

PUBLICITY AND SOCIALIST ADVERTISING IN ROMANIA. THE IDEOLOGY AND THE LEGITIMISING DISCOURSE

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Abstract The present study aims to analyse the ideological, economic and cultural grounds that configured the discourse that legitimised the role and the economic and social functions of socialist advertising in Romania. The research examined a text corpus compiled of articles and studies from scholarly publications, as well as treaties and textbooks from this field, which had been representative in their time. Moreover, the aim was to make a correlation between the aforementioned texts and the theoretical and institutional dynamics of socialist advertising from the “stages” characteristic to the development of the socialist commerce and economy in Romania (the stage of the ideological establishment – 1955-1963; modern socialist advertising – 1963-1973; advertising as a part of marketing – 1974-1989). Throughout these stages, from the viewpoint of the legitimising discourse of the socialist advertising, two types of discourse can be identified, namely the reactive discourse and the argumentative discourse.

Keywords Advertisement, advertising, socialism, Sovietisation, Romania.

Introduction

As an industry and a marketing strategy, advertising developed within a social, economic and cultural context, somewhat reflecting the dominant factors of the evolution of society and of the market, such as the degree of the economic development, of the industrialisation and standardisation of the production of goods, the development of the mediums for mass communication, the literacy, the dominant cultural and aesthetic

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DOI: 10.26424/philobib.2021.26.1.04

trends, the people's tastes and sensibilities, the cultural influences and models, the cultural traditions. Despite the apparently true idea that the commercial goods produced within a state economy need no advertising, in the case of a country like Romania, however, the advertising during the communist regime (1947-1989) is part of the same complex evolution marked by economic, social-political and cultural factors. The relevance of advertising and its role within the socialist economy and culture in Romania define a subject of historical research located on the borderline between the economic history (of the political economy) of consumerism under socialism, of the social-political legitimation and the history of daily life. The social, economic and cultural transformations that occurred in Romania in the 60s and the beginning of the 70s, the evolutions that followed, until 1989, the year of the fall of the communist regime, imposed a particular dynamic in the evolution of advertising and of socialist advertising.

From a wide spectrum of historical issues, namely the research conducted on the institutional evolution of socialist advertising, of the relations with the soviet model and the relations with the socialist states, of the theoretical definition of the commercial advertisement and the practices that included the "advertising activities", the present study aims to discuss the means by which the role and functions of socialist advertising in Romania were legitimated, on a discursive level. Our focus is not on a discourse analysis per se. For this reason, the goal is not that of identifying the structure, the building blocks or the categories of the communist ideological discourse, but rather that of emphasising certain motivations and rhetorical ideas which were meant to prove the usefulness of socialist advertising. From this angle, in the present study, we shall focus on identifying the extent to which the use of these rhetorical motivations as discursive arguments had been part of a wider legitimising discourse of the political regime from Bucharest, both from an ideological perspective and from the viewpoint of the desire to mould the cultural customs and practices of daily life into the characteristics of the "new man". In order to identify this set of rhetorical ideas and motivations, we analysed the scientific magazines edited in the fields of trade and advertising.¹ Moreover, the rhetorical

¹ The magazines under scrutiny were as follows: *Comerțul socialist* [The socialist trade], a weekly magazine published between 1955 and 1989, *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], published in 1963 and transformed, in 1967, into the supplement of another monthly magazine, *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade]. As a supplement, *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology] was printed until the end of 1973, after which it was no longer published. From 1973 until the end of the socialist period in Romania, the magazine *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade] continued to be published. Between 1969 and 1974, under the auspices of the Institute for Commercial Research of the Documentation Department, the magazine *Probleme și noutăți din comerțul Mondial* [Issues and novelties in world trade] was published, and issue no.1-2 from 1971 contained a series of articles regarding the socialist advertisement, *Reclama comercială – Stadiul actual și perspective* [The commercial advertisement – the current state of affairs and prospects].

motivations of the legitimising discourse of socialist advertising identified in the aforementioned magazines are approached together with other sources, which can be found in the primary textbooks and treaties on the socialist trade.²

Among these works, the ones authored by Șt. Dumitrescu, I. Ungureanu and T. Pavel were published by well-established publishing houses and they had wide public circulations, while the books authored by E. Bibiri and A. Berca were merely multiplied and they only addressed the scholars in the field, with a limited dissemination. In the professional circle of the trade workers, the magazine *Probleme și noutăți din comerțul Mondial* [Issues and novelties in world trade] (1969-1974). The approach of this text corpus compiled of the editorials and opinion pieces from the scholarly magazines and the chapters that define the socialist advertisement in the textbooks and treaties opened the path towards the main thematic registers that argued the legitimization of the socialist advertisement in Romania. From this viewpoint, the primary focus of the present research was on two main issues. The first issue refers to the identification of extent to which the legitimization discourse of the socialist advertisement suffered changes based on the distinctive phases of the Romanian socialist advertising. The second issue is outlined by the possible answer to the interrogation: What were the thematic registers and which argumentative motivations were brought into question, in order to assess the purposes of the advertisement in Romania?

Naturally, when we refer to the reconstruction of an aspect related to a totalitarian system, by approaching the press from the communist period, we must take certain precautions. The press promoted a heroic view, it was the main propaganda instrument (an internationalist-proletarian propaganda, followed by a nationalist propaganda) of the communist regime, which is why the representations of the social, economic and cultural life are distorted. From the very beginning, in the case of the advertisement as well, we must note that the realities were depicted by using certain stereotypes within the structure of the articles (the good/evil antithesis, the underlying critique, the establishment of future tasks), in the ideological motifs that build this structure (the perpetuum beginning, progress, modernisation, scientific capture etc.) and in the “hollow talk” used as such.

We must not focus merely on the distortion of reality, made by the press that was under the control of the political regime from Bucharest, on a discursive level, but

² The treaties and textbooks under scrutiny are the following: Dumitrescu, I. Ungureanu, *Reclama în comerțul cooperatist* [Advertising in the co-operative trade] (Bucharest: Centrocoop, 1958); T. Pavel, *Publicitatea și reclama în comerțul socialist* [Advertising and commercials in the socialist trade] (Bucharest: Ed. Științifică, 1962); E. Bibiri, *Publicitatea și consumatorul* [Advertising and the consumer] (Bucharest: Consiliul Național pentru Știință și Tehnologie, Institutul Național de Informare și Documentare Științifică și Tehnică, 1973); A. Berca, *Reclama și publicitatea comercială* [The advertisement and the commercial advertising] (second edition, Bucharest: Institutul de Economia Comerțului Interior și a Turismului, Oficiul de Informare Documentară pentru Comerț Interior, 1979).

also on its use as a “smoke screen” that masked the internal social evolutions. Thus, the practice used during the Ceaușescu regime is acknowledged as one that is characteristic to the communist totalitarianism, which acclaims the adherence to a modern way of life, in order to mask the repressive policies that infringed on this quasi-western way of life.³

Faced with the difficulties resulted from the confrontation with the type of aforementioned historical sources, we could ask whether or not the proposed research bears any relevance. There are at least two possible explanations. The first is related to the fact that, in Romania at that time, the socialist advertising and commercials existed as an unmediated reality and that there truly was a discourse through which their economic and social usefulness was meant to be proven. The documents of that time prove the existence of certain institutions responsible with the coordination and execution of the commercials, the presence of advertisements in the day-to-day mass-media, the organisation of certain advertisement exhibitions, the existence of institutions and collectives involved in the organisation of such events, the different methods of advertising encountered in the day-to-day life, all of which represent the real elements that compile the image of the socialist advertisement⁴ in communist Romania – a complex and continuously dynamic image. Despite the efforts made in the sphere of “advertising activities”, the phenomenon of the socialist advertisement in Romania represented a marginal field, from the viewpoint of its spread, which was characteristic to the practices and aesthetics of advertising under the political-ideological legitimising commands of the communist regime. The second explanation can be found in the definition of the research subject and of its objectives. The present study focused on researching the discourse present in the editorials and articles from the scholarly press of the commercial field, the theoretical-ideological chapters in the treaties and textbooks of that time dedicated to the socialist advertising and commercials. Therefore, neither the evolution of the institutions that coordinated and created socialist advertisements, nor

³ Jill Masson, *From Black Caviar to Blackouts. Gender, Consumption, and Lifestyle in Ceaușescu's Romania*, in Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger (Eds.), *Communism Unwrapped. Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 227; Julie Hessler, *Cultured Trade. The Stalinism turn towards consumerism*, in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalinism. New Direction* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 184.

⁴ Probably the most “extravagant” advertising campaign in Romania at that time was the campaign that took place in 1968. The endeavour focused on home appliances: the *Alba Lux* washing machines, the *Practic* dust vacuums, the *Fram* refrigerators, the *Dacia* televisions, the *Nordic*, *Albatros*, *Mamaia* radio broadcast receivers. For the advertisements, 700.000 fliers were printed, 400.000 of which were distributed all across the country in the shopping bags and the rest were dispersed from a helicopter in the primary markets and streets of Bucharest. The description of this campaign can be found in Marian Petcu, *Istoria jurnalismului și a publicității în România* [The history of journalism and advertising in Romania] (Iași: Polirom, 2007), 157; more details on this matter in Vasile Warodin, *O campanie publicitară reușită* [A successful advertising campaign], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology] (1969), no. 1, 5.

their relation with the mass-media and the strategies and tactics of the socialist advertisements constituted the subject of the present paper, but rather the identification of the motivations and rhetorical ideas through which the economic and social role of the socialist advertisement was argued. In other words, the study focuses on these deceiving strategies, which were true “smoke screens” through which the political regime tried to justify the unmediated presence of the socialist advertisements.

Because of the marginality of the socialist advertising in Romania, the historical studies on this subject were not particularly outstanding. The studies on this issue remained rather isolated and secondary, by focusing on the institutions, on the relations with the outlines of gender identity, or by emphasising the anecdotal elements.⁵ However, this does not mean that the historical studies on the socialist advertising cannot offer certain significant clues regarding the evolution of communism in Romania, in its international-proletarian or national-Romanian versions. In this sense, the legitimising discourse of the socialist advertising, analysed from the viewpoint of its normative function, of the lives of the people living in Romania, can emphasise the

⁵ The research conducted on the subject of the Romanian advertising in communism, although 30 years have passed since the fall of the regime, remained in an area of the synthesis, as part of a wider synthesis, namely that of the Romanian advertising of the 19th and 20th centuries, or they remained mere case studies, focusing on the specifics of a press genre, the almanac, or as segments within gender studies, namely the stance of the woman in the Romanian communist advertising. More recently, a study approached the issue of the advertising schools. See Marian Petcu, *Istoria jurnalismului și a publicității...*, 155-161 and 169; Camelia Mureșan, “Advertisig During Communist Period in Romania. Case Study: almanacs,” in *Journal of Media Studies*, I (2008), no. 2, 84-103; Delia Cristina Bălaș (Balaban), “Publicitatea în ultimele două decenii ale perioadei comuniste” [Advertising in the last two decades of the communist period], in *Journal of Media Research*, IV (2011), no. 3, 59-76; Ancuța-Luminița Chiș, “Imaginea femeii în reclama comunistă” [The image of the woman in communist advertising], in *Studii și cercetări din domeniul științelor socio-umane* [Studies and researches in the field of social sciences], vol. 20 (2010), 107-113; Anca Cristina Micu, Madalina Moraru, “Advertising Higher Education in Romania,” in I.I. Richards, B.I. Ross (Eds.), *Advertising education around the world* (East Lansing, M.I.: American Academy of Advertising, 2014), 249-270, see 250. A research direction that is complementary, but suggestive for the scrutiny of socialist advertising in Romania is represented by the studies on consumerism. In this sense, see the aforementioned Jill Massino, *From Black Caviar to Blackouts. Gender, Consumption, and Lifestyle in Ceaușescu’s Romania*, in Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger (Eds.), *Communism Unwrapped*, 226-249; Luminița Gatejel, “The Road to Socialism Paved with Good Intentions. Automobile Culture in the Soviet Union, Romania and the GDR During Détente,” in *Cold War Culture. Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies*, Eds. ANnette Vowinckel, Marcus Payk, Thomas Lindenberger (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012), 152-171; Eadem, *Warten, hoffen und endlich fahren: Auto und Sozialismus in der Sowjetunion, in Rumänien und der DDR, 1956 - 1989/91* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2014).

significations of the “imagined communism”⁶ and its detachment from the profound social reality, from people’s actual lives.

Considering the observations regarding the subject and the viewpoint of the present study, the historical sources which represented the basis for the analysis of the legitimising discourse regarding the purposes of the socialist commercial advertisement in Romania, we systematised the presentation by firstly insisting on the aspects that relate to the political-economic context and the evolution of the socialist advertisement in its different stages, between 1947-1989 (I); in the second phase, the emphasis was placed on rendering certain motivations and rhetorical ideas used by the legitimising discourse of the Romanian socialist advertising in order to demonstrate its “importance and necessity” in the economic, social and cultural life of that time. These rhetorical motivations occurred in different discursive contexts, as was the *reactive* discourse (II), on the one hand, and the *constructive-argumentative* discourse, on the other hand (III).

I. The Historical and Political Context. The Study Premises.

In a study on the advertising in the East Germany, Anne Kaminsky,⁷ in order to introduce the subject of her paper, used a question-challenge, namely a question borrowed from a German scholarly journal, published in 1954: “Is advertising necessary today?” Although the question had a rhetorical function, as the aforementioned author notes, and although it circumscribed to the East German realities, it could be considered as bearing a more general relevance, namely for the entire Eastern European space, for the countries in the socialist bloc and the ones that, after World War II, began the process of sovietisation. The political, economic, social and cultural realities of these countries had a quasi-similar evolution, without overlooking certain particularities of each country.⁸ In all of the socialist countries, given the presence of the soviet troops, popular

⁶ We are using the concept created by B. Anderson, the “imagined community,” considering that the official discourse defined such a “community” with a specific view on life and specific values. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1991).

⁷ Anne Kaminsky, “True Advertising Means Promoting a Good Thing through a Good Form”: *Advertising in the German Democratic Republic*, in vol. Pamela E. Swett, S. Jonathan Wiesen, Jonathan R. Zatlin, *Selling Modernity. Advertising in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 262-286, 262.

⁸ For the general evolution of the countries from the socialist bloc, see Hugh Seton-Watson *The East European Revolution* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1985); Crampton, R. J., *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1994); Westad, Odd Arne, Sven Holtmark and Iver B. Neumann (eds.), *The Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, 1945-89* (London: St Martin's Press, 1994); Ivan T. Berend, *From the Soviet Bloc to the European Union The Economic and Social Transformation of Central and Eastern Europe since 1973* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); John Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations. A History of Eastern Europe* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020).

democratic governments were established, thus eliminating the multi-party systems, replaced by a centralised political system, with a single party in power, the communist party (which had different denominations in each country and in each stage during the construction of socialism). On a cultural level, there was a substantial institutional restructuring and a strong ideologization of values, changes subsumed under what is commonly known as the “cultural revolution”.

On an economic level,⁹ in all of the countries that had popular democratic regimes there were massive restructurings, after the nationalisation of the companies and of the banking system and the cooperativisation of the agriculture (to different extents in different socialist countries). The economy of the socialist countries represented a centralised and planned system. The organisation of trade followed the same logic, that of centralism and planning, of nationalisation and the forms of the state socialist trade, characteristic to the Soviet Union, which was in fact the organisational model for all of these countries.

The economic reconstruction, after World War II, favoured the development of the heavy industry, the power industry, the mining industry and the construction of machinery and tools, as a basis for the war industry, at the expense of the industry that produced daily consumer goods, the food industry or the light industry. This economic approach led to deficiencies in supplying the population. Only after the popular movements from the summer of 1953, from East Germany,¹⁰ or from 1962, from the USSR,¹¹ a greater attention was given to the other economic sectors and to meeting the needs of the people with respect to food, clothing and daily consumer goods. In this sense, an important role was played by the political initiatives from the mid-1950s, during the so-called “Khrushchev Thaw”, as well as the transfer of the conflict between the two political-military socialist-capitalist blocks from the context of the Cold War, from the arms race, to a competition that focused on the level of the development of the standard of living, for the citizens of the two political systems, thus illustrating the so-called “doctrine of peaceful coexistence.”¹²

⁹ For the evolution of the Romanian economy in the context of the international economy, of the socialist states, see Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)* [Romania and Europe. The accumulation of economic gaps (1500-2010)] (Iași: Polirom, 2010), 325-407; see also the bibliography on the matter: 491-515.

¹⁰ Katherine Pence, “You as a Woman Will Understand: Consumption, Gender and the Relationship between State and Citizenry in the GDR’s Crisis of 17 June 1953,” in *German History*, 19 (2001), no.2, 218-252.

¹¹ Susan E. Reid, “Cold War in The Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization Of Consumer Taste In the Soviet Union Under Khrushchev,” in *Slavic Review* (July 2002), 211-252.

¹² Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger (Eds.), *Communism Unwrapped. Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Annette Vowinckel, Marcus M. Payk, Thomas Lindenberger, *Cold War Cultures. Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies* (New York, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2012).

Through several particularities, Romania illustrated this process of sovietisation and of falling in line with the socialist block, by fully assuming the path towards building socialism.¹³ After the economic reconstruction that followed the World War, the country underwent a process of accelerated industrialisation and urbanisation, particularly between 1960 and 1970, the years which, according to the foreign policy statement from April 1964 and the release of the political prisoners, established a certain liberalisation of the political regime and an increased standard of living, a promotion of the modern lifestyle, as means of political legitimation.¹⁴ However, in the mid-1970s, as Jill Massino stated, “the political and consumer honeymoon was over.”¹⁵ The legitimation of the political regime resorted to an economic autarky, to the exacerbation of nationalism and of the cult of personality, to a “small cultural revolution” that was of an Asian communism type. The consequences of these policies led to the degradation of the standards of living, especially during the last decade, the 80s.¹⁶

At the end of 1954, the rations and the supply cards were eliminated, and one could note a series of changes: an improvement of the commercial system; the establishment of self-service stores, of the shopping centres (stores that sold grocery items, industrial items and household items, following the total self-service model), or the universal stores; a stimulation of the domestic tourism; the establishment of certain research institutes for the market operation and control. Trade was also boosted by the practice of instalment sales, the systematic policies for the price reductions, wage increases and seasonal clearance sales. Over the year, specific commercial events were organised: gifts month (Fig. 1), children’s gifts month etc. The 1970s and 1980s showed a developing Romanian economy and a population that had an increasing purchasing power.¹⁷ This period marks Romania’s set off on its own path towards economic, social and cultural development, within its assumption of the socialist way.

¹³ Vladimir Tismăneanu, “Understanding National Stalinism: Reflections on Ceaușescu’s Socialism,” in *Communism and Post-Communism Studies*, 32 (1999), 2, 155-173.

¹⁴ Jill Massino, *From Black Caviar to Blackouts. Gender, Consumption, and Lifestyle in Ceaușescu’s Romania*, in Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger (Eds.), *Communism Unwrapped*, 226-227.

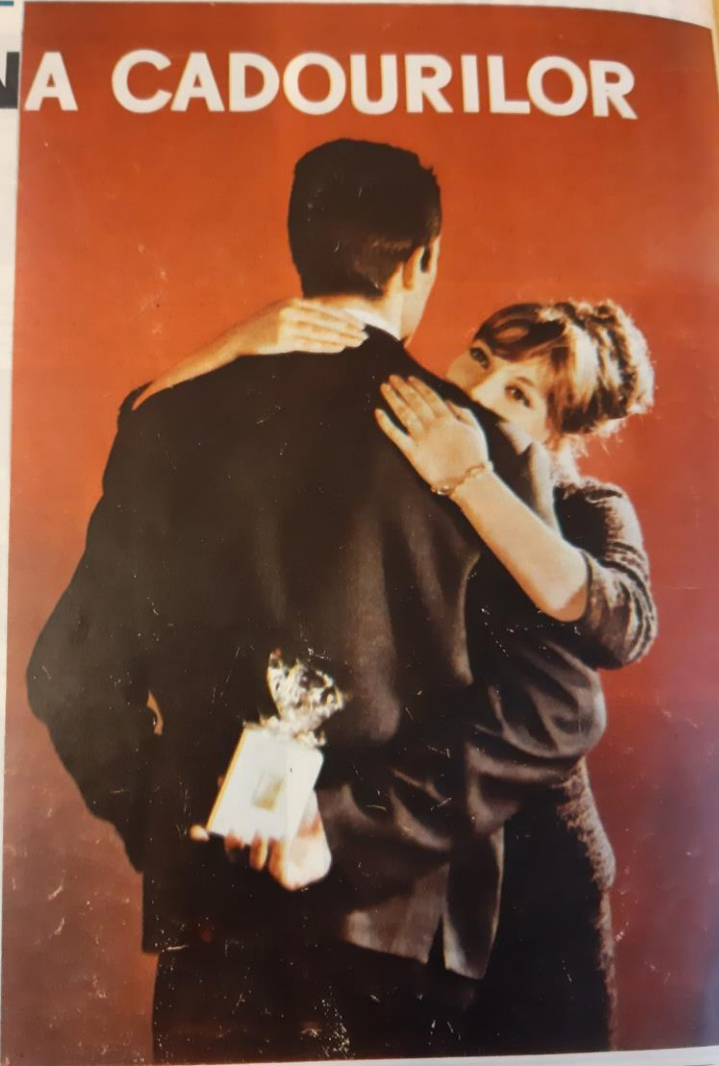
¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁶ See *Ibid.*, 236-246.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.

LUNA CADOURILOR

Magazinele de specialitate sînt bine aprovizionate cu articole potrivite pentru cadouri: tricotaje, parfumerie, marochinărie, confecții și încălțăminte, țesături de mătase, bijuterii, ceasuri, produse zaharoase și băuturi.



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Fig. 1. The “Gifts month” advertising, in *Femeia* [The Woman], 1965, no. 12, back cover.

The institutional evolution and the evolution of the commercial practices outlined a new attitude towards advertising. Thus, the notion of *socialist advertisement* was established, bearing a general ideological meaning for the socialist countries, but its means and practices differed from one country to another.¹⁸ If, initially, as Anne Kaminsky also noted,¹⁹ the “distribution” of goods was the primary objective of the state commerce, and the role played by the advertisement was difficult to justify, in the 1960s, together with the development of the production of daily consumer goods, the trade boost and the focus of the political discourse on the increase of the standard of living, the commercial advertisement became an instrument for the rationalisation of the consumption, for obtaining balance between production and sales.

The interest in the Romanian advertisement followed the sinuous path of the evolution of the communist regime. From a chronological viewpoint, at least three main periods can be established for the institutional evolution and practices of advertising, in line with the general political-economical evolution of the country (1955-1963: the institutional and ideological definition phase; 1964-1973: the modern socialist advertisement; 1974-1989: advertising and the commercial as marketing components).

With the assertion of socialist trade, of the state and co-operative trade network, the preoccupation for new forms of advertisements also came into being.

¹⁸ Philip Hanson, *Advertising and Socialism* (London and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1974); *Style and Socialism Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, Eds. Susan E. Reid and David Crowley (Oxford, New York, 2000); Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne. Leisure, Consumption and Culture* (New York: Berg, 2003); Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade. Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917-1953* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004); Amy E. Randal, *The Soviet Dream World of Retail Trade and Consumption in the 1930s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Natalya Chernyshova, *Soviet Consumer Culture in the Brezhnev Era* (London, New York: Routledge, 2013); Diana Fainberg, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, *reconsidering Stagnation in the Brezhnev Era. Ideology and Exchange* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2016); Timo Vihavainen, Elena Bogdanova, *Communism and Consumerism. The Soviet Alternative to the Affluent Society* (Boston: Leiden: Brill, 2016). From the soviet model, in the context of “the bloc of socialist countries,” Yugoslavia detached in first half of the post-war period and Hungary did so at the end of the 1960s, due to the economic reforms. For advertising in Yugoslavia, see Patrick Hyder Patterson, “Truth Half Told: Finding the Perfect Pitch for Advertising and Marketing in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1950-1991,” in *Enterprise & Society*, 4 (2003), 179-225, and for the case of Hungary, see Philip Hanson, *Advertising and Socialism*, 91-150.

¹⁹ Anne Kaminsky, “True Advertising,” 262. The same observation regarding Romania can also be found in Alexandru Stănescu, “Despre publicitate și publicitar. Câteva note din istoria și practica publicității” [On advertising and the advertisement. Several notes on the history and practice of advertising], in *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade], VIII (1974), no. 5, 46.

Thus, in 1947, trade was taken over by the state and what began was regarded as the “planned guidance of the goods towards consumption.²⁰” Later, in 1955, the supply system based on cards and rations was disbanded, replaced by the “price ceiling”-type trade.²¹ Moreover, in 1955, the first weekly socialist trade magazine was published, the purpose of which was to “socially discipline” the masses of workers, the consumers who had to abide by the spirit of the socialist trade, which was superior to “the capitalist one.²²” The new official newspaper *Comerțul socialist* [The socialist trade] defined the Romanian socialist trade’s entrance into a “new stage of development,” as an instrument of propaganda, as well as an instrument meant to educate the consumers’ taste. With the publication of the economic and commercial type magazine, the preoccupation for the national economic and commercial literature rose. Until 1955, this quasi-theoretical and reflexive plan of the specialised literature was based on borrowings from the soviet literature, namely translations of these contributions into Romanian.

A true assertion of the advertisement takes place between 1955 and 1963. The latter year, 1963, as a chronological reference point, marks a new approach of the country’s economic development and a reflection at the level of the much more diverse scholarly literature. Thus, beginning in 1963, the magazine *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [C] is published, as well as a magazine with a wider spectrum of issues, *Viața economică* [The economic life]. The processes of industrialization, of economic and social modernization, were also reflected by the new publishing market in the field. In 1967, the magazine *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade] was published and, until 1973, its supplement was *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology]. During these years, *Probleme și noutăți în comerțul mondial* [Issues and novelties in world trade] (1969 – 1974) and the works of Eduard Bibiri on modern trade and the relation between advertising and the consumer were also published.²³ Advertising became an autonomous field, after the publication of T. Pavel’s monograph in 1962, and in 1974, the synthesis signed by Alexandru Berca came into being, in its first edition (in 1979, the second edition was reprinted). The efforts made for the modernisation of the Romanian economic and commercial life, for illustrating a modern lifestyle (Fig. 2), between 1963 and 1974, outline a new stage in the evolution of the socialist advertisement.

²⁰ Original text: “îndrumarea planificată a fondului de mărfuri către consum.” *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], I, no.4 (23 August 1955), 1.

²¹ *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], I, no. 1 (30 July 1955), 1.

²² Ibid.

²³ Eduard Bibiri, *Coordonate ale modernizării comerțului* [Coordinates of the modernisation of trade] (Bucharest, 1971); Idem, *Forme moderne de comerț* [Modern forms of trade] (Bucharest, 1973).



Fig. 2. Fashion advertisement, *Femeia* [The woman], 1965, no. 12, 17.

During the eighth and ninth decades of the 20th century,²⁴ because of the failure of the investment policies in the industry,²⁵ the abatement of the civil liberties and the restrictions of the consumption of goods and services, the population's standard of living gradually degraded, which implied a poignant shortage of commodities and services;²⁶ as such, one can note a return to the rudimentary forms and practices of advertising from the beginning of the 1950s. In this period, beginning in 1970, there was a plea for the scientific nature of advertising, its integration in the wider modern concept of economic marketing.²⁷ The plea was merely a rhetoric, a simple ideological motivation with no concrete representation at the level of the commercial practices and the advertising discourse per se. In fact, advertising in the mass-media almost completely disappeared. However, the advertisement could be found in the actual sales locations, in the stores.

II. A View on the Role Played by Advertising in Communism.

There were doubts regarding the purposes of advertising in socialism,²⁸ expressed by both economic theoreticians and by the practitioners and workers from commerce. This is why the idea of "the importance and necessity" of the advertisement was always presented as a "red thread" in the discourse of the Romanian advertising, both in scholarly journals and in the main treaties and textbooks. As early as 1956, many "underestimated the importance and necessity of advertising."²⁹ After a short period, in 1958, the authors of the first textbook-guide addressed to the use of advertising in the co-operative trade, Șt. Dumitrescu and I. Ungureanu, considered

²⁴ Jill Massino, *From Black Caviar to Blackout...*, 226-249: "Romania became increasingly nationalist, repressive, and isolated, and daily life more difficult and desperate." (226).

²⁵ For the context and details of the economic reform at that time, see Vlad Pașca, *Cincinalul 1971-1975 în România socialistă. Mecanismul decizional între tentații tehnocratice și primatul politicului* [The 1971-1975 quinquennial in socialist Romania. The decisional mechanism between technocratic temptations and the political primacy], Doctoral thesis, The University of Bucharest, coordinated by Univ. Prof. Bogdan Murgescu PhD (Bucharest, 2015).

²⁶ Liviu Chelcea, "The Culture of Shortage During State-Socialism: Consumption Practices in a Romanian Village in the 1980s," in *Cultural Studies*, 16 (2002), 1, 16-43; Narcis Tulbure, "The Socialist Clearinghouse: Alcohol, Reputation, and Gender in Romanian's Second Economy," in vol. Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger (Eds.), *Communism Unwrapped*, 255-276.

²⁷ Mihai C. Demetrescu, *Marketing – prospectarea pieței* [Marketing – prospecting the market] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1969), 102-128.

²⁸ Gordon Wills, Roy Hayhurst, "Marketing in socialist societies," in *European Journal of Marketing*, 5 (1971), No. 1, 13-28; Mark Tadjewski, Inger L. Stole, "Marketing and the Cold War: an overview," in *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 8 (2016), 1, 2-16.

²⁹ "Un ajutor prețios: Reclama" [A valuable aid: Advertising], in *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], II, no.36 (4 September 1956), 3.

that “Until recently, the commercial advertisement did not constitute a major preoccupation for the co-operative organisations, because of a faulty mentality according to which the goods sell *themselves*, with no efforts made for their presentation and popularisation.³⁰” During the same year, 1958, after a sustained effort to prove the role played by the socialist commercial advertisement, there were still “enough leaders who believed that, in the socialist trade, advertising was a useless element.” In the aforementioned text, however, there was an immediate reference to the fact that “experience showed that the commercial advertising conducted by the state commercial organisations and companies was a necessary and especially efficient activity.³¹”

In an inquiry published in the magazine *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], in 1964, we must note the presence of the idea that asserted the “importance and necessity” of the advertisement in the socialist economy. The idea was formulated both directly and indirectly. Anton Moiescu, the secretary of the Union of Architects from the R.P.R., mentioned an idea that was rather widely spread, regarding the fact that the quality of the product was its best advertisement and he noted: “It is true that while it is indeed necessary, it is usually insufficient. On the one hand, modern life allows us little time to study, compare and choose what we compare. On the other hand, the new qualities of a product usually cannot present themselves and the public needs guidance towards what is truly new, in the sense of that which is better.³²” Among the responses to the

³⁰ Original text: “Până de curând, reclama comercială n-a constituit o preocupare de seamă a organizațiilor cooperatiste și aceasta datorită mentalității greșite, că mărfurile se pot desface și *singure*, fără a se mai depune eforturi pentru prezentarea și popularizarea lor.” Șt. Dumitrescu, I. Ungureanu, *Reclama în comerțul cooperatist* [Advertising in the co-operative trade] (Bucharest: Centrocoop, 1958), 4.

³¹ Original text: “experiența a arătat că reclama comercială a organizațiilor și întreprinderilor comerciale de stat este o activitate necesară și, mai ales, eficientă.” I. Schwartz, *Reclama în sectorul textile-încălțăminte* [Advertising in the textile-footwear sector], in *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], III, no. 30 (27 July 1958), 2.

³² Original text: “Este adevărat însă că aceasta deși necesară, este de obicei insuficientă. Pe de o parte, viața modernă ne lasă puțin timp să studiem, să comparăm, să alegem ceea ce comparăm. Pe de alta, calitățile noi ale unui produs nu se impun totdeauna de la sine și publicul are nevoie de o îndrumare către ceea ce este cu adevărat mai nou, în sensul mai ales de mai bun.” “Opinii despre reclama” [Views on advertising], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], II (1964), no. 3, 9. The inquiry itself represents a programme-document for *modern advertising*, a new stage in the development of the Romanian socialist advertising in the mid-1960s. Within this inquiry, by convening the more notorious architects, writers and journalists, a series of themes were discussed, themes that would recurrently appear in scholarly press debates: emphasising the characteristics of a product, modern advertising, dynamics, the aesthetic and urban values of advertising, the use of photography, the professionalisation of advertising by establishing certain institutes for the

same inquiry, journalist I. D. Suchianu directly stated: “At first glance, one could believe that, in the socialist society, the goods do not require advertising. Because the only manufacturer is the state. However, upon deeper reflection, we can note that, in the socialist society, advertising must be not only admissible, useful, but also indispensable. It represents a sort of duty.³³”

In the mid-1970s, the *scepticism* regarding advertising reappears, in an article signed by B. Stănescu, a member of the *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology] magazine editorial board: “if, until the more recent years, the controversy regarding the utility of the commercial advertising was still a common issue, today nobody can conceive a *modern trade system* (author’s emphasis – B. S.) without the corresponding advertising.³⁴” In the 1970s, the idea that “advertising was important and necessary” was reinstated. At the end of 1971, given the establishment of a new system of financing the commercial advertising by integrating it in the planned profit of the commercial establishments, there was a particular emphasis put on the beliefs “felt by most workers in the retail network, namely that commerce cannot be conceived without the active presence of advertising.” The emphasis on this majority, convinced of the role played by advertising does not imply that there were no cases in which the approach was more in terms of “all I need is the merchandise, for it shall sell itself.³⁵” Certain concerns regarding the role of socialist advertising were also raised by Eduard Bibiri, a notorious author in the field of commerce and advertising at that time. He noted, in a synthesis, that “its significance has not yet been fully acknowledged within the planned socialist economy.³⁶” Along the same lines, the

coordination and research in the fields of psychology, sociology, aesthetics, market research, a close relation with the contemporary advertising from other socialist countries, as well as from the capitalist ones, the shift towards tourism, particularly on the Romanian seaside.

³³ Original text: “La prima vedere s-ar putea crede că în societatea socialistă marfa nu are nevoie de reclamă. Căci singurul producător e statul. Dar dacă ne gândim mai bine, vedem că în societatea socialistă reclama trebuie să fie nu numai admisibilă, utilă, ci și indispensabilă. Ea reprezintă un fel de datorie.” Ibid., 11-12.

³⁴ Original text: “Dacă până acum câțiva ani era încă la ordinea zilei controversa asupra utilității sociale a reclamei comerciale, astăzi nimeni nu mai poate concepe un comerț modern (sub. autorului – B.S.) fără o publicitate corespunzătoare.” B. Stănescu, “Publicitatea științifică și eficientă” [Scientific and efficient advertising], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial trade] (1966), no. 1, 3.

³⁵ Original text: “marfă să am, că se vinde și singură.” Vasile Cojocaru, “Activitatea de reclamă în perspectivă” [The advertising activities in perspective], in *Reclama și tehnica comerțului* [Advertising and the commercial technique], supplement of the magazine *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade] (1971), no. 4, p. 3.

³⁶ Original text: “nu s-a recunoscut până acum pe deplin însemnătatea ei în condițiile economiei socialiste planificate.” Eduard Bibiri, *Publicitatea și consumatorul* [Advertising and the consumer] (Bucharest: Institutul Național de Informare și Documentare Științifică, 1973), 13.

reference to the “importance and necessity of advertising” is also present in a text from the end of 1973: “An often-heard objection to advertising is that it has worth and it fulfils its functions only in the case of the buyer’s market (namely when the supply exceeds the demand). This objection is unfounded. Advertising plays an important role in the case of the seller’s market as well (namely when the demand exceeds the supply), since in both cases, and perhaps even more in the second case, the issue is that of harmonising the production with the demand of the final consumer.³⁷”

The failure in understanding the role of advertising in the socialist economy was also a consequence of the level of development of commerce. In this sense, Alexandru Stănescu echoes a progressive vision that noted the presence and importance of advertising in the modern trade: “After a period of transition in the transformation of our commercial life, a period in which the goods were distributed, rather than sold, advertising appeared as a permanent necessity.³⁸” Alexandru Berca’s statement falls along the same lines, despite the note of confusion introduced by the passage from his book, in which he recalls the “respective period” with no precise clue in that regard (we could assume that he referred to the 1950s). The aforementioned author emphasised the importance of advertising in “the practice of our political social development in the construction of the socialist society” and demonstrated “the need for highly efficient and aesthetically valuable advertising, in the lines of the socialist system, in spite of the fact that, in that respective period, the well-established opinion was that advertising, as a method used in the commercial practice, is incompatible with the economic and social nature of the socialist society.³⁹”

³⁷ Original text: “O obiecție deseori auzită la adresa reclamei este aceea că ea are rost și își îndeplinește funcțiile numai în cazul pieței cumpărătorului (adică atunci când oferta depășește cererea). Această obiecție nu este întemeiată. Reclama are un rol important și în cazul pieței vânzătorului (adică atunci când cererea depășește oferta), deoarece în ambele cazuri și poate chiar mai mult în al doilea caz, se pune problema armonizării producției cu cererea consumatorilor finali.” Al. Leon, “Conceptul reclamei socialiste și realizarea lui” [The concept of socialist advertising and its implementation], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technique] (1973), no. 4, 1.

³⁸ Original text: “După o perioadă de tranziție în transformarea vieții noastre comerciale, perioadă în care mărfurile mai mult s-au distribuit decât s-au vândut, reclama a apărut ca o necesitate permanentă.” Alexandru Stănescu, *Despre publicitate și publicitar...* [On advertising and the advertisement...], 46.

³⁹ Original text: “necesitatea unei reclame de o înaltă eficiență și estetic valoroasă în condițiile orânduirii socialiste, în pofida faptului că în perioada respectivă s-a încetățenit părerea că reclama ca metodă a practicii comerciale este incompatibilă cu natura economică și socială a societății socialiste.” Alexandru Berca, *Reclama și publicitatea comercială* [The advertisement and the commercial advertising] (Bucharest: Institutul de Economia Comerțului Interior și a Turismului. Oficiul de Informare Documentară pentru Comerțul Interior, 1979), 28.

Considering the evidence regarding the *scepticism* and the *uselessness* of advertising in the socialist economy and society, ideas propagated among the theoreticians, practitioners and the general public, we believe that we are faced with more than a mere subject of rhetoric. Although the rhetoric should not be completely overlooked, especially in the context of a regime that holds complete control over the public expression. However, in the present case, the situation is quite the contrary – the presence of the idea according to which “advertising is important and necessary” is rather insistent throughout the period, which denotes a thought coordinate which we cannot disregard, in the attempt to outline the role and economic and social functions of socialist advertising. Naturally, the *scepticism* is contextually associated with the dominant, mobilising themes of the official discourse, characteristic to each “stage” in the economic evolution and development of socialist trade. The initial period, the first half of the sixth decade and the beginning of the seventh, associated the scepticism towards the purposes of socialist advertising with *experience*, *necessity* and *efficiency*, the mobilising concepts that employ commitment for the assertion of socialist trade. In the period that followed, the seventh and eighth decades, the “importance and necessity of advertising” were associated with notions such as *guidance*, *duty*, *conscience*. These notions bear a particular significance in the context of socialist trade and in the conceptualisation characteristic to the political economy of the economic and social functions of advertising “in the case of the seller’s market (when the demand exceeds the supply).”

III. The Legitimising Directions of the Advertising Discourse in Communism

The immediate refute of this idea, that of scepticism, through the unmediated association with the aforementioned notions and concepts, also implied a more ample effort, a continuous push for the assertion of the role of socialist advertising throughout the different “stages” in the development of Romanian socialism, the different theoretical-ideological conjectures and the institutional organisation of socialist advertising.

Between 1955 and 1989, on a discursive level, we can note several motivations by which the need for advertising in Romania during the socialist years was legitimated. The range of motivations identified on the discursive level was outlined gradually, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s. Withing the repertoire of the discursive motivations that legitimised advertising and the advertisement, several main categories can be identified – an ideological one, an economic one and, last but not least, a cultural one. A precise identification of the rigid borders between these categories is impossible; the motivations encompassed within the legitimising discourse rather slide between these categories, adapted in accordance with the general nature of the arguments invoked by each author.

The Ideological Motivation Category

From an ideological perspective, at that time, efforts were made for a clear and permanent distinction between the socialist advertising, advertisement and commercial propaganda and the similar activities from the capitalist countries.⁴⁰ Capitalist advertising⁴¹ was seen as the result of the consumer's market competition, the monopolistic and trust policies, the race for obtaining individual profit by any means. All of these represented negative aspects that were translated into exorbitant and economically unjustified expenses. Capitalist advertising resorted to brazen and ridiculous actions for the promotion of products that were of doubtful quality. The exorbitant expenses and the brazen practices, in the description of capitalist advertising, attracted social and cultural criticism from different schools of thought in the West. The emphasis put on the irrational determination of shopping, on manipulating the individual's emotions and subconsciousness, on creating the consumer's desires, opened the path for the criticism that focused on the manipulation techniques for creating false desires, by displaying falsehoods and promoting lies, all carried out by capitalist advertising.⁴² To the same extent, the role played by advertising in the capitalist society was associated with the formation of the consumerist and mass culture, the flattening of the cultural horizon and placing

⁴⁰ This terminology represented a primary topic of discussion, but the conclusions were certain explanations commonly accepted by different authors. See T. Pavel, *Publicitatea și reclama* [Advertising and the advertisement], 5-7; Gheorghe Petrescu, *Publicitate sau reclamă?* [Advertising or publicity?], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technique] (1971), no. 2, 7, text reproduced in *Probleme și noutăți din comerțul Mondial* [Issues and novelties in world trade] (1971), no. 1-2, 6-9; E. Bibiri, *Publicitatea și consumatorul* [Advertising and the consumer], 7-8; A. Berca, *Reclama și publicitatea* [Advertising and the commercial advertisement], 7-11.

⁴¹ The definition of the capitalist advertising is a commonplace for the journalism pieces and treaties of that time. A specific approach was made by Sorin Stan, "Dimensiunile și consecințele publicității capitaliste" [The dimensions and consequences of capitalist advertising], in *Probleme și noutăți din comerțul Mondial* [Issues and novelties in world trade] (1973), no. 3-4, 125-135.

⁴² See, for instance, B. Stănescu, *Publicitatea științifică...* [Scientific advertising...], 3. The text mentions Ch. Gide's critique, or that of the German sociologist W. Sombart. Along the same lines, it mentions the critique carries out by V. Packard in its famous book from the 1950s, *The Hidden Persuaders*. See C. Wischermann, "Placing Advertising in the Modern Cultural History of the City," in *Advertising and the European City: Historical Perspective*, ed. Clemens Wischermann and Elliott Shore (London, New York: Routledge, 2020), 1-31, and especially 15-25.

it on the level of the primary, instinctual reactions. The criticism of the mass culture, formulated by the New Left, was also assumed by the official discourse in Romania.⁴³

However, as the years passed and as Romania was integrated in the landscape of the world economy, as the economic and commercial dialogue with the western countries was diversified, the damning image of capitalist advertising suffered a series of important changes. Although the clear demarcation from capitalist advertising was not waived, it became an expression of the countries that had developed economies and modern trade systems. Consequently, the expenses in this field, which were great and growing, argued for the economic status and defined the importance of advertising from an economic viewpoint.⁴⁴

To the same extent, the western scholarly literature was invoked in order to enrich and refresh the theoretical and practical framework of socialist advertising. The openness to the popularisation of the issues regarding advertising and the advertisement of the western world, the agenda of the associations and specialised organisms from these countries, or from the ones that were internationally relevant, the information on the scholarly publications, conferences and international conventions found a new positive echo in the Romanian publications in this field. A delegation from Romania also participated in some of these international manifestations, such as the 1971 international convention on advertising, held in Vienna, and the debates were made known to the Romanian spheres through a series of limited distribution publications (a type of literature known to specialists in the field, printed through multiplication by different competent instituted and organisations, with no public circulation per se). Beginning in the 1970s, we must note an appeal to an increasingly richer scholarly theoretical literature published in the West, to the popularisation of the viewpoints on advertising assumed by the western practitioners.

The socialist advertisement was defined in contrast with the capitalist advertisement.⁴⁵ The socialist advertisement contributed to the insurance of the

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ E. Bibiri, *Publicitatea și consumatorul* [Advertising and the consumer], 6; A. Stănescu, *Despre publicitate* [On advertising], 45. See the column "Mondorama" from *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade], or "Revista presei străine" [Foreign press review] from *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technique].

⁴⁵ "Reclama în comerțul socialist" [Advertising within socialist trade], in *Îndrumar practic privind reclama comercială* [Practical guide for commercial advertising] (Bucharest: 1958), 3-4; T. Pavel, *Publicitatea și reclama* [Advertising and the advertisement], 10-13; E. Bibiri, *Publicitatea și consumatorul* [Advertising and the consumer], 12-20; A. Berca, *Reclama și publicitatea* [Advertising and the commercial advertisement], 21-23. The antithesis is a discursive strategy that is characteristic to socialism, identifiable in the presence of the binomial *socialist advertising – capitalist advertising*, as well as in the relation between *advertising from the beginning* (until the mid-1960s) and *modern advertising* (the 1970s). See,

economic balance, it was for the good of the communities and the individuals, with no intention to increase individual profits, but to inform, convince and support the rational purchase of daily consumer goods. Socialist advertising was informative, truthful and educational. It represented tasteful forms and manifestations and, from an aesthetic viewpoint, it was different from formalism and it was not ostentatious.

The conceptual benchmarks, the practices and institutionalisation of socialist advertising in Romania followed the model of the Soviet Union and of the bloc of “brotherly nations”. At the end of the 1950s, there was a need for a common action, in the socialist countries, in order to establish certain coordinates regarding advertising, given the context of the economic reorientation towards the production of daily consumer goods, the elimination of rations and cards from the years that followed World War II, and in the context of the social unease caused by the shortage of food supplies and daily consumer goods.⁴⁶ On the initiative of the commercial ministries from the USSR, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, in the autumn of 1957, the first conference for the workers in the advertising field from the socialist countries was held in Prague.⁴⁷ Through the conference Resolution,⁴⁸ the main theoretical and ideological coordinates were established for the socialist advertising. Such international gatherings were also held, in 1960,⁴⁹ in Bucharest, and in 1970, in Sofia; however, the main aspects that were discussed regarded the foreign trade, the cooperation between the socialist states. The first convention for socialist advertising was planned on the occasion of the 30th edition of the Poznań

for instance, “Reclama ca mijloc de informare” [Advertising as a means of information], in *Probleme și noutăți din comerțul Mondial* [Issues and novelties in world trade] (1971), no. 1-2, 12-14.

⁴⁶ Susan E. Reid, *Cold War*, 211-252; Eadem, “Communist Comfort: Socialist Modernism and the Making of Cosy Home in the Khrushchev Era,” in *Gender & History*, 21 (2009), no. 3, 465-498; Katherine Pence, “You as a Woman Will Understand...”, 218-252.

⁴⁷ *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], IV, no. 2 (12 January 1958), 3. The didactic function of the series on the Conference in Prague was directly assumed by the periodical from Romania. One such article stated: “Aplicarea învățăturilor desprinse în general din lucrările Conferinței de la Praga a specialiștilor în domeniul reclamei comerciale din țările socialiste va contribui fără îndoială la îmbunătățirea sensibilă a reclamei comerciale în țara noastră.” [The implementation of the lessons generally given by the papers from the Prague Conference, presented by the specialists in the field of the commercial advertising in the socialist countries will undoubtedly lead to the sensible improvement of the commercial advertising from our country] See Gh. Teodorescu, “Aspecte de la Conferința de la Praga. Reclama comercială în R.D. Germană” [Aspects regarding the Conference in Prague. Commercial advertising in East Germany], in *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], IV, no. 10 (9 March 1958), 4.

⁴⁸ *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], III, no. 12 (23 March 1958), 3.

⁴⁹ T. Pavel, *Publicitatea și reclama...* [Advertising and the advertisement...], 161.

International Fair, in the spring of 1972, and the debate theme was “Advertising in the service of society.”⁵⁰

From an institutional viewpoint and from the viewpoint of the practices of commerce and advertising, the Soviet Union⁵¹ defined a model that was also adopted by Romania. However, both on an institutional level and on the level of the commercial and advertising practices, strong influences were also felt in the contracts with Czechoslovakia⁵² and East Germany.⁵³ Later, in the 1970s, Hungary⁵⁴ and Poland were the examples which drew the Romanians’ attention.

⁵⁰ *Probleme și noutăți din comerțul mondial. Reclama comercială* [Issues and novelties in world trade. The commercial advertising] (1971), no. 1-2, 98.

⁵¹ A series of articles from the soviet magazine was published in the Romanian magazines as well, some of which, we believe, had a programmatic nature, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. Later, in the 1970s, socialist advertising was presented in the light that would emphasise, for the Romanian political and economic forums, its usefulness in domestic trade, its role in foreign trade never having been doubted. Thus, in 1972, the specialised magazine from Bucharest, in the “Note” column, published a detailed text entitled “Reclama în Uniunea Sovietică” [Advertising in the Soviet Union], *Reclama și tehnica comercială* (1972), no. 4, 15. Beyond the mere republication in the Romanian press of certain articles from the soviet publications, translations of certain programme-articles in this field, contributions made by the soviet senior officials, periodical mentions regarding the USSR advertising organisation, magazines and practices, a comparative view, all point to the modelling nature of socialist advertising for the Romanian practices, as deduced from the studies dedicated to soviet advertising.

⁵² A. Uricariu, “Reclama comercială în R. Cehoslovacă” [Commercial advertising in the Czechoslovak Republic], in *Comerțul socialist*, III, no. 37 (15 September 1957), 4; “Unele aspecte ale reclamei comerciale în R. Cehoslovacă” [Several aspects regarding advertising in the Czechoslovak Republic], in *Îndrumar practic privind reclama comercială* (Bucharest, 1958), 23-25; Șerban Enăchescu, “Călătorie de studii în Cehoslovacia. Câteva impresii” [Study trip to Czechoslovakia. Several impressions], in 8-9; A. Uricariu, “Din experiența reclamei comerciale în R.S. Cehoslovacă” [Aspects from the experience of advertising in the Czechoslovak Republic], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială*, II (1964), no.2, 9.

⁵³ Gh. Teodoreșcu, “Aspecte de la Conferința de la Praga. Reclama comercială în R.D. Germană” [Aspects regarding the Conference in Prague. Commercial advertising in East Germany], in *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], IV, nr. 10 (9 March 1958), 4, see also “Reclama și formarea cererii de consum” [Advertising and the formation of the consumer demand], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială*, II (1964), no.2, 31. For advertising in East Germany, see Mark Landsman, *Dictatorship and Demand. The Politics of Consumerism in East Germany* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁵⁴ See, for instance, “Organizarea lucrătorilor din domeniul reclamei din Ungaria” [The organisation of the workers in the field of advertising in Hungary], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* (1972), no. 4, 7.

The Economic Category

From the viewpoint of the motivational category of an economic nature, the role played by advertising in socialism was justified through its contribution to the rationalisation of consumption, to the identification and control of the demands and needs of the population, to the balanced and efficient distribution of goods all across the country, to the avoidance of goods that had a slow circulation. The economic efficiency of advertising represented a commonplace of the theoretical discourse and of the discourse that aimed to guide the activity conducted in this field. The popularisation of the new merchandise, services and commercial establishments offered by the Romanian socialist economy represented the major objective during the phases of the assertion and consolidation of socialist commerce in Romania, in the 1960s and 1970s.⁵⁵ In 1966, B. Stănescu reiterated the fact that the purpose and the object of advertising “abided by economic laws of socialism and they were in the service of man’s major interests.”⁵⁶ Beyond the ideological perspective implies by

⁵⁵ The entire literature and scholarly journalism of that time points out the economic functions of socialist advertising. In the 1970s, the focus on the economic efficiency and profitability increased. See V. Cojocaru, “Principiile economice ale publicității comerciale în socialism” [The economic principles of commercial advertising in socialism], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* (1972), no. 1, 1-2. On page 1, he mentioned: “În economia socialistă, publicitatea comercială este chemată să contribuie la satisfacerea nevoilor de consum ale populației, prin îndrumarea și informarea consumatorilor, prin cultivarea gustului pentru mărfurile noi. Ea este o prezență activă în procese cum sunt: creșterea volumului de mărfuri și servicii destinate consumului populației, diversificarea sortimentelor și serviciilor, extinderea și diversificarea unităților comerciale și prestatoare de servicii etc.” [In socialist economy, commercial advertising is called upon in order for it to contribute to satisfying the population’s consumption needs, by cultivating the taste for new merchandise. It is an active presence in processes such as: increasing the volume of goods and services dedicated to the population’s consumption, diversifying the assortment and services, expanding and diversifying the commercial establishments and the service providers etc.] Within the same article, the author insisted: “Indiferent de forma pe care o ia un mijloc de reclamă, de perioadă, de canalele de transmisie, de voința beneficiarului sau a executantului, publicitatea comercială trebuie să țină seama de principiile economice izvorâte din caracterul economiei noastre socialiste.” [No matter the form of a means of advertising, the time period, the transmission channel, the will of the beneficiary or the executor, commercial advertising must consider the economic principles that emerge from the nature of our socialist economy] In V. Cojocaru’s enumeration, the principles of socialist economy which had to be taken into account by advertising were: the reflection and harmonisation of the economic interests of the state and of the consumers; the correlation of advertising with the contexts of our market; a direct focus on a certain product, service, store or consumer; the economic efficiency.

⁵⁶ Original text: “subordonate legilor economice ale socialismului și puse în slujba intereselor majore ale omului.” B. Stănescu, “Publicitatea științifică și eficientă” [Scientific and efficient advertising], 3.

this statement, which is also important in explaining social humanism, we could also note the economic relevance of advertising in the national economy as a whole, as well as for each individual. Thus, in the 1970s, the functionality of advertising was asserted within the economic *system*, or as a *concept* of socialist economy. The measurements of the “system of socialist advertising,⁵⁷” or of the “concept of socialist advertising⁵⁸” corresponded to “the needs of the national economy.” To the same extent, socialist advertising had an important economic function on a family level. A. Berca emphasised that “socialist advertising acts upon the use of the family budget.⁵⁹” Similarly, socialist advertising contributed to the support of the general economic policies, stimulating the economies and changing not only “the structure of consumption,” but also its distribution over time.⁶⁰

The economic and social policies of the communist state marked the involvement of advertising plenarily, in order to fulfil the its duties, in accordance with the objectives of the six-year and five-year economic plans⁶¹ that outlined the economic, social and cultural coordinates of the evolution of Romania, on the path to the edification of the multilaterally developed socialist society. Economic concepts such as efficiency and cost effectiveness received central roles in the

⁵⁷ “Sistemul reclamei socialiste” [The socialist advertising system], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială*, supplement of the magazine *Comerțul modern* (1973), no. 1, 1-2. The text was published as an editorial piece, unauthored, but it was actually written by Eduard Bibiri and it was reproduced in his book, entitled *Publicitatea și consumatorul* [Advertising and the consumer], 14-17.

⁵⁸ Al. Leon, “Conceptul reclamei socialiste și realizarea lui” [The concept of socialist advertising and its implementation], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială*, supplement of the magazine *Comerțul modern* (1973), no. 4, 1.

⁵⁹ Original text: “reclama socialistă acționează asupra folosirii bugetului de familie.” A. Berca, 20.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*: “Reclama comercială are încă o funcție însemnată și anume aceea de a stimula economiile. Trezind noi nevoi, noi cereri de mărfuri și mai ales cereri pentru bunuri de consum de folosință îndelungată, de valoare mare (mașini, motociclete, frigider etc.) reclama mobilizează indirect la economii, ceea ce duce nu numai la schimbarea structurii consumului, ci și la o schimbare a repartizării în timp a consumului.” [Commercial advertising has another important function, namely that it stimulates the economies. By awakening new needs, new product demands, and especially demands for durable consumer goods and high-value goods (cars, motorcycles, refrigerators etc.), advertising indirectly mobilises the economies, which leads not only to a change in the structure of consumption, but also to a change in the time distribution of consumption].

⁶¹ Eduard Bibiri, *Publicitatea și consumatorul* [Advertising and the consumer], 13: The development of the productive forces, the assertion of large-scale serial production, the full use of the industrial capacities, imposed “o tot mai sistematică și perseverentă utilizare a reclamei, sub multiplele forme ce le poate îmbrăca, în vederea influențării pieței și a subordonării acesteia obiectivelor planului economic și social.” [an increasingly systematic and perseverant use of advertising, in its multiple forms, in order to influence the market and to subordinate it to the objectives of the economic and social plan].

argumentative discourse that focused on commercial advertising.⁶² Advertising became an issue of the economy as a whole. In the beginning, the emphasis was placed on the need for the collaboration between industry and commerce, in order to fulfil the desiderata regarding the purpose and functions of advertising. In the 1980s, the socialist economy system was defined, and the industrial sector and the agrarian sector intertwined with commerce harmoniously. Based on such a conception, advertising was, in its turn, integrated in the theoretical and practical system of marketing.⁶³

The Cultural Category

The motivations of the legitimising discourse in the cultural category focus, on the one hand, on a historical justification, and, on the other hand, on the economic competitiveness of the standard of living with the developed countries of the contemporary world. *Historicism*⁶⁴ and *modernisation*⁶⁵ were the main

⁶² The concepts of economic efficiency and profitability are illustrated in the advertising treaties of that time: T. Pavel, *Publicitatea și reclama*, 146-150; E. Bibiri, *Publicitatea și consumatorul*, 64-75; A. Berca, *Reclama și publicitatea*, 168-182.

⁶³ The Editura Politică [Political Publishing House] published a series entitled *Biblioteca organizării și conducerii științifice* [The library of scientific organisation and management], which included Mihai C. Demetrescu's book, *Marketing – prospectarea pieței* [Marketing – prospecting the market], 102-128; A. Berca, *Reclama și publicitatea*, 36-48.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Alexandru Stănescu, [On advertising and the advertisement. Several notes on the history and practice of advertising], in *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade], VIII (1974), no. 5, 43: "Rămânând în domeniul în care evoluează reclama, recunoaștem că ea este un atribut al producției de bunuri, de care omul a avut totdeauna nevoie, la nivelul cerințelor dictate de stadiul de dezvoltare al societății." [By remaining in the field in which advertising evolves, we must acknowledge the fact that it is an attribute of the production of goods, which people always needed, at the level of the demands established by the development stage of society] Historicity became an increasingly more pronounced and nuanced argument in the legitimising discourse of socialist advertising. The increase in the percentage occupied by history can be noted by comparing the space it covered in the treaties and textbooks dedicated to advertising: T. Pavel allots it 2 pages out of 198, approximately 1% (pages 7-9); E. Bibiri, 3 pages out of 77, approximately 3.89% (pages 9-12); Alexandru Berca, 9 out of 212, approximately 4.24% (pages 12-20). Although it is relatively low, the percentage of historicity indicates an increasing tendency. It does not differ from the one present in the western advertising textbooks (a study on this aspect was carried out, for the USA, for the 1960-1980 period, by Vicent P. Norris, "Advertising History – According to the Textbooks," in *Journal of Advertising*, 9 (1980), No. 3, 3-11). In other words, historicity has significant values, characteristic to the Marxist paradigm of interpreting history. T. Pavel's text follows the general Marxist chronology, but it is narrative and explanatory, by giving examples of advertisements from different historical epochs. The explanation for the historical development in accordance with the Marxist view is given by including socialist advertising

themes of the cultural arguments. Historicism contained an appeal to the mythological origins of the advertisement (Biblical mythology,⁶⁶ Greek-Roman

within the deterministic chain of progress, since at the end of the historical description lies the socialist advertisement. In the case of E. Bibiri, the concepts used, the general theoretical view, subject advertising to the same model of interpretation. The author mentions pre-capitalist social-economic systems, the second great division of labour – the division of the agricultural jobs, the emergence of commerce and cities –, the widening of the international division of labour, the consequences of the scientific-technological revolution, the scientific nature of advertising, the depiction of progress motivated by the scientific conquests resulted from research. E. Bibiri, just like his predecessor, is the exponent of the same deterministic view and the socialist advertisement ends the historical presentment. A particular note in his presentation is a repositioning with respect to the contemporary capitalist advertising, and the characteristics of advertising were illustrated through the stance taken by D. Ogilvy, “the director of a large advertising agency from New York.” The historicist argumentation was even more nuanced in the case of A. Berca. He introduced his own periodisation of the evolution of advertising, for which he mentioned “six stages”. The criteria on which the periodisation was based were the development of the means of communication and the advance of the editing and multiplication processes (the invention of the movable type printing, the emergence of the journal, the assertion of the “cheap journal”, of chromolithography, of the neon tube lighting). From the viewpoint of the professed historicism, A. Berca is closer, in method, to T. Pavel, by refreshing the narration and increasing the number of the examples and the area of their selection. From this viewpoint, two details that set him apart are worth mentioning. By introducing a chronological criterion, he favoured the description of advertising in Czechoslovakia, more than the one from the USSR, and the Czechoslovakian model was, in its turn, much more present in the specialised publications from Romania; secondly, when speaking of the American advertising, A. Berca noted “perfecționarea ei (a publicității – n.n.l.C.) și găsierea celor mai ingenioase mijloace precum și executarea reclamei pe o scară extrem de mare.” [its advancement and its most ingenious means, as well as its execution on an extremely large scale]. The gap regarding the reception of the American advertising was opened at the beginning of the 1980s, but we must note that was still present at the end of the decade, since Romania’s commercial relations with the USA had a special nature, which would explain this approach.

⁶⁵ Modernisation represented a cultural motif around which the studies on the history of advertising developed. See Stefan Schwarzkopf, “The subsiding sizzle of advertising history. Methodological and theoretical challenges in the post advertising age,” in *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 3 (2011), No. 4, 528-548, especially 531-533.

⁶⁶ B. Stănescu, “Publicitatea științifică și eficientă,” in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* (1966), no. 1, 3: “Referitor la începuturile timpurii ale publicității comerciale, de o largă răspândire este de pildă butada după care primul produs căruia i s-a făcut reclamă este mărul șarpelui biblic, care în acest fel a fost și primul *agent de publicitate*.” [Regarding the early beginnings of the widely spread commercial advertising, we could mention the irony according to which the first advertised product was the apple of the biblical snake, which was thus the first *advertising agent*].

mythology⁶⁷), to discussing the primary historical periods from the perspective of the dialectic and historical materialism (feudalism and capitalism), to emphasising the plenary manifestation of advertising in the capitalist society.

Competitivity,⁶⁸ in its turn, contained, as fundamental themes, the progress and modernisation of society. These themes focused on the evolution of the society from the second half of the 20th century and the edification of socialism in its different stages. Thus, we must note the existence of an initial phase, that of the beginnings, characterised by the militant efforts to argue the role and functions of socialist advertising, to theoretically define it and to identify the practices that represented “the advertising activity.” That was the period, between 1955 and 1963, that clamoured the slogan “let’s learn how to advertise!”⁶⁹

Another phase is characterised by the consecration of progress, by assuming the technical-scientific revolution⁷⁰ and by defining the scientific nature of social advertising. After the assertion of modern commerce, a phrase that was present in the public discourse from the mid-1960s, it was deemed that

⁶⁷ Alexandru Stănescu, *Despre publicitate și publicitar*, 43: “La Atena, el era un mesager cu o sută de voci care, sub numele de *PHEME* și de *OSSA*, trâmbița faptele glorioase, dar mai vâra uneori între ele și o reclamă comercială. (...) La Roma, era triumfătoare Fama, zeița cu numeroase trâmbițe, care îl arată pe Romul alăptat de o lupoaică și pe Lucreția torcând lână, dar care mai recomanda și vinurile din Falerne, stridiile din Ostenda și gustoasele păsări din Phase. Reclama se regăsește deci dincolo de istorie – în mitologie.” [In Athens, there was a messenger with a hundred voices who, under the names of *PHEME* or *OSSA*, trumpeted glorious deeds, but who also sometimes inserted commercial advertisements among them. (...) In Rome, Fama was triumphant, the goddess with many trumpets, who showed Romulus nursed by the she-wolf and Lucretia spinning wool, but also recommended the wines from Falernum, the oysters from Oostende and the tasty birds from Phase. Advertising can thus be found beyond history – in mythology].

⁶⁸ Competitivity is a concept characteristic to the Cold War and it refers to the competition between the two systems that regarded the standard of living, a context in which the consumerism index has a particular meaning. The evolution of socialist advertising in the context of the Cold War can, for instance, be found in the studies conducted by Susan E. Reid, “Cold War binaries and culture of consumption in the late Soviet home,” in *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 8 (2016), no. 1, 17-43; S. Marilyn, “Exhibiting Art at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959,” in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 4 (2002), No. 1, 6-26.

⁶⁹ *Comerțul socialist*, III, no. 24 (16 June 1957), 3.

⁷⁰ The special focus put on the scientific nature and on the scientific technological revolution represented a commonplace for the discourses of the socialist countries. See, for instance Susan E. Reid, “The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating The Scientific-Technological Revolution,” in *Journal of Contemporary History* 40 (2005), no. 2, 289-316; Karin Zachmann, “A Socialist Consumption Junction: Debating the Mechanization of Housework in East Germany, 1956-1957,” in *Technology and Culture*, 43 (2002), no. 1, 73-99.

modern commerce in the absence of appropriate advertising was inconceivable. Thus, advertising represented “an intrinsic part of modern commerce, with a scientific basis substantiated by economy-politics, philosophy (including psychology and sociology), aesthetics and merceology.⁷¹” The professionalisation of socialist advertising and of the workers in this field had been a desire that had very early been stated in the specialised publications and it was pursued throughout the years with consistency. Regarding the role of advertising, an increasingly greater emphasis was put on the promotion of “new products”, the results of the technical innovations and the scientific studies, of the modernisation of economy and of the socialist commerce. All of these aspects constituted the premises of the modern socialist advertising, characteristic to “the current stage” (after 1965) of the development of Romania “on the path to the edification of communism.⁷²”

The idea of modernisation also assumed the *social pedagogy* function attributed to socialist advertising,⁷³ namely that of the direct and pragmatic education that facilitated the use of new products, the education of the aesthetic taste of “the new man”; the *social pedagogy* function also promoted the adaptation to a new, urban culture, resulted from the industrial development and domestic migration (of the workforce from the rural areas to the cities) and, at the same time, it contributed to the definition of a new social identity. The socialist urban culture brought forth an issue that was

⁷¹ B. Stănescu, *Publicitatea științifică*, 3: “Acestea fiind posibilitățile pe care ni le oferă cunoașterea științifică contemporană, este o sarcină imediată a teoriei publicității contemporane din țara noastră de a le dezvolta și populariza în rândurile lucrătorilor comerciali, activitatea aceasta obligându-i la împletirea cunoștințelor obținute prin experiența proprie cu ultimele date ale studiului științific al mărfii, pieții și mijloacelor artistice de exprimare, în strânsă legătură cu modul diferit de acțiune asupra sensibilității, psihologiei individului sau grupelor sociale.” [Since these are the possibilities that the contemporary scientific knowledge offers us, the immediate duty of the contemporary advertising theory in our country to develop and popularise them among the commercial workers, this activity thus compelling them to intertwine the knowledge they had gained through their own experiences with the latest information provided by the scientific study of merchandise, of the market, the artistic means of expression, all in close connection with the different action on sensibility, individual psychology and social groups]. In this sense, see, for instance, Mihai C. Demetrescu, “Cercetarea sociologică și psihosociologică a consumatorului” [The sociological and psychosociological study of the consumer], in *Revista de sociologie* [Sociology magazine], 13 (1966), no. 11, 1351-1365.

⁷² See *Reclama comercială – Stadiul actual și perspective* [The commercial advertisement – the current state of affairs and prospects], a special issue of the magazine *Probleme și noutăți din comerțul mondial* [Issues and novelties in world trade] (1971), no. 1-2.

⁷³ Ioan Matei, “Funcțiile sociale ale ‘reclamei’” [The social functions of the ‘advertisement’], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* (1966), no. 7-8, 4.

characteristic to the relation between the urban landscape and the advertisement, an issue of the urban landscape aesthetics.⁷⁴ The placement of street advertising, the presence of electrically illuminated advertisements, of attractive storefronts in the central areas, as well as in workers' quarters or at the city peripheries, represented a major point of interest for the people working in advertising.

From a sociological viewpoint, advertising played an important role in defining the social identity of young people (by engaging them in leisurely activities, by offering fashion advice) and in defining the social identity of the new woman in socialism.⁷⁵ By promoting the new household appliances (Fig. 3), the woman's role as a homemaker was quicker and easier to fulfil, since the women had much more time to be involved in public activities, as well as in the activities involved in beauty and in the care given to their public appearances. Even the wearing of jewellery, by women, a practice that used to be associated with the bourgeoisie lifestyle, in the mid-1960s, was associated with the image of the modern socialist woman (Fig. 4).

⁷⁴ See, for instance, Fe. Marinescu, "Animația centrelor orășenești și publicitatea" [The animation of the municipal centres and advertising], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* (1969), no. 4, 14; Idem, "Revitalizarea centrelor urbane tradiționale" [The revitalisation of the traditional urban centres], in *Reclama și tehnica comercială* (1970), no. 4, 6-7.

⁷⁵ See Jill Massino, 231-235.



Fig. 3. An advertisement for the “Alba Lux” washing machine, *Femeia* [The woman], XXIII (1970), no. 3, 19.



BIJUTERIA
aleasă
vă subliniază
personalitatea
și vă sporește
farmecul!



În LUNA CADOURILOR,
magazinele vă oferă
nenumărate modele
de garnituri elegante
și distinse, compuse
din colier, brățară
și clipsuri.
O frumoasă garnitură
vă conferă un plus
de strălucire
în noaptea Anului nou.

RECOM

Fig. 4. An advertisement for jewellery, *Femeia* [The woman], XXIII (1970), no. 12, 31.

The depiction of progress and modernisation in the field of socialist advertising had atavistic effects and the advertisement was, in the 1970s, integrated into the economic marketing system. The assertion of marketing as a theory and a practice, with an institutional network and a legal basis in socialist economy subordinated advertising, diminishing its conceptual and institutional autonomy. From the second half of the 1970s, in Romania, advertising was merely a component of the economic marketing and found its “place” within the “marketing system”. Between 1969 and 1973,⁷⁶ through a series of legal initiatives in the field of the management of the industry and commerce establishments, as well as other institutional fields, a new theoretical context was outlined regarding socialist advertising. The new legal system contained Law 11/1971, for the organisation and management of socialist establishments, Law no. 71/1969, for the economic contracts, Law no. 3/1972, for the domestic trade, Decree no. 445/1972, for the establishment, organisation and functioning of the Council for the Coordination and Guidance of the Supply and Provision of Services for the population; moreover, based on the Ruling of the Council of Ministers, a series of institutes in the field of the foreign and domestic markets were established, The Institute for Commercial Research, The Institute for the study of the international economic conjecture and, in 1971, the Romanian Marketing Association.⁷⁷ In 1974, the Laboratory for Marketing Study and Research was founded, with the help of the higher education institutions, the research institutions, the data centres, the personnel training centres, the centres for the production of consumer goods and of the productive use goods, the state and co-operative commerce, the specialised press, the Romanian Marketing Association management, Publicom, the handicraft co-operative and certain foreign trade companies.⁷⁸ In this legislative, institutional and theoretical context, advertising became a component of marketing. The terms advertisement and advertising were used more and more rarely, since they were replaced by syntagms such as “sales techniques” or “actions that promote sales.” The use of these terms illustrated the leading economic forums’ preferences regarding the commercial practices in socialist Romania, namely the emphasis put on promoting

⁷⁶ For the context and details of the economic reform of this period, see Vlad Pașca, *Cincinalul 1971-1975 în România socialistă...*

⁷⁷ Radu Paul, Aurel Vainer, “Marketingul în socialism. Sarcinile întreprinderilor în cercetarea pieței și adaptarea structurii producției la cerințele consumatorilor” [Marketing in socialism. The companies’ duties of conducting market research and of adapting the production structure to the consumer needs], in *Comerțul modern*, X (1976), no. 1, 48.

⁷⁸ “Înființarea unui laborator de studii și cercetări de marketing” [The establishment of a laboratory for marketing study and research], in *Comerțul modern*, VIII (1974), no. 5, 69.

the products at the points of sale. In this context, advertising through the means of mass communication was diminished almost entirely, or was only sporadically used.⁷⁹

Final Observations

The complexity of the Romanian socialist advertising is given not only by its massive presence and its impact on the buyers, through its quality and aesthetics, but also by its relation with the political power. The socialist advertisement illustrated the economic, social and cultural policies of the Romanian communist regime and, as the press of that time claimed, it represented “the herald of the accomplishments of the national economy.” The legitimate assertion of socialist advertising in the mid-1960s required efforts and endeavours into the ideological and theoretical argumentation (in political economy) for its “importance and necessity” within the planned economy; it required institutional affirmation on the regional and national level, professional training and guidance for the “advertising activities.” After 1955, in the scholarly literature, we must note the presence of an offensive discourse that militated for the support of the economic and cultural purposes of the socialist advertisement. This discourse amplified in the context in which Romania defined “its own path” towards socialism and asserted itself as an economic partner in the world market, as well as dialogue partner for the western countries. However, after the political regime stopped legitimising itself through consumerism and shifted its focus towards Stalinist practices (the exacerbated nationalism and the cult of personality), socialist advertising was pushed into the shadows. This attitude change birthed a defensive discourse regarding the demonstration of the importance and necessity of socialist advertising. Despite this defensive discourse, the fate of the socialist advertisement in Romania was sealed. The assertion of the modern socialist advertisement in the 1960s and 1970s was enveloped by the definition of its scientific nature, as a result of the research conducted in different fields (psychology, sociology, merceology, aesthetics, linguistics etc.). This predilection for research and science determined socialist advertising’s inclusion in the wider concept of marketing, as one of its components. In other words, the usefulness of advertising was maintained and acknowledged in the field of foreign trade, where the Romanian products competed with the western ones. Such an approach on the usefulness of advertising in the foreign trade was made in the 1950s and it once again became a primary stance beginning with the mid-1970s.

⁷⁹ The existence of a “dispute” between the options “advertising through the mass-media” and “advertising in the point of sale” was also mentioned by Eduard Bibiri, “Promovarea vânzărilor și publicitatea – amici sau inamici?” [Sales promotion and advertising – friends or foes?], in *Comerțul modern*, X (1976), no. 4, 39-40.

The study on the legitimising discourse regarding the role of the ambivalence of the Romanian socialist advertising revealed several discursive strategies. The existence of view that did not understand the purposes of advertising in the socialist economy generated a type of combative, engaged discourse that manifested in two ways. The first represented an immediate and direct reaction, associated with the mentioning of the scepticism towards the purpose of advertising, through a reactive legitimising discourse. This discursive strategy crossed the publishing sphere of that time from one end to the other. The second manifestation birthed an autonomous, constructive, argumentative discourse based on a series of text-programmes, which included the magazine editorials, opinion pieces and chapters from the scholarly treaties and textbooks. Based on these texts, we can note the existence of certain *key moments* in the assertion and evolution of socialist advertising in Romania. One of these key moments was the year 1957, when a series of articles were published, preparing and popularising the Conference in Prague. Moreover, the editorials and the opinion piece from 1964 were texts that mentioned the directions of the theoretical and practical development of socialist advertising. Moreover, the editorials from 1973 represent articles that could be considered to be true memoirs for the conservation of the theoretical autonomy of advertising, in the context of certain major legislative, institutional and financial changes that made advertising a component of the marketing system. Practically, advertising through the mass-media was almost completely eliminated, while advertisements were accepted only at the points of sale.

An approach to the legitimising discourse of socialist advertising leads to the identification of the subordination or distancing relations with the soviet model, the influences from the other socialist countries, both on a theoretical level and from the viewpoint of the institutional organisation. Although the organisational and theoretical model was established by the Soviet Union and it was accepted by the soviet satellite states, including Romania, we must note a slight similarity with Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Poland. To the same extent, we must note a pendulation of the attitude towards the capitalist advertising. The dichotomic nature of the socialist advertising – capitalist advertising remained a constant, but in the mid-1960s, there was a gradual presentation of western advertising in more positive terms, with examples that supported the economic functions of modern advertising.

Translated from Romanian by Anca Chiorean