**Project Title: Identity in Southern Romanian working-class communities**
**Name, class year: Radu Stochita, 2022**

Coming from a post-industrial, Southern Romanian working-class family and neighborhood, I have always asked myself questions about our identity, customs and behaviors. There were obvious differences between us, living close to the periphery, and the upper classes inhabiting the hills, guarding over Pucioasa – my birth town. We used to hang around the factories, play football on concrete grounds, between apartment buildings and see our parents for very little time in a day – they were either working or had other duties to fulfill.
The daily life has been the main focus of my research and with clear optimism I have tried to use the Southern Romanian environment as my space for analysis. Unfortunately, due to a raise in cases of COVID-19 and of the improper measures taken by local authorities, collecting archival documents and analyzing them was impossible – simply, the archives were closed and are still closed for the public. I have tried to contact professors from **The University of Valahia –** the local university, but unfortunately, they told me that not so much research exists on this topic and that I should be better off focusing on **industrialism** and how this contributed to the general identity of the working-class. In order to help my research, I have relied on the archive of my parents which they have built over the years, finding a variety of theoretical works published by the apparatus of the **Communist Party of Romania**. Those works were easy to access, were spread in the factories and were available to be bought at every bookstore in the country. The aim of them was to inform the general public about the achievements of the **Communist Party of Romania**, but more importantly to create a sense of identity around **industrial work, devotion to the party and strict obedience to the working schedule.**
Having read and taken notes on all those works (most of them were books or pamphlets, numbering over 20), I have tired to find the adequate methodology to analyze and put them in the context to the observations I have made over my living time in this environment. To do that I have relied on discussions with my parents, observations of their own behavior, as well as diary entries made by myself over the years. With the data collected, **prof. Mohandesi** has helped me on a biweekly basis by discussing critical theory which was useful in shaping the analysis. Over the summer period, we have discussed authors such as **Louis Althusser, Henri Lefebvre, Antonio Gramsci, Mario Tronti, Nancy Fraser, Jean Baudillars, Slavoj Zizek.** Out of those discussions, with the help of the professor I was able to develop a methodology that could help in understanding better the identity and take a critical stance towards it.
I have looked at the process of identity formation from the point of view of **Ideological State Apparatus** and **Ideology**. Rather than considering it a simple coincidence or a natural fact inscribed in the DNA of the Romanians – the devotion to work and the tendency to overwork – I have tried to link it to the State and its efforts of pushing people to work more and more. In the previously mentioned sources, industrial work dominates the pages, with strong references to the need of constructing the industry for the “national awakening”. All the references to work are very seldom accompanied by any discussion about leisure. In fact, when leisure is addressed, the authors of the pieces refer to it as time in which voluntary work for the creation of the industrial building capacity of Romania can happen. Throughout the pages, the readers are encouraged to work, to devote their lives to work and to cherish people that choose to be in the industry than rather lazily relaxing at home.
In order to link this to the present, I have turned to one of the most influential books in my development **Critique of Everyday Life** by **Henri Lefebvre**. From this theoretical piece, I have taken the **analysis of routines**, as well as **the importance of the everyday life** to defend my argument. Rather than simply looking at mass programs of employment after high-school which existed during **The Communist Period of Romania (1947 - 1989),** we should turn our attention to habits that contribute to the identity formation. One of those habits is reading theoretical work, which continued to emphasize the need and the duty of people to work. To work was considered patriotic and to devote one’s life to the party, contributing to the industrialization of the country, was the duty that each one of us had to fulfill.
Having reached those conclusions, I felt that a comparison with **Marxist theory**, especially the one developed by the **Althusser, Marx, Engels, Lefebvre, Gramsci and Tronti** was required, to understand how exactly was **The Communist Party of Romania** shaping their discourse around work. Since **Marx**, we have had the theory that people should strive for the abolition of work, after going through the required phases of development (capitalism, socialism and communism). Considering this as one of the main aims of Communism, I came to the conclusion that **The Communist Party of Romania** did not ever consider that last stage and no mentions of it were made. The only ideal future was that of working, of having a develop industrial society without any prospects of abolishing work.
This research has helped me develop an understanding of the Romanian society and to the formation of **work-hard** ideology. Additionally, it has contributed to developing my passion about Intellectual History which I hope to pursue with an **Honors Project.**
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