

## ADVERTISING AND FASHION IN SOCIALIST ROMANIA. THE CASE OF THE REPRESENTATION OF VORONEȚ IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS OF THE MODA MAGAZINE (1970)

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**Abstract** The consumer culture in socialism, the socialist advertising and fashion in Romania in the 1970s are historical research subjects that outline the fundamental context for the analysis of the visual documents represented by the advertising published in the Moda [Fashion] magazine. Considering the means of disseminating the advertising message, namely through the Moda magazine, the characteristics of the advertising discourse present over time in its issues and of the audience sphere (in Romania and abroad), the elements that compose the message of the advertisement and the photomontage directly, the present study also notes the touristic connotation of the advertising message. The advertisement represents a tourism incentive and stimulation, despite the fact that its foreground contains the efforts for promoting a lifestyle and a clothing model, as well as the means for procuring it. The main goal of the present study resides in the contextualisation of socialist advertising in several registers of historical and economical analysis (regarding consumption in socialism), of the socialist advertisement in particular and of the interpretation of the power discourse on the presentation of the modern lives of the citizens of modern socialist Romania in the 1970s (fashion and the promotion of tourism are associated with the daily modern socialist culture).

**Keywords** Advertisement, advertising, socialism, propaganda, fashion.

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In the spring of 1970, the issue of the well-known Romanian magazine *Moda*<sup>1</sup> [Fashion] printed, on its fourth cover, an advertisement for the artisan cooperatives from the Suceava County. The publication of an advertisement for such artisan cooperatives was not a novelty in itself, since they appeared both in the years before and in those that followed. However, the advertisement from the spring of 1970 and the photomontage with the same theme in the content of the magazine issue had a character of uniqueness. This uniqueness was given by the association of the fashion products from the units of the aforementioned cooperative, and of the fashion phenomenon that was accepted by the Socialist Romanian society, with a remarkable monument of medieval art – in other words, the association of fashion with the famous painted monasteries of Moldova, in this case Voroneț. No other monastery was ever associated thusly and no other commercial advertisement ever used such a communication tactics. How could one explain this “case”, namely that of the presence of the advertisement and of the photomontage in the pages of the *Moda* [Fashion] magazine? What is the significance that can be drawn from this message by a historian that focuses on communism and on the Romanian society from that period?

For instance, the American historian Jill Massino, who reproduces an image from the aforementioned photomontage, considered that it “showed modern interpretations of traditional Romanian styles with images of Voroneț (a medieval monastery in Moldavia) as the backdrop. In one of the pictures, a woman is wearing a peasant-style minidress and heels, while smoking a cigarette. This blending of the traditional and the modern could be read as a sartorial expression of Ceaușescu’s national communism. At the same time, because peasant styles were also in vogue in the West, these fashions were considered trendy and stylish rather than simply provincial or traditional.”<sup>2</sup>

Is this explanation enough? Is it comprehensive enough to illustrate the meaning of the photomontage from the *Moda* [Fashion] magazine? We must address these questions with no desire to open a polemic with Jill Massino. Quite the contrary, we appreciate the fine observation made by the American historian and the analysis she brings to the table. Moreover, we must also note the precautions taken by the wording of “could be read”. We must also emphasise that Jill Massino simplifies the meaning of the photomontage’s message to a single dimension, namely to that of the “clothing expression”, and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Moda* [Fashion], 68 (1970).

<sup>2</sup> Jill Massino, “From Black Caviar to Blackouts: Gender, Consumption, and Lifestyle in Ceaușescu’s Romania,” in *Communism Unwrapped. Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe*, eds. Paulina Bren, Mary Neuburger (Oxford University Press, 2012), 232; See also Jill Massino, *Ambiguous Transitions. Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2019), 329.

signification it produces in the Ceaușescu ideological sphere, that of national communism. Both aspects are fully argued. Fashion was explained as “a visual form reflecting that Romania had progressed towards a mature socialism.” National communism used this strategy of constructing discourse by associating tradition, especially religious tradition, as a form of sacralising the nation. This was also the meaning that was invested in the photomontage images, as the text that accompanies them mentions.<sup>3</sup> The text uses the word “hieratic” as a euphemism for religious and sacred, in contrast to the word *reality*. Thus, for the abovementioned historian, fashion is one facet of the modern woman prototype displayed by the communist regime of that time. Fashion, together with film, chocolate, caviar, washing machines and furniture helped build the illusion of the “liberalisation period” of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, what would be the premises on the basis of which we could bring up a nuance of the interpretation directions of the photomontage discussed above?

First, Jill Massino only approached the photomontage, without making any reference to the advertisement on the fourth cover. However, there is a direct correlation between them. The two visual documents invite an attempt to approach, understand and explain this correlation, considering several aspects: what type of documents do we have at hand and what makes them stand out? By whom and in what context were they made? On the one hand, the first question is methodological, but it also has a historical problematisation-type connotation. On the other hand, the second interrogation refers to the process of contextualising the source, in order to understand its meaning in the terms of the era that created it. The main objective of the present study consists precisely in the contextualization of the socialist advertisement in several registers of historical analysis, of an economic nature (regarding the consumption in socialism), of the socialist advertisement

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<sup>3</sup> The text is signed by Renata Runcean, editor-in-chief of the *Moda* [Fashion] magazine: “Located on the threshold between tradition and innovation, set in the middle of the archaic poetry and the green spring landscape that surrounds it, ascending towards the blue sky, Voroneț appears from within the silence of the forests. // A source of inspiring meanings, fresh and renewing, this church speaks to our times, through its immemorial force. // Deeply touched by its beauty and by the immediate impression of a harmony that seems to need no further explanation, we contemplate its images, painted in blue and gold. // On the background of the famous Voroneț blue, in this luxurious decorative setting, our magazine projects the unfolding of the scenes and characters, it organises the forms and expression artistically and decoratively. // In the enamel brightness of the colour, our models acquire grace and diaphanous freshness, they borrow the joyful tranquillity of the angels and a glow of an unspeakable charm. // The hieratic and the real, the sacred and the profane merge into a unique creation.” *Moda*, 68 (1970). If not marked otherwise, all cited translations from Romanian were made by the translator of the present paper.

<sup>4</sup> Jill Massino, *Ambiguous Transitions*, 231.

itself and of the interpretation of the discourse of power regarding the presentation of the modern life of the citizens of socialist Romania in the 1970s (the fashion phenomenon and the promotion of tourism are associated with this modern socialist daily culture).

### **Methodological observations**

The originality of the present research is given by the type of historical source under scrutiny, namely the socialist advertisement – more specifically, the advertisement present in the *Moda* magazine. The particularity of the historical source derives, in this case, from two reasons. The first refers to the characteristics of the aforementioned magazine, while the second refers to the advertisement as a historical source. The *Moda* magazine was edited by The Union of the Artisan Cooperatives from the People's Republic of Romania, starting with 1952. The magazine was edited with the support of the Ministry of the Textile Industry over several periods: until 1957, the magazine circulated narrowly and it was not intended for the general public, since it was “a modest publication, of internal use, which, with its few pages of fashion drawings, was addressed to several dozen specialists.”

From 1957, it became a widely distributed magazine and it was published in this semi-annual format until the fall of the communist regime, in 1989. In fact, the evolution of the magazine marks the “turbulences” in the editing of the Romanian press. From 1957, it became public and it benefitted from the openings created by the Dej regime but, in 1974, its editorial offices were merged with those of the *Modern* magazine. The latter publication had also appeared in 1957, under the name of *Jurnalul modei* [The fashion journal], edited by the Ministry of Light Industry; from 1962, this magazine changed its name to *Revista modei* [Fashion magazine] and, in 1964, it changed back to *Modern*, a title under which it appeared until the moment of its unification with the *Moda* magazine. The year 1974 bears a special significance in the history of press publishing in Romania – many publications were suppressed, the format of the newspapers and magazines was modified, reduced, simplified and became much more austere. However, the *Moda* magazine had an advantage. It also addressed foreigners and it circulated in both socialist and Western countries. For this reason, it maintained its general editorial characteristics, despite the fact that its number of pages was reduced. Only in the 1980s, due to the aggravation of the economic crisis in Romania, did the magazine suffer a period of austerity, shown by the reduction of not only the number of its pages, but also of its colour images, and by the trivialisation and the obsessive focus on the national subject of its contents. However, it

was a highly popular magazine. For instance, in 1981, upon the festive publication of its 100<sup>th</sup> issue, it had a print run of 42,000 copies.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the lifespan of the magazine, an editorial program that had several objectives was consistently pursued. One of these objectives was stated directly. In this sense, the magazine was intended to be “a means of documentation for master tailors.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, it also assumed a pedagogical role, as “a guide for the general public in the art of dressing fashionably.”<sup>7</sup> Another objective should not be excluded, despite it not having been stated directly – one that emerges from the magazine pages: the desire to show the achievements of Romanian socialism in the field of clothing industry, both to Romanian citizens and to foreigners. Therefore, advertisements for clothing, craft workshops, but also for other consumer goods, from cosmetics to household goods, found their place in the pages of the magazine, describing the feminine universe in particular, even if the magazine also contained references to male fashion for children.

What are the characteristics of the advertisement as a historical source in general, and of the ones in the *Moda* magazine from the 1970s in particular? Several decades ago, Roland Marchand<sup>8</sup> stated that advertisements do not directly reflect the social reality. In this regard, Marchand highlighted a series of arguments. In his opinion, advertisements are rather a *Zerrspiegel*, a deformed image of reality. Because of the fact that advertisements are selective, they present certain feminine or masculine stereotypes, social scenes or images understood as “conventional forms” of communication.<sup>9</sup>

However, Roland Marchand considers that “the use of advertisements as historical documents is not without merit.” He believes that, for a historian, advertisements raise issues that differ in degree, more so than in the means of their analysis, if we were to compare them to other sources of historical documents that are more frequently used by the researchers of the past. The basis of this observation resides in the motivation of the advertisers for the need to communicate “directly and intensely” with their audience. In this sense, they test the results of the communication more rigorously than other categories. Secondly, the advertisers are convinced that they must associate social values and attitudes with the message. The contents of the advertisements reflect the attitudes of the consumers that resulted from the researches and surveys and they illustrate a situation at a given time – fashion, clothing, furniture, interior

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<sup>5</sup> *Moda*, 100 (1981): 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Moda*, 57 (1967): cover 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII.

design, be they reflective of an elitist social status or an avant-garde vision. The advertisements illustrate a specific adherence to modernity, to novelty, as opposed to the old (“the missionaries of modernity”). In Marchand’s view, advertising was a “humanisation of modernity”, it “brought the product to the dimensions of its humanity,” through the fact that it also plays the role of the counsellor in modern society. Thus, advertising reflects the needs and anxieties of the modern society individual to a greater extent than the social circumstances and behaviour of the individual or of various communities.<sup>10</sup>

From this analysis perspective on the advertisement and photomontage from the *Moda* magazine, as visual sources circumscribed to a discourse of the political power in Romania in the 1970s, several main fields of historical research emerge. The first results from the integration of visual documents in the context of the dominant political-ideological discourse, on the one hand, and that of defining their professional nature, consumerism, consumption patterns regarding the consumer goods in Romania in that period. Advertising and photomontages fit into what can be called the “promotional culture” in the space of the Romanian socialist society. The research horizon of the “promotional culture” offers other possible reading keys, for the explanation and interpretation of the aforementioned visual sources. Advertisements are the product of a conception of the socialist advertising of the 1970s and of the institutions that created them. What is characteristic about the socialist advertisement in Romania in the 1970s? In this situation, we may ask ourselves: to whom are the aforementioned advertisements addressed? Thus, we must note two planes of the advertisement, one more general and comprehensive, in relation with the clothing fashion, and another, more particular one, in relation with the artisan centres from the Suceava region. Therefore, the third major direction of historical research is outlined, represented by the evolution of fashion in communist Romania, by the place and role of artisan cooperatives in this fashion landscape.

The consumer culture in socialism, the socialist advertisement and fashion in Romania in the 1970s are issues of historical research that emerge as a fundamental context for the analysis of the aforementioned visual documents. However, considering the means of disseminating the message, the *Moda* magazine, the characteristics of the advertisement discourse inserted over time in its issues and the sphere of its audience, both within the country and abroad, the elements that directly compose the message of the advertisement and of the photomontage, we must also note the interest in the touristic connotation of the advertising message. The advertisement represents a touristic inducement and a stimulus,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., XXI.

despite the fact that the foreground is held by the efforts to promote a lifestyle and a clothing model, as well as a means of purchasing it.

Therefore, the Romanian reality of the 1970s can be divided, starting from the analysis of these visual sources, into several “social tableaux”: the first is that of the consumer culture in socialism (I); the second refers to the context of the socialist advertisement and the particularities of the advertisement in the *Moda* magazine (II); the third is a “social tableau” itself and it depicts the significance of the discourse about fashion in socialism, the means of procuring clothing in Romania in the 1970s, especially for female fashion and the contribution of fashion to the elaboration of the socialist female archetype (III); the fourth is a “social tableau” that emerges from the socialist consumer culture, in which tourism bears the significance of the modernisation of the Romanian society, of the modern life offered to the labourers, thus defining a Romanian modern urban culture (IV).

The reconstruction of the tableaux of the socio-economic life, of the daily life in Romania in the 1970s, especially in explaining the social dynamics, implies the use of a series of statistical data selected from the official publications of the era. However, one could object that this data also represents a commonplace, since the statistics in communist Romania had been moulded so as to mark an economic-social dynamic that was convenient for the communist party propaganda. We believe that a number of amendments can be made to this trenchant statement. By this we would not outright deny it, but we consider it to be circumstantial, relevant in a certain economic-social context. The above statement has, overall, a highly general nature and for this reason it can be questioned. The statistical data offered during the communist regime by the communist authorities or with their consent are diverse, mirroring different aspects of the economic, social, cultural life, and they refer to the different stages of the evolution of communism in Romania. In other words, the types of discourse that put such data into question as arguments for a particular radiography of social reality are equally diverse. In turn, the discourses used by the authority or controlled by the power structures (censorship) – mass media and propaganda in the academic and research fields – were contained in a regime of historicity specific to the communist regime. Therefore, not all data and statistics encountered in these discourses should be evaluated and judged in the same way, according to the same reading grid, by researchers. On the contrary, the historian may appeal to this type of source, analysing it under the same conditions of the criticism of the historical sources to which any artefact of the communist period is subjected.<sup>11</sup> From this

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<sup>11</sup> For a problematisation of this topic, regarding the research methodology in the case of the totalitarian regimes, see Lynne Haney, *Inventing the Needy. Gender and the Politics of Welfare in Hungary* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), 249-259.

viewpoint, the discourses of the communist regime use statistics in at least two ways. One highlights the self-referential nature of the data – in other words, the data from a field are ordered according to a reference chronology without making correlations with the information and the aspects of the reality which would explain the evolution of the figures, the percentage held by the image of a continuous, vectorial increase, illustrating the law of progress. Thus, the statistical figures are presented correctly, accurately, but in way that is isolated and integrated in the “great narrative” of the regime about itself. Another practice, albeit less directly useful to the historian (if they do not study the social socialist imaginary!) was the use of statistical data as a forecast of the development of socialism in Romania. In this instance, the percentages and the absolute values were presented to the regime as objective, as targets for the industrial development, for consumption or for raising the living standards of the labourers. They place the discourse in the area of the uchronia. Therefore, such statistical data were *ab initio* excluded from the approach in the present research.

### I. Consumer culture during the years of socialism in Romania

Jill Massino, in a study published ten years ago, dedicated to the analysis of the Romanian people’s way of life during the Ceaușescu period and of the relationship between gender/social identity and consumerism, started from a somewhat paradoxical observation: “Post-war Romania is rarely imagined as a place of abundance.” Commonly, the life of the people in communist Romania was presented in terms of deprivation, with respect to consumer goods and services, as a blackened and frustrating existence, compared not only to the Western consumerism, but also to the lives led by the individuals from the socialist countries with liberalised consumption, as were East Germany, Hungary or Yugoslavia.<sup>12</sup> Certainly, this image characterises the final years of the communist regime and it was of a particular importance in triggering the social discontent that led to the fall of communism. However, a generalisation of this image is inadequate and the American historian emphasises the fact that, even in Romania, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, consumerism played a key role in the state strategies regarding the legitimization of power.<sup>13</sup> The strategy of consumerism was shared with the other states from the socialist bloc, alongside the “promotion of a modern lifestyle.” With a strong partisan note, we must also point out that the aforementioned Romanian

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<sup>12</sup> For an overview, see Paul Betts, “The Politics of Plenty: Consumerism in Communist Societies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*, ed. Stephan A. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 424-438.

<sup>13</sup> Massino, “From Black Caviar to Blackouts,” 226-249; Massino, *Ambiguous Transitions*, 311-363.



literature of that time described these efforts made by the state and by the communist party to offer the Romanian citizens a “modern life”.<sup>14</sup>

In order to understand the efforts of the Romanian communist state to raise the material standards of life, we must make several observations, while also mentioning that they should not be evaluated as distinct and isolated, but connected, as part of a complex social dynamic.<sup>15</sup> The onset of the interest in elevating the people’s standard of living dates back to August 1953, immediately after the social movements from the DDR, in June 1953. Generally, historiography associates the policies for increasing the standard of living in the socialist bloc with the events from East Germany. If the events that occurred in June 1953 in East Germany represent the “immediate cause”, an in-depth cause is represented by the confrontation between the great powers, USA and the USSR, namely The Cold War.<sup>16</sup> There were two great directions for the competition between the two powers: conquering the cosmos and consumerism. A Russian historian of the 21<sup>st</sup> century considers that the “idea of constructing a society of abundance legitimized consumption and became a way of affirming the superiority of the socialist regime,”<sup>17</sup> over the capitalist one. The model of the soviet society bears the symptoms of the same interest in raising the standards of life and in satisfying the people’s material needs. In the USSR, as well as in the other countries from the socialist bloc, there was also an effect of the de-Stalinization process after March 1953. In the last three decades, a rich

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<sup>14</sup> Such an approach can be found in the analyses carried out by Gr. Smeu in a study dedicated to the aesthetic as “an attribute of the quality of the consumer material products.” Gr. Smeu mentioned a series of party documents that proved the interest in increasing the consumer goods production and in increasing the people’s standard of living. These party documents are as follows: Decree of the Central Committee Plenary of the RWP from 19-20 August 1953, which provided for the diversification of the production of consumer goods and its increase; the CC plenary meeting of RWP from 26-28 November 1958, which emphasized the need for the “continuous development of the production of consumer goods” and the enhancement of the quality of these products; the Report of the extended Plenary of the CC of the RWP from 13-14 June 1959, which more broadly highlighted the need for increasing the quality of these products (page 136, note 1).

<sup>15</sup> For an analysis of the economic evolution of Romania in the years of socialism, see Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)* [Romania and Europe. The accumulation of the economic disparities (1500-2010)] (Iași: Polirom, 2010), 313-407.

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the historical literature in this regard, see Mark Tadajewski, Inger L. Stone, “Marketing and the Cold War: An overview,” *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 1, 8 (2016): 2-16; For the relation between marketing and fashion in the soviet space, see Olegovna Papushina, “Marketing in the Late Soviet Garment Industry,” *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 4, 12 (2020): 551-566.

<sup>17</sup> Larissa Zakharova, “How and What to Consume: Patterns of Soviet Clothing Consumption in the 1950s and 1960s,” in *Communism and Consumerism. The Soviet Alternative to the Affluent Society*, eds. Timo Vihavainen, Elena Bogdanova (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), 85.

literature was published, illustrating this very statement. For instance, Larissa Zakharova noted, in a volume published in 2016, that the USSR had a “program aiming at satisfying the Soviet people’s material needs is well known as one of the ambitious projects of the Khrushchev era.”<sup>18</sup>

Thus, we are witnessing a new legitimising discourse from the power structure, which appeals to the population’s standard of living, to the satisfaction of basic needs, to consumer goods. Moreover, one of the major policies of the totalitarian state emerges, namely the one focused on the demographic, for an active, young and vigorous workforce. In these conditions, of development of the production of consumer goods and of demographic increase, we must note the entry into a new development stage of the socialist trade.<sup>19</sup>

In Romania, the works of the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress of the RCP, in the summer of 1965, established the new objectives for the development of the country. First on the list was industrialisation and, more particularly, the development of the heavy industry and of the automotive industry, “without which the elevation of our homeland to a higher level of civilisation and well-being would not be possible.” Regarding the production of consumer goods, it would increase “at a rate of approximately 10 percent,” the forecasted growth rate being the lowest, compared to the other industries. Another detail seems significant in understanding Romania’s subsequent economic evolution, namely the fact that the shortage of consumer goods increased at the end of the eight decade and over the decade that followed, which, to a certain extent, contributed to the fall of the regime in 1989. The documents of the Congress specified the need to systematically improve the “quality of the products”, the purpose being to streamline the Romanian industry and “to make our products competitive abroad.” Considering the slow pace of the production of consumer goods and the primary focus on export, the economic project for the country actually contained the germs of the crisis that Romania faced internally in the 1980s.<sup>20</sup>

What is the model of the Romanian consumerism from the beginning of the eighth decade of the last century? Eugen Barat, one of the analysts of the Romanian socialist trade in

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> In agreement with this objective, in 1963, the following statement was made: “The continuous growth of the industrial and agricultural production and the increase in the salaries of the labourers, according to the tasks outlined by the documents of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of RWP, ensure the permanent development of the socialist trade. The Congress directives provide for 1965 to double the volume of the sale of goods to the population, compared to 1959, and the achievements of the first years of the six-year plan confirm even the possibility of exceeding these provisions.”

<sup>20</sup> Liviu Chelcea, Puiu Lățea, “Cultura penuriei: bunuri, startegii și practici de consum în România anilor 80” [The culture of scarcity: goods, strategies and consumption practices in Romania in the ‘80s] in *Viața cotidiană în comunism* [Daily life in communism], ed. Adrian Neculau (Iași: Polirom, 2004).

those years assessed that “the movement of goods is the branch in which any change in the national economy is most rapidly mirrored, in the form of changes that occur in the population’s demand for goods.”<sup>21</sup> As an economic barometer, trade highlights the “upward course of the economy” and the rise of the “standard of living of members of society.” Therefore, socialist trade has economic functions, regulating the relationship between the planning of the production of goods in correlation with the distribution and demand of consumption, and social functions, of educating the taste of consumers, by introducing new goods to the market.

The consequence of the economic development of Romania in the 1960s and 1970s, with the affirmation of the industrialization process, was the establishment of a new dynamic of the commercial activities. The industry that produced consumer goods experienced a development rate of approximately 10.3%, with 1960 as the reference year, and it was more dynamic in the field of furniture production and the production of durable goods. These are new industrial branches, with new products that entered the Romanian market at that time, products “made in Romania” that had been unknown until then. For instance, we must note the increase in the production of refrigerators (39.2%), televisions (34.7%), furniture (18.1%), washing machines (13%). In contrast, the textile industry seems more stable, with a growth rate below the general average – cotton fabrics (5.4%), wool fabrics (6.1%), silk fabrics (5.2%), while the growth rate of knitwear was double: 12.4%.<sup>22</sup>

The volume of consumer goods distributed to the population in the seventh decade compared to the previous period doubled.<sup>23</sup> E Barat noted a sharper increase in food and metal-chemical products.<sup>24</sup> The products from the light industry, namely textiles and footwear, experienced a growth rate of almost 8.2% and an even higher growth after 1965. The advance of the food consumption was explained by the phenomenon of the “denaturalisation of the peasant consumption.” This represents the ending period of the collectivisation of agriculture, in 1962, and the dislocation of an important part of the population towards the urban areas or their employment in the new industry. Thus, out of the total expenditures of the population, 75% were operated in the socialist trade, while

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<sup>21</sup> Eugen Barat, “Dezvoltarea comerțului socialist în perioada 1960-1969” [The development of socialist trade between 1960-1969], *Comerțul modern*, III, 11-12 (1969): 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. See also table no. 5.

<sup>23</sup> In absolute figures, the volume of trade in 1969 amounted to 88.7 billion Lei. See “La început de drum. Bilanț și perspective” [At the beginning of the road. Balance sheet and prospects], *Comerțul modern*, IV, 1 (1970): 3.

<sup>24</sup> Barat, “Dezvoltarea comerțului socialist în perioada 1960-1969,” 9.

the peasant market continued to represent only a percentage of 7%.<sup>25</sup> An important role in making sales more dynamic in the socialist trade was played by the increase in imports of food products and consumer goods. Food imports increased by 13.1%, while consumer products had a growth rate of 14.7%.<sup>26</sup>

In 1958, the commercial network expanded by 28%, compared to 1955, and compared to 1950, it expanded four times, an increase of 8,000 units, of which 4,500 were in the rural areas.<sup>27</sup> More than 200,000 people worked in the commercial sector. The volume of goods from the socialist sector doubled. The textile industry produced three times as much as in 1938, and the food industry increased its capacity twice. At the beginning of the '50s, Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej remarked: "the fact that today the (state and cooperative) socialist trade occupies a dominant position, that private trade has been restricted, is a great success for our party."<sup>28</sup>

The stimulation of consumption was accompanied by a number of factors meant to potentiate it. The increase in people's incomes was a determining factor. Thus, the average annual sales per inhabitant increased in 1969 compared to 1965 by 25%, from 3,555 Lei to 4,435 Lei.<sup>29</sup> In 1975, the expectation was that the average salary would reach the amount of 1,800 Lei, and the minimum wage to 1,100 Lei, an increase of over 50% compared to 1970. As such, the expectation was that a family would spend approximately 15,000 Lei for the purchase of food, 50,000 Lei for clothing and footwear and the rest of the expenses were supposed to represent the purchase of durable goods.<sup>30</sup> The population was to buy "ready-made" clothing in a proportion of approximately 67%.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade], III, 34 (22 August 1958): 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Comerțul socialist*, III, 36 (7 September 1958): 1, 4. By the Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 739/1954, "The buildings or premises that in the past were used for commercial purposes, for shops, catering establishments (restaurants, coffee shops etc.) or warehouses and which are currently used for other purposes will be returned to the use of socialist trade regardless of the current owner or of the purposes for which they are used." This measure aimed to ensure the restitution of the commercial network of the old buildings, often built for this precise purpose, a similar measure having been enforced in the Soviet Union. In the '70s, there was also a revitalization of traditional shopping areas, for example, Lipskani, in Bucharest. See Alexandru Grossman, "Puterea de atracție tradițională a zonei comerciale Lipskani poate fi deplin folosită" [The traditional attraction power of the Lipskani shopping area can be fully used], *Comerțul modern*, IV, 1 (1970): 8-16.

<sup>29</sup> "La început de drum," 3.

<sup>30</sup> Emil Niculescu, "Schimbări în structura desfacerilor de mărfuri și a consumului populației" [Changes in the structure of sales and consumption], *Comerțul modern*, VI, 1 (1972): 10-13.

At the same time, a number of new methods of sale were introduced. Among them, the “sale with payment directly to the seller” for pre-packaged products, with no receipt or queue, with payment at the checkout, was established in the summer of 1956, as well as the sale in instalments. Likewise, another new method was the self-service.<sup>31</sup> Such a store was opened in Bucharest, on Magheru Boulevard, at the end of January 1956, “as an experiment.”<sup>32</sup> Another new method was represented by the non-stop store, “the store that was open 24 hours a day,” one of the first being in Bucharest, namely the dairy store named “Miorița”. Similarly, the superstore was also opened in the mid-1960s. The first such superstores were opened in Bucharest in April 1966. Because the superstore encompassed “in their spacious sales halls... beside the usual self-serving sections, aisles which sold: sweets, cold cuts, cheeses, bread, meat,” fruit and vegetables, the customers were thus “exempt from many trips and they thus saved a lot of time.”<sup>33</sup> A special focus was on developing the network

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<sup>31</sup> The model for this type of commercial practice is the soviet one and that of the countries from the soviet bloc. *Comerțul socialist*, II, 33 (14 August 1956): 4, see also 34 (21 August 1956): 4; Ion Preoteasa, “Impresii din URSS. Autoservirea” [Impressions from the USSR. Self-service], the CC president of the trade workers’ Union presented “New ways to improve consumer service,” insisting on the reduction of the circulation costs, as a task set by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the RWP. He stated that “in the socialist trade, self-service is considered to be one of the more advanced forms of consumer service and a means of simplifying the way in which the consumers acquire their necessities in a shorter time.” Moreover, self-service leads to “an increase in work productivity.” He also showed that, in the USSR, the first store opened in 1954 and now, in 1956, over 200 such stores were in operation: “until the end of 1956, we must largely finalise the introduction of self-service in all public food service units like the workers’ canteens, the university and school canteens, as well as the town canteens, cafes, buffets, teahouses etc.” A balance sheet of the efficiency of commerce through the self-service method in Romania was made by Gh. Fețeanu, “Un deceniu de la introducerea autoservirii în comerțul socialist” [A decade from the introduction of self-service in the socialist trade], *Comerțul modern*, IV, 9 (1970): 20-25.

<sup>32</sup> *Comerțul socialist*, II, 16 (17 April 1956): 2; “La magazinul fără vânzători” [At the store without sellers], *Femeia*, IX, 4 (1956): 9; See Gh. Teodorașcu, “Unele concluzii din experiența a 28 magazine cu autoservire” [Several conclusions drawn from the experiences in 28 self-service stores], *Comerțul socialist*, VII, 25 (23 June 1962): 2: The first self-service grocery stores were opened in 1956, based on the experience of the soviet trade and of the other “fraternal countries”. They were organized as “standard” units: “a model in terms of the way of arrangement, endowment with furniture and equipment, presentation of goods and customer service.” *Comerțul socialist*, IV, 37 (17 September 1961): 1: In Bucharest, the first self-service fruit and vegetable store was opened. In 1962, 90 self-service grocery stores were in operation: Bucharest, 11; Cluj region, 1; Bacău region, 7; Ploiești region, 6; Constanța city, 6. The criteria on which their establishment was based was as follows: location (“on the thoroughfares with the highest levels of traffic in the city centres and in the housing districts, at a distance of at least 300-400 m from the shops that distribute similar goods”), the sizing and the assortment of goods (“they must have a sales hall of at least 100 sqm and 60 sqm for the warehouse”), the interior organisation (“they must ensure a normal flow of buyers... the goods must have a stable place.”)

<sup>33</sup> *Comerțul socialist*, XI, 17 (22 April 1966): 1.

of universal stores, which were considered to be the most important form of “concentrated commerce and the main objective of the urban commercial centres.”<sup>34</sup> For instance, in 1969, investments amounting to 1 billion Lei were made for the modernisation of the technical-material base for the socialist trade and, thus, over 3,500 stores were opened.<sup>35</sup>

In order to animate the trade and to increase sales, a series of periodic, seasonal or annual commercial events were held: “The decade of gifts for women” (27 February – 8 March), “The month of May, the month of prints,” “The month of gifts for children” (June) or “The month of gifts” (December, every year).

The establishment of a Romanian consumerism in the years of communism is based on several direct items of evidence from the commercial sphere, an emerging urban culture as a consequence of the industrialisation process.<sup>36</sup> From the second half of the 1970s, these transformations of the Romanian society were accompanied by the affirmation of an economy of services, particularly through the new momentum of tourism. In the words of Michael David-Fox, a historian who focused on the phenomenon occurring at the confluence of the capitalist and socialist countries, in the ‘60s and ‘70s tourism turned the Iron Curtain into a “semipermeable membrane.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, the contact between the two sides was direct, perceptible, highlighting the supremacy of one over the other, and it was no longer merely in the form of staged meetings at international or bilateral fairs.

## II. Socialist advertisement in Romania

The socialist advertisement in Romania had different periods, determined by the oscillations of the ideological discourse, the development of the industry that produced consumer goods and services, the international and internal economic crises. Thus, the first period was between 1955 and 1963, a period of legitimization for the socialist advertisement, due to the development of the commercial network and of the commercial practices that were characteristic to the socialist trade (rations and cards were discontinued, the incomes increased, the purchase in instalments was introduced). The second period was between 1963

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<sup>34</sup> V. Aurel, “Problematica magazinelor universale” [The issue of the universal stores], *Comerțul modern*, VII, 3 (1973): 41-42; see also Virgil Adăscăliței, *Organizarea modernă a magazinelor universale* [The modern structure of the universal stores] (Bucharest: INID, 1972).

<sup>35</sup> “La început de drum,” 4.

<sup>36</sup> Betts, 424-438.

<sup>37</sup> Michael David-Fox, “The Iron Curtain as Semipermeable membrane: Origins and Demise of the Stalinist Superiority Complex,” in *Cold War Crossing: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc 1940-1960*, ed. Patryk Babiracki, Keyton Zimmer (Texas University Press, 2014).

and 1973, which marked the modern socialist advertisement. This is the period of economic openness towards the west, when the production of socialist advertising was institutionalized, and the quality of discourse increased at the same time with the diversification of the means of advertising and dissemination through the media. This period also corresponds with that of the magazine *Moda* [Fashion], discussed in the present paper. The third period was between 1974 and 1989, when advertising was integrated into the concept of marketing. The theoretical perspective was synchronous with the viewpoints in the general literature; however, the advertising practice in Romania would narrow down, becoming austere, simplistic and less and less relevant, in tune with the deepening shortage of goods for the country's population.

The soviet model<sup>38</sup> represented the mark of the socialist commercial advertisement in Romania, but it was received in a post-Stalinist form that was also open to a ("mutually beneficial") collaboration with all other countries from the bloc of communist states. The engagement in the economic system of the socialist states imposed an alignment, from a unitary viewpoint, with the roles and functions of the commercial advertisement. The soviet model meant "the popularisation of the advanced soviet experience" (1955), in which a magazine, *Sovietskaia Torgovlia*, was published for this field – a model for the Romanian specialised journalism from 1963. Moreover, the soviet literature in this field was translated, recommended and transformed into the only one that was scientific and true, but also the only one available for reading.<sup>39</sup> Gradually, the soviet model was seconded by the various developments of the socialist advertisement from the "friendly countries": Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary etc. The most important accomplishments in these countries were systematically presented, beginning with 1957, in a special column of the weekly publication *Comerțul socialist* [Socialist trade].

The interest in this issue grew after, at the end of 1957, the Romanian representatives participated in the Prague Conference, an important moment in the re-launch of the socialist advertisement. The resolution of this conference placed the commercial advertisement in the context of the development of the production of goods, the reduction of trade expenditures, the rationalisation of consumption, the information and education of the consumer, the

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<sup>38</sup> "In soviet trade, the advertisement represents an important means for the popularization of the goods and, at the same time, a good way of influencing the demands of the population." (O. Snack, "Pliantele – o formă utilă de reclamă comercială" [Leaflets – a useful form of commercial advertising], *Comerțul socialist*, II, 43 (23 October 1956): 4.

<sup>39</sup> See, for instance, A.I. Mikojan, *Cu privire la măsurile pentru dezvoltarea continuă a circulației mărfurilor și îmbunătățirea organizării comerțului de stat, cooperatist și colhoznic* [Regarding the measures taken for the continuous development of the circulation of goods and the improvement of the organisation of state, cooperative and kolkhoznik trade] (Bucharest, 1953).

advertisement's representation in the terms of socialist realism. The cultural function of the advertisement was emphasised in a pedagogical sense, as well as in a pragmatic spirit. The pedagogy of advertising is found in its ability to educate the people's tastes for the development of their requirements, which ultimately led to the "active" formation of the demand for consumer goods. The informative nature of advertising translated to an aid for the buyers. The spectrum of information provided by the advertisement was ample, it included clues about the "most rational consumption" processes, about the known goods, their properties, their nutritional values, "the advantages of their use," the means for their advantageous procurement (about the commercial enterprises, their schedules, their methods of sale, their additional services), all of which expressed "the socialist state's care for the consumers – the labourers." With this information at their disposal, the buyers would find "the necessary goods quicker, they would purchase them as advantageously as possible and with minimal time expenses."<sup>40</sup> Defined in these terms, the advertisement established a relationship between the state and its citizens, the labourers, in a paternalistic style, since the state was the caretaker and protector of the many. In order to fulfil these functions in the socialist economy, the advertisement had to be "varied and interesting." As a cultural horizon, it was integrated in the paradigm of socialist realism: "The main trait of commercial advertising is the very idea that it contains – its veracity and its concrete character."<sup>41</sup> The "truthful nature" of socialist advertising resulted from the verification of the disseminated information on the quality and properties of the goods and their uses. For this reason, the language of the advertisement was required to be "clear, convincing," while formalism, "used in the artistic and textual solutions, was unacceptable, since formalism does not ensure the clarity of the advertisement that had to be understood by all."<sup>42</sup>

The noteworthy aspect is precisely this stance taken by socialist advertising in relation with the stimulation of the development of the production of consumer goods (an increasingly pronounced emphasis in the development projects of the socialist countries during the "peaceful confrontation" of the Cold War), of the reduction of trade expenses and the informative, cultural-pedagogical and aesthetic character.

A new dynamic was represented by the evolution of socialist advertising in Romania after 1963. The emergence of a new magazine, on the one hand, and the establishment of an institutional frame for the advertising activities, on the other hand, represented the essential

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



factors for a new assertion of socialist advertising. A series of normative inventions,<sup>43</sup> as a consequence of the new emphases in the economic policy of the regime in Bucharest, contributed to the new dynamic of the evolution of advertising. Increasingly more bold objectives were adopted in economy, objectives that focused on increasing the population's living standards and its "material and cultural prosperity." The signal was given by the political forums. In front of the Great National Assembly, Ion Gheorghe Maurer stated that the task of the Ministry of Internal Trade was "to pay more and more attention to the commercial advertising, in order to make the characteristics of the new products known, thus contributing to the guidance of the tastes and demands of the consumers."<sup>44</sup>

Another normative dimension of the advertisement referred to its correlation with the "current stage" of the development of the Romanian economy in general, of the "current trade." What exactly was the meaning of the expression "current stage", an ever-laconic formula, the meaning of which was implied in the journalistic discourse? It is one of the axiomatic and elliptical expressions which, because of its repetitive use, no longer required an explanation within a form of communication that was often compiled from such expressions. The meaning of the expression can eventually be inferred as designating the stage of the "fulfilment of the socialist construction in our country"; the task of the

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<sup>43</sup> For instance, see the Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 499/1962 and "Indicații în legătură cu folosirea cu eficiență economică maximă a bazei tehnico-materiale a comerțului cu amănuntul aprobate prin ordinul M.C.I. nr. 666/1964" [Indications in connection with the use with maximum economic efficiency of the technical-material basis of the retail trade approved by order no. 666/1964 issued by the Ministry of Internal Trade], *Reclama și tehnica comerțului* [Advertising and the trade technology], II, 4 (1964): 5: "The advertising activities must consider the following: the popularisation of new products introduced for consumption; the popularisation of existing products in stocks that exceed the current possibilities of sale; the popularisation of newly established units and the advanced forms of customer service (as are the 'Month of Gifts' or the 'Month of prints' etc.). Considering the fact that the showcase is the main means of advertising, one must pay special attention to the arrangement of the storefronts both in the city centre and on the outskirts. The showcases will display only the goods that are in store for sale. Further steps will be taken in order to raise the qualification levels of the sellers and of the window dressers."

<sup>44</sup> I. Bucșa, "Anul 1964 – Cuvânt înainte" [The year 1964 – Foreword], *Reclama și tehnica comerțului* [Advertising and the trade technology], II, 1 (1964): 2. B. Stănescu, "Reclama comercială instrument de sporire a eficienței economice în comerț" [The commercial advertisement as a tool used to increase the economic efficiency in trade], *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], II, 4 (1964): 7: "The organisational measures elaborated this year by the Ministry of Internal Commerce for the application of the tasks assigned to the trade system through the Party and State documents on the occasion of the launch of the State Plan for 1964, as well as the conference of the Party Organisation of the city of Bucharest, include the indications regarding the maximum-efficiency use of the technical and material basis of commerce."

advertisement in the circumstances given by the fulfilment of the construction of socialism was found in the need to present the goods and to inform the buyers. Presenting new goods and influencing the tastes and demands of the buyers were, indeed, the main objectives of advertising – generic objectives stated from the level of the party and of the state, to the activists and the editors of the newspapers and magazines from the field of commerce and advertising.

At the beginning of 1964, the emphasis was put on “broadening the informative nature” of the advertisement by using various means. The features of the information that the advertisement depicted referred to truthful, operative and concrete data.<sup>45</sup> The role played by the advertisement was considered to be extremely important when it covered new products or products with technical characteristics, in which case it was defined as a true guide for the product’s use and maintenance. In this regard, the buyer had to be guided, advised, and convinced of the quality of the product, of its advantages and its utility. To the same extent, the interest in the aesthetic character of the advertisement was highlighted, establishing the relationship between the advertising content and the artistic value. The intention was to create advertisements that would have a concise, lively and intelligible style, using images that would highlight the merchandise.<sup>46</sup> A contribution in this sense was made by the economic content of the message, the selection of the arguments and the artistic form.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], II, 2 (1964): 2: “The most efficient solution occurs when the artistic form enriches the advertisement, when it highlights and clarifies what the advertisement wants to communicate.” In the magazine’s fourth issue of the same year, on the occasion of a contest of posters and advertisement texts, the emphasis was put on the pragmatic nature of advertising, on “the harmonious combination between the artistic element and the advertising element. Some of the contestants took this combination into account, while others allowed themselves to be “captured” by the plot development, by the artistic nucleus of the advertisement... We must note that advertising can be efficient and convincing only if it is based on precise elements and undisputable arguments. Obviously, an ingenious presentation of the arguments and their intelligent combination play an important role. However, the value of an advertisement must be judged based particularly on its commercial efficiency, and not on its intrinsic artistic charge. Therefore, the creators of the advertising materials must be guided not towards an exaggerated development of the artistic side, not towards an ambition to find only amusing punchlines and funny situations, but towards presenting precise elements, characteristics and uses etc.” See *Reclama și tehnica comercială*, II, 4 (1964): 13-14. See also Stănescu, “Reclama comercială instrument de sporire a eficienței economice în comerț,” 7.

<sup>47</sup> See also A. Uricariu, “Publicitatea la nivelul cerințelor actuale” [Advertising at the level of the current demands], *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], 6 (1966): 1-2.

Socialist advertisement became more dynamic especially after 1965. From an institutional and organisational viewpoint, in 1964 a central advertising team was established with the role of coordinating and guiding the advertising activities<sup>48</sup> within the Ministry of Internal Trade, a collective that was reproduced at the scale of each region of the country (the region being at that time the administrative unit of Romania), starting with 1965.<sup>49</sup> From 1967, the Commercial Research institute<sup>50</sup> came into being and began the publication of the magazine *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade], with the supplement *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], until 1973, when the supplement was discontinued. To a greater and greater extent, due to the new organisational structure of the institutions that promoted the advertising activities, the emphasis was put on two plans for carrying out the “advertising campaigns,” the first being the advertising endeavours carried out at a central level by the Ministry of Internal Trade and its departments, and, secondly, the advertising endeavours projected and carried out at a regional and local level, due to the newly established collectives. In 1966, the head of the advertising department of the MIT noted a higher level of diversity for the advertising means – printing commercial-touristic information publications in several regions of the country and exploiting the advertisement through radio stations and cinema.<sup>51</sup>

Beginning with the same year, 1965, there was also an improvement in the graphics of the magazine *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology] – there was a higher number of colour images, the advertisements covered a larger percentage of the magazine pages, the paper on which the magazine was printed was of a higher quality (vellum paper), the subjects in the magazine diversified, the references to western

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<sup>48</sup> The organism compiled the representatives of the ministries that produced consumer goods: the Ministry of Internal Trade, Centrocop, Ucecom, The State Committee for Culture and Art. The tasks of this forum included the coordination of commercial advertising in the branches it represented, the establishment of the criteria and principles in advertisement creation and assuming responsibility for the advertising activities between the industry and commerce. See *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], II, 3 (1964): 28.

<sup>49</sup> Uricariu, “Publicitatea la nivelul cerințelor actuale,” 2: “by establishing, in 1964, the Central Committee for the coordination of advertising and, in 1965, the regional collectives, the goal that was largely achieved was to obtain a better coordination of the advertising endeavours, an efficient focus on the efforts and means to elevate the level of the commercial advertisement and to increase its economic efficiency.”

<sup>50</sup> Betts, *The Politics of Plenty*, 430-432.

<sup>51</sup> Uricariu, “Publicitatea la nivelul cerințelor actuale,” 2: “It is the task of each regional team to coordinate advertising, workers in this sector, using the existing experience, resources and traditions specific to the regional areas, including elements of folk art and local folklore, to produce the most varied and original means and forms of advertising.”

advertisements increased (particularly the French advertisements and the French language magazines were presented). From 1966, the periodicity of the aforementioned magazine doubled, from four issues per year to eight issues. This editorial momentum also occurred in the case of other Romanian publications – for instance, the magazine *Femeia* [The woman] was in a similar situation, with respect to the superior graphics and the advertising novelties (covering a larger space in the magazine pages, the use of editorials, interviews and insertions as advertising methods, while the graphics were replaced by colour photography).

To what extent and how were the advertisements received by the general public in Romania in the 1970s? We can sequentially outline the way in which the public related to advertising and to the socialist advertisements. This research was carried out in Bucharest, in the second half of the '70s, in 1967, and the data was made public in 1969. The survey aimed to measure the audience of the press advertisements, the trust instilled by the commercial information through these advertisements and the general opinion on the motivation for publishing these advertisements.<sup>52</sup> The percentage of those who informed themselves using commercial advertisements from the written press was between 18% and 19%. This section can be broken down into different age groups. For the age group between 20-15 years, containing students, labourers, civil servants, reading advertisements in the press represented a percentage of 3.5%, with the exception of advertisements for movies and musical performances, where the interest met the adhesion of 67%. The low level of attention drawn by the advertisements for this group can be explained through the general low level of interest in the acquisition of consumer goods at this age. In the next age group, the interest shown increased, but not significantly, reaching 4.8%. For this group, there was also an increase in the gap between the civil servants and the labourers, the first with 5.9%, the others with 3.7%. The explanation for these values could be that, at this age, the intention to buy was the result of other influences, such as family, friends or chance. Only in the age group between 35-45 years, was there a higher interest in the advertisements printed in the press, namely in that 28.2% reacted to commercial advertisements. This increase was due to a “quasi-independence from the surrounding environment,” which took place with age, and “the emergence of more rational preoccupations for one’s budget.”<sup>53</sup> For the group over 45 years, the interest in reading commercial advertisements deepened, reaching 43%. C. Zahirnic noted that this age group “informed itself not only to obtain supplies, but, in many cases, because they actually

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<sup>52</sup> Constantin Zahirnic, “Reacțiile cumpărătorului față de mijloacele publicitare” [The buyer’s reactions to the advertising means], *Comerțul modern*, III, 3 (1969): 35-43.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

desired to know about all that was new.”<sup>54</sup> However, this was a generation educated in the inter-war period and used to a certain presence of advertising in the public space.

If the frequency of commercial advertisements remained somewhat low, the trust in the advertising message reached even lower levels, 66% of the people surveyed having declared that they did not trust the provided information – 27% considered it to be purely informative and only 7% declared their full trust.<sup>55</sup> The generalised distrust in the commercial advertisements in Romania was due to the rooted opinion that “advertising is done for the consumer goods that do not sell well,” between 90% and 93% of the respondents confirming this view.<sup>56</sup> However, we must not overlook the fact that the public discourse elaborated through the press in the years of communism was associated with the discourse of the political authority, as a propaganda discourse aimed at the citizens. For this reason, the trust in the discourse of the communist press was limited, since communism did not stir much enthusiasm among the population. Similarly, the distrust was also increased by the questionable quality of the consumer goods on the Romanian market and this was not merely an impression, since the observation appeared repeatedly in the economic literature in general, as well as in the literature addressed to the workers in the field of socialist advertising.

What was the place held by socialist advertising within the promotion of clothing items? With regard to informing and influencing the consumer in their decision to buy clothing items, from the viewpoint of the media used to distribute the advertisements worldwide, there were two models. The first, characteristic to the USA and Japan, where the advertisements were covered by television in a proportion of 95%, while in the European countries, 65% were through “press, newspapers, magazines, catalogues and other different kinds of publications.”<sup>57</sup> Romania followed a different pattern. 70% of the consumers used, “as means of information, the displays inside the shops and in the showcases... complete with spontaneous, uncontrolled and unorganised information.”<sup>58</sup> The advertisement in journals and magazines had an average of about 15.5% of consumers. The social elite, namely the “executives”, the “specialists”, as well as the pupils and students, made up most of the people who frequented the advertisements in the magazines. However, the labourers and the peasants were located at the lower limit – the labourers, 11.5%, and the peasants, 8.3%. An intermediary area was held by the civil servants,

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> V. Ionilă, “Mijloacele de informare și preferințele consumatorilor pentru confecții” [Means of information and consumer preferences for clothing], *Comerțul modern*, VI, 1 (1972): 26.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

the technicians, the laboratory workers, with a percentage of 17.8%.<sup>59</sup> The deficient level of advertising in this field was explained by V. Ionilă: “on the one hand, advertising is not made to the point and in perfect synchronisation with the assortments offered for purchase, and, on the other hand, the prices are high and they complicate the possibilities for the producers and traders to use certain highly efficient means.”<sup>60</sup>

This image of socialist advertising in Romania in the 1970s captures the circumscription of the elaboration of the commercial advertisements into the concept of social and economic modernisation of the country. The processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and definition of an urban consumerist culture made way for a form of socialist advertising that was not merely a mediator between the merchandise and the buyer, but also proved its worth in different spheres, from the economic one to the cultural-education one. The association of the modern woman with the artistic and historical monument, the Voroneţ Monastery, from the viewpoint of socialist advertising, is a mark of notoriety in which fashion/clothing, as a product of the socialist economy, indulges. The exceptionality of the Voroneţ Monastery proved to be complementary with the socialist lifestyle, of “clothing as merchandise” of the socialist economy and trade in Romania. The one who emitted the advertising message in Romania was the state and, thus, the advertisement was integrated into the symbolic discourse of the political power, as a legitimising discourse held in front of the citizens. The emphasis put on the terms *fashion/modern* in the case of this type of discourse brought forth the accomplishments of the development of a “mature socialism” in Romania. The advertisements were produced in the 1970s in Romania by several advertising agencies (Scânteia, ISIAP, RECOM, RECOOP, PUBLICOM, PUBLITURISM, I.S. DECORATIVĂ, I.I.L. CICLOP, ARTIS),<sup>61</sup> but they could also be the result of the activity of any commission within the competent ministries – in the present case, the Advertising and Presentation Enterprise of UCECOM [the Romanian abbreviation for the National Union of the Craftsmen’s Cooperative].<sup>62</sup> The advertising costs were paid at the central level by the UCECOM, to the media. The price of an advertisement was estimated at 1,500-2,000 Lei.<sup>63</sup> A higher accuracy

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> *Reclama și tehnica comercială* [Advertising and the commercial technology], supplement of the magazine *Comerțul modern* [Modern trade], 3 (1973): 7.

<sup>62</sup> Gr. Smeu, “Esteticul ca atribut al calității produselor materiale de larg consum” [Aesthetics as an attribute of the quality of consumer material products] in *Estetica vieții cotidiene* [The aesthetics of daily life], eds. Marcel Breazu, Anton Moiescu (Bucharest: Ed. Științifică, 1966), 137-138.

<sup>63</sup> Ioan Roceric, “Ierarhizarea și eficiența mijloacelor publicitare” [The hierarchy and efficiency of the advertising means], *Comerțul modern*, IV, 1 (1970): 83.

would be given by the identification of the means of creating the advertisement and the photomontage. In 1969, one year before the publication of the visual documents in the *Moda* magazine, an album about Voroneţ was edited by Maria Ana Musicescu and Sorin Ulea.<sup>64</sup> This publication represented the basis for the construction of the photomontage and the advertisement. From the aforementioned volume, a series of images was selected and, on top of these images, the photographs of the models were superimposed – a photomontage executed in the magazine offices' workshops.<sup>65</sup>

The reference in the article and the artistic-historical background of the photomontage represent an atypical formula for the advertising discourse in the promotion of the fashion industry. Usually, the advertisements in this field preferred a "moving product" – they present the merchandise / the fashion item worn by a model and the action is rendered by a photograph. The message is anchored to the text that accompanies this image. Normally, the text contains the name of the workshop / producing craftsmen cooperative, its address, the basic information and a series of attributes that characterise the clothing item that was advertised. These texts offer a suit of recurring motifs, such as: the assortment diversity, the practical nature of the product, the irreproachable quality, the quality of the materials / fabrics (practical, resistant), the aesthetic elements (beauty, fantasy, originality), the social prestige (elegance, good taste, refined taste, novelty, modern line). Within this register, we must note the establishment of the image of the product, as well as the definition of the consumer who opts for the respective product. The merchandise is defined by quality, utility, aesthetic valences, while the consumer who associates with such merchandise becomes a modern, original and special person, open to the all that is new, elegant, refined and of good taste. The text that accompanies the advertisement on the fourth page of the *Moda* magazine, the source under scrutiny in the present paper, maintained the same discursive tactic – the modern is legitimised through the art of dressing with good taste: "A new, modern concept in the art of getting dressed, through the Craftsmen Cooperatives of the Suceava County Union."<sup>66</sup>

A somewhat surprising aspect in these socialist advertisements is the lack of an element considered essential for a correct information of the buyer, namely the price of the

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<sup>64</sup> *Voroneţ*, with an introductory text by Maria Ana Musicescu, image anthology by Sorin Ulea (Bucharest: Ed. Meridiane, 1969).

<sup>65</sup> A comparison between the images from the *Moda* magazine and the ones in the album about Voroneţ led to the following identification: Overview. Southeast (No. 26), Entrance to the Narthex (no. 1), The Tree of Jesse (detail), (no. 30), The Last Judgement. The Prophets (detail) (no. 55), Prayer of All Saints – Altar Abyss (detail) (no. 25), Genesis. Adam with the Plough. The Northern Façade (no. 22), the Last Judgment – The Western Façade (no. 45), The Tree of Jesse. South Façade (No. 33).

<sup>66</sup> *Moda*, 68 (1970): 4<sup>th</sup> cover.

product. Here, though, we must keep in mind that the products were made by the craftsmen cooperatives, or, in other words, they were hand-made products, promoted in a form of the traditional trade, by direct order, which implied a variety of prices, tailored to each customer. Since they were not serially produced, these clothes did not have a unit price. Nevertheless, it is difficult to approximate the volume of this type of production and trade, since even at that time there were fears regarding the accessibility of these products. Such fears are visible in Sanda Faru's writing, in statements such as: "we would sure like to find... in the stores all that we see... in the fashion shows..."<sup>67</sup> The case of the absence of the advertised products from the stores is not specific to Romania – the situation occurred in the other countries from the soviet bloc as well.

### III. Fashion and the condition of the woman in socialism

What kind of fashion was shared with the readers of the magazine? In general, in the socialist regimes, the attitude towards fashion was ambiguous. However, as the political regime displayed its prestige and highlighted the great achievements of the people of that time, there was also an amelioration of the quality and volume of the consumer goods, a category which also included clothing. First of all, fashion was no longer associated with "a social class characteristic." Among others, Gr. Smeu, in his study on aesthetics and the consumer goods, made a series of notes regarding fashion: "It is, however, no less true that, in the case of some consumer goods, particularly in the case of clothing, there could be certain moral influences that reflect a certain mentality. But... the material qualities of the products per se have no class character: only the significances conveyed by the ostentatious display... of a certain clothing ensemble, for instance, which bears the mark of a certain mentality."<sup>68</sup> At the same time, fashion apparently steps out of the ideological limits of the two political-military sides: "In the field of fashion, the perversion of taste penetrates relatively more easily. And if we borrow, from capitalist countries, certain clothing models that are of truly high quality, we must also reject and combat the infiltrations of eccentricity, stridence and the obsolete."<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the aforementioned author emphasised that without "aesthetically educating the working people" and "through an unhealthy use of the aesthetic appearance, there could be ... an opportunity

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<sup>67</sup> Sanda Faur, "Când moda scotocește prin lăzile de zestre ..." [When fashion rummages through the dowry coffers], *Moda*, 70 (1970), 18.

<sup>68</sup> Smeu, 140-141.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.



for introducing certain morally harmful influences.”<sup>70</sup> Thus, these statements on fashion were reproduced in various forms and in the pages of the *Moda* magazine. Each time, the emphasis was put on the genetic relation between fashion, education and good taste. For instance, an article from 1969 contained the explicit statement that fashion could no longer be associated with frivolity, a pejorative characteristic from the discourse describing capitalist society in the 1950s: “Fashion today is no longer the attribute of frivolity.”<sup>71</sup> However, fashion was strongly connected to aesthetics and it transformed into every woman’s “obligation”: “It was directly linked to the category of beauty, it became an obligatory preoccupation for every woman, it was all about education and style.”<sup>72</sup> In other cases as well, the remarks were consonant with the statements above. Olga Horşia mentioned the contest between the “practical and the aesthetic” in the assertion of fashion, emphasising two aspects that generally characterised clothing – a practical aspect, that of “protecting one’s body,” and an aesthetic aspect, that of “adorning it”. In this light, the author made a series of notes regarding the variables that had to be considered in defining fashion: tradition, climate, season, occupation, social purpose, raw materials, manufacturing technique.<sup>73</sup> As time went by and the turbulences in the Romanian economic life deepened, the pragmatic side of fashion became increasingly more dominant. Thus, in 1976, Liliana Bartnowski, in an article suggestively entitled “An accessible fashion” emphasised: “Clothing is no longer something forced, nor is it the mark of certain particular social classes anymore: it is a natural necessity expressed by what we all call FASHION, the result of a fortuitous symbiosis between art and technology.”<sup>74</sup>

Thus, in 1970, we could consider that a Romanian fashion school was founded. In fact, this statement belongs to Maria Rosetti, and appeared in an article published by the *Moda* magazine at the end of the 1980s. The emergence of the Romanian fashion school led to the establishment of institutions for the formation of specialists in this field, namely of “fashion stylists”, within the Institute of Fine Arts, at the fashion design section, beginning with 1971. At the same time and in direct relation with the acceleration of the country’s industrialisation process, a new profession was outlined, namely that of the “industrial designer”, considered to be “the profession of our time.”<sup>75</sup> Mircea Gherman, the director of the UCECOM advertising and presentation enterprise, described this profession in apologetic terms: “The designer is the

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> *Moda*, 64 (1969).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> *Moda*, 63 (1968).

<sup>74</sup> Liliana Bortnowski, “O modă accesibilă” [An accessible fashion], *Moda*, 91 (1976): 33.

<sup>75</sup> Mircea Gherman, “Industrial design – profesia timpului nostru” [Industrial design – the profession of our time], *Moda*, 68 (1970): 71.

person who is part of the team that creates serialised products. This person must be 30% technician, 30% sociologist, 30% artist, 30% trader, 30% businessman, 30% seller. In other words, this person is more than a man and a half.”<sup>76</sup>

The phenomenon of fashion in Romania in the 1970s has at least two other important characteristics. The first is related to the international character of the fashion phenomenon. This is not connected to the natural relationships with the “brotherly countries,” the countries from the socialist bloc, but to the openness to the similar phenomenon from the West. The international fashion festivals from the socialist bloc debuted as early as the 1950s. From the 1960s and 1970s, France, with Paris (“this unequalled and dreamed centre for fashion creation”) and Italy, with Milan and Torino, held the spotlight in the Romanian fashion magazines.<sup>77</sup> Christian Dior’s “New Fashion”, or the Italian fashion houses, had collections that were presented in the *Moda* magazine as well. In fact, from the beginning of the sixth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Christian Dior had entered the markets of the eastern countries, with exhibitions in Moscow, spreading its models in the magazines from the soviet bloc. The association with Paris, considered to be the world fashion centre, also had political-ideological valences in the context of the Cold War.<sup>78</sup> Paris represented an alternative to all that the “American Look”<sup>79</sup> meant to represent, a fashion through which the ideas of American freedom and democracy were disseminated throughout the world. In the specialised magazine in Romania, Paris was associated with such a connotation: “The Paris fashion is freedom from fashion in a way, a free expression.”<sup>80</sup> Thus, the advertisements for the fashion models of Christian Dior were repeatedly printed in the *Moda* magazine in that period. Similarly, the political dimension was emphasised by the democratic nature of fashion and by the condition of the woman in the socialist society: “Today, there are too many charming women, and it is up to each of them to highlight their own qualities.”<sup>81</sup>

Another characteristic of the phenomenon of the Romanian fashion was strongly linked to the international dimension, but, as it was also motivated by an increasingly obsessive embrace of the “national” determination of communism in Romania, the relation

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> “Din Paris: Instantanee” [From Paris: Snapshots], *Moda*, 64 (1969); Renata Runcan, “Paralela în modă Paris – Roma” [The Paris-Rome fashion parallel], *Moda*, 68 (1970).

<sup>78</sup> Djurdaja Bartlett, *The Spectre that Haunted Socialism: Fashion East* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2010), especially chapter 4, “The Cold War and the Fashion War,” 137-180.

<sup>79</sup> Stephanie M. Amerian, “The fashion gap: The Cold War politics of American and Soviet fashion, 1945-1959,” *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, 8, 1 (2016): 65-82.

<sup>80</sup> *Moda*, 64 (1969).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

between fashion and folkloric tradition was also established. The influence of the folk art in outlining fashion was considered to be a trend in this industry at the end of the 1960s. However, in Romania, it was fully embraced and used obsessively. Fashion critics, professionals in this field and specialists in ethnography were summoned to analyse the relation between fashion and the folk art motifs. For the Romanian fashion designer, folklore became “an inexhaustible source” of “originality and authenticity,” proven by “the elegance of the lines and the harmonious proportions, the refinement of the chromatic palette, the variety of shapes, the simplicity and expressivity, the stylistic unity that characterised the ensemble of items”<sup>82</sup> that compiled the folk costume. The well-known fashion critic Sanda Faur expressed the same viewpoint. She argued that, in the Romanian case, there was a deep relation between fashion design and folk art: “...in the Romanian fashion, the relations with folklore were somewhat more consistent, less frivolous and ephemeral, more well-intentioned.”<sup>83</sup>

Beyond the aesthetic valences and the motif of historicism that more and more often made their way into the discourse of the Romanian fashion, the traditional clothing items also had an economic importance. Thus, at the beginning of the 1980s in Romania, there were 36 folk art and handicraft cooperatives and over 100 departments that produced folk art fabrics, carpets, embroideries and garments. Over 50.000 “designer-workers” or folk craftsmen were employed in these artisan cooperatives.<sup>84</sup>

Besides the political-ideological and economic dimensions, the inspiration drawn from folk art in the case of the Romanian fashion also gained the mark of international prestige. Thus, the Romanian products of this type “conquered a considerable number of markets around the world.” The Romanian products participated in different international fairs and obtained the full recognition of the industry across the world. In this sense, the awards included: an honorary diploma from the Munich Artisan Fair, four gold medals from the Florence international fair, two gold medals and an honorary diploma from the Brussels International Consumer Goods Fair, as well as other diplomas and medals from the

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<sup>82</sup> Olga Horșia, “Contemporaneitate. Tradiție” [Contemporaneity. Tradition], *Moda*, 63 (1968).

<sup>83</sup> Sanda Faur, “Când moda scotocește prin lăzile de zestre ...,” *Moda*, 70 (1970): 18.

<sup>84</sup> Olga Horșia, “Arta populară – inepuizabilă sursă de inspirație” [Folk art – an inexhaustible source of inspiration], *Portul românesc* [The Romanian costumes], supplement of the magazine *Moda* (1981): 3-5. For the motif of historicism, see Smărăndița Stanciu, “Tradițională și modernă: IA” [Traditional and modern: IA], in the supplement of the magazine *Moda* (1981): 9-10: she mentions the clay figurines from the Bronze Age from Cârna (Craiova) and the metopes of the Adamclisi monument, with the scenes depicting the Dacian population, acknowledging the tailoring of the shirts worn by the female characters.

international fairs held in Madrid, Moscow, West Berlin and Geneva.<sup>85</sup> This international prestige was dangled in front of the Romanian citizens in the form of the socialist regime's superiority over the West. However, this discourse actually hid the deep crisis of the national economy. A comparison between this type of discourse and the discourse of the advertisements in the 1950s for the external trade shows a surprising similarity, if we think of the industrialisation efforts of the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, in both cases, the prestigious goods were the ones produced by the artisan cooperatives – they were handcrafted in small series, which is why they were almost unique.

Thus, the image of fashion in Romania in the 1970s offers a perspective for reading the advertisement and the photomontage from the *Moda* magazine. In this case, we must note a plea for fashion as an element for the transformation of the modern socialist woman, a fashion that was compatible with the general western trends but that retained the note of elegance and good taste. One of the images contains an international model, Mila Schoen, from Ente Moda Torino, Italy. The association with a monument that was representative for the Romanian medieval art represented a prestige transfer and a legitimisation of fashion as a contemporary art form – a socialist art form that was comparable with the national and universal exemplary tradition. This was an aesthetic association between new/modern, fashion and tradition. The association between fashion and the monument was mainly chromatic, since it could not be linked to the subject or the significances depicted in the mural painting. However, this association between the image of the socialist woman and the religious edifice can also avail an ideological reading, in which the modern, emancipated, secular woman is highlighted in antithesis with the “enslaved woman,” subjected to the social and religious constraints. In many situations, the images of the models are placed in a “pharaonic position,” disproportionate to the artistic and historical monument.

This discourse of fashion, received through the message of the authority, gives way to another question: To what extent was this fashion, as a descriptive formula, adopted by the general audience? As we have already mentioned above, these products were also absent from the specialised stores, and, when they were indeed present in the stores of the fashion houses or in the stores of the Union of Fine Artists, their prices were very high. Beyond these assessments, an adequate understanding is given by the observation of the costume models, with respect to the fashion items in Romania at that time. What was the receptivity to accepting a new fashion line in Romania? An image of this receptivity is offered by the survey

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<sup>85</sup> “Moda folclorică românească în circuitul internațional (De vorbă cu Ioan Toanchină, director adjunct al ICCOOP)” [The Romanian folk fashion in the international circuit (A discussion with Ioan Toanchină, deputy director of ICCOOP)], *Moda*, 98 (1980): 33-34.

conducted in the autumn of 1969 on a group of young people (between 15 and 35 years old) in Bucharest.<sup>86</sup> The survey data showed that approximately 54% of the young women renewed their wardrobes after the generalisation of this fashion. Another 39.1% of the young women changed their clothes as soon as a new fashion trend appeared. The young women who were not preoccupied by fashion were a minority, 6.9%. From a professional viewpoint, the workers (60.7%) and the students (55.7%) were more conservative, they adopted the fashion after a certain period of time; however, the young women from other professions (civil servants, artists, specialists in trade and industry etc.) immediately resonated with the fashion launch (65.5%).<sup>87</sup> A quicker or slower adoption of the fashion novelties was also influenced by age. The group of people between 15 and 25 years old was divided into several segments – up to 19 years old, between 19 and 25 and over 25. Thus, 50% of the young women over 25 “immediately” renewed their wardrobes. The percentage then decreased for the women between 19 and 25 to 45% and, for the girls under 19, it was only 22.6%.<sup>88</sup> A focus on the wardrobe renewal after the “generalisation” of the fashion shows a reverse trend, from the younger category to the women over 25 (72.6%, 45% and 50%). However, we must note the degree of autonomous decision-making when choosing the clothes, regardless of the profession – 53.9% of the young women decided for themselves. Divided into age categories, the younger the women were, the more they were influenced by their husbands, families and friends: the husbands and parents influenced 45.1% of girls under 19 (their parents to a greater extent); 40% of the young women between 20 and 25 were influenced by their husbands and parents (this time, the husbands to a greater extent); 48% of the women over 25 were influenced by their husbands, while the influence of the parents disappeared.<sup>89</sup>

Beyond the relation to fashion, the means of procuring clothing in general in the urban areas were emphasised based on certain statistical surveys and motivational studies, carried out in six of Romania’s major cities (Bucharest, Cluj, Constanța, Craiova, Iași and Timișoara), “regarding the formation of the wardrobe and the main purposes of the different garments.”<sup>90</sup> 75% of the consumers in Romania did not choose their own garments – the

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<sup>86</sup> Petre Rogoveanu, Victoria Ștefănescu, “Moda – factor important în influențarea producției și vânzării mărfurilor” [Fashion – an important factor in influencing the production and sale of goods], *Comerțul modern*, IV, 3 (1970): 35-43.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>90</sup> D. Patriche, P. Rogoveanu, M. Ștefănescu, “Caracteristici ale formării și folosirii garderobei populației” [The characteristics of the formation and use of the population’s wardrobe], *Comerțul modern*, VI, 4 (1970): 24.

decision was made by consulting the family and it was most often associated with values such as refinement and social performance.<sup>91</sup> In the case of the men, only the suits and pants came from the custom order centres, while the other products (jackets, topcoats, overcoats, short coats, vests) came from the state trade. In the case of the women, the wardrobe items came from the custom order centres. Dresses (62%), skirts (61%), suits (66%), *deux pieces* (64%), topcoats (49%), overcoats (51%) were all procured from the custom order centres. Only the blouses (55%), jackets (73%) and short coats (77%) were store-bought.<sup>92</sup> The statistical data also shows a geographical pattern for these purchases. Thus, in Bucharest and Iași, the procurement of clothing, by women, from the state trade was prevalent, while in Cluj, women extensively turned to the artisan cooperation centres. The differences are also based on the buyers' social-professional status and incomes. The labourers more often resorted to the state trade, while the social elite used the custom order centres of the cooperation; those with higher incomes ordered clothing, while those with lower incomes bought ready-made clothing.<sup>93</sup>

The clothing procurement model described above corresponds to a tradition, on the one hand, and illustrates, on the other hand, the presence of intense advertising at these custom order centres of the artisan cooperatives frequented by the population. In the case of the advertisement under scrutiny in the present paper, they were the Artisan Cooperatives of the Suceava County Union, namely "Unirea" from Suceava, "Solidaritatea" from Gura Humorului, "Deia" from Câmpulung and "Arta populară" from Sucevița-Rădăuți.

#### IV. Tourism and the culture of modern life

The issue of tourism appeared increasingly more prominent in the magazines of that time – particularly in the economic magazines, but it was not overlooked by the ones from the other fields with which this activity interacted. However, the economic dimension remained fundamental. Tourism, especially international tourism, was an important resource for the

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<sup>91</sup> V. Ionilă, "Mijloacele de informare și preferințele consumatorilor pentru confecții"[The consumers' information sources and preferences regarding clothing], *Comerțul modern*, VI, 1 (1972): 27-28. In the case of young women between 15 and 30 years old, 57.4% used to buy their clothing through the custom order centres. See Rogoveanu, Ștefănescu, 41.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

national economy.<sup>94</sup> The first institutions that controlled this activity were established in 1955 as the National Tourism Office. The Tourism Ministry was established in 1970 and, within this institution, the Research Centre for the Promotion of Tourism also functioned. On an international level, the National Tourism Office became, in 1958, a member of the International Union of the Official Travel Organisations.<sup>95</sup>

However, a significant increase was experienced by the Romanian tourism in the five-year period 1966-1970. Three billion Lei were invested “in the development of the material base of tourism” (2/3 in the construction of commercial units and 1/3 in the acquisition of airplanes, ships, buses and other means of transportation).<sup>96</sup> In an analysis on “the place of tourism in the national economy,” the conclusion was that the Romanian tourism “was in the process of becoming a branch of the national economy.”<sup>97</sup> This re-launch of tourism (especially of international tourism) was aided by a series of political and administrative measures that opened Romania to the foreigners. Thus, there were “facilities for tourist visas” in the middle of 1964, there was an intensification of the “external tourism propaganda” and tourism offices were opened abroad.<sup>98</sup>

In the seventh and eighth decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the motivation for the development of tourism related to several aspects: the consumers’ satisfaction in terms of leisure, their need for rest, treatment, cultural-scientific information, the recovery and strengthening of the work force, the enrichment of the cultural-educational horizon of the individuals, as a source for increasing the national income and as “an important factor in the

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<sup>94</sup> Murgescu, *România și Europa...*, 374-380; Elena Dragomir, “Hotel Intercontinental in Bucharest: competitive advantage for the socialist tourist industry in Romania,” in *Competition in Socialist Society*, eds. Katalin Miklossy, Melanie Ilic (London, New York: Routledge, 2014), 89-106.

<sup>95</sup> For the international affiliation of the tourism institutions in Romania in the 1970s, see Gh. Barbu, “Turismul internațional – parte integrantă a relațiilor economice externe” [International tourism – an integral part of the foreign economic relations], in *Turismul – ramură a economiei naționale* [Tourism – a branch of the national economy], ed. G. Barbu (Bucharest: Editura pentru Turism, 1973), 58-59, notes 15, 16.

<sup>96</sup> Eugen Nicolescu, Nicolae Z. Ionescu, “România și turismul European” [Romania and the European tourism], *Comerțul modern*, 7 (1970): 38.

<sup>97</sup> O. Snak, Gh. Barbu, “Locul turismului în economia națională” [The place held by tourism in the national economy], in *Turismul – ramură a economiei naționale*, 16.

<sup>98</sup> C. Gavrilesco, “Turismul internațional – activitate economică de mare eficiență” [International tourism – a highly efficient economic activity], in *Turismul – ramură a economiei naționale*, 66; regarding the tourism propaganda, see în Eugeniu Nicolescu, *Marketingul în turism* [Tourism marketing] (Bucharest: Editura Sport-Turism, 1975), 277-300.

activation of the foreign payment balance.”<sup>99</sup> Socialism’s aspirations to the modernisation of Romanian society defined the integration of tourism in this cultural model, “as an activity that covered an increasing share of modern man’s free time.”<sup>100</sup>

What exactly did the re-launch of tourism in Romania in 1966 and the 1970s mean? On a national level, Fl. Marinescu noted that between 1956 and 1970, the number of people who requested services in the rest and treatment resorts increased fourfold. A sociological survey conducted on the population of Bucharest highlighted the fact that a person allocated between 1.000 and 1.500 lei annually for tourism activities, which represented approximately 20% of the volume of a person’s annual expenses.<sup>101</sup>

At the same time, the number of foreign tourists increased in Romania. The increase rate was rather significant, namely of 4.3% between 1965 and 1972, from 676 thousand to 2.9 million tourists. Most foreign tourists were from the socialist countries, namely 80% (from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria), as opposed to the 20% from the western countries (West Germany, Italy, England, France and Austria).<sup>102</sup> Moreover, there was a 4% increase in the revenues produced by the development of the international tourism. Between 1965 and 1972, the increases in the revenues from the international tourism surpassed the growth of national income (8.8%), of the global industrial production and of the total volume of the goods export (13.6%), while the international tourism had a growth of approximately 22%.<sup>103</sup>

The development of tourism was strongly linked to the potential of the national tourist areas: “there are areas and products that are unique in Europe and worldwide, which is a great advantage in the competition carried out on the international market.”<sup>104</sup> They included the Danube Delta, the Apuseni Mountains, as well as “the area of the monasteries from northern Moldavia, monasteries that, through the value of their frescoes, represent true artistic treasures.”<sup>105</sup> In this sense, the infrastructure was organised in order to accommodate

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<sup>99</sup> Fl. Marinescu, “Considerații asupra locului și rolului turismului în societatea socialistă multilateral dezvoltată” [Considerations on the place and the role of tourism in the multilaterally developed socialist society], in *Turismul – ramură a economiei naționale*, 24.

<sup>100</sup> Snak, “Turismul – activitate cu pondere crescândă în timpul liber al omului modern” [Tourism – an activity covering an increasingly larger share of modern man’s leisure time], in *Turismul – ramură a economiei naționale*, 109-120.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

<sup>102</sup> Gavrilescu, “Turismul internațional...”, 63-69.

<sup>103</sup> Barbu, “Turismul internațional...”, 36; Gavrilescu, “Turismul internațional...”, 48.

<sup>104</sup> Barbu, “Turismul internațional...”, 54-55.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*



tourists: “The visitors of the monasteries in Moldavia will find hospitality upon the descent into a picturesque setting, at the Agapia Inn, at Moldovița, Sucevița, Văratec, Țepeșeni.”<sup>106</sup>

This exemplary tourism offer was enthroned in an increasingly systematic and poignant way by the political-ideological commands of the national communism advanced by the Ceaușescu regime. Since tourism was “an act of culture and education”, this act was “an important means for patriotic education.” Through tourism, “the many” were informed of “the beauties of the homeland”, and of “the invaluable treasures of human thought and feeling that we often call the *memory of the Romanian land*, besides the fact that they highlight the contribution made by the inhabitants of these lands to the uninterrupted progress of mankind.”<sup>107</sup>

In this context, advertising and the socialist advertisement devoted a special chapter to those in the field of tourism. Both in the specialised magazines and in the monographs and textbooks dedicated to socialist advertising a particular interest in the tourism advertisement was shown.<sup>108</sup>

This is the tourism image which encompasses the advertisement and the photomontage from the *Moda* magazine. The introduction, in the background, of the images from the Voroneț monastery resonated with this type of approach to the development and promotion of tourism, and the monasteries from northern Moldavia represented an important tourist attraction. Moreover, the role of a mediator, of a propagator of tourist information played by the magazine was well established in its editorial policy. The magazine was not only nationally circulated; it also had an international dissemination, which is why the table of contents was presented in four languages (German, French, English, Russian), later adding a fifth, namely Hungarian. The fact that the magazine contained advertisements for the “Taron” air travel company, or for car service companies, points to the openings towards the transmission of tourist information at a national and international level. Moreover, the seasonal nature of fashion strengthened the message of the tourist

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<sup>106</sup> I. Bucșa, “Turismul o latură a activității cooperăției de consum” [Tourism as a part of the activities of the consumer cooperative], *Comerțul modern*, IV, 9 (1970): 36.

<sup>107</sup> Gh. Barbu, I. Jula, “Funcțiile economică, culturală și educativă ale turismului” [The economic, cultural and educational functions of tourism], in *Locul turismului* [The position of tourism], 134.

<sup>108</sup> T. Pavel, *Publicitatea și reclama în comerțul socialist* [Advertising in the socialist trade] (Bucharest: Editura Stiintifică, 1962), 184-188: “Propaganda și reclama în turism” [Propaganda and advertising in tourism] and “Mijloacele publicității turistice” [The tourist advertising means]; 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), 51-55: “Publicitatea turistică” [Tourism advertising]; Ioan T. Avram, “Publicitatea turistică” [Tourism advertising], *Comerțul modern*, IV, 3 (1970): 64-67.

advertisement. The magazine had articles on the Romanian seaside and the summer fashion, but it also offered clothing recommendations for mountain tourism.

### **Concluding remarks**

Despite the analytical decomposition into the four social images of the advertisement from the *Moda* magazine, images which consecrate its significance, the consumption, the means of constructing the socialist advertisement, fashion and the condition of the woman in socialism in Romania, as well as the tourist openness, as signs of the modern socialist life of the 1970s, there was a strong significance of unity, a series of converging discourses that elaborated and transmitted the image of a modern life for the Romanians from the period “in which socialism had reached maturity.”

Concepts such as industrialization, the technical-scientific revolution, urbanization, modernization are emblematic for the discourse of the communist power in Romania in the 1970s. They became commonplaces for the outlines of identity and for the legitimization of the regime. In this discursive horizon, the regime delivers itself to its own citizens, as well as to the eyes of others, to those from abroad, regardless of whether the foreignness coincided with the capitalist world or with the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union. The final part of the 1960s and the first years of the decade that followed outlined a “specifically Romanian” path in the construction of socialism – in other words, a detachment from the soviet model and a re-alignment with the western life and values. In these circumstances, the power discourse in Bucharest sought a compatibility with the western world, but also a reactivation of the traditional values, in order to emphasise the new course, the detachment from the homogenizing schematism of the socialist bloc. The relative “liberalisation” of the Bucharest regime that characterised the beginning of Nicolae Ceaușescu’s “reign” led to a relaxation of the social atmosphere and a higher standard for the economic and social life of the country's population. Under these conditions, the association between a religious monument and the image of the modern socialist woman in the context of an advertising discourse no longer seems paradoxical. Rather, the regime’s militancy for a modern life for which the indicators were the consumer goods, in this case clothing and a practice of the modern social culture, namely tourism, ideologically supported the appeal of generally recognisable cultural symbols. The Voroneț monastery represented such a cultural symbol despite its origination in the religious sphere. Obviously, the association between fashion and the monument does not directly imply a transfer of religious significance, but rather a transfer of the artistic and cultural prestige. Voroneț monastery has artistic and cultural value. Fashion, particularly

socialist fashion, or fashion that is accessible to the socialist woman, can be compared to the originality and aesthetics of the monument. Certainly, we could ask ourselves to what extent was this image of female fashion, on a discursive level, transferred to a daily reality in socialist Romania in the 1970s. Most often, these fashion creations remained accessible only to the elite, because of the high prices, but especially because they were not found in the stores. The means of procuring clothing, however, for that time, remained within the limits of tradition – the artisan cooperatives took on the role of the private tailors from the previous period. For this reason, most of the clothing advertisements in the magazine are related to such artisan centres, spread all across the country. Usually, these advertisements were simple, quasi-banal, merely reproducing photographs of models, men and women, wearing elegant clothing, together with texts that contained the contact information of the artisan cooperatives. Most often, apart from the contact information, these advertisements probably had no direct connection with the clothing workshops themselves. The elaboration of the advertisements was made in the institutions from Bucharest, with the help of the editorial board of the magazine, and the financial accounts were automatically honoured by the central organization of these craft cooperatives in the capital. The case under scrutiny in the present paper, the advertisement of the artisan cooperatives from the Suceava County, by using the association between the local fashion workshops and an element that is characteristic to the regional and local identity, the Voroneț monastery, which bears universal value, is thus exemplary and unique in the ensemble of advertising discourses in the magazine, as well as in the entire landscape of socialist advertising in communist Romania. Surely, the artisan workshops from the Suceava County did not come with the advertising initiative themselves, since it had been created following an established institutional model by the advertising agencies in charge of the creation and placement of advertisements in the magazines, or by a specialised centre from the forums that coordinated the activities of the artisan cooperatives in Bucharest, the UCECOM Advertising and Presentation Enterprise. It is possible that the initiative had belonged to the editorial office, since the photomontage with the same theme was signed by the editor in chief of the *Moda* magazine, Renata Runcan.

The analysis above notes the discursive horizon of the Romanian communism of the 1970s, elaborated at the level of socialist advertising, illustrating, from a militant perspective, the image of socialist modern life, displayed at the level of the woman's daily appearance (through clothing) and of the practices of modern culture (tourism).

At the end of these observations, one question still remains. Why has this strategy of the socialist advertising discourse, present in the advertisement from the *Moda* magazine from the spring of 1970, associating fashion, the image of the modern socialist woman and religious

art remained so unique? Why have we not encountered it elsewhere? Has any "ideological line" agreed at the time been crossed for what has been called the "relative liberalization" since the beginning of the Ceaușescu regime? Or was there a hostile reaction from the Orthodox Church, which could have considered the association between the monastery and the worldly fashion to be downright irreverent? This repertoire of questions are not answered by the historical document sources we know of today. A more in-depth research and an enrichment of the documentary material with possible collections held by the archives of the institutions of that time may bring forth new, enlightening details.

Translated from Romanian by Anca Chiorean



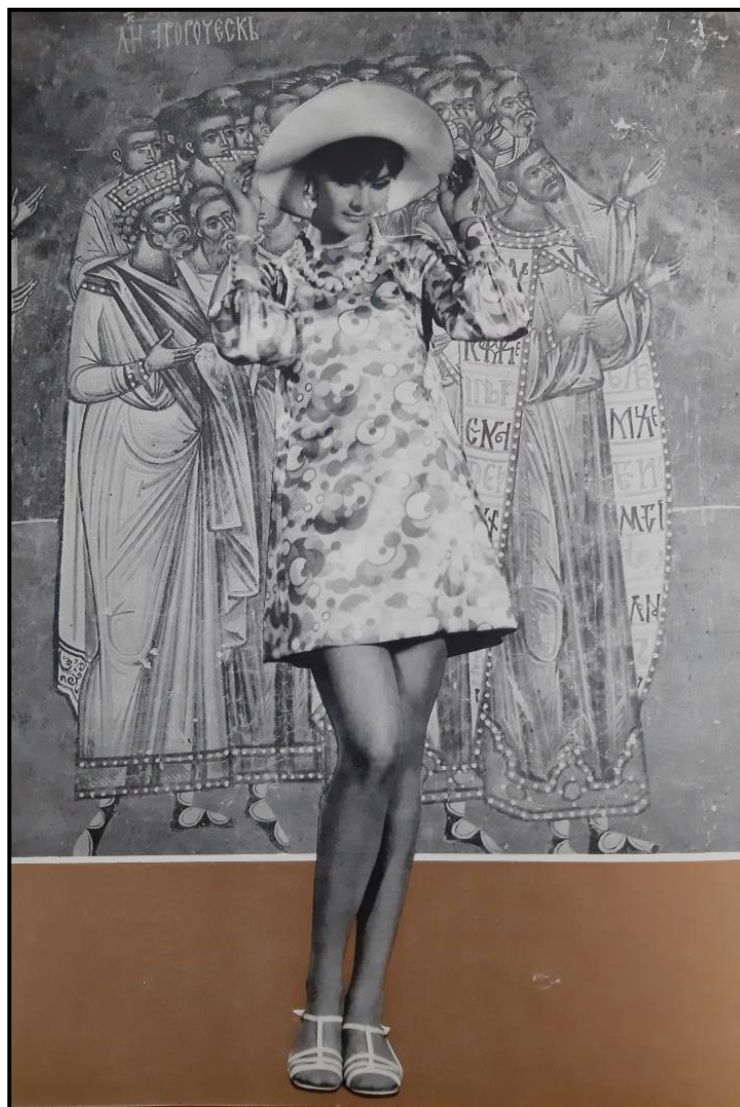
Fig. 1. The advertisement in the *Moda* magazine: *Moda*, 68 (1970): fourth cover.



Fig. 2. The “Fashion in Voroneț” photomontage – *Moda*, 68 (1970).



**Fig. 3.** The “Fashion in Voroneț” photomontage – *Moda*, 68 (1970).



**Fig. 4.** The “Fashion in Voroneţ” photomontage – *Moda*, 68 (1970).





**Fig. 5.** The “Fashion in Voroneț” photomontage – *Moda*, 68 (1970).



**Fig. 6.** The “Fashion in Voroneț” photomontage – *Moda*, 68 (1970).



Fig. 7. The “Fashion in Voroneț” photomontage – *Moda*, 68 (1970).



**Fig. 8.** The “Fashion in Voroneț” photomontage – *Moda*, 68 (1970).



**Fig. 9.** The “Fashion in Voroneț” photomontage – *Moda*, 68 (1970).