

THE STATE AS DISPOSITIVE IN TIMES OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract: Critics of postmodernism insist on the issue that postmodern methodology lacks the statistical insight into the problems which are researched. The hardship of the undertaking is to get hold on relevant data. Having the possibility to work with statistical data from the Romanian Statistical Yearbooks starting from 1958 until 2015, we can show that the state works like an omnipresent dispositive as described by Michel Foucault's theory. The omnipresent state through its administration records data in minute details about everything that state administration considers necessary. These data are collected about every industry and on every person into personalized files which create a web of virtual persona, accessible to the state administration. But the state administration disassembles this virtual persona created by the personal files and takes the individual's data and uses it jointly with other similar data to describe its inner workings and its structure. These new data are the statistics in the statistical yearbooks, which gives rise to alienating state power and also grabs the individual, homogenizes it throughout the population as the state's subject and pins it taxonomically to its own individual place in this omnipresent state dispositive. Presenting a selection of these statistical data we show fulcrum points where personal lives, state power and history juxtapose to demonstrate that postmodern theory describes social reality statistically with relevant statistical data in this global age to connect and homogenize nations, economies, production and even people.

Keywords: Foucault, dispositive, statistical yearbook, globalization, taxonomy

We had the opportunity to study the Statistical Yearbooks of the People's Republic of Romania (1957-1967) and the Statistical Yearbooks of the Socialist Republic of Romania (1968 - 1989), and also some of the Statistical Yearbooks of Romania (1990-2015). We collected some of the data and it struck us that we should look at the structure of the Statistical Yearbooks. The yearbooks starts with a chapter called "general data". The second chapter was about population. There are also chapters on synthetic indicators, on the work force, industry, agriculture and silviculture, investments and constructions, transports and telecommunications, interior and exterior commerce, state budget, education, culture and art, on health and social assistance, on households and animal husbandries, and a final chapter on international statistics.

"General data" chapter was on weather, geography, the height of mountain peaks, number of lakes, length of the state border and other such kind of data which was and still is presented in every statistical yearbook. The "population" chapter appears to be one of the most important ones, since there are also demographical yearbooks which deal exclusively with such data. These are presented for every county, for the rural and urban spread and data is also shown percentually and in totals. Such data on population is given also by age intervals, and typically data goes back 10 – 20 – 30 years to show growth and comparison. Data is shown also by gender, by birth and death rate. Some of the yearbooks have tables on live birth, or on those who

survived some age limits. Also data is presented on number of marriages by county and by age groups, and there are similar tables with mortality rates.

The work force is presented by industry, and productivity. Also by type of the industry which is small-household-handmade or other type called republican. It also shows numbers on workers wage and interestingly the tables are discontinued. The chapter on industry shows data on different branches of the industry, such as food production, like canned meat, canned fruit and vegetables, sugar, alcohol, or lard and oil production. It also shows number of works by industry branches. Agriculture and silviculture shows landmasses for different usage, and by county and by year. Also it shows indicators of the state farms and collective farms. Also production of fruit is recorded, the number of animals, and all this is presented by county and year. “Investments and constructions” chapter shows data on apartments built and how many were built by the state and how many by communal arrangements and how many were given to people by number, by livable surface area, and how many were sold and so on. In the “transport and telecommunication” chapter there were data on public roads, their modernization by county, by year. Also there were data on public transportation in urban areas, by means of transportation and by year.

Interior commerce showed data on number of shops by trade, by year, by county, by products. The exterior commerce was about how much and what kind of produce and products were exported. The “households and animal husbandries” chapter showed data on water and gas distribution networks. Education chapter showed data on the number of schools, and what kind of schools, number of school children – and all this by county, and by year. In the “culture and arts” chapter there was data on the number of libraries, which were school libraries or public ones, and how their numbers changed. In the chapter on “health and social assistance” was data on the types of hospitals, the number of doctors, medics, specialists, and the auxiliary personal. Also there was data on the number and types of pharmacies. All this data was by year and by county.

Interestingly the chapters in the statistical yearbooks from 1958 until 1989 are the same more – or – less. But at the beginning of the 1990’s there are some changes, and since the 2000’s the chapters are restructured, and many tables migrated from one chapter to the other, or there are issues that disappeared all together and were replaced with new issues. We grouped some of the observations on the data changes to ease their overview.

Right before political changes, with 2 – 3 years before, stable – fixed numbers start to change, and this change continues after the political change, for another 2 - 3 years; for certain years the original numbers are given, but in retrospect, data is changed, corrected, stretched or compressed; data is published in retrospect; brut and net figures are published separately than cumulatively, and then separately again, unit of measurement are changed from a year to another. There are tables that are published for certain dates than they disappear and then years later reappear. There is data that is published for some time and then it is discontinued (sugar and salt exports, etc); There are items which sometimes appear to be discontinued but actually they are moved in other category/ to another chapter. There are data which is discontinued in favor of other, new data. Some of the categories in the tables are politically defined (school types, region or county, road type, etc) There are tables which do not exist before 1992 (tables on strikes and work conflicts). There are adjustments in tables that are so consistent that there’s a good chance that they were operated with the knowledge of the government offices for propaganda purposes (water and gas main lengths, etc)Birth rate change in 1967.

Many of these changes were perceived by the public as lies. The public distrusts these public figures collected during the communist period and they consider it a hoax to refer to them. What they knew and understood about all of it, it was that numbers are stretched, ballooned and they don't reflect reality. Many of the known statistics in the communist period were known to be utopically good and made better in ways that they didn't reflect the reality at all. The public lacked the understanding of the ideology of those times to put these changes in prospect and also they lacked the proper datasets to check against the data presented.

Even today, understanding the figures presented in the communist era Statistical Yearbooks of Romania – it is challenging. Many of the changes are understandable within historical context, in retrospect and also knowing the juridical, political and economical situations of those times.

The Statistical Yearbooks were written after the Second World War, when Romania's political and economical situation was still changing. The war ended in August 1945 with Soviet occupation even though Romania was still a kingdom. In 30th December, 1947 the King abdicated and the communist party took over the power. People's Republic of Romania was declared. Some of the ideological campaigns were started at that time, and one of the most important which cemented the position of the communist party was the collectivization of the Romanian agriculture in the double context of having 77%¹ of the total population living in rural areas (in villages and being peasants, and living from agriculture) and also having the ideological drive put forward by the Communist Manifesto, the "abolishment of private property" (Kligman, Verdery, 2001)

The other idea that makes the context of the situation is that at that time Romania was People's Republic. This meant that the single party at the government, the communist party put emphasis on the betterment of the people and heterogeneity of the population was respected. Also women were emancipated, meaning that they could occupy workplaces in factories, in the name of ideological unity and equality (Kligman, 1998). At this time the communist party organized a large literacy campaign all over the country (Kligman, Verdery, 2001)

Also, since the communist party wasn't illegal anymore, they started to recruit the large member base. That meant that the power of the party was weak and it couldn't impose its will easily on people. This is how the secret police was created as the strong arm of the party, to apply the necessary and sometimes not controlled and never calculated aggression on people, communities and villages² (Kligman, Verdery, 2001). The collectivization went in parallel with the nationalization and the industrialization of the country. Changes happened in rural as in urban areas, and nobody was exempt from these changes. The state apparatus was taken over by the communists, and bureaucracy was modeled on soviet style. That meant that many bureaucrats at lower levels (local party leaders) were purely educated, hastily prepared and pressured to produce results (Kligman, Verdery, 2001). These changes affected the social order, the relationships in communities and destroy them, to replace them with top to bottom style organizational relationships. In these times self-censorship, falsification of data, routine inflation,

¹ Kligman, Verdery, 2011: they have the data from the Statistical Yearbook of Socialist Republic of Romania, 1984, page 12.

² People's Republic of Romania was a closed country, self-sustaining. This meant that enemies of the state were inner enemies, ideological enemies, who didn't conform in a way-or-another to the party and state politics, like middle class peasants, named "kulaks" (in Russian) and "chiaburi/ moşieri" (in Romanian), the rural bourgeoisie who were considered an intrinsic threat. These population categories were convinced by brute force to submit to the communist power by the strong arm of the party, the secret police, the Securitate. The authors call the strong arming of the secret police: pedagogies of persuasion (propaganda, denunciation, agitation, persuasion, beating, jailing, surveillance, specific language used, political show trials, forced labor and eviction) to debilitate the agrarian resistance (Kligman, Verdery, 2001).

self-aggrandizing, standardized data collection and copying and other kind of instances led to the inherent, but never spoken knowledge that all data is false and untrustworthy.

Also it is noteworthy some of the decrees passed to legitimize government action. Decree 83 from 1949 gave the start to the collectivization process which lasted until 1962, even though there was couple of years of hiatus when Stalin died in 1953. The decree 115/ 1959 enforced the previous one and gave the authority to enact the collectivization everywhere.

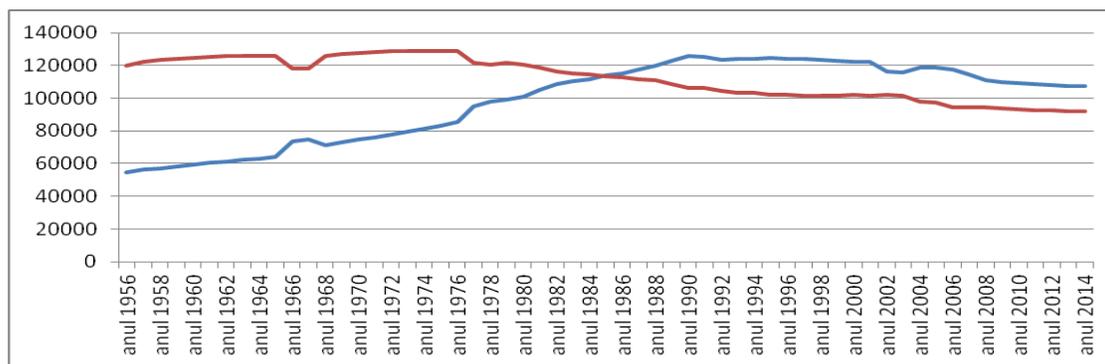
Another important moment was 1965 when Nicolae Ceaușescu was elected president of Romania and he changed the status of the country from People’s Republic to Socialist Republic, which carried a nationalistic overtone³. The other fare reaching decree was 770/ 1966 which made abortion illegal and criminalized it. This decree was presented as pro-natalist policy when in fact criminalized abortion. The socialist economy needed manpower, the human capital to function. So it was a dire need for population increase (Kligman, 1998). Under these circumstances the party politics eradicated social differences, diversity was denied, objectification by the state was legitimized, and all this masked the petty, the personal, the corrupt, the backstabbing, the wheeling and dealing (Kligman, 1998:4).

In Ceausescu’s regime “the body became an instrument, a vehicle through which “greater goals” were intended to be realized.” (Kligman, 1998:7) Propaganda was used to mobilize people and also to convince them that what they were doing was a good thing. This period in Romania’s history was one of “rapid urbanization; it was about housing shortage, industrialization, and wage labor, generalization of education, increased higher education opportunities and rising expectations about the standard of living.” (Kligman, 1998:30)

Beyond the communist era, right in 26 December, 1989 the first law abrogated decree 770/ 1966 which criminalized abortion, also the law 58/ 1974 which proposed systematization of settlements, and law 5/ 1984 regarding scientific food consumption. Law 18/ 1991 was put in place to recreate property situations as in 1959 for a society existing 30 years before and also law 31/1990 permitted the creation of private commercial enterprises. These were major changes, in the context of political change, which led to economic and social change.

We will present some of the data collected. The selection of data will show three of the policies that the communist state enacted and then capitalism incorporated.

Chart 1.
Population changes in urban and rural areas in a period between 1956 and 2014



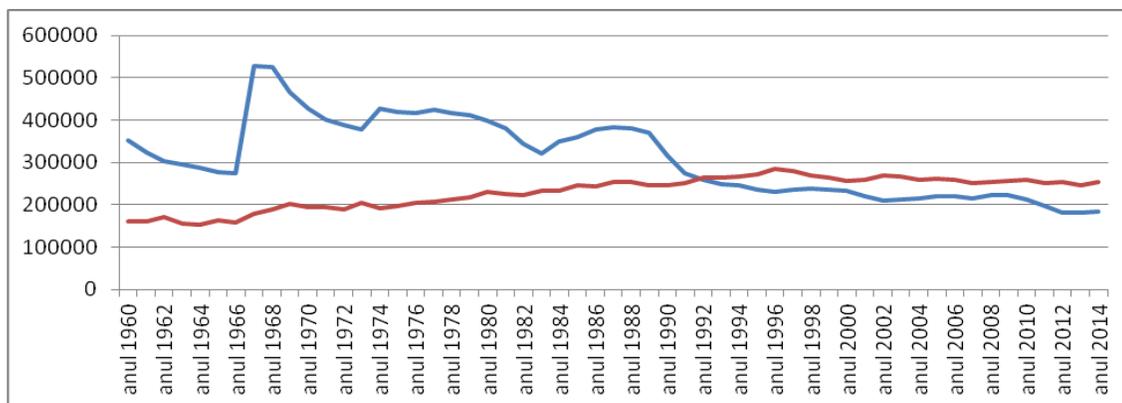
Changes in urban and rural areas in a period between 1956 and 2014

³ Protocronism was the official and national ideology of the Socialist Republic of Romania in the 1980’s.

This graph above shows population changes in urban and rural areas in a period between 1956 and 2014. Data in red shows rural population tendencies and data in blue shows urban population tendencies.

It is noteworthy to see the effect of decree 770/1966, and also the point of which is considered

historic in Romania, 1985, when rural



and urban populations were at equal (50% - 50%) and that the urban population is higher ever since. Census data is used.

Chart 2. Birth and mortality rates dynamic between 1960 and 2014

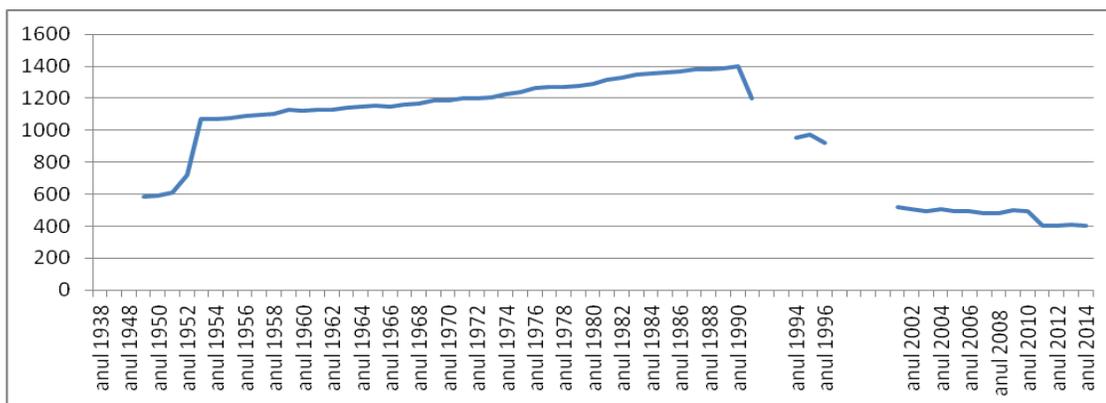
This graph shows birth and mortality rates changes since 1960 until 2014. The blue data shows birth rates, the red data show mortality rates. The effects of decree 770/ 1966 is clearly observable when birth rates shout up in 1967, but the graph also shows that birth rates decline and that the party state took measures in 1973 and 1983 (Kligman, 1998) to try to maintain the birth rates at higher level and to curb decline. Also it worth to mention that in 1993 the positive balance changed and since than there's a negative balance.

These two graphs show population data from the Statistical Yearbooks of Romania. They are telling the story of the biggest social experiment undertaken. Romania was a closed country and the communist party instituionalized all parts of the social life. Institutionalization got even into the bedrooms and into the most intimate moments of couples. Child baring was a patriotic duty and abortion was a crime set in law. Police, at that time called militia was stationed in hospitals with a prosecutor to watch over not just the pregnant women but also medical personal. Medical controls were conducted regularly at every level of society to curb the abortion phenomenon. This spooned myriad of illegal methods to provoke abortions, which resulted in death of many wemen (Verdery, 1998).

The second graph shows that the effects of the decree were short lived, but the social consecvences were long lasting. This decree changed the relations between partners or potential partners. The first graph shows that the proportion of urban population tipped the balance in 1985, and since than the country's majority lives in urban settlements. When corporations came

into the country, this is the population which is mobilized in its workforce. Also the arrival of capitalism will increase the economic divide of the urban-rural populations in Romania. The negative balance in the second graph is also due to a massive migration of population from

poor areas. The y migrated into the European

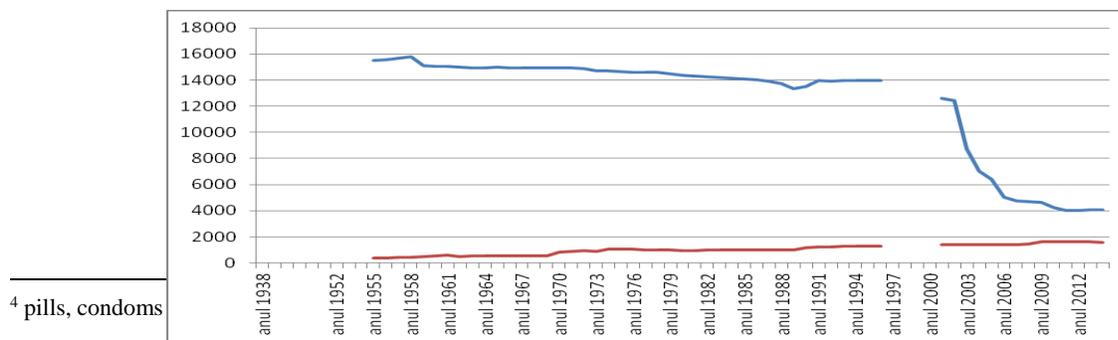


Union to find work, which was lacking in Romania due to deindustrialization of the state, which resulted in many closed workplaces, unemployment and privatization.

Chart 3. Number of public pharmacies in Romania between 1949 and 2014

Data shows the number of public pharmacies in Romania since 1949 until 2014. There are three things to observe. The first is that the numbers of public pharmacies shot up in 1953 due to nationalization. The second observation is that their numbers steadily increase even if during the communist times there were shortages of all kind, including in the medication. The third observation is that during the 1990's there's a steady decrease of the numbers of public pharmacies. This phenomenon is due to the appearance of private enterprises in this area of the economy and also because private pharmacies are offering a bigger variety of medication so they are more thought after. There are data in the Statistical Yearbooks starting 2007 to show the increase of private and corporate pharmacy numbers.

We think that the decrease started in 1990's is also due to the negative perception of this public institution not just because of medication shortages but also due to the association with the interdiction on selling pregnancy preventive methods to the population⁴. The ideological

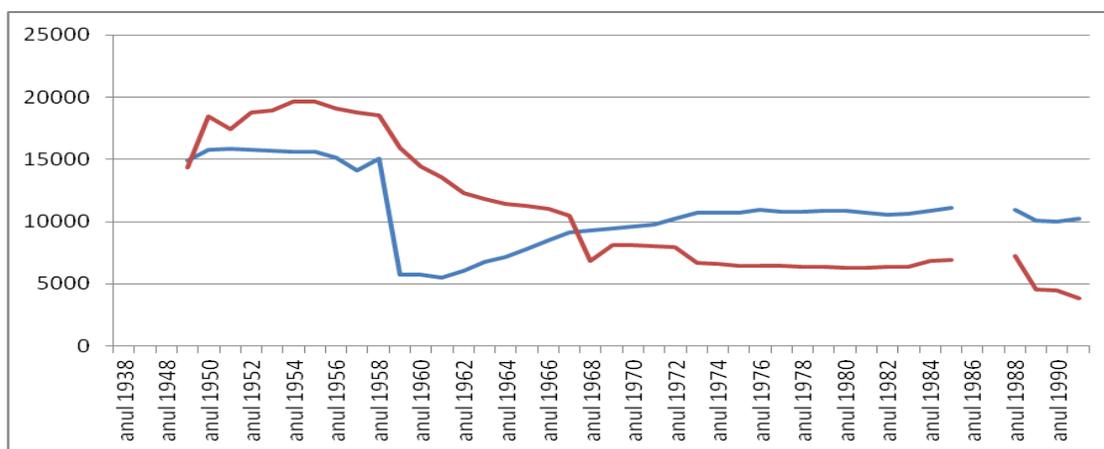


⁴ pills, condoms

implications are obvious in the 1953 sudden increase. Since this data is not coupled with the rise in numbers of private pharmacies, the data hint at the economic, politic and social changes after the 1990's.

Chart4. Dynamic of middle - and high schools since 1955 until 2014

Data shows the numbers of middle schools and high schools since 1955 until 2014. Data in blue show the number of high schools and data in red show the numbers of middle schools. There's to



note that during communist times the literacy campaign were significant, and that started a trend in increasing the numbers of middle schools. Since the workforce in the industry was important, educations third level, the high school was important, but it was concentrated in industrial high schools. Also the drop in the numbers of high schools starting in 2003 was an effect of reorganizing the education system. Also it might be in connection with the fact that the educational law stipulates that education is compulsory until 10 classes, and students leave the educational system at finishing the compulsory mandated study years.

Chart5. Change in number of public and school libraries during 1948 – 1991 period

The number of public and school libraries starting 1948 and until 1991. Data in red show the evolution of the numbers of public libraries in the country. Data in blue show the evolution of school libraries. The literacy campaigns during the People's Republic years of 1948 – 1968 are clearly favored public libraries, probably mobile libraries, which traveled the villages. Since

1969 the numbers of school libraries increase and follow a stable path. Interestingly the numbers of public libraries plummet in the 1990's when they cross from state management to county or local management, and funds are cut off.

The last two graphs show political and ideological change through time. Every major group and community used to have schools until 1968, but then in the Socialist Republic homogenization policies took over educational policies and this reflects in the data of decreasing high school numbers by consolidation. Also ideological and economic changes show off in the numbers of public and school libraries. Especially in the number of public libraries which are contrasted with the number of school libraries. Public funds after 1990 are diverted on infrastructural and other priorities rather than to sustain the public library system. This goes hand in hand with the decreasing number of high schools and decreasing number of trade schools, and also the pauperization and precarisation of the population. All these changes, modifications, shifts, corrections, discontinuations made us wonder, how should we interpret the data?

We think that as data appears in the statistical yearbooks confirms what Foucault said about the mechanisms of dispositive. We see the state – the state of the socialist/ communist Romania – as a dispositive, a closed system. What Foucault's said about changes, variants, difficulties, reconceptualizations and we can observe it in the longitudinal data put forward in the statistical yearbooks. Even though the data was collected with the ideas of industrial modernity in mind and with objectives of the five year plans and industrial management of the whole country, it exemplifies the theory put forward by Foucault. The dispositive's administration collected data on all aspects of the inner working of the dispositive, which was seen as a closed system. The administration collected data on the population, on infrastructure, industry, and economical works of the dispositive. This dispositive was managed centrally; it had its own rules which materialized in the communist ideology and the state decrees which we referred to. Also this dispositive had its own and specific handlers of power, the secret police (the Securitate), who "helped" to apply a supplement of power which materialized in excessive aggression for the making of the industrialization as much as in rural as in the urban areas of the country. Also we saw that the state apparatus had informers who supplied information on the public mood and on mostly everything related to the ideology of those times. All these information resurfaced in the secret archives of the secret state police.

The observed changes, modifications, fluctuations, discontinuations, cumulations or redefinitions of the statistical data are not unusual. In closed systems, in total institutions "knowledge production requires influence. Creative leaps are achieved by coping, distorting, transforming, combining, merging and transforming elements that already exist. The best adapted variants of the knowledge are the most aggressive forms of knowledge" (Ferguson, 2010). Institutions were not hiding these changes and they dispersed - permeated society (Foucault, 1977). Changing numbers, publishing data in retrospect, changing units of measurement or categories, discontinuing data and favoring new data, hiding data, splitting or compounding data, politically defining categories of data – all these actions could be possible because of the one party – communist system. This system was hierarchical, Benthamian, organized, tactically dispersed and rule abiding. The power had confederates. The communist party used clausturation, tactical dispositions and tactical distributions, institutional control, information flow from bottom – to – top by the administration, calculated punishments if it was necessary (Foucault, 2006). Uniformity, conformity, order and discipline was employed to create profit and economic growth. We'd like to show that the theory of Michel Foucault explains that the state is a dispositive which clenches and grips individuals in their existence. Since Foucault's theory is

considered postmodern, we have to deal with some of the criticism formulated towards postmodernism and Foucault's work too. We're not claiming that all of the criticism is untrue or misguided, nor we'd like to combat all of them in this paper, but we'd like to show that in certain conditions is not disintegrating the epistemology of science, nor is fluidizing the traditional borders of science (Iluț, 2013:93). We argue that our society changed from industrial to post-industrial, that our society embraced risqué, that we live in second modernity, a reflexive one, and that we think that modernity entered in a flexible, liquid faze which includes and incorporates seemingly contradictory facts with dialectic methodology.

Tamas Gaspar Miklos in his Key Note Address at PEN World Voices Festival in 2011 said, that communist systems and the capitalism as we know it have "characteristics in common: like commodity production, wage labor, the main mediation instrument – which is money, a class system, inequality and a state separate from society." (Tamas G. M., 2011) What he says is that capitalism and communism may be ideologically different, but they are the product of modernity and thus they share more similarities than differences. The differences according to him are ideological as far as "the market can be comprehended with a mathematical model (capitalism) and it was replaced by another method, also based on a different mathematical model, namely: planning (in communism)" (Tamas G. M., 2011) This gives us conceptual thought on how easy it was to transition – at least economically – from communism to capitalism in post-communist Romania. "Transition from socialist – redistribution economies to market integrated systems" (King and Szelenyi, 2005:223) was easy because what the political elite did, it was to open the closed, planned and redistributionist inner market (communist type) to capitalist, international, open and consumerist market. Thus the state transitioned first economically than politically/ideologically into a new system. In this transition is the key to understanding how multinational corporations, who came to the newly opened markets could so easily be integrated into the economy. In every industry or production when they needed data about the population, the economy, the market, and the needs - they had readily collected data (Graeff, Harmon, 2002), centralized at state level. Since communism and capitalism are different facets of modernity, both of them rely epistemologically and ontologically on same things: tactical dispositions, institutionalization, comprehending models mathematically and describing realities statistically. Even though changes occurred from production type system to consumerist system, both of them rely on the same data, on the same technology of collecting – interpreting and using data: the dispositive. The existence of this disciplinary dispositive facilitated the transition of communist Romania to a capitalist post-communism and into an integrated globalization as we have it and know it today. The multinational companies and corporations through discount or loyalty programs are collecting personal and purchase behavior information and they create quantified-self practices which can be explored as much by the companies which collect them as much as by us in some cases (Graeff, Harmon, 2002). This new development comes with the privatization of state monopoly on data at institutional level, but also with change and reconfiguration of the self and the democratization of the discipline needed for self governance (Thomas, Walsh, 1998). While in communism the only institution was the state which collected and worked with data, and used it to consolidate its power and disciplinary grip on the population, the public could focus on it and they saw the misuses of it. But society changed from production to consumption, from communism to capitalism and centralized state governance to privatization through democratization of discipline and governance which is mediated by technology and media systems. This decentralization of data usage first gave way to companies and corporations to use statistical data to further capitalist gain.

New self-disciplining, self-governing, wearable and personal technologies emerged. They are mediated by media, democratize statistical data usage, and hands it over to the people, but in many cases just to companies. Fitness trekkers, mobile phones, smart watches, laptops, computers, photo/ video/ audio enabled technologies, GPS enabled gadgets, consumer/ fidelity/ loyalty/ member/ bank cards, health monitors, security technologies and many more – collect personal data about their users. These devices are incorporated into self-disciplinary dispositives. This is sousveillance technology. Democratization of data collection made it such that people hand over their data willingly. Security and privacy concerns were raised, but the data collection is not illegal and against its misuse there are juridical safeguards.

These self disciplinary dispositive's with their data technologies enable seemingly incompatible nations, cultures, people, businesses and communities to be connected through consumption and the collected statistical data, which ushered lives – and made it part of globalization. Data now is not collected by the state but by global companies, which are using it and make sure to cater to our needs in ways to increase their profits. We don't criticize capitalisms new ways, we just point out that statistical data is used in global ways and by companies to solve problems. In retrospect we can see that the communist state as a closed institution, with a planned economy, how used statistical data, and now, global and private companies are using data in an open, decentralized consumption focused market economy. Statistical data links the person, the state and the companies, and puts the person into a new position, into a global focus which is mediated by technology. This makes geographically distant persons to recognize each other through their consumption. This is a new taxonomical position which creates need for new connections, new networks, new habits, and differentiation. This new positioning creates this new category of self, which is transnational and global, and transcends community-, national- and other barriers through self-discipline and specific consumption technologies of the dispositive which slowly dissolves the state.

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