

Recuperative memory in Romanian post-Communist society

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(Received 16 July 2014; accepted 1 November 2015)

This paper explores the idea of “recuperative memory” with respect to the process of coming to terms with the past after the fall of the Romanian Communist regime in 1989. Its method is to examine the mechanisms used by recuperative memory in order to re-appropriate the past and emphasize the inherently mediated and multifaceted nature of this process. Using various examples from oral testimonies, autobiographical writings, literary works, and cinema, the paper argues that the role of recuperative memory is not only to facilitate the process of coming to terms with the past, but also to offer the material necessary to sustain a viable politics of memory. This entails providing a platform for the intergenerational transmission of memory and knowledge for those who did not live under the Communist regime, filling in this way the intergenerational gap, despite the lack of political class engagement.

Keywords: Communism; mediation; recuperative memory; Romania; testimony; publications

Introduction

After World War II, Romania suffered a traumatic Communist period, which ended with the 1989 revolution. Brutal oppression targeted primarily intellectuals and political figures, but also fell on workers and peasants who refused to submit to the new Communist regime, leaving deep traces in Romanian history and collective narratives. Unfortunately, a politics of memory (Barahona de Brito, González Enríquez, and Aguilar 2001; Hodgkin and Susannah 2003) to foster public reconciliation with a repressive and traumatic past (Rigney 2012) was almost non-existent in the years immediately following independence.

Informally, a few attempts have been made to reclaim memories from this time period, typically using autobiographical and narrative tools in this process. The present study considers such tools and the private initiatives behind them. The main objective is to focus on the field of recuperative memory as a principal reference, departing from the existing literature based mainly on transitional justice mechanisms. Recuperative memory is defined here as the process of recovering memories of the traumatic past, despite direct or indirect attempts made by the political class in an effort to suppress such memories. The mediated nature of recuperative memory underlining the dynamics of remembrance in the wider context of the politics of memory is defined here in its broad sense as the permanent interaction between “acts of oblivion and acts of actively creating positive collective memories

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for the future (the mutual interpenetration of informal social memory and organized political memory)” including various “interactions between institutional political actors” (Tileagă 2012, 463). The result is a multifaceted recuperative memory that uses different mechanisms to re-appropriate the past.

By analyzing the main attempts to come to terms with the past in Romanian post-Communist society, the study shows that recuperative memory includes both individual and collective recollections as well as institutionalized frameworks for public memory. Thus, the variety of representations and media used give voice to alternative narratives, showing how former victims and survivors of the Communist regime are involved in the process of transmitting their stories to future generations. The question of intergenerational transmission of memory is interlinked with the issue of multiple voices of the past and with the variety of methods, language, and media used in the field of recuperative memory. The existing literature focuses mainly on the topic of transitional justice (Stan 2006, 2013), with some studies that focus on the main representations of Communism as ways of remembering the past (see Todorova, Dimou, and Troebst 2014). The political language was analyzed (Tileagă 2011, 2012) as well as justice mechanisms (Stan 2009a, 2009b, 2012). Despite the relevance of this literature, there have been no attempts to integrate the concept of recuperative memory into the existing politics of memory.

The present study takes up this task. The first part develops a theoretical framework for the concept of recuperative memory and its primary methods. A politics of memory is presented for post-Communist Romanian society, including the transitional justice mechanisms adopted after the fall of the totalitarian Communist regime. The study then approaches some institutionalized forms of recuperative memory, presenting the main Romanian institutions and organizations founded to facilitate research into the recent past. Initially, these were primarily the result of private initiative rather than public or governmental implication. The second section deals with testimonies, which are considered one of the main sources of the recuperative memory process. Some representative studies are reviewed, including both oral histories and autobiographical writings. The third section discusses the published life narratives of those who survived imprisonment and deprivation under the Communist regime. This section also offers some relevant examples of accounts of those within the Communist party, emphasizing in this way the multifaceted nature of recuperative memory. The last section discusses the inherently mediated nature of recuperative memory as it is exemplified in literature, television documentaries, and cinema. In so doing, the study gives an overview of the main attempts to reconcile with the past, the multifaceted nature of recuperative memory, the dynamics of remembrance, and the complex structure of the collective historical narrative, emphasizing that the role of recuperative memory must be sustained in the continued conversations surrounding the politics of memory with respect to post-Communist Romanian society.

Methodological aspects

The literature review in this study was categorized according to the following main forms of recuperative memory: oral history, life narratives, monuments, and institutions. A search through the Romanian National Library’s online search engine generated 2921 results for the term “Communism” and 240 results for “Communist prisons” (only 37 of which are books). Spanning the entire post-Communist period (1990–2015), the abundance of materials renders a complete review virtually impossible in the context of a single paper.

The field of memory politics is divided by political strategies and ideological options. Following the events of 1989, the lack of immediate action translated into weak legislation

and virtually no moral responsibility on the part of post-Communist politics. Political agendas made it difficult to distinguish between collaborators, victims, and perpetrators, whose roles were in fact often interchanged. Informers or secret service agents often exaggerated the facts, introduced new information, or created false identities for their victims in order to justify their activities and to maintain the feeling of distrust that so deeply affected Romanian society at the time. Victims were often manipulated into serving as informers for the secret police (a practice that continued even after 1989). This strategy contaminated public debates and the mass media, and implicitly shaped public remembrance and commemorations.¹

Politics and institutions of memory

In recent years, there have been attempts by Romania's political powers, as in other post-Communist countries (Todorova 2010), to sustain the process of reconciliation with the past via public condemnation of atrocities, financial support offered to different institutions that seek to analyze and clarify past crimes, and the organization of research on different problems and questions related to Communism. Though "public recognition of suffering and acknowledgment of victimization is essential to coming to terms with the past," (Bickford and Sodaro 2010, 76) an official condemnation of the Communist regime came very late. More than 20 years after the fall of Communism in Romania, the government finally instituted several justice mechanisms, such as the public identification of former Securitate agents, access to secret files, court trials against Communist officers, and a presidential truth commission. It was not until 2006 that the Communist regime was publicly condemned by President Traian Băsescu in an extraordinary session of the Romanian Parliament. The activity of the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania – called the Tismăneanu commission after its chair, historian Vladimir Tismăneanu – resulted in a public report describing the crimes and repressive mechanisms of the Communist regime, as well as the ties between the Communist Party and the secret police, the Securitate.² This public denouncement was followed by the opening of secret files, which proved to be a long and difficult process.³ Acting at the national level, The National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives, known as CNSAS (<http://www.cnsas.ro/>), was the result of a long lobby for the declassification of the Securitate's files.⁴ The CNSAS is an official institution, directly controlled by the Romanian Parliament and active in the preservation and publication of testimonials about Romania's Communist period.⁵ It was created in 2000 to act as the custodian of the Securitate's archive (Oprea 2008) and to facilitate citizens' access to the Securitate's secret files. It was also charged with offering conclusive data regarding the involvement of different informers, collaborators, under-cover agents, or political figures with the Communist political police who wished to occupy official or governmental positions. The fact that the CNSAS is headed by a Directory College of 11 members named by political parties, the government, and the presidency was considered proof of its explicit political dependency. Some of its decisions were privately or publicly contested and its activities were many times seen as an arena of disputes for the political class. The fact that private information was disclosed to the media as a means of political manipulation did not improve the organization's image,⁶ and its research and results concerning the disclosure of Securitate agents did not alter the dynamics of the political arena (Stan 2012).

The institutionalization of personal memories is part of the politics of memory, and different forms of public and mediated memory (public media, monuments, and commemorations) are typically integrated into a more or less holistic representation. The fact that the

generation of historical witnesses naturally disappears in time supports the institutionalization of the past as direct testimony is replaced by mediated representations (Brockhaus 2012; Weiffen 2012). Historical, sociological, and political textbooks (Tismăneanu 2003) dedicated to the recent Communist past grew in scope and variety despite a narrow specialized target and the fact that public interest proved to be low. A large number of authors have edited volumes based on archival historical documents.⁷ The recent past as a historical subject was introduced in the educational system through high-school history textbooks (Stan 2013) containing information about the Communist period. Often, autobiographical writing provides a personal point of view that is easier for young people to grasp. Many of these initiatives started around the activities of the historical and cultural institutions that have as their purpose research on the Communist period – for example, The National Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, and The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile (ICCMRE).

Two types of institutions act at the level of recuperative memory: non-governmental and those financed by the state. Though most institutions were initially the result of private initiatives and financial support, many of them came under state control and become dependent on its financial support and approval and, more importantly, became subject to political manipulation according to the agenda of the regime in power, thus fueling the disputes and distrust regarding their goals and results (Stan 2013, 20). Many governmental organizations and institutions directly participated in the recuperative memory process only much later and not before similar projects had been developed by non-governmental organizations or private initiatives (victims of the Communist regime, former anti-Communist dissidents, intellectuals, civic society organizations, etc.).⁸ Their aims reveal the need to reintegrate the individual life narratives into the collective memory through various publications, round tables, public discussions, expositions, commemorations, and so on.

At the international level, the process of retributive justice acts through truth commissions, legal inquiries, public commemoration of the victims, retribution as material compensation, acknowledgement of past sufferings, public condemnation, or state apologies. In her book, *Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Romania: The Politics of Memory* (2013), Lavinia Stan offers a broad overview of the main justice mechanisms: from court trials and public access to secret files and the restitution of properties, from compensations and rehabilitations to the public condemnation of Communism. All of these transitional justice mechanisms are important aspects of recuperative memory. However, recuperative memory does not involve only the theoretical and practical aspects of transitional justice (Ciobanu 2011), but also includes the register of personal and collective narratives. These include diaries, biographies, and social and historical research. The way memory acted during the post-Communist period was not simply recollection based on personal experience, which challenges personal defense mechanisms, but that of recuperative memory, which is public and collective. The recuperative process involves the reintegration of the personal, individual memories into the collective register. However, personal defense mechanisms are reinforced at this level by social and the political ones, and the personal, private attempts risk not surpassing these challenges if they are not sustained by the public politics of memory. The immediate post-Communist society of Romania was characterized by a sort of political amnesia and lack of moral responsibility toward victims of the regime, even if the mass media focused on both victims and perpetrators.⁹ Despite the absence of political will to sustain and assume a consistent politics of memory using transitional justice mechanisms, the recuperative memory process was carried out through private initiatives to record personal and collective memories. Collective memory is a theoretical

concept that must be “concretized and materialized,” and thus the forms of recuperative memory – “physical structures and cultural artefacts” (Neiger, Oren, and Eyal 2011) – operate at the society level (Connerton 1996, 7). Recuperative memory uses different methods of recollecting the past, from oral history (Thomson 2000) to cultural and historical institutions that cropped up mainly after sustained civic lobbying or private initiative in this direction.

The lack of an official politics of memory and rigorous state-supported analysis of the past, as well as minimal public interest in bringing past events to light after the fall of the Communist regime, have meant the loss of valuable information about the past.¹⁰ The political regime that followed the post-Communist period often attempted not only to manage public memory, but even to obliterate it by suppressing it¹¹ or neglecting important acts of recollection¹² such as publication of memoirs, interviews, the construction of museums dedicated to the recent past, and so on. For example, despite the official condemnation of the Communist regime, it is not yet possible to visit a museum dedicated to Romania’s 50-year totalitarian past in Bucharest. Because of the lack of political impetus, the National Museum of the Communist Repression remains only a concept, as do many other projects that would require the initiative and direct support of the state. The absence of national state interest in commemorating the victims of the Communist regime is also manifested through the poor representation of public memorial sites, even where certain places are renowned for the Communist horrors that took place there and for the loss of many former Romanian elites to Communist prisons in those areas. The dynamics of commemoration are highlighted by different types of commemorative practices, such as the attempt to create museums dedicated to the Communist past using decommissioned prisons, for example, Sighet or Pitești, and the actions of the Romanian Association of Former Political Prisoners. Through the association’s initiative, commemorative statues, crosses, and plaques were erected in many cities, marking the sites where Romanian people died fighting against the Communist regime. One important institution is The Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance.¹³ The Memorial stands on the premises of the decommissioned Sighet prison. This was an extermination prison for the country’s elite political figures, academics, economists, military officers, historians, journalists, politicians, bishops, and Greek or Roman Catholic priests. The Memorial was created and is administered by the Civic Academy Foundation since 1993. This private initiative came from Ana Blandiana and Romulus Rusan, and the financial support came from a number of Romanians exiled in the West. The range of activities organized as part of recuperative memory include: debates, round tables, numerous exhibitions, the organization of the Summer School of the Memorial for teenagers in 1998, and Remembrance Day, when former prisoners, the victims, their families and friends and those who are interested in understanding and analyzing Romanian Communism come together to keep alive the memory of those who did not survive. Though the Romanian state declared the Memorial a “symbol of national interest,” state financial support was severely lacking, and most expenses were covered by private donations and the support of other non-governmental institutions.

An INSCOP poll from December 2013¹⁴ found that almost half of Romanians, 44.7%, believe that the Communist regime was a good thing (the number increases with the respondents’ age range and decreases with education). Almost the same percentage, 44.4%, believe that during the Communist period living conditions were better than they were at the time of the survey. Raluca Beșliu¹⁵ speaks about an institutionalized amnesia regarding Communism in Romania, caused by the preservation of the former political and economic class (*nomenklatura*) and the lack of justice for its victims. In 2010, the Romanian

parliament approved the Law of Lustration¹⁶ regarding the limitation of access to public functions for those who were members of the repressive bodies of the Communist regime, but the Constitutional Court (CCR), as result of a complaint made by some senators and deputies, declared the law unconstitutional. The main argument was that lustration could no longer be justified 21 years after the end of the Communist regime. The emphasis needs to be not on collective guilt and social exclusion based on “mistaken ideological choices,” but on individual liability. Some critics of the law also observed that the persons targeted by the law had already held political and economic power for 20 years, so the result would be insignificant. As some authors have pointed out, “lustration is a matter of political choice and of the importance and urgency the society attaches to this issue” (Dix and Rebegea 2010). The question of lustration is tied to the criminal prosecution of Communist perpetrators, reparation to victims, and access to secret files. The official and public condemnation of Communism as a criminal regime was accomplished in 2006 by then president Traian Basescu, but only in 2012 did Parliament allow the prosecution of individuals suspected of committing crimes more than 40 years prior. However, public opinion remains skeptical that top-ranking officials will be prosecuted and condemned for their crimes.¹⁷ In 2012, Parliament (Chamber of Deputies) approved a new Law of Lustration, 22 years after the first draft, but it was again rejected by the CCR as unconstitutional. Parliament itself finally rejected the law in 2013. The argument was that lustration needed to be reconsidered in its fundamentals, completely rethought and rewritten. So, despite the pressure from civil society, the political class delayed adoption of the lustration law and finally pushed it out of the political agenda altogether. On the other hand, in the context of high-ranking corruption, economic struggle, and dissatisfaction with the ruling political class, the problems of the past are losing their force and urgency. Selective amnesia not only affects the political class but parts of the public as well. Thus, political will, social opportunity, ethical obligations and responsibility, and victims’ need for justice and moral retribution intersect in the remembering process. This paper makes the case for recuperative memory as a key component of an effective politics of memory in Romania (Stan 2013). The public condemnation of the regime and the lustration law attempts need to be complemented by society’s desire to reinstate the regimes’ victims and perpetrators to their rightful places, to pressure the political class to follow democratic values, and to sustain a viable politics of memory regarding the Communist past. Despite the fact that the rightful moment for lustration and reparation had passed, it is never too late to reclaim knowledge of the past if it can be done. Understanding and social reconstruction, especially after a traumatic event, are vital to ameliorating the destruction of the social bond (Mitroiu 2015). Recuperative memory acts at this stage, offering space to different voices and narratives, increasing the capacity of counter-narratives and alternative memories to present themselves against the context of political amnesia.

Oral histories and testimonials

The performative nature of remembrance, Winter (2010, 20) points out, is “marked by the act of listening, of attending to the voices of victims and survivors.” Oral history is, in this way, one of the main resources of recuperative memory. Many victims of the Communist regime never had the option of writing their memoirs; oral narratives were the only way for them to transmit their stories (Reulecke 2010; Brockhaus 2012; Schwab 2012). Different interviews collected in personal or public archives reveal the mediated nature of collective memory. Two concepts must be mentioned: postmemory or second-generation memory, mediated through representation, projection, and creation, an “intersubjective

transgenerational space of remembrance” (Hirsch 2001, 221). This is the process of adopting the traumatic experiences of others, a sort of “retrospective witnessing by adoption” (Hirsch 2001, 221), or “prosthetic memory,” a concept developed by Alison Lansberg who defines it as “neither purely individual nor entirely collective” but emerging at “the interface of individual and collective experience” (2004, 19). These types of memories are described as “privately felt public memories that develop after an encounter with a mass cultural representation of the past, when new images and ideas come into contact with a person’s own archive of experience” (Lansberg 2004, 19). Both concepts sustain the mediation process; recuperative memory uses prosthetic memory via a “mediated representation (seeing a film, visiting a museum, watching a television miniseries)” (Lansberg 2004, 19).¹⁸

When the direct witnesses are no longer alive, the only sources for memory are mediated: interviews, films, documentaries, books, museums, and so on, or re-enactments of the past through rituals and commemorations. Recuperative memory becomes almost an obligation of the future generations and in some cases, the only available remembrance, as much as totalitarian regimes “engender the fear that nobody might remain to bear witness to the past and that this bearing of witness will have no listeners” (Rosch White 2003, 181). The testimonies not only have to inform others about past atrocities, but also help individuals develop personal recuperative memory. Individuals attempt to recreate their personal narratives and identities: “What the experience of trauma does is fragment the observing ‘I’, and the experience itself is no longer a whole. What we are left with are traumatic fragments” (Laub and Finchelstein 2010, 56). The process of giving testimony “allows for the fragments to find the frame of reference” (Laub and Finchelstein 2010, 56–57), helping the victims to reconstruct a narrative of past events and their own historical narrative.

The first public video testimonials of the terror imposed by the Communist regime were conducted by television producer Lucia Hossu Longin. After the fall of the Romanian Communist regime, she succeeded in producing a series of interviews with some notable figures of the anti-Communist resistance and many victims from different regions and social classes. Under the title *Memorialul Durerii* (The Memorial of Suffering) (2012), the 120 episodes provided for the first time in Romanian history a corpus of interviews and testimonials of different victims who suffered unimaginable tortures and humiliations, images from Communist prisons, photographs from victims’ personal collections and from the public archives, interviews with different historians, images of the places where people were deported, short videos from the National Films Archives and National Television Archive, among others. For the first time, the Communist prisons (including Sighet, Râmnicu Sărat, Jilava, Aiud, Gherla, Pitești, and Periprava), where thousands of people experienced torture, deprivation, hunger, humiliation and death, were publicly revealed and became a public reality.¹⁹ Hossu Longin (2013) confesses that the official institutions – which held numerous materials regarding the organization of the prisons and their employees, including the files of those who were condemned by the Communist regime – were reluctant to collaborate in any way. Furthermore, many of the witnesses and victims were old and suffering long-term physical and psychological effects of their past torture. As time passed, the perpetrators realized that there were no legal actions against them and no legislative systems in place to initiate such actions, and their confessions became difficult to obtain.

Audio-visual testimony, as a genre related to written autobiography and oral testimony (Assmann 2006), works not only at the cognitive level, but also at the emotional one. The impact of this television series on the collective memory was strong and the public as

listeners became co-witnesses (Assmann 2006, 265). The camera served “as a technological surrogate for an audience in potentia – the audience for which many survivors had been waiting for a lifetime” and allowed “public participation and intergenerational communication” (Pinchevski 2011, 257). For those who suffered deeply during the Communist terror, the chance to speak was the key that unlocked their testimonies. The objective was not for people to reinvent themselves or reinterpret their narratives, but to make them “publicly displayed” (Tileagă 2011), as well as to testify on behalf of those no longer present. By re-enacting the past, they integrated the personal memories of a traumatic past into the collective narrative, thus confronting the trauma and responding to the genuine need for restorative justice.

Aside from the implicit value of the personal testimony presented, the documentary points out the importance of incorporating the individual narratives into a collective national narrative. Aleida Assmann highlights that the function of video testimony “is to transform the ephemeral constellation of an individual voice and an individual face into storable information and to ensure its communicative potential for further use in an indefinite future” (2006, 270). The *Memorial* presents not only individual histories, but also a representative collective of entire generations who lived and died under the Communist regime and the history of their oppressors, mapping the identity and memory of a nation. Through individual stories, the collective past is recreated and some lies imposed by the Communist regime are contested. For example, the *Memorial* offers for the first time the image of the Romanian resistance that began in the mountains (Făgăraș, Banat, Vrancea)²⁰ and was brutally eradicated by Communist leaders. Through personal testimonies, this historical reality is recreated, and the documentary – combining video testimony, archival documents, and interviews – presents the oppression and torture experienced by those who opposed the Communist regime, their families and friends, and anyone who assisted them in any way. Even the simple act of offering members of the resistance food or accommodation for a night (Kideckel 1993; Iordachi and Dobrinu 2009)²¹ was brutally punished. Another example is that of forced collectivization, which deprived Romanian farmers of all their properties. Many of them tried to resist and fight for their land and goods, but their resistance was eradicated by armed forces, and many of them faced imprisonment, torture, and even death. There is other research based on oral history concerning the strategies adopted by the Communists and their effects on Romanian villages and peasants. Two rural communities are offered as examples: Nucușoara, a village where the anti-Communist movement was very active (Liiceanu 2012), and Scornicești, where the last Communist president, Nicolae Ceaușescu, was born, and where all the Communist rules were first implemented (Mungiu-Pippidi and Althabe 2002).

Supraviețuitorii. Mărturiile din temnițele comuniste ale României (The survivors: Testimonies from Romanian Communist prisons), edited by Raul and Anca Ștef and published in 2014 by Humanitas, is one of the few collections of interviews with survivors of the Communist regime. The 19 interviews included in this volume – too few when compared with the number of those who suffered under the Communist regime, but abundant in information and emotion – offer a valuable overview of the tragedies endured by the brave survivors of the regime. Many of the interviewees were sent to Communist prisons in their youth (many high-school students were arrested for their loyalty to their national and family values) and lived their whole lives under the permanent scrutiny of the Communist regime. Even if little information is offered about the mode of data collection, the volume is impressive in its openness and direct contact with those who survived some of the worst prison conditions, and the photographs used in this volume make the contact with these survivors and their stories all the more vivid. The testimonies cover a wide range of topics: the

conditions of arrest, descriptions of pre-Communist and post-Communist society, accounts of prison conditions and torture mechanisms, reflections on human nature and the political regime, advice for the younger generation, regrets and beliefs, and much more. Some common aspects unite these testimonies to tell a single story. Many of these survivors waited for years to tell their stories, never sharing their experiences with their families or friends for fear of repression or because they felt that their traumatic experience would be too difficult for their loved ones to understand. Their narratives show that the demarcation line between victims and perpetrators can in some cases become permeable, as with those who suffered what is called “Pitesti phenomenon” (Ștef and Ștef 2014, 94).

Oral history has also been used as a source for different books intended to revive the memory of a specific time, place, and community (e.g. Serbs, Germans, Hungarians, Jews, gypsies, and Romanians). Vultur (2000a, 2000b, 2002) is especially interested in the area of Banat and various communities who were persecuted under the Communist regime. One of her books concerns an episode of deportation in Bărăgan, a geographical area of Romania. On 18 June 1951, more than 44,000 people from Banat and Mehedinți were forced to leave their homes, and after a two-week journey in wagons used to transport animals, they were left without any means of survival in different parts of the Bărăgan region.²² Described as a political deportation (Vultur 1997), those selected for deportation were of different ethnicities, but the majority were peasants who lost all their belongings in the deportation. Vultur focuses especially on the social category of peasants because of their limited access to public discourse. Their testimonies are included in oral history archives, and can be used both to reconstruct the past as it was lived by those directly involved²³ and to analyze representations of past experiences in present discourses of memory.

Several national public initiatives have been undertaken to further the study of oral history as a successful tool in recollecting past events. For example, the Oral History Institute in Cluj-Napoca, founded in 1997, continues to be actively involved in different projects, publications, and educational initiatives in the research on Romanian Communism. Its research projects, which have resulted in a significant number of interviews, include topics such as the anti-Communist resistance, the memory of exile, the history of the Greco-Catholic Church during Communist years, and much more.²⁴

Life narratives through publications

Various Romanian publishing houses have created special collections dedicated to Romanian Communist history (Cesereanu 2005; Vultur 2007). Humanitas, for example, has a collection titled “The Process of Communism” that includes testimonials and analyses written by Romanian authors, and also translations of foreign literature on the subject. Some journals have dedicated issues²⁵ to this topic, and two in particular focus on the recent Communist past. *Memoria* (Memory) (<http://revista.memoria.ro>) has published many issues containing research and testimonials and personal and collective narratives. *Arhivele Totalitarismului* (The Archives of Totalitarianism) (<http://arhiveletotalitarismului.blogspot.ro/>), a peer-reviewed academic journal published by the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism of the Romanian Academy, publishes studies dedicated to the totalitarian experience in Romania and Europe, based on oral histories, historical documents from different archives, social history analyses, and reviews of the current literature. The journal has a large array of topics concerning the Communist period, including studies by various historians and researchers, biographies of Romanian dissidents and anti-Communist fighters, biographies of the victims and their perpetrators, the history of the Communist party and its main leaders, and the history of Romanian intellectuals and Church leaders. Of great

interest are the Internet platforms that combine photo archives, written or video testimonies, press photography, video footage, and so on. Such is the case with the online project *Memoria.ro* (<http://www.memoria.ro/>), created and financed by the Aspera Foundation as a digital library containing interviews, testimonies, oral histories, books, and photographs related to recent Romanian history. Many attempts to recover the past through autobiographical writings, television documentaries, commemorations, and so on, have been supported by The Association of the Former Political Prisoners in Romania (<http://afdpr.ro/>). Its more than 45 branches are involved in cultural, legislative, and educational projects covering the Communist regime and mediation of the traumatic memory of the past.

Those who survived prison, deportation, and torture kept on going not only for the sake of their own lives, but also to act as “witnesses to later generations” and as “relentless recorders.” Their writings preserve “the memory of social groups whose voice [sic] would otherwise have been silenced” (Connerton 1996, 15). Political repression targeted not only peasants who refused the forced collectivization of their properties and non-Communist politicians, but also the early leaders of the Communist Party, proponents of Greek Catholic and neo-Protestant beliefs (in the first year of the Communist regime), Orthodox priests (some years later) (Vasile 2005; Sullivan 2006), the military elite and those who organized the armed resistance, and people who helped anti-Communist movements. Autobiographical literature focusing on the inhumane conditions imposed in Communist prisons (Ierunca 1990; Giurescu 1994; Coposu 1998; Corbeanu 2002; Diaconescu 2003; Mărgineanu 2006; Cesereanu 2008) has expanded, reaching religious leaders (Wurmbrand 1969, 1970) of different faiths,²⁶ women who were tortured or detained (Valéry-Grossu 1976; Constante 1995; Samuelli 1997), and many others. It is worth mentioning that those who have been able to publish their confessions are mainly intellectuals. Thus, various experiences are lost and the language used in depicting the Communist regime and the traumatic past is determined by professional backgrounds.²⁷ A well-known collection of prison testimonies is Nicolae Steinhardt’s *Jurnalul fericii* (The happiness diary) (1991) – a mix of memories, prison testimonies, literary references, humor and irony, religious experiences, and life reflections. Steinhardt, a Jewish-born Romanian writer who became an Orthodox monk after he was released from prison, was arrested in 1958 alongside other well-known intellectual figures and spent years in prison (1959–1964). His refusal to betray his friends was catalogued by the Communist regime as “conspiracy against social order.” Many victims of the Communist regime were incarcerated under the same charge and the motivations for their arrests were often imaginary. Steinhardt’s manuscript knew a very restless history (Mareş 2013). It was confiscated in 1972 by Securitate, and Steinhardt wrote another version, also confiscated, but not before he managed to send some copies of the manuscript to some of his contacts in Western Europe. Monica Lovinescu arranged for the manuscript to be read on *Radio Free Europe* between 1988 and 1989. It was published in Romania in 1991, after the collapse of Communism, and thus became accessible to the public even before it was known to the small circle of intellectuals who read it in samizdat. Reading forbidden works was a crime very severely punished by the Communist regime; recall that Steinhardt himself was arrested for his inclusion in an intellectual group named Noica–Pillat after two Romanian intellectuals. Their main “crime” was reading and distributing forbidden materials. Samizdat functioned in Romania as a way of keeping alive the values of the old world, even under the brutal destruction of Communism. This is why some Romanian intellectuals prefer to speak about a “resistance through culture”²⁸ as a way of practicing dissidence, particularly since dissident acts were only possible at the individual level in Romania, which did not see the kind of collective movements seen in other Eastern European countries such as Hungary or Poland.

Special attention must also be given to Ioan Ioanid's book, *Inchisoarea noastra cea de toate zilele* (Our Prison from all Days) (1999). Its three volumes highlight not only the cruel realities of different prisons and methods of torture, but also a diagram of the figures making up the Romanian social fabric: intellectuals, former ministers, peasants, workers, and so on. The volumes also include more than 250 names and short descriptions of the prisoners encountered by Ioanid and the administrative personnel of the prisons. This type of personal testimony, which concerns the perpetrators and the victims who can also speak for those who are no longer alive, can be reinforced by more systematic research, as in the case of Cicerone Ionițoiu's work, *Victimele terorii comuniste: arestați, torturați, înțemnițați, uciși* (Victims of the Communism terror: arrested, tortured, imprisoned, killed) (2000–2010). It was conceived as a dictionary in 11 volumes written between 2002 and 2010. In 2013, The Civic Academy Foundation published *Cartea morților* (The book of the dead). Its 800 pages, coordinated by Romulus Rusan, are based on 86,000 documents from the archives of the Securitate. The documents represent the legal papers of those who were imprisoned: their names, the reason for their arrest and imprisonment (usually this section is unfilled), the court that sentenced them, the punishment received, and in very rare cases, the result of their imprisonment: deceased or executed.

Autobiographical writings attend to specific elements of former prisoners' experiences, such as the phenomenon of re-education, which started in Pitești prison (Magierescu 1994; Stănescu 2010)²⁹ but, fortunately, was not adopted on a large scale and so did not affect many of the other prison locations. Re-education meant transforming victims into perpetrators using torture and brainwashing to induce them to deny all previous values and ideals. The victims were typically young students detained for their political beliefs and their torture was unimaginable. Mechanisms of suppression and annihilation of any opposition, real or imaginary, confront readers with the violent reality of the Communist regime and for many of us, even the act of reading these testimonies can be difficult.

The biographical literature published after 1989 includes memoirs and often personal correspondence of those who escaped the Communist regime by leaving the country and seeking political asylum in the West. Their memoirs were edited by well-known Romanian publishers. For example, Monica Lovinescu and Virgil Ierunca worked for *Radio Free Europe* and spent their lives supporting Romanian dissidents³⁰ and intellectuals, and the anti-Communist movement. Without their help, many important figures who escaped from Romania may have never succeed in making their voices heard in Western Europe and even in Romania through the radio waves, despite the fact that listening to *Radio Free Europe* was a punishable crime.³¹

Not only the victims of the Communist regime have published their experience, though. Many former officials of the Communist party have attempted to present their version of past events as well. Many historians focus on the Securitate and its officers, trying to identify its inner mechanisms (see e.g. Dobre 2006; Troncota 2006; Oprea 2008; Burcea and Stan [2009] 2011). While the figure of the torturer is always present in the victim's testimonials, few studies develop accounts of those directly involved in the torture and maltreatment of prisoners. Such is the case of two books: *Lexiconul negru. Unelte ale represiei comuniste* (The Black Lexicon, Instruments of Communist Repression) (2001) and *Drumul Damascului. Spovedania unui fost torționar* (The Road to Damascus. Testimony of a Former Torturer) (1999). Doina Jela, the author of both works, offers a broad overview of the subject. The later of these was conceived as a sort of dictionary of the Communist perpetrators. The majority of the information contained therein was obtained from autobiographical literature and the little data that were offered by public institutions that could facilitate access to this type of information. Difficulty in gaining access to

the necessary archives derives from the lack of professional replacements for the old Communist structures. The author's main objective is to present a gallery of portraits and to sketch a typology of the torturer as the instrument of Communism, and this goal is enacted through interviews and an analysis of Franz Țandără's confession about his role as a torturer in Romanian Communist prisons. A prison guard by the name of Ioan Chertiție who worked at Baia Mare prison until 1992, offers a detailed inside perspective of the repressive and humiliating crimes committed against his victims in his book *Am fost torționar. Confesiunile unui gardian* (I was a Torturer: The Confessions of a Prison Guard) (2011, the first edition was published in 1992).

Lavinia Beta is a Romanian researcher who focuses on those who paved the way for the Communist regime. Many Communist portraits are outlined in her studies, such as that of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, a major party leader who was executed in 1954 by the same regime that he helped to establish and in which he was still a minister. Three volumes are devoted to Nicolae Ceaușescu, the dictator overthrown by the 1989 anti-Communist events. Beta is known to have interviewed many Communists and their heirs during her research. *Povești din cartierul Primăverii* (Stories from the Spring district) (2010) traces the stories of the children and grandchildren of the Communist elite. The Spring district was a Bucharest neighborhood where the Communist officials and former Romanian presidents lived, having access to special shops, schools, and hospitals. The stories of the second and third generation, in addition to their own contextual merits, offer a different perspective on the ways in which recuperative memory works, as these accounts use different languages and mechanisms of remembering. The stories tend to center on the predecessors' personalities and family memories – in which case political responsibility is completely forgotten – or on the political context, in which case the parents and grandparents become powerful political figures. Moral and political guilt, including doubts about their predecessors' actions or a sense of transgenerational responsibility, are not common elements in these discourses.

Literature, documentaries, and movies

Speaking about “literature as a medium of remembrance,” Erll and Rigney (2006, 112) point out that “collective memories are actively produced through repeated acts of remembrance.” Based on this concept of “literature as a medium of remembrance,” this section will highlight some cultural and historical productions, especially autobiographies, and some references to literary and artistic forms.

It is almost impossible to publish an autobiography without mentioning the Communist regime unless the author was born after 1989. The Communist regime was in power for such a long period of time, changed the lives of so many people, and influenced Romanian society so deeply, that people's memories have been irrevocably affected by it.³² The volume *Confesiunile unui cafegiu* (The Confessions of a Coffeehouse Owner) ([2008] 2014) sustains this claim. The author, Gheorghe Florescu, spent his entire adult life serving coffee, and his work was his passion. When he was not serving customers, he was learning coffee secrets from one of the best Armenian specialists of the day, Avedis Carabelaian, caterer of the Romanian Regale House. His memories guide us to new territory: that of commerce during this period of history. Having worked in one of the main commercial sectors, which was ultimately controlled by the Securitate, Florescu is a reliable witness with remarkably clear memories of people, gestures and events, stories, and old sayings. Together, his memories sketch a very colorful portrait, offering glimpses into life under the Communist regime and the chain of events that followed the 1989 regime

change. One of the great merits of this book is that it offers us a representation of the past as lived and seen by a man who dedicated his life to serving customers. The book is presented chronologically but also offers a transversal view of the past, revealing the details of daily life at the micro-level (personal lives) and the macro-level (Romanian society as a whole).

Two main directions are suggestive for the literary representation of the past: in one direction, there are very few writers who focus on the horrors of the Communist regime; in the other, there is a notable tendency for authors to write instead about common, everyday experiences that were concurrent with Communism.

Eginald Norbert Schlattner, a German-born Romanian citizen, was arrested in 1957 for political reasons and spent almost two years under police arrest where he was brutally beaten and tortured. He mentally succumbed and eventually collaborated with the Securitate, and his claims were used against five German language writers who spent many years imprisoned as result. Even if Schlattner's declarations were not the only proof of their condemnation, he was severely criticized for this and public opinion still holds him partly responsible. After 1990, he wrote three novels in German, later translated into Romanian, depicting the life of the German community in Romania during Communism's fiercest years and touching on events from his own life as well. His works mingle the traditions and values of the past with a critical account of his own collaboration, as well as the experience of those in the second generation who were blocked from certain social positions and educational institutions based on their "unhealthy background." His final novel, *Das Klavier im Nebel* (The Piano in the Fog) (2005, translated into Romanian in 2014), though little known, touches on a topic scarcely approached by Romanian literature. The potential guilt and sense of responsibility of the second or third generation, whether offspring of victims or perpetrators, are very little discussed in Romanian literature. The great number of people involved in the Communist regime, whether active members or informers, implies a great number of relatives, heirs of this dark burden, but for some reason, this subject has not sparked relevant debates, not even in the realm of fictional literature.

Another Romanian-born German writer, Herta Müller, represents a notable figure. She knew very well the harassment of the Securitate with its tactics of intimidation, manipulation, constant surveillance, humiliation, endless questioning, and physical and psychological terror. She successfully immigrated to Germany in 1987 and in this way managed to publish the works that were so problematic for the Romanian Securitate. Müller, who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2009, focused many of her writings on the violation of the inner space and human dignity imposed by the permanent surveillance of the Communist regime. For example, her novel *Der Fuchs war damals schon der Jäger* (Even Back then the Fox was the Hunter) (1992) describes the experience of a woman named Adina, whose apartment was searched by Securitate officers when she was not home. Their presence was announced by chopping parts of a fox fur that was in the apartment. What would they do when they finished chopping the fur? This type of question hovered in the minds of those followed by and intimidated by the Romanian political police. What would they do next? The effect was an individual asphyxiation, the sensation that it was not possible to breath or to live a normal life in a society where fear and oppression were always present. Müller's writings thus reveal the annihilation of any collective or individual opposition, the destruction of the social bond, and, bit by bit, of human dignity: the "breaking" of human nature.

Another literary approach looked at the Communist regime through the everyday accounts of the common people under the system. This approach appeals to nostalgia, a feeling that does not refer directly to the Communist regime itself, but to the experience

of growing up in a period when daily vicissitudes were more easily accepted, not for social reasons, but personal ones. Writer Dan Lungu is representative in this regard. His characters depict the daily experiences that shaped the personalities and mentalities of people living during this time period. Lungu's theories and personal sociological background are interwoven into his accounts. Together with Amelia Gheorghiuță, he also edited a volume (2014) based on life narratives and cultural consumption during the Communist period: books, authors, music, and so on. Lungu's novel *Sunt o babă comunistă!* (I'm a Communist Old Lady!) (2007) impressed readers with its power of recalling memories of daily life under Communism, using humor and common expressions from that time period, anecdotes and stories to accomplish this. Growing up under the Communist regime, then facing the new challenges that came with the institution of democracy, becomes the subject of Lungu's analysis. The novel contributes to recuperative memory by giving younger generations a more nostalgic account of their parents' and grandparents' lives and describing the social, political, and economic conditions that shaped their mentalities beyond the raw accounts of Communism and its impact on society. Thus, it is easy to see that recuperative memory is multifaceted, using different mechanisms and forms of recollecting the past, and showing different insights from different angles.

Recuperative memory also works through forms of mass media communication such as television and cinema. Many documentaries offer insights, including a film by the name of *Utopia impusă, Regimul comunist în România* (The Imposed Utopia, The Communist Regime in Romania) (2010), directed by Marius Th. Barna, which features interviews with historians, researchers, and artists about their experiences under Communism. Typical difficulties ranged from the obligation to be a member of the Communist Party, the permanent sense of terror, the desperate search for food, worries about their children's future, and the impossibility of creating or being promoted at work, among other things. Using footage from the Communist period, especially created to disseminate official propaganda, *Condamnați la fericire. Experimentul comunist în România* (Condemned to Happiness, The Communist Experiment in Romania) (1992), a documentary written and presented by Vladimir Tismăneanu, recreates step by step the historical events that left thousands of victims in its wake and destroyed Romanian society, in sharp contrast with the happiness and well-being that was supposed to characterize the life of the Romanian people. The documentary responds to the appeal for political and moral justice and knowledge of the past. Another documentary, *Născuți la comandă Decreței* (Born on Command: The Children of the Decree) (2005), is dedicated to the ban of abortion established in 1966, which reinforced a preexisting ban on the sale of contraceptives. The documentary recounts the consequences of this legislative measure: the death of many women and children, the increase in the orphan population, mandatory pregnancy testing, generations of unwanted children and their parents' struggle to keep them alive and healthy in a time where even basic needs presented an enormous problem. Buying milk alone meant waiting in a queue for hours. Other documentaries are dedicated to the total transformation of the country under Communism, such as: *În spatele cortinei de fier* (Behind the Iron Curtain) (2013) directed by Bogdan Mustață, which recounts the brutality of Romanian prisons and the traumas endured by the survivors and *Demascarea* (Uncovering) (2010) directed by Nicolae Mărgineanu, which is based on interviews with some of the survivors of the Pitești prison. The documentary *Autobiografia lui Nicolae Ceaușescu* (The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceaușescu) (2010), directed by Andrei Ujică, uses images from Romanian Television and from the Movie National Archive to present the figure of the last Communist president (1967–1989).

Movies offer a rather different approach, mixing collective and personal memories, clichés of the regime language, humor, and irony,³³ but also the changes imposed by the democratic system that followed and the ways in which the people coped during this transition period. Their target public is often the second or third generation, as cinematography provides a simple and popular way of connecting these generations with the experiences of their predecessors. Thus, different mechanisms of recuperative memory are used in order to make more accessible the reality of the past to the younger generations or to foreigners who did not experience the Communist regime directly. In the last decade, Romanian cinema has become an important part of European cinema³⁴ and it actively participates in international festivals. The past can be considered a considerable rich source for cinema topics and the mediated character of recuperative memory makes possible this approach to representing and discussing past traumas. Some movies use the Communist period as a general context, as in Cristian Mungiu' *Amintiri din epoca de aur* (Tales from the Golden Age) (2009); others narrate a single episode or a specific phenomenon, as in *4 luni, 3 săptămâni și 2 zile* (4 months, 3 weeks and 2 days) (2007) – also directed by Mungiu which presents the reality of an unwanted pregnancy; *Undeva în Est* (Somewhere in the East) (1991) – directed by Nicolae Mărgineanu, portrays the peasants' resistance to forced collectivization; and *Hîrtia va fi albastră* (The Paper will be Blue) (2006) and *Cum mi-am petrecut sfîrșitul lumii* (How I Spent the End of the World) (2006) focus on the theme of regime change in 1989.

Conclusion

Responsibility and guilt remain the core elements in shaping future discussions about Romania's Communist past. It is the lack of these elements from collective narratives that call into question the entire process of coming to terms with the past. The perpetrators of the Communist crimes are characterized as foreigners, and as the Communist "other."³⁵ Even in the discourse of those who were directly involved in these crimes, the signs of moral guilt are conspicuously absent: "Soviet domination also allowed Eastern Europeans to blame a foreign power for their dictatorial experience, exonerating their own societies and elites to some extent" (González Enríquez 2001, 221). Responsibility and moral guilt are rarely mentioned in public debates, literary discourses, or any other forms of recuperative memory, and they are not generally considered part of the process of coming to terms with the past. There is no evidence of literary works or artistic representations wherein the children of those responsible confront their parents' guilt or feel in any sense responsible for the atrocities committed against their own countrymen. Thus, a question is raised: Can we truly put the past behind us? Recuperative memory cannot be passive. It is an active and engaged process of selection and (re)construction of different historical representations, "endowed with political meaning" (Said 2000, 185). What is at stake is the process of coming to terms with the violent past through private and public acts of remembrance (Rigney 2012), and sometimes more specifically reviving individual and communal memories of those who suffered or died under Communism (Assmann 2012). In Romania's case, this process seems to be a sinuous one, founded on a difficult acceptance of the past caused by political struggles for power and economic interests. The politics of memory was not a priority for the Romanian political class, thus the declassification of secret files, restitution of property, and criminal prosecution of the officials rather than the collaborators alone have been difficult to initiate. This difficulty is compounded by willful public amnesia and the fact that many Communist officials continue to occupy important political roles. Many other countries in Eastern Europe have experienced similarly repressive regimes and were confronted with the long process of coming to terms with these

experiences, but “very few have systematically avoided confronting the past” the way Romania has (Stan 2009c). In other post-Communist societies (see e.g. Estonia or Poland), the process of reckoning with the past included a more intense commitment on the part of the victims and especially civil society, as well as the active engagement of official agents (Mitroiu 2015).

Thus, in the Romanian politics of memory, it must be underlined that recuperative memory not only helps us to access information about the past, it also serves as a normative memory (Poole 2008), reminding us of our responsibility to the past and its victims and creating a “shared memory” as a “cement for the community” (Margalit 2004, 67). This type of memory requires communication and integration of the perspectives of people who experienced the same events in different ways. Shared memory “travels from person to person through institutions, such as archives, and through communal mnemonic devices, such as monuments and the names of streets” (Margalit 2004, 54). As this study has discussed, recuperative memory uses different languages and mechanisms, and offers a multifaceted view of one of the most difficult and contested periods in Romanian history. The result is a map of national identity as it relates to the country’s recent past. Recuperative memory offers valuable insights into this past, and aids in the process of reckoning (Stan 2013) with its traumas. Essentially, recuperative memory offers rich material not for the theoretical and practical framework of transitional justice mechanisms, which need to be further implemented in Romania, but also for sustaining a well-developed politics of memory. Finally, it involves the phenomenon of postmemory experienced by those who did not live directly under the Communist terror but gain understanding via the mediation of oral histories, written testimonies, literature, artistic representations, television, and cinema.

Funding information

This work was supported by the UEFISCDI [grant number PN-II-RU-TE-2014-4-0010].

Notes

1. Gabriel Andreescu’s (2013) *Carturari, opozanti si documente. Manipularea Arhivei Securitati* reveals the difficulties of interpreting historical documents, especially with the Securitate archive documents that concern public figures or well-known intellectuals.
2. See Tismaneanu, Dobrinco, Vasile, eds. (2007).
3. See, for example, the chapter “Romania” in Stan (2009a), especially 137–140.
4. The Securitate was the Romanian political secret police during the Communist regime; it controlled the private and public lives of Romanian citizens through mass indoctrination and manipulation, censorship, and hard repression.
5. For example, in February and March 2014, the CNSAS in collaboration with other institutions organized an exposition using archive documents and photographs dedicated to the Securitate as an instrument of dictatorship.
6. In elections (e.g. in 2000 and in 2004), the CNSAS failed to unveil the identity of informers and Securitate agents, and forgetting the imperative of neutrality, CNSAS leaders often sided with political parties (Stan 2013). Its internal disputes, methodological errors in analyzing information, and errors in past verdicts resulted in public disregard of CNSAS activities and, after so many political attempts to manipulate the truth, a general neglect of the past. Meanwhile, informers were the only figures exposed for their crimes, and the main perpetrators, those who had high-ranking positions and who were directly involved in crimes were forgotten, until eventually many of them died (Alexandru Nicholski, Alexandru Drăghici, or Gheorge Crăciun) or were too old to be incarcerated.
7. See, for example, the activity of The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile (ICCMRE).

8. The first organization created in post-Communist Romania, The National Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (<http://www.totalitarism.ro/>) was founded in 1993 under the umbrella of the Romanian Academy. Its publications include the journal *Archives of Totalitarianism*. Another example is The Romanian Institute for Recent History (<http://irir.ro>), a privately funded non-governmental institution, founded in 2000 as the result of the initiative of Coen Stork, former ambassador to Romania from Holland. The Centre of Investigation of the Communist Crimes (CICCR) (<http://www.condamnareacomunismului.ro/>), was founded in 2010 to identify cases of human rights violation under Communism. Possibly the best known is the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile (ICCMRE) (<http://www.iiccr.ro/en/>), founded by a governmental decree that united two previously separate organizations.
9. For example, some journals publish weekly articles regarding former victims/perpetrators, major Communist figures, the history of the Romanian Communist Party, and so on.
10. I am referring here not only to the documents and Securitate files that were missing or destroyed after the fall of the Communist regime, but also the personal testimonies of those discouraged by the political class from stepping forward and revealing the details of their traumatic past. Many survivors kept silent after the regime change, either afraid that the Communists were still in power or feeling neglected by the public and suppressed by political agendas.
11. See, for example, the destruction of Securitate files after the Revolution; the case known as the Berevoiești affair is still not elucidated. Under Ion Iliescu's political regime, in 1990, some 90 sacks of Securitate documents were allegedly thrown into a ravine to be destroyed. According to the media, this was not an isolated incident.
12. Memories can be subjected to manipulation and various attempts to rewrite the facts. It is very strange that the former President Ion Iliescu, who was also a well-known Communist and who became the first president after the 1989 events, was also the president and founder of the Institute of the Romanian Revolution in December 1989. His role in the 1989 events is not very well established, but there are many suspicions about his activities.
13. <http://www.memorialsighet.ro>; the website can be accessed in four different languages.
14. Please see www.inscop.ro, accessed July 17, 2015.
15. Beșliu (2014); see also Dragomir (2011) and Todorova and Gille (2010).
16. More information about the history of the Law of Lustration in Romania can be found in Dix and Rebegea (2010), and also in the chapter "Lustration" in Stan (2013).
17. In 2013, two former Communist prison commanders (Alexandru Vișinescu and Ioan Ficior) were placed under investigation on charges of crimes against humanity. Alexandru Vișinescu was charged in July 2015 and sentenced to 20 years in prison.
18. For the concept of mediation, see also Erll and Rigney (2009).
19. In 2008, a dictionary of the Romanian Communist prisons was published by Andrei Muraru.
20. See also the activity of the "Fundăția Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu" (Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu Foundation). Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu was the leader of the Făgăraș anti-Communist fighters group, active between 1947 and 1956.
21. The legal consequences varied from up to 20 years in prison (including torture, starvation, and the loss of the personal properties) to death.
22. The conditions were very difficult, many died from cold, hunger, exhaustion, or various diseases. They were heavily guarded and questioned or tortured in a perpetual attempt to coerce them into collaboration.
23. Another direct testimonial is that of Spijavca (2004). She lived the nightmare of deportation together with her husband and children and kept a journal about her family's suffering.
24. For more details, see <http://institute.ubbcluj.ro/>.
25. See, for example, *Echinox* issues 13 (2007): "Gulag and Holocaust," 15 (2008): "Mémoires de prison," 19 (2010): "Communism: Negotiation of Boundaries." See also *History of Communism in Europe*, vol. 1 (2010) "Politics of Memory in Post-Communist Europe."
26. Lavinia Stan (2009a, 142) concludes that after the Greek Catholic Church was dismantled in 1948, its six bishops and some 600 of its priests who refused to convert to Orthodoxy were imprisoned.
27. Among other volumes that present the Communist regime, Anita Nandris-Cudla *20 de ani în Siberia. Amintiri din viață* (2006) depicts the years she spent in deportation in Siberia and offers deep insight into the suffering experienced by those deported to Communist camps who lost all their properties, and more often their lives as well.

28. This concept was amply argued in the post-Communism Romanian cultural sphere, and used by Romanian television in a documentary series under this title, focusing on cultural life during the Communist period; the documentary is now transmitted weekly at midnight, thus it targets, voluntary or not, a limited audience. <http://www.tvrplus.ro/editie-rezidenta-prin-culturala-287394>, accessed August 2, 2015.
29. See also Alan Hartwick's documentary *Beyond Torture: The Gulag of Pitesti, Romania*, and the website <http://www.fenomenulpitesti.ro>.
30. Their anti-Communist activity was made possible after the first decades of the Communist regime, when the fact the West was "watching" Romanian Communism began to matter to the regime in power. Though this movement was not one of the most remarkable of its kind, many risked their lives and the lives of their families in order to oppose the regime. Among those killed for their dissidence were Mihai Botez, Paul Goma, Doina Cornea, and Gheorghe Ursu.
31. Otilia Răduleț remembers how her daughter asked her why her father listened to the radio with his winter coat on his head (Ștef and Ștef 2014).
32. That is why many novels set in the Communist period can be read as containing biographical references. For example, a character's childhood might represent the memories and experiences of real-life figures who had been children during that time period.
33. For this topic, see Georgescu (2010).
34. More on this subject in Nasta (2013).
35. The report of the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania discusses the root of public condemnation of Communism in Romania. See in Tileagă, "Communism in retrospect." For example, page 471: "The narrative of Communism is not self-condemnatory or self-blaming, but rather Communism is distanced from (the national) self."

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