanian transition. At times the debates and controversies surrounding the title of 'revolutionary' animate the public space, generating contradictory attitudes. The segment of population that was directly involved in the events of December 1989 can be considered a complex and heterogeneous social category. It was politically recognised as a social category when it became the object of a state policy that has been materialised into a law since December 1990; namely Law no. 42/1990, initially entitled 'the Law for Honouring the Martyr-Heroes' Memory and for Awarding certain Rights to their Families, as well as to those Injured during the Revolution of December 1989'. The numerous amendments made to this law reflect a rather ambiguous relationship between the post-December governments and this social category. I therefore assume that the social construction of revolutionary identity is not politically neutral; in this respect I shall stress the symbolic and material interests involved in claiming this identity, as well as the political stakes and power relations that the public acknowledgement of revolutionary identity implies. Secondly, moving beyond the generic acceptance of the term 'revolutionary', I shall attempt to depict its internal diversity, referring to a multitude of lived experiences and shared memories that provide the content of this identity.

## Theoretical and methodological framework

The theoretical perspective of this analysis of revolutionary identity is shaped primarily by Richard Jenkins' contribution to outlining social identity as a strategic concept in the social sciences (Jenkins, Richard 1996): the model of dialectical internal and external definition of identity; the conceptual distinction between nominal and virtual identities; the institutionalised identities, etc. I also use Barth's insightful concept of boundaries (Barth, Fredrik 1969), which has now become a common reference in studies of ethnicity, as well as of other social identities, demarcating the social spaces across which identities are negotiated.

The assumption that 'power and politics are central to questions of identity' and that 'social identities exist and are acquired, claimed and allocated within power relations' (Jenkins 1996:24-5), which is influenced by a Foucauldian view of power, seems to be used rather rhetorically in Jenkins' book. Nevertheless, I shall illustrate its relevance in the context of the Romanian revolutionary identity.

On the other hand, I would emphasise the central role of collective memory in shaping a social identity. A shared meaningful past is needed in order to legitimate a collective identity. In the case of a revolutionary identity, the official ascription of the category of 'revolutionary' ultimately depends on testimonies of lived experiences. The social construction of these narratives implies shared, negotiated meanings of life histories. For the social researcher it is worth scrutinizing these life stories with particular sensitivity to the implicit personal and collective mythology, as the special light in which oral histories can be seen;<sup>1</sup> Any life story, written or oral, more or less dramatically is in one sense a personal mythology, a self-justification' (Samuel and Thompson 1990, 10). From this point of view, such narratives could be valuable sources in oral history as well

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<sup>1</sup> This new perspective on life histories was offered at the 1987 Oxford Conference on 'Myth and History', and was reflected in the volume *The myths we live by*, edited by Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson. It was a 'fundamental proposition of this conference to assume the displacements, omissions and reinterpretations through which myths in personal and collective memory take shape' (Samuel and Thompson 1990, 5)

as in social anthropology, since they are not just testimonies of a recent past but also encapsulate current social tensions<sup>1</sup>.

The present analysis is based on data collected in the course of an extensive fieldwork that is still in progress. I attempt to establish the social identity of the revolutionaries by relying on the following sources and methods: interviews with participants in the Revolution of Cluj (mainly members of the 'Association for the Truth about the Revolution, Cluj', composed of the injured and the families of the *martyr-heroes*); interviews with participants in the Timișoara Revolution; and participant observation and interviews with those who attended the 'National Conference of the Unifying Revolutionaries from Romania', which took place in Timișoara, on December 16, 2002. In order to analyse the official discourse on the category of revolutionary I have used the text of Law no. 42/1990, with its subsequent amendments and additions, published in *Monitorul Oficial* (The Gazette); other statements I make in this paper have their empirical basis in my monitoring of media covering the period of December 2002, which focused on the public debates on the quality of revolutionary, as well as participant observation in a couple of sessions of the trial of the Revolution in Cluj. This study of the configuration of the Romanian revolutionary identity is part of a broader PhD project with the title 'The 1989 Romanian Revolution in the Collective Memory and in the Social Imaginary', in which the theoretical and methodological approach is an interdisciplinary one, bringing together oral history, social anthropology and social psychology.

If we look at the process of revolutionary identification as a synthesis of external and internal definition (Jenkins 1996: 26-7), then we become aware of whose definition of a 'revolutionary' counts more, in which contexts, and with what consequences and how such definitions are interrelated. Thus, we can analyse the social construction of the revolutionary identity at the following levels: the official level of political discourse and government policies (which define the quality of revolutionary and allocate material and symbolic

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<sup>1</sup> In this respect, an oral archive of recorded testimonies of the participants in the Revolution of Cluj is in preparation at the Institute of Oral History, Babeș-Bolyai University, to which I belong.

resources); the level of the institutionalised identity (comprising all revolutionary organisations, which define membership and draw distinctions between members and non-members); the level of public opinion (which conveys stereotypes and fluctuating social representations of revolutionaries). The external definitions influence self-ascription and self-definition, and in the tension between them a social space of negotiating identities is configured.

### **Towards the semantics of the revolutionary: the official definition**

The generic term `revolutionary` is a nominal, all-embracing identity under which one can find, in the political discourse, those who took part directly (and they also claim this) in the events of December 1989 in Romania – events that are officially as well as historically termed ‘The Romanian Revolution’. As it is known, in the Central and East-European landscape of the year 1989, where changes in the political system were programmatically non-violent, the Romanian Revolution was remarkable for its extreme violence, both physical and psychological (through a huge media disinformation campaign). The tragic consequences of the violence in the Romanian Revolution were 1107 dead and 3352 injured people, including 162 dead and 1107 injured before December 22 (the day of Ceaușescu’s fall and capture) and 942 dead and 2245 injured after December 22. As long as there is confusion surrounding the events of December 1989, a lack of political will to establish the truth and a systematic avoidance of responsibility for what happened to the victims, the revolutionary identity and its public acknowledgement can be nothing but problematical. Therefore the semantics of the ‘revolutionary’ notion implies an ideological dimension, fairly compatible with the official - hegemonic - definition of the Romanian Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, in the public eye a series of connotations that have tended to fluctuate in time have been attached to this

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<sup>1</sup> I have already attempted a historical semantics approach to the notion of the Romanian Revolution in the article ‘Significances of Political Non-Violence in the Central and Eastern European Revolutions of 1989: The Violence of the Romanian Revolution’ in the journal *Caiete de antropologie istorică* (Papers of Historical Anthropology), published by the Seminar of Historical Anthropology, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj 2(2002)

denomination of `revolutionary`: from the ‘heroic’ halo attributed to the participants in the events of December 1989 (lasting until the first democratic elections of May 1990, when the echoes of the revolution as a miracle, as the birth of a new world were still resounding), to their transformation into ‘victims’; and after 1996, when the number of revolutionary certificates issued exploded, to their acquiring meaning of ‘impostors’ and ‘profiteers’.

At the official level of political discourse and government policy, the category of revolutionary was established by Law 42/1992, which regulates access to a series of symbolic and material resources. This law has produced more or less perverse effects. Criteria aimed at categorising those who can benefit from this law were provided in order to allocate these resources. Subsequently, these categories were slightly redefined. But it should be mentioned that these modifications are far from being indifferent towards political interests. Consequently an increasing conflictual tension has been maintained, reaching critical points in 1996, 2000 and 2002.

Thus, the heading of the initial text of the law was ‘The Law for Honouring the Martyr-Heroes’ Memory and for awarding certain Rights to their Families, as well as to those Injured during the Revolution of December 1989’. Obviously, the law had a symbolic character, given the title of ‘*martyr-heroes* of the Romanian Revolution’, awarded posthumously, and the triumphant title ‘Fighter for the Victory of the December 1989 Romanian Revolution’ (a title sounding like those in the communist historiography of revolutions) awarded to the injured persons. The initial law also had a compensatory character for the damages suffered, by providing some rights exclusively to those who had suffered a loss in the events of December 1989. A short time thereafter, in June 1991, Law no. 42/1990 was slightly modified, introducing the following new categories: the title ‘Fighter for the Victory of the December 1989 Romanian Revolution’ was now also to be awarded to those who were imprisoned between December 16-22 for having participated in demonstrations leading to the victory of the Revolution. There also appeared a category of the ‘direct participant in the manifestations for the victory of the Revolution, remarkable through special merits’, an honorary category that does not have any material rights as yet. A new governmental group called ‘The State

Deputy Secretary for the 1989 Revolution *victims` problems`* was then instituted. (To be noted that the term 'victims' stresses the compensatory character of the law.) This institution will represent the official entity that can ascribe the institutionalised revolutionary identity according to the definitions of the law. A finer typology reflecting a more complex representation of the December events as well as of those involved in it can also be noticed here. Thus, besides the quality of *martyr-hero* and that of *fighter for the victory of the Revolution* (which implies, as I mentioned, a coherent triumphant vision of the Revolution and the assumption of the revolutionaries' agency, active role), the category of 'deceased or injured *in connection with the events of December 1989`*, reveals, on the contrary, the involuntary, hazardous aspect, the regrettable mistakes, the confusion and incoherencies of the Romanian Revolution. Re-published with certain other modifications in 1992, Law no. 42 brings forth the following new aspects: The title of 'Fighter for the Victory of the Romanian Revolution' included now the terms *injured, imprisoned in the period 16-25 December and direct participants in the fights for the Revolution victory between 16-25 December 1989*. Those in this latter category were granted institutionalised social identity if they could obtain recognition by the revolutionaries' organisations founded until that date. All these categories have access to a series of important material facilities and rights.

Inevitably, once these items come to be put into practice, any declaiming of identity, as a "direct participant in the Revolution" will be susceptible to abuse. The law no longer has a compensatory character, but is framed in terms of rewards, and is positively discriminating. The new political authority that arose as a consequence of the 1989 regime change actually rewarded the category of 'Fighters for the Victory of the Revolution' for their loyalty to the 'revolution cause'.

In the context of the political changes, which occurred in Central and Eastern Europe during the revolutionary year of 1989, these material rewards for civic involvement (performed, of course, in an extremely risky context until a certain moment) seem by now to have acquired an air of caducity. If the historical-juridical bases of such rewards are rather precarious, the political stakes are pretty obvious.

They belong to the official vision of the nature of the Romanian Revolution even if they appeal to worn-out patterns of revolutions, the Marxist-Leninist pattern in particular.<sup>1</sup> The official discourse about the events of December 1989 implicitly contains a vision of the confrontation between *Us* and *Them* as an abrupt dichotomy in terms of fighting, of civil war between *revolutionaries* and *counter-revolutionaries*, between *good* and *evil*, and between *progressive* and *reactionary* forces.<sup>2</sup>

Once more, this dichotomy can be read between the lines of Law 42 since every version of it specifies that the rewards instituted by this law cannot be applied to those who 'fought against the Revolution'. At the discursive, ideological level, the *Us/Them* opposition is evident. During the events of December 1989 it did have a symbolic effectiveness as it mobilized the population to defend the vital points of the capital against the 'terrorist' threat. In reality, however, the *us* and *them* categories were very ambiguous and extremely confusing; the consensual notion of *Us*, intensively constructed by the media, which mobilized a great part of the population around the new 'emanated power', in fact have concealed the existence and the confrontation of different competing groups and factions. On the other hand, the *them* category of enemies, who represented a danger against which the people had to defend themselves by uniting was hardly identified during and after the Revolution either. The idea of fighting implies the existence of an enemy, the existence of winners and losers. But this screenplay proves its weakness in this respect as well. In the apparent logic of rewarding after the fighting -which might find its equivalents in the war history - one side of the coin is still missing: the identification of those forces that were responsible for producing so many victims and their punishment. First of all this is about the

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<sup>1</sup> This idea is developed in my study mentioned above, *Significances of Political Non-Violence in the Central and Eastern European Revolutions of 1989. The Violence of the Romanian Revolution*.

<sup>2</sup> I have analysed this type of polarization at the discursive level in my BA dissertation, stressing the fact that this *black* and *white* polarity between 'terrorists' and the 'Saviour' has been the key to the ideological representation of the 'Live Broadcasting Romanian Revolution'. There is a short version 'Symbols in the Romanian Revolution of 1989', published in *Caietele Tranzitiei* (The Paper of Transition) ed. by the Institute of Cultural Anthropology, Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj, 1997.

'terrorists' claimed by the tele-revolution after the dictators fled on 22 December. Even though the collective psychosis of the *terrorists* produced many more victims than Ceaușescu's repressive forces until the 22 of December, it is generally known that the subsequent investigations did not succeed in finding any genuine terrorist. All those suspected and captured in the psychotic period of the Revolution were subsequently released. These unidentified entities rather represented rhetorical means, elements of scenery in a screenplay of a tragically revolutionary performance; meanwhile the actual persons who participated in the repression ordered by Ceaușescu in the period of 16-22 of December 1989 and who can be clearly identified by their victims were not actually made responsible.

In the trials of the revolutions (which were initiated in Timișoara, where they came to an end in 2000, and in Cluj, where the Supreme Court sentenced a minimum punishment for the Army representatives) the general trend has been to delay matters for as long as possible to escape the law; in such a manner that those whose lives had been dramatically damaged were denied the moral right to find out the truth and justice.

To return to the effects of Law 42, the climax of the conflicting tension between the categories of participants that this law referred to was reached in 1996 when an abrupt split in the social identity of the revolutionaries, discriminating between *us* (meaning the *genuine* revolutionaries) and *them* (meaning the *impostors*), was favoured. This happened in the framework of an inflationary issuing of "revolutionary certificates", as a consequence of a massive awarding of such documents to those who in one way or another had managed to claim their identity as 'direct participants with special merits in the Revolution'.

The means by which the revolutionary files were produced are not hard to imagine in a culture favouring nepotism like the Romanian one, which is biased toward abuses and corruption.<sup>1</sup> All these

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<sup>1</sup> There are a few notorious cases of certain people who had behaved in a totally hostile manner towards the anti-Ceausescu' protestors in the first period of the Revolution (before the dictator's fall), or even those involved in the repressive forces, who are currently members of certain organisations of revolutionaries and who have obtained an official certificate as a revolutionary. This is a rather peculiar illustration of the theoretical assumption that 'the criteria of membership are a matter of negotiation at the organisational boundary' (Jenkins 139-63).

strategies were possible because of the weakness and the versatility of the law, the lack of objective criteria by which such a vague identity could be claimed. Consequently, the number of persons acknowledged as 'fighters in the Revolution; direct participants with special merits' grew dramatically: in 2000 in *Monitorul Oficial* (the Gazette) 17,126 persons were enlisted with the status of 'participant with special merits', while the number of the titles of 'martyr-heroes' was 27; the numbers of the titles of injured revolutionaries was 73 and that of the imprisoned - 108 persons [cf. *Monitorul Oficial*: 100 bis, March 7, 2000]. The effect of this inflation was a suffocating sense of marginalisation of those who had had revolutionary files drawn up by the prosecutor since 1990 - that is before the delivery of material rewards- but had been overwhelmed by the newcomers added to the list in 1996. This inevitably led to discrediting the identity of the revolutionary in the public eye. What consequences has this phenomenon had upon the social identity of the revolutionary?

#### **Claiming authenticity: the organizations of revolutionaries**

The year 2002 can be considered to have been a critical moment; 13 years after the Revolution there is a need to re-assert the revolutionary identity. The appropriate strategy is claimed to be the exposure of the 'impostors' through a campaign of file checking and effective civic involvement. This aim was asserted at the National Conference of 'Unifying the Revolutionaries in Romania', held in Timișoara, on December 16, 2002. There, the leaders of this movement of the 'genuine revolutionaries', as they called themselves, said:

'We have to get rid of *the others*, to retrieve the same dignity which we had *then*, to get it back now and to get united and to become a force having a say in public life. (...) We want to be a balancing factor, to continue our fight for the democratisation of the country and the social problems for which we stood up *then*.' (in December).

They asserted their own autonomy from the political power and the multiple identities of this union's members:

*We are not interested in the colour of the political parties. (...) But we want to be useful to any government; (...) what we fight for is raising the quality of life of people, even by telling the truth.'*

The re-assertion of the identity of *genuine revolutionaries*, which the conference intends to institutionalise, is made through self-definitions and a clear delimitation from “the others”.

**At the organisational level, markers of authenticity and distinction are provided:**

‘(...) There are 33 genuine associations, with signatures, with stamps, 34 having been founded according to Law 42 until 1990, when the problem of the material rights had not yet been taken into consideration. *We* are people who really fought in the revolutions and wanted to be together ... *the others* made an association for the sake of the big bone... This makes us different from *the others* who outnumber *us*, who are in far greater numbers than the genuine *us*. (...) This is not a question of Iliescu’s or Nastase’s revolutionaries; the fight is waged between the *genuine* fighters and revolutionaries, on the one hand, and *the impostors* and *intruders* on the other.’

The dichotomy *Us* vs. the *Others* is played across the boundaries of different revolutionary organizations; but it is recurrent at other levels as well. Several interviews with representatives of certain revolutionaries’ organizations from Timișoara revealed that the relationship between political power and this category has constantly been perceived as asymmetrical. In terms of self-stereotypes, the revolutionaries define themselves as brave, strong-willed people, capable of becoming leaders:

‘(...) one couldn’t have got out in the streets if one hadn’t been able to be a leader, to say either/or!’

They believe that they are endowed with such a strong-willed character, of which the new political power was aware, continually trying to drive a wedge between them:

‘(...) *They* are afraid of the revolutionaries; the power has kept trying to split us up for 13 years.(...) They are afraid of *us*, they definitely know that this is a sensitive area...’ (namely Timișoara)

In the case of this assertion the dichotomy them/us easily slips towards acquiring a local cultural distinction; Timișoara versus Bucharest as different cultural areas, competing with each other. As it is known, the Romanian revolution was initiated in Timișoara and

continued in the other major cities of the country and in the capital. Revolutionary programs were also formulated here (‘The Timișoara Proclamation’). In spite of the active role and the huge risks taken by the protesters then (in December 1989), their 13-year absence from the political stage of the country was justified by interviewees as it follows:

‘We were weak, politically unprepared and unwilling to make any compromise. We have waited for 13 years, not getting involved in public life; we didn’t want to be compromised... “Children of the Revolution are the first to be devoured”...’[n.a. we can notice here the political myth of the French Revolution].(...) ‘We are now experienced enough and we know we have a word to say’.

They judged that they were aware of the political stakes and of the strategies through which the power had kept them under control:

‘These people couldn’t be kept together and disciplined except by means of material motivation, that is under Law 42. This law was an illusion for *us* and a reality for *them*, the former *nomenclature*, the second generation of communists.’

‘(...) They are afraid of *us*, there are people among us whose aim is to divide us.

If we had been united and disciplined and had had some sort of economic motivation we would certainly have been a force, a real force by now.’<sup>1</sup>

These discourses advocate, sometimes passionately, the (re)-legitimation of the revolutionary identity. Bridging the gap between ‘then’ (the mythical period of their revolutionary protests) and ‘now’ is meant to construct a sense of continuity of their pro-active role in the Romanian transition. Implicitly, these kinds of discourse reveal other social representations of Revolution, an alternative mythical view: the unfinished revolution.

Once more, ‘it is clear that identity (however inexplicit), boundary (however elusive and nebulous), and authenticity (however contested and contestable) are matters in which people invest huge value.’ (Cohen 2000, 5)

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews that I made in Timișoara in 2002, with participants at the ‘National Conference of the Unifying Revolutionaries from Romania’. I will transcribe the records so as to include them in the Oral History Archive.

## Searching for Truth and Justice: aspects of the trials of the Revolution

I consider that the phenomenon of the Romanian Revolution can be conceived as an iceberg event, having a deep history and causing long-term effects. Referring to its violent side, it might be regarded as a traumatic event of the present past, and its deep ambiguity has generated difficult memories. I suggest, therefore, that scrutinizing it towards a comprehensive understanding involves a form of catharsis. This kind of approach belongs to the more general and sensitive issue of 'treating a difficult past'. (Ash 2002)<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the complex issue of the trials of the Revolution, as well as the controversial issue of rewards and compensation, which we have already discussed, should be addressed in this broader context. However, the aim of this paper is more modest. I shall refer here to the trials of the Revolution merely as another level at which the dichotomy *us/them* has been performed.

This dichotomy implies other protagonists and other types of experiences. The trials of the Revolution have institutionalised the opposition between the injured and the families of the victims of the Revolution, most of them by now members of certain revolutionary associations, on the one hand, and a few representatives of the repressive forces on the other (namely the representatives of the army who have been accused for their violent intervention against protestors before fraternising on 22 December).

Only a few individuals have been made responsible for the casualties that occurred before 22 December 1989 (the day of Ceaușescu's fall). These ones perceive themselves as *scapegoats*. In the public eye, their having to stand trial has brought a serious offence and caused severe damage to the image of the army as an institution, given the perspective of NATO integration. On the other hand, the victims of the Revolution in Cluj have had quite different experiences. Some of them had bullet-inflicted wounds that have still not healed.

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<sup>1</sup> In 'Trials, purges and history lessons: treating a difficult past in post-communist Europe', Timothy Garton Ash has done a comparative analysis of the policy of facing the legacy of communism, particularly in Germany and its neighbours. In these respects, four key interrogations have to be answered carefully: 'whether to remember and treat the past, (...) when to address it; (...) who should do it, and last, but not least, how?' (Ash 2000, 265-282)

Others, members of the *heroes'* families, bear inner wounds and material difficulties that are sometimes overwhelming. I shall illustrate a few aspects regarding the social recognition of the revolutionaries in the community that they belong to; their attitudes towards the guilty and towards the need to find out the truth, through the voices of some members of a Revolutionary Association from Cluj, whom I have interviewed. These can be found in the Archive of the Oral History Institute.

(Thoughts on the social acknowledgment of the revolutionaries):

'All these rights and medals are not unsatisfactory for me, materially speaking; I am disappointed from a moral point of view. I don't really need all these, what I need is rather the truth, I need to know what happened; a moral reward would have been more special if the society had taken definite steps in other directions than the present ones.'

(Lung Dan Ioan, injured in the Revolution)

'Public opinion is the one that causes a bitter feeling in me: people I haven't met for 12 years asking me what's wrong with your leg?.. I tell them: drop it, don't ask me that, such a long time has passed. And still, if I tell them anything they ask me: "Why did you go there?..." This is the bitter feeling I get because the public opinion cannot appreciate properly how serious the events that happened then were. They'd rather believe those who said that a few drunkards had got out into the streets. So they minimise things and, what is more, they even disapprove of us. It is easier to stay indoors and to get things for nothing.'

(Juscau Vasile- injured in the Revolution):

(On the public opinion of revolutionaries and their families);

(speaking of her husband's death, her acquaintances say): 'Why did he go there?(...) What do these people (the revolutionaries, those injured) want more? We are also poor; everybody is poor...'

(On attitudes towards those who were responsible for her husband' death);

'I would have been content if they had only come to ask us for pardon... the gentlemen who shot, *tovarășii, securiștii*, whatever they were... the *terrorists*...(...) For me and my family it is no longer

important if *they* are punished or not; if then in 1990 any justice had been done, now it would all be different. It is too late now’.

(On public oblivion);

Reporter’s question: ‘Do you think the event of 1989 is meant to be forgotten?’ - ‘Yes, it is. What was published was not enough... Neither in the media, nor...It was all like a taboo... Why did those people die in Cluj? I wonder...As if it was nothing...’

(Ciortea Elisabeta, a widow of the Revolution)

### **An elusive identity: revolutionaries without a certificate**

I have so far emphasized certain types of institutionalised revolutionary identity whose discursive universes I have attempted to reveal. From the point of view of the social researcher there still is a non-institutionalised category: namely the participants in the demonstrations until 22 December and the subsequent performance, those who have not had a revolutionary certificate awarded to them by the Government and who are not the members of any revolutionary organisations. This type of identity implies their having chosen not to become affiliated with any association, not to claim anything in exchange, and not to demand any awards for their ‘revolutionary’ attitude, which was considered normal during those days.

‘I consider the decision to take part in the street protests of 22 December as being perfectly normal. Those weren’t acts of heroism... theoretically, this could have happened in Braşov back in 1987, as well as on other occasions... and if the people had mobilized themselves and they hadn’t supported Ceauşescu through their passivity, we wouldn’t have been in that situation in 1989 and probably our post-December situation would have been different.’

(Interviewee Leontin Iuhasz, the son of Mrs Doina Cornea, a Romanian dissident)

The single authority before which they legitimate themselves is their own civic consciousness, and perhaps the life stories to be told to their children. In the absence of organizational membership they can hardly make any claims on their identity. And this is all the more difficult as long as there is a tendency to monopolise the debates on

and the (re)-definitions of the Romanian Revolution by both the representatives of revolutionary associations and by the mainstream political power.

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The multitude of personal experiences and meanings of the events lived then configure discursive universes that are continuously redefining themselves around present social interests. The oral history approach uses participants’ testimonies to capture the veins of a recent history. And what is more, searching the comprehensibility of the events we experienced and which influenced our lives in a more or less obvious way means, for each one of us, whether a scholar or not, a chance to understand ourselves. Eventually this fact constructs our individual identity. And I would even venture to say that the relevance of this complex interrelation implied in the process of the revolutionaries’ social identification could be extended to encompass a more general theme: attitudes towards the recent past, and particularly towards the founding event of 1989. I consider that the ambiguity of the official definition of revolutionary identity and the problematic experiences of being a Romanian revolutionary have subtly influenced and mirrored the profile of our rather dramatic post-communist transition.

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## THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND TECHNOLOGY

*Els Rommes*

### **Introduction**

Here I will give an introduction in science and technology studies and its usefulness for studying transformation processes in Romania, e.g. how the material culture may hinder transformation as they may be hard to remove, e.g. flat blocks, central organization and plan economy needed because of organization of energy system (centralized nuclear power plants that require authoritative government), or on a symbolic level, e.g. statues of Lenin/Marx which are re-inscribed as Romanian poet, or trash cans with Romanian flag to signal nationalism.

Then I want to make the shift to what this has to do with gender studies, focus on empirical research on gender and ICTs as an example of how we may study material culture and gender processes. The following sections will be rewritten with more attention for computers and the Internet in general and less attention for De Digitale Stad (DDS, which is only a part of the Internet). This part is largely based on my thesis.

### **Gender and the Internet**

Research and policy concerning the under-representation of women as designers and users of new information technologies often focus particularly on the so-called deficiencies of women (Henwood 1993). Policies for change are thus restricted to educating women to fit the requirements of the technology, rather than designing the technology in such a way as to encourage a diversity of users. I

therefore want to reformulate the problem by exploring the extent to which the under-representation of female users can be understood in terms of technological choices made in the design of this technology. To do this, I draw on constructivist studies of technological development introduced by scholars in social and feminist studies of science and technology. In constructivist theories, gender and technology don't have intrinsic, fixed characteristics, but are the products of social, political, and cultural negotiations among innovators, policymakers, and social groups (Latour 1988; Bijker, Hughes and Pinch 1987; Bijker 1995; Grint and Gill 1995; Wajcman 1993; Faulkner 2000 b). Central in this conceptualisation of the relationship between technology and society, including gender, is the 'mutual shaping approach': technology and society/gender mutually shape each other. In this view technology is both the source and consequence of gender relations, symbols and identities.

Adopting this constructivist approach, I will study the mutual shaping of gender and the Internet. My main questions are: **which processes underlie the gendering of the Internet and how does the Internet contribute to the in/exclusion of women as users and designers?**

Most scholars who study the mutual shaping of technology and society have focused primarily on either the design (ANT or SCOT approach) or the use (domestication approach) of an artifact<sup>1</sup>. By solely focusing on the design, these studies tend to ignore how the artifact is used in social relations and its potential use for alternative purposes (Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay et al. 1997: 3, 84; Cockburn and Ormrod 1993: 9). On the other hand, studies that focus only on the use of an artifact run the risk to lose sight of the power-relations involved in the

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<sup>1</sup> This does not imply that users have been completely absent from technology studies. In the SCOT-approach (Social Construction Of Technology), they may be discussed as 'social relevant groups' as e.g. Bijker and Kline and Pinch have done in their studies of the bike and the automobile (Kline and Pinch 1996; Bijker 1995). In ANT (Actor Network Approach), users are sometimes analysed in the semiotic sense: as user-representations made by the designers (Akrich 1995; Latour 1988). In domestication studies, increasingly more attention is paid to the design context (Silverstone and Haddon 1996). See Oudshoorn and Pinch for a more detailed analysis of the ways in which STS and cultural studies scholars have conceptualised the relationships between design and use and technologies and users (Oudshoorn and Pinch Forthcoming). Nevertheless, I can conclude that there are few studies that study the whole life trajectory paying equal attention to the design and the use context.

production of technology. By studying the biography, or 'life-trajectory', of an artifact, I can avoid these problems and include the various, interrelated processes through which gender and technology are mutually shaped during the design and use of a technology.

The biographical approach has the added advantage that 'women can be introduced as actors again' by 'casting the net' wide enough so 'that it includes the lowest-paid workers producing the artifact' and 'the individuals who use or refuse it' (Cockburn 1992: 38). This might be the reason that the few studies that have been done using the biographical approach, have predominantly been done by feminist scholars<sup>1</sup>. The most comprehensive biographical study adopting a mutual shaping of gender and technology approach is the study of Cynthia Cockburn and Susan Ormrod on the microwave oven (Cockburn and Ormrod 1993). They studied the whole 'circuit of gender and technology', by following it from design, manufacture, marketing, sale, purchase and use to maintenance<sup>2</sup>.

Inspired by this exemplary study, I will study the 'biography' of DDS to provide a detailed insight into the complex and diverse processes underlying the mutual shaping of gender and DDS. Starting with the first ideas of its 'founding mother', I follow DDS through its development of successive interfaces, organizational structures and diverse actors involved in the development of this technology. I will continue my study by following DDS into the homes of its users and by studying some of the people who were excluded from its use. There are three major differences between Cockburn and Ormrod's study and this thesis. Firstly, in the case of DDS, women were deeply involved in the design from the start. Therefore, I can ask questions about the influence of the presence of women on the gendering of the

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<sup>1</sup> Amongst these studies are an analysis of the gendered design of cockpits and of vacuum-clean technology by Rachel Weber and Riita Smeds et al and several other studies that formed a part of a European project (Weber 1999; Smeds, Huida, Haavio-Mannila and Kauppinen-Toropainen 1994; Cockburn and Dilic 1994). Anne Jorunn Berg studied several parts of life-trajectories of technologies; she however studied a different technology in each phase, making it harder to connect the phases (Berg 1996). A non-feminist biographical study of the Walkman was done by Paul du Gay (Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay and Negus 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Because DDS was initially publicly financed and because DDS was distributed via the Internet, several of these phases are not relevant in this study, notably its manufacture and sale.

design and use of DDS. Secondly, the kind of technology is different. Probably, it is not coincidental that most studies of the design and/or use of technology focus on concrete artifacts such as an oven, a Walkman, a bike or a door-closer (Schwartz Cowan 1987; Cockburn and Ormrod 1993; Bijker 1995; Latour 1988). Generally, with these kinds of artifacts, the design and the use context are clearly divided and already in place as the analysts start their research. In the case of DDS, and the Internet in general, the division between design and use and the designers and users is not so clear-cut. This enables me to explore the extent to which interactive, digital technologies challenge or reinforce the establishment of traditional gendered patterns in the design and use of computer technologies.

Finally, Cockburn and Ormrod did not explicitly address the question of how the mutual shaping processes they found in the design of the microwave oven were related to the processes they described for the use of this technology and vice versa. In fact, there are 'hardly any studies' in which an analysis is made of how 'the male dominance of engineering affects the actual shape of technological artifacts' (Faulkner 2000 b: 101), and I have found none that investigate the consequences for users and non-users. By analyzing the design and the use context in one study and explicitly asking how they are related, more insight can be gained into what processes in the design of artifacts will be most consequential in excluding women in the use context.

In this introductory chapter, I will introduce Akrich's concept of script as a way to study the relationship between the design and the use context (Akrich 1992b). Oudshoorn and Oost introduced the notion of 'gender script' to point at the potential of studying gender processes with the help of the script concept (Oudshoorn 1996; Oost 1995). As a means of systematically studying gender, I will introduce the multi-level theory of gender developed by Harding (Harding 1986). I will use Harding's levels to get insight into the current research on the mutual shaping of gender and computers. Together, the concepts of gender script and the multi-level theory of Harding and the insights of previous studies form the theoretical basis of this thesis. In each chapter, I will further develop my theoretical framework. The methods I will use to do this will be introduced at the end of this chapter, followed by an introduction of the chapters.

## The script of technology

The concept of 'script' has been introduced in technology studies by Madeleine Akrich<sup>1</sup>. The advantage of the script concept is that it addresses the relationship between design and use, while keeping the materiality of the technology in focus. Akrich defines a script as follows: 'technical objects define a framework of action together with the actors and the space in which they are supposed to act' (Akrich 1992b: 208). So a script of a technology is defined as the assumptions about the use context that are materialized in the technology, which pre-structure the use of the technology. Akrich suggested that in the design process 'innovators are from the very start constantly interested in their future users. They construct many different representations of these users, and objectify these representations in technological choices' (Akrich 1995: 168). This construction can be done with the help of explicit representation techniques, based on special skills or qualifications in the area of defining or interpreting consumer representations, and implicit techniques, if designers rely on statements made on behalf of the users (Akrich 1995: 169). According to Akrich, designers 'inscribe' their visions on the future users in the technology (Akrich and Latour 1992). As a result, technologies contain scripts: they attribute and delegate specific competencies, actions, and responsibilities to their envisioned users. Designers inscribe actors with specific tastes, competencies, motives and aspirations in the technology. The script of a technology prescribes what actors are supposed to (be able to) do, in order to get a technology to function.

The consequences of this process of 'inscription' are political. Technology can normalize behaviour and (re) allocate responsibilities between users and between users and the object. Akrich calls this the

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<sup>1</sup> The script-concept can be placed in a tradition within constructivist theory in which technology is analyzed as a text (Woolgar 1991; Latour 1988). According to Liesbeth van Zoonen, the script-concept is conceptually similar to the communication-studies concept of 'implied audiences', with which the users that are presupposed in a text are meant (Zoonen 2000). Anne-Jorunn Berg suggested media-studies as the origin, where the activity of 'encoding' by the writer and 'decoding' by the user are used (Berg 1996). Indeed, the use of these concepts in communication- and media-studies is very similar to the use of 'script' in technology-studies. All these concepts try to make a connection between the designers (writers) and users (readers) in which the technology (text) has a crucial function in binding them together

'moral delegation' of technology and the 'geography of responsibilities' inscribed in the technology (Akrich 1992b). The designers do not necessarily consciously strive for these consequences. A script can both be the result of conscious and unconscious decisions by the designers and can have unintended consequences.

Moreover, users can also shape the script. According to Akrich, users themselves can accept, change or refuse to accept the role that is prescribed by the script<sup>1</sup>. If the script is accepted or changed, a stabilized socio-technical network with its (new) relationships between the actants is established and the technology can be considered successful<sup>2</sup>. According to Akrich, this will happen mostly if the user-representations by the designers are aligned with the future users, whereas differences between the user-representations as inscribed in the technology and the skills, attitudes, actions and identity as performed by the prospective users, may cause problems in the acceptance of the technology.

The next scheme may clarify the development of technology according to Akrich:

	<b>Design context</b> (the creation of user representations)	<b>Script</b> (the creation of affordances and constraints in the form of technical choices incorporated in the artefact)	<b>Use context</b> (the creation of a socio-technical network of users)
<b>Focus of analysis</b>	- explicit or implicit user-representation techniques and user-representations	- inscribed images of user and usage - social geography of responsibilities, distribution of competencies, moral delegation	- scripts are accepted, changed or rejected
<b>Main actants</b>	- designers, policy makers	- technology	- users and non-users

<sup>1</sup> These strategies are related to strategies, which in media studies are defined as dominant, negotiated, and oppositional decoding of messages (Ibid).

<sup>2</sup> Although not necessarily from a gender perspective.

When studying the design process, Akrich focuses her research mostly on the designers of technology. The designers are, however, part of a socio-technical network of which for example also policy makers, financiers such as subsidizers and customers, and journalists who introduce DDS to potential users, are a part. Moreover, other factors than user-representations are of importance in the design of technology. These are for example the policy with which the designers are confronted, the level and kind of education the designers have received, the hardware and software that is already developed, the office in which the designers work and the set of conventions and informal rules within which Internet developers usually operate. As all these factors may be important in shaping the script of DDS, I will consider them in my study of the design context of DDS.

Akrich has hardly addressed the processes in which technology gets accepted, changed or rejected by users. I will use the concept 'technological frame' to get more insight into the processes underlying the in- and exclusion of potential users. In addition, the concept of 'domestication' seems adequate to shed light on the processes through which users accept or change technology. I will introduce these two concepts in more detail in chapters six and seven.

A final point of criticism of the concept of script can be made from a feminist analysis of technology: Akrich seems to 'blackbox' the potential users of a technology<sup>1</sup>. Even though she described that society is 'composed of complex and many-sided users moving within a heterogeneous set of relationships' (Akrich 1995: 167), she does not draw the consequences of this towards the processes involved in the acceptance of technology by users. She restricts her view of the diversity of users with the observation that potential users can accept, change or reject a script (Akrich 1992b). Obviously, in Akrich's view there is no question of whether new technologies are accepted or not by some users but not by others. This approach thus neglects the fact that new technologies are rejected by large groups of potential users and accepted or reshaped by others.

<sup>1</sup> For a similar point of criticism see Kammen and Oudshoorn (Kammen 2000; Oudshoorn and Pinch Forthcoming)

The question is thus, who accepts the script, who reshapes it and who rejects it. If certain groups time and time again reject technologies because the scripts do not fit them, they become excluded from parts of society for which these technologies are central. Sally Wyatt and Susan Leigh Star pointed at the 'private suffering' and the amount of work that needed to be done by people that (in)voluntarily did not accept a new technology or, in the case of Star's study, did not use specific ingredients of fast food (Wyatt forthcoming; Star 1991; see also Fischer 1992: 19). In other words, it is also important to consider the consequences of a new technology for those that are excluded from it. To include those that have to perform more work by changing the script or adapting their lives to the new technology, it is important to diversify amongst users. To remedy this shortcoming of the script concept, I will adopt the concept of 'gender script'.

### The gender script

To contribute to our understanding of the inclusion and exclusion of users from technology and to maintain the focus on the heterogeneity amongst users, Nelly Oudshoorn and Ellen van Oost have recently introduced the concept of 'gender script'. Given the heterogeneity of users, designers will consciously or unconsciously privilege certain representations of users and use over others. When these representations and the resulting scripts reveal a gendered pattern, we call them 'gender scripts' (Oost 1995; Oudshoorn 1996). According to Oudshoorn, gender scripts can be problematic if they reinforce gender inequalities in society. Gender scripts can be problematic in four different ways: they can 'delegate different competencies and responsibilities to men and women; they can reinforce differences between female and male work; they can normalize stereotypical male and female behaviour; and they can create barriers for the accessibility of technology' (Oudshoorn 1996: 8). Just as for gender, we can analyse the 'age-scripts', the 'racial-scripts', the 'sexual preference-scripts', the 'physical requirements-scripts' or the 'educational-scripts' of a technology. Such script analyses of a technology aim to analyse the extent to which the user-representations of the designers correspond or break with the present competencies,

tastes, identities and contexts of white, highly educated, technologically and physically competent, young, heterosexual male users. This is the 'cultural hegemonic masculine identity' in our society (Connell 1987)<sup>1</sup>. In this thesis, I will further develop the concept of *gender script* in the knowledge that it is also a useful tool to study other social categories.

Oudshoorn, Kammen and Oost have developed a gender script approach to analyse how the design of different technologies for men and women shapes constructs and maintains differences between men and women. Oudshoorn and Kammen showed how during the development of new contraceptives, differences amongst women were made invisible, while differences between men and women were highlighted (Oudshoorn Forthcoming; Kammen 2000). Similarly, Oost observed how shavers that have the same function (to remove hair) were designed to look very differently for men and women, thus symbolically constructing differences between men and women (Oost forthcoming). These authors also argued that these constructed differences resulted in gender inequalities. By designing a contraceptive that could only be used by women, the designers delegated the responsibility of prevention of pregnancy and the resulting health risks to women. Similarly, the absence of a screw to open a 'lady-shave', a shaver for women, not only reflected but also reinforced the lack of technological competence of women.

Gender scripts may thus emphasize or hide, and reinforce or diminish gender differences and gender inequalities. The gender scripts Oudshoorn, Kammen and Oost described, are denominated 'polarized' by Pfaffenberger: 'different versions of essentially the same artefact are created for no other reason than to reflect and to reinforce race, class, gender, or achievement categories' (Pfaffenberger 1992: 293). Other than the technologies Oudshoorn, Kammen and Oost described, in the case of DDS no different version for men and for women has been produced. How can such a seemingly gender-neutral technology embody a gender script? This can only be understood if I take into account that we live in a gendered society in which forms of

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<sup>1</sup> It connotes the particular version of manhood associated with men who are in power. In Western culture, it is associated with white, heterosexual men who are successful in terms of the capitalist marketplace (Faulkner 2000 c).

behaviour, resources, symbolical connotations and patterns of location follow gendered patterns, which consequently shape technological development.

As feminist scholars have revealed, gender is deeply entrenched in our lives, it is a structuring principle with which we make sense of and produce our personal identities. Moreover, it is an analytical category with which we see and create order in our society. As Sandra Harding stated: 'as far back in history as we can see, we have organized our social and natural worlds in terms of gender meanings within which historically specific racial, class, and cultural institutions and meanings have been constructed' (Harding 1986: 17). Gender is thus understood as a deeply rooted ordering principle.

As an ordering principle, gender is not innocent. Even in current western equality oriented society, gender differences often lead to gender inequalities<sup>1</sup>. Gender does not only point out different spheres, masculine and feminine, but also to socially constructed hierarchical differences between these spheres. As Harding wrote: 'in virtually all cultures, whatever is thought of as manly is more highly valued than what is thought of as womanly' (Harding 1986: 18). According to Robert Connell, this is a form of domination that extends beyond 'contests of brute power' but is 'achieved in a play of social forces'. According to him:

*'Hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to women and to subordinated masculinities. These other masculinities need not be as clearly defined - indeed, achieving hegemony may consist precisely in preventing alternatives gaining cultural definition and recognition as alternatives.'* (Connell 1987: 184, 186)

In terms of a gender script, this would imply that the kind of knowledge, context, preferences, skills and needs that the user is required or assumed to have, that are 'norm-alized' in the technology, are those of the hegemonic masculinity<sup>2</sup>. It also means that it will be

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<sup>1</sup> As Wendy Faulkner stated 'presumed gender differences translate into real gender inequalities' (Ibid).

<sup>2</sup> Which will make the technology easiest to use and most suitable for users who are most similar to this hegemonic masculinity, which will give them an advantage over other users and conform their dominance. An example of this is the time traffic lights allow pedestrians to cross: the speed pedestrians are supposed to have is 'norm'alized to the speed of a healthy man, causing problems for e.g. elderly, handicapped people or

much harder for designers to allow alternative masculinities or femininities to become part of a gender script, as they are often not even articulated or visible. As a result, a gender script will rarely be the result of conscious attempts of designers to exclude certain users. Rather, it will be the result of unconscious repetitions and reiterations of the hegemonic masculine norm.

The presence of a gender script in technology does not necessarily mean that the technology excludes groups of women from the technology. More likely, it means that some women have to adjust more, have to work harder, in order to be able to use a certain technology in present society. A gender script analysis can thus be specified as a study of the 'mechanisms of adjustment' (Akrich 1992b: 209) or the failure to adjust between a technology and a potential user. It is about who has to 'adjust' more, who has to pay the price for not fitting the norm that is reproduced in the artefact (Star 1991).

In this thesis, I will analyse the processes through which gender and gender inequalities 'reproduce' themselves in the new technology DDS. Because society is highly gendered, especially with regards to technology, I expect that new technologies cannot escape this gendered order<sup>1</sup>. Technologies that do not try to challenge these pre-existing gender norms and routines will consolidate or reinforce them. As Everett Rogers argued, the introduction of most new technologies will lead to greater inequality when the society 'is already very unequal' (Rogers 1995: 436). This also means that in a society without gender differences and gender inequalities, a gender script would be hard to imagine. Thus, it is important to take into account the highly contextualised character of gender scripts, as the gendered character of society continuously changes. According to the urban legend

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even women with high heels or prams, to cross in time (Oudshoorn, Saetnan and Lie Forthcoming; see also Latour 1988).

<sup>1</sup> According to Smith, society may appear to be genderless, but masculine preferences, perspectives and relevances in fact structure it. Society contains a 'gender subtext', which is mostly subconscious and invisible because it is part of everyday-life practices (Smith 1987). By bringing this gender subtext to light, it can get more clear what the impact of seemingly genderless technology or policy might be for individual men and women. For examples of the use of a gender subtext analysis in Dutch policy see Brouns and Oost (Brouns 1998a; Oost 1994)

introduced by Winner, the overpasses on Long Island in the United States intentionally blocked the passage of buses to prevent poor black people who did not have a car, to go to the beach, did not exclude black people anymore when black people got rich enough to buy a car themselves (Winner 1999)<sup>1</sup>. All in all, conclusions about the gendered character of a script are by necessity localized, contextualised accounts.

As I mentioned above, in my gender script analysis I will use the multi-level theory, which has been introduced by Sandra Harding, to analyse how society is gendered. She describes three aspects of gender, three processes through which gendered social life is produced. According to her: 'gender difference is a pivotal way in which humans identify themselves as persons, organise social relations, and symbolise meaningful natural and social events and processes' (Harding 1986: 18). Thus, she identifies gender identity, gender structure and gender symbolism as levels at which we can study gender. To study gender and technology, feminist researchers often use this division into three levels<sup>2</sup>. I will now discuss the results of previous research on gender and technology, the computer and the Internet, to illustrate this multi-level theory. I will use the insights of these studies concerning the complex relationships between gender and technology as a backdrop in my analysis of the gender script of DDS.

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<sup>1</sup> This famous S&TS story has been proven wrong by facts, but can still count as an illustrative 'myth' or 'urban legend'. As Woolgar and Cooper state: 'the power and significance of the story lies not in its referential adequacy but elsewhere - that is, in its rhetorical strategies and its pragmatic value within the field of S&TS argumentation' (Joerges 1999; Woolgar and Cooper Ibid.)

<sup>2</sup> Joan Scott and Hagemann-White have introduced other multi-level frameworks. Scott introduced her four-level framework to broaden the vision of feminist historians from 'women' to 'the workings of gender'. Hagemann-White is, as a psychologist, most interested in the identity and behaviour-level of gender (Tonkens 1998). Sandra Harding used her multilevel theory to get an understanding of if and how science is masculine. My goal with looking at DDS is similar, so I chose the multi-level theory of Harding as an analytical framework. Harding considered the structural level the most important level. She did not consider the identity level in detail. I will use Hagemann-Whites' understandings to get more insight into the specificities of that level. In my understanding of multi-level theories, I do not regard the levels as hierarchically ordered, depending on the phenomena I want to study, varying levels will get more attention.

## The mutual shaping of gender and technology

How is current western society gendered with regards to technology according to European and US literature? More specifically, how is it gendered with regards to computers and the Internet? The answer to these questions enables me to deconstruct the technology to analyse the gender scripts in DDS. Throughout this thesis, I will study gender at the three levels introduced by Harding. The identification of these three levels might give the wrong impression that these levels are separated in their production of gender. Instead, they are very much intertwined and work together in (re)producing gender. Gender gains strength on the intersections of these levels. For example, the skills a woman has in using a computer, is partly determined by the position she has in society (structural level). If she has a profession in which she does not learn these skills and she has no spare time at home to acquire these skills, she will not be able to acquire these skills (identity level). The symbolical level of gender, which says that she as a woman does not need to have these competencies, strengthens this process; it is not part of the cultural norms concerning femininity (symbolic level). Consequently, when she talks about these skills, she will probably underline that she is not 'good' with computers (identity level), confirming the existing stereotypes about women and technology (symbolical level)<sup>1</sup>. This will withhold her from finding a position where she needs those skills (structural level).

For the sake of clarity, I will discuss the three levels separately, evaluating some of the most important conclusions of previous research. How is current western society structured with regards to gender and technology, and more specifically, with regards to computers and the Internet?

### Gender symbolism

According to Harding, 'gender symbolism is the result of 'assigning dualistic gender metaphors to various perceived

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<sup>1</sup> Kleif and Faulkner have, amongst others, shown that women downplay their technical abilities, while men seem to overestimate their skills (Kleif and Faulkner Forthcoming).

dichotomies that rarely have anything to do with sex differences' (Harding 1986: 17). In other words, we use gender as a way to represent, conceptualise and give meaning to the social and natural world around us. And we do this by assigning gender to various perceived dichotomies, such as mind/body, culture/nature, civilized/primitive, active/passive, complex/simple, danger/safety, etceteras. Almost all of these dualistic symbolic systems are related to masculinity/femininity. With virtually all of them, the masculine part of the dichotomy is assigned a higher value in our society than their feminine connotated counterpart (see e.g. Haraway 1991; Cockburn and Ormrod 1993). What are the symbolic relations between gender and technology in current western society?

Technology is often dichotomised with nature, culture or the 'social'. In all these cases, technology is assigned a masculine value, and nature, culture or the social a feminine. Technology is one of the most stable and powerful symbols of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987; Wajcman 1993). So much so, that, according to Wendy Faulkner, technology becomes part of 'what it means to be a man', being a masculine person means to be competent with technology (Faulkner 2000 a: 2; Connell 1987). Cynthia Cockburn, Susan Ormrod and Anne-Jorunn Berg showed that this mechanism also works the other way around: the very definition of what technology and technological work is, is defined by what is used by men (Berg 1996: 144; Cockburn and Ormrod 1993: 98, 101; Cockburn 1985).



Figure 1: In this cartoon, the relationship between masculinity and technology is ridiculed and underlined<sup>1</sup> (syndicated bij Bruno Productions B.V).

<sup>1</sup> Cartoons are interesting material to analyse because they refer to common, recognizable symbol systems and dominant dichotomies. As Oost wrote: 'they give

The masculine connotation of 'technology' in general is, however, not the only way in which various technologies are perceived as masculine in our society. Technologies often also incorporate other 'symbols, metaphors, and values that have masculine connotations' (Wajcman 1993). Arnold Pacey distinguished three basic sets of values related to technologies: some technologies prioritize economic values, which Pacey regards as gender neutral. Other technologies, however, prioritize values of virtuosity and again others emphasize user or need values. Pacey links the latter to feminine values, the former express hegemonic masculine values (Pacey 1983, 1999).

How have the computer and the Internet become gendered at a symbolical level? Ellen van Oost showed how in the 1950s and 1960s, by using metaphors for computers and programming, an image of the computer was created of a mysterious, sometimes even dangerous machine and clearly positioned within the masculine connotated domain of the brain and thinking (Oost 2000; Oost 1998). In general, it can be said that computers have acquired a masculine connotation in western society because they are associated with 'technology'. This may very well form the basis of the often-mentioned 'fear for computers' by women (see e.g. Brosnan 1998).

According to Sherry Turkle, however, women do not stay away from computers because of fear, but because of 'computer reticence, wanting to stay away because the computer becomes a personal and cultural symbol of what a woman is not' (Turkle 1988: 41)<sup>1</sup>. Or, as a Dutch quantitative study concluded: 'new information technology is, apart from expensive and complex, apparently also technology, and is for that reason clearly less within the interest range of women' (SCP 2000: 211). Similarly Bente Rasmussen and Tove Håpnes have described how in Norway secondary school students constructed an image of the computer science profession which was 'not interesting'

information about 'how the world works' (...), about ambivalences about the subject but also about that, which is commonly experienced as obvious' (Oost 1994).

<sup>1</sup> This line of reasoning is common in cultural, media and feminist studies. Media-studies scholar Silverstone, for example, describes how potential users construct Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as an object of desire or as something they do not want, 'not only to fulfil specific functions but also as a construction of the desire for difference and social meaning' (Silverstone and Haddon 1996).

because they 'preferred working with people' (Rasmussen 1997). Their perception of computer science was that it was a technical, non-social profession<sup>1</sup>. Even female computer science students articulated this same view, which shows the dominant nature of this image (Rasmussen and Hapnes 1991). These representations of computer science are not necessarily related to the 'reality' of the work. They not only show the image women have of this profession, but also the genderedness of 'social' and 'technical' values in western society and the way women position themselves vis- a-vis these values.

In a review on the literature on gender and the Internet, Liesbet van Zoonen concluded that there is not much research done about gendered connotations of the Internet and the symbol systems related to it (Zoonen 2001: 6). Until recently, it was and could be assumed that the Internet had a masculine connotation because it is associated with computers and technology and because the Internet is rooted in 'a male world with four roots: the military, the academy, engineering and industry (Scott, Semmens and Willoughby 2001: 5). Moreover, research seems to suggest that mostly male preferences for content are represented on the Internet, though lately this seems to change (Zoonen 2001; and see also Dijk 1997). This masculine connotation of the Internet at the content level is closely related to masculinity at the structural level, as it has everything to do with interests of men and women due to the different positions they have in society.

Research amongst female users of the Internet by Scott et al showed, however, that this picture might be changing and that more complex and many-sided symbolical meanings become attached to the Internet (Scott, Semmens and Willoughby 2001: 18). Similarly, Spilker and Sørensen concluded that the metaphors used in connection to the Internet are shifting from 'change, pace and movement - the perhaps

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<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Wendy Faulkner distinguished three sets of dichotomous and gendered symbol systems that are related to technologies in the UK: firstly the 'assumed-to-be mutually exclusive distinction between being people focused and machine focused'. Secondly, she observed a distinction between technology that is perceived to be 'soft' technology, which 'is likely to be smaller scale, like kitchen appliances, or more organic', versus 'inert and powerful', 'hard' technology. Finally, she distinguished a 'concrete' and an 'abstract' way of problem solving in relation to technology (Faulkner 2000 b). The first part of each of these three sets of dichotomies is assumed to be a feminine value and is in general less valued.

traditional masculine interpretation of Internet' towards metaphors of 'known and located places', which in our western society are related to the feminine (Spilker and Sørensen 2000: 282). Indeed, several attempts have been undertaken by various women to attach more feminine connotated symbolic systems to the Internet. For example by associating the Internet and the Web with 'spinning' (Grundy, Kohler, Oechtering and Petersen 1997) or by emphasizing the communicative character of the Internet and using it as a tool to support women's actions and women's supportive communities (Harcourt 1999; Cherny and Weise 1996). Clearly, more research is needed about the gender connotations of the Internet.

My understanding of the studies I have just described is that they show the many complex ways in which technology and computers have become intertwined with symbolic masculinity and power. In some way, each of the described studies show how masculinity is related to (certain forms of) technology, power, complexity, obscurity, challenges, technical fascination, addiction, absorption, brain, mystery or danger, whereas femininity is related to the symbolical opposites. The gendered symbolical systems and the gender connotation of the Internet are less clear, though initially seemed to follow the pattern of technology in general and more specifically computers. These connotations may shift in the course of time and across cultures.

### Gender structure

The second process through which gendered social life is produced, Harding refers to as the 'division of labour by gender', or gender structure (Harding 1986: 17). Partly on the basis of the gendered dichotomies or the symbolical gender processes, social activities and human relations are organized in gendered ways. Cockburn and Ormrod have extended the meaning of gender structure by defining it as a 'gender pattern of location'. In this way, gender structure does not only include labour structures, but also gender structured experiences in the wider society, e.g. in families or leisure activities. As the division of men and women over these 'locations' is easy to quantify, many statistical studies have been done on this level of gender. Related to the gender pattern of location is a

gender pattern of experiences, obligations and chances (Hagemann-White 1989: 37) or a dividing of 'necessary social activities between different groups of humans' (Harding 1986: 18). So the gendered pattern of location is closely related to those individuals in society who 'encounter' computers and the Internet and those that do not. Computers and the Internet are located at specific places in society and not at others. Thus, if women are located at places where there are no computers, e.g. because they are employed at places where they do not need computers, or because they do not have the money or time to have one in the household, they are excluded from experiences with computers and the Internet<sup>1</sup>.

What is the gendered pattern of locations if we look at technology? In general, men are the designers and producers of technology and ICT, while women are, depending on what kind of technology is at stake, more often the users or consumers of technology. Statistical data show that, in Europe, the US and Australia, the already low number of female computer science students and programmers have started to drop in the last ten years<sup>2</sup>. Ruth Oldenziel and Ellen van Oost have analysed how the relationship between men and being designers of technology and ICT is the result of historical processes (Oldenziel 1997: 95; Oost 1994; Oost 1998; Oost 2000). This division of labour is considered problematic because several researchers have observed that male designers are the decision makers when it comes to what technology looks like, and often do not take into account the needs and wants of the future female users (Berg 1996; Berg 1998: 462; Pain, Owen, Franklin and Green 1993). Thus, gendered patterns of location may help establish gendered structures of dominance from men over women.

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<sup>1</sup> The editors of several recent collections of studies on gender and the Internet concluded in their introduction that the structural level has been one of the most important parts of gender/technology research in the past. Even though a gender-analysis at a symbolical or identity level seems to have relatively gained popularity, an analysis at the structural level is still considered important (Lie and Sorensen 1996; Green and Adam 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Even though Australia had about 30% women in computer science studies at Victoria University, the percentage dropped there to 20% in 1999 (Miliszewska and Horwood 2000). Germany reached a low number of about 10% female students in 1995 (Schinzel 1997). In 1990, the US had 36% graduates in mathematics and computer science and the UK and the Netherlands had 13% female graduates (Suriya and Panteli 2000).

In 1999, only about 33% of the Internet users of the Netherlands were women. The Dutch research institute SCP who conducted this study called this outcome a 'striking and unexpectedly large inequality' (SCP 2000: 211)<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, statistics seem to indicate that the percentage of women with access to the Internet is increasing. Statistics about Internet users rarely take into account the quality of the access men and women have, whereas this might be an important difference between male and female access (Thomas and Wyatt 2000: 27, 29, 30; Dijk 2000). A part of these differences in access by men and women can be explained by the gendered pattern of locations: women are not as often as men at places where they have a chance to use computers.

Many users of computers and the Internet use it at their workplace. Not only are men more often the designers of technology, they also use and appropriate technology and ICT more often in non-technical jobs (Webster 1995b: 322; 1995a: 9). Wendy Faulkner and Tine Kleif described similar gender patterns for the use of ICTs during leisure time. Men use technology for fun in their leisure time, whereas this is a 'gender inauthentic pursuit' for women and they need to 'legitimise or justify their leisure activities more than do men' (Kleif and Faulkner Forthcoming: 20). Though this pattern can be clearly ascribed to gender symbolism, it is also for a large part the result of the difference in the amount of spare time men and women have. Again according to Faulkner: 'little boys only get the leisure time in

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<sup>1</sup> The measurement of the number of male and female Internet-users is problematic. There are big differences in the ways of measuring these numbers between countries and the outcomes cover a wide range of percentages, reflecting the diverse methods used in obtaining the data. Still, most statistics agree that the USA has the highest percentage of women online, between 40 and 55% of all Internet users are woman, whereas Europe is lagging somewhat behind with between 20 and 40%. Some studies on the percentage of men and women in different years, comparing the USA and Europe are: <http://teloz.latrobe.edu.au/circuit/>: US/Canada in 1997: 42% of the Internet users was female and in Europe in 1998: 22% female. [http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user\\_surveys/survey-1998-10/graphs/general/q47.htm](http://www.gvu.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-10/graphs/general/q47.htm): USA in 1998: 36% of the Internet users was female and 18% in Europe. Research by SCP: Netherlands in 1998: 37,5% of the owners of a computer with modem was woman and 33% of the users with access to the Internet was woman (SCP 2000). <http://www.commerce.net/research/stats/wwstats.html>: USA in 1999: 50.8% female, 39% female in Europe. <http://www.multiscope.nl/persbericht-volledig.phtml?uniek=2000012020000>: Netherlands in 1999: 29% female.

which to tinker (e.g. Haddon 1990), and male engineers working in 'high-tech' companies only have the 'freedom' to spend long hours at work (Massey 1995) because neither are expected to assume the same level of domestic responsibilities as their sisters or wives' (Faulkner 2000 b: 110). Indeed, several authors suggest that men in general have more spare time than women and are more interested in 'playing around', while women mostly want to use the Internet if they consider it 'useful' (Ford and Miller 1996; Boomen 1996b).

The gendered patterns of location related to the use of computers can in themselves lead to the repetition and reinforcement or even creation of new gender dichotomies, which may again reinforce the gendered patterns of location. Lesley Haddon, for example, showed that the culture boys developed around playing with computers, was highly visible because they often played at public spaces (e.g. in computer clubs or arcades), while girls played inside the house. This visibility of boys playing with computers affected the perception of computers as masculine by producers of computers, which again led them to develop more games for boys (Haddon 1992). Similarly, several studies have shown that some women do want to use computers and the Internet for fun, but are hindered to do this because designers of software and policy makers try to offer them software that is useful (Nordli 2001; Spilker 1999; Cassell and Jenkins 1998). In this way, gender patterns at the symbolical and structural level are reproduced over and over again.

Gender structure does not only point to 'who is where' and 'who does what', it also points to the material differentiation that is the result of it. So gender structure also points at the gendered divisions in income, education and employment between men and women. Time and time again, statistics show that women in general have less income, lower (and less technical) education and are less often employed (and in less technical jobs). Buying and using computers will be less common amongst women than amongst men, simply because of material constraints. Indeed, according to Bimber, these kind of socio-economic factors are partly responsible for the 'access gap' between men and women: men have more often access to computers and the Internet than women because they have higher incomes and higher levels of education (Bimber 2000: 868; see also Scott, Semmens and Willoughby 2001: 13).

## Identity level

Harding defines the level of gender identity as 'socially constructed individual identity, which we express in social practices'. To underline both the individual and the social practice element of identity construction, Cockburn and Ormrod distinguish subjective and projected identities. With subjective identity, Cockburn and Ormrod refer to the 'gendered sense of self, the identity created and experienced by the individual', whereas 'projected identities' refers to potential, actual or desired gender identities as others perceive or portray them' (Cockburn and Ormrod 1993: 6). Although subjective identity seems to point at an essentialist category, this 'stable component of someone's self-image' is the result of continuous confirmations in varied interactional situations: hence there is a strong relation between the way others perceive someone's gendered identity and their subjective identity<sup>1</sup>. All in all, gender is a binary, structuring principle with which we make sense of and produce our own and other's identity.

According to Judith Butler, sex and gender are constructed by imitation, through a 'stylised repetition of acts, bodily movements and gestures', which, because they are repeated so many times and over such a long period in time, appear to be 'natural' or 'essential' (Butler 1999: 179). However, because gender can be seen as a 'performance'<sup>2</sup>, an imitation, there is always the possibility of 'fissures' or 'gaps' in this imitation. There are always acts or people that 'escape or exceed the norm', that cannot be wholly 'defined or fixed' by the repetition (Butler 1993: 10). It is these fissures, according to Butler, that show the performative, imitative character of gender, that show that gender is not the cause of behaviour, but the effect.

Gender identity is closely related with the other two gender processes. It is partly the result of the location a person has in society and partly the result of accepting or repelling parts of the gendered

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<sup>1</sup> That a person's subjective gender identity is not necessarily the same as its projected identity and that it is not necessarily connected to a person's biological sex, is shown by the existence of transsexuals.

<sup>2</sup> The use of the word 'perform' calls attention both to the imitative, non-essential character of gender, and to the work that is involved in it.

dichotomies. By repelling or excluding parts of the dichotomies, a coherent self is created and consolidated<sup>1</sup>.

Gendered stereotypes form a connection between gender at the symbolical and the identity level. Various perceived and gendered dichotomies form the basis of gendered stereotypes of what it means to be a woman or a man in our society and consequently, which parts of the dichotomy men and women are supposed to repel. Cockburn and Ormrod wrote about stereotypes: 'stereotypes are continually belied by events, yet they reflect, while also constituting, a material reality. A stereotype is not 'true' but it is 'real'. (...) Meanings people make and deploy involve the creation, challenging and reproduction of two complementary symbolic spheres, the masculine and the feminine' (Cockburn and Ormrod 1993: 76). In other words, gendered stereotypes are powerful, symbolic constructions to which men and women relate as they construct their gender identities.

The symbolic strength of stereotypes does not imply that there is no escaping them by individual women. As Henwood showed: 'while women do reject technological work because of its association with masculinity, many others are attracted to it precisely because of this associations' (Henwood 1993: 44). Stereotypes do mean that men and women have to relate to them while they make a choice that goes against them, especially if the stereotypes are as strong as the connection between men and technology. As Hilde Corneliussen, who studied male and female computer science students, wrote: 'the stereotypical image of gender and computing has been concentrated around the highly polarised picture of the computer competent boy, typically portrayed as a hacker or a computer geek - opposed to the incompetent girl who neither has nor wants to acquire computer competence. Even though this does not mirror reality, it works as a myth (...) it seems that the students, whether they accepted the myth or not, nevertheless had to deal with it' (Corneliussen 2000: 4; Forthcoming). By using ICTs, men and women perform gender identities that reflect or challenge gender stereotypes in relation to technology.

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<sup>1</sup> In Butler's understanding, the part that is repelled or excluded remains a repressed part of the self, a part she calls the 'Other'.

Gender identities are not only constructed in relation to gender stereotypes. As Anne-Jorunn Berg wrote: 'femininity is constructed both in relation to being a woman and in relation to the notion of masculinity and what it means to be a man in relation to technology' (Berg 1996: 124). In other words, gender identities are constructed in relation to technology and in relation to other men and women. As Merete Lie noted: 'the focus needs to be directed at relationships where men's and women's roles and competencies towards technology presuppose each other: it is only in contrast to 'scared' or 'incompetent' women that men can prove their masculinity in relation to technology' (Lie and Sorensen 1996: 21). Gender identity is formed by 'doing, making and producing (...). The things we do and do not, ... the technologies we are intimidated by and leave to other people partly shape our self-identity (Cockburn and Ormrod 1993: 159). So by showing certain attitudes, skills and knowledge towards technology, people construct their gender identity.

This does not mean that men always act out masculine behaviour. According to Dorte Marie Søndergaard, people 'mix their own sex/gender cocktail from the masculine and feminine connotated components, drawing from the cultural repertoire', thus constructing their own sub-category of man or woman, even though these 'sub-categories still keep their sex/gender uniqueness within the basic dualism: man/woman. Thus, a soft man is not the same as a soft woman' (Søndergaard 1999: 14, 4; see also Hagemann-White 1989: 44). These 'cocktails' are partly the result of other than gender categories, such as race, education and age, and lead to the existence of more than one form of femininity and masculinity. It is the unique, individual mixture of masculine or feminine connotated skills, attitudes and forms of behaviour with regards to technology that I will see as the shaping of an individual gender identity.

What forms of behaviour reflect masculine identities and what forms of behaviour have a female connotation in western society or, in other words, of what consists the 'cultural repertoire' from which people can draw masculine and feminine connotated elements? More insight into this question can be gained by looking at studies about kinds of behaviour that are different for men and for women. Presumably, men will, to express their masculinity, more often than

women perform masculine connotated behaviour, whereas women more often perform feminine connotated behaviour. According to Bimber, men and women use different facilities on the Internet and women use the Internet considerably less than men (Bimber 2000: 871). In addition, men in general say they experience considerably more pleasure while using the Internet than women (Brosnan 1998; Ford and Miller 1996).



**Figure II:** Calvin does not want to be seen as a 'sissy'. Apparently, using a manual is in current western society connotated with a feminine form of masculinity (syndicated by Bruno Productions B.V).

According to Sherry Turkle and Papert, men prefer command structure approaches in computers, as they want to 'feel in control' and they are not afraid of taking risks in learning how to use a computer, thus preferring a 'learning by doing' approach. Women favor a more concrete, contextualized, intimate 'bricolage' approach and they do not like to take risks while learning (Turkle 1988; Turkle and Papert 1990). A Dutch study concluded that the skills needed to use computer and the Internet are not widely shared by women, older people and people with a lower level of education (SCP 2000: 150; Steyaert 2000). Again, these kinds of 'general statements' about male and female behaviour and attitudes towards technology should be seen as locally specific and contextualized. Whereas one form of behaviour, such as having a concrete, bottom-up approach towards programming is in some contexts seen as 'bricolage' feminine behaviour, in another context the same behaviour is seen as typical 'hands-on' male behaviour.

## Data analysis

In the collection and analysis of the data, I have used Harding's distinction between the symbolic, structural and identity level of gender. To study the structural gender relations in the design of DDS, I reconstructed the gendered pattern of location in DDS by asking questions about who were involved in what parts of its design, who had which responsibilities, who financed what parts and who decided what goals were set. Most of the information I used for this reconstruction is based on the interviews, which I compared with each other and with the archive material to triangulate the data. For the structural gender relations in the use of DDS I used statistics about the sex of the users. I interviewed all informants about their personal backgrounds, such as education, occupation and possession of and experience with computers and the Internet. I confronted all these findings with the literature about the gendered pattern of locations that I described in the section about the mutual shaping of gender and technology of this chapter.

The symbolical level of gender is hard to bring to light, because gendered symbol systems are such an implicit part of society and personal lives. I have tried to make them explicit by referring to other authors, as I did in the 'mutual shaping' section and with the help of cartoons. Hence, the cartoons I use in this thesis not only serve to enliven the text, but by giving an ironical view on men, women and technology, also serve to indicate the current stereotypes and dominant symbolical relations between them. Jokes and cartoons only 'work' if they refer to a common, recognizable frame of reference, which they ridicule by going against expected patterns of behaviour or by exaggerating them<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, they can be used to bring to light

<sup>1</sup> The fact that jokes and cartoons play with common stereotypes and dominant symbol systems does not mean that they thereby destabilize these systems. On the contrary, they can even serve to enforce them. As Faulkner observed: "Engineers' humour typically celebrates their technical prowess and ridicules the lack of it in others (...) The fraternity of engineers is thus a homo-social enactment (...) affirming particular versions of masculinity" (Faulkner 2000 b). Faulkner illustrates this notion with the following common joke amongst engineers: 'Real programmers don't write in BASIC. Actually, no programmers write in BASIC, after the age of 12' (p.114).

some of the current, western, dominant symbol systems<sup>1</sup>. With the help of these gendered symbol systems, I have analyzed the gender connotations of the goals the designers and policy makers wanted to achieve, the gendered symbols represented in the resulting interfaces and the way the informants referred to technology, their technological competence and gender. This brings me to the individual identity level of my analysis.

The gendered identity of people is constructed with the help of symbol systems, which make available to them certain 'subject positions' they can take towards technology. I analyzed the way people constructed their identity by studying the statements the informants made for the subject positions that were available to them: how did the informants locate their own position within the available 'social and collective subject positions'? (Søndergaard 1999: 10). In some cases, I directly asked the informants about their relation to the 'collective subject positions' or stereotypes, asking them about their opinion about women and the Internet, or about what role the stereotypes about women and technology had played in their construction of user-representations. Answers to such direct questions often lead to socially desirable answers in line with the dominant equality discourse of current western society. As Hilde Corneliussen observed, 'both male and female students have tendencies to present themselves in accordance with expectations of how men and women relate to technology. Their verbal presentations of themselves thereby conceal both gender diversity as well as more nontraditional gendered relations towards the computer' (Corneliussen 2000: 1). Indeed, the answers I received to these direct questions were not very useful, as they merely presented opinions. I was interested in the way the informants personally dealt with these stereotypes and with technology in their lives, their personal experiences. Inspired by the biographical-interpretive method (Hollway and Jefferson 2000: 34-53), I asked the informants for their personal, concrete experiences, such as

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<sup>1</sup> It is crucial to keep an open eye for what the informants see as problematic positions to take and to check whether this might be connected with underlying symbol systems. In chapter seven, I for example found out that what I previously had seen as a not gender connotated metaphor of city did have gender connotations.

their first experience with computers, the Internet and DDS and I urged them to give concrete examples of whatever they discussed.



**Figure III:** Calvin and Hobbes express that they want to play with technology for its' own sake, even if they do not succeed in 'getting it right' (syndicated bij Bruno Productions B.V).

**INFORMAL ECONOMY IN COMMUNISM AND  
POSTCOMMUNISM.  
APPLES AND *PALINKA* IN A NORTHERN VILLAGE  
OF TRANSYLVANIA<sup>1</sup>**

*Remus Anghel*

After the collapse of the socialist systems in Eastern Europe, the restructuring of the former socialist economy lead in many cases to industrial involution and autarchization of the economy, as well as to the development of informal economy. The present study analyzes the informal economy in the particular context of the North of Romania, by studying comparatively the rural economy during state socialism and after socialism.

The study is organized taking into consideration the following questions:

- a) Which are the informal economic practices in the two above mentioned time periods (socialism and post-socialism) and which is the relationship between formal and informal economy?
- b) What changed in the local rural economy with the fall of communism, the redefinition of the state and the emergence of the market economy; in this respect, how does the study of informal economy help us understand the changes in society?
- c) Which is the relationship between urban and rural economies in socialism and in post-socialism in the studied context?

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<sup>1</sup> The first draft of this research paper was realized in collaboration with Florin Popa and contained almost half of the content of this article. It was presented publicly at the annual conference of the Romanian Anthropological Society in October 2002. This text, including the theoretical framework, the structure, as well as the conclusions, belongs to me. Heretofore I thank Liviu Chelcea, Puiu Lăteza and Mihnea Vasilescu for their critical comments and theoretical suggestions.

In order to answer to these questions, I will briefly describe the local economy over the last half of the century, paying a special attention to the changes that have been affecting the village of Şişeşti over the last fifty years. Hence, I will describe the effects of the industrialization and the politics of centralization during state socialism, as well as the rural economy in the post-socialist period, featured by de-industrialization and by autarchization of local economy. The theoretical framework for this study is borrowed from Katherine Verdery, Michael Burawoy and Chris Hann<sup>1</sup>.

*The studied Community: some data concerning the studied village<sup>2</sup>*

The village of Şişeşti is situated in the North of Romania, in a hilly area, nearby Baia Mare (15 km), Baia Sprie (4 km) and Cavnic (15 km). It has about 600 households (1631 inhabitants), dispersed on a large area nearby the main road linking Baia Sprie and Cavnic. At first sight, the village makes the impression of a relatively prosperous place for the Romanian context, with one or two-storied houses; there are also a number of houses that were in construction in the '89 but they are not finished yet.

The local economy is oriented towards fruit growing, apples especially. For the consumption of the households, grains are cultivated but the arable surface is relatively small compared to the total surface of land owned by the inhabitants<sup>3</sup>. The rest of the land is used as pastures, hay fields and orchards. Usually, families own small surfaces of land, of about two hectares. On these plots of land they cultivate potatoes, corn and beans.

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<sup>1</sup> See especially Verdery (Verdery 1996: 19-38, 204-229), Burawoy and Verdery (Burawoy, Verdery 1999: 1-16), Burawoy (Burawoy 1996: 11-57), Hann (Hann 1995) and (Hann 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Part of this material, especially the description of the village, uses the research reports made by Monica Şişeştean, Andreea Ionel, Elena Badea, Alexandru Zloteanu. The research team included also Cosmin Ochişor. In 2002 all of them were students in sociology at the University of Bucharest.

<sup>3</sup> Aproximatively one fifth of the total surface of land is used for grains.

*Local Economy during Communism  
The Industrialization*

Until the Second World War, local economy was autarchic, oriented towards agriculture and fruit growing and the standard of living was generally low. Compared to the previous period of time, the early years of communism brought a lot of changes in Şişeşti, due to the project of communist industrialization, rural development and urbanization. Beginning with the '55, the mining activities in the area were intensified and generated at the local level a growth in the number of well-paid jobs<sup>1</sup>. The first persons employed in the mining and in the industry were especially the ones with small plots of land who were not able to support their households only from agriculture and animal breeding. In the beginning, the recruitment of villagers for mining was very simple: everyone could theoretically work without having previous specialization. Later on, for the industry recruitments, people could work at first as non-specialized workers and could later get specialized at the workplace. Some of them, who had qualifications obtained in the industrial schools, could work as blue collars.

Compared to the interwar period, the wages in mining and industry were higher than the incomes from agriculture and animal breeding, previously earned. Besides, due to the fact they owned the land, people had a secondary income source from agriculture that was directly under their control. Thus, due to industrialization, in the '70s most men were employed. Women were generally housewives and they were working the land together with the old people. They organized the household activities and raised children. Rural-urban migration was low and took place around the '70s, being most probably caused by the educational opportunities offered by the cities. It was especially the case for young people who attended schools or universities.

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, the mines as well as the later industrial settings were nearby the village, about 15 km afar from the village, hence people were not forced to leave their home in order to go to work.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the improvement of living conditions for the villagers. In the beginning, the houses were made of wood and mud, covered with hay, without current water and electricity. In the '70s, cheap construction materials (with prices sustained by the state) appeared on the market, which helped people construct relatively cheap houses. In this respect, it is often mentioned that for a good period of time the prices for bricks and other materials were very low and materials and anyone could afford to buy them from their salaries<sup>1</sup>; this is why they say that most of the houses had been built between '72 and '80 and had better lives<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Local Agriculture and Commerce with Agricultural Products Communist 'Systematization' of Agricultural Economy in Şișești*

Compared to most Romanian villages, Şișești remained not collectivized and people could keep their land. The same thing occurred in areas with less fertile ground, especially in hilly or mountain areas, where the potential profit of the CAP's would have been very low. In the case of Şișești, it seems that the process by which the village was exempted from the CAP system was more complex. On one hand, the quality of the land was indeed low, but at the same time in the neighbourhood there were other areas with similar land quality that entered the CAP system. In our case it seems that the local mayor had a significant role in exempting the village from CAP. It is said that when the officials in charge with the collectivization process arrived in the village, he manipulated them showing a plot of land of a very low quality and convinced them not to search for other plots. Others consider that communists preserved non-collectivized areas around some large cities in order to supply the markets of the city with aliments in periods of food shortage, fact that may look rather as a justification for the privileged situation of the village during communism. Actually, this is what happened also in the case of

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<sup>1</sup> According to what someone said, during his studies the prices of materials remained unchanged, although the salary was much bigger.

<sup>2</sup> This is the case not only for Şișești: Hann (Hann 1995: 29) mentions that in Eastern Europe there were major changes in the rural economy, which led in many cases to the improvement of the life conditions for a large part of the rural population.

Şișești, but from different reasons than the official ones and using mostly informal channels.

However, even though it is not clear how the process of collectivization took place at Şișești and which are the reasons why the village remained outside the CAP system, it is very clear that the keeping the land had a very important role in the rural economy, especially in the last years of Ceaușescu's regime, when the shortage deepened. Even though, at that time, the acquisition of food was a difficult task in Romania, people of Şișești had relatively easy access to the needed products, with the exception of some basic products, such as sugar, bread and oil that were 'rationalized'.

Next, I will describe the most important elements of the rural economy and the system which integrated the local economy into the state's centralized economy. I will also analyse the informal economy, emphasising the economy of apples and palinka, the main local resources.

#### *Quota System and Gathering of Agricultural Products*

The fact that an area was not included in the CAP system did not mean that the area was considered 'out' of the communist planning. In this respect, the state established a 'quota system' designed to integrate the local agriculture in the state system. Each household had to sell to the state a certain quantity of agricultural products (milk, meat, crop, fruit), established in relation with the land plots that they owned.

The 'quotas' were established at the centre but the administrative apparatus of the village made the acquisitions at a local level. Theoretically, the products were delivered proportionally by all villagers, in relation with the number of animals and the land they owned, but there were cases when the products were supplied disproportionately, according to the 'preferences' of the local officials. For instance, there was one case when a family delivered about six thousand liters of milk, about half the quantity of milk that was requested from the whole village. As a consequence, many families were not forced to supply to the state too much milk and the rest was

used for household's use. The explanation lies in the fact that in many cases there was no uniform distribution of the 'quotas' and the relationship with the local administrative apparatus was important in the delivery of the supplies given to the state.

For the products delivered, producers received a certain amount of money; besides, the state financed the raw materials and seeds (e.g. corn for animal breeding) and it provided free of charge agricultural services (such as the fertilizer activities, for instance) in order to improve the quality of crops and orchards. In the case of animals, for instance, for the cattle delivered to the quota, peasants were able to buy at a very low price<sup>1</sup> a grain quantity equal to the weight of the animal. In order to collect the goods, a centre for gathering the milk and the milk products, a centre for collecting the wool and sheep skins and a centre for collecting apples and other fruits were established in the village.

Beyond the punitive aspect of the quota system, the quantities that were established by the state for delivery allowed the peasants to keep significant quantities of goods. Part was traded through informal channels or on the official markets in the area and the other part was generally used for the household's consumption. Additionally, people were allowed to sell the surplus to the state at the same payment conditions as those established for the quotas. Even though the prices were lower than those people could get from the informal markets or from the official regional markets, all goods were bought notwithstanding the quality and the payments were undertaken immediately. Hence, the selling process was not problematic and goods could be entirely sold.

#### *Household Economy, Market Selling and Informal Economy*

The products made in the households were used for household's consumption, to cover the quotas and for commerce, either on local markets or through informal networks. Until the '80s, household consumption was not restricted by state policies, but then, state

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, in this case, the price of the grains was about 50 *bani*/kg, which was a very low price.

control intensified and consumption of meat was sharply restricted. The slaughter of animals for household's consumption was prohibited. At the same time, aliments such as bread, sugar, oil, were 'rationalized'<sup>1</sup>, being sold only on special cards delivered to people. For instance, any person had the right to consume one liter of oil and one kilogram of sugar each month. The 'rationalized' goods were bought from the local shop, according to a list that was set up by the local officials, on which were inscribed the quantities of food delivered to the population of the village.

Anyway, despite the hardships of the regime and of the level of shortage that affected Romania in the '80s, household consumption was realized in *Șișești* through illegal slaughter of animals and through informal commerce of food, through direct exchanges between producers, through informal acquisitions and through acquisition of the goods from the nearby markets. In the case of meat consumption that was extremely restricted at that time, people used illegal slaughter of animals and tried to manipulate local officials in charge with the control of the livestock. In the case of *Șișești* the control of the authorities was made by a person who knew the exact situation of the livestock in the village and by the local officials. Due to the fact that the village was spread on a large surface in a hilly area, a strong and efficient control was difficult to undertake and there were cases when the animals (especially the calves) could remain undeclared.

However, usually the illegal slaughter of animals was often made with the tacit consent of the local officials and of the persons in charge with the control of the animals. In many cases, slaughters were realized by associations between different persons, who were buying and sharing the meat.

It was not possible to slaughter calves and eat the meat, because they should be 'contracted' to the state. We associated three or four persons, looked up who had a calf for sale, and we shared it between

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, any citizen of Romania was allowed to consume only a certain quantity of food and basic aliments that was 'scientifically' established by the state according to 'scientific standards' of consumption.

us. We took two kilograms of meat for the people at the local council, saying where the calf was bought. And we brought two kilograms of meat to the person that registered the animals and he/she simply cut the calf from the list.

In these cases, the trust at the local level as well as the 'commitment' to local officials was very important; without these two elements the informal economy functioned with difficulty. Hence, because of the pressure of the state and of the centralized agricultural policy, people looked for alternative informal solutions based on trust and horizontal solidarity. In some cases, when the illegal sacrifices could not be concealed, they could be 'disciplined'. For instance, if too many calves were killed in a certain period of time, this could be 'heard' and could become a potential threat for the local officials and for the practice of illegal slaughter in the village. In one of these cases, a person that used to kill too many animals 'without paying attention to consequences' could be taken by the police, brought in front of the court, and finally sent to jail for a period of time.

Besides household consumption, food was also used as a supplementary source of income. Informal trade with food products functioned on the basis of trust networks, either rural-urban networks or rural-rural networks, according to the type of informal trade that was practiced. The main products that were traded through informal networks were milk and dairy products, palinka and meat. Meat sale, that was the most susceptible of being punished by the state, was practiced only by some people as a source of complementary income.

Part of the food products, especially the dairy, could be sold at the market places, but in time this type of trade has been abandoned. The regional market places were in Baia Mare and Satu Mare. The 'travel to Bucharest' was often mentioned, especially when there was a large quantity of palinka or dairy products and when the travel was economically efficient. In this respect it seems that in the village there were some persons 'specialized' in the 'sale in Bucharest' and who continued the small scale commerce between Şişeşti and Bucharest even in post-socialism.

Due to the fact that fruit (especially apples) were the main resource of the village, further on I shall discuss the evolution of the economy of apples and alcohol. In the case of the commerce with apples and palinka there are two important periods of time with different evolution, the first up to the '70s, and the second after the '70s.

Until the '70s, apples could be sold on the market places or they could be brought to the collecting centres in the village. In the second case, the payment was made immediately and the selling process was very simple, although the income was about half of the income they could get from the market places<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the selling at the collecting centres gave some advantages due to the access to free of charge chemical treatment for the apple trees. Smaller quantities of apples were sold on the markets in Baia Mare, Baia Sprie and, in the case of larger quantities; they were taken to Bucharest, Cluj or Oradea. In order to transport the apples, people were associating and were renting transport vehicles (chariots, cars for the nearby places, and in the case of long distances, even train wagons). The transport of apples by trains required the association of many producers. On the one hand, there was a need for a large quantity of apples in order to make the transport process profitable, and on the other hand, there was a more complicated selling process that required a longer period of time for the effective sale at the market place. At that time, the local production of the *palinka* was unimportant, mainly designed for the inner consumption of the households.

After the '70s, the state built a series of fruit production centres in the North West of Transylvania, in Sălaj, Baia Mare and Satu Mare counties<sup>2</sup>. Due to the technological advantages and other facilities the centres were granted, they produced apples of high quality that were commercialized by the state on the urban markets of the area. Because of the competition exerted by the regional fruit growing centers,

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<sup>1</sup> Hence, if at the collecting centres one kilo was about 3.5 lei, for the first quality of apples, 1.8 lei for the second quality of apples and 0.8 lei for the third quality of apples, at the market, one kilo of the first quality could get up to 10 lei in the autumn and 12 lei in the spring.

<sup>2</sup> Baia Mare is the county of the Şişeşti village; Satu Mare and Sălaj counties are two of the neighbouring counties with Baia Mare.

peasants couldn't sell their own products as profitably as before. In this new context, there is nothing else left to do than sell the apples to the collecting centres at much lower prices. This was a stroke to the local apple economy that forced the peasants to reorient the whole apple economy. Shortly afterwards, they started to produce and trade homemade *palinka*. For instance, if initially they were producing about 30-50 liters/year, from that moment on the quantities were larger, up to hundreds of liter/year.

*Palinka* was produced in the local improvised manufactories or in the state 'Vinalcool' factory in Baia Mare. Informal manufacturers collected the fruit from the peasants and transformed them into *palinka*; the owner of that manufactory kept a certain quota of *palinka*. The selling process could be realized both through sales to the state (MAT) at a very low price, or on the informal markets, at approximately ten times bigger prices. One of the reasons for this bigger price and for the success of this type of informal trade was that on the formal markets there was a shortage of goods and there were no beverages of good quality on the market. Besides, the import of beverages was almost inexistent. In this context, homemade beverages were preferred and in many cases had a better quality than what existed on the market. With the occasion of wedding ceremonies or other festivities, the acquisition of beverages, such as wine or *palinka*, was often made through informal channels. Due to the shortage of the formal market, *palinka* was requested and could secure for the producers a relatively prosperous situation<sup>1</sup>.

*Palinka* could be sold on the informal urban markets nearby, through the networks of friends and relatives or in distant places, through long distance informal economic networks. In many cases, buyers came in the villages and bought the *palinka* directly from the producers.

In Ceaușescu's time *palinka* could be sold, mister! It was sold to persons of the city, for weddings for instance. People of

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<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the price of sale in the case of *palinka* was approximately 150 lei/1 liter, a good amount of money at that time. Hence, the value declared by people is very high, since an average salary was about 3000 lei/month, and a car was about 70 000 lei.

the city came and asked: I need some *palinka*. How much does it cost? 150 lei. OK, you got the money for 10 liter, 50 liter or 100 liter, depending on how much they needed.... At that time I was producing about three-four hundred liters each year.

Due to the fact that most men in the village were commuters, working in mining and industry in the nearby cities, there was easy access to the city and the requests for *palinka* were often coming from the part of colleagues or direct acquaintances. Besides, the informal market of Bucharest is mentioned as important, but it is still unclear how the commerce with Bucharest was undertaken. Apart from the prices at which *palinka* was sold that were rather speculative than those regulated by the market, there are many unclear aspects related to the effective quantities that were sold yearly and exactly how much it was produced in households. Moreover, it is unclear if there were people 'specialized' in the production and distribution of *palinka*, while others were simply raising their incomes and were coping with *palinka* as a secondary activity. Besides, I did not study the ways in which the *palinka* manufactories functioned in socialism, taking into consideration that the alcohol production was officially under the monopole of the state.

People of Șișești benefited in different ratios from the trade with *palinka*. At that time, the owners of the *palinka* manufactories of the village, who were able to sell every year large amounts of *palinka*<sup>1</sup> were considered the richest people. In the period of late socialism in Romania, due to the growing levels of state's control over food and beverage products, the trade of aliments (such as meat, milk, eggs) was more problematical than the trade of alcohol and, in this respect, the commerce with *palinka* was 'safer' than any other kind of informal trade; it was hence preferred to other kinds of informal trade with aliments. At the same time, in the context of the shortage economy, almost any kind of food product could be sold on the informal markets. With the income obtained through different economic

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<sup>1</sup> This is due to the fact that they received between 10 and 15 percent of the whole quantity of *palinka* they manufactured.

activities, people of Şişeşti began, especially after the '70s, to build new houses and buy cars, the investments in houses and household utilities being the most suitable investments for them.

As a conclusion, until the interwar period, animal breeding and fruit growing were the main activities of the people of Şişeşti. In general terms, the arrival of the communism led, at least after the '50s, to a change in the economical structure of the village. Mining was intensified and new economical niches in industry were available for people. Inner migration and commuting appeared. The local agriculture oriented towards fruit growing and the activities of animal breeding declined.

The fact that the village remained not collectivized is of crucial importance, especially for the economical situation of the people in the last years of socialism. Hence, villagers could own their products and can exchange or sell them on the informal regional markets or to the state. In this respect the ownership of the land could offer them flexibility towards the economic policies of the state; when the state competed with them by selling apples on the regional market places, the villagers could invent alternative niches, by creating new products and starting to produce *palinka* in large quantities. Besides, the informal sale of other types of agricultural products (especially milk and apples) could ensure income sources for part of the population. In some cases, meat was also commercialized.

Accordingly, in the case of the inhabitants of not collectivized areas, the shortage economy could be an advantage, in the sense that, when a certain product market was unprofitable, people had the opportunity to create new product niches. Besides, the job to the state offered constant financial resources, that actually strengthened the already mentioned flexibility.

Hence, during communism there was in Şişeşti a mix of formal and informal economy that supported one another. Formally, people worked in state enterprises, sold their products to the gathering centres and sold apples in market places. Formal delivery of apples to the collecting centres meant the usage of free of charge fertilizers, sustaining the productivity and consequently, the informal commerce with *palinka* and apples. Informally, people sold apples and *palinka*,

and sometimes, even meat. Besides, the consumption of the households was often ensured through informal means.

Another factor that explains the relative prosperity of the people is commuting. On the one hand, commuters were involved in two distinct economical activities: working in factories, wherefrom they received money and the work in their own households, wherefrom they got products for consumption. On the other hand, due to the fact that most men were commuters, the local economy could easily adapt to the informal requests of the urban economy. Having acquaintances and work colleagues in the nearby cities, commuters could sell their products without too many difficulties. Besides, the informal economy could be partially undertaken by commuters that were frequently economic middlemen between rural economy and urban food markets.

#### *Economy in Post-Socialism. Re-autarchization of Economy and Local Initiatives*

After the '90s everyone hoped for the better... They tried to organize their own households as they did prior to the '90s, but they faced inconveniences; many were fired from their jobs, were hired by some private companies and maybe fired from there as well, and it was difficult ... generally, the difficulties after the '90s affected us.

In post-socialism a series of events modified successively the local economy. On the one hand, part of the villagers began to practice a sort of autarchic (or natural) economy and on the other side, there were persons able to find and use more efficient economical strategies. Heretofore, I discuss the effects of the industrial restructuring in the area and of the closing down of the gathering centres, about the local initiatives and possible success strategies. Secondly, I analyze the changes that appeared in the sale and the production of agricultural products.

In the context of the industrial involution<sup>1</sup> in the area, mines were closed; the factories in the nearby cities were either restructured or

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Burawoy formulates the term, in an analysis regarding the Russian economy (Burawoy 1996: 14). It designates the process that was undertaken by former

closed. In the context of the changes in the Eastern Europe, Hann (Hann 1995: 48) considers that the commuters ('peasants-workers') are typically among the first that loose their jobs when factories are restructured. From his point of view, this leads to the emergence of an impoverished rural underclass. To some extent this is also the case of Şişeşti; here, villagers were fired especially in the '95 and between '97 and '98; at that time, most men lost their jobs and received financial compensations.

On the other hand, there is also a tiny minority<sup>1</sup> that still kept the jobs and there are some persons employed in private companies in the city. However, in general terms the loss of the jobs meant for the villagers not only the loss of a constant source of income but also the exit of the urban socializing networks. Due to the lack of work places in the area, the villagers are no more able to find jobs in the cities and most of them started to deal intensively with agriculture.

Parallelo to the industrial involution in the area there is a tiny emergence of a private sector in textile industry, located in Baia Mare and Baia Sprie. Women of the village began working in textile factories but they receive very small amounts of money<sup>2</sup> for their work. In the case of Şişeşti, the textile industry involves only a few persons and does not change the general image of economical decline.

In post-socialism the economical initiatives are rather modest. In the village there are two private pubs and two shops that sell aliments and household utilities for the villagers and a car service that provides services for the whole village. Initially, the mechanical repaired cars and received both money and various agricultural products, but after a while, he accepted to be paid only in cash for his services. A few years later, he hired two assistant workers and he is thinking to enlarge the business.

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socialist countries during the post-socialism, accompanied by the closing down and the restructuring of the former communist industrial companies, having as effect the sharp decline in the GDP and the unemployment. He considers that the term industrial involution and not industrial evolution describes at best the processes of economic restructuring occurring in some of the former socialist countries. To some extent, this is the case of Romania, too and in areas such as Şişeşti it can explain very well actual economic occurrences.

<sup>1</sup>At the moment there are approximately 100 people working in the city.

<sup>2</sup> In 2002, the average salary was about 1.5 millions lei (about 50 USD).

Another local initiative is the collaboration between the village and a village from France; as an outcome of this relationship, the villagers thought to start an economical project in tourism. The village is partner of a village from the Loire Valley. The French helped the dwellers of Şişeşti to install the gas pipe in their village, offered them medicines and intend to help build a local cultural centre. At the moment, people think to start a project in rural tourism. However, beyond these rather exceptional cases, the village can be characterized rather in terms of economical loss, the loss of the jobs and economical decline.

As an outcome of dismissals in industry and of economical decline, people started to deal mainly with the production and trade of agricultural products, but some major changes appeared as well, in the trade of food products. Hence, if before the '89 there was an informal market for agricultural products and the villagers could find clients rather easily, this state of affairs changed. The sale of the alimentary products on the informal markets or to varoius acquaintances became more problematical when the formal market developped and the market competition emerged.

At the same time, the centers for fruit gathering were closed and the villagers were no more able to sell their products to the state. Instead of these centres there were for a certain period of time private centers for milk collecting, but they 'cheated' people and disappeared after a while. Moreover, up to a certain moment, the villagers tried to sell their products on the market places in the region but they did not adapt to the requests of the speculating agricultural formal market.

As for the milk, there were some private companies that mocked the people. There were some Italianos, some Mafioso, having the headquarters in Baia Mare. In the first month they paid for the milk and afterwards they did not pay for half a year and finally they left.

Even when the selling process of the products (milk or milk cream) that is done by middlemen is conducted correctly (without speculation), people consider that they are paid about half of what could constitute a reasonable level<sup>1</sup>. Still, for a limited number of

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<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, they can receive about 30 000 lei for a kilogram of cheese, even though they would consider correct a price about 45 000 lei.

persons the long distance informal trade is still practiced especially by sales on the Bucharest market. But this is only a seasonal activity and can bring only a limited income. In the case of the meat trade, the speculative character is obvious; people sell the meat to middlemen, who are considered 'thieves', because they buy the products at very low prices.

Now, there are some gendarmes, not ... entrepreneurs. If I go with a calf to a meat shop, they don't take the products directly from me. They send one of their relatives who come and make the deal. Then, the relative or friend earns half of the price just for this operation. If the calf was about ten millions, he gives me just five millions. Is it my animal? It is mine, but I cannot sell it.

On the alimentary markets competition appeared and the sale prices are low. Comparing to the communist period, the villagers are no longer in the position to set up their prices on the market. Hence, if during communism the peasants sold their products directly to the people of the cities at the prices of the informal market, the products were sold quickly and the prices were not negotiable. This does not happen in post-socialism, when they have to choose between the prices imposed by middlemen or not selling the products at all. Besides, the informal market of aliments is diminishing due to the emergence of the formal market. Accordingly, instead of delivering their products to the state (milk and fruit) and to the markets as it happened before, people are supplying the consumption of their own households (milk, eggs, meat) and the surplus (milk, fruit) is often given to the animals.

#### *The Economy of Apples and Palinka*

As for the *palinka*, because fruit could not be sold anymore, people couldn't do too much, and they say: let's start drinking, 'cause it is good. Could you imagine? *Palinka* helps digestion and the cholesterol is not damaging the body. This is why we need the *palinka* in our organism.

In post-socialism, Şişeşti is characterized by a negative dynamics that appeared in the case of the trade and production of apples. If at the beginning of the '70s, local economy was based in some respects on the production and on the formal and informal trade with apples, this changed now. Heretofore, I analyze the dynamics of the apple economy and I explain why people that lived well from the economy of apples about twenty years ago are now justifying the economical inefficiency by claiming the usefulness of alcohol consumption.

The existence of the regional centers for fruit growing (especially in Baia Mare) removed the producers from the regional and local markets, especially in post-socialism when the formal market of agricultural products is developing. Due to the fact that in Şişeşti the apple trees are not of the best quality and due to the impossibility to use fertilizers and chemical treatments for the orchards, the products of the people of Şişeşti are directly competing with products of a higher quality that are produced at the fruit centers. Besides, the disappearance of the gathering centers that existed in the village leads towards the loss of the previous niches for formal apple sale.

People could sell their apples where when the quantities were large and the transport at distance was economically profitable; in one of these cases, the sale in Bucharest was preferred<sup>1</sup>. But this is a rather accidental situation and, in most cases, apples remain unsold.

Here people don't know what to do with the production. Two years ago there was an enormous production here, and people really let the apples on the ground to rot, they couldn't do anything with them, because nobody was interested in buying them.

One of the solutions is the product exchange, apples for grains, that is made with producers from other villages<sup>2</sup> (especially people from the plains), who can in turn supply the necessities of their households, too. But the exchange of products is not practiced very

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, they say that in the year of 2000 a very large quantity of apples was produced, and at that time the transport was affordable.

<sup>2</sup> Hence, for one bag of apples we could obtain two bags of corn, for instance. It is not clear however, who did the transport and how the transaction was done, who looked for clients or if there were already established trading networks, and so on.

often due to the fact that the prices of the transport are high comparing to the value of the goods<sup>1</sup>.

In this respect, most apples are transformed into *palinka*, in order not to lose the whole value of the production. Comparing to the communist period, the emergence of the market of alcohol products after the '90s leads towards a growing competition and to the collapse of the informal trade with *palinka*. It is often mentioned that *palinka* is no more requested because of the 'invasion' of various types of beverages on the market, while before it was not the case. As selling places, some pubs are still available in the area, but people think that the 'publicans are all thieves'.

Every one sells how he/she can. Today they can sell one liter, tomorrow two, and if you can find a customer in a month then you can sell. But until then, you can starve; if you don't have enough money, you are not able to buy bread. The managers here don't buy if they don't agree to the prices, and they would give nothing for the *palinka*, if it were at their disposal.

Another interesting strategy was the trade of *palinka* to Hungary at the beginning of the '90s. Due to the opportunity to transport the *palinka* over the border and because of the higher prices of *palinka* in Hungary, people of Şişeşti could sell *palinka* there and buy various products from shops and supermarkets. But this activity lost in intensity over the last years and for the moment there are only two persons still practicing the traffic of *palinka* over the border.

After the Revolution, we sold *szilvapalinka* and brought back bananas and other things. We bought rum, took with us *palinka*, because it was very expensive there (in Hungary) and we sold them there. Afterwards, we went to shops and bought Pepsi Cola, white bread and we could have one-week food for the kids. This is how it happened, but it did not last.

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<sup>1</sup> Even though there is no clear data about the profitability or not profitability of the transport, the price of the transport very often is mentioned as one of the main impediments in the trade with agricultural products.

The commerce with *palinka* was also practiced on the market of Bucharest, only a few persons were involved in it. Generally, people that dealt with the long distance trade with *palinka* (especially to the Bucharest market) were the owners of the alcohol manufactories; they owned large amounts of *palinka* and thus the trade and the transport prices were affordable. But for most people, *palinka* is irregularly sold and in many cases it remains unsold. In this context, the raising level of alcohol consumptions in the households is often remembered arguing that 'if it is not sold, it should at least be drunk'<sup>1</sup>.

For the local economy of apples, the economical calculus is no more thought in terms of gain, but in terms of cutting down losses. The economy of apples, flourishing ten years ago is autarchized. What is produced is consumed within the households or it is exchanged for other products. This makes the local economy decline; the change of the political regime and the path towards the emergence of the free market means in the case of Şişeşti economic involution, or put in other terms, 'regressive dynamic'<sup>2</sup>.

In this fragile economical environment part of the inhabitants began to migrate, especially to Western Europe and at the moment about 10% of the people are abroad. The transnational migration started at the beginning of the '90s when the work migrations towards Israel appeared. After '92, the migrations towards Italy and Spain appeared, using in the beginning the Greek Catholic connection and the pilgrimages to Rome. People of the Orthodox cult went also to Italy, using the religious network and the friendship with the Greek-Catholics. Thereafter, the migration niches were constituted on individual basis<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Although I have some doubts related to the declared level of alcohol consumption, maybe there was a certain growth in the consumption of alcohol, doubled by a legitimizing discourse about it.

<sup>2</sup> Burawoy and Verdery (Burawoy, Verdery 1999: 20) consider that in the context of the post-socialist market transformations, both progressive and negative dynamics appear. They consider that in the case of Russia, the shock therapy led the Russian society rather towards a type of Third World country than towards a functioning market economy.

<sup>3</sup> Anyway, the usage of the religious networks as migration niches it was observed in many contexts in Romania; see for instance Sandu (Sandu 2000: 21-34)

## Conclusions

In conclusion, in post-socialism the villagers are massively dismissed from factories and mining. The state retreated from the emerging food markets, competition and speculation grew, pushing the producers out of different product markets. In the case of people of Şişeşti an economical logic emerges, lead by the logic of minimizing the losses; most of the times products are consumed within the households in order not to be spoiled. The household economy becomes autarchic and the only successful strategy that can be adopted by this people is transnational migration, especially among young people, who choose to permanently live in the West. There is not a substantial flow of capital and goods from migrants towards their home village and pendular migration is not developed. In the context of a constant birth rate, the village has been depopulated with about 10% over the last five years.

Secondly, the informal economy in post-socialism differs from the informal economy during socialism. If during socialism informal economy was generated by the pressure of the state and facilitated by the shortage, in post-socialism informal economy is generated by the lack (or better said, disappearance) of the state, in a context of a not yet settled market. Informal economy is affected by speculations and the state no longer controls the production and local marketing. Hence, if during communism, the functioning of the informal economy was influenced primarily by vertical relations (the state mostly), in post-socialism horizontal ties became important. People negotiate prices by themselves, associate themselves, speculate and migrate in common networks. The incapacity of the people of Şişeşti to escape the natural economy in which they live, is generated by the lack of the market demand and by the lack of money.

Thirdly, the commerce with food products was affected by the dismissals from industry. On the one hand, without dismissals, the commuters could potentially still be in contact with the urban economy and the hypothetical possibility of selling the products through informal networks could remain. Thus, the loss of jobs had important side effects, separating the rural economy from the urban

environments and inducing additional losses. Accordingly, for the case in question, we can better understand why the local economy is autarchized, not only as a direct effect of the regional deindustrialization, but as well as an effect of the breakdown of the economical relations between rural and urban areas and of the impossibility to use the informal networks for economical purposes.

Last but not least, even though at the local level in post-socialism there is a high dynamics of economical practices, as people try to adapt to the current social changes, these activities generate most of the time, disaccumulation and not accumulation. The transnational migration might be the only solution for success for these people and is generally chosen by the youth. As a result, it means that at the local level there is initiative, there is property, but due to the lack of regulations, both of the state and of the market, these do not lead people to economical success.

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**RE-CONSTRUCTING ROMANIAN HEROES AFTER  
THE FALL OF COMMUNISM:  
THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN SHAPING THE SOCIAL  
IMAGINARY**

*Monica Mitarca*

**Introduction**

*Heroes: what is their role/function? How do they appear/shape up and change? At which level do they operate?*

To answer these questions, we should emphasize the double nature of the heroic behaviour: on one hand, the personal traits that could end in exceptional behaviours; on the other, the social dimension (one could not be a hero unless society says *This is heroic behaviour*). This double nature induces a further fragmentation of the heroic behaviours: *heroic behaviours per se* and media emphasized *heroic-like behaviours*.

We would dare say that, these days, media – exercising their role of shaping the symbolic world, through storytelling and, in this perspective, through selecting the preferred traits to report – have a major role in this process of social construction. It's not a sole contribution, though, since their efforts are coupled with the traditional mechanisms, in order to round up the social effort (also assumed by the media themselves) to re-finding/re-defining the values onto which the new socially desirable behaviours would ground onto. As the hero has a role in regulating/adjusting the socially acceptable behaviours, by the power of the example or by identification, we find heroes as social forces extremely important. Such is the power of those able to modify this symbolic order.

Mass media, through all the channels, scatter around stories - news stories, selecting mainly the negative traits that end up in crime and scarcely few positive behaviours labelled as heroic. We also have the entertainment, with its double-sided stories: wherever we have negative traits, labeled as villains, we also have the counterpart for these, the **heroes** (but not always), branded as such by the obvious positive character of their behaviour. This duality is not a new thing, though: the fairy-tales, the historical stories, the myths in general are based on this duality, explained also by Vladimir Propp as a must. We would go further to the binary oppositions, and see that there could not be any heroism in the absence of the binary *evil/bad*.

Evil, in the heroic stories, is the nature turned against us (as in saviours), another ideology (historical figures, heavily encountered in communist heroes), evil as humans, usually with pathological traits (heroes that fight against terrorism, these days mostly), odd circumstances (usually the accidents that do not involve any human intention). So, the hero could fight/strive for a person or for a community rather than for him/herself; in this would reside its heroism. Sometimes, heroic behaviour passes in myths and fairy-tales; of course, the characters are embellished with a handful of other positive traits. This is the case with historic figures that are presented to us as heroes. Without any doubt, their role is kind of different: these heroes are a part of our nationality - whatever obsolete and unwelcome this concept would appear now, in an era of globalisation and abolishment of borders/ethnicity. They serve as centripetal forces around which the community would shape up. Of course, this role is not to be accomplished before the apparition of a community/nation conscience; from this point further, heroes serve as continuing vectors.

### **Mass media as storyteller, myths creator and social force**

To answer the questions above, we ought to find the criteria that are used to select heroes amongst other people. Journalists, aware of this process they are undergoing or not, use a cluster of traits to shape up the heroic behaviour. These traits are deeply related to values - and the values selected and preferred are not the journalists', but they represent the definition society gives to abnegation and, generally, to

“good behaviours”. The patterns used by the Romanian media to create its heroes are, thus, the easiest tools we can use.

Media undertook some of the functions of other traditional institutions that help creating, consolidating and circulating the social imaginary. If we were to compare the role of the Anglo-Saxon *storyteller*, of the Italian *truvero* or of the French *troubadour* (those people wandering around with no other job but to make stories, tales and legends circulate) with the role of the media, we would notice that they don't differ much. History, religion, and mythology - all of these have, to some extent, the task of defining and delimitating the symbolical realities, inherent to the social life.

Although the media undertook this task, they create and circulate the media heroes according to some criteria that are not always the same as in the case of the traditional, classical hero. For this reason, they circulate some persons/figures also in collateral situations - others than the “heroic” circumstances. Thus, we could identify that extraordinary activity/event as a sort of central nucleus, with a subjacent moral value. Furthermore, the person is “re-circulated” in the media, gaining a new “use value”. At a first glance, we could relate the process to the agenda setting concept.

To explain this, let's revisit some of the theoretical grounds. Media “setting the agenda” could be read in many ways. At the surface, there is the common view: mass media select some of the matters/subjects/themes of discussion/interests in the public sphere. But underneath this process there is another selection, based not so much on global issues/themes, but on values. The values selected are also subject to an agenda setting. And this agenda, the more time goes by, changes.

Let's visit some of the changes that are obvious. First of all, the hero, as defined by the dictionary, is that “person that distinguishes by abnegation and exceptional courage”. We find here a dichotomy - between *exceptionality* and *norm*. Being exceptional in a positive manner, that would have granted the status of hero before, is not the criteria anymore. And that is because exceptionality has changed. In the era of global communication and in the advocacy/adversarial system, the media constructs exceptionality. The media event - concept forged by Dayan and Katz - represents the quintessence of the

processes analysed here. As long as, through selection and special emphasize, an ordinary event could get to an exceptional status – only by being *decoupe* as such – it is not impossible to think that people are presented as exceptional by the same mechanisms.

And the criteria of selection are as fragmented as we could imagine, in a puzzle-like, post-modern world. This leads to momentary, perishable meteoric heroes: created, circulated and maintained by the media as long as the media consider it necessary. The cycle described above is shorter now; a hero gets down easier and after a shorter period of time. In fact, it does not get down, but falls into oblivion, as long as the collective memory has to be reinforced harder in order to retain something for a longer period of time. On the other hand, mass media keeps a hero “hot” as long as it serves their interests (be it gathering the audiences around a theme for advertising money or by pure journalistic conscience of an interesting story).

The idea of *reinforcement* is another key concept here. Mass media use to accentuate and push harder on some themes, until they exhaust them. The problem, though, is two-folded: they exploit every possible human interest for financial/fame reasons, but they could also be seen as intuitively understanding the instability, the laziness, of the audiences, that has to be constantly stimulated in order to get their attention – in the audiences’ best interests.

So, the inflation of journalistic materials on a “hot” subject can be also read as a civic act of waking up the lazy/placid ones. We could say that the civic, almost pedagogical function of the media is accomplished this way.

This is the case with the general news stories. But what about the stories involving heroic figures/behaviours?

We should get into this picture the mass media conscious or unconscious role in shaping up the social imaginary. By the very act of sending/spreading messages towards their audiences, media help shaping the cultural sphere. All the messages they transmit are received by some people, read/listened/viewed, understood and/or negotiated. These messages consist in meanings, exchanged between sender and receiver and among receivers. But what’s underneath the meanings – or in what they would consist?

## Heroes – then and now

The explosive development of the Romanian media, in the last decade, was accompanied by a whole set of social changes, some of them, natural consequences of the transition to a market economy and a free flow of information, others brought along by the new media reality – some values, institutions and social norms have been activated in this period, others have just become obvious, through the media.

Within these changes, a special place is taken by the springing of new values and behavioural models generated by the media. The mediators, for these values and patterns/models were the new media stars, VIP’s and heroes. During communism, we have had a restricted and limited number of ordinary uses of the HERO concept, all of them outside the historical framework (“Eroii neamului” – the country’s heroes; “Erou al Muncii Socialiste” – Hero of the Socialist Labor; “Eroul colectivizarii” – Hero of the Collectivization; “Mama eroina” – Hero-Mother; “eroii necunoscuti” – unknown heroes, usually of the war). Besides these, we also had a double historical use of the concept. On one hand, Hero meant eroii “intemeietori”, “descalculatori”, “civilizatori”, aparatori de neam si tara” (grounders/founders, dismounters, civilisers, nation and country defenders). On the other hand, the communist ideology created a special category of heroes, related, all, to the shifting moment of the World War Two and the rise of communism in Romania: characters not always heroic *per se*, but included into history through the means of heroic narratives. Both these categories were easy to find in places like: history books, history re-told, for children, heroic novels, cinema/TV (historic movies/films and entertainment). It was exactly this mixture of old time heroes and communist heroes that made the last category credible and, even more, liable.

The post-December stars of Romania are different by the ordinary, traditional hero. The difference consists in the fact that their apparition and circulation through the media is artificially extended by reasons that are not related to the individual excellence, but mostly by other reasons. Some of them get, through a well-conducted image-building campaign and with the help of the circumstances, to be kept into a narrative sphere and live within a symbolic universe extended

far beyond the one they were first circulated in. Of course, not all of them get to be heroes, and we shall strive to discover the thin line that separates the public figure, the star, the VIP from the **media hero** – and for this purpose, the circumstances within which *monsieur/madame-tout-le-monde*, the potential news subject, could earn the status of hero (see the case of the young girl that extracted a child out of a well).

Thus, in the identity crisis we find ourselves, the need for heroes to identify with makes so that creating and circulating heroes represents, in the hands of who's got that power, a special kind of weapon. This crisis period (any transition supposes the existence of a crisis, and the perpetual transition we find ourselves in makes no exception) is defined, on one hand, by the change of some of the elements that define the national identity – in the Romanian case, the national anthem, the national standard, the Constitution (that is now to be refined, the first time after being changed, in 1991, as symbol of the transitions' ending or almost ending) the governing form, the National Day; but also the history handbooks and, implicitly, the official view over some of those considered heroes before 1989.

These changes, necessary for breaking up with the communist past we all deny, invite us to a reflection on the steadiness and absoluteness – or, on the contrary, the relativity of the values we ground our socially accepted behaviours on. Bestowing upon a person the title of hero is an act of a great social importance. First of all, this act of conferral represents the warranty that society has not only a normative function, but also a symbolic role. But, beyond these considerations, the values considered worthy of this title do change in time and, mostly, change with the shifting of the regime. And, if communism used to select and prefer some values heavily worked upon to reflect an ideology, the “freedom” encountered the last 13 years could have been applied also at the symbolic level: we are “free” of heroes.

### **Who's shaping the symbolic Romania?**

*First of all, let's ask ourselves which are our heroes now? Is it possible that the newest heroes of Romania are created by some other instances than the communist ones?*

The hero crisis we confront with is doubled by the tendency of referring as heroes to many types of persons. Thus, if in the explanatory dictionary (Romanian), hero means “1. Person that distinguishes him/herself by bravery or exceptional courage in wars, by special abnegation in difficult occasions or in work. Soldier dead in the battlefield; and 2. Main character of literary work. Main character of an event, person that, in a certain situation, would attract attention towards him/herself”. Le Petit Larousse has a slightly different version: “Hero – Demi-dieu ou grand homme divinize. Personage legendaire a qui l'on prete des exploits extraordinaires.” The legendary dimension, that lacks the Romanian definition, is probably the result of a national dilemma: is the hero really real, completely real, impossible to doubt its existence or does it have that touch of immortality given by mystification?

Out of these definitions – and with the help of some other considerations and analyses – we should discover the mould within which Romanian post-communist heroes do fit.

In the media (both print and electronic), referrals to a heroic status of real-life persons are scarce; we find references of these mostly in entertainment.

Here's a brief analysis of the articles with the explicit formula (hero/heroic) found right in the title:

- “To resist awful pains, the miner-hero is sedated with morphine” (Romania Libera).
- “Antonescu – hero or war criminal?” (Cotidianul)
- “Sasa Disici – hero or corrupted policeman?” (Cotidianul)
- “Bucharest – martyr city, heroic city”
- “General Guse – murderer turned into hero”
- “Hero-policemen in Carei” (policeman that saved a woman) (Ziua)
- “The hero of the students – Corneliu Zelea Codreanu” (with a post-December extension in the person of Marian Munteanu, at least from the perspective of the “stage role”, behaviour maintained until the 1995 students general strike, where he gathered the students around him and around what he represented when wearing a national costume).
- “Penes Curcanul – hero without a face?”

We should notice several things. First of all, in most of the cases, the status of hero is the one questioned. This swinging between a desirable status (the heroic one) and a non-desirable one (of war criminal or corrupted cop) - selection realized by an, I dare say, unconscious-of-him/herself journalists - demonstrates that this transition is not over, that a constant re-defining of heroes, although prophylactic, could be read the same time as a "symptom". Second, the classical heroes (history/handbook heroes - the founders, those remarkable figures so popular amongst us during the communist period - mythological and cultural heroes) are less circulated in the symbolic sphere. The reasons for this could be, of course, the shift of values - along with the need for distancing ourselves from the communist past and all it comprised.

This double process - on one hand, forging the new socially accepted/desirable/compensated behaviours and the values that underpin them and, on the other hand, of distancing from the communist past - read: vision over history, symbols, prominent figures, patterns of social promotion - is the most important mechanism of the symbolic transition.

If, by 1989, we have had a clear-cut typology, a classical heroic typology, consisting in:

- historical heroes (grounders, founders, civilisers, defenders), circulated along with one or more exceptional event/s - may be the only event known related to them;
- mythological heroes, circulated alongside with the legend or the myth that consecrated them;
- cultural heroes (the interwar model of Nae Ionescu, Mircea Eliade, Nicolae Steinhardt, Constantin Noica, that in communist times became sort of standards of cultural excellence but also heroic-like resistance);
- political heroes and
- war heroes, mainly encountered as "unknown heroes", soldiers, of greater or lesser rank, dead in the battlefield).

All these are now circulated mostly as street names, monuments, common places in nowadays political discourse.

The new categories that could be constructed are:

- the "money bringer" - Ion Stoica - Caritas; Sorin Ovidiu Vintu also may be Florin Calinescu - "cu minutele-astea doua/V-aduc milionul voua");
- the martyr-heroes of the Revolution (as opposed to the terrorists, whose media circulation has known an increase in the last 30 months);
- the "saviours";
- the sportsmen/women that made Romania known worldwide by their victories (they could have been considerate as heroes also before, but it seems that the regime would not want to mix the heroic status with sports);
- the dissidents - the resistance movement to the communist regime, the imprisoned in the Romanian political prisons, even Ilie Ilascu by his determination.

This is a possible typology of the contemporary hero. But to what extent does the media create them? How would they have been perceived without any intervention of the media? How should the media report as to emphasize not some subjectively chosen traits? Who would get into the newspapers if no value selection would have been made? These are questions with no immediate answer.

Mass media, by their specific processes, among which we have the selection as very important, are helping creating heroes or destroying them? The star created by this cultural industry to serve some financial purposes could be transformed into hero. The promotion mechanisms, by manipulating the social imaginary and shaping up the symbolic environment, could turn any person into a star (see the Big Brother contestants, the public figures that the camera "surprises" while doing charity or even heroic acts in key moments like Christmas/Easter - helping the poor, jumping into ice-cold water from a bridge) or even a hero.

## VILLAGE, NATION, AND WORLD WIDE WEBS: THE SZÁSZCSÁVÁS BAND

*Colin Quigley*

The story of the Roma musicians in the village of Csávás/Ceaus provides one fascinating and telling case study of the ongoing re-configuring of Roma performances as representations of an ethnic identity within Romania and an exoticized Other in the global market place. Several performances that I observed there in 1998 highlight interactions among simultaneously overlapping frames of reference for folk performances in Transylvania today.<sup>1</sup>

Known colloquially as Szászcsávás this village is a Hungarian speaking community located in eastern Transylvania near Târnava, in a multi-ethnic region of Romanian, Hungarian, and formerly Saxon population. Hungarian ethnologists call this area the Kis-Küküllő. In comparison to Kalotaszeg, for example, this region was one of the lesser-studied ethnographic zones, perhaps because of its mixed character. There is no comprehensive study of this village and its music. There is, however, enough information scattered throughout different sources to piece together a good picture of the Roma musicians and their place in the local society (Szánthó 1996; Magyar 2000; Pávai 2000). Over the last decade or so, some of their music has become available on commercial recordings of the Szászcsávás Band.

Szászcsávás is distinctive among Hungarian cultural sites for its unique polyphonic choral singing. Deriving from the Basel school of church singing presumably brought there by Protestant ministers, it has been celebrated among Hungarian song traditions and valued for its unusual character (Szánthó 1996). As such, it may be featured in

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was accompanied by video documentation of the performances mentioned.

Hungarian music performances as a contrast to other better-known material. I first encountered this choral singing, without knowing what it was, at the 1998 Magyar Opera House performance celebrating twenty years of *táncház* in Kolozsvár. Later I heard it sung in Csávás by the villagers in a self-conscious performance referencing their Hungarian-ness.

It is not this tradition, however, that has gained the attention of world markets. That distinction has gone to an ensemble of musicians playing selections from the varied repertoire with which they have serviced the music needs of the extended region around Szászcsávás for several generations. These musicians come from a Roma community living on the edge of Szászcsávás (Szánthó 1996). These families make their living primarily from seasonal agricultural work and brick making in the region, traditionally supplementing this income with their musical work. From among the very many musicians of this community, who make up more than one ensemble that comprise variety of instruments including the relatively modern accordion, saxophone, electric organ and drums, one family has emerged as an internationally known traditional music band – the Szászcsávás Band. Musicians and singers from this community and its surrounding region can be heard on a number of commercial recordings and (Kurti 1985; Ágoston, "Püder" et al. 1994; Bartha, Nagz et al. 1994; Szánthó 1996; Szánthó 1998; Pávai 2000; Szánthó 2000). In recent years the band has toured widely, including in the U.S. I recorded performances of these marvelous gypsy musicians on several occasions that juxtapose the overlapping, intersecting frames within which they operate.

This ensemble includes lead fiddler Jambor Istvan (known as Dumnezu), his brother Csányi Mátyás (Motis) on bass fiddle and their brother-in-law Mezei Ferenc (Csángáló) playing the viola-like *kontra*. Sometimes augmented with a second fiddle and additional *kontra*, this ensemble was standard in the previous generation. It is also the ensemble prized by connoisseurs of traditional music from Transylvania, the world music market, and the Hungarian dance revival network.

The post-89 encounter between local cultural scenes, like that in Szászcsávás and the global occurs in two directions, from the local out

and the global in; what has been called a “glocal” phenomenon. In this case, some of the musicians have moved into the domain of the world music market. The outside world at the same time has been arriving in increasing numbers and variety. In summer 2003, for example, the village played host to a weeklong dance camp for the third time.

I made my first visit was on Easter Monday 1998 to record the custom known as *locsolás* (sprinkling). This Easter Monday tradition in Csávás, like its singing, is also striking. Sprinkling is a widespread custom throughout all of Hungary. In its modern transformation, rather than dousing young women with buckets of water at the well, the boys spray unmarried girls with perfume (Balassa 1984, 645-646). Formerly, unwilling girls were doused by force, and the custom retains this coercive quality. I heard several young women I met recall how much they resented the dousing that they had to await at home.

In Csávás this custom takes a group form that is occasionally found in Székely communities. The young [unmarried] men organize the event, one that gives them an occasion for sanctioned public drinking and boisterous behaviour. The young men process from the home of one unmarried girl to another where they each douse the young lady with perfume and then dance with her in turn. They hire the musicians to accompany them on their rounds, singing well-known and widespread popular Hungarian songs, as they go. As in many “house visiting” customs, the visitors are offered festive food and drink before leaving.

The band I recorded on that day included members of the Szászcsávás Band along with an accordionist. These local Roma musicians are a necessary and important adjunct to the custom. In this instance, the boys hire and pay them to play for them. The repertoire they employ for this custom is different from that the band plays in concert. It is not the dance music of the *táncház*, or the more varied repertoire of the touring sets and CDs. The young men chose to sing well-known Hungarian songs of wide circulation and the dance music includes ballroom genres such as waltzes. These popular songs were of two formal types, the traditional “new style” melodies and *Magyar nóta*, composed songs in a national style that became popular in oral tradition. They reference a shared popular level of Hungarian musical culture, not elite cultivated music, nor the “authentic” folk music that

is both elite and very local in its audiences, but rather, the now somewhat old fashioned, somewhat rural popular music of the previous generation originating at the turn of the century. The texts sung on this occasion were tales of young male erotic adventure, reinforcing the basic character of the event.

On Easter Monday, after a drive from Kolozsvár that progressed from the national road leaving town to a very long, very rough dirt road that seemed to go nowhere else but Csávás, my assistant and I arrived in the town centre. The neighbouring householder came out and he invited us in to “freshen up.” Entering his home, I was surprised to see a tour poster for the Szászcsávás Band. Yes, we are quite proud of “our gypsies” he commented. In addition, he explained there would be a good opportunity to hear them in a few weeks time when a touring dance ensemble was to perform there. Apparently, today’s custom was not really about their performance.

*Locsolás* belongs to the boys of the village. They organize it. They practice it. Moreover, they enjoy it. It is local in its reference, addressing primarily immediate social relations within the village. It is a playful enactment of gender relations. The boys clearly enjoy this chance to put the girls in their place, at the mercy of the boys’ fun. The girls are “on display” and must play their part submitting to the “sprinkling,” the kissing and the dancing. Of course, at the same time the girls may enjoy being the center of attention, and do take an active role in the drama, preparing coloured eggs ahead of time for the boys to take, and refreshments served to the visitors.

I returned to Csávás for the ensemble concert we had been told about. In contrast to the family and courtship structure of the *locsolás* performance, the visit of the Valaszut ensemble became primarily an occasion for invoking a Hungarian identity. Indeed, references to ethnic-national identification permeated its activities. Announcements from the stage emphasized the shared Hungarianness of Magyars throughout the Carpathian basin. This ideology informs the Budapest táncház movement and is grounded in the research of Hungarian ethno-choreologists. Expression of a Transylvanian Székely identification was also prominent. A solemn singing of the the Székely Hymn by the village hosts provided a complex moment of Hungarian

identification at the same time it marked a regional identity. Most of the Roma musicians stood by indifferent to its significance.

The Válásút dance ensemble is based in Budapest, specializing in “authentic and improvisational” dances adapted for the stage (WEB PAGE CITE). Its repertoire is large and on this occasion, they presented a range of classic stagings, such as the lads’ dance *legényes* performed in the Kalatoszeg style, a dance cycle from Mezőség region, a dance from Hungarians in Slovakia. Of most interest to me was a staging of the dance their director had learned from the Szászcsávás musicians and their families on previous visits. The piece begins as the musicians play a slow gypsy song melody. The dancers, clothed in stereotypical gypsy costume, pose in a downcast posture awaiting a change of tempo to spring to life. The choreography proceeds by moving its six dancers through a series of stage formations with room for individual variation. The men perform coordinated slapping motifs in unison. While the ensemble dancers are quite accomplished, it is immediately noticeable that they do not display the same high level of energy that is typical of Roma performance. This energy is expressed in constant small quick movements that ornament the basic ‘steps’ of the dance, which are relatively simple; a style that was to be seen just moments later.

On this occasion, the gypsy community was also “invited” to take the stage to dance for both the guests and the hosts, in a kind of coerced self-representation. Roma community presentation on stage throughout Transylvania usually includes entire families and features performance by the children, as it did on this occasion. Putting the children forward is generally explained as a statement of pride, “see how well they dance.” Indeed the young boys and girls were impressive. The dance of the Szászcsávás Roma combines what is called *csingorálás* with a quick-csárdás turning-couple dance. In Szászcsávás this may be called “cigány csárdás.” The “gypsy” component is the unattached improvisatory couple dancing featuring quick shifts of weight from foot to foot with finger snapping. The women may hold their skirts before themselves; the men may add rapid and vigorous hand-to-leg slapping patterns. Here, this dance genre is combined with simple turning steps for couples as the dance progresses. On stage on this occasion, their highly individualistic

freely improvised dance style was somewhat regulated and subjected to the norms of ensemble presentation. They are dancing as gypsies but not for themselves. Rather, they remain the object of another's gaze, in this case, that of a Hungarian national sensibility. They are indeed "our gypsies."

Once they move into a more international sphere however, performances of the Szászcsávás Band are constructed in different terms. One can trace this development in commercial recordings from the region (Kurti 1985; Ágoston, "Púder" et al. 1994; Szánthó 1996; Szánthó 1998; Szánthó 2000). We find publications such as Kurti's *Hungarian Folk Music from the Kis-Kukullo Region of Central Transylvania, Romania*, that emphasize the frame of ethnographic dialect region and others that are more performer centred, as is appropriate to the marketing and making of a professional recording career. Szászcsávás Live in Chicago, their most recent CD, presents them playfully posing in a "Chicago gangster" look. The place of this band within a "world music" context can also be explored on the Internet. If one simply searches for the name Szászcsávás, an interesting array of hits appears that provides a picture of its world music market presence. One finds several French folk festivals, mail order Passion Music compact discs; a playlist for Planet Radio that situates a recording of one of their pieces by the Australian "Transylvaniacs," next to other recordings that reference 'gypsy' in some way; and a dedicated "Szászcsávás Band" page from Centrum management. While their primary management is based in Budapest, Centrum, which describes itself as "presenting Hungarian artists," provides access to the U.S. market. Though mediated through this "Hungarian" window, the band is nevertheless presented as 'gypsy' by deploying many of the crucial evocative exoticizing descriptions of imagined gypsy-ness e.g. wild-spirited, free, and fiery.

More work remains to be done in analysing both the entry of such tradition-based ensembles into the world music market and the effect such moves have on local musical scenes. This short discussion of the Szászcsávás band based on observations of them at home and in the media show just how complicated the overlapping of rather different fields of musical action can become as local, regional, national, international, and trans-national networked frames of reference are invoked.

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## RETHINKING RURAL IMMIGRANT CULTURE

*Réka Geambasu*

As one arrives from Oradea by car, the very moment of entering into the city of Cluj (or Kolozsvár/Klausenburg<sup>1</sup>), represents multiple experiences, that generate a multitude of impressions, representations, formulated, perpetuated or reconsidered individually or collectively, depending on the very position from which the subject “views” the city and lives the experience. The inhabitant of the town, familiar with its structure and functioning, would “come home”, perceiving it in terms of “the homecoming”, of meeting the familiar, and in the same time, looking for spatial and points of reference, used in the everyday life. The “mental maps” of a settlement’s inhabitants are formed both individually and in groups, used during everyday actions and negotiated in social relations and interactions. They are meant to structure and organize chaotic, quotidian experiences, and create organized patterns of individual life-worlds<sup>2</sup>, making possible the orientation within the physical and social space. Mental maps are only partially built of objective, physical, tangible items of the space, moreover, all these carry special significance, meanings attached to them by people (see for sense-making practices, as a defining process of culture, Keesing, 1974: 79, Hannerz, 1992: 3). The selection of all those significant items of the space, in which we live, items that would eventually structure and define our quotidian experiences, is a social

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<sup>1</sup> Using three different names – Romanian, Hungarian and German, respectively – of the city, I do not, in this context, ascribe to a certain normative ideological approach. Moreover, I emphasize that – in spite of the attempts to challenge the constraints of a reality described in ideological terms – I am aware of the fact that *ethnicity* is a relevant variable within all kinds of analyses of the social reality of Cluj.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of *Lebenswelt*, created by Alfred Schütz refers to that segment of reality to which the individual has immediate and direct access. It denotes that inter-subjective space which is perceived as given, and unchallengeable.

and symbolic process, with several defining factors. Mental maps, significant places within the city, means attached to its places, they all depend on the variety of the individual's social memberships, on his or her gender, ethnicity / nationality, class, social, educational, professional, economic status. All the particular sites within the city, as well as the (micro)histories told about them, bear individual significance, however, these representations and interpretations are influenced by the individual's multiple group-memberships (Magyari-Vincze, 1992: 168).

Thus, entering the city, might mean a *coming back* to the family, meeting the neighbours, or, in a different situation, it might face the individual all over again with deprivation, scarcity, of any kind. Or, it can just mean a simple passing by all those familiar and meaningful places of the city that became important throughout personal biographies, at the crossroads of the *differences* that *matter* at certain moments of life (see Magyari-Vincze, 2002). The city, the physical, but also, in the same time social, space ends up forming and defining the individual and collective identities of its inhabitants.

Driving on the Florești road, after leaving behind salespersons of popular artefacts, situated on the margins of the road, and after passing by the Metro supermarket, which, could not have been built in Cluj, after all, these are new elements which the narrative of the entering can be built on. The "stranger", the "outsider", meeting for the first time the reality of the city, lacking any prior experience related to Cluj, might built a totally different representation of it, a narrative organized, for instance, around public discourses on the city.

The city of Cluj is situated on the crossroads of multiple normative approaches, built around concepts that are being negotiated by actors of the public life. The city can be considered the place, the *locus*, and the object of public discourses. There is a powerful stake to all the normative and ideological approaches - the symbolic domination of the city, domination that can, in the same time, facilitate the access to material resources<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The public discourses on Cluj that I refer to in this paper, are going to be presented based on personal observations, lacking all sorts of systematic methods. They offer, first of all, a broader interpretative context to the empirical material and analysis that is going to be developed.

Someone approaching the city from West - to continue the original metaphorical idea - might be dominated by the experience of the poor infrastructure that exists between Huedin and Cluj, developing an entire argumentation concerning poor policy and administration. In the same time, the ideological model of the centre and periphery can offer itself a pattern of interpretation of the differences existing between the "levels of civilization" of the West and the East (see Hall, 1992: 277 and Wallerstein, 1991: 162-163, 168-173).

Cluj becomes the *topos* of both the Hungarian and the Romanian nationalist discourses. For both communities (but especially within the discursive strategies of the ethnic elite) Cluj represents a symbolic asset, and the cultural and symbolic centre of the national organization. The proportion of these two ethnic groups within the total population of Cluj, their control over the city's space, especially that of the centre, and over the meaningful and strategic buildings (the university, the public and local administration, statues etc.), all these acquire special meanings within the elite competition for the symbolic definition of the city as the centre of the essence of Hungarian/Romanian culture.

As you enter Cluj from the Southwest, you meet the blocks of flats, and several huge buildings, as parts of the neighbourhood called Mănăştur, the largest and most encompassing residential quarters of the city. Built during the socialist period, among other workers' neighbourhoods, Mănăştur constitutes a crucial *topos* and *locus* of the Romanian nationalist discourse, perpetuated by the political actors organized around the figure of the mayor. In the same time, Mănăştur is absent from the symbolic representation of the Hungarian political elite, and when they mention it, they do it with a great amount of suspicion. Called "*the united villages of Mănăştur*"<sup>1</sup>, according to the city's urban folklore, Mănăştur is the quarter with the biggest rural immigrant proportions. Inhabited mostly by workers, the neighbourhood became one of the most visible results of the socialist projects of industrialization and urbanization. The people from

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<sup>1</sup> The ironic name has been mentioned for several times during the interviews made with inhabitants of this neighbourhood.

Mănăştur have proven important voters of mayor Funar, mostly due to the material support given to the quarter, by the local administration (Troc, 2003: 11<sup>1</sup>). Thus, both at the level of individual or small group-opinions, and in official discourses, Mănăştur became a distinct, homogeneous, unitary entity within the city.

When entering into the city, a “stranger” might not observe anything from the reality bearing a set of meanings for the local citizens: Mănăştur, a neighbourhood, much alike the others, but which is seen as a “rurbanizing” space<sup>2</sup>, as rural islands within the urban space, with blocks of flats less valuable and less prestigious than those situated in other parts of the city<sup>3</sup>. In other words, a residential zone inhabited by rural immigrants.

### **The socialist industrialization and urbanization. The socialist project of modernization**

The citizens of rural origin living in (former) industrial centres are seen as an important and specific segment of the urban population, both at the level of individual opinions and by official, political and scientific discourse-builders. Their position – as a group – within the urban society can be and is interpreted in terms of the socialist project of modernization. According to the socialist ideology, “the new socialist man” could only be created through erasing the social division that existed between certain social-economic groups: workers and intelligentsia, women and men, peasants and citizens (Kligman, 2000, 29-33). On the other hand, the official encouragement of rural-

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<sup>1</sup> The socialist rural-urban migration itself can be interpreted in terms of the ideological attempt to change the ethnic structure in the big cities of Transilvania (see Troc, 2003: 11).

<sup>2</sup> The concept has been used by Ion Aluaş, describing the mechanisms of perpetuation of rural behaviour norms and patterns within the city (Aluaş, 1998: 20-22). According to another approach, that of Szelényi, the concept of “suburbanization” refers to those rural settlements that are situated near big industrial centres, and that have become residential spaces for commuting workers. These villages have been developing during the post socialist period due to the development of the service sectors within these settlements. (Szelényi, 1996: 321).

<sup>3</sup> This is one of the opinions that occur repeatedly in interviews, thus it can be considered as being part of the urban common sense (the set of shared knowledge and meanings attached to certain common dimensions of the life worlds).

urban migration was also motivated by the very pragmatic goal of transforming the Romanian economy into an industrial one so that the country could effectively play its economic role within the COMECON. The emphasis put on the industrial development created a growing need for workforce, and in consequence made the recruitment of rural origin workers necessary. However, the migration from rural to urban did not begin only in the Soviet period, but at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the industrialization process (Andrusz, 1996, 35). The process of urbanization and the migration of the rural population acquired a symbolic dimension, that of the modernization of the Romanian society. According to the socialist ideology and policy, the massive movement from rural to urban settlements, had both a pragmatic, economic and a symbolic stake within a predominantly agrarian state. In the 1920s 78% of the Romanian population lived in rural area, thus, the socialist state saw the process of urbanization as a means of creating “the proletariat”, the workers’ class, the future ruling class of society (Harloe, 1996, 2). That is the reason why the rural origin workers, also called “the new workers”, are considered the quintessential results of the socialist politics. The inclusion of large categories of workers in the industrial process also meant a democratisation of the political system, and, in the same time, the modernization of production and a general improvement of living conditions (Kemény, 1990, 8-10).

While the capitalist type industrialization is dominated and structured by the principles of market economy, and therefore, industrial production develops as long as there is a need for its products, socialist industrialization follows an “ideological rationality”, that of total employment. Besides this, Romania emphasized heavy industry.

One of the major imperatives of socialist ideology was that of providing 100% employment for the population. The Romanian society was characterized by a powerful unemployment in the period between the two World Wars. The socialist state was seen as an actor of the national economy that by itself could guarantee full employment, by controlling all the processes of production. For this, the state had to support all the industrial units and centres, as well as all the investments that were made in building infrastructure, as long as the

wages were kept on a very low level. The industrial sector of the national economy had been given a strategic role during all this period. In the 1980s a proportion of 60% of the total Romanian production had originated from industry that, in the meantime, secured the workplace for 38% of the active population (Negulescu, 1999, 417).

During the socialist period individuals were not provided the right to make all the decisions for themselves, concerning their private lives, family, education, or medical care, and this was a condition *sine qua non* for the paternalistic state to manage for total control of the citizens. All the services an individual could have had access to had a social character; therefore these were free of charge. However, since paid work was not only a right for citizens, but also an obligation, social services were all delivered through the working places, a sort of intermediate agents between the state and the individual. That is how employment and workplace ended up being a major community-forming agent and principle, instead of residential places, for example (Andrusz, op. cit.: 64)

Marxism saw cities as having central role in collective identity formation. Urban zones meant spaces that facilitated centralized social service delivery – seen as a form of collective consumption – and centralized control. Low prices and egalitarian distribution of goods (especially those of living conditions) resulted in egalitarian welfare. Urban planning maintained and perpetuated – at least on a discursive level – socialist ideology, and on the other hand, it created new residential spaces, new neighbourhoods in the proximity of industrial centres, which is mostly the case of “new cities”. There are also “only partially changed cities”, but the former are mainly organized around one single industry, such as mining, for instance (Smith, 1996, 72-73). The cities planned and built during the socialist period represented, in fact, rational solutions to economic, social, demographic, ecological and physical problems created by industrial development. New cities were first of all meant to solve housing issues (Andrusz, op. cit.: 63). According to another opinion, the whole process of population concentration within industrial centers can be interpreted in terms of an assembly line-modernization (Andrusz, op. cit.: 64).

The most important goal of socialist industrialization and urbanization was to “erase” “the old society”, that is to dissolve

traditional communities that existed prior to 1945. Official ideology argued that “the new socialist man” was going to be created only as a consequence of powerful atomisation of traditional society. New blocks of flats were built, and prior to that, old houses demolished, and this way, uniform apartments, and uniform living conditions created (Mihăilescu - Nicolau - Gheorghiu - Olaru 1994: 88).

The forced urbanization process was not – in either of its phases – characterized by an assistance given to rural migrants. The system took the issue of rural immigrants’ urban socialization for granted. Moreover, the rural-urban migration was considered – both by official discourse and social actors themselves – a form of upward social mobility.

### “Peasants” living in urban space

Urban collective imaginary or common sense ascribes a set of specific traits and characteristics to members of the rural immigrants’ groups. They, most of the time, are held responsible for a series of negative issues and dysfunction in the post-communist period:

“I think they are totally different from urban people, and you can notice this from a long distance. For instance, when they come to me (*to the consulting-room -GR*), they do not tell you., «mister, this or that is the problem ». They always begin with «you see, I have a relative, he or she told me that I should turn to you», and so on. So they cannot deal with anything normally, without getting help from someone from their family. They always take care of things in their very specific, traditional way.”

Rural immigrants are being often blamed for corruption itself:

“We will never get rid of corruption this way: here all is “taken care of”. That is how they were used to operate, since they got here from the villages, to resolve anything through acquaintances and relatives. This is the way in which they deal with neighbours, as well. They all try to bring in the blocks in which they live former neighbours from their villages, and relatives, to be close to each other. They hardly can wait for someone to die, so that they can buy the flat, to live close to in-laws, cousins, brothers.”

One of the major issues of sociological approaches dealing with rural immigrants is concerned with the degree of "adaptation" of these citizens originated in rural areas. The key concepts of this approach are the opposite ideal types of *rural* and *urban lifestyle*. Each of these two terms defines and marks the modernization process that is the shift from rural to urban type of social organization. Rural families and individuals are considered to be – within this sort of theoretical framework – bearers of a certain *rural culture*, as a result of the socialization process they went through. Their move to the cities the two sets of norms and behaviour patterns – the *urban* type, which already existed among citizens, and that "brought" by rural immigrants – were seen as two different and often conflicting ways of life. The degree of "adaptation" and "urbanization" of rural immigrants was, thus, seen and measured as the degree in which they "internalised" *urban* patterns of behaviour (see Alu ş, 1998; Gans, 1965; Hosu, 1997; Kem ny, 1990).

All these – empirical and theoretical – approaches of the rural immigrant population can be grouped in two kinds of perspectives: the first is a *static, descriptive* one, and the other a *dynamic* approach. The descriptive approach offers an understanding of the rural immigrant culture in terms of *absolute alterity*. It emphasizes those elements of the rural immigrant culture that distinguish them from the citizens of urban origin, and also the consequences this internal differentiation has on the social organization of city life and on the relationships between certain groups. The dynamic model defines the life of rural immigrants as a teleological process, with a well-defined goal, that of the urbanization of their ways of life. Within this framework, the very stake of the analysis is to comprehend the degree in which rural immigrants have "adapted" themselves to urban life.

Both approaches have proven to be simplistic, for they both create a unitary, undifferentiated, homogeneous representation of the rural immigrant culture and communities. Individuals are presented within these frameworks only in terms of their roles performed within their communities, roles preserved and perpetuated in time. Communities presented as undifferentiated are also seen as constant, unchanging entities. The authors dealing with the communities of rural immigrants emphasize only the contrast existing between citizens of

rural and urban origin, without presenting internal differentiation along variables as sex, economic, professional status, religion and so on. In the same time, *urban culture* is presented as a monolithic, stable, unchanging, unitary entity, supposing that all citizens of urban origin commonly share it.

### "Peasants in the city"

Ion Alu ş considers "rurbanization" or the "ruralization" of cities a perverse effect of the urbanization process. As urban societies were not able to assimilate entirely the rural immigrant population, the result was the creation of communities of urban origin, and moreover, a sort of a "mixture" of rural and urban culture elements (Alu ş, 1998: 20-22).

Herbert Gans names the physical, cultural and social he studied "*urban village*", which was in fact the Bostonian neighbourhood called West End. The name urban village was used first of all, due to all its visible characteristics, but nevertheless, because of all its inhabitants' cultural and social practices through which they traced and strengthened the borders between insiders and outsiders. Gans argues that physical traits of the space derive from all those cultural peculiarities that characterize that very ethnic community<sup>1</sup>, each and every time they contacted outsiders. Gans offers an analysis of the inhabitants more in class, than ethnical terms, emphasizing that – without considerable upward social mobility – ethnicity and class tends to coincide. Individuals are seen as members of their families, of their peers (forming a *peer-group society*), and also of their community. All these groups prescribe sets of roles, norms, values and behaviours, resulting in a rather high degree of social cohesion. Family relationships have great power of structuring the individual's everyday life, a pattern described by Gans as a person-oriented individualism, in contrast with the middle class object-oriented individualism (Gans, 1965: 89-91).

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<sup>1</sup> The social group studied by Gans was a community of second generation Italians.

## “People of / in transition”

Kemény István introduces the concept of “new workers”, when referring to rural origin workers in great state-owned socialist enterprises. The author considers that “new workers” are “on the road”, as they are exposed to a complex process of urbanization of their lifestyles. The final goal of this process is that of total internalisation of urban patterns and that of total integration within urban structures, as a consequence of broken relations with rural relatives (Kemény, 1990: 10-16).

The transformation of the individual from peasant to worker represents, in Kemény’s opinion, a complex process of “culture change” (Kemény, op. cit.: 11). That is the reason why, through the process of upward mobility, one of the first steps a rural origin worker has to do is to become an unskilled worker, and then, work in the heaviest branches of industry. The process of adaptation itself has proven to be a very complex one, as the most important values and norms rural individuals were socialized with, vary significantly from the urban reality. However, in most of the cases, authors see the total and successful accommodation and adaptation to urban conditions as the finality of the migration and urbanization process (Kemény, op. cit: 13-15).

## Rural and urban or working class?

Families of rural origin settled in cities during the socialist period form a distinct social group, with specific, traditional, “rural” norms, values and behaviour patterns, for most citizens. Both in the context of social change during the communist regime, and in the period of economic, political and social transformations after 1989<sup>1</sup>, there is a

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<sup>1</sup> I intentionally do not use the concept of *transition* in this paper, for I do not consider that there is a well defined and unequivocal finality to the process of changing within post-totalitarian societies - that of Western-type liberal democracy and market economy. Political elite legitimises its actions, in its official rhetoric by using argumentation built on the necessity of consolidating institutions of pluralistic democracy and market economy. However, in most cases, post-socialist societies are lacking the necessary conditions for the implementation of neo-liberal economic policies. The theories of “path-dependent transformation” (Stark, cited by Harloe, op.

population segment in Romania that attributes a certain cultural traditionalism to communities of rural immigrants.

I do not use the concepts of *lifestyle* and *culture* as synonyms. The first one can be associated with the essentialist and structuralist interpretation of the second one, as *lifestyle* refers to a set of values, meanings shared by a group’s members, meanings and norms that delimitate groups from each other (Magyari-Vincze, 2002: 11-12)<sup>1</sup>. I agree with the attempt to “*deculturalize*” the concept of culture, to locate it in social practice, and moreover, to analyse it in strange relationship with the political sphere. Culture, through its ideological dimension, is the one that constitutes social reality, becoming, in the meantime, an instrument of interrogating social, economic and political life (Magyari-Vincze, 2002: 13-15). I therefore use the concept of culture in its constructivist and procesualist assertion, in order to emphasize that culture can become an instrument of self- and hetero-positioning and identification within the social structure. I argue that culture represents a means through which those empowered can define what “normal” and “desirable” in a society is (Hall, 1997: 17-18).

Both in scientific analysis and public, normative discourse, rural immigrants (or, moreover, the “problem” of first generation citizens) are represented in terms of their “traditional” culture. They are supposed to have “kept” or “maintained” the “rural” elements of their lifestyle, elements that are on the one hand incompatible, and on the other, “incapable” of being adapted to “urban” ways of life. This kind of approach locates *urban* and *rural culture* on the two opposite ends of a continuum, emphasizing the “non-modern” or “pre-modern” nature of the culture of rural immigrants.

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cit.: 5) and that of the “capitalism without capitalists” (Eyal-Szelényi-Townsley, 2001: 7) describe macro-level characteristics of East-European societies.

<sup>1</sup> The concept of culture, as Kottak defines it, represents an entity, that is: 1. all-encompassing, 2. general and specific in the same time, 3. internalised, 4. symbolic, 5. limiting nature, 6. shared, 7. adaptive and maladaptive, and finally, 8. multi-level, depending on social groups that “bear” a certain “culture” (Kottak, 1991: 37-43). In addition, I agree with the view that sustains that culture has also a political function, which means that it contributes to the social construction of reality, the process of the negotiation of meanings and the definition of power relations. Culture defines what “good”, “normal” and “desirable” in the society is.

The bearers of traditional, pre-modern culture are always identified in terms of origin, and never according to individuals' class-membership. *Class* as an entity or criterion did not exist or function as a legitimate category or variable in explaining social processes during the communist period. As socialist ideology planned the construction of a homogeneous, unitary, egalitarian, classless society, lacking all sorts of differentiation, class-membership could not work as a real category of understanding social reality. Instead, social - rural or urban - origin represented a means for identifying and categorizing people. However, differences persisted and perpetuated. In this context, using the variable of social origin seemed to be legitimate, and moreover, sufficient for the description of inequalities and social reality.

Most theoretical approaches attempting to understand and to describe "cultural" differences between social groups - in our case, between citizens of urban and rural origin - are structured and designated by the conceptual framework and fundamental perspective of the great sociological theories explaining social change and modernization process. Overarching classical sociological theoretical models are based on the *pre-modern and modern* conceptual dichotomy. This intellectual and theoretical tradition - I argue - is the one that determines and legitimates in the same time, the conceptualisation and application of the dual conceptual frame on the theoretical description and understanding of rural immigrants living in post-socialist cities. Thus, groups whose "culture" is perceived, described and understood in terms of *rural, traditional* elements, become, through a process of hetero-identification, *rural immigrants*. In other words, I argue that not rural immigrants are "responsible" in the context of post-communist cities for "preserving" traditional culture, but elements that might resemble rural social and cultural everyday practices "create" and "define" what rural immigrant in post-socialist societies means. While, in fact, they are not necessarily rural immigrants, but *workers* - of several kinds of origin.

### The conceptual dichotomy

Social change is conceptualised and interpreted by classical sociologists in terms of shift from pre-modern, traditional to modern

forms of social organization. Both types of social organizations are characterized by specific interpersonal relationships.

Tönnies's theoretical model describes the transformation of social organizations, the shift from *community* to *society*. Society represents a societal type dominated by impersonal relations, life and everyday practices organized around formal, official regulations instead of informal, community norms (Tönnies, 1983: 6-8).

Émile Durkheim constructs the *mechanical solidarity - organic solidarity* conceptual dichotomy in order to describe and understand the nature of modernization. Mechanical solidarity refers to that kind of social cohesion that is based on absolute unity of social actors. Modernization that is the organic type of solidarity means the functional differentiation of society, the social division of labour. The modern, complex society is characterized by a multilevel organization of social structure, which means that each individual is a member of more than one social group (Durkheim, op. cit.: 30-36).

In another, but also classical approach Max Weber interprets the process of modernization in terms of *rationalization* of social life. Traditional, pre-modern authority legitimates power on religious or customary belief, while modern authority is based on rational investment of power (Weber, 1987: 46-47).

According to these classical perspectives, modernization means a shift of the emphasis from tradition, direct and coercive control of norms to a more impersonal social organization, based on, and dominated by rational, predictable rules, and also characterized by atomisation and by functional differentiation of the population.

### The culture of the working class

In the previous part I have shown how the classical social change paradigm can and does offer a useful framework for the interpretation of the supposedly traditional culture of rural immigrants - that is interpreting the migration and urban adaptation process itself in terms of modernization.

However, I propose another conceptual and methodological framework for the description of a population and a culture that was thought to be rural and traditional. That is the theoretical model of

*working class culture*. Based on a quantitative data analysis, and also on interview and fieldwork experiences, I affirm that those individuals who “we” might categorize as rural immigrants, and who are considered to be the bearers of traditional culture, are in fact workers.

As for the concept of *class*, Marx defines it as a function of ownership of production means. As such, he defines *working class*, *capital owner class* and *landowner class* (Marx, 1991: 26). Weber, instead, offers a larger definition for class, including aspects of interests, lifestyle elements, and affiliations. According to Weber, class membership is also determined by the individual’s position on the market, and in the same time, by certain aspects of life opportunities, and his - her chance to change individual social position. One of the key terms introduced by Weber in his class-model is that of the *privilege*, which can be positive and negative, depending on the individual’s market-position. Workers constitute, in this sense, a negatively privileged class, since they do not own other means of production than their workforce, and in addition, they do not have access to privileged and valuable assets in society (Weber, 1991: 62-65).

The culture of workers’ class represents the object of several analyses, however, in this context, I only limit my presentation to the work of Young-Willmott, an analysis done in East-London, at the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Their conclusions are more or less the same as Gans’s. One of the most important characteristics of workers’ everyday social organization is the central role attributed to the institution of the extended family, including relatives and neighbours. The institution of neighbourhood is in most cases assimilated and identified with that of family, as these both function as important resource in quotidian life. The core figure of the extended family is the mother, around whom all the – even married – children organize their lives. Grandparents are also seen as *social capital*, as they regularly offer to take care of grandchildren. Obviously, not only young people value these kinds of family relations, because organizing family life this way, elder people get protection from the children. The family-centred social organization can be also observed in the tendency of spatial concentration: members of the working class tend to move in the nearby of their own relatives (Young-Willmott, 1999).

### **Aspects and dimensions of everyday life at the crossroads of social origin and class membership**

*Complex, “modern”, industrialized society, the modern city, the society itself* has become the object and the field of anthropological inquiry since the “dislocation”, “the identity loss” of classical anthropology (see Frykman, 1989: 68), and in the same time, as a consequence of facing decolonisation process. In addition, focusing on complex societies also meant the growing interest in *everyday life*. Until that moment, distance was the most important feature that characterized anthropological research, investigations being done on unknown fields, by “hero” ethnographers. Re-directioning the focus of investigations on the researcher’s own society also meant a re-interpretation and re-definition of “alterity” and “difference”, so that it could solve the issue of distance within the communities in which the anthropologist is himself / herself a native. While research in traditional societies used a stable, unitary, homogeneously shared concept of culture, it cannot be considered reliable any more. Scientific attention is oriented towards the quotidian, towards everyday social and cultural practices of building and negotiating cultural norms, values and meanings. The concept of culture becomes deeply embedded in social practices.

The intimate, personal sphere of the individual becomes now worth of studying, the focus of research moves from the transcendent to the immanent. The reality of everyday life is defined as “reality” itself, the valid, true set of meanings, and, as culture itself (Frykman, op. cit.: 71).

Recognizing interior diversity and differentiation within complex societies, anthropologists seem not to be interested in building and legitimising “national” culture anymore. Even though, there are categories needed to understand urban life, that is why Gullestad offers the term *overarching category* which can help describe individuals’ practices at large. These categories structure and organize the lives of the majority of social actors. The major stake for anthropological investigation is decoding and understanding the meanings attached to overarching categories of social life, in order to cross major borders between social groups (Gullestad, 1991: 87-90).

There is also another stake for the description of individual everyday urban experiences as reality itself: that is the deconstruction of the negative image of cities. Micro-social and micro-anthropological approach is able to make "life at small scale" accessible and understandable in its own terms (Niedermüller, 1995: 556-557).

The methodology proposed by the micro-investigation of everyday experiences has got an advantage in the case of the research of rural immigrants as well. Interpreted within the framework of classical social theories - that is the conceptual dichotomy of pre-modern and modern - or, on the other hand, within the urban sociology paradigm, the "culture" of rural immigrants can only be understood in terms of *transition* between two ideal types of social organization. Urban sociologists - Redfield or Wirth - describe the city-life as the emphasis placed on "complex interpersonal networks" instead of "simple rural organization". Urban life is characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity, population density and number, which eventually results in the disappearance of traditional extended family and community-control (Wirth, cited by Nemes-Szelényi, 1967: 53-55). "Folk society" is dominated and organized by small, primordial groups - family and neighbours -, and is characterized by low degree of social and geographical mobility. As a consequence of specialization, bureaucratisation and industrialization, all these institutions lose their initial functions, as social and interpersonal relations become fragmented, anonymous and impersonal (Redfield, cited by Nemes-Szelényi, 1967: 53-63 and Niedermüller, 1995: 557).

Rural immigrants represent "absolute alterity" within post-socialist industrial cities, and they are seen as bearers of traditional culture, on their way of a final urbanization. Their culture is interpreted in terms of underdevelopment, its perpetuation being facilitated by their own and specific family networks in which they live their everyday experiences (see Smith, 1996: 116-117).

Rural immigrants are supposed to organize their social lives around family relationships and primordial ties, so that they can avoid contact with external, formal, administrative institutions; it is thought that they build small farms around the blocks in order to "re-experience" former farmer lifestyles; meanwhile they are seen as groups that perpetuate former relationships with villages. The stake of

this kind of analysis is to describe an attempt of reorganizing former rural autarchies in the context of urban space.

However, an anthropological approach makes the deconstruction of such images possible, while it offers methodological instruments with which the internal differentiation among rural immigrants can be seen. Following Hannerz, I define culture as a set of meanings people create as members of society (Hannerz, 1992, 3). Locating and analysing people's culture on its various sites of everyday life - in gender relations, the division of work, the organization of households, the resource management, spare time organization, social networking etc. - all the interior aspects of a working class culture can be seen. The way in which individuals perceive their own lives, quotidian experiences - I argue - is not a necessary consequence of their rural or urban origin; moreover, it is a result of their place on market, in the social structure, and a function of their access to material resources. Individual life histories, lived experience are not *modernization stories* or *urbanization narratives*. Individuals do not see their own lives as having one well-defined goal: adaptation to urban life or modernization itself. The majority of rural immigrants became workers, with their own culture, as a consequence of limited access to material, symbolic and intellectual resources. In their life-narratives the practices of building and negotiating meanings, the really important differences and social boundaries are located and interpreted somewhere else, than on the boundary between rural and urban origin people. In most of the cases, they define alterity and difference in terms of gender and class.

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**SEXED BODIES**

**“ONE HOUR JUST FOR MYSELF”.  
AEROBICS AND THE BODY OF TRANSITION**

*Petruța Mîndruț*

*“Bodies take metaphors seriously”  
(H. Moore, 1994: 71)*

This article draws extensively on the dissertation thesis for my MA in Cultural Anthropology at Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj, in June 2003. While writing this paper, I found myself thinking very deeply about what this particular research has meant for me. As I see it now, choosing the topic of aerobics and the post-socialist body seems to have been a very bold and hazardous action but at the same time one of my most subjective and sincere scientific endeavours.

I have initiated this research with a basic interest in the representations of female body and femininity in post-socialist Romania, as they emerge through accounts and narratives of women themselves. My greatest personal challenge was, though, not to allow my own feminist allegiance to transform this into a struggle to expose the oppression of women. Most of the feminist literature depicts women as having their “docile” bodies modelled and shaped according to patriarchal norms. I have decided to approach and analyse women’s narratives and discourse as much as possible taking into consideration their previous experiences and also the communist political and social legacy. The task was not a facile one, though, and neither were the questions it raised.

How can we make sense of the “bio-politics” of the communist regime, to use a term coined by Michel Foucault, in order to grasp the contemporary representations of the body and the *praxis* of caring for the body, not to mention the discourses that legitimise both? In what

sense should we interpret the post-socialist widely spread mania of working out the body and what implications might this have for a (re)-negotiation of traditional gender roles? What consequences does practicing aerobics have with regard to one's self-image and self-identity?

Theoretically, the starting point in my research was the analogy that Mary Douglas draws between the two bodies, the physical and the social, arguing that "there is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other" [...] "The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society" (Douglas, 1996: 69). The physical body becomes, for Douglas, "a microcosm of society, facing the centre of power, contracting and expanding its claims in direct accordance with the increase and relaxation of social pressures" (Douglas, 1996: 77). The body is read as a "cultural text, giving material expression to the cultural values, preoccupations and anxieties of a culture" (Benson, 1999: 128). For Susan Bordo, this metaphor of "reading the body" proved a very fruitful one; according to her, the body is "a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies, and even metaphysical commitments of a culture are inscribed and reinforced through the concrete language of the body" (Bordo, 1997: 91).

Social constructionism holds as conventional knowledge that bodies are produced by the prevalent discourse(s) and as such they are created, inscribed and managed according to the norms of this/these discourse(s). Sandra Lee Bartky writes about "disciplinary practices" that are "part of a process by which the ideal body of femininity – and hence the feminine body-subject – is constructed; in doing this, they produce a 'practiced and subjected' body, i. e., a body on which an inferior status has been inscribed". Moreover, "the technologies of femininity are taken up and practiced by women against the background of a pervasive sense of bodily deficiency. This accounts for what is often their compulsive or even ritualistic character" (Lee Bartky, 1997: 139).

On the other hand, Chris Shilling tries to reconcile the extreme positions of the two main approaches of the body, i.e., the social

constructionism and the naturalism, in viewing the body as a "multidimensional medium for constituting the society: a source, a locus and a way of positioning individuals inside the society" (Shilling, 2003: 208). In short, the body is to be seen as "a material phenomenon which shapes, as well as being shaped by, its social environment. The body is central to our ability to 'make a difference' to, to intervene in, or to exercise agency in the world, and our bodily emotions, preferences, sensory capacities and actions are a fundamental *source* of 'social forms' " (Shilling, 2003: iv). Consequently, my paper aims at approaching the body both as produced by and as producer of discourse.

Erving Goffman's approach also proved useful for my research, especially in considering the body as a mediator between the self-identity of the individual and his/her social identity and in acknowledging a degree of independence in the management of one's corporeality. "The management of the body is central to the maintenance of encounters, social roles and social relations, and also mediates the relationship between an individual's self-identity and their social identity". The body is seen as a resource that can be "managed in a variety of ways in order to construct a particular version of the self" (Shilling, 2003: 66). In Goffman's approach, the body is the property of the individual who has the capacity of controlling and monitoring his own bodily performances in the social interactions; the individual performs his identities through the body. We can only ask ourselves what is the relation between one's body and one's self? And also, how are bodies produced in discourse and at the same time what kinds of discourses/narratives do they produce? Moreover, how much freedom of managing one's bodily performances can we talk about in the age of pervasive and constraining aesthetic norms?

In the late modernity the body is spoken of as more and more a phenomenon expressing the personal identity of an individual. Jean Claude Kauffman argues, "the body has become an essential identifying tool which explains the extremely personal character of the decisions regarding it" (Kaufmann, 1998: 11). In the age of modernity, personal identity and body constitute "reflexively organized projects that have to be chosen out of a complex plurality of options, without any moral guidance" (Shilling, 2003: 157).

Another French sociologist, David Le Breton, underlies the link between social and self identity, as mediated by the body, which is considered “a surface of projection where one can put in place the fragments of the sense of personal identity, divided by the social rhythms. By placing in order and in significance of the self, through a body whom he dissociates and transforms into a screen, the individual acts symbolically upon the surrounding universe. He seeks his subject unity, organizing signs, trying to produce an identity and to make himself socially recognizable” (Le Breton, 2002: 170).

But identity is never a stable achievement, fixed and unproblematic for the individual. On the contrary, constructing and performing an identity is a continuous and flexible process. Enikő Magyari-Vincze writes that: “differences from the outside (between ascribed subject positions) transform themselves into intimate differences (experienced subjectivities). In this process, the individual acts as an active subject (agency), combining more than often in his/her attitude both elements of complicity with and elements of resistance to the norms prescribed for his/her identity by the hegemonic order” (Magyari-Vincze, 2002: 48). Moreover, we should speak of multiple identities for the individual, as one can never have just one identity but a plurality of identities in a plurality of contexts; each individual has his/her own hierarchy of identities.

What about the identity of the body? The so-called “new feminist philosophy of the body” tries to revalue the feminine corporeality against the “centrality of mind, the psyche, interior, or consciousness (and even the unconscious) in conceptions of the subject through a reconfiguration of the body” (Grosz, 1994: vii). Rosi Braidotti<sup>1</sup> uses the term “embodied subjectivity” to express her belief that the body is “one’s primary location in the world, one’s primary situation in reality”, an “interface, a threshold between the material and the symbolic” (in Moore, 1994: 18-19). “Speaking from the body” signifies not only the “specificity of positionality” but also “the embodied, material nature of one’s relation with the world” (Moore, 1994: 18). In her turn, Henrietta Moore argues that “the multiple nature of

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<sup>1</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *Patterns of Dissonance*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991: 219.

subjectivity is lived physically, through practices that can be simultaneous physical and discursive” (Moore, 1994: 81).

At this point, having reviewed the major theoretical approaches concerning the body and its relation with identity and discourse, we should try to sketch out the premises for analysing women’s situation in Romania after the collapse of communism.

*“When the state usurps the private life, the body remains naked in public”*

(Gail Kligman, 2000: 14, quoting a Romanian informant)

Taking into consideration Moore’s previous argument about “lived subjectivity”, we can assert that the politics of sexual equality forced upon women by the communist regime in Romania was indeed experienced by these women both physically and discursively. The official discourse pertained to transform women, as well as men, into socialist citizens. The *de jure* equality between the sexes denied women *de facto* their sexuality, while transforming their reproductive capacity into a national project. The body, especially the female one, was reified by the communist regime in order to serve the interests of the State, represented by the Party.

Writing about the “politics of duplicity” (the politics of reproduction in Ceaușescu’s Romania), Gail Kligman considers that “the most intimate element – sexuality – has been exposed to public view or, as some argue, to ‘voyeurism’ in the name of public wellness”. Both the productive and the reproductive potential of women as socialist citizens were put to work for ideological projects such as “constructing the communist nation”, “building the multi-developed socialist society”. Thus, the socialist body, the female one *per excellentiam*, becomes nothing more but a “vehicle for achieving certain objectives ‘higher’ than the individual ones” (Kligman, 2000: 14). Soliciting women’s full commitment, energy, capacity of work and also reproductive capacity, the real intentions of the Communist Party were in fact to control the private life of individuals, their most intimate behaviours, feelings, intentions. The population, simultaneously “subject and object of social experimenting, was to be

shaped, with or without consent, to become the socialist people" (Kligman, 2000: 22).

In the beginning, as Zoe Petre argues (Petre, 1998: 259), the politics of sexual equality was meant to destroy the patriarchal order of the previous bourgeois society by undermining the very idea of traditional family, of private (in the full sense of the term) life. Abortions, divorces, women's public careers (especially in traditional 'masculine' jobs) were not only permitted but encouraged. "The radical alteration of social relations and of the organization of the structures of every day life was one of the main objectives in the strategies of development proposed by the communist plan-makers" (Kligman, 2000: 32). Thus, "destroying the public property, including the condition of woman as a private property, was crucial for achieving the alteration of the 'ancien regime' and for the dissolution of the capitalist 'habitus'. In this way, the traditional bourgeois family was meant to cease to exist" (Kligman, 2000: 14).

Moreover, the reproductive role of women was coded in terms of nationalism; woman-the-mother becomes not only a symbol of the communist hard-working and self-sacrificing hero, but also a symbol of mother-nation. The ideological discourse intermingles with the political one. Woman's body becomes the body of the nation as the sexual reproduction entails reproducing the (socialist) nation. Paradoxically, sexuality itself is abolished. As Ceaușescu ordered: "We should treat all individuals not as men and women, but as members of the communist party, as citizens, whom we judge exclusively by the work they do"<sup>1</sup>.

One can only guess the difficulty of analysing matters of gender construction and negotiation in this context. How should we discuss femininity in a society that for such a long time has tried to abolish the "natural" order of things, that is the previous gender regime? How should we conceptualise the experience of women - former socialist citizens - in a new world with new and conflicting values and projections of femininity? What happens to women's bodies after communism and what can the practice of aerobics tell us about this experience?

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<sup>1</sup> The official discourse at the Plenary Session in June 1973, in Olteanu, Gheonea and Gheonea, 2003: 41- 42)

"Presenting an entirely new metaphor for sport, aerobics fits neatly into the shift toward modernity that has distinguished the late twentieth century"

(Spielvogel, 2003: 49).

Laura Spielvogel, writing about aerobics in Japan, argues that the popularity of this activity in the last two decades "marks out a new age concerning sport, leisure and consume", as a symptom of "general social changes associated with economic growth" and as part of a "broader set of practices of consume"<sup>1</sup>. Perhaps due to this multiple determination of aerobics, the discourse that supports and advertises it is based on different heterogeneous elements, such as discipline, endurance, will (associated with sports), fun, satisfaction, relaxation (as part of leisure) and also a pervasive norm of the consumer society (the desire for a slender body). One of my initial interrogations dealt precisely with what discursive assertions (youth, independence, will, self-control, western lifestyle, economic status etc.) are associated with practicing aerobics in the particular context of post-socialist Romania.

To start with, one might wonder perhaps "why aerobics?". My answer would be that at the time, aerobic clubs seemed to be the only legitimate location for discussing the female body in a society where corporeal taboos and restrictions still function. It only "seemed to be" a legitimate location, because it turned out that not even in a place where women come with the obvious goal of working out their bodies, they do not feel at ease with discussing about it, about their relation with their own bodies, about their corporeal identity.

From a methodological point of view, I should mention that I have conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with women practicing aerobics. Although not intended, the sample proved homogenous, most of my respondents being young (24-38), educated (at least faculty level) and belonging to higher socio-economic groups (lawyer, engineer, PR manager etc.).

Although I started out expecting to find no discourse whatsoever underlying the *praxis* of aerobics, fieldwork data proved my

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<sup>1</sup> Spielvogel, Laura, *Working Out in Japan: Shaping the Female Body in Tokyo Fitness Clubs*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003: 45).

expectation wrong. Not only that all my respondents spontaneously constructed a discourse, but this proved to be a highly homogeneous one, with similar assertions and ideas emerging stereotypically in every single interview, such as the “coding”, the “negotiation”, the “routine”, the rhetoric of “satisfaction”, the “abandon”.

As mentioned, one of the main discursive mechanisms is “coding” the practice of aerobics. Be it “the school”, “the church”, “a choir”, all of my respondents spontaneously associated it with a “legitimate” social institution: “I go to aerobics just as I go to work, it’s in my schedule”(Doina). Thus coded, the superficial and frivolous practice of aerobics gains a new social signification and is more easily “negotiated” with the other sex roles. Moreover, it always finds a special place in the daily routine: “the truth is that it is much easier to hold on to it if you think about it as something that you have to do because you just have to, if you insert it in your life as something natural, something that is part of your life” (Raluca). Coding aerobics and conferring it a stable, un-negotiable place in the life of a woman obviously helps her to hold on to this practice and to construct a legitimising discourse for it.

Very important seems to be the idea of doing something collectively. Timea, for instance, values the fact that “everybody is doing the same thing. It is like going to church, when you go in and there are a hundred people and everybody is praying. And it creates a kind of a ritual, a bond; everybody is doing the same thing without knowing each other”. Another respondent, Ioana, emphasizes the idea of collectivity; if she misses a class she feels sorry for betraying the “team”.

This also implies other factors, such as the one mentioned by Raluca: embarrassment. “It’s like in a choir, where everybody is singing and you’re the one silent”. You cannot give it up. “It’s a matter of challenge: if the other can do it, why couldn’t I? You gnash your teeth and keep up”. Comparison is always there. Timea compares herself with the trainer: “Every time I want to stop and I feel all sweaty and tired, I look at her and I say to myself: «God, this woman is forty and she jumps here like this» and I cannot stop”.

Most of my respondents value the will and discipline associated with this activity. Raluca takes it as a personal challenge: “I feel like if I do not do this I am a coward and weak person. It is more like, you know, competing with myself. What, am I that weak that I can’t rise from here and

go do something?”. Timea is also a dynamic person: “I think it is a lousy excuse.«Oh, my, I do not have time for this!». If you really want, you find two hours for yourself”.

The discourse is constructed on the idea of an intense satisfaction associated with practicing aerobics: “Aerobics is my greatest achievement. Nothing in the world could make me give it up”, says Ioana. What motivates these women to construct such a discourse? Satisfaction is explained as a feeling of physical comfort, of harmony with one’s self, of fulfilment. And the cliché of “having one hour just for myself” enters the stage again: “When I’m there, for an hour I do not think of anything else but those movements, what leg should I stretch and things like that. During that hour my mind is emptied of anything else, personal problems, job, anything...and there’s also that pleasant feeling after working out, a pleasant tiredness, that you still feel after you’ve finished...I feel like heaven. Every time I step out from aerobics, there’s no gravitation, I feel like flying” (Raluca).

“I can not be without it. My husband respects that. And if it were to be another husband, he would have to respect it, also. And, anyway, what would I do during that hour, if not aerobics, wash some more dishes?” asks Magda. “At least I know I do something for me, for my health”. This is another issue at stake: doing something for one’s self. “There’s something about it, you know, like when you were little and you were building a house from blankets, it was something just for you. Perhaps, who knows, going to aerobics when you already have a family is something you do just for yourself” (Raluca). Especially because “if you go there, you leave everything behind and just take care of yourself. After one hour you feel relaxed and fulfilled that you’ve done something for yourself” (Doina).

Asserting independence and a personal goal seems extremely important for these young women: “As I see it, I do it for me, not to show off because I look good or to find a nice man because I have a great body. And I bet I will do it even after marriage, because otherwise I wouldn’t feel good” (Timea). Raluca says something very similar: “When I go to sport, I feel like I am in control, independent, I do what I do for me”. As the discourse turns to matters of identity, difference appears as well. The extreme alterity in this case is constructed as “those girls who go there dressed up in the latest fashion” and who “go there just to look good for a certain man”. These persons contradict the main discourse about asserting

independence and personal will. "I could never understand those women who struggle themselves, go to sports, solarium, massage, all of it, and then get married and put on twenty kilos. «I already have a husband, I can eat!»" (Timea). There is also a matter of socio-economical status: "There are these individuals who just carry their bag around...They go to fancy clubs just to be seen there, and to be able to say «I work out», not necessarily to do it" (Magda).

Although my inquiry started out as one concerning the body and the relationship with identity and discourse, the discussion mainly got around the subject without really getting into it. The body proved a delicate subject. The general idea most of my respondents agreed with is that one has a body and one has to cope with it: "A women should never forget that she has a body and she has to take care of it as much as possible, or at least to get used to the idea that, look, this is what I do for me, for my body" (Raluca).

It seems that the relationship with one's body usually takes the form of a partnership. Timea argues that: "I like to have a relation of friendship with my body, meaning that I give it what it needs and it helps me to feel good, like a partnership. By practicing sports, I think that I take care of my body". Raluca sees it as a symbiosis: "My relationship with my body is a kind of symbiosis, I feel perfectly its reactions, I can feel when I'm catching a cold, getting the fever...We tolerate each other, well, no, we help each other...". Even more, she agrees that practicing aerobics has ameliorated this symbiosis: "Since I have been doing aerobics, we get along better...I'm at ease with myself". The idea of harmony is also at stake, as defined by Timea: "To feel good psychically, you have to look good physically. I see it as a whole: I have a soul and a body, and so I have to work out my body".

"Feeling good" about one self is crucial. Raluca puts it very briefly: "I used to think that this stuff with «feeling good about yourself» is just American bullshit. But it really is very important to feel good about you. It gives you confidence; if you don't feel good about yourself, you feel good with someone else, and this is already dependence. It's like I would only feel good if the man besides me worships me and looks at me".

Most of my respondents agree to the idea of a norm concerning the female looks, which Raluca puts in connection to the life in the city: "Perhaps a country woman would never understand and would think of

it as something futile, another tiring burden. Not to mention that in the country there isn't this madness about the body we are accustomed to, the obsession about the looks, about the cloths. Down there things are simpler: you've gained some weight, nothing happens".

In conclusion, the discourse about practicing aerobics that these women spontaneously uttered during interviews tends, to my opinion, to obscure the actual relationship with one's body. Emphasizing discursively issues like "feeling good", "spiritual harmony", "the soul", "independence", and these women avoid discussing their corporeal identity and matters pertaining to the body.

Leslea Harravon Collins, writing about feminism and aerobics, suggests that, since the subjects experience a corporeal fragmentation in everyday life, aerobics, through its repetitive character, can be perceived as a mean of rediscovering, appropriating and integrating the body (Harravon Collins, 2002: 98). In his turn, David Le Breton argues that "body practices are situated at the a crossroads where the anthropological necessity of fighting the fragmentation experienced in the self meets with the play of signs (forms, shape, youth, health), that gives a decisive social supplement to any physical activity of choice" (Le Breton, 2002: 161).

Thus I came to believe that the rhetoric of "having one hour just for myself" that emerges redundantly in the discourse dissimulates in fact the intimate relation with one's body. Subjects of a post-socialist gender regime, women experience this particular bond as something new and not yet internalised, which is denied to them in other social locations. As such, they choose to construct a feminine space – and a discourse – in which experiencing an intimate integration with one's own body can be "naturalized" and lived un-problematically. This is a space in which exercising a degree of independence, including in the relation with the self and the body, is highly valued.

Trying to understand such a mobilizing, voluntary discourse in the context of renegotiating roles and identities in post-socialist Romania, I suggest that this particular discourse is in fact a form of empowerment, of a rhetorical exercise of power and agency, designed for themselves by a category traditionally constructed as passive and undemanding, i.e. women. That is why I have tried to emphasize the experiences of my respondents as narrated by themselves. It is my

deep conviction that approaching the “insignificant”, “superficial” details of social life, trying to grasp its most intimate functions can only be a way of “reading” differently the major social narratives and of enriching our understanding about it.

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## SEX DIFFERENCES IN HEALTH AND ILLNESS IN ROMANIA AND THE LOGIC OF GENDER SPECIFIC MEDICAL EDUCATION

*Petra Verdonk*

### **Introduction**

In this paper the necessity for attention to sex or gender in medicine and more specifically in medical education is highlighted. Some sex differences in health and illness will be presented. The term 'sex differences' will be used as much as possible. The reason to do this is that the paper also presents a Dutch project to incorporate sex in medical education. The term 'gender' cannot be translated in Dutch, and gender as a social construction of masculinity or femininity means little to doctors, being used to the term 'sex' in their medical discourse. Besides that, the Dutch translation of the word 'sex' (*sekse*) means more than just the biological sex. [1] For doctors a concept is needed that implies both biological sex as well as the English meaning for 'gender'.

An attempt is made to reflect on which sex-differences in health and illness are important in Romania. [2] However, knowledge is derived from studies that have been done by researchers from Women's Studies in Medicine in several Western countries, applied to epidemiological data from e.g. the WHO or the World Bank. This means that results cannot be extrapolated to men and women in CEE-countries, and more specifically Romania, without hesitation. A second problem with these data is that they may not reflect the agendas of Romanian women and men themselves, who may have other priorities than the WHO, or face problems that are overlooked by the NGO's. Therefore not enough emphasis can be put on the

contribution of women's groups or self-organisations in women's health as advocates of change. Magyari-Vincze argues that academic feminism is not empowered by existing local women's and/or feminist movements. [3] I would like to remark that the organisation of women's groups in health or specific health conditions in women offer an opportunity for addressing feminist issues, because they question the consequences of disadvantaged social and economic positions. In trying to find explanations for these disadvantaged positions as well as solutions for the problems they create, women's groups in health may pave the way for including feminist issues in policies, health education, and patient care.

First, an overview is given on explanations for sex-differences in health and illness to clarify the necessity for addressing men's as well as women's health in medical practice, in medical education, and in health care policies. The next section will address a few health topics that are especially important to women's health, like coronary heart disease and reproduction. Where possible, Romanian data are given to illustrate the necessity to uncover sex-segregated data on health and illness, with national data and cultural context in mind. Finally, a Dutch project to incorporate sex in the medical curriculum that started in 2002 is described as an example of sex-mainstreaming medical education. In this introduction I wish to notify that this paper is not a structured review nor does it claim to be complete.

### **Explanations on sex differences in health and illness**

Sex differences are profound in many areas, such as presentation of health complaints, diagnoses, treatment, and prevention of disease. [4] A lot of data were found by women's studies in medicine during the past decades. Their studies were performed as a critical reflection on common practices in medicine, such as the exclusion of women in pharmacological research, or the generalization of results of studies on disease to women's bodies, e.g. results of studies to coronary heart disease in men. [4]

Several hypotheses exist to explain sex differences in health and illness. The first explanation is biology: women's bodies are different from men's bodies. Women menstruate; they are pregnant, give birth

and lactate. Although sex specific problems in reproduction are evident also in medicine, they are not always and in all countries priority of health care policy. And if they are, the policy does not necessarily take the female point of view. This has been clearly illustrated by Baban and David in their paper on body politics in Romania under the Ceaușescu regime. [5] A second explanation that is given for sex differences in health and illness stems from psychological theories. Sex differences in psychosocial development supposedly create sex differences in adults concerning coping styles, experiencing disease, or the perception of symptoms. [4] Sociological explanations are the third line of theories to explain sex-differences in health and illness. These theories point to differences in socio-economical circumstances and positions of power in society. Lousy jobs, double burden of paid and unpaid labour and role conflicts weigh heavily on women's health. [4] According to this theory, men's risk taking behaviour is at least partly accountable for the gender gap in life expectancy.

Feminists have proclaimed that women's health complaints are more often labelled as psychosocial problems, and that women's daily life problems are more often medicalized. Doctors, these critics pointed out, should be aware of the structural problems women face in society and their social environment.

Taking this criticism seriously, women's studies in medicine are confronted with a difficult problem. On the one hand, women's lives, bodies and needs differ from men's. Evidently, these differences are not enough taken into account in the doctor's office, e.g. when it comes to coronary heart disease. On the other hand, by putting forward sex differences instead of equality, stereotypes may be created that reproduce women's problems in society. Therefore, it should never be forgotten that differences between men and women are not nearly as large as similarities between the sexes and that many differences in health and illness are due to discrimination and stereotyping. This needs to be resolved on a political and cultural level. Besides that, similarities between men and women in research hardly stand the chance to be published in journals. [6] This means that there is considerable overlap between the sexes, also when it

comes to health problems. Presented differences are hardly ever mutually exclusive differences, but gradual differences in statistics.

In the following section some topics that are especially important to women's health will be addressed. Reproductive health of women in Romania seems to be of specific importance. Then several other topics will be described, wherever possible accompanied by Romanian data or CEE data.

### **Sex-segregated data**

In Romania, most of the necessary epidemiological data are not available at all, so gender-segregated data are even more difficult to find. The segregation of data is of special importance, since they clarify the different health conditions of men and women. Only then special policies can be made for prevention or health care of men and women in societies to take care of sex-specific needs. Because Romanian health care is developing, sex-differences can be taken into account right from the start. Segregated data are the first step towards a gender-sensitive medicine. However, it is important to go beyond documenting sex-differences in rates. [7] Differences between men and women in morbidity rates may largely be explained by non-biologic factors. [8]

Life expectancy shows the largest gender gap in almost all countries. In this respect, Romania appears to have the lowest life expectancy among reference countries like e.g. Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, and the life expectancy at birth is decreasing. The life expectancy in Romania was in 1998 66,3 years for men and 73,8 years in women. [9] Suicide rates among men for instance have increased during the 1990's. The gender gap in life expectancy has even increased because of the deteriorating health especially among men. Data show that the generic expression 'women get sick, men die' also seems to describe the Romanian situation. Identification of health problems of a diversity of women and men seems to be of specific importance in a country with so many economical and cultural differences within the population. Romania has several minorities of which Hungarians (7.2%) are the largest group, then Gypsies (1,8%, although this may be an underestimation) and Germans (0,5%). Of the

population 18% lived in acute poverty in 1997 (with less than \$1,- per day to spend) and this percentage is even higher in rural areas. Many sex-differences in health and illness are multidisciplinary caused. Therefore it should be notified as much as possible who was included in medical research and to whom results are being extrapolated. In the following sections, only information is given on sex, and not on ethnicity. Data were not available.

### **Reproduction and sexuality**

When it comes to reproductive rights and health care, biological differences between men and women were used in Romania to legitimise control over women's bodies. Băban and David describe in their paper 'The impact of body politic on women's body' the dramatic effects of 23 years of pro-natalist policy by the Ceaușescu regime. [5] Among these effects are the widespread practice of illegal abortions, maternal death and overcrowded orphanages. According to these authors, official statistics show that in 1965 for each delivery were four abortions, and that the annual population growth in 1966 was less than 1 percent. In 1985 Ceaușescu proclaimed that giving birth was a patriotic duty, and women who refused had to be seen as deserters, escaping the law of natural continuity. In 1989 abortion was legislated, but costs for abortion have to be covered by women themselves, unless they have no income at all, are mother of four children already, or for medical reasons. Between 1990 and 1998 the number of abortions did indeed decrease by 74% to 46,5 per 1,000 women. In 1990 this was 177,6 (women aged 15-49). For European standards though, these levels are still high. By raising the price of abortion in the 90's an attempt was made to encourage women to use contraceptives and discourage them to abort. However, the high price for abortion and the deficiency of contraceptives in rural areas also lead to illegal abortions with tragic consequences. The authors note that unofficial estimates indicate that nearly 20% of Romanian women (5.2 million) of reproductive age may now be infertile, due to unsafe abortions. In the literature infertility rates caused by sexually transmitted diseases or other conditions were not found. Infertility has been found to increase women's risks of affective or neurotic syndromes. [7]

Clandestine abortion is the most important cause of maternal mortality. [10] Maternal mortality rate is 43 per 100,000 live births. In 1997 21 of these deaths were due to induced abortion. Maternal mortality is 0.3% now in Romania and has been decreasing, but it still is one of the highest rates in Europe.

In 1998 fertility rate in Romania decreased to 1.3 in 1998, which is below the replacement level (2.1) and the highest among ten reference countries in central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary). [9] Child mortality in Romania is 21%, which is the highest in Europe, together with Albania. [9,10] This high figure is due to perinatal and malformation condition. Despite the low fertility level many Romanian babies are still left behind in orphanages. Most of them have been abandoned because of their health (56%) and because of socio-economic problems in the family (41%).

Romania has the highest incidence rate of AIDS among the reference countries (Czech Republic, Bulgaria, etc). Lack of contraceptives, lack of sexual education, anti-abortion law and the use of non-sterilized syringes are said to be causes for the spread of HIV/AIDS in Romania. Romania faced a major HIV-epidemic in the late 1980's to early 1990's. [11] Thousands of institutionalised children were infected with HIV through blood transfusions and injections with non-sterilized syringes. The surviving cohort of HIV-infected adolescents (now frequently homeless) may soon start to engage in behaviours that put them at risk of transmitting HIV to others. The number of heterosexually infected cases has so far remained relatively low in Romania. The booming of sex-industry may play an important part in the future spread of HIV in Eastern Europe. [12] Many of these problems are closely related to lack of sexual education in Romania. [5]

### **Coronary heart disease**

Muresan concludes that not only the deterioration of real income and unhealthy lifestyle have an impact on life span, but also the lack of financial means in the Romanian health care system. [13] However, the main cause of the decrease of life expectancy between 1991 and 1994 was the lack of efficiency in fighting against coronary heart disease. Compared to the reference countries in 1998, the SDR for

cardiovascular diseases was the highest among women although mortality due to CVD is decreasing. [9]

In Romania coronary heart disease is, as everywhere, the main cause of death. Of deaths under 64 35% of the people dies because of coronary heart disease. Of deaths over 65, this percentage is 77%. [10] Traditional risk factors that are identified in western research may not have predictive value in eastern European populations. [14] Mortality for cardiovascular disease is especially high at young ages, deaths are more likely to be sudden, and many people who die do not show the expected evidence of coronary artery lesions. Lipid metabolism may be different, but other factors may be involved also. Eastern European diets are low in quantities of fruits and vegetables, with consequences for antioxidant activity in the blood. Data are not consistent as to whether Romanian nutrition is high (following northern European patterns) or low (following southern European patterns) on fat. [9,14] The number of cigarettes smoked per person in Romania exceeded the average level of the EU since the mid-1990s. This influences the high mortality from cardiovascular diseases. [9] Alcohol is also a contributor to the increased mortality due to cardiac disease. In Russia, alcohol is typically drunk as vodka and in binges, which is associated with a marked increase in the risk of sudden cardiac death. Another factor may be the high level of psychosocial stress. [14] The article of McKee and Shkolnikov shows that men with poor education were especially vulnerable to the transitions in Russia and overall mortality was much higher in men with the least education, due to external causes and cardiovascular diseases. The link between alcohol and both causes of death is evident. The large consumption of alcohol is a key- contributing factor to the high level of injuries and violence.

Western research shows that coronary heart disease differs a lot in men and women. Women present their chest pain differently from men, and other illnesses may be due to women's chest pain. [4] This is a trap for both doctor and patient and can lead to underestimation of coronary heart disease in women. Also, women attract the disease when they are older they face different risk factors (e.g. diabetes, which is a much greater risk factor for women than it is in men). Several tests are less reliable in women. And consequences of the disease are also different if only because women are older when they start having these health complaints.

## Occupational health

In socialism gender equality was based on ignoring gender-differences and treating women as men. As a consequence, women carried the double burden of paid and unpaid labour but were thereby seen as 'double heroes' (Magyari-Vincze, presentation Babes-Bolyai University Cluj, June 2003). This author argues in another paper that women were devalued under communism by the general state policy, and women's emancipation was reduced to labour force participation. [3] The newsletter 'Center News' from the Russian and East European Center shows a cartoon from a Russian newspaper of a woman carrying a large bag with her husband, several children and her cattle inside, while she says: "I can't believe that I have such a happy life! To live free in a free country!" Gapova, trying to explain the gender gap in voting in Belarus, where women voted pro-communist in the 90's, argues that for many Belarusian women new 'liberal choices' do not exist, since they are traditionally concentrated in lower priority sectors of the economy and in lower posts. This probably is the case in many other CEE countries. The new economic context needs workers free of household and childcare duties and defines the 'new employee' as independent, which is meaningless to women as mothers and caretakers. [15] This ideology may cause several constraints on the occupational health of women. Being double heroes under communism, in this transitional state they move towards being no-hero-at-all: second-hand employees facing discrimination and job demands in a context of 'liberalism', while having to take care of household and care taking duties which are seen as private, leisure time, and not valuable to society. This is being expressed in the feminisation of unemployment in Romania. The absorption of unemployed women seems to be slower than the absorption of unemployed men. Therefore, women are more at risk for long-term unemployment than men. [2]

Other health care constraints follow from specific job demands for Romanian men and women who work in textile industry, agriculture, or sex industry. One example is pesticide contamination in rural areas, which may differ in health consequences for women than for men. Unfortunately, information on risk factors for occupational health is scarce. [9]

## Mental health

Romania has no official mental health policy yet, even though the number of people who suffer from psychiatric problems increased by 28% in 1999, compared to 1990. [10] Women worldwide are at higher risk for depression because of uncontrollable life-events, such as illnesses, job insecurity, dangerous neighbourhoods or hazardous workplaces. In men, these problems may be associated with abuse of alcohol/drugs or with violence. Women tend to use psycho-tropics to cope with daily strains, whereas men tend to self-medicate themselves with alcohol for temporary strains that are caused by external pressure. [7]

Evidently tobacco, drugs and alcohol use are key factors to levels of mortality and morbidity among young people in Romania. [9] In 1999 the World Health Organization reports that there are few reported cases of the use of injected drugs, but in 2002 Elekes and Kovács note that drugs are becoming more of an issue in Romania. [16] Although drug use and drug-related crime is increasing, drug-treatment is in its initial phase. Alcohol abuse is a much larger problem, but drug abuse is a new, and growing problem in Romania, as well as in several other CEE countries. In Russia, poor educated men are especially vulnerable to alcohol-related death, such as death caused by coronary heart disease and violence. [14] Interestingly, an article about patterns of alcohol consumption in Bulgaria shows that drinking in Bulgaria is more common in cities than in villages (especially for women), and that drinking was more frequent in those with the highest income. [17] These results show that the association of alcohol consumption with affordability is evident, but also that drinking patterns differ not only between men and women, but also between men and between women. It can nevertheless be concluded that heavy drinking in CEE-women is infrequent, but very common among men.

Western research also found that drinking patterns among men and women differ. [2] Women drink alone and are more ashamed of their addiction than men. Women who have alcohol problems more often than men have a partner with alcohol problems, and women with alcohol problems are not taken care of very well when it comes to

nutrition, since they don't take good care of themselves. Women with alcohol problems are more vulnerable for sexual abuse. Children of addicted mothers are at risk of being neglected, children of addicted fathers are at risk of being physically abused. Pregnant mothers who abuse alcohol can get babies with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome.

In 1997 Romania had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rates for chronic liver disease and cirrhosis among the reference countries. Although mortality is higher in men, the rates are equal for the sexes. In this respect, Romania has unfortunately the smallest gender gap compared to EU countries. [9]

Violence against women received little attention so far in research. Official data are lacking but Baban and David note that domestic violence is widespread in Romania, in a variety of social and economic groups. [5] A surrogate indicator for domestic violence is the rate for homicide and purposeful injury among women. This rate in Romania is three times the EU-rate, but four times the lowest rate among reference countries. The number of rapes reported to the police has increased significantly during the 1990's. [9] Women and children with experiences of violence are at special risk of being affected by mental health problems. In Romania people who suffer from psychiatric disorders do not only face discrimination by family and friends, but also by medical and professional staff. [9] This is only one of the reasons why it is important for doctors to know about sex-differences.

### **Incorporation of Gender in the Medical Curriculum**

A Dutch project to incorporate gender in the medical curriculum is presented here as an example of mainstreaming sex differences in medicine, especially in medical education.

The concept of gender or sex mainstreaming in this project consists of three different dimensions. First, it is about equal access to knowledge about health and illness, respect, and health care. Second, it is on equal outcomes, such as (healthy) life expectancy. And finally, it is about equal rights and more specifically the equal right to be different, different of men, and of other women.

Already for a long time the Dutch ministry of Health wishes to create a sex specific health care, in which men and women receive care in which their special male or female needs are met. To accomplish this, sex has to be integrated in medical education. In 2002 a national project started to incorporate sex in at least six out of eight medical schools in the country. But what does a sex specific medical curriculum look like? To be able to accomplish the mainstreaming of sex in medical education, goals have been set. [18] Objectives have been listed on a practical level based on literature and international experiences. These objectives are directed towards accomplishing a longitudinal sex specific medical curriculum. In table 1 these objectives are shown.

*Tabel 1*

Gender is incorporated in the medical curriculum if Students are capable of recognizing and explaining differences between the sexes in the following domains:

- Life stages e.g. menopause, adolescence
- Pharmacotherapy
- Coronary heart disease
- Urinary tract infections and micturition
- Urinary incontinence
- Reproduction, especially contraceptives, Sexually Transmitted Disease, infertility
- Eating disorders, obesity
- Addictions: alcohol, benzodiazepines
- Depression and anxiety disorders
- Sexual abuse and violence, child abuse, partner violence
- Posttraumatic stress disorder
- Sexuality, sexual problems
- Communication
- Gender and culture
- Sex-specific health care/health care quality

Sex-differences are incorporated in objectives of the curriculum

Students followed an education on biomedical as well as socio-cultural differences between men and women

Students are educated in sex-specific medicine during several years of the study.

Students are educated in sex-differences in at least 6 to 8 required courses of 2 to 4 weeks

Students have been offered an elective course on gender and/or culture

Many topics that are especially important to women often are lacking in the Dutch medical curricula. These are subjects like sexual violence or child abuse, or the interaction between sex and culture incorporated in medical education. And secondly, sex differences have to be addressed in all kinds of topics that are currently taught in a neutral way, but where male patients seem to be normative. These sex differences and topics should be implemented in the educational objectives.

Not only biomedical topics or biomedical differences between the sexes should be in the curriculum; but socio-cultural differences need to be addressed as well. Risk taking behaviour in men has a lot to do with health and illness such as in car accidents, and so has (lack of) assertiveness in women like e.g. in negotiating the use of contraceptives.

Differences between the sexes have to be addressed in several years of the curriculum, not just in one. The message of the importance of gender has to be repeated in several different years and on several levels of education. Sex differences have to be incorporated in 6 to 8 courses of the regular programme for the same reason. And finally, for those students who are really interested an elective course on gender (and culture) should be available.

### History of the project

The national project started with a local project in Nijmegen that began in 1998. [19] Material was screened, interviews were done with coordinators and lecturers, and agreements on changing the material were made. The national project started with the evaluation of this pilot-project in Nijmegen, to see what could be learned from the pilot-project. [18]

Coordinators (all male) were interviewed again on the changes they had made, how satisfied they were with the changes, and how they felt the students experienced the changes. Results of the local project show that gender is much more integrated now than it was before. Many of the coordinators did in fact adjust their programme. Those who didn't carry out the recommendations, found it difficult to make adjustments or felt that adjustments could not be incorporated

well in their programme. New ideas however developed during the interview. Those coordinators who began to see sex differences in their own practice seemed much more willing to make changes in their course also. Many times doctors are confronted with differences between men and women, but they are not always aware of them or don't always see why it should be in medical education, or they don't really see how these differences affect the health of their patients.

### Conclusion and discussion

The Dutch project to integrate sex in medical curricula followed several steps that may or may not be applicable in Romania or other countries. The first step is to find sex-segregated data and data segregated on other factors such as age, ethnic background, or level of education. The next step in the process is a local project to gain experience with the integration of gender in medical school. An evaluation of this project offers information on existing resistance and success factors. After this, sex can be integrated on a wider scale e.g. on a regional or national level.

In such a process, many difficulties are to be faced like what strategy is best, the focus of the content, but also the possible creation of new stereotypes. Another problem is the process of teaching itself. Students do not only learn from books and activities, but they learn also from staff as role models. Attitude of staff towards male and female patients (and towards male and female students) is not easily changed. How can gender be incorporated in this 'hidden' curriculum? [20] This will be the last, and undoubtedly the most difficult, step in the project. A step that is not only necessary in medicine.

### NOTES

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## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE SEXUAL EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS

*Cornelia Mureşan*

### Introduction

Proposing the subject of gender differences in sexual experience among students, I thought that this conference would be an excellent occasion to share the results of a survey taken among students, a year ago, about sexual behaviour and reproductive health (USSBRHS). Obviously I shall not be able to treat here but one of the various aspects approached by the survey. This subject, the first sexual intercourse, is an event that demographers usually prefer when they talk about teenagers and young adults.

My paper has three parts: the first one studies sexual behaviour among students in the international context, showing the gender differences regarding the intensity and calendar of the studied event for Romanians and other 5 nationalities of students: Bulgarians, Poles, Russians, Italians and Japanese. In the second part I will present the main trends of sexual behaviour at Romanian students on the basis of some other national surveys, following the issues that could be approximately retaken in the third part where the attention is focused on Romanian university students only.

### **Gender differences at the first intercourse. Romania in the international context.**

Without entering methodological details, I would like first of all to present two comparative tables that reveal a result that surprised me. I must confess that I did not expect gender differences regarding that first sexual experience to be so big in Romania; anyway I did not expect them to be a lot bigger than in the other countries in which the international survey took place.

Table 1.

Intensity differences in first sexual intercourse. Cumulative percent of respondents who experienced their first sexual intercourse by the age of 20. Kaplan-Maier estimation with censored cases.

	TOP of precocity			Girls	Boys
	Girls %	Boys %	Differences %		
<b>Romania</b>	52.1	74.0	21.9	Bulgaria	Bulgaria
<b>Bulgaria</b>	78.0	89.6	11.6	Russia	Russia
<b>Poland</b>	42.8	54.8	12.0	Italy	Romania
<b>Russia</b>	68.3	78.8	10.5	Japan	Italy
<b>Italy</b>	57.1	63.6	6.5	Romania	Poland
<b>Japan</b>	53.4	51.6	-1.8	Poland	Japan

Table 2.

Average age at the first sexual intercourse. Kaplan-Maier estimation

	TOP of precocity			Girls	Boys
	Girls (years)	Boys (years)	Gender gap (years)		
<b>Romania</b>	20.0	17.8	2.2	Bulgaria	Bulgaria
<b>Bulgaria</b>	17.4	16.2	1.2	Russia	Russia
<b>Poland</b>	20.8	19.5	1.3	Italy	Romania
<b>Russia</b>	18.3	17.0	1.3	Japan	Italy
<b>Italy</b>	19.3	18.9	0.4	Romania	Poland
<b>Japan</b>	19.9	20.1	-0.2	Poland	Japan

The first table shows an intensity indicator: the cumulative percent of respondents who experienced their first sexual intercourse by the age of

20. Most of them are Bulgarians and Russians in percentage of 70-90%. Poland, Italy and Japan, countries that still have very traditional family values, have a lower percentage of students that have sexual experience, 40-60%. As a rule the percentage of girls is lower than that of the boys, with the exception of Japan. Romania is though different. Here the gender gap is much larger. Three quarters of the boys are not virgin anymore by the age of 20, but only half of the girls are still virgins by that age.

The analysis of the average age at first intercourse (table 2) leads us to exactly the same results as the intensity indicator. The age at the first sexual relation is higher with more than two years for the female students than for the male students and doubles the difference noticed at Bulgarians, Russians, or Poles. This fact, as well as the percentage of responders that have experienced the first sexual relationship before being 20 years old, proves an important precocity difference between girls and boys for Romanians.

In my opinion, we have here a solid argument when we state that the gender equity in peer and family life in our country is in the red.

### The sexual behaviour of the Romanian young people

In the following I will present some notes on the sexual behaviour of young people based on the findings of Young Adult Reproductive Health Survey conducted in Romania in 1996, as a special need created by the outcomes of the 1993 Romanian Reproductive Health Survey. The 1996 YARHS was designated to collect information from a representative sample of men and women of 15-24 years of age throughout Romania. The universe from which the respondents were selected included all young adults, males and females, regardless of marital status, who were living in Romania when the survey was carried out.

### General trends in the sexual behaviour

The 1993 RRHS found out that young women, compared to older cohorts, were more likely to have experienced premarital sexual intercourse, had a longer interval between first intercourse and first marriage, were older at their first birth, and were less likely to use

contraception. Their longer exposure to premarital sex and their desire to postpone childbearing, in the absence and/or low acceptance of effective contraceptive methods, have led to more time spent at risk of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. As a result, pregnancy rates to young women, most of them mistimed or unwanted increased considerably. So did legally induced abortion.

These findings, and the following ones too, may underestimate the true extent of social and behavioural changes that have occurred recently among young adults, since sex before marriage and non-marital pregnancies are routinely underreported in countries like Romania where strong traditions view premarital sex as morally wrong and condemn childbearing out of wedlock. However, some over-reporting is also possible, especially among young men; unlike females, young men benefit from social sexual permissiveness and may tend to exaggerate their sexual experience, feeling that they are expected to have had sex. However, I think this is less true in the case of students.

The 1996 YARHS found out that young adults in Romania tend to marry later than they did previously. In 1996, only 7% of teenagers (15-19 years old) and 52% of 20-24 years old women have ever been married<sup>1</sup>, it means three time less of teenagers (22%) and 50% less 20-24 years olds (76%) than the ever been married women of three decades ago.

The trend of marriage continued after 1996 too, but a surprising contrary trend has manifested itself in the early fertility (15-19 years old). The *fertility* rate has been rising to 8.5 ‰ in calendar year 2000 versus 7.8 ‰ in 1996 at age 15, to 21.5 ‰ versus 19.5 ‰ at age 16, and to 37.8 ‰ versus 36.9 ‰ at age 17. During the same period the fertility rates at all age between 18 and 25 dropped, the childbearing has been postponed but the total fertility rate remained at the same level: 1.3 children per woman. Sexually implicated very young people have been growing in proportion, but they were not capable, in the same proportion, to manage early childbearing.

<sup>1</sup> 1998, Young Adult Reproductive Health Survey Romania, 1996 - Final Report

## Sexual experiences - outcomes from the YARHS

Table 3.

Reported first intercourse and age at the time by different factors. Young adults 15-24 year-olds YARHS 1996.

Gender	Girls			Boys		
	Had the first intercourse (%)	From which pre-marital (%)	Before age 18 (%)	Had the first intercourse (%)	From which pre-marital (%)	Before age 18 (%)
	46.3	53	38.0	66.6	98	72.9
<b>Current age</b>						
15-17	9.1	65		24.3	99	
18-19	36.0	64		67.7	99	
20-22	68.4	53		92.1	99	
23-24	83.3	48		94.3	98	
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	45.1	66	34.4	66.4	99	75.7
Rural	47.7	39	41.1	66.5	98	69.5
<b>Education (only 20-24 year-olds)</b>						
Primary school	87.7	26	67.5	87.3	96	77.6
Some high school	84.0	49	41.7	93.9	99	75.4
High school complete +	63.8	63	18.6	93.8	99	67.7
<b>Socio-economic status</b>						
Low			47.8			68.5
Middle			27.4			72.3
High			36.0			82.2

Less than half of 15-24 year-old women and two thirds of 15-24 old men have ever had sexual intercourse. While the likelihood of having had intercourse increases steadily with age, sex among very young teenagers, especially females, is uncommon. Only 9% of 15-17 old women and 24% of 15-17 year old men have ever had sex<sup>1</sup>. In fact, even later in the teenage years (18-19), only one of three girls is sexually experienced. This contrasts with two out of three 18-19 year old boys who have had sex. Overall, almost 80% of teenage girls and

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the raise in the very young teenage fertility after 1996 is due to a significant change in sexual behaviour

59% of teenage boys were virgins. Conversely, sex is very common among 20-24 year-olds. Two out of three 20-22 year-old women, five out of six 23-24 year-old women, and virtually all 20-24 year-old men were sexually experienced.

Slightly more than half (53%) of the women reporting sexual experience had premarital sexual intercourse. This contrasts sharply with the pattern of sexual activity amongst men, who virtually never wait to have the first intercourse with their brides.

The overall levels of sexual experience of young adults were not significantly different in urban and in rural areas. However, the levels of premarital intercourse appear to be much higher among young women in urban areas than in rural areas. Two-thirds of young sexual experienced women in urban areas reported they had not been married at the time of first intercourse and the proportion rises to 80% if sex occurs during the teenage years. By comparison, in rural areas, only slightly more than one-third of young women and 43% of teenagers reported sex outside marriage<sup>1</sup>.

On average, there were no significant differences in men's sexual experience, regardless of residence, because men begin having sex younger and marry later than females, and thus the first sexual experience is almost always premarital.

Education is a strong predictor of delayed sexual activity among young women but not among young men, and this effect is most visible among 20-24 year-olds, who have completed their teenage years and are more likely to have achieved a secondary education. More educated young women (20-24) with high school complete or more education were much more likely not to have had sex (36%) than women with some high school education (16%) and their peers with only primary education (13%). However, premarital sexual experience follows a different pattern. It is most prevalent among women with complete high school or higher levels of education.

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<sup>1</sup> Among factors that could have contributed to regional differences in premarital sex are: earlier marriage in the countryside, rural girls grow up in families with stronger traditional values, more influence of the religious community in countryside, young women in rural areas are less educated and less capable of controlling their reproductive lives than the urban women

By contrast, education is directly correlated with sexual experience among men; sexual experience was most common among men with the highest levels of education, regardless the age. Since most of the sexual activity among young men takes place outside marriage, there is no significant gradient of premarital intercourse by education.

### **Age patterns at the first intercourse - outcomes from the YARHS**

Among young women who reported sexual activity, the onset of intercourse is rather late. Overall, only 38% of them reported sexual intercourse before age 18 and only 11% before age 16. Rural women were slightly more likely to have had early intercourse but they also marry earlier than urban women. Young women who were not married at the time of first intercourse were more likely to have had intercourse before age 18 (41%) than women whose first intercourse was marital (34%). Age at first intercourse is correlated to educational attainment. More than two-thirds of women with low levels of education initiated sexual activity before age 18 and 33% before age 16. Conversely, less than 20% of women with 12 or more years of education had had intercourse before age 18. The patterns of first intercourse differ also by socio-economic status. Young women of low socio-economic status were more likely to be sexually experienced and much more likely to have had sex by age 18 (48%) compared to women with middle or high status (27% and 36%, respectively). However, the socio-economic differences are likely to reflect, in part, differences in education, as less well-educated women are more likely to be poor.

Early age at first intercourse is much more common among men than women. One in three men reporting sexual experience had had intercourse before age 16, nearly three in four before age 18, and almost all had had intercourse before turning age 20. Age at first intercourse is not influenced by place of residence, but varied inversely with the educational attainment. Although fewer men with only primary education were sexually experienced, those who reported ever having had intercourse were more likely to have sex before age 18 (78%) compared to their more numerous sexually experienced peers with 12 or more years of schooling (67%).

Premature timing of first intercourse among males is influenced significantly by the respondents' socio-economic status. Fewer men with low socio-economic status reported having had sex by age 18 compared to men with high status (70% vs. 82%). A possible explanation for this pattern is that men coming from affluent families, or who live alone and can support themselves, have more economical resources and less stringent family restrictions, live mostly in urban areas where they are exposed to more opportunities for casual sex, and feel more in control of their sexual choices than men with low socio-economic status. It is also possible, of course, that this pattern does not reflect a real difference in behaviour, but merely a difference in the perception of what these men believe is social acceptable or desirable to share with an interviewer.

### Contraceptive use at the first intercourse - outcomes from the YARHS and USSBRHS

Table 4.

Contraceptive status at time of first sexual intercourse, by gender and method. Young adult 15-24 years of age whose first sexual intercourse was premarital RRHS 1993, YARHS 1996 and students 18-22 years of age USSBRHS 2002.

	Girls			Boys	
	RRHS 1993	YARHS 1996	USSBRHS 2002	YARHS 1996	USSBRHS 2002
No method	74.5	61.0	12.5	65.5	11.2
Any method from which:	25.5	39.0	87.5	34.5	88.8
Withdrawal	17.4	20.8	18.1	15.2	5.1
Condom	4.0	13.4	60.6	15.9	77.6
Calendar	3.3	3.2	3.1	2.2	1.5
Pills	0.8	1.4	5.4	1.0	2.6
Other	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	2.0

Data collected in both the 1993 RRHS and 1996 YARHS show a low prevalence of contraceptive use at first intercourse and heavy reliance on withdrawal and to a much lesser extent on condom. However, among sexually experienced young women who reported premarital intercourse, the proportion using a method had increased from 26% in 1993 to 39% in 1996. Almost all of the increase in use was the result of the increased popularity of condoms, whose prevalence more than tripled (from 4% to 13%).

The same table 4 shows the situation among students. This is completely different. There are only 12% of girls and 11% of boys that didn't use any contraception method at first intercourse. Two thirds of the girls and three of four boys rather prefer the condom. On the second place of preferences is the withdrawal, especially among girls.

And so, I have already switched to our survey on students. But let me continue with the "beginning".

### The sexual experiences of the Romanian students

#### Characteristics of the sample of USSBRHS 2002

The sample was drawn from the first and second year of study in social sciences and economics from Bucharest, Cluj and Tîrgu Mures. The selection criterion was the presence of students at the date and course when we did the agreement with a professor. In the Romanian system part of the students are budgeted and part of them are paying. Generally, the paying students are older and with a lower score in secondary school, but they may attend the course as the budgeted ones. Some of them are much older than the others and generally different from the majority. In order to obtain a more homogenous sample of young students, we thought it was better to eliminate them from the analyses. So, from the provisory number of 1296 students we retained the 1231 those of 18-22 year-olds. The final sample has the following distribution (table 5):

Table 5.

General characteristics of students, USSBRHS 2002

Characteristic	Total	Percent	Notes
<b>Age</b>			
17	1	.1%	
18	29	2.2%	
19	581	44.8%	
20	455	35.1%	
21	117	9.0%	
22	49	3.8%	Subtotal: 1231 (95.0%)
23	17	1.3%	
24	7	.5%	
25	10	.8%	
26	13	1.0%	

27	2	.2%		
28	4	.3%		
29	2	.2%		
30	2	.2%		
31	1	.1%		
32	1	.1%		
33	4	.3%		
43	1	.1%	Total:	1296
<b>Gender:</b>				
Girls	955	77.6%		
Boys	276	22.4%		
<b>University centre:</b>				
Bucharest	755	58.7%		
Cluj	508	39.3%		
Targu Mures	34	1.5%		
<b>Domain of study:</b>				
Social sciences	579	47.0%	from which girls:	499 (86.2%)
Economics	652	53.0%	from which girls:	456 (69.9%)

The sexual behaviour of university students compared with young adults with the same demographic characteristics on the national sample

Table 6.

Reported first intercourse of students and young adults 18-22 years of age, USSBRHS 2002 and YARHS 1996

Current age	Girls			Boys		
	Had first intercourse (%)	From which pre-marital (%)	Unweighted no. of cases	Had first intercourse (%)	From which premarital (%)	Unweighted no. of cases
USSBRHS 2002						
All	52.1	97	955	74.0	100	276
18-19	45.6	97	471	70.3	100	139
20-22	58.3	98	484	77.8	100	137
YARHS 1996						
All	52.4	56	1012	79.0	99	970
18-19	36.0	64	501	67.7	99	517
20-22	68.4	53	511	92.1	98	453

As at the national level, the probability that the boys have already had their first intercourse is higher than for the girls. More than half of

girls and three of four boys risk to be sexually experienced, it means a little bit fewer than the young adults from the national sample. What is more interesting is revealed when we look within age groups. Compared to the national sample, there are fewer very young (18-19) students that have never had intercourse: 29.7% compared to 32.6% for boys and 54.5% compared to 64% for girls. But for the age group 20-22 the proportion of virgin students is higher: 22.2% against 8% for boys; 41.7% against 31.6% for girls. The possible explanation would be that they do not marry yet, so those who would follow the traditional pattern (intercourse inside marriage) do not contribute to the increase in the proportion of those experienced.

There are very few married persons among students in the sample, and all of them are female (14). The great majority of girls and all of the boys had their first intercourse outside the marriage.

*The sexual experience of students and age pattern at the first intercourse*

Table 7.

Reported first intercourse and age at the time by different factors. Students 18-22 year-olds USSBRHS 2002.

	Girls			Boys		
	Had first intercourse (%)	Median age (years)	Log Rank Signif.	Had first intercourse (%)	Median age (years)	Log Rank Signif.
<b>Gender</b>						
	52.1	20.0		74.0	17.8	.0000*
<b>Current age (generation)</b>						
18-19	45.6	19.7	.1813	70.3	18.0	.4181
20-21	58.3	20.1		77.8	17.4	
<b>Population size of town during secondary school</b>						
<100 000	51.0	20.1	.070	73.5	18.0	.004**
100 000-500 000	50.0	20.2		65.2	18.6	
> 500 000	56.4	19.7		80.0	16.9	
<b>Study and paid work</b>						
never	47.1	20.2	.009**	67.0	18.7	.039*
ocasionally	56.2	19.6		77.3	17.2	
regularly	62.2	19.2		81.5	17.6	
<b>Parents' socio-professional status</b>						
low	51.4	20.0	.001**	63.4	18.9	.023*
middle	44.5	20.4		76.8	17.5	
high	57.0	19.4		77.8	17.8	

	Girls			Boys		
	Had first intercourse (%)	Median age (years)	Log Rank Signif.	Had first intercourse (%)	Median age (years)	Log Rank Signif.
<b>Acceptance of parental rules at age 16-18</b>						
agree	37.3	20.2	.000**	56.3	19.1	.017*
persuade	54.6	20.6		77.8	17.6	
fight	66.7	19.6		78.6	17.6	
<b>School results at about 18</b>						
good or less	57.1	19.6	.000**	74.4	17.7	.570
very good	44.1	20.6		72.0	18.0	
<b>Acceptance of school rules and regulations</b>						
usually accepted	50.2	20.1	.032*	65.9	18.6	.003**
not complain, although ...	52.9	19.6		80.0	17.1	
often complained	66.1	19.3		88.2	17.1	
<b>Importance of religion</b>						
not at all or little	67.5	18.5	.000**	75.4	18.6	.004**
fairly	55.4	19.7		79.7	17.1	
very important	41.0	20.7		62.7	18.6	

Looking for the factors that influence the beginning of sexual life of students I applied two procedures of statistical analysis: association tables and Kaplan-Maier life tables. The statistical significance of intensity and tempo differences of demographical phenomenon are those corresponding to the Log Rank test (table 7).

I was looking for the influence of several factors from the same categories as those examined earlier, for the national representative sample of 1996. These are not identical and they cannot be, but I was also looking for differences induced by regional criteria, education or economic independence, adding criteria such as acceptance of parental and school rules, and the importance of religion.

Not only the risk of having first intercourse is lower among girls, but it also takes place later than for boys. Half of the girls had first intercourse before the age of 20.0, while the boys before 17.8. Two years of age is the average difference between the beginning of sexual life for girls and for boys.

The size of the locality where they studied during high school has a statistical significant influence over the chance to have had the first intercourse, but only for boys, not for girls.

However, both boys and girls that lived during the adolescence in capital cities (Bucharest, Chisinau, etc) have kept their virginity in a

smaller proportion. The median age for losing it is almost 2 years earlier for boys and half a year earlier for girls.

For the two (close) generations of students there are no significant intensity and tempo differences.

The students' autonomy level is an important indicator of the first intercourse, both concerning the frequency of a paid work in parallel with the studies, and the possibility of parents with high socio-professional status to sustain their children.

Thus, those that have never done a paid work are less predisposed to sexual life, and if it happens, it happens later. Only 47% of the girls that are not working (and only 67% of the boys) have already had their first intercourse, compared to 62% (respectively 81%). Half of them had it later than the age 20 (respectively 19 for boys), compared to age 19 (respectively 18 for boys).

The parents' influence acts in a similar way, but the differences induced are weaker, although statistically significant. The most exposed to first intercourse, obviously early, are those with parents having high socio-professional status (both for girls and boys), while the least exposed, and at a higher age, are the girls having parents with medium socio-professional status, and the boys having parents with low socio-professional status.

The level of acceptance of parental rules during the adolescence is strongly correlated with the avoidance of the sexual intercourse and with the postponement of the age when it happens. Only a third of the girls that generally accepted their parents' opinions and only 56% of the boys from same category had their first intercourse, compared to the two-thirds of the girls and four-fifths of the boys that used to oppose their parents.

The education level of students is practically the same, but even their behaviour in high school can be a predictor for their demographic behaviour. Indeed, girls that have reported very good school results present a lower risk to lose their virginity, or to lose it early. In the case of the boys, school results have no influence over the behaviour related to the first intercourse. In exchange, the more they accepted the school rules and regulations, the less they are exposed to sexual intercourse, especially to early ones. The same is perfectly true for the girls.

The importance of religion is a factor that influences both the probability to have already had first intercourse, and the age when it happened. But the pattern is different for girls and boys. The girls that declare that the religion is very important for them risk gradually less to lose their virginity and to lose it early. In the case of the boys, the most exposed are those that declare that the religion is fairly important for them, and they are also likely to lose their virginity early (age 17 compared to 18.6 for those who consider religion either very important, or less or not important at all).

I close the analysis here but it is no doubt that the survey may give us much more support for other interesting findings.

## DICHOTOMIST THINKING AND PHALLOCENTRIC PORNOGRAPHY IN HETERO-EROTIC PRACTICES

*Ilinca Dobrescu*

*“Patriarchy perpetuates its deception through myth”. “Myths are said to be stories that express intuitive insights and relate the activities of gods. The mythical figures are symbols. These, it is said, open up depth of reality otherwise closed to “us”. It is not usually suggested that they close off depths of reality which would otherwise be open to us”. “To participate in “reality” is to repeat mythical models, to reactualise them continuously”. Such lines contain the essence of the patriarchal view of myth”. (Mary Daly, 1979: 44-45)*

In order to develop the main issues concerning this subject, I would like to point out some specific psychological gender matters related to *dichotomist structures of language*. Afterwards I'll emphasize on the multiple psychological meanings of the *pornographic concept* by marking the way it interferes with the *sexist perceptions and mentalities on sexuality*.

The pornographic message comes out on the route of “respectable” dichotomist thinking that uses to dissociate the mind from the body. In a patriarchal system wherein women are associated with nature and maternity and men are associated with spirituality, the psychological afferent perceptions identify women as natural elements and men as spiritual subjects. The *soul/body, culture/nature, man/woman* dichotomies imply the following equation: if “we have to deal on one side with the soul and, on the other side, with the body”, then women which are considered natural beings become implicitly un-spiritualised bodies, as long as men who are considered cultural beings become un-embodied spirits. In other words, because of the

linguistic dichotomies established by the patriarchal culture, we use to focus women in their bodily dimension and men in their spiritual dimension. Therefore the most frequent critical judgments regarding women are tied on the "beauty" criteria as long as men are evaluated related to "intelligence" criteria. This conceptual paradigm is reflected by and in the most majority of cultural representations of heterosexuality and becomes psychological reality in our own perceptions, insights and judgments in such a manner that, within androcentric hetero-relations, "*men-spirits*" act erotically over "*women-bodies*".

Pornography, socially defined as material with sexually explicit references, presents, as a general rule, the image of some heterosexual acts. But there are some questions arising from this kind of view. **From what perspective could be considered obscene the graphic representation of a sexual act? And in what measure are heterosexual practices pure hetero (gender equally) in patriarchal societies?** Aren't these practices rather phallogocentric and phallogocentric and focused especially on men's lust, libido and sexual expression? A somatophobic attitude, specific for religious morality, defines obscenity as illustration of explicit sexual acts, but, for the radical feminist Andrea Dworkin such an attitude is far from being as obscene as it is the direct or subliminal message of women subordination to men's power and desire promoted through sexual graphics, literature and customs. According to her, the obscenity of pornography consists in the phallogocentric clue that sexual representations are decoded through. As long as the collective mental and the common senses are tributary to Freudian concepts on sexuality, and our psychological perceptions are determined by a phallogocentric way of thinking, according to which, women's sexuality is considered to be a simple meaning or accessory that men's sexuality is satisfying through, the pornographic representations keep containing the germs of sexism. In a patriarchal world we are relating in a patriarchal way to everything and once more to sexuality. This is a domain of existence that cannot be "free" from any misogynist allusions and meanings. Patriarchy is not a simple social convention, which could be overthrown by quick norms and decrees, because it does not consist in a set of laws and abstract rules that could be

politically neutralized, but it represents a huge ideology on whose frame an entire civilization has been constructed. Patriarchy has invaded our minds and souls; it shaped our consciences and even our unconscious archetypes. There is not a single cultural domain independent of human psychology so that our perceptions on that certain domain to be completely psychologically detached. Therefore the prevalent way that we use to psychologically decode through the cultural representations belongs to the patriarchal cognitive mechanisms of thinking. Pornographic message that means, in radical feminist terms, "illustration of women as sexual objects" represents the main theme in some outstanding psychoanalytical theories that still keep a huge credibility among academic circles. The pornographic message also comes through in "sexual and gender harassment" that women are exposed to in their work places or in educational institutions. The pornographic message exists in all toms of androcentric philosophy and ride out the whole patriarchal culture as a red line. Within hetero-erotic practices – this pornographic message is transposed in some distinct ways, which are manifested through:

- Double standards: women's sexual freedom is enclosed by moral norms so that a woman's "purity" and her moral quality are evaluated related to her "sexual purity" which means her degree of sexual devotion toward a single man,
- The stigmatisation of the victims of sexual or gender aggression: if a woman is physically or sexually aggressed by a man she is considered to be guilty of this fact, as "deserving her fate", because woman's generic image is culturally outcast to "guiltiness",
- Patriarchal men figure out that phallogocentric myths are real and that women truly enjoy the aggression forms, the domination and subjugation that are submitted to, they believe that women are really masochistic and that they are naturally inclined to eroticise their sufferance,
- Men are educated in patriarchal cultures to disdain women intellectually and morally, by using them and their feelings in order to fulfil their own erotic and (or) emotional goals so that they defy the Kantian practical imperative which claims to never use a person only as a meaning but always as a purpose in self,

- Womanly erotic motivations are reduced to men's erotic motivations, so that men take on the right to treat women "anyhow" in the name of *erotic passion* or they use to ignore women's desires and will, by asking them, in the name of the same passion, only selfish satisfactions, because women's sexual status have been culturally configured only as a source of sexual fulfilment for men,
- The humanly virtues of a woman are evaluated related to her skill of being a perfect sexual and emotional servant of men,
- The somatophobia, which was culturally inherited and projected into hetero-erotic relations, manifests in men behaviours through a compulsive syndrome of attraction-rejection towards women, because women have been culturally associated with "pure instinctual", somatic existence,
- Men relate sexually with "un-spiritualised" feminine bodies and intellectually with "un-embodied" feminine minds, because of the dichotomist separation they conceive between mind and soul, which is also available for the psychological dissociation they make between their own mind and instincts,
- There are a lot of misogyny forms expressed in non sexual registers of hetero-erotic communication,
- The lack of women's self confidence and self esteem is exploited by men in their own profit so that women are exposed to many psychical abuses, (I called this phenomenon *Eva complex*),
- Men use erotic lies or seductive strategies in order to conquer women which they abandon *post-coitus*, without any moral hesitations and this fact happens in a socio-cultural context within a woman's failure in erotic relationships is the equivalent of a man's failure in profession,
- There are different kinds of social anathemas that single women, without any male protector (father, husband or lover), are exposed to,
- Women are trained by men in the matter of "femininity" or "womanhood"; they are educated in such manner to modify their behaviour related to men's "wishes and desires" and all these in the name of hetero-love which is patriarchally defined,

- Women's frigidity is ordinarily defined as lack of reaction to sexual simulation coming from a male person, in other words, a frigid woman is any woman who refuses or is not able to have a sexual arousal in contact with a pure sexual simulation (not emotional, not spiritual) occurred from a man's part. Another definition of frigidity is bound on the "myth of vaginal orgasm" according to all women who cannot achieve this kind of physiologically impossible orgasm are frigid, in other words all women are frigid because the vaginal orgasm is a fantasy conceived by men in the phallogocentric culture.

I preferred to use the term erotic instead of sexual because of the following reason: in the psychological, anthropological and sociological discourse, the sexual orientation and the spiritual one are defined, if not in a dichotomist way, anyway very different. Otherwise psychological reality does not follow this distinction, but conforms to the mechanism I named the principle of communicant vessels which manifests between the rational mental contents, the affective processes and the instinctual motivations in such manner that sexual orientations are never completely determined by basic instincts, but represent the consequence of more complex psychological motivations that combines instinctual elements with cultural-conceptual, emotional, intellectual, experiential elements. The adaptation to a certain socio-cultural environment is outstanding in formation of a sexual orientation. It is not purely instinctual, but also and rather culturally conditioned. Therefore we cannot *stricto modo* talk about a sexual orientation but about a culturally sexual orientation. I have chosen the term "erotic orientation" because eroticism implies both the idea of psychosomatic sexuality and psycho-emotional sexuality. It is a term that covers a larger specter of significations and could be associated as well to the somatic and emotional dimension.

**The principle of communicant vessels in the interactions between sensitivity, emotion, sensation and rational construct**

The misogynist dispel of women's intellectual condition along with the rationalist conception according to which intellect, sensitivity

and body subsist in different ontological plans, determine patriarchal men to relate only sensitively and irrationally with women because the androcentric culture defines women as lacked of rationality. Therefore men are educated to neglect women's quality of intellectual companions and use to relate to them exclusively or almost exclusively emotional and (or) sexual so that, in fact, men and not women prove to be the ones who act irrationally within erotic and affective hetero-relations. Otherwise, inside the psychological reality we are living in, the human instincts are constantly submitted to an activity of the conscience so that the conscious orientations modify instincts' mode of manifestation. If the rational attitude that we have toward instincts makes us assume them amorphous-irrationally or non-sentimentally, then we maintain our instinctual behaviour into a peripheral zone of the spirit, but, if we aim, through a contrary rational attitude, to spiritualise our instincts, then their mode of manifestation will be configured over another type of representation. What we use to think about the way that something should function turns into a "prophecy that becomes true", because the model of representation is a generator-force of the subsequent psychical manifestations. If we keep a pre-established idea about the way a phenomenon should produce, this idea determines us to mentally construct and to perceive that certain phenomenon in the clue we have projected rationally before.

Radical feminists reject the "fatality of instincts". They reject the idea of normality of the compulsive, irrational instinctual behaviours available for men's way of relating to women. Instincts, understood in the most basic sense, have been overbid in patriarchy. The *eros* is considered to be an irrational dimension of the existence and therefore men cultivate, in the virtue of conceptual representations of *eroticism* and *libido*, irrational behaviours toward women in the context of hetero-relationships, also projecting over women's behaviour their visions on sexuality. Traditional formulas concerning *logos*, *eros* and *instinct* mark out very strict borders between the three dimensions of the psychical life and reduce the rationality to intellect, the emotional processes to affection and the instincts to basic instinctual activity. Such an approach is both pleonastic and scientifically wrong, because there is a permanent interference between the conscious rational

contents, the emotional ones and the instinctual impulses. The conscience activity assembles and operates all psychical products in a unitary whole. This interference creates an organic tissue of motivations and implications that could not be reduced to their rational, emotional or instinctual essence. There are equally intellectual emotion and emotional reason, conscious instinctual acts and unconscious thinking and the dimensions of our psychical existence interact over a pattern that I named *the principle of communicant vessels*. Conscience coordinates and rationalizes the multiple psychical processes, impulses and motivations, even those belonging to the irrational zones. The separation conceived between intellect and emotion represents a schizoid attitude, a phenomenon of decentralization of the ego's contents. Therefore the dichotomist thinking on psychological different acts determines the cleavage of the psychical life into multiple parallel domains, which generates inner tensions, anxiety and frustrations. The psychological balance could not be kept beyond the integrity of the conscience resorts. The emotional needs and motivations cannot be replaced or satisfied through physiological sexual fulfilment as well as the communication need cannot be satisfied in pure emotional relations. The maintenance of communication between each other on a single psychological level, whether sexual, emotional or rational, determines us to focus the persons we are relating to from the perspective of the communication type we initiated with them. So we have the tendency to substitute the image of those persons to the specific psychological register that communication is producing into, therefore to treat the persons we are relating intellectually as being some exclusively rational beings, the persons we are emotionally communicating as beings some pure affective subjects and the persons we are communicating with sexually as being some exclusively sexual subjects. The integrity of the person is losing within this kind of relation and the optics we have on the individuals we are interacting with are distorted by reductionism due to a functional perception. This is a first major trap of the dichotomist thinking, which transforms within the context of phallogocentric human relationships into a misogynist syndrome through which women become into men's eyes emotional-object, sexual object and (or) object of the intellectual discourse. We could not

relate to a human subject who is simultaneously *mind, soul* and *body* only sexually, only affectively or only intellectually, but if the human being is perceived divided between mind, soul and body, and his or her psychological identity is substituted to one or more functional identities, then the person becomes a simple object of someone's subjective perspective and therefore loses his or her attributes of human subject, which means moral and psychological subject. In patriarchal cultures women are conventionally associated with the feminine archetype whose main feature is sensitivity. On the other hand, the dichotomist thinking situates sensitivity on the antipode of rationality so that women are perceived as non-rational beings. Under these circumstances men become blind to women's rationality focusing only on their sensitivity, even though they have to deal with a woman who is the same time both intelligent and sensitive. The language dichotomist structures distort the good perception of the principle of the communicant vessels manifested through the interference between rationality and sensibility that are supporting and never excluding each other. The conceptual dissociation of the three plans: *instinctual, emotional, rational* creates such perception distortions.

### **Phallogentric erotic practices built on dichotomist principles**

According to the dichotomist formula applied to sexual matters, in patriarchal societies men use on one hand to make sex with women *bodies* and on the other hand to love the *souls* of women. Because of this reason, it often happens for them to divide women in two generic categories: *women spirits* and *women bodies*. The most common tendency induced by this dissociation is reflected in men's habitude of valuing non-sexually the *women spirits*, by ignoring their instinctual dimension and to relate erotically to *women bodies*, ignoring or neglecting their spiritual dimension. Dichotomist views regarding sexual issues induce a fundamentally immoral attitude in life experiences, immoral in a Kantian way, by transgression of the *practical imperative*. It doesn't make any difference if we are mistaken by considering values in self or by thinking them non-contextual, because the effects of the reflex thoughts from the dichotomist kind

are damaging in the frame of human relationships. A case study on a classical love affair with "unpredicted end" could reveal us the fact that the male partner leaves his female mate, telling her that his pretended "love" has been a simple illusion, an "aborted dream" and by this statement that upset the situation he is breaking the Kantian imperative, which claims that no man is morally justified to treat another human being only as a mean, because every human is a purpose in him/herself. The relationship with another human being cannot be qualified in the same category with the "solitude phantasms" or with the intellectual failures, because a humanly relationship supposes the commitment of two different persons which are living subjects and not the phantasmatic or rational activity of a single human subject. In a view which situates an abstract ideal above real persons' lives, more explicitly in a vision within which values are defined in themselves, non-contextual and independently from any human relation, the mistake of using a person in the name of an ideal is extremely frequent. The ideal could be as well love or happiness, so that a pole of relationship could invoke it in order to use the other pole's being in the name of that certain ideal. The usage of one person for achieving a goal doesn't imply with necessity the idea of goal's infamously; the purpose shouldn't be immoral or degrading in order to spoil the sense of the usage. What is immoral is the usage *per se*, no matter how noble or ignoble would be the goal. We are not morally legitimated to use another human being in the name of an ideal or of a happiness plot, for renouncing after a while to that person if he or she doesn't fit with the scenario we imagined, like that person would be a false solution for a mathematical problem. In human relationships we are not morally justified to act as being trapped into a logical labyrinth, we have not the moral right to treat a human being like an equation, because this means to objectify that person, to cultivate, in other words, a pornographic attitude. If every human being is a purpose in self, then no matter what someone would feel or not feel anymore for another person who was his or her erotic partner, it is morally necessary that this fellow should assume the fact that has initiated a relationship with another human being, that he/she should admit that the other person is a SUBJECT of his or her false love and not an OBJECT of a love fiction. For the abandoned woman of the case

study I named before it was more difficult to deal emotionally with the specific way she has been left down than with the idea of separation. Her partner's gesture hurt her especially because he confessed that her life and existence have been a simple dream for him, which have not retained real consistence. The objectification of the person does not occur only when someone is treated as object of dispel, but also when is treated as object of attraction. The objectification of someone's real existence could happen as well if his or her image is reduced by the other pole of relation to derisory or it is hyperbolised and transformed into a reverie. It does not make any difference if male visions have derided and underestimated women or over evaluated them; anyhow women's real existence has been neglected and annihilated because of these visions. Radical feminists see in this phenomenon the harmfulness of pornography. Reducing a real person to a phantasm (no matter how wonderful or attractive) is a deeply anti-humanist, immoral, trivial, exploitive attitude. Pornography consists in my opinion in the objectification of a real human being by treating him or her as a conceptual ghost or as a dream; pornography consists in neglecting the quality of subject that a human being we are initiating a relation with has. Men who relate pornographically with women are regarding their real existence as an object of their attraction; these men are using women and letting them down on their will.

Generic woman, named by Karl Gustav Jung (1994) *anima*, is an imago of archaic womanhood imprinted in man's soul. "Each men carry inside the image of the eternal feminine and not the image of a certain woman. This image is, basically, a hereditary feature transmitted from ancient times and registered in the organic system, a type (an archetype) of all experiences of the ancestral line concerning the feminine nature, a sediment of all collective impressions regarding woman, an inherited system of adaptation" (1994:74). Under these circumstances men project over the real women they initiate erotomorphic relationships with the imago of the generic woman which is characterized by: intellectual inferiority, lack of conscience, exacerbated eroticism, lack of interior autonomy, functional psychical identity depending on the role they use to play in men's lives.

In her famous book "Beyond God the Father", Mary Daly pointed out (1985: 122-125): "Female becoming is not the so-called "sexual revolution". The latter has in fact been one more extension of the politics of rape, a new Morality of false liberation foisted upon women, who have been told to be free to be what women have always been, sex objects. The difference is simply that there is now social pleasure for women to be available to any man at the beckon of an once-over, to be a non-professional whore. The Old Morality was an ethic of the double standard. The New Morality has not essentially changed this, for male behaviour toward women has not changed in basic way. The social context is still one in which women are without power, without outlets for or encouragement to the higher levels of creativity". "The sexual freedom that recently has been forced upon women leaves no freedom to refuse to be defined by sex". "The draining of women's energies by obsession with genital sexuality is a currently popular form of rape". "The categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality are patriarchal classifications. Because men in our society have been socialized to be destructive in their relationships with women, some women have come to the conclusion that authentic personal relationships with men under prevailing conditions are extremely difficult and perhaps impossible. Male fear and hostility regarding "homosexuality" reflects anxiety over losing power that is based upon sex role stereotyping."

In patriarchal relations between men and women dichotomist thinking becomes psychological reality. Men disarticulate women and fall in loved with "parts" and "pieces" of their beings. Most often men reduce women to that only dimension that better serves their interests that is to the specific of the *job* they offer to those women. If a woman situates in the role of the mother, the man, who is her son, will refuse to acknowledge her other qualities and rights but those ones specifically addicted to mother's condition, he becomes blind to the others dimensions of his mother's existence, to the other existential motivations that she keeps, beyond motherhood. If the woman is his wife, the male central character of relation denies all other human attributes and characteristics of his wife but those ones belonging to the wife's role. Men use to perceive functionally women's lives; they don't love them for everything they are, but they are cleaving women

into pieces in order to reduce them to the feminine role in which they distributed them. Patriarchal men prove pornographic attitudes even toward their mothers, because they treat them like some vassals whose unique vocation is to play mother's role in their lives so that men refuse to award them the quality of "psychological subjects" with autonomic inner life and with a non-functional identity. According to dichotomist attitude towards psychical dimensions "traditional pornographers" make sex with women's bodies by dispelling their minds and "feminist pornographers" make sex with women bodies by valuing their minds, but none of them have real erotic relations with women, because every relationship implies the existence of two human subjects which are in the same time body, soul and ration, and not possessing body, soul and ration, as Mihaela Miroiu demonstrated in *Convenio* (2002: 69-70).

#### **Freudianism and the woman as object of masculine sexuality, a scientific legitimation of the pornographic message**

Tributary to dichotomist thinking, the Freudian psychoanalysis operates, on its turn, with some couples of dichotomies, like: soul/body, conscience/instinct, penis/nothing (as equivalent of vagina as I am going to show further). He uses the soul/body dichotomy by situating the elemental libido in the zone of bodily impulses or psycho/somatic ones and the conscience in the zone of rational ego and super-ego composed by spiritual and cultural constructs. This distinction, theoretically inevitable, does not function *per se* within psychical reality. There is a permanent interference and interdependence between the conscious thinking and instincts, because psychical contents cannot coexist in harmony without a coherent organization on conscience level. Otherwise Freudianism proclaims men as being the only sexually active subjects as long as women are calculated for sexual passivity. This kind of approach concerning sexuality is both phallogocentric and scientifically abusive.

Norman O. Brown (...: 121) describes very suggestively the dichotomist stereotype of representation of masculine/feminine instincts available for Freudian paradigm: "The dualism of masculine-feminine is merely the transportation into genital terms of the dualism

of activity and passivity; and activity and passivity represent unstable fusion of *Eros* and *Death* at war with each other. Thus Freud identifies masculinity with aggressiveness and femininity with masochism".

According to Freud's formula: "anatomy is destiny", which means human behaviour is determined by instincts, men are supposed to act identically in relation with women or with other men, but the psychological reality contradicts this fact. So we must assume that "instinctual imperialism" is not so implacable and consistent as it appears to be in Freud's vision, but is rather the expression of a fundamental attitude that men adopt towards women, attitude centred on a misogynist system of thoughts whose main idea is the one designated in all patriarchal ideologies, according to which women's role in the world is to serve, satisfy, help and fulfil men's needs and interests.

One of the most important psychoanalysts from the post-Lacanian wave is Luce Irigaray. She discusses largely the problem of dichotomist phallogocentric system. She focuses especially on those one connected to sexual domains: penis/vagina/nothing/clitoris/labia. In her article, "This Sex which is Not One" Irigaray questions the assumption that female sexuality is dependent upon male sexuality: "Female sexuality has always been theorized within masculine parameters." Female sexuality is therefore dependent for its existence on male sexuality. Irigaray also points out that in the Freudian theory female sexuality is always coded in terms of reproduction. Besides, within this phallogocentric model, the kind of sexuality that gets privileged is the one based on looking because the one sexual organ, the penis, is visible. In contrast, woman's sexual organ(s) cannot be seen; therefore it is inferior and becomes equated with having nothing. In other words, male sexuality is based on having a penis; female sexuality is based on having nothing. This system sets up the dichotomy penis/nothing. According to Freud, since women have nothing, women are always trying to get a penis for themselves in order to fill the lack. In his opinion if a woman acts like a man: rationally, logically and so on she is essentially denying the "fact of her castration" and is neurotic. Therefore, according to Irigaray's reading of Freud, in the Freudian paradigm, female desire is always the desire for a penis to fill the lack or nothingness. There is also

another component of female pleasure, according to Freud, and that is the pleasure a woman gains from being a (sexual) object of male desire. Based on this, he says that: 1. a woman's pleasure is always masochistic, it comes from being a sexual object, from being looked at and desired by men and 2. Women get pleasure by giving a man pleasure; for a woman pleasure comes from the emotional connection and relationship of pleasing a man. In other words, men gain pleasure from sexual intercourse and women gain pleasure from emotional connection and relationship and by being a beautiful object for a man's viewing pleasure. Irigaray theorizes that another system is needed; a system that would include multiple erogenous zones, and where pleasure would be diffuse and plural. This system would liberate heterosexuality for both female and male. Irigaray infers that true heterosexuality is impossible within Freudian system because man and woman are not relating to each other directly but in the roles of mother and father or get involved in heterosexual relation in order to fulfil and resolve the Oedipal complex. Thus, the couple is failing the pure, mature, free eroticism under the phallogocentric Freudian system. Irigaray uses Freud's theory of sexuality to point out the limitations that are imposed on female sexuality by such a paradigm. She challenges the reader to rethink the notions of sexuality and asks one to expand or discard the preconceived notions of what sexuality means in a phallogocentric culture.

A similar vision on heterosexual phallogocentric practices have been emphasized by Andrea Dworkin (1987) in her article "intercourse": "Intercourse occurs in a context of a power relation that is pervasive and incontrovertible. The context in which the act takes place, whatever the meaning of the act in and of itself, is one in which men have social, economic, political, and physical power over women". "Intercourse as an act often expresses the power men that have over women. Without being what the society recognizes as rape, it is what the society - when pushed to admit it - recognizes as dominance. Intercourse often expresses hostility or anger as well as dominance. What does it mean to be the person who needs to have this done to her: who needs to be needed as an object; who needs to be entered; who needs to be occupied; who needs to be wanted more than she needs integrity or freedom or equality?". "Whatever intercourse is, it

is not freedom; and if it cannot exist without objectification, it never will be". "It is a tragedy beyond the power of language to convey when what has been imposed on women by force becomes a standard of freedom for women: and all the women say it is so". "We become female: occupied; collaborators against each other, especially against those among us who resist male domination - the lone, crazy resisters, the organized resistance. The pleasure of submission does not and cannot change the fact, the cost, the indignity, of inferiority".

This kind of pattern of the "normal sexual act" is the basic frame of Freudian Psychoanalysis that always defines women's sexuality as an accessory of the male one. Womanly sexuality appears in Freudian theories as in-animated by a proper libido. It is represented as a receptacle of the masculine sexuality. Alike the androcentric philosophic dissertations, the phallogocentric psychoanalysis also situates women in the place of the "other", the *non-subject*. Following Freud's assumptions we could state, in a gynocentric logic that, if the sense of the sexual act is the fecundation of women, then male sexuality has a simply circumstantial role in intercourse, irrelevant in self, pure functional. In her book, "The Second Sex" Simone de Beauvoir refers to feminine sexual masochism under the circumstances wherein a woman considers herself as being the sexual object of man's desire and not a subject of desire. Going on the Freudian logic she assumes, on her turn, that frigid women are those one who cannot achieve the vaginal orgasm. In contradiction with physiological minimal knowledge all women psychoanalysts from the beginning of 20 century took seriously the phallogocentric mystifications on sexuality. Anne Koedt (2000: 371-378) is the first woman who made light over this obscure, well controversial subject in her dissertation "The Myth of Vaginal Orgasm" only in 1970: "Whenever female orgasm and frigidity are discussed, a false distinction is made between the vaginal and the clitoral orgasm. Men have generally defined frigidity as the failure of women to have vaginal orgasms. Actually the vagina is not a highly sensitive area and is not constructed to achieve orgasm. It is the clitoris which is the centre of sexual sensitivity and which is the female equivalent of the penis. I think this explains a great many things: first of all, the fact that the so-called frigidity rate among women is phenomenally high. Rather than tracing female

frigidity to the false assumptions about female anatomy, our "experts" have declared frigidity a psychological problem of women. Those women who complained about it were recommended psychiatrists, so that they might discover their "problem" - diagnosed generally as a failure to adjust to their role as women. The facts of female anatomy and sexual response tell a different story. Although there are many areas for sexual arousal, there is only one area for sexual climax; that area is the clitoris. All orgasms are extensions of sensation from this area". **"What we must do is redefine our sexuality.** We must discard the "normal" concepts of sex and create new guidelines, which take into account mutual sexual enjoyment. While the idea of mutual enjoyment is liberally applauded in marriage manuals, it is not followed to its logical conclusion. We must begin to demand that if certain sexual positions now defined as "standard" are not mutually conducive to orgasm, they no longer be defined as standard. New techniques must be used or devised which transform this particular aspect of our current sexual exploitation".

Anne Koedt names Freud the "Father of the Vaginal Orgasm": "It was Freud's feelings about women's secondary and inferior relationship to men that formed the basis for his theories on female sexuality. But the severest damage was not in the area of surgery, where Freudians ran around absurdly trying to change female anatomy to fit their basic assumptions. The worst damage was done to the mental health of women, who either suffered silently with self-blame or flocked to psychiatrists looking desperately for the hidden and terrible repression that had kept from them their vaginal destiny." Anne Koedt also discusses some arguments around the question "Why Men Maintain the Myth":

1. *Sexual Penetration Is Preferred* - The best physical stimulant for the penis is woman's vagina.

2. *The Invisible Woman* - One of the elements of male chauvinism is the refusal or inability to see women as total, separate human beings. Rather, men have chosen to define women only in terms of how they benefited men's lives.

3. *The Penis as Epitome of Masculinity* - Men define their lives primarily in terms of masculinity. It is a universal form of ego-boosting. This kind of superior-inferior definition of self, rather than

positive definition based upon one's own achievements and development, has of course chained victim and oppressor both.

4. *Sexually Expendable Male* - Men fear that they will become sexually expendable if the clitoris is substituted for the vagina as the centre of pleasure for women.

5. *Control of Women* - One reason given to explain the Mid-eastern practice of clitoridectomy is that it will keep the women from straying. By removing the sexual organ capable of orgasm, it must be assumed that her sexual drive will diminish.

6. *Lesbianism and Bisexuality* - Strictly anatomical reasons why women might equally seek other women as lovers, there is a fear on men's part that women will seek the company of other women on a full, human basis. The recognition of clitoral orgasm as fact would threaten the heterosexual *institution*".

To the gynocide (Mary Daly) promoted by traditional psychoanalytical practices have contributed in a large measure the academic women who embosomed, without hesitations, Freudian theories concerning womanly sexuality. Their collaborationism with the phallogocentric system have brought on some regrettable damages by amplifying the patriarchal psycho-sexual gynocides in a larger measure than a men psychoanalysts' army would have been able to do. Academic women who accepted, deliberately or not, to confirm the phallogocentric theories on sexuality by mystifying the truth have contributed on one hand with their position to the accreditation and perpetuation of the phallogocentric myths and on the other hand have retarded the apparition of those audacious women psychoanalysts who tried and finally succeeded to ride down those myths.

In "Gyn/Ecology" Mary Daly (1979: 174-175) criticizes the position of such women and their adhesion to the promotion of misogynist theories on heterosexuality: "The Freudian psychoanalyst, Marie Bonaparte, also muddies matters in her famous "Notes on Excision" in her book, *Female Sexuality*. In this academic treatise she takes issue with Bryk's theory that "The Nadi males, in this way, seek to maximally feminize their females by doing away with this penile vestige, the clitoris, which, he adds, must result in encouraging the transfer of orgasmic sensitivity from the girls' infantile erotogenic zone, the clitoris, to the adult erotogenic zone of the woman, which must

necessarily be the vagina at puberty". Still referring to Bonaparte, Mary Daly states further: "Her analysis moreover is coached in the falsifying jargon and framework of *freudian/ fraudian* theory, which assumes the reality of the vaginal orgasm". "More Freudian than Freud, Bonaparte lacks not only social perspective but the sensitivity and imagination to even begin to relate to the situation of these women outside the doctrinaire Freudian framework".

Regarding Freud's sexist theories, Germaine Greer wonders in her book, "The Female Eunuch" (1971: 91) the scientific legitimacy of his assumptions: "Freud himself lamented his inability to understand women, and became progressively humbler in his pronouncements about them". "Freudian theory of motherhood is the masculine conviction that a woman is a castrated man. Ernst Jones (1948): "there is an unhealthy suspicion growing that men analysts have been led to adopt an unduly phallogocentric view of the problems in question, the importance of the female organs being correspondingly underestimated". "Her infantile sexuality is essentially masculine, with important qualifications: "As we well known (sic) it is not until puberty that the sharp distinction is established between the masculine and feminine characters". "The auto-erotica of the erogenous zones is, however, the same in both sexes, and owing to its uniformity there is no possibility of a distinction between the two sexes such as arising after puberty. So far the auto-erotic and masturbatory manifestations of sexuality are concerned we might lay it down that the sexuality of the little girl is of a wholly masculine character". This must be a non-sense. What comes out strongly is only that Freud believed that all libidos were male libidos.

The connection between phallogocentric pornographic thinking and the Freudian message, according to which women wished to be raped, comes out from the arguments given by Mary Daly in *Pure Lust* regarding the patriarchal sado-society we are living in: "A key that links patriarchal theology and pornography is the total arrogance in the promulgation of deception" (Daly, 1984: 55). Andrea Dworkin has discussed the pornographic Lie: the pornographic conceit is that the normal female demands the force, the violence and the pain... This pornographic conceit accounts for the fact that men in general do not believe that rape or battery are violations of female will". Moreover,

women in general do not know that men in general believe and sustain this Lie. Thus women are force-fed the Lie concerning this Lie".

The famous Freud's "Case of Dora" is recounted and commented by Mary Daly (1979: 267): "Clearly, Freud assumes that any woman who is "approached", that is sexually accosted, should respond uncontrollable visceral desire for the male who mauls and violates her. Thus Dora's normal reaction of disgust and Self-salvation is neglected. Freud drones on: "...the behaviour of this child of fourteen was already entirely and completely hysterical. I should without question consider *a person* hysterical in whom *an occasion for sexual excitement* elicited feeling that were preponderantly or exclusively unpleasurable; and I should do so whether or no the person were capable of producing somatic symptoms." (Freud, 1977: 36). "In this maze of obscene babble the great mind-shrinker announces that any woman who does not enjoy rape is hysterical". Further in the same chapter, Daly (1979:278) wrote: "So also Jung slyly legitimates punitive measures against strong women, implying that strength of mind is abnormal. He states: "often the man has the feeling - *and he is not altogether wrong* - that only seduction or a beating or a rape would have the necessary power of <persuasion>".

The harmfulness of Freudianism doesn't necessarily consist in the theories and practices initiated by the founder parent of psychoanalysis in a very androcentric era, but especially in the attitude of the contemporary psychoanalysts who are, in their most majority dogmatically addicted to Freud's visions on sexuality. These people are stuck in some kind of blindness and refuse to admit that the world becomes more and more democratic and therefore less and less androcratic. This social situation drives to the apparition of new cultural patterns for the gender roles, which are psychologically transfigured. These cultural patterns might generate new gender types or, by the contrary might destroy all the rules concerning gender status. Every new generation built up new force fields in gender-configured relationships. The specific *Weltanschauung* (Jung) of every generation reshapes differently human personalities, and imprints to them other codes of behaviour because psychical dimension is a magma that takes the form of the riverbed it is flowing into. As Lacan

demonstrated, the language and the way we are conceptualising the reality determine the spectre of our experiences, define the destiny of our vital motivations and reactions and configure our self-image.

Even though within democratic societies patriarchal mentalities are less prominent than some time ago, women keep defining their sexuality in phallogocentric terms. The inertia of the traditional pattern of hetero-eroticism holds its roots in the background of ancient mentalities, of collective mental and under-conscience. Men continue to be the ones who initiate women in sexuality, who charm and accost women, who are the masters of the discourse on sexuality, who define and establish the "normality" borders and arrogate the right to be the judges of "women's sexual abilities" evaluating their eroticism or frigidity over phallogocentric and phallogocentric norms. Sexual rituals and myths remained basically the same in spite of all social, ethical and political feminist demarches.

#### **Rape as the expression of the Freudian/dichotomist thinking within the phallogocentric and phallogocentric society**

"Love, in the context of oppressive male female relationship, becomes an emotional cement to justify the dominant-submissive relationship. The man loves the woman who fulfils her submissive ego-boosting role". (Wendy Langford (1999:7) quoting from New York Radical Feminists, 1971: 442).

Rape means, in dictionaries, a forced sexual act. Rape means to force a sexual act, but also means to invade, occupy a foreign territory, steal, cheat, charm, deceive, violence means cruelty. It does not matter which are the means that the enforcement is done through, which are the strategies and techniques of fight that drive the conquerors to victory and invasion. No dictionary will state that the means of pressure should be monstrous and not tempting, false-hearted, romantic, fairylike.... The goal of a rape is always the violence, the sufferance of the victim: any kind of sufferance and anyhow provoked.

In his dissertation "History of Rape", Georges Vigarello (1998: 265-266) describes the way that Western society related with the rapes done by men to women during the period when Freud was conceiving

his theories: "The truth is that doctors and judges of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century estimate a lot the sexual crime from the perspective of its echoes over the mores and social customs and not quite from the perspective of its echoes over the personal and sensitive life. They took note of the virginity loss from the point on view of corruption, without paying attention to the effects of the terror and psychical disorder induced by rape". "The evolution of the sexual crime in the individual conscience remains that one of the shame or of the easy virtues: the danger is focused in the dimension of the "pathetic learning of the vice which imprints into the victims souls a corruption germ" and not in the terrible experience of the victim". The pornographic message comes out in a relevant way from this vision promoted by men through social norms and moral customs. They used to ignore the psychological side of the rape, because they were convinced that women are human objects and belong to them ontologically. In rape cases, during that period, only the men's right to property was considered to be offended, because women were socially pictured as men's legitimate property. Andrea Dworkin specifies this syndrome in her book "Letters from a War Zone": "Pornography is an essential issue because pornography says that women want to be hurt, forced, and abused; pornography says women want to be raped, battered, kidnapped, maimed; pornography says women want to be humiliated, shamed, defamed; pornography says that women say No but mean Yes -Yes to violence, Yes to pain. Also: pornography says that women are things; pornography says that being used as things fulfils the erotic nature of women; pornography says that women are the things men use. Also: pornography says that women are sluts, cunts; pornography says that pornographers define women; pornography says that men define women; pornography says that women are what men want women to be". "Obscenity laws are also woman-hating in their construction. Their basic presumption is that it's women's bodies that are dirty". "The sexuality of women has been stolen outright, appropriated by men - conquered, possessed, taken, violated; women have been systematically and absolutely denied the right to sexual self-determination and to sexual integrity. Pornography illustrated and expressed this valuation of women and women's sexuality, and that is why it was named *pornography*: "the graphic depiction of

whores. Depicting women as whores and the sexuality of women as sluttish is what pornography does.”

This kind of mentality has not been abolished along with the shadows of the last centuries. In the contemporary world, even in the most humanist societies, Freudian dialectics that sustain, in academic language, the pornographic message denounced by Andrea Dworkin, is still very present in university circles and represent one of the most important theses emphasized in the curricula available for the psychology universities. His visions on sexuality are presented by professors as patterns of scientific representation for the “normal” heterosexuality, a healthy model, a natural one. Freud insists on the idea according to which a “normal” woman wishes she was raped and possessed by men, that she is naturally masochistic, considering otherwise that a woman who does not correspond to the generic portrait he pictured for her is mentally ill, hysterical or frigid. Any psychological resistance that women would oppose to rape is qualified by the phallogocentric Freudian “experts” in sexuality as mental deviation. This fact is, in my opinion, a psychological genocide, that all practitioners and theoreticians who sustain Freud’s point of view and traditional psychoanalytical thesis are subscribing to.

I shall finish with some words of Andrea Dworkin, which concern especially us, the researchers, philosophers, psychologists and anthropologists: “None of the scientific research that they (pornography defenders) relied on to come to their conclusions is worth anything today. It is all-invalid. I ask you to take seriously the fact that society does not exist in a laboratory that we are talking about real things that happen to real people, and that is what we are asking you to take some responsibility for”.

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## HEROISM AND EROTICISM. NEW JOBS FOR WOMEN

*Patricia Nedelea*

Reading “The Market” magazine (“Piața”), a newspaper that publishes job offers for Cluj-Napoca, we can notice that there are some jobs offered “especially to women”. Anyway, most of the jobs are gendered directly; they rarely ask for “a person”; they say that they are looking for “girls”, “women”, “men” or “girls and boys”.

Let’s see what kind of jobs we’ve got for women.

“The Market” contains a few jobs for waitresses. This job implies 10-12 hours a day working in the sun and an income of approximately the equivalent of 50-60 USD a month. This offer is still interesting because of the tips that are bigger than the salary itself.

There are a lot of announcements for “massage” (in the “health and medicine” part of the newspaper) and, reading these offers, you can easily understand that they imply prostitution: “*Nice and discreet young brunettes, we offer you a Thai massage at our own place, be very discreet*”<sup>1</sup> and so on. Of course, there are a lot of offers for teaching private lessons on all the disciplines. In two hours of private lessons you can get an income of 2-3 USD. Reading this newspaper you can easily notice that in our country there are too many teachers without jobs or with an insufficient income. We also know that the majority of students who graduate letters are women.

What do these women do after their graduation?

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<sup>1</sup> There are also a few announcements addressed to the ladies as buyers: “*Young and discreet sportsman, I will make you relax and have a great time if you’re a generous lady. I’m a pro.*”

Most of them will get no job or, if they are well connected, maybe they will get a very low paid job as a teacher in a town (rarely) or in a village.

What else?

Let's get back to "The Market". We will find some job offers like this one: *"I'm looking for young nice ladies who speak English and have no inhibitions, for a video-chat job."* Well, this could be a possible solution for our ladies trained on languages.

I have studied the act of selling the erotic female image in Romania today and the differences (if they do exist) between selling the image of sex and selling sex itself.

One of my questions was: Is this selling of your own erotic image prostitution or not? Another problem is this: why do a lot of well-educated women in Romania choose to sell their erotic image instead of selling their knowledge?

The answer is simple: The knowledge is much cheaper in Romania today than the sex image.

There are two major ways of selling the erotic image:

1. In a private way, on erotic sites;
2. In a public way, on an erotic magazine.

1. The situation of the erotic sites workers: at this very moment most of the women who work on erotic sites are Romanians and Russians. The clients are Americans, Australians, and so on<sup>1</sup>.

The girls can get an income of a few hundred USD per month and they usually keep this job secret from their friends and family. Interviewing a few of them<sup>2</sup> I've got some information about their activity and how they feel about it. I found out that they had established during their work personal relations with the clients. Some of these clients became good friends or more, they fell in love and asked those girls to marry them, they used to send them money and they even came in Romania in order to meet the girl and to marry her.

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<sup>1</sup> Anyway they are not Romanians because the Romanian ordinary man can not afford to pay 3-5 USD per minute.

<sup>2</sup> All of the girls graduated a faculty. They were single or married.

Actually on these sites the following story is a usual and even regular situation, a kind of cliché: the American man falls in love with the Romanian woman and, even if this sounds like a soap-opera, he comes in Romania to propose to her.

What about the self esteem? I was a little bit surprised to find out that these women actually felt better than before having this job: they felt sexier, more attractive and beautiful than they ever dreamt. Sorry, but this is the reality: They felt more encouraged than humiliated. They were not touched, even if someone who was over the ocean saw them naked as God created them.

Another dimension of this job is the theatrical experience: these women are playing, a role. They pretend to be someone else, someone sexy, willing to please, available, never tired or stressed...the kind of woman that man dreams about.

Ok, but where is the heroism, you might ask.

At first, they have to resist one, two or more nights with a broad smile on their faces, till a client wants to pay and take them "in private". This isn't easy. Secondly, they have to hide their job from the family, they risk to be seen when they are "on free" by anyone who accesses the site (and there are a lot of Romanians who use to do this even if they don't have money to take the girls "in private", so they can be recognised as "the one that get undressed for money").

2. The second situation refers to the Romanian women who appear in an erotic magazine. If the person is known (as the girls of our Olympic team of gymnastics), their appearance is usually accompanied by a press-scandal.

It is strange that no one asks why our gymnasts had to do it. One of them gave the answer: *"I was paid for one appearance in that magazine much more than I got for my whole career in sport."*

Do these women deserve to be blamed?

Is this negative reaction normal in a society that accepts the appearance of the female naked body in almost all the commercials and videos of Romanian singers? If the society accepts to see the

naked female body everywhere, why does it still condemn those women who don't do anything more than showing their bodies?

My sad conclusion is that the Romanian society is an old woman who pretends to be young for an outsider's eye. But she is not, she is old and decrepit and she cannot get undressed and show a beautiful body (and a beautiful mind) anymore.

## **DISCIPLINARY POWER**

## ANTHROPOLOGY OF EASTERN EUROPE. CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

*Alina Branda*

I. Eastern Europe was not, from the very beginning, an area of great interest for cultural/social anthropologists. At least in the colonial period, cultural /social anthropology had as main issue of studies, mostly, societies that “fit” the pattern: “primitive”, “exotic”, “illiterate”. In his study “Anthropology Comes Part Way Home: Community Studies in Europe”, John Cole pointed out that this cliché was dominant in the anthropological world for quite a long time: “anthropology is anthropology only if it is done very much abroad in unpleasant conditions, in societies very different from the anthropologists’ habitat, very different indeed from the sort of place where he might go on holiday” (Cole, 1977: 353).

Generally speaking, the European societies (including, to a certain extent, the East and South East European ones) were out of this “elementary” scheme and had not been approached by many specialists of this field.

There were other reasons that could explain such a weak interest as well. Eastern and South Eastern Europe had never been an area of colonies. The multitude of peoples inhabiting this area had a different, specific history both from the “centers” or “powers” of Western Europe and from the history of colonies

They were first incorporated in multinational empires: Habsburg, Ottoman and Tsarist, being involved in the modern age in the process of national emancipation, of constituting nation-states.

Or cultural /social anthropology (a western product) had to focus, mostly, on the colonial areas of the West European powers (I do not intend to emphasize here the relation in between cultural/social

anthropology and colonialism. This is quite a debated issue, beginning with the 60s). Anyway, it is obvious that, at least in the colonial period, Eastern and South Eastern Europe just occasionally interested social/ cultural anthropologists.

The things changed in a way after the Second World War. Most of the states of this part of Europe were incorporated in the Soviet Block, experimenting totalitarianism. At that moment, Eastern Europe could constitute the fundamental difference that anthropologists are traditionally searching for. Or this area could offer such a difference.

It is also very important to see how the things have been changing since 1990. Eastern Europe offers now enough issues to be approached by specialists of the field. First of all, societies of this part of Europe are involved in the process of transition.

These involve social, political, economic change and have deep cultural/social implications and constitute topics of great interest for specialists. Mostly, they are free to perform fieldwork, after decades of ideological control and restricted contacts.

Joel Halpern and David Kideckel's study describes briefly the most important features that could focus the anthropologists' interests in this area: "the peasant nature, peripheral political-economic position to a series of empires, the conflicting ethnic diversity of its population and since world war II, the commonality of its socialist institutions" (Halpern and Kideckel, 1983: 379).

Their study is extremely useful as it offers a kind of catalogue of the main anthropological issues that American specialists found in Eastern Europe, from the beginning of the 20th century till the 80s. The same study offers a more or less complete list of the American anthropologists that performed fieldwork in certain countries of this area. As the authors point out, the first anthropological researches that were carried out from the beginning of the 20th century were mostly on certain cultural institutions, kinship (zadruga, Ph. Moseley, using qualitative methods), on psychological, mentalities' profiles (Ruth Benedict on Romanians).

The same authors mention as the most debated issues: rituals, kinship, the economic relations in rural areas, migration, and poverty. There are elements of continuity in the anthropological researches that

were done on Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, meaning that issues that had been approached at the beginning of the 20-th century were assessed even after the Second World War (following both a social structural and a political-economic direction). At least this is the conclusion of the above-mentioned study.

If we have a look on the say "history "of the anthropological interest in Eastern Europe, it is absolutely compulsory to notice the shift, beginning with the 50s.

One of the main reasons that could motivate such a change is the Cold War. At the level of all western ideological public discourses, Eastern Europe represented, at that time, the absolute otherness, a "locus clasicus (as someone said) of cultural, political, economic difference" being very much incriminated.

As David Kideckel (2000) pointed out, at that time, the role of the anthropologists was that of cultural mediators in between two different systems, trying to frame a more understandable image of socialism for the western public. The deconstruction of these systems was mostly realized by analyzing structures of domestic life, rural economy, and rituals.

Of course, western anthropologists that carried out fieldwork at that time in Eastern Europe had other different scientific interests as well.

Some of them investigated the "socialism", realizing that way a fundamental critique of western cultural constructions such as: market economy and democracy.

Meanwhile, some other specialists of the field were interested in Eastern Europe, being aware of the fact that describing this area they could implicitly depict and realize a positive image of the Occident.

Even after 1990 the idea of difference is still the one that determines the interest of anthropologists in Eastern Europe. In some specialists' views, it is the role of anthropologists that changes. They do not have to mediate in between two different worlds, but to help the Eastern one to find and implement appropriate social policies for this area.

II. If we refer to cultural analyses that approach Eastern and South-Eastern European areas, it is absolutely necessary to speak

about the ethnographic/ethnological works of the indigenous researchers as well.

These researches were initiated in the 19th century. The main goal of such introspective approaches was to demonstrate the existence of distinct, specific cultural units in this area. It is a task that makes sense if we evaluate the historical context of that time: The fact that so many, distinct populations of this part of Europe were incorporated in multinational empires: Habsburg, Ottoman, Tsarist.

Generally speaking, the efforts of cultural elites of these distinct populations/ peoples were committed to the ideals of national emancipation. This is the case of ethnographers as well. The fact that they were literally involved in this process is well known.

After the First World War, when the process of constituting nation-states in this part of Europe was more or less accomplished (the multinational Empires disappearing), the ethnographers continued to be committed to the same ideals as before.

In the interwar period, their researches assessed basically issues related to the ideals of nation/nationalism, trying to consolidate what the end of the World War offered to them. The discourse and the methodology they used was more or less the same in each of these countries (it was the case of Polish, Hungarian, Serb, Romanian, and other ethnographies). All these discourses were constructed the same way, of course debating specific, national topics.

In the communist period, these discourses perpetuated to a certain extent the same issues (as the national ideology was used by authorities to control and manipulate the societies).

Generally speaking, the discourses of any social science (including the ethnographic approach) could not have a normal evolution in the totalitarian period: due to the above mentioned manipulation, to the ideological control, to the specialists' isolation and so on. Of course, a shift has been producing in this respect since the 90s.

III. The Hungarian ethnographer Tamas Hofer's statement, in 1970, according to which a real dialogue between western anthropologists interested in Eastern Europe and the indigenous

anthropologists was almost nonexistent could be a kind of motto of this part of my paper.

This lack of communication, with prejudicial consequences, between the West European / American anthropologists and the Eastern researchers of traditional culture has been discussed by specialists of the field in the latest.

To have a proper image of the aspects of this problem, further on, we are going to analyze a few texts we consider conclusive in this respect.

In her study *"Writing about Eastern Europe. Perspective from Ethnography and Anthropology"* Longina Jakubowska, who has studied ethnography in Poland and then obtained a Ph. D in Anthropology in the United States, suggests an explanation of the discrepancies between the indigenous research traditions (East and Central European) and anthropology.

The author demonstrates that the Polish ethnography and, in general, the East-European ethnographies were framed in the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It was early rallied to the ideals of national emancipation, of independence of the nations incorporated in empires that dominated this part of Europe. Consequently, its finality was to demonstrate the existence of some distinct cultural units as bases for national states creation.

The Serb ethnographers, for example, had been directly involved in the national emancipation process, they effectively participated at the Peace Conference in Paris. Enslaved to certain issues, they permanently tried to demonstrate the existence of those distinct cultural units in order to prove the necessity of the national state.

The ethnographers of the traditional culture in South Eastern and, partly Central Europe did not prove to be in contact with theoretical debates of the social and cultural anthropology in Western Europe and America.

As Longina Jakubowska and other specialists interested in this topic have noticed, the discrepancy between the research type suggested by indigenous specialists and the Social/Cultural Anthropology, in its well known meaning, could be explained starting with the preliminary goals and research modalities of both approaches. If the ethnography performed by East European

specialists developed introspectively, Cultural Anthropology was shaped in the colonial context. It was focused on Otherness, on Difference. The Eastern scientists approached their own culture, enhancing the national issues. Meanwhile, the main topic of Social/Cultural Anthropology was the traditional cultures, essentially different from those to which the anthropologists belonged.

The two research traditions (or Schools) continued to be different afterwards, as well. The discourses they “constructed” subsequently, made nothing but resuming the initially enunciated issues, deepening the difference.

In the communist period, the scientists of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are compelled to avoid interpretation (interpretation of cultural events, obviously). In the authorities’ point of view, allowing the researchers to develop a normal scientific discourse could be a dangerous issue (they could escape, to a certain extent, to the ideological control), promoting inadequate ideas, as alternatives to the unique, official discourse.

Meanwhile, the Eastern researchers were damned to isolation, they did not have free access to the anthropological bibliographies, and they could not participate at international conferences. This double frustration perpetuates a rather rudimentary discourse, different from the Western one.

Considering these conditions, Longina Jakubowka asserts that while the Anglo-Saxon Anthropology had started long debates concerning its own methodology, goal and meaning in a post colonial world, in Poland (and in Eastern and Central Europe), the research in this field continued to be focused on issues relevant to the national existence. “So at the times when Anglo-Saxon anthropology grapples with reflexivity and self-criticism derived from traumas of colonialism, Polish ethnography remains firmly committed to issues relevant to the national existence” (Jakubowska, 1993: 149).

Obviously, the differences and discrepancy increased. Thus, it can be explained the Polish author’s “case”. She had been initially initiated in the tradition of the Polish ethnographic school, finding at the moment she started her PhD in the United States, that the scientific experience she gained in her country hardly helped her.

This case can be easily explained, considering the above-mentioned situation. In this particular matter, the Polish scientist did not have a methodological education to allow her to easily connect to the American University requirements. Consequently, the differences are obvious, being illustrated through her biographical experience.

The same obsession of the difference between the Western Anthropology and South European cultural research inspires Dimitra Gefou Madianou’s study “*Mirroring Ourselves through Western texts: The Limits of an Indigenous Anthropology*”. The author assesses three main issues: the late introduction of social sciences in the Greek Universities, the necessity of performing anthropology at home by indigenous anthropologists and, finally, a debate on the existence or non-existence of a Greek anthropological discourse.

From the very beginning, Dimitra Gefou-Madianou examines the conditions in which the Greek state has been shaped. The situation was, of course, very similar to other East European states-nations: Greece was obliged to face the problems of an old society in a new state.

In such a context, the cultural research was, obviously, focused on national topics, on their own traditions. Cultural research of this kind had been practiced for quite a long period in Greece.

During the civil war, the image of social sciences continued to be prejudiced. The social sciences were introduced as separate departments in different Greek Universities, only in 1980. An independent Sociology department had been created at Panteion University in 1984.

In this context, all those interested in studying social sciences (including Anthropology) had been obliged to go abroad. This is the author’s case as well. Her situation is very much alike Longina Jakubowska’s: initiated in a positivist and introspectively oriented spirit, which dominated the traditional cultural research in Greece, she approached then, the anthropological discourse.

The fieldwork she performed in a mixed Greek-Turkish community, located between Athens and Piraeus demonstrates the advantages of both having an adequate theoretical background in anthropology and of analyzing her own culture.

The advantages of indigenous (Eastern, South-Eastern) scientists, initiated in anthropological theories and methodologies, assessing their own cultures, are obvious: the cultural patterns are already known; the fieldwork could be easily performed. Both the above-mentioned studies discuss such cases.

As Easterners or South-Easterners, practicing anthropology at home after 1990, we are more or less obliged to face the same incertitude related to our own identity, to the sense and the goals of our work and to the specific research traditions. This is why I have tried to make some comments on all these texts that are relevant in this respect.

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## A CRITICAL ESSAY ON THE ROMANIAN ETHNO-FOLKLORIST DISCOURSE

Șerban Văetiși

This essay approaches the issue of ethno-national identity as produced by the traditional folklorist discourse. It indicates the subject and outlines a proposal for an anthropological approach to the mentioned topic. In my paper I take into consideration the necessity of the reassessment of the traditional ethnological and folkloristic writings produced in Eastern Europe, particularly in Romania. The aim of such a reassessment is an urgent one, as it brings us nearer to the contemporary political challenges.

### Introduction: renegotiating an ethnological identity

Cultural identity, by its association with the notion of the „national” was perverted by the propagandistic discourses of the communist period, as well as it is perverted today by the nationalist post-communist discourses. I would like to analyse the creation of this identity from an anthropological point of view, including into my analysis a historical look on the anthropological discipline in Eastern Europe. It is obvious that, for instance, the „Romanian national identity” is a construction not only of historiography or political propagandistic discourse but also of that one which have been produced by the Romanian discipline of „ethnology and folklore”. These sciences, which aimed to study the ethnic culture, have suggested concepts, terms, and discourses for that identity construction. I consider that it is important to study the mechanisms of this production for at least three reasons:

(a) To indicate the propagandistic manipulative dimension and the totalitarian methodology by which these terms were imposed;

(b) To recognize this pattern of the discursive ethno-national identity creation as one that is questionable;

(c) To join the recent critical and reflexive paradigm of cultural anthropology that reassesses its own traditional discursive production.

I consider the possibility to detect continuity at the level of the anthropological discourse. Only by rereading the continuum between the old local ethnologies and the cultural-political discourses of our days we could mould an applied critique on our topics. Otherwise, we could not avoid the risk of the activist attitude going beyond the critical attitude. Moreover, supporting the idea of this continuity, I consider that the old mythical corpus might be analyzed as a critique of ideologies. Myth in the pre-modern societies corresponds to ideology in modern, political societies. We should not forget that old writings on the former were ideologised as discourses of the latter, and therefore automatically constituted a subject for any new critical anthropology and ethnography.

If we notice that ethnic identity is at its turn a construct we have to ask ourselves which are the mechanisms of this construction and who manipulates it. There is the ethnicised cultural discourse, the ethno-nationalist political one, and finally, the ethnologic scientific one. I intend to refer to the latter as to an ethnological identity, and to take into consideration the fact that this has for a long time stood for an anthropological discourse. There is an epistemological framework through which one may investigate this identity and its construction: it is a critical reflexive one, called meta-ethnography. In my paper I intend to draw shortly a kind of meta-ethnography of the traditional Romanian ethnology.

#### **Outlining a critical reassessment of the traditional folklorist discourse**

The critical discussion about identity constructions made through the means of anthropological discourse involves some precise points.

Such investigation is (a) first of all an effort of assessment, and a critical ethnographic rereading and rewriting of the traditional/traditionalist ethnographies. This approach entails hence the possibility of a (b) synthetic analysis of the anthropological references on identity in the traditional Eastern anthropology and in the modern Western cultural anthropology (especially Anglo-American). This methodological dimension highlights the idea that both the scientific discourse of traditional anthropology and that of the modern anthropology are (c) political discourses, too. And, moreover, that these are discourses which, so (re)read, have to be (d) critically investigated as terms and „paradigms” of discursive identity constitution. This critique would encompass, necessarily, (e) a critique of myth, (f) a critique of ethnic-nationalist discourse, and finally, (g) a critique of the mechanism of the identity-discourse itself. This complex critique - carried on many levels - would propose, implicitly, a theoretical commentary on (h) the anthropology of national identity, placed in the larger context of the (i) writings on identities and identity construction.

Such a project, therefore, should refer to all of these dimensions (the assessment aspect, the synthetic, political, critical, theoretical and meta-ethnographical dimension) as it discusses about this mythical-national identity, even though our research reflects only on the field of anthropological writings by which identities were produced or constructed. There are to be considered: (1) writings produced in the Romanian cultural area during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that could be included in a scientific-political traditional anthropological discourse (ethnology, ethnography, folklore, popular mythology etc.) and the context that generated it; and (2) recent cultural anthropological writings which theorise, comment or describe new cultural identity constructions, particularly, the ethnic-national components of such identities. The critical relevant *synthesis* (which could be made this way, taking into account the two kinds of writings), could be one that attempts to go beyond the rigid treatment of the former only as ethnographic data, and of the latter as theoretical-critical apparatus.

## National ethno-folkloric identity

But how do we describe the areas of scientific traditionalism that we detect in the anthropological production in Romania? These can be noticed, primarily, from the very moment of the constitution of the social-cultural sciences in association with a „romantic” project. The social-cultural sciences, particularly anthropology, are subsequent to a demonstrative tone, idyllic or gothic, of the cultural descriptions of non-European areas, exotic, savage or paradisiacal. But these fascinating features could be discovered – with a little romantic imagination – also within the peasant European cultures. Cultural missionaries promptly appeared inside their own „popular culture”. This movement quickly became scientific and political, and it imposed an ideology, which was dominant during a century and a half in large areas. „The Romanticist movement understood that (...) rudimentary philosophies, popular cultures, with all their idiosyncrasies (overall), had to be respected and preserved not just as facile expressions of universal truth, but as supreme values in itself” (Gellner, 2001: 127-128). This theoretical and methodological nationalism describes very well the traditionalism of the ethnological and folkloristic studies in the entire Eastern Europe.

In this context the issues of Romanian ethnology were: the historical continuity and the unity of The „National Culture”; the superiority of this national culture (identified with the peasant culture), and finally, the moral and philosophical superiority of the Romanian ethnos. All these implicitly characterise the ethnological and folkloristic works and they are exposed explicitly in short in their theoretical or exegetical sections. For instance Ion Vlăduțiu writes in his “Introduction” to the monumental Romanian Ethnography (1973: 11):

“According to the purpose of this work, we shall attempt to appreciate those aspects of life and culture which emphasize the strong originality and the extremely creative and fecund spirit of the Romanian people, his love for beauty, his permanent endeavour to make the work and the life more and more beautiful. Our people realized in a multitude of styles its

ingenuity, as resolving his fundamental issues of the existence and of the continuity, in a unique and proper manner that fully reflects the originality of his entire way of life and culture. Connected, from its very beginnings, to the work process, the popular Romanian creation transmitted itself from generation to generation as accumulated life experience that reflected the aspirations, the hopes for a better life, and the struggle of our people for a better existence.”

A critical analysis of the key topics detected in writings like this cannot be made without taking into consideration the contexts in which this scientific production has been made. Contextualization is important not only because it refers to many ideological strata, the romantic, the poporanistic, the legionary, the national-communist, the protocronist, the anti-occidental, and so on and so forth. In addition, the analysis cannot be reduced to a „thematic description”, but it has to notice also the socio-cultural contexts and the scientific treatment of these themes. I think that an outline of this large analytical perspective has to focus on topics like ruralism, passeism or Orientalism, and first of all nationalism.

Some researchers thought that the essence of the nation could be „demonstrated” by the ethnological and folkloristic studies. The frame was, as I mentioned, larger European. A whole scientific production was called to sustain the national consciousness in the wake of the theories of authors like Herder, Friederich Müller or Johann Grimm. These sciences of the nation had to offer the description of the „national soul/spirit” and of the uniqueness, significance and value of the national culture that it was suppose to „mirror”. The attempt was not easy at all and it involved an important salvaging and imaginative effort. Certainly the ancestors, the peasants, the nature, the tradition, and the local spirit were those implicated. These could be important for the ethos of an area that could shape emergent state borders and nations. The national ideology was inseparably linked to socio-cultural sciences, emergent at their turn. They were constituted, decisively, as an object and a methodology. And we add now, as an ideology: “The peasant customs, initially considered subject of interest just as vestiges of national culture, are also becoming symbols of the mother country

and of the ethnic reference models. From now on, peasantry serves as evidence that, in spite of every perceptible change, the nation remains unaffected. (...) Peasants depicted in folklore studies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had nothing to do with rural poor mass and the lesser with the serfs whom possible uprisings still worried the power." (Thiesse, 2000: 15). They will have nothing to do with the peasants of the following periods. This paradox is already observed by Marcel Mauss who wrote: "It is almost risibly to see bad known and bad studied folklore issues invoked at Peace Conference as evidence that one or another nation must lie from here to there because that territory possesses one or another specific form of house or certain bizarre custom. (...) The ethnographic museums, the return to national art, the succeeding modes that subordinated it, all of these belongs to the same phenomenon. And as the nation is in fact the one which makes the tradition, they try to reconstruct the nation around the traditions" (Thiesse 2000: 15).

But scientific-ideological production concerning the „national culture" is unceasing. Inquiries in villages, folk-tales collections, popular melodies, traditional costumes, patriotic museums, and national art – constituted the background, the object and the purpose of the ethnological East-European disciplines. They had primarily ideological aims, and less scientific accuracy. All these, along with the traditionalism in which their discourse has been involved have always indicated a „specificity" of Eastern ethnologies.

These are initial orientations, which would be able to explain afterward the discordance between the types of the scientific endeavours promoted by the Eastern researchers and the Westerners. Moreover, these would be able to give details about the disparity between the methodology and the theory of the two disciplinary areas. The great majority of East-European researchers who revisited the local ethnological production and those from West who studied Eastern Europe as anthropological fieldwork noticed this fact (Halpern & Kideckel, 1983; Porter, 1997). But not everybody drew attention to the role of the ethno- nationalist identity construction in this contrasting depiction.

This observation implies two comments: (1) Many ideological contents were for a long time, naively regarded as mythological ones, and (2) the impression of artificiality of many of these studies on popular culture is given exactly by their association with ideological contents, such as nationalism. In this latter respect the sociologist Alfred Schütz wrote: „The self image of nationalism implies the attention shown to the people, folklore, popular culture etc. Genuine peasants or the members of the tribes, however brilliant should be as popular dancers, do not become, regularly, good nationalists" (Schütz, 1994: 58). In the former respect, some details: The model of Celtic national poem Ossian, a fake in itself, is followed by the entire European mythologized production during the Romantic project of national cultures (and states) constitution. The difference is that if in the West this fake was promptly commented as such, in the East its illusion perpetuated. Productions not older than some decades, as for instance Song of Igor's Army (in Russian culture), Zelena Hora (in Czech culture) or Popular Songs of the Romanians (in the Romanian culture) continued to be admired as directly myth-rooted cultural forms. Their continuous mythicisation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century represented at the same time a national pedagogy and an incontestable ideological corpus. What was unusual was the fact that, so presented – out of any analysis or reassessment, out of any relationship or confirmation to the reality of the described facts, and finally, out of the theoretical and methodological circuit of the study of culture – it was placed at the margin of the scientific endeavour. A critical retrospective analysis should include it, without difficulty, in the category of the nationalist literary writings and nothing more.

From an anthropological point of view – a science also interested in re-evaluating traditional thinking inside its discursive practice – the mythicisation and falsification of reality are relevant analytical categories. They affected both the individuals caught by ideologies that instrumentalised nationalism, and the local researchers of those cultures. Mythicisation and falsification are, therefore, constitutive dimensions of a certain mentality, and surely, of a certain level of the East-European ethnology and folklore. "Professional troops of folklore, made in special schools and salaried by the state, undertake

national and international competitions. Starting with the '60 «tourist villages» are arranged, as for instance Hollókő in Hungary or Lerești in Romania. These put on stage an archaic mode of agricultural production, which is supposed to be abolished by the communist regime because of collectivisation. It is true that everything that could evoke the poverty or misery had been carefully cleared away. The visitors were allowed to see peasants in lively coloured costumes, being devoted to agricultural labour by imitating their ancestors, celebrating «traditional weddings» and dancing on the streets; the store offered for shopping local artefacts fabricated following the ethnographers' indications" (Thiesse, 2000: 202).

The fake had to become a masterpiece in the grotesque representations that took place on the stage of Cântarea României (Singing for Romania Festival), an incredible dramatisation of national culture, which gathered together a huge mass of people (some millions) and recycled every possible myth and heroic act of the Romanian history: Burebista, and very many other national heroes culminating with Ceaușescu; Meșterul Manole, Miorița, Baba Dochia and Păcală; the kindness, innocence, morality, wisdom, and craft of Romanian peasant; the splendours and the hunted richness of the mother country; the great communist fulfilments (in which „corn field were twins with oil wells”), and so on and so forth. All this was about the theatricalisation of an ethnos, which directly legitimated Ceaușescu's paranoia. It was impossible to determine the “truth” in this mystification as long as from the beginning it was placed under the sign of the fake. It was impossible also because this festivist nationalism marked the Romanian culture profoundly. The Singing for Romania Festival was an allegory of the ethnological and folkloristic writings themselves.

### **Illustrations and solutions**

I would like to illustrate now the fact that all these attitudes deeply marked the local cultures, and the Romanian culture as a whole. Last week I read the papers of my first year students, whom I offered seminars on “Cultural Anthropology in Eastern Europe”.

Although we had studied very attentively the history of East-European nationalism, and each course of the curricula (starting with the Philosophy of European Integration) emphasises the necessity of overcoming the nationalist paradigm, the students have not used a critical approach towards it. They were five-six years old in 1989, at the time of Revolution. Nevertheless, they did not understand to think in a detached way about nationalism, and, in their papers (whose subject was “Explain and illustrate the way in which Ethnology and Folklore constitute themselves as sciences of the nation in the context of East-European cultures: Propose a commentary regarding their status and role today”), only 20% had mentioned the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century national states formation and the scientific production called to justify it, and only 10% noticed that the nationalist discourse entails a critique. This shows once again that the critical discourse is not internalized by the Romanian culture, deeply marked at its turn by ethno-folklorist traditions. The answers were as it follows: “We can say that folklore and ethnology represent the sciences of the nation, and the attributes of the spirit that give us identity as nation”. “But where elsewhere than in Eastern Europe the magic of the old is still present and the spirit of the ancestors is still preserved with worship?” Or: “In my opinion the role (...) of ethnology and folklore is to preserve untouched the fundamental nature of the identity of the country, [they] represent, right by their features a wall against losing identity”. And finally: “Ethnology and folklore represent the fundamental sciences of the nation, they represent not only people's mentality during one certain period, but the identity and the spirit of the people as a whole”.

The cause of the maintenance of these attitudes is very deep and it is linked to the ideology of culture, to the fact that the Romanian culture is a nationalist culture and the ethnological-folkloristic discourse has inhibited any possibility of surpassing this ideology. I am not going to return to the genesis of nationalism and to its historical and social reasons. I draw attention to the nationalism that was a constant landmark in the Romanian culture during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (in the interwar period, in the communist period, and in the post-communist period), and to certain cultural forms that it

generated. I would intend to present now, very shortly and concisely, three of them, by noticing their relevance in the contemporary period: (1) the continuous construction of a peasant identity; (2) the continuous construction of the scene of identity representations; (3) the continuous discursive repudiation of other identities (for instance, the civic one) and its equivalence with the ethno-nationalist identity. We have to see these constructions as produced by both political discourses and sanctions, and the cultural ones. Among the latter, as we have already seen, ethnology and folklore are in the first lines.

(1) The so-called theory of peasant class as the only one that preserves the national specific had an evident philosophical background, the conception of Herder. I quote Henri H. Stahl: "In their endeavours to philosophically found the discovery earlier folklorists have made, namely the existence of a popular culture, they all invoked, basically, the «Volkgeist» theory, that is the veneration of the ethnic group, mystically conceived, as a «ancient stratum», as a shaping «pattern» of the popular creation". (Stahl, 1983: 25). This 19<sup>th</sup> century idea is perfectly operating today in the Romanian culture, from academic writings to media cultural recommendations. It goes along with other deep hobbies as thraco-dacism or spiritism.

(2) I have talked about the Singing for Romania Festival as about something that happened decades before. The stage has not come undone, at least regarding the peasants. Anyone watching media productions (nowadays of entertainment, not of political propaganda) can rediscover them on the TV platform or screenplays. The same peasants masked in national costumes are dubiously appearing from anywhere, and the same ideology is incessantly engaged. It is interesting to notice that in the post-communist period they have received a new function, that of preserving the national identity against globalisation and "Americanisation".

(3) The issue of the culturally constructed and imposed ethno-nationalist identities is a crucial one for the contemporary European cultural politics. These identities are in contradiction with the current ideologies and projects of European unification. One may observe that also the other dimensions culturally recommended by the Romanian ethnology and folklore (such as traditionalism, ruralism,

particularism, and so one and so forth) constitute further problematic aspects of the integration of our country into the Western cultural context.

As a conclusion I am stating that the cultural and civic identity in Romania is primarily a nationalist one. There are many explanations for this situation. One of them is the ethno-folklorist vision of culture. The traditional ethnological discourse is among the most important ones involved in producing this vision. Cultural anthropology, which reshapes itself now as a new critical discourse in the Romanian culture (and Eastern Europe) has to deconstruct this traditional discourse. I consider that this should be its main purpose as a critical field of study. The moment when it will produce a critique of the discursive culturalist identity construction is going to be the time of its affirmation.

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**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN  
PROFESSOR DIMITRIE GUSTI'S MONOGRAPHIC  
CAMPAIGNS.  
A WORKING HYPOTHESIS**

*Zoltán Rostás and Theodora-Eliza Văcărescu*

In the '80s, twenty years after the "rehabilitation" of Sociology<sup>1</sup> as well as of the Sociological School from Bucharest founded by Dimitrie Gusti<sup>2</sup>, not few historians of Sociology thought there was nothing left to study about the history of this Romanian scientific establishment. This conviction was also emphasized by the fact that exaggerated efforts had been made in order to spotlight less important authors

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<sup>1</sup> For fifteen years, during Dej's dictatorship, Sociology has been classified as a bourgeois doctrine, which served imperialism. In 1965, through a Party decision, Sociology, along with Cybernetics and Genetics, was reconsidered and revalued... as part of the Marxian ideology.

<sup>2</sup> **Dimitrie Gusti** (1880-1955), sociologist, philosopher, politician. University professor in Iași and Bucharest. Deputy and Senator. Minister of Public Education, Cults and Arts (1932-1933). The founder of the modern sociological education and of the Sociological School from Bucharest. He initiated the monographic research method and undertook, starting of 1925, the first sociological inquiries. Initiator of the Social Service Law. He founded the Romanian Social Institute (1921), the journals *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială* (Archive for Science and Social Reform) and *Sociologia românească* (Romanian Sociology). As general manager (1934-1939), he modernized the activity of the Royal Foundation "Prince Charles." He was the main organizer of the Romanian pavilion at the international exhibition from Paris (1937) and New York (1939). In 1937, the International Institute of Sociology charged him, as president, with the organization of the 15<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Sociology, which ought to take place in Bucharest, in 1939. Together with V. I. Popa and H. H. Stahl, he founded the Village Museum from Bucharest (1936). He coordinated and edited the *Romanian Encyclopaedia*, 4 volumes (1938-1943). Member of several foreign societies. As the president of the Romanian Academy (1944-1946), he sets the grounds for the National Council of Scientific Research (1946).

who wrote about sociology and who also taught sociology, but have never actually done concrete social research.

This opinion was false from both the historical and the gnosiological point of view. On one hand, despite the so-called "saturation" concerning the development of the School's history, many works have not been republished; therefore they have not been capitalized. On the other hand, it is common knowledge that the analysis of a phenomenon is always related to the given historical moment and it is wrong to assume that another perspective, another epoch would not impose another grid of evaluation for that particular phenomenon.

Therefore, there is no wonder that after 1989, Mircea Vulcănescu's<sup>1</sup> and Anton Golopenția's<sup>2</sup> works were published, both of these sociologists having been noteworthy members of the Sociological School, who died in the communist political prisons. Moreover, after decades of denial from the censorship, important works of Dimitrie Gusti, Henri H. Stahl<sup>3</sup>, Traian Herseni<sup>1</sup> have

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<sup>1</sup> **Mircea Vulcănescu** (1904-1952), philosopher, economist, sociologist, founding member of the Sociological School of Bucharest, he had significant contributions to the finalization of the theory of sociological monographs. Professor Gusti's assistant at the University of Bucharest, under-secretary of state at the Ministry of Finance during the Antonescu government. He was member of the Department of Monograph from the Romanian Social Institute (1929) and he took part in the monographic researches from Goicea Mare, Fundul Moldovei, Drăguș, Runcu, Cornova. He took part in the elaboration of the *Romanian Encyclopedia*. He undertook important sociological and economic studies concerning the peasant household and the Romanian village. He had original contributions to the history of sociology, history of philosophy, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of Romanian culture. He died in the prison of Aiud.

<sup>2</sup> **Anton Golopenția** (1909-1951), sociologist, statistician, close collaborator of professor Dimitrie Gusti, Gusti's chief secretary while he was a minister, honorary assistant, editor of the journal *Romanian Sociology*, inspector at the Royal Foundation "Prince Charles". He was in charge of the Office of Studies and, subsequently, delegated general manager at the Central Institute of Statistics. He took part in the monographic researches of Runcu and Cornova and he led, together with Dumitru C. Georgescu, the sociological enquiry of 60 villages in Romania. In 1942-1943, he led the ethno-sociological researches of the Romanian settlements from beyond Bug. He died in the prison of Jilava.

<sup>3</sup> **Henri H. Stahl** (1900-1991), sociologist, historian, the most important collaborator of professor Dimitrie Gusti, professor of Sociology at the University of Bucharest until the elimination of the discipline in 1948. Noteworthy participant in the reestablishment of the sociological research and teaching after 1965. He had an important role in the elaboration of the methodology of the monographic research on the field. He participated in all the School's monographic campaigns. In 1939, he published the first

formally been accepted by the communist regime after 1965, and therefore allowed to be published.

The other mistake of the historians of sociology in the '80 cannot really be imputed to them. Because, as long as they, like most western specialists, were focusing on the idea that the history of sociology is dealing with the results of the research, with the top works of sociology, they could not notice the alternative attempts in the research of this discipline. They were not able to acknowledge that in the reference literature of the 80s, the attention was shifted from the final results of a research, to the process of preparation, of the actual "doing" of the research and of the writing of the work.<sup>2</sup> From the perspective of such a change of approach, it would be relevant to notice the fact that during the process of elaboration of the works of the Sociological School of Bucharest, actually during the process of institutionalisation of Romanian sociology, women's participation – compared to other countries – was astonishing. The dismissal of this fact is not due to the misogynist or anti-feminist attitude of the historians of sociology, but, simply, to the lack of sociological sensitivity of those who examined the School in a traditional manner. Even a sociologist like Henri H. Stahl, when asked how he could explain women's massive participation in the campaigns from Fundul

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complete monograph, the one of Nerej. He is the forefather of the Romanian historical sociology. He is also the first scientist in Romania to use statistics and the method of historical archeology in social history research. He suggested a new division into periods of the Romanian history. Member of the Romanian Academy.

<sup>1</sup> **Traian Herseni** (1907-1980), sociologist, anthropologist, close collaborator of Professor Dimitrie Gusti, assistant and then associate professor of rural sociology at the University of Bucharest and at the University of Cluj. In the fall of 1940 he was secretary general at the Ministry of Public Education during the Iron Guardist government. He was imprisoned between 1951 and 1956, and subsequently he became researcher at the Academy's institutes. He was the most prolific author of the Sociological School of Bucharest. He participated in the monographs starting the one of Nerej. He led the monographic team from Drăguș and he undertook a brief monograph of the villages from the region. He is one of the initiators of the regional sociological monographs in Romania. He wrote a history of Romanian Sociology.

<sup>2</sup> See the works of Edward Tyriakian, 1979, "The Significance of Schools in the Development of Sociology" in W. E. Snizek et al. (eds), *Contemporary Issues in Theory and Research*, Greenwood, Westport, Conn. and Martin Bulmer, 1984, *The Chicago School of Sociology*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Moldovei and Drăguș, he admitted that he had never thought about this issue: "I don't know how to explain it. I have never taken this matter into consideration, why there were so many women."<sup>1</sup>

It was obvious that the description of the process of becoming of Romanian Sociology needed not only a new vision, but also especially the resort to other documents than the mature works of a few important sociologists. An enquiry into the materials published in the newspapers of the time, into the scholarly journals, into the memoirs, diaries, published and unpublished letters, archive documents of the institutions involved in the organization of sociology, and, finally, into the documents of oral history involving the members of Gusti's School could facilitate the portrayal and understanding of the organizations founded by Dimitrie Gusti, of the monographers' community, of its internal structure and of the network that the School was included in. Such a detailed approach could not help notice women's participation, especially since it was unique compared to other similar endeavours from the same period in Europe.

In a study<sup>2</sup> published in 1936 by Henri H. Stahl, where there is a list of all the participants in the monographic campaigns starting 1925, we identify almost forty women: BA students, BA graduates, Ph.D. students, medical doctors, artists, choreographers etc. who participated in the sociological inquiries organized by Gusti (this figure does not include the women who participated in the activities of the royal student teams<sup>3</sup>, nor in the Social Service<sup>4</sup> of 1939). Some of these women were permanent participants in Gusti's monographs; others were transient participants in the campaigns. Among those

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<sup>1</sup> Zoltán Rostás, 2000, *Monografia ca utopie - Interviuuri cu Henri H. Stahl* (The Monograph as an Utopia - Interviews with Henri H. Stahl), Bucharest: Paideia, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Henri H. Stahl, "Școala monografiei sociologice" (The School of Sociological Monograph), *Arhiva pentru Știință și Reformă Socială*, XIV (1936), Bucharest: Editura Institutului Social Român, pp. 1130-1165.

<sup>3</sup> The Royal Cultural Foundation "Prince Charles", led by Dimitrie Gusti, sent between 1934 and 1938 tens of thousands of teams in the villages of Romania, and in each of these teams there was a woman.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Social Service Law, elaborated by Gusti and his collaborators and promulgated by Charles II, all the students who were in their final university year were compelled to do organized cultural work. In 1939 hundreds of women who graduated from universities were trained for village cultural work.

who became conspicuous we can mention: Xenia Costa-Foru<sup>1</sup>, Marcela Focșa<sup>2</sup>, Lucia Apolzan<sup>3</sup>, Lena Constante<sup>4</sup>, Ștefania Cristescu-Golopenția<sup>5</sup>, Elisabeta (Zizi) Constante<sup>6</sup>, Paula Gusty-Herseni<sup>7</sup>, Marioara Negreanu<sup>8</sup>, Floria Capsali<sup>1</sup>, Veturia Manuilă<sup>2</sup>, Maria (Miți)

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<sup>1</sup> **Xenia Costa-Foru** (1902-1983), sociologist, collaborator of Professor Dimitrie Gusti since the monographic campaign of 1927, specialized in social work in Germany and the USA. She was co-founder, professor and manager (since 1935) of the Superior School of Social Assistance since 1929 until its elimination in 1950. Within the Department of Monograph of the Romanian Social Institute, she was the leader of the monographic research team on family, attending the campaigns of Nerej, Fundul Moldovei, Drăguș, Runcu and Cornova. Between 1929 and 1931, within the Superior School of Social Assistance, she expanded the investigation over the urban environment (Tei district from Bucharest). Her work *Cercetarea monografică a familiei* (The Monographic Research of the Family) is considered to be the most systematic paper dedicated to the research of the family, within the Sociological School of Bucharest.

<sup>2</sup> **Marcela Focșa** (1907-2002), ethnographer, museographer, participant in the monographic campaigns starting 1928. After a short period of time at the Romanian Institute of Social Research and in the Ministry of National Education, she was transferred to the Central Institute of Statistics. After the war, she worked at the Popular Art Museum. She co-authored seven volumes and tens of studies in *Revista muzeelor* (Museums' Journal) about popular costumes and adornments, and about the methodology of organizing exhibitions. She was never married.

<sup>3</sup> **Lucia Apolzan** (1911-1999), sociologist, ethnologist trained in the school of Romulus Vuia (Cluj). After 1940 she joined the Gustian school, undertaking important bibliographic works. She thoroughly researched the villages from Apuseni Mountains, and the mountain area from Porțile de Fier.

<sup>4</sup> **Lena Constante** (born 1907), fine-artist, participant in the sociological monographs, starting with the campaign of 1929. She had significant contributions to the understanding of the art of icons on glass. She married Harry Brauner, also a participant in the monographs. She was politically sentenced to twelve years of prison, in the Pătrășcanu trial. She wrote poems, theatre plays for children and two volumes of memoirs on the life in the communist political prisons.

<sup>5</sup> **Ștefania Cristescu-Golopenția** (1908-1979), sociologist and ethnologist. She participated in the monographic campaigns starting 1929, focusing in her research on the popular rituals and ceremonies. She married Anton Golopenția.

<sup>6</sup> **Elisabeta (Zizi) Constante**, BA in Letters, participant at the monographic campaigns starting 1927. Subsequently she worked at the Superior School of Social Assistance.

<sup>7</sup> **Paula Gusty-Herseni** (born 1907), BA in Letters. She took part in the monographic campaigns from Drăguș, Runcu, Cornova. Between 1936 and 1938 she researched, together with her husband, Traian Herseni, the groups of lads from Țara Oltului. She published bibliographic syntheses of the Sociological School of Bucharest. After marrying Traian Herseni, she no longer attended her personal research, dedicating herself to helping her husband.

<sup>8</sup> **Marioara Negreanu**, BA in History, Ph.D. in London, participant in the monographic campaigns, collaborator of Professor Francisc Rainer, secretary of the Spiru Haret boarding house, professor of history.

Dărmănescu<sup>3</sup>, Domnica Păun, Elvira Georgescu, Dochia Ioanovici<sup>4</sup>. Their activity and destiny were left in the shadow, maybe also due to the repeated destructive blows of history (the outbreak of the World War II, which eliminated the structures of the research and, especially, the communist reform of education of 1948, which eliminated the sociology and the sociologists from the academic life).

Regardless of the consequences, women's participation in Gusti's School remains a fact that should be studied in order to have an adequate picture of this scientific institution and of the Romanian inter-war intellectuality. Moreover, this research will enrich the knowledge of women's emancipation in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Romania. However, this issue raises several questions that need a thorough investigation in order to be answered. For this reason, the goal of our paper is only to signal the importance of this dimension and to call attention upon it.

In the following part we will briefly sketch the provisional thematic area of this research project, relying on an oral history archive of the Sociological School from Bucharest.

1. The first question concerns the understanding of the reason why Gusti and his close collaborators decided to invite at the monographic campaigns women from different universities. Gusti, although an inveterate bachelor in the beginning of his teaching career, even during his stay in Iași, proved to be more modern than his colleagues by publishing, in a collective volume<sup>5</sup>, the study of a

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<sup>1</sup> **Floria Capsali** (1900-1982), choreographer and dancer, she attended the monographic campaigns starting with the one from Fundul Moldovei (1928) and she dealt with the popular artistic manifestations. She had a very important role in the development of the Romanian ballet, by promoting the dance of folkloric inspiration.

<sup>2</sup> **Veturia Manuilă** (1896-1986), medical doctor and sociologist. Between 1926 and 1927 she specialized in the field of social assistance at the John Hopkins University from Baltimore. Starting 1929 she organized and managed the Superior School of Social Assistance, and in 1934 she inaugurated the first Romanian centre for young delinquents. In 1947 she illegally fled the country together with her husband.

<sup>3</sup> **Maria (Miți) Dărmănescu** took part in several monographic campaigns; subsequently she worked as a Romanian language teacher in Brăila.

<sup>4</sup> **Dochia Ioanovici**, BA in Letters, participant in the monographic campaigns starting 1929.

<sup>5</sup> *Studii sociologice și etice* (Sociological and Ethical Studies), Iasi, 1915.

remarkable woman student, Corina Leon (it was not Gusti's fault that later, this student kept her link with sociology only by marrying an important German sociologist, Werner Sombart).

In the '20s, at the first two field trips, in the villages Goicea Mare (1925) and Rușețu (1926), there were no women participants, but, starting with the campaign of Nerej (1927), women's presence was common in all the teams. We have not found yet any documents regarding this important decision, but this does not mean that we cannot formulate a hypothesis concerning the possible reasons for the co-option of women onto the monographs. It is very likely that the hardships of research during the first two campaigns proved that there are phenomena, situations and institutions within the village that can be better and more efficiently approached by women than by men.

Henri H. Stahl:

She [Xenia Costa-Foru] had a BA in Sociology. She has been a teacher as well, for a short period of time. Consequently, she worked as a social assistant in a hospital. She did not have an issue [of research], she simply came to see what it was all about. I think it was I who inflicted her with the idea of the family. Because there was no one to deal with this issue. In my opinion, this is an issue that fits very well a woman sociologist, better that it would fit a man sociologist. And I told her: deal with this issue. You will study the family.<sup>1</sup>

This quotation does not allow us to decide whether Stahl, due to men's unsuccessful experiences, drew this conclusion, or he simply assumed it. Stahl knew, even without reading it, that women had always been associated with the private sphere, i.e. the house and the family, their role being the one of mothers and, therefore, of caretakers and nurturers. Therefore, it is very likely that, the moment when women started to penetrate the public sphere through the access to education, they have been attributed (or they themselves have assumed) roles that were compatible with their prior socialization.

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<sup>1</sup> Rostás, *Monografia ca utopie*, pp. 245-246.

This might be the reason why the area of research of most of the women monographers is somehow restricted to those topics that they were, anyway, “accustomed” to: family, women and various artistic manifestations, like decorating the house or folk costumes.

A second hypothesis, probably never formulated in writing, refers to monographers’ need to have research assistants, an activity for which women would be more appropriate than men. But what does “more appropriate” amount to? Stahl does not say that women would be more appropriate or more skilful in gathering material, collecting data or copying fabrics and icons. What Stahl is saying, directly or indirectly, is that most of the women participants in the monographs “did not have a vision”<sup>1</sup>, “were not geniuses”, but “simple performers”<sup>2</sup>, and thus, the only activity they could perform just as well as men was collecting data. Moreover, the researchers did not have the time to be present wherever it was necessary, so they needed these “second class people”<sup>3</sup> to do this type of work for them.

Henri H. Stahl:

There were many women in the monographs. We worked well with them. I personally worked systematically with women. I got along very well with them. [...] None of them was brilliant, but they were very useful on the field. They did their job well. [...] They were good field investigators. However, in what it concerned sociology, it is no doubt that they did not have a vision, or conception or an issue. Simple performers. One would tell them: do this and that, and they did. Isn’t it? Very good. They were useful. [...] First, because this is the only way you could work in multiple teams, since there are many situations when you can not be present, as observer, everywhere at the same time – things happen in different places, with different people and then, when there are many people, you say: you do this, you do that... Then you gather everything at one place. You need these second-class people.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

Henri H. Stahl:

Generally the women worked well, I mean, they were serious. None of them brought about any trouble, and, although they were not much of enlightened spirits, they were correct and hard workers. I personally worked very well with them.<sup>1</sup>

Henri H. Stahl:

All of them [the women who took part in the monographic campaigns] would have had the ambition to do something. And you would give them things to do. You could use them for certain censuses, for certain routine works. But those are failures; there was none with a vision. [...] Moreover, most of them prepared themselves to be high school teachers.<sup>2</sup>

Marcela Focşa

They came... these girls were gathering material work, documenting work. They did not necessarily have to be geniuses; the geniuses were others.<sup>3</sup>

Marcela Focşa:

Zizi [Elisabeta Constante] did at Fundul Moldovei the same thing I did. They told us to do statistics, we did statistics, they told us to do family files, and we did files. That’s what we did at Fundul Moldovei. We did exactly what they were telling us to do.<sup>4</sup>

Marcela Focşa:

I dealt with fabrics, I used to copy models of fabrics and she [Lena Constante] copied icons on glass and did a research. With our materials, Gusti went in the fall, I think, in Germany, in Berlin, at I-don’t-know-what thing, and he organized an exhibition of our drawings.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Marcela Focşa in Zoltán Rostás, *Sala luminoasă. Primii monografişti ai Şcolii gustiene* (The Light Hall - The First Monographers of Gusti’s School), 2003, Bucharest: Paideia, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

2. It is just as interesting to study the reason why these young women accepted the invitation to come to the sociological researches at the countryside. Future investigations will confirm the pertinence of our hypotheses: a) beginning of a scientific career; b) evasion of the bourgeois family environment; c) accompanying a girl friend, a boy friend or a husband etc.

Lena Constante:

We [Lena Constante and my sisters] were children of Macedonians, very tightly raised, we were not allowed to have friends, for me, the monograph was a great adventure, so many boys, so many girls, freedom.<sup>1</sup>

Marcela Focșa:

It was not that interesting [at Runcu], except for the Hohodol, a river where we used to bathe. It was so wonderful there!!! */she laughs/* It was fun... */I have the feeling that these researches, for some of the team members, were more fun than.../* Well, if it were not fun... It had to be! [...] There was here a kind of liberation, release of all the prejudices and of all the social conventions. My generation, compared to that of my mother's had already taken an extraordinary leap. At Râmnicu-Sărat I used to stay with a Macedonian woman who was an inveterate spinster. But not against men, I mean she enjoyed having male friends, but that was as far as she went. She was a teacher. And she used to ask me: and your mother allows you to be alone in a room with a man? [...] She thought it was very strange that girls were allowed to be alone in a room with a boy, she could not understand this. Therefore, these researches have been a new and exciting experience for all of us.<sup>2</sup>

3. We have presented so far extracts of oral documents with respect to the initial reason of participation. In what it follows, we have to highlight and articulate the destiny of some of the women monographers, for, if in the beginning, the apprenticeship in the rural

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Harry Brauner and Lena Constante Rostás, *Sala luminoasă*, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Marcela Focșa in Rostás, *Sala luminoasă*, p. 123.

research could be thought as indistinct from or could merge with the secretarial and assistance work, later, a differentiated development was expected. This development depended on talent, ambition and several other factors. Thus, some of the women could remain "simple" material gatherers, but in the shadow of the "older and smarter men"<sup>1</sup>, like, for example, Marcela Focșa, Domnica Păun, Miți Dărmănescu, others, with the strength of undertaking their own researches and writings, could become independent researchers, like Xenia Costa-Foru and Ștefania Cristescu-Golopenția, or others could dissipate in marriage, like Paula Gusty-Herseni.

Henri H. Stahl:

Strong "personalities" could be considered some other monographers, too, as well, like, for example, Xenia Costa-Foru, around whom gravitated all those who were concerned with issues of "family", as well as with, more generally, the social life of the village, seen from the point of view of the woman.<sup>2</sup>

Henri H. Stahl

She [Ștefania Cristescu-Golopenția] was a quiet and good girl, very skilful in her work. Finally she became an excellent Romanian teacher. A finical folklorist, extremely assiduous. She worked hard and she published very interesting things as well. A very nice girl, no doubt. Golopenția fell in love with her and married her. But she was very conscientious and remained devoted to this preoccupation.<sup>3</sup>

Marcela Focșa:

And when they got married [Paula Gusty-Herseni], what do you think? Paula became some sort of a secretary, she used to type all his texts, she did this entire "kitchen" job for his

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Henri H. Stahl, 1981, *Amintiri și gânduri din vechea școală a "monografiilor sociologice"* (Memoirs and Thoughts from the Old School of the "Sociological Monographs"), Bucharest: Editura Minerva, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Rostás, *Monografia ca utopie*, p. 303.

works. He used her entirely for his works. But she did it, and even gladly.<sup>1</sup>

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Through these research courses and directions, through the hypotheses formulated, we wanted to pinpoint an unstudied matter that, in the following period, will be in our focus. The theoretical framework of the project is the one offered by the organizational sociology, situated in a particular historical context, the inter-war period. This general framework allows a multi-faceted approach of the social integration of the young university graduates, as well as of the women university graduates, a more detailed analysis of the institutionalisation of sociology as a science, as well as the monitoring of the process of emancipation of the women intellectuals in the inter-war Romania.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Marcela Focșa in Rostás, *Sala luminoasă*, p. 187.

## MAKING HISTORY IN POST-SOCIALIST ROMANIA: CONTRASTING MEDIA AND CULTURAL STRATEGIES

Levente Szabó

The paper focuses on a special aspect of the pragmatics of contemporary Romanian history making: on myth-making, foregrounding mostly the boundary defining-characteristics of the historical myths at issue. The paper will view historical myth making as a **cultural phenomenon**. In an attempt to survey the micro- and the macro-, the local and the national level of Romanian myth making, the article will start off from a case-study of a 1992 incident that occurred in Cluj, then passes on another case-study, but on a national level. The analysis of the first major post-socialist Romanian history textbook debate will use some of the results of the interim conclusions of the first case-study so as to picture a possible global explanation for a better understanding of Romanian historical myth-making as a post-socialist phenomenon.

### "We are the masters of this land"<sup>1</sup>

On November 24, 1992, Hungarian citizens reported to one of the local newspapers that in Cluj, one of the major cities of Romania inhabited mostly by Romanians, Hungarians and Roma people, the mayor and the local representatives of the Romanian government plan to commemorate the national holiday by placing an inscription on the

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<sup>1</sup> The quotation is part of a very popular Romanian folk song, sang also before and after 1989 mostly in commemorative contexts. According to its refrain: "We are Romanians, we are Romanians / We are the masters of this land" (in original: "Noi suntem români, noi suntem români, / Noi suntem pe acest pamant stapâni.").

statue of King Matthias. The statue, a historic monument, the work of art of János Fadrusz, was erected in 1902 during the Austro-Hungarian government, and since it has a certain symbolic value for the Hungarian ethnic community, the plan immediately resulted in several types of protests, even after the inscription was placed on the statue.<sup>1</sup> In the following I will try to analyze the events using historical myths as the basis and focal point of the discussion.

The occasions when and where historical myths are employed are not contingent and neutral regarding their (actual / on-the-spot) meaning: the occasion of their employment thus can be considered a meaningful aspect of the pragmatics of historical myths. It is not contingent that Gheorghe Funar and the party (and the cultural foundation) backing him up (then The Party of the Romanian Unity, respectively The Romanian Homeland Cultural Foundation) has chosen the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, the Romanian national holiday to place the inscription on the statue. The local organizers of the commemorative acts also underlined the double symbolic element underlying the holiday in the city of Cluj: according to them, since on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December Stephan the Great won over the Hungarian King Matthias, the two occurrences, that of the 1918 Union and that of the 1467 victory are intimately linked and should be treated as such.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> The figure represented, King Matthias, is itself controversial in XIX–XX<sup>th</sup>-century Romanian historiography: he is reckoned to be descended from a Romanian family and thus to be directly linked to the Romanians themselves. On the other hand the statue itself had the Hungarian national symbols on it, these being removed in 1918, after the unification of Basarabia, Bucovina, Transylvania, Banat, Crişana and Maramureş and also with the Romanian 'Regat'. The Hungarian inscription "Mátyás király" (King Matthias) was replaced with a Romanian one ("Matei Corvinul"), and in 1932 a new text was placed on the statue, containing a quotation according to which: "Triumphant everywhere, defeated only at Baia by his own people when he tried to conquer the invincible Moldova." The quotation from Nicolae Iorga, a contested Romanian historian of the first part of the XX<sup>th</sup> century appropriates and ethnicizes the figure of the king, considering it along another controversial event that has divided Romanian and Hungarian historians: whether the battle (1467) between Stephen the Great and King Matthias was won by the former or the latter. The controversial inscription referring to the controversial event and the controversial descent of the ethnically problematic king was now to be placed again on the statue.

<sup>2</sup> For this argument, see, for instance: 'Ziua naţională a României', *Adevărul de Cluj*, December 1, 1992, no.767, 3.

endeavour to join the two symbolic acts, and thus to incorporate the new (the uncertain and unfitting) element into the framework of the commemorative ritual can easily be noticed in the communiqués announcing the program of the commemorations: "The celebrations of the National Day of Romania will begin at ten o'clock in front of the statue of Mihai the Valiant [in the Mihai the Valiant Square] with a wreath-laying ceremony. It is going to continue on the Liberty Square [the centre of Cluj] with the unveiling of an inscription inspired by Nicolae Iorga on *Matei Corvin's* statue, respectively with a wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of Lupa Capitolina [i.e. the replica of the famous Roman sculpture of Romulus and Remus]."<sup>1</sup> The statue representing King Matthias and some of his comrades is included within an already value-loaded structure: Romulus and Remus alluding to the alleged Roman origin of the Romanians and Mihai the Valiant standing – in the very pragmatics of the respective commemorative act – for all the Romanian heroes who died or lived for the Romanian nation<sup>2</sup> In this complex framework that encompasses the myth of antiquity into that of being *sui generis*, the figure of King Matthias is reinterpreted, the new inscription and its constructed history (with the quotation from the oeuvre of one of the most important – but also a highly controversial – Romanian historiographers) makes the instability of the appropriation and transition more easy and credible. So the context of the historical myth of *being sui generis* favours the embedding of an uncertain element into a certain historic and commemorative structure, ascribing from the meaning of the latter to that of the former.

The choice of the Romanian national holiday, a rather political than a neutral type of holiday<sup>3</sup>, politicizes every segment of the

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<sup>1</sup> Funar, Gheorghe, 'Comunicat', *Adevărul de Cluj*, November 28–30., 1992, no. 766., 1.

<sup>2</sup> "In the Mihai the Valiant Square the wreath-laying commenced in honour of the heroes of the nation [...] The Holy Father Irineau Bistriţeanu celebrated an extraordinary mass in honour of all the heroes who died for the ancient land." Serghif, Dorin, '1 Decembrie: a fi român', *Adevărul de Cluj*, December 2, 1992., 1.

<sup>3</sup> December 1 is not a neutral, civilian type of national holiday since it foregrounds the political act of the beginning of a unitary Romanian state, signaling the importance of the 1918 political events. Its political and boundary-making character is emphasized by the fact that it not only includes, but also excludes and divides, since for the

commemorations. On the other hand the purpose of the national holiday itself is to magnify the otherwise insignificant elements to the level of the national<sup>1</sup>, respectively it prescribes for the individual a certain type and certain number of possible attitudes towards the act of commemoration itself: For instance, every criticism regarding the national holiday itself or those participating at it in the prescribed manner, and every misbehavior according to the norms of commemoration is naturally perceived in a much more negative way than it would be interpreted outside the commemorative framework. So, the commemorative situation itself frames every segment within it, be it a more or less recent or old element, establishes the norms with the help of which also the more recent elements will be interpreted, respectively foregrounds a certain set of possible and canonic meanings that can be attached to the new elements.

The embedding of the new element into a Romanian national narrative that foregrounds the Roman mythical antecedents of the

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Hungarian ethnic minority it may evoke the end of the Austro-Hungarian (Dual) Monarchy. This argument has a rare and taboo character, but it is an existing argument. For instance, December 1, 1992 issue of the Romanian newspaper reports on a meeting of the Association for Interethnic Dialogue: "Szilágyi N. Sándor presented the meaning of the Great Unification for the Hungarian minority. He read an article written two years ago, considering it still valid. According to its text 'For the Hungarians December the 1<sup>st</sup> represents the nostalgia for the the Great Hungary.' 'The unification meant the end of our normal Hungarian being and our transformation into a minority of the Romanian society. [...] Nobody could ask us to become Romanians. [...] The text ends in the hope that the 'Romanians' [sic] shouldn't expect the Hungarians to do the impossible and appeals to the Romanians for a mutual understanding and respect for each other's feelings." Costea, Rodica, "Semnificația zilei de 1 Decembrie pentru minoritatea maghiară", *Adevărul de Cluj*, December 1, 1992., no. 767., 3. For an earlier account on the problem, see: SZILÁGYI N. Sándor, *Reflexii la o aniversare*, 22, November 30., 1990.

According to the Romanian Iorgulescu Mircea the choice of the day of December 1, 1918 was "a grievous political error" since the national holiday should be a day of "coagulation and not division" and "for an important part of Romania December 1 remains the day when its status and condition took a radical change." Iorgulescu, Mircea, "Provocarea", *Dilema*, October 29–November 4., 1999., 4.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. in general: Turner, Victor, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Cornell U. P., Ithaca-London, 1974., 105.; regarding specific cases: Rintman-Augustin, D., 'The Metamorphosis of Festivals in a Socialist Country', *Ethnologica Europaea*, XX., 1990.

nation, the claims of primevalness by positioning Mihai the Valiant as a new founder of the Romanian nation (certainly neglecting the dynastic and not language or ethnically based character of the province Mihai led, respectively the fundamentally divided and different character of the provinces of that time from modern Romania) and all these in the context of the 1918 Romanian Unification, make also the new figure, that of King Matthias, part of the narrative of a continuous founding<sup>1</sup> of the Romanian nation in which those who side with foreigners (like Matthias did according to the new interpretation conveyed by the inscription) will be defeated by their own fellow nationals. So, in the process of meaning assignment not only the existing framework (including different types of historical myths) attaches a special semantics to the new element (making it similar to the type of narrative and historical myths it is included in), but also the recent constituent produces an effect on it (though according to the logic of the system it is embedded into): it makes the narrative of continuous founding more consistent, less sketchy and offers a quasi negative example with didactic purposes: the defeat of King Matei from the Romanian family of the Corvins that sided with the Hungarians on the one hand, and the figure of the glorious Romanian king who was so brave that he even came to rule the Hungarians, too. Taking into account the afore-mentioned, these could serve as *partial* interpretative arguments to understand both the position of many Romanians (including that of the Romanian Government and Presidency<sup>2</sup>, respectively the local authorities, other than the mayor) and the power of placing the inscription. So, the intensity and actual semantics of the historical myths depends also on the occasion and on the temporal and spatial framework they are remembered and re-acted / re-constructed.

In the following I would like to focus on the intimate relationship between the appropriation of the symbolic space and the enactment of the myth of antiquity regarding both a national and a local space. The

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<sup>1</sup> Gellner, Ernst, *Nations and Nationalism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, the nationalist type of discourse (anterior to the then approaching national elections) of president Ion Iliescu and of some of the political parties cannot be neglected, either.

events of late November and early December 1992 of Cluj viewed in the context of the events of the following years (events concerning the meaning assignment to the public space of the city) show an intimate connection and may be interpreted as different phases of a unique narrative, that of the enactment of the myth of antiquity through a kind of use of the public space. If we take a chronological order, the first thing that might occur to us is the circumstance that the endeavour to place the inscription on the statue coincided with an attempt to place Romanian flags on it: "Gheorghe Funar declared to our newspaper that he is going to remove the inscription MATHIAS REX [i. e. the only inscription on the statue before the events of December 1992] and will place two columns in front of the statue so as the Romanian flag could permanently wave on them."<sup>1</sup> The communiqué of the National Board for the Protection of Historic Monuments and Sites<sup>2</sup> that protested against any kind of alteration of the monument and stated that any unauthorized modification is forbidden according to the laws protecting the historic monuments and sites, contained also a recommendation regarding the two flagpoles: "Any flagstaff needed for the celebration of the national holiday are to be erected independently and further from the monument, in its immediate vicinity."<sup>3</sup> The mayor took the recommendation literally and erected also the flagpoles he had mentioned earlier, literally framing the space of the statue (see picture 4). The endeavour to appropriate and reinterpret the history of and the history represented by the statue can be viewed in an interesting manner if we take into account the next step in the alteration of the public space of the centre exactly in front of the statue: as shown by the picture 1. The mayor's office took the initiative in excavating the space in front of the historic statue two years later. Speaking from the specialist's point of view the results that led to the excavation of the remains of a Roman settlement were not surprising at all since in the

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<sup>1</sup> Eduard, Bogdan, 'UDMR este o organizație teroristă', *Evenimentul Zilei*, December 3, 1992., no. 140., 5. Hungarian account of the statements of the mayor: 'Az RMDSZ terrorista szervezet', *Európai Idő*, December 9- December 22, 1992., no. 49-50., 3.

<sup>2</sup> Published in facsimile in *Szabadság*, December 3, 1992, no. 236, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem

autumn of 1991 other rich remains were found in another part of the central area and the archeologist of the Historical Museum considered that a former Roman town was to be found almost under the whole centre.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this the remains of the Romans 'discovered' in front of the statue – though contested also by specialists – became almost immediately integrated into the myth of antiquity of the former pattern.<sup>2</sup> The protest of the Hungarians (who saw in the excavations an additional sign of aggression against 'their' historical site) in fact enforced the symbolic boundary-making nature of everything that could be spatially related to the statue. The struggle over the excavations became thus directly linked to the statue both for the Romanians and the Hungarians. On the other hand the excavated Roman remains became directly linked to the Daco-Roman myth of origin of the Romanians<sup>3</sup>, so they were integrated into the founding narrative I was previously speaking about.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1998 a small column was erected just in front of the excavations, almost in the midst of the pavement, with the inscription: "On this site the replica of the Column of Traianus will be erected on the original scale. December 1, 1998. Mayor's office. Cluj-Napoca." (see picture 2.). The point in time chosen for the unveiling of the small statue, the place chosen for the statue, the simultaneous wreath-laying ceremony (like usually after 1992) at the statue of King Matthias made the excavations and the intended replica of the column part of both the same micro-narrative (including the struggle over the statue) and the very same myth of antiquity. But they also enacted the myth of antiquity by spatially rewriting / remodeling the space of the centre: they were placed symmetrically in front of each other, and both in front of the statue of King Matthias. The myth of antiquity became visualized by means of the position of the new sites. The space can

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<sup>1</sup> For an interview with the archeologists leading the excavations see: *Város Kolozsvár alatt?*, *Szabadság* July 11., 1992., no. 131., 1.

<sup>2</sup> According to the inscription of the mayoralty, the aim of the excavations was: "..."

<sup>3</sup> According to the English version of the explanatory inscriptions "the objective" [i. e. the aim] of the excavations is: "Documentation on the historical evolution of the ROMAN-DACIAN NAPOCA CITY [sic]"

thus be considered not a contingent, but a value-loaded, semanticized medium regarding the historical myths: these can be made palpable also by spatial references and enactments.

Moreover the appropriation of the space of the centre of Cluj can be viewed in the context of the appropriation of the public space of the town. Thus the claims of primevalness suggested on a national level become the endeavor to actualize the myth also on a local level. Cluj abounds in monuments built by Hungarians: from the present-day headquarters of the main university of Romania (Babes-Bolyai University) to the building of the major library very many buildings reflect another ethnic past than the Romanian one. Thus the following strategies employed by the mayor may be considered as parts of a symbolic struggle to overwrite the space of the town and to suggest a strong claim of primevalness with regards not only to the national, but also to a local Romanian identity. First and foremost: national flags were hoisted on every [!] lamppost of the town, and also the Christmas lighting wore the national Romanian colors. The benches painted in the colors of the Romanian national flag and the metal kerbs protecting the traffic islands in the broader centre (painted also in red, yellow and blue – see picture 2.), the presentation of red-yellow-blue football to the local (and non-local) schools (with special regard to Hungarian ones) were also part of the strategies of symbolic struggle over the local ethnic space and implicitly over the ethnic character of both the synchronic and diachronic times. (The procedure which has a certain pragmatics in Cluj parts from the original context and reappears also in other circumstances (for instance, the railway-stations of Apahida and Câmpia Turzii, both belonging to Cluj county): in this case they rather underline the belonging to a certain identity than enact the myth of antiquity – at least, not with the intensity one can find represented in the city of Cluj.)

The traffic island surrounding the mayor's office, that is the one leading to a major student campus has recently been paved with colourful flagstones in the colours of the national flag. The similarly coloured litterbins (see picture 3.) in the broad centre raised the protest of some Romanians themselves (including the Local Council – in conflict for some time with the mayor).

The inscriptions posted at several spots in the centre and at the borders of the town (so in highly symbolic places) contain references to specific paragraphs of the Romanian Constitution according to which: “[i]n Romania the official language is the Romanian”<sup>1</sup>, “[i]n the eyes of the law and of the authorities all citizens are equal without any privileges and discriminations.”<sup>2</sup>, and “[i]n Romania the dispositions of the Constitution are mandatory”.<sup>3</sup>

All these strategies of space appropriation are canonically defined and adequately received as border-making strategies that constitute ethnic identities that are made to define themselves *against* each other. On the other hand the appropriation of the local space enacts the myth of antiquity itself on a local level.

The inventing and reinventing of historical myths as boundary-making and -defining entities in the specific context of the November-December 1992 Cluj events and during the whole mayoralty of Gheorghe Funar can also be interpreted from the point of view of the (literary/historiographic) genres they employ. Genres come rarely in the focus of historical craftsmanship since they are tacitly considered transparent and hardly relevant in the constitution of meaning.<sup>4</sup> In the first decades of the nineteenth-century Hungarian culture the epic poem was considered a truly relevant (literary) genre that could produce historical truths regarding the ancient history of the Hungarian nation. Meanwhile (literary/historiographic) genres like biography resisted the refunctionalization of the genre-system in which an allegedly true history can be told and the epic poem became irrelevant from this point of view. But in the last decades professional

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<sup>1</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the Romanian Constitution.

<sup>2</sup> The quotations make reference to the 16<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the national Constitution, the mayor usually using both the former and the latter paragraph in an idiosyncretic way to deny the rights of the ethnic minorities to use their language in education and in the administrative system, qualifying such types of requests as privileges and discriminatory to the ethnic Romanians.

<sup>3</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the Romanian Constitution.

<sup>4</sup> Even Hayden White and those representing the linguistic and cultural turn in historiographic studies rarely mention the genres, they generally speak about narratives: cf. e. g. White, Hayden, *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, The Johns Hopkins U. P., Baltimore and London, 1987, pp. 1–57.

historiography - with the *ego-histoire* type of turns - seems to reinterpret the value of the first person-narrative (literary) genres in historiography, from genres like the diary and autobiography to that of the memoirs. So the relevance of the (literary / historiographic) genres as history-producing media is itself historical: it might suffer serious changes over the time.

On the other hand it is not irrelevant whether a history is told in the form of a biography, a commemorative speech or a diary. All these forms produce rather different histories depending on the rules of their genres (including their narrative perspective) and the way certain interpretative communities are using them. So history doesn't depend only on language and narrative in general, but also on another 'form' that partly prescribes and constitutes its meanings: the (literary / historiographic) genre.

The dispute between those opposing and those siding with the mounting of the inscription to the statue is a wide and complex one directed towards different types of communities. It embraces different levels of the public sphere, operating not only with face-to-face interaction, but also with endeavours to 'convert' both those siding with one or another opinion and the neutral viewers of the conflict (for instance by means of communiqués, handing out rival leaflets with rivaling histories of the inscription etc.). The initiators of the placement of the inscription - headed by the mayor himself - besides the classical type of historiographic reasoning (or at least besides a reasoning that is formally similar to the text criticism and norms of the canonic historiographic discourse) seems to employ other genres, that are less or non-canonical in official historiography, but that are often accepted as truth-producing genres regarding Romanian diachronic or synchronic events: gossip and rumour. The use of these genres as an endeavour to produce truths that seem probable is not an 'invention' of the mayor and of his fellows, it has a certain - though in a certain sense different - tradition from the era of the Communist regime itself and a strong use and abuse during the 1989 Romanian events, nay also during the ethnic conflicts of March 1990.

During the socialist period the so-called "politics of duplicity"<sup>1</sup> helped the formation of a cultural space where on the one hand the public space of the regime aggressively penetrated the private space of the people, but on the other hand (also as a consequence of this characteristics) it resulted in an intimate and strong borderline between the discourse of the regime and the alleged truths on it. Thus, for instance, the official version on the history of the present was continuously and tacitly emended in the private sphere. Gossip and rumour became the most important genres of these emendations, a specific value being attached to them as to 'the most intimate, and thus most believable, publicly unutterable truths'. This overvaluing of the gossip and of the rumor and the attribution of a high value of probability and truth to them in general, made these genres functional also during the 1989 events when a considerable amount of this type of information was present in the mass media. In a certain sense thus the 1989 events perpetuated the overvaluing of these genres from the point of view of their content of an alleged truth.

In March 1990, during the ethnic carnage of Târgu-Mureș between the Hungarians and Romanians, the very same genres came to have a paradigmatic ethnicized semantics, i.e. they were misused so as to demonize ethnic groups. This type of usage has already a certain tradition from the time of the 1989 events, when the leaders of the communist regime alluded to a foreign (also Hungarian) peril that aimed at destroying the country.

So, the mayor of Cluj took over not only a certain poetics of speaking on past and present events, but also a certain politics of them when he began alluding to Hungarians from Hungary that might stand behind the fiasco of his Timișoara canvassing, a Magyarization of Cluj and of Romania in general.<sup>2</sup> The same paradigm may include

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<sup>1</sup> For the introduction of the concept regarding the political regime of Ceaușescu and the application of the term on a specific problem, that is that of social and biological reproduction during Romanian socialism, see: Kligman, Gail, *Politica duplicității. Controlul reproducerii în România lui Ceaușescu*, trad. Marilena Dumitrescu, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2000, pp. 47-52.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Serghie, Dorin, 'Domnul primar Gheorghe Funar îi amendează pe organizatorii manifestației U.D.M.R.', *Adevărul de Cluj*, no 773., December 9, 1992., 1.; 'Precizări necesare cu prilejul așa-zisului bicentenar al Teatrului și Operei Maghiare din

the statements according to which the Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians is a terrorist society<sup>1</sup>, the Huns (and not the Hungarians) entered Europe in the years 900–1000 AD coming also from today's territory of India<sup>2</sup>, the Hungarians of the Hungarian counties of Romania committed "brutal deeds" and "acted in hordes like a thousand year ago"<sup>3</sup>, "Ceausescu was a good Romanian in what he did" and "actually at the end of 1989 there were interests that differed from the ones of the Romanian nation, and Ceaușescu's end was decided by the Great Powers"<sup>4</sup>. The textual strategy that often backed up these rumours and gossips during the 1992 events and afterwards is the quotation that – by foregrounding only a part of the original text –, distorts its original meaning. So, apparently the discourse comes close to the classical notion of historic text criticism, but functions in a totally different manner. This type of text criticism is actually typical for the genres at issue: they don't have a fixed meaning, no craftsmanship and professional training is required to utter and / or modify them (like in the case of canonical elite historical genres), their meaning and the spreading of this meaning is elusive. That's why they can be easily used to spread historical myths.

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Cluj-Napoca', *ibidem*. In order to back the reality-effect of his assertions, the mayor sometimes refers to concrete things, details. For instance, after being chased from the Timisoara canvassing trip by a furious crowd consisting of several hundred people (that considered his person as being not worthy of placing a wreath at the foot of the memorial of the Timisoara revolutionaries) he reckoned that about ten-eleven supporters of the Hungarian's party were identified (among them, a deputy) as being present at the spot of the incident together with a bunch of 'young and blue-eyed people from Hungary' that probably planned to go on to the next place of his canvassing trip. The construction of the physical traits of the alleged group responsible for the incidents makes way for the construction of an entire characterology of the side to be blamed in the case of a conflict (involving the mayor). Cf. for instance *Szabadság*, September 17., 1992., no. 181., 1.

<sup>1</sup> Eduard, Bogdan, 'UDMR este o organizație teroristă - a apreciat dl Gheorghe Funar', *Evenimentul Zilei* December 3., 1992., no. 140., 5.

<sup>2</sup> Etelka, Csók - Oplatka, Andreas, 'Szeretne-e ön ma és itt magyar lenni, polgármester úr?', *Szabadság* July 17., 1992., no. 137., 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*

So in the context of the different types of historical myths that appeared within the 1992 Cluj events (and not only)<sup>1</sup> these genres proved a highly effective and fit media for the spreading and success of the very same historical myths. According to these experiences: the effectiveness (including its boundary-making character) of historical myth may be in direct ratio to the genres, the poetics, respectively the politics of the (historical) genres it is employed within.

### "Let the young shock us"<sup>2</sup>(?)

Early in the autumn of 1999, following the reform of the curriculum also regarding the teaching of national history, a history textbook was granted permission to be published.<sup>3</sup> Several days later sixty-four deputies – the whole Opposition and some deputies from the then governing parties, too – signed a motion of no confidence backed by a former recommendation of the Commission for Culture, Science, Youth and Sport. The motion of no confidence regarding the textbook had also many opponents: first and foremost the Ministry of Education and at the same time rector of Babes-Bolyai University (where the textbook in question was elaborated), intellectuals, the Romanian Diaspora of Paris<sup>4</sup>, many historians protested against the motion and considered the textbook good or very good. The motion of no confidence was aimed at the immediate withdrawal of the history textbook since – according to its text – the latter "ignored, underrated and ridiculed" the Romanian national heroes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The analysis might end in similar results if applied to the textbook-debate I am going to approach later, but so as to maintain the coherence of the paper I decided to treat the question along my first case-study.

<sup>2</sup> Cioroianu Adrian, 'Șo pă Sorin Mitu', *Dilema*, October 15–29., 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Mitu Sorin (supervisor) – Copoeru, Lucia – Pecican, Ovidiu – Țărău, Virgiliu – Țărău, Liviu, *Istoria românilor. Manual pentru clasa a XIII-a*, Sigma Publishing House, București, 1999. For an excellent overview of the debate see PARAIANU, Răzvan, *National Prejudices, Mass Media and History Textbooks: The Mitu Controversy in Nation-Building and Contesting Identities. Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies*, eds. Trencsényi Balázs et al., Regio Books–Polirom, 2001., 93–117.

<sup>4</sup> For the declaration of the Romanian diaspora from Paris see: 'Diaspora română din Paris - de partea manualului de istorie', *Evenimentul Zilei*, November 16., 1999., 3.

<sup>5</sup> For a synopsis and interpretation of the motion of no confidence see: Nistorescu, Cornel, 'Bulă cu papion', *Evenimentul Zilei*, November 16., 1999., 1. For the whole

According to several deputies the textbook “strikes out the national-patriotic content from the educational process”<sup>1</sup>. But not only the motion, but also a part of the written and audiovisual press attacked with a rarely seen vehemence the idea of the writers of the textbook to focus more on the ‘mentalities of a given period’ than on individual historical characters. Another idea causing the polemic attitude was a critical discourse on the mythologies that had been constructed along the Romanian nation-formation (e. g. the myth of the concerted Daco-Roman founding of the nation, an ahistorical analysis of the archaic historical times by operating with modern, for instance language-based, identities and territories) and in former textbooks, highlighting the fragmented nature and lateness of the founding of the modern Romanian national state (thus, for instance, demythologizing the figure of Mihai the Valiant, who had been constructed as a foremost leader of an allegedly common Romanian state). Nay, the authors introduced the synchronic world into the framework of the textbook, considering it worthy of historical analysis: contemporary personalities, from famous TV presenters to former anti-communist human rights fighters were included into the last chapters. This latter solution led to a new type of argument according to which the authors politicized (so *fragmented*) the otherwise united national history and overvalued contemporary phenomena by treating them in a similar format to that of the ‘legendary heroes’.<sup>2</sup>

The motion was also implicitly directed towards the then recently changed national curriculum on history that gave preference to several historical methodologies over the political historical one; already the title pointed out this broader interest and stake of the parliamentary debate over the textbook and its authors: “Motion of no

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parliamentary debate see: *Dezbaterea moțiunii semnate de 64 de deputați, având ca obiect “Politicile educaționale promovate prin manualele de Istoria Romanilor”*, Stenograma ședinței Camerei Deputaților din 15 noiembrie 1999, [http:// www.cdep.ro/steno/owa/plen.stenograma](http://www.cdep.ro/steno/owa/plen.stenograma)

<sup>1</sup> ‘Parlamenti vita a tizenkettedikes törvénykönyvről’, *Szabadság*, November 14., 1999., 8.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance: ‘Mașina de vot a Puterii a respins moțiunea îndreptată împotriva manualului lui Mitu’, *Curentul*, October 17., 1999.

confidence the object of which is the educational policies promoted by the textbooks on Romanian history”. The reasoning of the motion foregrounds the idea that the most excruciating characteristic of the textbook was the fact that it reduced the attention usually dedicated to ‘legendary’ figures of Romanian history and “with a view to reach these goals a forced demythologizing and an enforcement of the imaginary took place.” The motion itself contains a hidden reference to the stereotype of the foreigners (usually those from Western Europe and the United States – a stereotype that appears also in the December 1992 events of Cluj to explain the opposition of the Hungarians towards the deeds of the mayor) that might stand behind the strange and demythologizing character of the textbook: the book “imposes some ideas from Recommendation no. 1283 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe<sup>1</sup> selectively, disproportionately and not at all in harmony with the historical truth”.

So, the motion not only aims at a concrete and immediate action, but also gives a sketchy explanation of the way such a deed could have ever occurred: it seeks for the reasons outside the community in order to be able to picture the community as being pure and immaculate, respectively wholly homogenous. It also contains a hidden, identity-strengthening narrative about all the good things originating from the community itself, while the bad things have their origin outside the national community.

The very same type of discourse operating with similar imagery recurs in the broader reception of the textbook: during a TV-show with an extremely high tune-in the chief editor of the textbook was attacked because he has a Hungarian wife and had formerly accepted the support of a foreign foundation so as to participate at a conference. Other views uttered throughout the same discussion established a close link between the allegedly Jewish background of the authors and the problematic characteristics of the book.<sup>2</sup> The newspaper entitled

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<sup>1</sup> The respective recommendation was aimed at improving the Bill of minority rights, especially after the series of complaints of the representatives of the Hungarian ethnic minority.

<sup>2</sup> For an account of this episode see: Iordache, Alina, ‘Ei/noi evreii și manualul de istorie’, *Dilema*, October 29 – November 4., 1999., 2.

*Curentul* placed in the same column, one beneath the other the news according to which *Hungarian teachers from Romania ask pupils to tear the dustjacket of the Hungarian textbooks so as conceal that they come from Hungary* and the negative comments on the rejection of the motion of no confidence, ethnicizing the case of the history textbook in a very subtle way.<sup>1</sup>

So, the discussion employs a myth that tends for a comprehensive explanation and thus goes far beyond the authors of the textbook, functioning as a construction of an allegedly pure and perfect Romanian identity. It also aims at positioning the participants of the discourse to those who can/may represent the whole community and those who should be excluded from or negatively received in this process of representation, selects the values which should stand at the basis of the judgments that are to be made. And it has also another characteristic, perhaps the most important from the point of view of an interim conclusion I would like to draw regarding the nature of the historical myths in general and of some specific ones in particular in the context of the debate I am trying to approach. It is to note that the discourse, which focuses on the apology of the historic myths contained by former textbooks seem to work according to similar principles to those of the historical myths themselves, respectively establishes the negative myth of the demonic that tries to destroy good and valuable things and threatens the identity of the community itself. Many historical myths operate on binary principles<sup>2</sup> and not only include, but also exclude; provide not only a positive and valuable picture, but also more or less firm borders and a symmetrical *other*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Profesorii maghiari din România cer elevilor să rupă copertele manualelor ungare pentru a nu se vedea că provin din Ungaria. Banii și voința Budapestei nu înfrâng legile vecine Ungariei', *Curentul*, October 17, 1992, respectively 'Mașina de vot a Puterii a respins moțiunea îndreptată împotriva manualului lui Mitu', *Curentul*, October 17, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> For excellent comments on this type of structures and the way enemy-construction uses them: Koselleck, Reinhart, *Feindbegriffe*, 1994.; Carl Schmitt, *Über das Verhältnis der Begriffe Krieg und Feind*, 1938.; Schwab, George, *Enemy or Foe: A Conflict of Modern Politics*, 1987.; Burke, Kenneth, *Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'*, 1941.; Edelman, Murray, *The Construction and Uses of Political Enemies*, 1988.; Ricoeur, Paul, *Violence et language*, 1967.

world beyond these borders (of course, constituted by values with a symmetrically different symbolical load). While refuting the challenge of the ideas contained by the textbook, those completely accepting the presence of the historical myths seem to operate with the same type of constitutive strategies historical myths do. The imaginary of the debate (of course, those parts I have predominantly discussed here) thus has the angelic types siding with the 'real' 'patriotic' and 'national' past and the demonic character of the demythologizers. It is the dichotomy of the *inside* and *outside*, of *us* and *them*.

The discourse attacking the demythologizing character of another historical discourse and attitude, and thus siding with the mythologizing discourse actually reproduces the structures of the mythological historical discourse itself. So by speaking for the mythologizing discourse this viewpoint comes very close to the strategies, the core of the world-view and the type of discourse used by the attitude it tries to protect/speak for. Nay, in this specific case the viewpoint that attempts at defending the *raison d'être* of the Romanian historical myths has recourse to another myth (that often permeates also the historical myths): that of the *demonic other*.

One of the major assumptions of those contesting the figure of the historian that led the task of history text-book writing was that by having a Hungarian wife and because sometimes ago his research work was supported by a foreign foundation he could be considered at least suspicious when dealing with Romanian national history.

This assumption might offer us the possibility of a theoretical consideration regarding the nature of the process that in this specific case backs the legitimacy of the old historical myths and underpins the argumentation. When positioning the co-author and supervisor of the textbook in question outside the Romanian community (by calling him a "bad Romanian" and "agent of foreign powers" respectively alluding to his marriage as being underhand) the argumentation constructs a homogenous "we" within and in the name of whose it speaks and also solves the painstaking problem of identifying the cause of the allegedly illegitimate nature of the textbook. It focuses primarily not on a professional reasoning, but on the process of *othering* all the figures that could refute the myths. This is why it might

prove more successful in a culture where the cultural attributions are not specialized, but interwoven. Specialists are considered not the solely ones that can produce *the truth* regarding specific cases, but – for instance – politicians, journalists or the opinion of the public are able to produce similarly – if not more – truthful accounts of both present and bygone events. Historical myths in general in this case seem to be supported by the symbolic exclusion (by means of the process of *othering*) from the homogenously imagined nation of all the professionals and non-professionals that question the legitimacy of the historical myth or myths at issue. On the other hand this nation-conception sketches what stands on the margin or what remains outside the borders of Romanian nationhood: the ethnic minorities (Hungarians and Jews in this case) and the foreigners are strongly believed to be disreputable/incompatible with Romanian history in general and/or its historical myths in particular.

Till now I have focused mainly on the analysis of those discourses that asked for an immediate withdrawal of the textbook (and even for the punishment of their authors) and I have hardly used the counterarguments of those siding with the writers, the textbook and the methodologies it represented. In the following I will spotlight a recurrent idea of those intellectuals and historians that commented not only on the textbook, but also on its multiple uses throughout the debate.

The then Ministry of Education Andrei Marga as the intellectual who gave the new history curriculum the go-ahead and had pleaded for the idea of alternative textbooks and alternative history teaching for several times, backed the textbook and its authors up: “This textbook – like all the other alternative textbooks published till now – was supervised and judged by a recognized group of historians and diverges in nothing from the principles the Government of Romania agreed with the World Bank on: i. e. a modern, scholarly open view on history”<sup>1</sup> But already this first detailed reaction of the minister contained an argument that recurs

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<sup>1</sup> Attila, Klárik, ‘Marga miniszter és az i-re tett pont...’, *Romániai Magyar Szó*, October 13., 1999., 1.

later, during the parliamentary debate itself on the part of those defending the textbook: “History should be written by those skilled in historiography [...] The majority of the protesters is not competent to question the conception of a textbook”<sup>1</sup>. Or, as a counselor of the Ministry of Education put it from the very beginning: “The judging of the history textbooks and of their methodology is the task of the specialists.”<sup>2</sup> Nay, a deputy of the House of Representatives, member in the Committee for Educational Problems reckoned even that “the evaluation of a textbook is outside the sphere of authority of the Parliament. The committees of experts [of the two Houses] go beyond the bounds of their sphere of authority when they try to interfere with professional questions.”<sup>3</sup> And “in the whole Europe there has been no precedent for a parliamentary committee of experts to question the competence of the scholars. Between this and a political decision that changes the result of the twice two is hardly any dividing line.”<sup>4</sup> All the above-quoted opinions remark on a specific distribution of competences (between political and scientific attributions) that should exist and the borders of which have been transgressed by the Parliament itself. The very same distribution of competences is touched upon in a special number of the independent weekly *Dilema* of the time. The periodical enumerates a series of incidents that – according to the authors of the thematic number – have one common feature: the protagonists of all are persons who are not competent to decide the value of the textbook: the prisoners of a Romanian prison lodge a protest against the book, “being offended at the way it treats the Romanian sovereigns”<sup>5</sup>; parents threaten the authors of the book; the same authors are accosted on the street by furious citizens; a director of historical films questions the competence of the supervisor

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<sup>1</sup> Ibidem

<sup>2</sup> ‘Szakemberek dolga minősíteni a tankönyveket’, *Szabadság*, October 9., 1999., no. 236., 1.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Parlament előtt a vitatott történelemköny. Asztalos: a képviselőház túllépte hatáskörét’, *Szabadság*, October 13., no. 239., 8.

<sup>4</sup> Mária, Gál, ‘Bukarestben győzött a józan ész. Kihallgatták Andrei Margát tankönyvtügyben’, *Szabadság*, October 14., 1999., no. 240., 16.

<sup>5</sup> Cioroianu, Adrian, ‘Pușcăriași și academicienii’, *Dilema*, October 29 – November 4., 1999, 3.

of the book; an influent (and bellicose) journalist puts forward the proposal to return to only one history textbook (and implicitly to one Romanian history).<sup>1</sup>

What is of paramount importance for me is not the literal level of this discourse, but the conceptual one: the circumstance that some protagonists of the debate signal the need for the distribution of competences and foreground one of the very interesting characteristics of the debate: the intermingling of the otherwise specific spheres of activities and the fact that this intermingling leads to the blurring of the borders between the different parts of the same culture. In this context the truth of a specific segment of culture will not be produced anymore by somebody who is suited for this by means of his/her qualification etc.

All these aspects are important because – as one could have already noticed – they already occurred in the case of the Cluj events both in November – December 1992 and afterwards: a mayor with no special training in historiography decides and comments in extremely delicate matters of history against the national authority in matters of conservation of the historical buildings and sites, then – in spite of the opinion of the local specialists in archaeology and history – maintains historical excavations even with brute force, then decides about the erection of a statue that is disapproved by the same specialists<sup>2</sup> (not to speak about his attempt to erect a statue in the memory of somebody convicted for criminal behaviour during the war<sup>3</sup> and have recently placed the bust of the same person in the assembly room of the local city council against the dispositions of the law). Putting together these

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<sup>1</sup> Vasilescu, Mircea, 'Cum se naște un 'caz'', *Dilema*, October 29 – November 4., 1999, 3.; Cioroianu, Adrian, 'Șo pă Sorin Mitu!', *Dilema*, October 29–November 4., 1999, 3.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed interview with the supervisor historian of the excavations, the director of the Historical Museum see: Mária, Gál, 'Kifürkészhetetlen a főtéri gödrök sorsa. A Történelmi Múzeum igazgatója a változásban bizik', *Szabadság*, November 10., 1999., no. 263., 8.

<sup>3</sup> On the debate upon the question see for instance: Áron, Balló, 'Buchwald Péter felfüggesztette az Antonescu-szobor felállításáról szóló határozatot. Ideiglenes prefektusi minőségében cselekedett', *Szabadság*, November 11., 1999., no. 264., 1.; Olivér, Kiss, 'Antonescu-szobor közkívánatra? Sálcudean nem akar ujat húzni a lakosság nagy „részével”', *Szabadság*, November 20., 1999., no. 272., 1.

similar segments of the two case-studies – the local and the national – they seem to allude to a paradigm and may lead us to broader interpretive conclusions regarding the survival (and in some cases: revival) of the historical myths in Romania.

First of all let me introduce some notions that will characterize the approach. Plumpe and Werber refer to a common endeavour of the avant-garde of the 1910s–1930s to restore the original, broad notion of literature prior to its differentiation.<sup>1</sup> Literary historians of nineteenth-century (broadly) Central- and Eastern European notions [!] of literature often refer to this paper when elaborating the notions of integrated and structured literature – literature, of course, taken in its broader, historical notion, prior to the disciplinary divisions into parts. They derive the notion of *integrated* from its Latin stem, meaning 'intact', 'whole', 'untouched', 'complete' and refer to a paper of Plumpe and Werber in order to express that literature as a subsystem of culture has similar values and functions as all the other subsystems of the very same cultural system. In this framework there are no disciplinary boundaries and specific disciplinary values and specialists. A very frequent form of the framework at issue throughout the nineteenth century is the one within which all the sub-systems of the culture pinpoint at the value of *nationhood*, its revival being their common aim; they all function subordinated to this value and idea. The other type of system strives after differentiation: in this sense, as a sub-system of culture, literature foregrounds its specific, unique values (for instance, the aesthetic ones) that make it different and performing different functions from any other sub-system of culture. In this latter case the discourse on a specific part of culture is sub-system-specific, i. e. the truths on a discipline, for instance, can only be asserted by specialists of the respective field and the truths of different

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<sup>1</sup> The original *locus* of the paper at issue is: "[...] diese Differenz von System und Umwelt noch einmal als Medium wählt, nun aber in der Absicht, diese Differenz zu *entdifferenzieren*: Kunst, Literatur und »Leben« zu integrieren oder zu »verschmelzen«." Plumpe, Gerhard – Werber, Niels, 'Literatur ist codierbar. Aspekte einer systemtheoretischen Literaturwissenschaft' in Schmidt J., Siegfried, ed., *Literaturwissenschaft und Systemtheorie. Positionen, Kontroversen, Perspektiven*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993., 39.

fields of the same national culture are thus probably incompatible with one another. This latter type of system might be called *structured*, based again on the Latin stem of the term at issue, meaning: 'structure', 'construction', 'building', 'wall', alluding to the manifold and split nature of the respective system.

Let me take the notions of integrated and structured literature to a higher level of conceptualization since they could be extremely useful in interpreting not only the textbook controversy, but also the Cluj dissensions of 1992. I will speak in what follows about the integrated type of culture and the structured type of culture, the former denoting a culture where the subsystems (including that of the disciplinary discourse on the past) are hardly specialized, or in spite of the existence of the institutions and persons with specialization, they have the similar function of legitimating a common cultural value, mostly that of the nation.

The structured culture is the framework comprising different subsystems that – on their turn – have different, sometimes incompatible functions, and even if their values are similar or identical, they use it according to different pragmatics. The notion of the structured culture – as mentioned upon in the foregoing – is not identical with the institutions or institutional aspects of the respective culture, since each institution might have a different program and view of its own, respectively others' functions regarding questions of history and specialization.

Naturally, the reality modelled by this dichotomy is much more complex: we could most probably speak of cultural orientations, respectively about differently oriented situations of the very same culture, this latter being constituted not only by converging tendencies and homogeneities, but also by inhomogeneities, hesitations, divergences, internal differences and transitional states and aspects.

So, the model of the unspecialized culture (where the production of the truths regarding national history is not linked to specialization and craftsmanship, but some other segments of the national culture may have similar (or even more important authority) to produce historical truths (like the discipline of historiography itself) proves a framework that enables the use and misuse of history and historical myths.

## Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn that go beyond the interim conclusions of the paper.

1. First and foremost it should be mentioned that *the historical myths of today's Romania are often perpetuated by the ethnical differences and struggles*; the conflicts that arise from the different interpretations of the myths not only perpetuate and strengthen the ethnical borders (thus functioning as border-making and identity-constituting formations) and ethnical affiliation to these myths, but also reproduce and strengthen the myths themselves, respectively often intensely ethnicize them.

2. The type of unspecialized culture in the framework of which history and historical myths *can be* used and *are* used exactly because the production of the truths regarding national history is not linked to specialization and craftsmanship, but some other segments of the national culture may have similar (or even more important authority) to produce historical truths like the discipline of historiography itself. If we view this characteristics of contemporary Romanian culture in a historical framework, a historically argued interpretation may be given that provides a macro-framework for the understanding of the preservation, uses and misuses of historical myths both in Romania and in specific parts of the Balkans.

Romania – unlike Hungary, for instance – became a unitary state only in 1918, after the unification of Transylvania and some smaller regions with the other Romanian provinces. Though the ideology of the Romanian nation-construction is partly prior to the actual formation of the national state, the successful actual constitution of a homogenous national state was much delayed both because of the regional differences and also as the result of the existence of significant ethnic communities (mainly the Hungarian and German ones) in Transylvania. The slowness of modernization also slowed the process of nation-formation. According to my view this is why there is a huge (and sometimes anachronistic – of course, from the point of view of the new, more global, and less national identities) phase shift in the process of nation-construction: history is still being seen by an

important part of the elite and of the population as the foremost ground of an allegedly homogenous national identity. That is also why there seems to be as much continuity as paradigm shift in general between the former patterns and interpretations of national history, prior to 1989 and those after it, both on the part of the Romanian Academy of Sciences and the public at large. A type of unspecialized culture (i. e. an integrated one) including a teleological way of defining the value of the national and the relationship towards it (i. e. positioning the value of the national above all types of values of the respective culture and imagining it as the value that transcends the whole culture, irrespectively of disciplinary boundaries and of sub-systems of the respective culture) functions as a fertile ground for the perpetuation and strengthening of the historical myths.

## **CIVIC ORGANISATIONS ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE**

**ASOCIAȚIA FEMEILOR ÎMPOTRIVA VIOLENȚEI -  
ARTEMIS  
Cluj, Romania**

*Women's Association against Violence - ARTEMIS*  
<http://www.artemis.com.ro>

Artemis is a member of the European network of the programs for women WAVE/ Women Against Violence Europe/ and of another two networks: Coalition for a Healthy Community (12 NGOs from Cluj working in the field of the the health of reproduction) and National Coalition of the NGOs with programs dealing with violence against women.

ARTEMIS has as main objectives: promoting the necessary measures for fighting violence, promoting the rights of victims of all forms of violence, promoting and accrediting the status of an expert in working with aggressed persons and that of an trainer for specialists that come in contact with these persons, facilitating communication among these specialists, changing mentalities with regard to violence, the possibilities and the significance of psychological-social-juridical assistance of persons victims of violence, psychological evaluation activities.

The Artemis center for counseling works for free, offering the following services:

- *Psychological counselling* for abused women and children.
- *Juridical counselling*
- *Hot line: - 598 155*
- *Organizing terapeutical groups, support or self-help groups.*
- *Specifical Training* for working with abused victims aimed at professionals in the field of primary assistance – medical personel, social workers, psychologists, teachers, jurists, police force.

- *Programs aimed at prevention and education for the public opinion.*

The Shelter for Women is open since March 2002, financed through by Access the European Community. It has a capacity of 5 places/families for a period of 3-4 months.

The foundation has also research activities, such as participating in two studies together with the Center for Family Planning, the Social Observer from the Social Work Department at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj.

## CENTAR ZA ŽENSKÉ STUDIJE Zagreb, Croatia

*Centre for Women's Studies*

www.zenstud.hr

The Centre for Women's Studies in Zagreb, founded in 1995, is the first and only independent women's educational centre in Croatia which offers an interdisciplinary program in Women's Studies, linking theory, activism and feminist art.

The Centre's main activities are education, research, publishing and cultural projects. The Centre for Women's Studies provides its students with basic insights and theoretical knowledge into a wide range of topics including: feminist epistemology, women within cultural theories, theories of identities, images of women and media representation, and women's awareness of the self by creating new models of education that complement and challenge the formal university curriculum. Since 2001, the Centre has been working towards developing the most appropriate models for the integration of Women's/Gender Studies programs within the higher educational system as well as fostering gender perspective in academic curricula. As of 2004, the Centre is running with two Women's Studies courses in partnership with the University of Zadar as the first step towards acknowledging Women's Studies as an academic discipline in Croatia.

As part of its core activities, the Centre is carrying out several research projects at both a national and international level including: Women's Memories – Searching for Identity within Socialism; Women Activists in Civil Society; Power of Female Politicians among others. Among its publishing activities, the Centre publishes titles focusing on the

distinctive achievements of Croatian women authors as well as translations of relevant theoretical feminist texts and studies. Since 1998, the Centre has been publishing *Treća* [The Third] as the first Women's Studies Journal in Croatia that promotes contemporary theoretical reflections on key women's issues and discussions and features a special section on feminist art practice from Central and Southeastern Europe.

Within its wide range of international activities, the Centre organizes an annual post-graduate course in cooperation with Rutgers University (USA) and the Centre for Women's Studies (Serbia and Montenegro) with the goal of providing feminist critical analysis on key themes and paradigms important to post-socialist countries. The Centre for Women's Studies - Zagreb is also a member of AOIFE as well as the co-contact institution for Women's Studies programs in Croatia within WISE (Women's International Studies Europe).

## **CENTRUM VOOR VROUWENSTUDIES Nijmegen, The Netherlands**

*Centre for Women's Studies*  
www.kun.nl/cvv

The Centre for Women's Studies at the University of Nijmegen was founded in 1985. It follows a double track policy by striving for disciplinary integration as well as independent interdisciplinary development. Staff members teach graduate and undergraduate courses in seven different faculties (Social Sciences, Humanities, Theology, Philosophy, Law, Medical Sciences and Policy Sciences). At the same time they conduct both fundamental and applied research on changes in gender and gender relations. Our interdisciplinary research program entitled "The Dynamics of Gender. Transformation, Context and Design (1997-2001)" focuses on three research lines: The embodiment of gender: shifting boundaries of the embodied self; Cultural codes of gender: transmission, multiplicity and conflict of gender models; and Strategies of gender: organizations, policy and citizenship.

In addition, the Centre regularly organizes open research seminars, post-graduate courses and international staff and student exchange. It publishes the magazine *Raffia* and has its own documentation centre. Students are organized in the student association *Voilà!*, that organizes debates on gender issues. The Centre for Women's Studies houses a documentation department where information is available (to the general public) concerning women's studies and emancipation policies.

**FUNDAȚIA DESIRE - DESIRE ALAPÍTVÁNY**  
**Cluj, Romania**

*Foundation Desire*

The Foundation was established in the city of Cluj, Romania as a non-profit organization in 1996, as a result of the co-operation between scholars and experts working on different domains of social sciences and within civic organizations. Through our programs we aim to develop a network that links governmental and non-governmental institutions, in particular universities and non-academic organizations. We are committed to the promotion of a democratic civic culture and viable social communication that empowers citizens of different ethnicity, gender and class, and increase their opportunities to participate actively in the (local) public life.

According to its objectives, the major Programs of the Foundation included the events from below. On the domain of social research: Institutions and Everyday Life in the City of Cluj/ Kolozsvár (1996); The "Carpathian Project" - Inter-ethnic Relation in Romania, Slovakia and Hungary (1997); The Hungarian Educational System in Romania (1998); Women and Men in the Multiethnic City of Cluj (2000-2001). As far as the organized public meetings are considered there should be mentioned the following (coorganized with other academic and civic institutions): Women and Men in East European Transition (summer school, 1997); How to Study Cultural Encounters? The Case of Migration (workshop, 1997); Women in Civil Society (workshop, 1999); Reconsidering the 8<sup>th</sup> of March (public event, 2000); Another March (public event, 2001); Female Presences (public event, 2002); Women's Works (public event, 2003); Renegotiating socio-cultural identities in the post-socialist Eastern Europe (conference, 2003).

Through some programs, our Foundation had a strong cooperation with the curriculum development efforts at Babes-Bolyai University, namely on the domain of cultural anthropology and gender studies. These were: Concepts and Methods in Cultural Anthropology (1996); Dialog for the Development of a Gender Perspective (2000); Development of a University Program on 'Gender, Society, Culture' (2000-2003). Established in 2000, the Desire Press published the following titles: *Prezențe feminine. Studii despre femei în România* (Female Occurrences. Women's Studies in Romania), edited by Ghizela Cosma, Enikő Magyari-Vincze and Ovidiu Pecican, 2001; *Femei și bărbați în Clujul Multiethnic* (Women and Men in the Multiethnic Cluj), edited by Enikő Magyari-Vincze, 2001; Ovidiu Pecican: *Arpadieni, Angevini, Români. Studii de medievistică Central-Europeană*, 2001 (Arpadiens, Anjous, Rumanians. Studies on the Medieval Central Europe); Enikő Magyari-Vincze: *Diferența care contează. Diversitatea social-culturală prin lentila antropologiei feministe* (Difference Matters. Socio-Cultural Diversity through the Lenses of Feminist Anthropology), 2002; Enikő Magyari-Vincze: *Talking Feminist Institutions. Interviews with Leading European Scholars*, 2002. The following titles are coming to be printed soon: *Gen, Societate, Cultură. Cursuri universitare* (Gender, Society, Culture. University Courses) coordinated by Enikő Magyari-Vincze and Petruța Mîndruț; Romanian translation of Henrietta Moore, *Anthropology and feminism* (translation by Petruța Mîndruț).

**ȘANSE EGALE PENTRU FEMEI (SEF)**  
**Iași, Romania**

*Equal Opportunities for Women Foundation*  
www.sef.ro

SEF is a local democracy and human rights organization (based in IASI, Romania) that promotes equal opportunities for women and men, working in the benefit of women and realizing appropriate activities in their protection and defense. The organization has legal status since March 1st, 1996, and it is registered as a non-profit juridical entity.

Our vision is to promote equal opportunities for women and men by supporting women's efforts to raise their standing and visibility in their professions and communities, so they may contribute to the greatest possible extent in Romania's economic, social and political transformations. The strategic objectives of SEF are to increase and support women's participation in decision making in politics and public life at local, national, regional and international level; to promote and support women's participation in community development at local, national, regional and international level; to foster solidarity among women involved in both democracy building/consolidation and political life at local, national, regional and international level; and to defend both women's human rights and interests by evaluating policies and social programs' development at local, national, regional and international level.

To reach its goals our Foundation is acting both as a lobbying organization and an operational one, it prepares and develops awareness and advocacy campaigns on specific aspects of women's

rights, but also advocacy campaigns for women's affirmation in social and political life, and publishes in-depth studies and research on specific aspects of the women's rights or violations. Further on it develops gender policies, it mediates and intervenes directly as appropriate in specific cases of violation of women's rights and negative presentation in mass media, it designs and develops training programs for access to employment and career development, capacity building, political empowerment for women and gender. Moreover SEF provides one-on-one counseling, assistance and related services to victims of rape, trafficking and domestic violence, it initiates, develops and supports partnerships to create a safer environment for women (in the home, in the street and in the workplace), and it collaborates with, and gives material and other support to organizations working, or intending to work, in the same or in similar field at all levels.

**GRUPUL INTERDISCIPLINAR PENTRU  
STUDII DE GEN  
Cluj, Romania**

*Interdisciplinary Group for Gender Studies*  
[www.gender.salve.ro](http://www.gender.salve.ro)

The "Interdisciplinary Group for Gender Studies" was formed in the year 2000 under the umbrella of the Institute for Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of European Studies of the "Babeş-Bolyai" University in Cluj-Napoca. With the support of the Higher Education Support Program International it initiated the undergraduate program "Gender, Society and Culture". Professionally we are assisted by two higher education units from Western Europe: the Research Centre for Women's Studies of the University of Sussex from Brighton, United Kingdom (contact person professor dr. Barbara Einhorn, director of the Centre), and the Centre for Women's Studies of the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands (contact persons Drd. Claudia Krops, centre coordinator).

Our main aim is to develop at Babeş-Bolyai University a teaching capacity on gender studies, a project that includes a permanent course, faculty and structural development. Two workshops and a conference have been organized with the participation of local and foreign scholars. Course readers and course materials have been published, and courses have been taught at an undergraduate level starting with the academic year 2001-2002. Scholars and students are having the chance to discuss their research projects and results within a monthly Feminist Research Seminar. A Newsletter is being published with the recent developments and results of the group. The interdisciplinary group seeks to establish a department in gender studies at the

crossroads of traditional departments, and financial and institutional support to be obtained for.

Starting with the academic year 2003-2004 an independent program at the Masters level has been launched. We are looking for cooperation with similar programs/ networks with long traditions from Europe and United States, such as: "ATHENA" - Advanced Thematic Network in Activities in Women's Studies in Europe; "WISE" - the Women's International Studies Europe at the University of Utrecht (The Netherlands); the Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research (Oslo, Norway); the Centre for Gender Studies, University of Stockholm; the Netherlands Research School for Women Studies; "NOISE" - the Network of Interdisciplinary Women's Studies in Europe; "AOIFE" - the Association of Institutions for Feminist Education and Research in Europe; the Women's Studies Department of Utrecht University; the Centre for Women's Studies at Rutgers University. The M.A. program on Gender Studies and Public Policies at the National School of Political and Administrative Sciences from Bucharest is among our supportive partners in the effort to institutionalise these studies in Romania.

**CENTRUL PARTENERIAT PENTRU EGALITATE**  
**București, Romania**

*Partnership Centre for Equality*  
www.gender.ro

In April 2002, Soros Open Network welcomed its 13th member organization, namely the Partnership for Equality Centre (PEC). Formerly the Women's Program of Open Society Foundation Romania, PEC is carrying on its mandate of taking over gender-related programs and projects initiated within OSF, in order to preserve the resources and investments made over the past five years (*the Women's Program of OSF was launched in 1998*).

The transformation of the Women's Program into PEC is the natural consequence of the OSF's development plans for a more comprehensive, sustainable approach to the activity of its most successful programs. This falls within the frame of the creation of Soros Open Network, a value-based network of 13 autonomous nongovernmental organizations sprung from OSF's programs, which fosters Romania's sustainable development.

Following this transformation, PEC hasn't taken over also the main grant-giving component of the Women's Program. Thus, PEC is basing its operations on the development of operational programs, run in partnership with the organizations and institutions, civil and public, active in the area of activity touching gender issues. This approach opens new perspectives for building up partnerships in areas of common interest: gender and development, gender and education, equal opportunities for women and men, preventing violence against women and trafficking in women, and so on. The funds of PEC are

being provided mainly by Open Society Foundation and the Network Women's Program. However, there are also several other donors supporting individual projects managed by PEC (European Commission through PHARE and RICOP Programs, John Snow Incorporated and so on).

Being aware of the role that it must play in changing and reforming the Romanian civil society and society at large, PEC is aiming at responding to the most ardent issues present in the gender area. PEC is committed to mainstreaming the principle of equal opportunities for women and men into the public policies and associated practices, as an integral part of democratisation and the creation of an open society, in order to re-define the status and improve the condition of women in Romania. To this end, PEC advocates for the following rights: Non-discrimination against women; The right to education; The right to be free from violence; Equal opportunities for women and men; Reproductive and sexual rights; A gender -inclusive approach to development; Economic rights for women; Women's active involvement in public life.

**RESEARCH CENTRE IN GENDER STUDIES  
Brighton, England**

[www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/publications/pgrad2004/genderstudies.html](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/publications/pgrad2004/genderstudies.html)

The Research Centre in Gender Studies from the University of Sussex, Great Britain covers many fields of gender research. It provides a coherent environment for cross-disciplinary research on gender and sexuality in areas of international importance, both practical and theoretical. Gender Studies is quintessentially interdisciplinary. It is an excellent area for lifelong learning, providing perspectives and information that will illuminate personal experience and enhance career prospects. It draws together faculty and graduate researchers, and offers the collaborative opportunities so important to work in this field.

Current areas of research and publishing activities include theoretical and comparative approaches and historical and current studies of: gender and citizenship; gender, nation and identity; gender, media and new technology; gender and visual representations, feminist political theory; feminist movements; globalisation and post-colonial studies; gender and life history; gender and psychoanalysis; gender and consumption; gender and reproductive rights; gender and leisure; gender and masculinity; women in medicine and higher education; gender and inequality in the labour market.

Because research and teaching in gender studies is spread across the subject boundaries of media and cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, English, history, history of art and politics and international relations, there is a wide range of potential research supervisors for DPhil students in gender studies. The existence on campus of the Mass-Observation Archive is an invaluable research resource for many

students. Current faculty areas of research available for research supervision include: Gender and sexuality; Issues of gender and citizenship, nationalism and globalisation; Cultural representations of gender in art, literature and the media, including cyberspace; 19th and 20th century British women's history and literature; Gender, power and politics in Europe; Gender, culture, identity; Gender in the workplace; Gender and education; Gender and reproductive rights; Gender and social anthropology; Feminist life history work; Feminist movements/women's activism; The Research Centre for Gender Studies is located in the School of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies.

**FUNDAȚIA PENTRU ANTROPOLOGIE VIZUALĂ**  
**Sibiu, Romania**

*Visual Anthropology Foundation*  
[www.astrafilm.ro/fav\\_en.htm](http://www.astrafilm.ro/fav_en.htm)

The Visual Anthropology Foundation (VAF) from Sibiu, Romania is a non-profit NGO, which aims to promote study, research and initiatives in the field of visual anthropology, and to encourage the use of anthropological documentary film (*adf*) as a means for cultural and cross-cultural understanding. It partners with anthropology, documentary film and visual anthropology organizations worldwide. Its board members are Dumitru Budrala (president) and Csilla Kato (director).

The mission of VAF is to provide a support-base and resource centre for filmmakers, and for scholars and students of anthropology and social sciences, and for anyone interested in the use of visual images to understand, describe, analyse, and interpret culture and society.

Our Foundation produces its own research-based anthropological films, footage, and photography; it promotes the production of anthropological documentary film in Romania; it organizes the major event ASTRA FILM FEST, the international festival of documentary and anthropology film ([www.astrafilm.ro](http://www.astrafilm.ro)); it maintains an archive of anthropological and documentary films open for research and public use; and it organizes research seminars and workshops; training programs in anthropological documentary film production, screenings of anthropological documentary film for educational and academic purposes.