Anthropology of Pubs: the Identity Role of a Pub

SNSPA - National School of Political Science and Administration, Bucharest, Romania
Faculty of Political Science
Coordinators: Cristina Plecadite & Raluca Nagy

Introduction

The pub is considered to be an encounter place that groups individuals and therefore acts as a public space which facilitates social contacts. The frequentation of pubs is generally perceived as rather disorganised, with much liberty of action and little behaviour rules. We will see that the particular form of space-time that constitute pubs is equally rulled by a set of laws, behaviours and relationships that are not always explicit or visible. These codes are not elaborated by society at its larger scale, but by the small "society" which forms the clientele of these places, a so-called community.

In order to have a better and more clear view of this "micro-comunities" that are formed around pubs, we decided to focus on pubs with a specific public. We started this research with the following questions: why the existence of pubs with a specific public is necessary? Why do people gather in this kind of pubs? Do customers come just to meet similar persons, people like themselves? Are these pubs only places for spending spare time? What is it that brings people together in such locations?

The research has been oriented towards an analyse of the social life of two pubs[1] in Bucharest: their clientele, its structure and rituals through their originality and specificity.

To reformulate these questions in a specific way we can approach this subject through the filter of the relationship between identity and **pub as an identity marker, as the territory of a specific community.**

Our project includes a theoretical part meant to investigate the connection between **the "trinity": identity / sub – culture / pubs**, methodology and presentation of our fieldwork.

A theoretical approach of the issue

Pubs, not surprisingly, are the site of extensive social interaction. Much of this is overwhelmingly "everyday" routine, as revealed through participant observation. Aspects of pub life that have usually drawn sociologists' attention have been practices of reciprocity and ideologies of egalitarianism and - linked to these - pubs' distinctive oral culture. For all sociological analysts, the pub is recognisable as a semi-public but highly regulated social space with its own codes of behaviour.

The pub

"Drinking . . . is essentially a social act, subject to a variety of rules and norms regarding who may drink what, when, where, with whom and so on. Drinking does not, in any society, take

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[1] "Red Dogs" and "Folk Eliad"

place 'just anywhere', and most cultures have specific, designated environments for communal drinking (SIRC, 1998)."[2]

An understanding of the pub is crucial to an understanding of our reserch main objective: people's relationships.

As a terminology note, we might be trapped among three possible denominations for the kind of locations that make the subject of our study and that have serving drinks as fundamental commun feature (we exclude night-clubs which do not fit the goals of our research). The three locations are the correspondent of French *cafés* and *bars* and Anglo-saxon *pubs*. We will stop for a small explanation of these three terms in order to make the using of the word "pub" clear[3].

Starting with the French side of the story, the first difference between a *café* and a *bar* is that in a café one can also eat, which is not the case for bars. Bar clientele is usually more homogenuous; as a general rule cafés open earlier while bars are accessible mostly in the evening or late afternoon. A bar needs a minimum recognition by its customers, a café is less categorised so more open to everyone. The places we refer to have characteristics of both bars and cafés.

The Anglo-saxon *pub* is the equivalent for both bars and cafés because it responds to both types of criteria. What is specific to pubs and rather rare in the case of bars and cafés is the concept of "happy hours": a section of time in the beginning of the evening when bevrages are cheaper than usual. This is a simple and obvious marketing strategy that does not need further explanations. The places we will refer to as pubs in this paper have all the caracteristics of pubs (and so group features of both bars and cafés) left aside this particular "happy hour" which is rather unusual (e.g. in Romania).

Pubs have much to do with habit and repetition: as expressed in the term "regular". They may offer a real sense of continuity, regularity and order that is 'fundamental to a sense of place, time and security. Pubs have always been closely related to everyday community life.

Oldenburg (1999) has stressed the importance within modern societies of the so called "third place". This is a location that is *not work* and *not home*: rather a public place where people can easily meet, relax and interact. Such locations include not just pubs, but also social clubs, hairdressing salons, internet cafés, public libraries, amusement arcades and other similar but culturally specific locations. They are typified by their open, democratic nature and informality. For Oldenburg they are a major contributor to the maintenance of social capital and of healthy community life.

Pubs are one of such "third places" that have long provided a non-domestic social space. In this regard the concept of "third place" may be of use to this research. It provides a conceptual framework within which we can locate some observations and a way to understand and value the type of activity that occurs in a pub: the pub is emblematic of the "third place" and its key attributes of such a place are listed below:

- neutral ground
- leveller (ideologies of egalitarianism, in a pub everyone is the same, the usual social differences are forbidden or diminuished)
- conversation as the main activity

[2] SHARE, Perry (April 2003) "*A Genuine 'Third Place'? Towards an Understanding of the Pub in Contemporary Irish Society*", 30th SAI Annual Conference, Cavan, Ireland
[3] especially since the appropriate Romanian word would be "bar", but its meaning is closer to that of "pub"

- accessibility and accommodation: the "third place" must be easily accessible, ideally on foot

- "regulars" (we will usually call them "insiders" or loyal customers): regulars of a pub develop a set of behaviors specific to that pub. The way people relate to and interact with eachother or the staff varies from place to place and certain traits that are specific to the members of the group become visible inside the pub. As for the place itself, in order to become the meeting space of the group, it has to adopt the symbols of the group and to identify with it.

- playfulness - liminal space

- "home away from home": the pub provides a particular type of freedom within modern industrial society. Socially, pubs occupy a space somewhere between "work" and "home". The pub can operate as a "home away from home" or as an extension of the workplace, but also contains elements that are opposed to those locations.

While a defining feature of the third place is that it is *not* home, Oldenburg suggests that it does nevertheless express key aspects of "homeliness" that makes it attractive. These include a physical centre or "root", a sense of possession as in "my local", a site of regeneration and restoration, a sense of freedom-to-be, of informality, and finally, a sense of "warmth". Together, all these features serve key psychological needs.

Oldenburg also suggests (1999, pp. 43-65) that individuals benefit from third places inasmuch as they are exposed to *novelty*; they gain a broader *perspective* on life; they are *socially reinvigorated* after the travails of work or home; they are able to generate and sustain *generalised friendships* and develop *habits of association.*

The pub helps to create and to reflect the society around it. Social relationships in the pub are intimately linked to social relationships outside.

While pubs may be seen as many things, they are pre-eminently places where *alcohol* is consumed. This helps to define the "meaning" of pubs. There have been significant changes in both the extent and style of alcohol consumption and the nature of the pub in the years since the early 1990s, a number of which have been alluded to above. The pub, and the use of alcohol more generally, is now increasingly associated with, to use a term popularised by Lash and Urry, "reflexive consumption". In other words both pubs and their customers are increasingly self-aware of the "meanings" of the activity of going out (or staying in) for a drink, and pay much greater attention to the symbolic aspects of the process.

The pub as site of interaction

As a meeting place, a pub has an important role in the life of the group. People communicate and exchange information, integrate (or reject) newcomers and develop common traits. Visiting the pub and adopting the specific behaviors is a way of affirming and reaffirming the affiliation to the group and so to one identity.

"When individuals enter a particular pub they are purchasing far more than a particular product, such as a drink or a meal. They are also purchasing an experience or ambience, which is associated with desire, and the creation and expression of *identity* and lifestyle. What is

important is not so much the actual products that are consumed but the meanings attached to those products."[4]

The major problem around the concept of **identity** seems to be its "embeddedness". Identity may or may not be "updated" once the individual gets in contact with the others, it may or may not be constructed when the first contact takes place and so it may only exist in the presence of "the others".

As Milton Gordon shows in *"Human Nature, Class and Ethnicity"*, an identity is born when the simple question "Who are you?" has to be answered.

One approach of this largely used concept of identity, called primordialistic, implies that **the individual is born with certain characteristics** (e.g. tribal or religious affiliation, psychological characteristics) that give him/her the feeling of belonging to a group, and so automatically provide him a "group identity". Therefore, the identity is a *datum* – the individual has an identity that is not self-assumed and that cannot be changed. This approach has been embraced by researchers in the field of ethnicity since it suits well the concept of ethnic identity.

A second approach to the concept of identity and more suitable to our research is the constructivist one: **identity emerges in interaction with others and their identities.** Scholars who use this approach are more concerned with the significance of identity and less with its characteristics. Unlike the primordialistic approach, which implies a group identity that is passed on to the individual, in the constructivist group identity is born as a system of symbols that help each individual construct his own self.

An individual has more identities, and each of them is best described by one or the other of the two approaches. We can also refer to latent identities which reveal themselves when a specific category of "others" is present.

Identities are derived from culture and a discussion about identities is always a discussion about cultures. We need identities to show that we have different cultural backgrounds and so to make interaction with others easier. When identity is derived from a new distinction in a group, it shows the affiliation to a sub-culture. The term of sub-culture classically describes a subdivision of the national culture and in broader terms the culture of a group within a larger group. Sub-culture is not concerned with race or ethnicity (or any other traits that are common to large groups), but with more complex and refined traits, that are common to much smaller groups.

Identities manifest and create specific symbols and behaviors. A meeting place is vital to the formation of a community. This meeting place can often be a pub which gathers its specific community with the respective sub-culture. The concept of **"community"** is very important for our research because we assumed that the kind of pubs we studied were linked to a specific community.

If we take the common sense[5], community means: 1**.** the fact of being common to many things or beings; common possession. 2. a group of people with common interests, beliefs and life rules; all the inhabitants of a city, country, etc.

In sociology[6], the definition of community is "a social-human entity, whose members are tied together through the fact of living in the same space and through traditional and constant social

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[4] WATSON, D. (2002) *"Home from home: the pub and everyday life"* in T. Bennett & D. Watson (eds) *Understanding everyday life*, Oxford: Blackwell / Open University, pp. 207
[5] Romanian Explicative Dictionary - DEX
[6] ZAMFIR and Vlasceanu (1993) *Sociological Dictionary*

relationships (consolidated during the time)". This definition couldn't help us too much because we were looking for more than relationships and values. So, our approach is guided by Weber's understanding on the community: in terms of culture and not structure. The substance of a community is given not by the proximity or co-existence but by "the participants' subjective feeling of belonging to the same community". As Weber noticed, only when the individuals mutually guide their behavior for interacting – due to this common feeling – one can interpret it as a social relation. This is the fundamental relation for a "community". Communitarian construction is based on the "significance" – a fundamental subjective element – and not on structural elements as kingship relations, neighborhood and co-residency. The consequence of the diversity of the significations is the diversity of communities that can be formed among people.

The hypothesis that guided our project was that people who gather in a pub form a community (in its weberian meaning). The pub is not "just a place to meet other people" but an instrument that helps the community reinforce itself.

It is the potential fragility of the borderlines between integration and exclusion that threatens both social identity and order of the group and which makes pubs look like rule-less spaces; pubs illustrate the themes developped by the post-modern thinking, especially with Michel Maffesoli and the place of the "communitary fusion" as dominant "socialisation" as opposed to a more individualistic attitude.

Last but not least, the existence of a specific type of pubs not only raises the question of a specific public but also a marketing problem: they have to be economically efficient. But starting with the assumption that their owners are chasing profit we automatically exclude the owners, at least symbolically, from the community created around the pub, which is not always the case.

Methodology

The bars where our research has been conducted are emblematic for two categories: the fans of a football team and the "folkists" – musicians in the folk stream.

Our research started in November. We began by finding a place (a pub) where we could observe this specific type of clientele that gathers in a certain space for community reasons rather than or complemetary to leisure. We intended to find an "extreme" case of pub / club with a closed circuit / restricted membership which would have allowed an easier observation of the relationships between members. The question was whether these "private clubs" automatically provide a concrete recognition of members and their power status. At that point, the main interest of our research was the negotiation of power and status among members, more specifically the rules of this negotiation. Trying to access such a place, we realised that the best and almost exclusive way to pursue the research objective was not to disturb the normal relations, and so to pass as members. Thus we encountered some deonthological issues, doubled by the time limits of this research. As a consequence we decided that this particular case of clubs was not the most suitable for our project.

The next step was to discover pubs with a double characteristic:
- a targeted but not very large audience / membership
- easily accessible

Our **main objective** is to understand why these "specific" pubs exist and what type of values and relationships they involve.

The **specific objectives** were:

1. To identify the main features of this kind of pubs – elements which give them a certain "identity"

2. To identify the relationships between:

- loyal (if the case) customers / "insiders" among themselves

- loyal and occasional ("outsiders") clients

- insiders and the staff (waitresses, owner)

- outsiders and the staff

3. To find if these pubs are more than a place for leisure time

4. To understand how the existence of these pubs influences the identity of their members[7].

We focused on three pubs in Bucharest which were suitable for our research:

1. **"The Sport Spirit"-** as its name indicates it, this is a pub meant to attract sport lovers, either fans of different sports or present / former sport performers; however, a preference for team sports (football, rugby, basketball, hockey, etc.) can be easily noticed.

2. **"The Red Dogs"-** this pub is placed inside the "Dinamo"[8] sport facilities campus and gathers the supporters of Dinamo football team.

3. **"The Folk Eliad House"-** a place for folk singers and their audience.

Our choise was based on "integration" reasons: we assumed that it would be easier to pass unnoticed in this kind of places where any sport or music lover can come.

The fieldwork started by the end of April, when we began to visit these locations. As an "entrance" to the fieldwork, we would go at different moments of the day and of the week in order to have the best view of memebers "circulation" and interaction.

We used the classical "**participant observation**" as first method to collect data. We tried to observe the specific facts that would illustrate our objectives:

- people coming to these places / insiders – outsiders, specific characteristics: age, gender, clothing, language, etc.

- temporal dependence or independence: connection between different kinds of visitors and temporal factors (moment of the day, week, etc.)

- relationship between visitors and pub's activities: "special" events (concerts, football games, etc.) and "ordinary" days

- loyal / occasional visitors

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[7] we use the term "member" as a larger category which includes all the participants grouped by a pub: staff, insiders, putsiders, etc.

[8] Dinamo Bucharest is one of the main Romanian sport clubs

- relations among loyal visitors / insiders (rules, e.g. specific place at the table, common values, characteristics, etc.)

- relations between insiders and the staff, insiders – outsiders, outsiders - the staff

We could place ourselves in the outsiders category and understand some of the "place rules" through an "innocent" eye. We passed as new "outsiders" throughout fieldwork. Participant observation was used during all the research period: end of April – mid June.

To get a better significance and understanding of what we could observe, we used a complementary method after having passed the first level (the exploratory phase) of our research: the semi – structured, face-to-face interview.

We intended to make interviews with all the participants at this process:

1. the loyal clients (and, according to our hypothesis, the members of the community)

2. the occasional customers

3. the staff

We tried to have a lot of informal and unstructured discussions with these categories but we wanted to obtain more information and so decided to elaborate an interview guide that contained the following main paths:

1. The history of the place

2. The location and the target public

3. Specific and common comparing to other pubs

4. Dichotomy special events – ordinary days

5. Visiting habits and continuity (how long, how often, etc.)

6. Decisions, strategies and expectations of the owners / managers

7. Audience and relationships evolution

8. Involvement of the pub in helping the public (supporters, singers), concrete contribution

9. Values, norms and rules

10. The importance of meeting the others

It was also to be found out through interviews if, how and where members meet eachother outside these pubs. The interview guide could be completed with other issues, but one important thing is that some questions were added and some were excluded accordingly to the interviewed person.

Another method that we used was photography, especially as an illustration of the fieldwork and a way of underlining the oral information.

We encountered a a technical / time limit: we gathered the information needed to start the interviews only by the end of May. This is a serious gap of our research: it lacks information from the interviews analysis and so it is not complete. The conclusions are based mostly on the data collected through participant observation and on interviews with two supporters and loyal clients of Red Dogs pub and with the owner and two loyal clients of the Folk Eliad House.

Red Dogs Pub

Description

"Red Dogs" is situated in the "Dinamo" Sport Complex, near the ticket booth and the main entrance to the stadium. The name of the bar[9] comes from the nickname of the football team. The bar has all the trademarks of the football team and the colours red and white master the place as well as the logo representing two mad dogs.

The interior space is rather narrow, with 7 tables, 4 chairs each. During summer the terrace in front offers a more generous space. The furniture inside is marked with the logo of the football club, which is not the case for the one outside. But "Stefan cel Mare" stadium and the exterior logo allow a good visibility for the marks of this club even from outside.

The bar was opened in 1998 under the direct supervision of the management of the club. They chose the logo (the two red and white dogs) and the name of the bar[10].

Customers

Sportsmen who finished their daily training, people who pass by accidentally and decide to have a beer, young people that live in the neighborhood: most of them up to 30 years old. This fact could be also explained by the "menu" of "Red Dogs" bar, which does not offer any kind of food and so it is a bar in the classic meaning of the word: only alcoholic and soft drinks are served here. As a general rule, if there is no sport pretext, like discussions (conversation as a characteristic of "third places" is essential in Red Dogs) about a match of Dinamo team, then the place has nothing else to keep one longer. The passion for sports, especially football, and more specifically the passion for the Dinamo football team is most likely to draw people to this pub and rule its dynamics.

We could distinguish three important categories of customers **according to the moment of visit**:

1. The occasional ones, who mainly come from the neighborhood or just pass by and stop on the terrace to have a drink

2. The supporters who use the pub as a meeting point only in a special events day: football match

3. The supporters (regulars) which come more often to meet each other (ordinary days)

The pub - an identity resource and instrument

As an image-representation issue it was interesting to see in which way the role of a "Dinamo" supporter is linked to the idea of going to a bar marked with the team logo. We wanted to see if the link between a supporter identity and a client of the "Red Dogs" bar can be verified. "Red Dogs" is a meeting place for the supporters of "Dinamo" team. Thus the meeting place of supporters transfered from the sports field to the bar.

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[9] This location is more a bar in the classic sense of the word as it will come out throughout its presentation

[10] Information provided by M., a 27 year-old member of the club's fan group

We started by asking M. if he considered himself a customer of the bar. His answer was negative: he did not feel like a customer that for him was someone who had nothing else to do but take his girlfriend out for a drink, or someone who went there everyday without asking himself why. After such an answer it was only natural to ask about the real meaning of "Red Dogs". He first pointed at it as a **rally spot** for the supporters of the "Dinamo" team and continued with the "advantages" of such a place: expensive drinks on the Club's account, entrance fee for the opponent supporters, and the fact that after the game any result is good enough for a drink.

As M. said, "*the bar is very important whenever there are football games*", in other words it is crucial for what we called "special events". One of our visits at the bar took place on such a special event day when "Dinamo" was playing "home". Since it was one of the last games of the season and the team had practically already won the championship, many of its supporters came to the game as a way to celebrate the title. The management decided to provide free access to the match, decision which lead to a very interesting problem: the stadium was full long before the game began and fans that had bought tickets in advance (or had season tickets) couldn't get in.

This emergency situation helped us find out that there was a back entrance to the stadium, through the bar, which was available only to regulars and acquaintances of the bartender. The angry fans tried to break the gates and argued with the police and the guards, but in the end settled down. They occasionally entered the bar to get updates about the game or see replays of the important actions (the bar has a TV, but it isn't fit for a large audience). However, they did not sit or order anything. The bar is not allowed to sell alcohol during a match (a city law forbids bars and shops in the area to sell alcohol during a football match). Fans usually buy beer on their way to the bar and consume it there.

The supporters of the Dinamo team are divided in groups by different criteria: friendship, neighborhood, musical preferences, gender, etc. Each of these groups brings new ideas about the playing field, signs of the team, slogans or choreography. During their meetings, they discuss the proposals and if there is no unanimous solution, they vote. Even though the bar is sometimes too small and crowded for meetings, it is **more than a meeting place** (whenever the team wins or looses). "Red Dogs" bar is also the place where the supporters compose slogans and choreographies to support their team during the games.

We noticed that, as M. had told us, regular clients do not drop by only when there is match going on. During one of our visits, on a Sunday afternoon, we the bar was not only a rally point, but also a **hanging-out place**. Regulars come to the bar even if there is no match or scheduled fan meeting. They chat with friends and other regulars. They are allowed to take chairs from the terrace and sit further from the bar. They can also sit without ordering or they can linger over a beer for 2 hours without being bothered by the bartender.

During the interview, M. had also mentioned the name of the other bar having a sports specific: "Sport's Spirit". He presented it as his favorite place where he enjoys having a beer or a chat with his friends. Hierarchy is always an issue when speaking of pubs. It came out that "Red Dogs" had a very important proactical advantage: its **location** - "*It's not very different from other bars, but being so close to the stadium it's the best place to meet whenever the team has games. We also meet in Sport's Spirit – it's a more classic bar where fancy people meet*". (M.)

We can assume that there is a difference between people coming to "Red Dogs" as members of the supporting team and clients of a bar with sport character. But in the end these two roles mix and this kind of bar is needed for a certain atmosphere provided by the supporters: drinking,

talking and making plans. The functional and amusement roles of the bar come from its **proximity** to the stadium and role of gatherer of people with common passion for the football team.

There are people who frequently come to this bar and become usual customers but no one drinks without paying on the spot. The owner justifies it as not to set a precedent. "*People forget to pay after they drink, so I can't afford to loose money because of this behavior. Not long ago, the bar used to serve beer for free to those supporters who couldn't join the team whenever it played away. But today this is not possible, because people cannot be trusted anymore*".

The bar is also **a source of information:** on the outside walls there are posters with the time and the place of the matches and the perfect place for meetings whenever there are descents over the "monsters". The "monsters" are the supporters of "Dinamo"'s traditional opponent, "Steaua"; the members of the two supporting teams rival with each other. The rivalry is very old and has nothing to do with the football championship anymore. Being a fan of one team implies hating the other team. Whenever one member of "Dinamo" supporting team is bitten up by the "monsters", the whole team meets and goes to "Diham", the bar where players and members of the "Steaua" supporting team meet.

The relationships among customers of "Red Dogs" are both formal and informal, but **mostly informal**. For some people drinks are on the house, especially after the matches when "Dinamo" wins. The interaction among people who frequently visit the bar is modeled by affiliation: supporting the same team or opponent teams. Among supporters of different teams interactions are usually violent and very aggressive. As for the supposrters of the same team, they hug as if they have known eachother for a lifetime, they laugh together, discuss the most interesting moments of the game, curse on the opponent team and compose lines about the past game. They are all the same: red dogs. This is a very intense atmosphere with everybody talking and enjoying the moment, the victory of the favourite team, even if they do not keep in touch afterwards.

Although this bar is a kind of home for "Dinamo" supporters, there are a few difficulties that the bar has to face. The first one that was mentioned before is the space problem, the bar is too small and something should be done about it, basically by the responsibles of the Club. The second issue would be prices. Customers consider the prices too high; the bar would have the same amunt of customers on ordinary days as on special event days if one beer costed 17.000 lei instead of 30.000[11].

As it can be observed from the above paragraphs, the affiliation to a football team like "Dinamo" can be gained in time and in connection with the "Red Dogs" bar, which is more than the place where the role of the supporter becomes reality because he can behave as one, it is the very place of common passion. No matter of customers' identities, when they step into this bar everything converges to football and supporting the favorite football team. From this point of view we witness the leveler role of a pub as a "third place".

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[11] 1 €= 40.000 lei

Folk Eliad Pub

Description

After a period of intensive "pub-searching" for the right pub, we've come to the conclusion that as "Red Dogs", "Folk Eliad" fitted our objectives. The main reason was the gathering of an important artistic community (the folk community) that considers this bar its "headquarter". This may seem a little exclusive for the by-standers (such as ourselves when we first entered the pub) but this is not the case for everyone is accepted, regardless of their membership to this folk community.

Folk Eliad was open in January 1998 and is sheltered by the former Culture Club (until 1989) of the 3rd District of Bucharest. The building itself has its own history that goes back to 1863 and is a living proof of the 19th century architecture. Between October 1940 and August 1944 it housed a private university called the "Marcu Onescu" College. Its cultural destination is preserved nowadays by the Toca Lighting Foundation and Folk Club Eliad. The latter was a cultural initiative of a group of friends (including the owners), who saw their dream come true when they managed to open the first folk club in Bucharest (and most probably in Romania). Since then, the pub sheltered more than 300 cultural events: concerts, jam sessions, album and book releases and even charity actions for orphans and elderly of the 3rd District.

The minute one steps inside, the atmosphere is very special: **"the folk music's world".**

The pub has two levels:

- an outside garden which is mostly used in summer (the terrace)

- an inside level, situated underground (mezzanine). This level can accommodate some 35-40 people which is not very much but, as we eventually found out, sufficient for the community.

The stage where the concerts take place every Friday evening (since 1997) is inside (second level). The walls are covered by all kinds of musical instruments[12], mostly string instruments (guitars, violins, etc.) and all sorts of objects reminding at every step this specific "territory"- a house of music: disks, vinyls, pictures with great Romanian folk singers that performed in there, members of the community, pictures from the Folk Eliad parties. Everything converges to the face of Valeriu Sterian (a Romanian folk singer, well known as a dissident). He is a symbol for the folk culture and his picture is placed majestically on the front wall[13], behind the stage. Not many years ago, Valeriu Sterian promoted the folk music and culture on the national TV station during a Friday night show. The "host" of this TV meeting was "Folk Eliad" house. So, one can understand that all these accessories are part of its specific and public identity: the house of folk singers and fans.

There were many icons of the Romanian folk, rock and jazz music individuals or bands who performed in the pub: Vali Sterian, Victor Baniciu, Mircea Bodolan, *Holograf,* the members of the *former Phoenix* (Doru Lipan Tandarica, Nicu Covaci), *Compact, Sphinx Experience, Pasarea Colibri*, Eugen Cristea, Ada Milea and many others. There have also been many famous singers and bands from abroad, lured by the special fame of the place: *Humble Pie*, the bassist of *Black Sabath*, Joan Baess, and even such exotic figures as African bands of tribal music. This is the

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[12] see photo 2
[13] see photo 1

reason why the club is referred to by journalists as "the artist's living room" or the "Mecca of the Romanian folk".

As far as the menu is concerned, D.R. (the manager) said it has remained approximately the same since the pub opened. At Folk Eliad you can eat the best Romanian traditional food (such as *mamaliguta cu brânza, sarmalute, ciorba de burta*, etc.), drink a beer or an old Romanian wine or simply take a coffee or a soda, everything at a moderate price.

The music that joins this atmosphere is a mixture of evergreen songs, rock ballads and occasionally the latest hits. Once there was music from the radio but we had no reason to believe that this happens on a regular basis. On Tuesday, there is a karaoke evening and everybody sings different songs, especially folk songs. The "old costumers" / insiders of the pub are "most wanted" by the audience for they know many folk songs. The rest of the weekdays, the atmosphere is relaxed and everybody comes here to spend some quality time.

Customers

Being there every weekday and at different moments of the day, we were able to distinguish between two main types of customers, first **according to their visit goal.**

1. The **occasional customer** who stops there accidentally on his/her way from work, ususally because it is the first pub where he/she could stop for eating.

When we first arrived there, around 7 o'clock in a Friday evening, nothing related to folk was happening. The customers were ordinary people having a drink or something to eat. The average age was about 45-55 years, but there were also older persons and some children. The fact that there are so many people "just visiting" the pub could be explained by the loose atmosphere, good and cheap food, openness and simplicity. The pub, even if it serves mainly the folk community, is opened to anyone who might "drop in".

2. **Folk- related costumers** for whom "Folk Eliad" is their "home away from home" and where they can meet friends, listen to the music, have a bite and a drink and chat about folk music & culture.

In what concerns **the moment of visit**, we could distinguish between:

     1. Those who visit the pub **by daylight**, before concerts

     2. Clients who come especially to listen to the bands who sing, in the **evening**.

The first group is composed by people - employed and students - who stop for a drink or a meal. The night is reserved to "regulars", usual customers (the folkists), some of them being friends of the pub manager.

The pub - an identity resource and instrument

What we might call the regular profile or the typical customer is a person over 35 years of age, well off but without being snobbish and a bit "bohemian"; this is the profile that came up from the participant observation and was presented as such during the interviews. **The folk culture and values are an integrant and essential component of the loyal custome r identity**, usually related to the educational background (childhood and youth). *"The real folkist is someone who has probably been a passionate of this music for decades, who has 3 or 4 hundreds of CDs or*

vynils at home and, most of all, who can really feel the emotion that folk music generates. The folkist is a poet with a guitar, even if he/she just carries it inside" (M.G., aged 55). The folkists make up a "*qualified public that can clearly tell the difference between an artist and a simple entertainer*" (D.R., aged 42). The good fame of **the pub** as a cultural *lieu* is also due to the fact that it has always **gathered people who perceive folk music and culture as a lifestyle, not as a mere leisure**. They are the *connaisseurs*, those who contribute to the definition of the pub's distinctive profile and who assert and reinforce their own identity in the process.

As we have mentioned before, one of our hypothesis is that the folkists make up a sort of community, namely a group of people sharing a similar cultural background, rules, values and patterns of communication in the broad sense of the concept. Since the period of our actual research was not so generous, the interviews we took with one of the owners and with two customers were the best way of approaching the universe of this group of people as far as the specificity of Folk Eliad is concerned. It was them who told us about the referential symbols and ideas of this community. We could not help perceiving a certain nostalgia (especially at the two customers, who were older than D.R.) for the years of "bohemian music and poetry", as they both called the '70s and '80s. In the communist Romania of that time these people and their friends were part of a dissident phenomenon called the 7 O'clock Club, phenomenon that could be considered a distant echo of the hippie movement. It consisted of "underground" concerts and get-togethers that united artists and fans of the folk and rock music and it symbolized a protest against the oppression and the censorship of the communist regime. Nowadays, although the social environment has definitely changed and the freedom of expression is possible, these people have kept their **nonconformist profile**. Their lifestyle has remained, in many ways, a reaction and a protest to a hypocritical and un-transparent society. What they now fight against is the excessive commercialization of the Romanian society and the snobbish and shallow attitudes associated to it. They define themselves as simple and unpretentious people who would rather wear jeans than a suit and who always prefer quality music and conversation in the cozy atmosphere of Folk Eliad to the elegant and costly cocktails of the Bucharest's upper class bars. These people make up what D.R. calls "Eliad's friends", those who come here to eat and meet their pals almost every day and are always part of the pub events – concerts, album or book releases, anniversaries of folk personalities (most of them exclusive parties), etc. Accordingly, the assertion that "*the artists always feel they are singing to a group of friends*" (C. D., aged 50) is not at all surprising and seems perfectly justified since D.R. himself admitted the concerts are not so well paid, even when a famous artist is performing in the pub.

As mentioned before, we can speak of a folkist community gathered in this pub. The automatic classification of customers is, as in the case of "Red Dogs", **"outsiders"** and **"insiders" - regulars**. We could verify our hypothesis through the relationship between the staff and the clients.

According to what we managed to find out from one of the associates, not even the regulars are allowed to pay later for their order; in other words, no one has a special "account" that would allow that person to consume and pay later. As far as our participative observation was concerned this fact proved to be accurate since we never saw anyone leaving his/her table without paying on the spot, not even the closest friends of the owners. And there is a simple explanation for this situation: what we defined as a constant / usual customer is a person over 35 years, having a good social status (decent job, financial independence, etc.). Consequently, such a person has no need to benefit from financial incentives, as we may consider the "luxury" of a subsequent check payment. Moreover, the associate who we interviewed let us understand that **the relationships between the management and the usual customers are strictly not**

commercial and commercial in the same time: there is a recognition od regulars but everyone has to pay for the goods and the services they ask for.

Nevertheless, **the selective/preferential distribution of services exists**. And this is mainly related **not to the purchasing power** – as in any usual pub where you go for a drink – but **to the status** you are attributed in this place. As we said before, the most respected people here are the folk artists, then the well-known "folk-addicts" and, finally, the younger "apprentices" of the folk movement. The ones that mediate between these three categories and the staff are the managers, especially D.R., who spends more time in the pub than his other three associates and is perceived by his employees as the real boss. For example, D.R. is usually in charge with the table-reservations for the Friday-night concerts. As he told us himself, he first attends to the requests of his buddies and of the people he knows, corresponding to the three sub-groups of folkists. Accordingly, the waiters and waitresses will pay more attention and will be much nicer to these people, who are actually the members of the folk community, than to the by-standers who happen to drop by. We could observe that in the night we went to a concert: even that many people had a table reservation made, when somebody "special" was coming, he got a place from a normal client or got a reserved table.

The participant observation revealed us the fact that in Folk Eliad there is a number of people who go there all the time – usual customers. But it wasn't until we had the chance to talk to them that we realized this group of people that we generically called the *folkists* make up a community, namely a social group with a distinct identity and a common lifestyle. And we can only attribute this fact to the symbolic boundaries of the group itself, boundaries that make the difference between an "insider" and an "outsider" and sustain the identity of the members. Being a member means that one shares the true passion for folk music and culture, is opposed to consumerism, superficiality and cheap mass culture and leisure, in other words, it means one is "special" and so wants to hang out with special people.

Conclusions

This research was focused on the two specific pubs and tried to highlight the particularities of socialisation methods of two special communities, rather urban and sensitive to sports / music. The two places that made the object of our reserch had been designed from the beginning as specific meeting places: they were not adapted, appropriated or adjusted by the group, but conceived from the beginning to provide the space needed by members of one particular group: supporters / fans.

The pub allows a lift-up of normal life barriers that limit the encounters during the day and also limit relationships with the others. Alcohol might play an essential role in this double mechanism of rational barrier and level of engagement. One can at any time involve or rethdraw from these social relationships or specific communities by joining or leaving the pub. There is also a risk of isolation for someone who crosses the limits or the rules imposed by an implicit and less transparent, oral code.

If we were to compare bars and cafés inside this broader category fo pubs, the frequentation of bars is more typical to a certain phase or a life cycle, that of youth. Taking the two locations that we studied, "Red Dogs" can be associated to the image of a bar and "Folk Eliad" more to that of a café. At "Red Dogs" there is no customer older than 30, as opposed to "Eliad House" where the age average is 40 or even more.

We can speak in both cases of individuals who find themselves within groups in a specific place away from society, namely the space-time of pubs. At a social level, the deffense attitude against outside world can be translated by an inversion of the money value (especially in the folk club case): make believe that it has less or no importance.

In both cases living in the evening is a lifestyle aknowledged as legitimate and, more than that, a "reflexive consumption", a self-awareness of the "meanings" of going out for a drink, a symbolic process.

The behaviours observed in these two pubs imply strong and implicit social structures made up by practices such as opening and closing hours, special events (be it football matches or folk concerts), prescribed or preferential behaviours towards (regular) customers, allowed or forbidden acts. The practices os use in this kind of space and the meeting codes respond to precise norms created by the staff / management or induced little by little by the ambience and the community specific.

The two examples illustrated the "third place" hypothesis as well as the "trinity": identity – subculture – community. As for the "communitary fusion" of Maffesoli, we can conclude that it applies more to a generation than to a changing society, mostly to young people between 20 and 30 years of age. This is an observation that can be made after a comparison between a bar with rather young customers - "Red Dogs" - and "Folk Eliad", a mixture between a café and a club with rather mature clientele.

Unfortunately there are some major limits to our research: not all our questions can be answered with the empirical data we managed to gather. But the main goal of this part of our research was to understand that a public place like a pub can be a marked territory for a specific community.

A pub might be percieved at first sight as an anarhic place for defulation where the freedom of behaviour is larger than in usual social spaces. But after a deeper analysis and research we can state the contrary, that the atmosphere is rather structured, underheld by a strong inside regulation which allows freedom and relaxation but also social connection and belonging to a community - another way of reproducing social order.

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Annexes

Photo 1

Photo 2

Relationship with the students during the HESP project

Cristina Plecadite

- I selected my students from my seminaries: in the first semester I held the "Introduction in Anthropology" seminary with the second year of study at The National School of Political and Administrative Studies- The Political Sciences Department

- The way of choosing the students: at the first seminary I presented to all my students the "Anthropology: Means and Meaning" project, with all the stages (abstract, project, workshop) that were going to involve my students.

- I also made a briefly description of our collective project (Maciek Sekerdej, Raluca Nagy and me). Our issue was concerning "The anthropology of pubs"

- I explained to them what are the advantages (access to an international network in anthropology, work in an international team, budget for our research, access for literature...)

- I asked my students to send me an e-mail containing a short curriculum vitae (their research activity) and a motivation letter along with a brief description of a pub they propose to be studied

- I selected, at the end of October, 3 students: Munteanu Cristina, Munteanu Petru and Preda Oana- all of them being in the second year of study

- Raluca Nagy also selected 3 persons from the same department and year of study: Marza Constantin, Mosneagu Ana Maria and Colotelo Cristina

- Taking into account the fact that we had a common research issue and our research team were colleagues, we decided to made a common team

- The first meetings we held in November when we asked our students to make a kind of map of the pubs from Bucharest and to propose some interesting issues of study on the base of the empirical data

- We both (Raluca and I) kept meeting our "common" team in November and December and established what pubs we were going to study.

- We kept in touch with Maciek throughout the whole process, we asked for professor Kapralsky's advice and he came with the idea of studying a "close circuit pub"; in the end this was not possible, as explained in the methodology part of the project.

- Taking into account that we had to study a specific pub and a place where we can do a real observation (not a very high rate of circulation and a very crowded place) , we established 3 pubs to be observed:

  o Folk Eliad House

  o Red Dog pub - a pub for football lovers (Dinamo football team supporters)

  o Sport Spirit pub (sportsmen pub)

- Because we could be part of the audience, we decided to study only the first 2 pubs. Why two pubs? Because we want to observe the similarities and the differences between two very

targeted pubs but with a different "content" (music versus sport) in order to understand what we were studying

- Between the 2 parts of the fieldwork (the first part: finding a pub and establishing a problem to be studied; the second part: the "real fieldwork"), Raluca and I we were working with our team and exchanging information with our Polish partner, Maciek.

  o We designed our project

  o We met for the workshop

  o We analyzed the abstracts

- The difficult moment started when we received the budget for our research, being a very delicate moment: our team is composed by students in Political Sciences and they were already involved in the local election projects at the end of May. The exam session was approaching and they got a lot of other project to be done so it was pretty difficult for us to mobilize them again for the project.

- After all, we started to go to make some participant observation: a few times I went with them but they got plenty of visits on their own

- Raluca and I decided to split our team in 2 groups just for them to have a deeper view on the place they studied: Cristina Munteanu, Petru Munteanu and Oana Preda were going to research the Folk Eliad Pub (team 1) and Cristina Colotelo, Constantin Marza and Ana Mosneagu the Red Dogs pub (team 2)

- The reason of making these team took into account their personalities: we choose the less "sensitive" personalities for Red Dogs (it was a "hostile" atmosphere in there: a lot of supporters, presented as hooligans by the mass media)

- Each visit they pay was strictly controlled by Raluca and I: telephones, e-mails and remainders for them to go to "take a look". After their visits, we always asked for briefly reports by mail or in direct meetings

- We recommend and participate with our both teams in this research process: I joined them in the pubs at different hours and different moments of the week: football games, habitual afternoons, concerts, during the week day or during the weekend for us to have the big picture and to have the control of information collection etc.

- I also made a lot of pressure for them to take some interviews because they were a little embarrassed to ask for people in the pub to speak with them

- I discussed with them all the time their methodological dilemmas: how to speak to people, how to ask question, what an interview means

- We also had some meeting for discussing how to structure our information and how to design our interview guideline

- I also encouraged both teams to communicate their finding all the time not only inside their team but between the teams and I also advised them to go in the both pubs for helping their colleagues with the "second" regard

- Problems with the students:

  o Most of them never made a research project (not only on their own)

o   What Raluca and I had proposed: not to conduct a research with a big stake, but

- to familiarize our students with the anthropological methods, especially fieldwork
- to teach them the stages of an exploratory research
- to teach them how to design a research project
- to analyze the collected data
- to correlate information
- to be able to see the "big picture"
- to understand the link between theory& empirical data
- to show them that social problems are everywhere around us
- to understand that our "normal" behavior is a social constructed environment

o   They are students in political sciences and they use different methodology: I had to face the fact that they don't understand the methodological problems as I did

o   They had worked in teams before but with those colleagues they preferred: now they found themselves in teams made by Raluca and I, so they had to learn to communicate with people they hadn't known before. They had to adapt not only their schedules but their methodologies and perspectives. All the time they have learned how to negotiate and collaborate

o   The surprise came when we had to write the final report: everyone of them, with no exception, came with his own report, without consulting his team

Conclusion: I have to say that I am very content with their work because they were very involved in this project. Except the fact that we had to remember them all the time their deadlines, they were always present at the meetings, they tried to collect data on their own even when the other members of their team couldn't join them. They helped each other and provided all the materials we had to deliver for the HESP programme.

Students' activity:

1.   Munteanu Petru: he delivered abstracts; he made participant observation in Folk Eliad (in the first part of the project he also played visits to other pubs); he was involved in the research design and he collected theoretical framework; he presented a personal report on the project on Folk Eliad

2.   Munteanu Cristina: she delivered abstracts; she made participant observation in Folk Eliad (in the first part of the project she played visits to other pubs); she was involved in the research design; she presented a personal report on the project on Folk Eliad

3.   Preda Ioana: she delivered abstracts; she made participant observation and 2 interviews (with a loyal client and with the owner) in Folk Eliad (in the first part of the project she played visits to other pubs); she was involved in the research design; she presented a personal report on the project and structured the information for the entire Folk Eliad project

4.   Cristina Colotelo: she delivered abstracts; she made participant observation and 2 interviews in Folk Eliad; one interview (with a loyal consumer) and participant observation in

Red Dogs (in the first part of the project she played visits to other pubs); she was involved in the research design; she presented a personal report on the project on Red Dogs and structured the information for the entire Red Dogs project; she also elaborated a part of the conclusions for the entire project

5.	Marza Constantin: he delivered abstracts; he made participant observation in Red Dogs (in the first part of the project he also played visits to other pubs); he was involved in the research design and he collected theoretical framework; he presented a personal report on the project on Red Dogs; he elaborated a part of the theoretical framework

6.	Mosneagu Ana Maria: she delivered abstracts; she made participant observation in Red Dogs (in the first part of the project she played visits to other pubs); she was involved in the research design; she structured the information for the Red Dogs team

All the students were involved the process of constructing the final conclusions.

Relationship with the students during the HESP project
Raluca Nagy

This research was conceived from the beginning as a common project together with my colleagues Cristina Plecadite and Maciek Sekerdey (during the september session in Cluj). The collaboration with Maciek, strictly related to the project, was rather virtual but very usefull. We had the chance to discuss more and compare our cases during the visiting lectures. To this extent the next step of this project would be to integrate our researches and student teams. This can be perceived as a goal for the next two years of the project.

As Cristina wrote earlier in her report, we had a common research and a common research team from the beginning of this project on pubs, which can be placed in the end of October, beginning of November. Therefore I will leave aside all the information that she already mentioned and only "complete" her report with my relationship with the students.

I met Ana-Maria Mosneagu two years ago during a fieldwork. We worked together as a mixed BA - MA student team. When I started to look for a team to work on this "clubbing" project, she was the first student I thought of. Our collaboration had been very good and I remembered her as being very intuitive, self-confident and dilligent. She was the one who chose Dinu Marza as a colleague, also basing her choise on a previous fruitful collaboration. Cristina Colotelo later completed our team and came with a fantastic energy, intuition and capacity of synthetising.

As throughout the whole research process I worked with both Cristina's and my team, I tend to enlarge my concept of team to six students, because I had the chance to know and somehow guide them all.

I was not in Bucharest during the fieldwork period and so I only participated "passively" in this process (e-mails, informal reports and answers to some method-related questions); in this evaluation I would rather refer to the first part of the project, the theoretical framework and the making of the project.

Even thought with different degrees of self-confidence, all the six students are very intuitive and smart, so it was a real pleasure to work with them. Some are more dilligent than others, but compensate with other important qualities. They were very rational and selective in chosing the pubs, which was not an easy task, especially after we "failed" in penetrating a club with a restricted membership profile. They have been very good observers and very careful with details, beginning with this "looking-for-pubs" period. I had the feeling that they opened their eyes to this kind of places in a different way; one of them told us during a meeting how he suddenly noticed the small no-name bar not far from his house where the workers from the "Pepsi" factory had been gathering. I had the strong impression that they became more and more sensitive to and careful with details thruoghout the whole "working" period.

As for the team spirit, I it seemed to me that they were working as a 6-team, but it turned out during fieldwork that the initial teams sort of stuck together, which is completely understandable and also very good for the fieldwork and the project itself.

I would like to end the evaluation of my relationship with the students without making any critique, but I was rather unpleasantly surprised by a certain difficulty in structuring and argumenting, basically in academic writing. I first noticed it in their summaries / abstracts of anthropology articles (which are part of the project) and then while having to put together the

fieldwork observation and the research report. This might be the only "weekness" of the team, which by the way improved in the second part of the report, the one concerning "Folk Eliad", that I find particularly well written and structured, and I am almost sure that the merit can be largely attributed to Petru Munteanu. I found this student particularly dilligent and focused, knowing how to use concepts and structure his work. This might come as a surprise to the other team-members because he lacks self-confidence.

As Cristina observed, the fact that they are not anthropology but political science students may be an explenation of this weakness in research writing; nevertheless, I wouldn't want to turn it into an excuse. On the other hand, writing skills can be achieved and mastered by practice, which is not the case of intuition, quality that I can largely attribute to the team.

Cristina mentioned something about having to remind them the deadlines all the time, but then again we had to be reminded these deadlines ourselves… so overall I was really impressed by the creativity and energy that my students invested in this project.