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DOMESTICATION OF THE MARKET? HOUSEHOLDING AND POST-PEASANT SOCIETY IN ROMANIA

The American anthropologist Gerhard Creed was writing in the 1980th about what he considered to be a meaningful phenomenon of socialism itself: *the domestication of industry*, "a shorthand expression for the containment of non-agricultural forces, specifically the compromise of industrial discipline and the restriction of industrial ascendancy in economic decision making, all as a concession to agrarian exigencies" (Creed, 1995: 528). This was to mean the complex interactions, most of them placed in the "social space defined by the household", resulting in "an adjustment in the industrial sector" in order to cope or react to "agrarian exigencies". By this, Creed also reminds us about "the continuing role of agriculture" beyond and despite the ideological, political and economical supremacy of industrialization and urbanization during socialism. "Domestication" of industry via what some other researchers would call "householding" was a *sui generis* part of "peasant resistance", documented all over the world mainly after the 1980th (e.g. Scott, 1985, Kearney, 1996). As phrased by David Kideckel, "though individuals were diminished, household social networks were just as important as they always been. Networks, in fact, mediated the struggle between household and state." (Kideckel, 1993: 103)

Recent accession to the European Union means a speedy and dramatic shift in economic culture and practices toward a common market economy and behavior. How will Romania, with about half of its population leaving in villages and about one third of its active population involved in agriculture fit into this emerging *post-peasant society*? What will be the main tensions and the short term adjustments of this emerging social context?

Without aiming to advocate for one scenario or another, the present essay intends to explore the role households and household centered economy actually play and will play in this context. Will this mean a kind of "domestication" of the ideologically, politically and economically supremacy of market economy everybody has to cope with? Our view is that households will go on imposing some exigencies on and offering some solutions to people rooted in rural-agricultural areas, being thus a lasting partner of the formal market economy and its social kind of relations. Far from being intended for disappearance, *householding* is a vivid and long lasting *dynamism*, now reframing and reshaping economic, social and identity processes in the new rural milieu, where the peasant started to be a "worker-peasant" already during socialism. A way of resistance, it may be a way of learning and experiencing too.

1. The principle of *householding*

Beyond actually existing forms of household, Karl Polanyi was pointing in his reference book at the "principle of householding", considered to be a third, genuine, "form of economic integration", distinct from reciprocity and redistribution: "the third principle, which we will call the principle of householding, consists in production for one's own use", its pattern being "the closed group" (Polanyi, 1944:53). Irrespectively to the shape and volume of these self-sufficient units, "the principle was invariably the same, namely, that of producing and storing for the

satisfaction of wants of the members of the group' (idem). As underlined by Halperin, "the institutional arrangements that organize householding can be as varied as the patriarchal family, the village settlement, the seigniorial manor, the Roman *familia*, the South Slav *zadruga*, or the average peasant-holding of Western Europe" (Halperin, 1994: 147-148). Polanyi is thus building, in fact, a "formal model" of an economic process that may occur in non-capitalist as well as in capitalist societies, in small, "traditional" societies, as well as in complex, (post)industrial ones, the "nature of the institutional nucleus (being) indifferent" (Polanyi, idem).

Rhoda Halperin moves further in the steps of Polanyi: "the model of householding can be further elaborated if householding is understood as the provisioning of a group by means of circular flows of resources, goods, and services. Goods and services move in ways that articulate different patterns of economic organization, that is, different economic institutions. For example, people work in factories for wage labor, they work for direct subsistence on their own family farms, and they bring goods produced in family gardens to sell in flea markets, where they also buy and sell used goods from a variety of sources (family goods, garage sale items, goods from other marketplaces) alongside of goods that are produced by the capitalist factory system and bought by vendors as seconds or rejects" (Halperin, op. cit.: 145-146). This kind of arrangements may extend and cover what Halperin calls "regionally based kin networks", i.e. kin networks over large spaces in the geographical proximity of cities. In such cases, "people in hamlets interact economically in complex ways with kin who live dispersed throughout the region" (Halperin, op. cit.: 154). It is similar to what David Kideckel (op. cit.) described in a socialist context as "transitional households" and even more so to what I coined as "diffuse household" (Mihailescu, 2000, Mihailescu and Nicolau, 1995).

In all these cases, householding (or the different types of particular existing households) stands for a way or process of *economic integration* of diverse and flexible activities aiming at the provisioning of a smaller or larger family based group for its own sake and satisfaction via "circular flows of resources, goods, and services". But there is more in it than "economic integration" (Polanyi, op. cit.) or "socioeconomic strategies" (Kideckel, op. cit.). Halperin is aware of this when connecting household with (groups of) kinship: "The goal of the family economy – he advocates – is not to ascend the ladder of social stratification; rather, it is to make ends meet by keeping the kin network intact through everyday, ongoing economic activities, often in seasonal cycles. (...) Here, occupation is secondary in defining who people are. The family network (who are 'my people') defines self and person. 'The Kentucky way' (in folk terms), in all of its various forms and manifestations, provides people with and identity precisely because it also enables them to make ends meet. Thus, a family imperative guides people's economic activities. Kinship orders livelihood processes through the pattern of householding." (Halperin, op. cit.: 164)

This relation between economic activities and kinship is not just a functional relation between existing entities: existing or emerging "kinship networks" are negotiating and distributing between their members available "livelihood processes" in a way to best satisfy the common interests of this group of people. Householding is about the building of a *group of Us*, which shares the feeling that it is good to *be* together and to *do* things together for the sake of all of Us. More or less common socioeconomic strategies are thus chosen because there is already a "group of Us" and there is such a network because it helps taking some common useful socioeconomic strategies. Together, they frame a kind of "common economy". But what is circulating in such networks is largely exceeding the strict exchange of goods

and services: it is also about sentiments, values, prestige, perceptions of personal worth, social recognition, etc. One should accept that – far from any kind of sentimentalism, as Max Weber would have said, – there is a *sense of community* in householding, that the *meaning* of being together exceeds the fact of working together.

This is the reason we prefer to look back at the way Weber coined his concept of *Vergemeinschaftung*, turning the substantive “community” into a verb, just as in the case of household – householding. Even more, we also believe that the weberian approach to domestic economy may help beyond this precise issue and might prove to be beneficial in the effort to describe and to frame the process of householding.

But, in order to do this, we have to start from very far...

2. Domestic unit, co-residence unit, household

To define the apparently "obvious" unit which is the household seems far more difficult, especially when rediscussed in the larger context of the "elementary" forms of co-existence. Here we have an interconnection of two specific major criteria, which often overlap to the point of confusion: the criterion of kinship and that of territory (to which sometimes add the criteria of age, sex, etc.). "Although they are no longer seen as an evolutionist sequence, as would be the famous "passage from kinship to territory" set forth by Sumner Maine in 1861 and shared by many other evolutionists, this dichotomy is still used and therefore causes problems. Although anthropologists usually use the terms of "family" and "household" rather vaguely and do not assign them strict and formal definitions, most of them admit however that there is a certain difference between the two terms. Thus, it seems that the difference is most likely to be accepted by anthropologists who oppose kinship and propinquity as two essential features which define their affiliation to family and household, respectively." (Yamagisako, 1979, p. 162). Kinship and territorial propinquity thus function as two criteria which allow the evaluation of certain forms of social organization, both at an extended level, for an entire settlement, and at a more restricted level, where one must keep in mind the dichotomy between *family* (the kinship criterion) and *domestic group* (the propinquity criterion, that is the one of co-residence). This is because not all domestic groups of co-residence are necessarily families, and even less the same family type and, especially because the relations between the members of a domestic group are very often defined first according to their co-residence, during the expanding period of that co-residence and only secondly, on the grounds of kinship relations. Thus, for instance, a boy who gets married and has his own house is still seen as a member of his parents' family, but he ceases to have the same rights as when he was a member of his parents' household. In fact, in the languages of South-Eastern Europe, the very term of "family" appears as a neologism of a rather recent origin, adopted under the influence of Western cultures, especially the Italian and French ones. The peasants themselves, as people from the past, in general, do not use this term, but other terms which have another meaning and another coverage, as would be "household", "mikokiato" (for Greeks), "domacinstvo" (for Southern Slavs) etc. Therefore, "if we want to give a precise name to the persons who live inside a household, we must use the notion of domestic group, which allows us to understand the fact that these persons live and work together, that they own the same property, have the same religious holidays, without ruling off the idea that they are somehow related." (P. Stahl, 2000:192).

The problem is that this list of shared activities - to a lesser or greater extent - can (also) be shared with persons from outside what we consider to be a domestic

group, while a series of these activities are achieved together with other people (also). While arguing with this concept which often slips between morphological units and function repertoires, Bender proposes the replacement of the term *household* with that of *group of co-residence*, while separately analyzing the domestic functions usually assigned to the household. His example gives a clearer explanation to the usefulness of this distinction. In the Mundurucu community, two types of "groups of co-residence" may be identified: one is made of men who live in men's houses, and the other is made of women and children who live separately. Neither of these groups can be seen as "households" or "domestic groups", as their domestic functions are met only by the merging of the two co-residential groups at village level, which then makes up the real "domestic unit". (Bender, 1967).

We may and should make a difference, it seems, between forms of co-residence in space, where territory limits the human existence, on the one hand, and forms to distribute and allocate the "function repertoire" between these spatial units, on the other hand. But this calls for an essential methodological requirement: in this case, we cannot isolate the minimal co-residence units from the other spatial forms which basically include them. We cannot analyze, let's say, the household, without approaching the notions of propinquity, village, village communities etc., of which that household is an organic part. And this is for a good reason: the domestic unit we called "household" will have (more or less) other functions and will be different, from the perspective of its legitimate relations with the propinquity, the village etc.

It is in this sense that we must understand the distinction Weber makes, between "domestic community" and "propinquity". The first notion refers to "a community which covers the needs for work and relationships" (Weber, 1971:379), while the latter refers to "extraordinary" needs. "This term does not define only the "primitive" form of relations occurring as a result of field proximity or of people inhabiting those places, but also, in general, it defines the entire community of interests, be they ephemeral or perennial, which result from the geographical proximity or from the residential space of more or less permanent residents." (idem:380). The basic feature which Weber assigns to these propinquiries is the economic "brotherhood" or "fraternity", or the "mutual help offered in the absence of any sentimentality" (idem:382). From this perspective, Weber states that the village of farming communities was a "typical propinquity community" (idem:380). While trying to go beyond the boundaries of a strict social morphology, Weber wants to describe the "domestic community" and the "propinquity" through the basic functions that those have to achieve, rather than by a certain general internal differentiating structure. But this approach also creates problems, as it is quite difficult to make a general distinction between "the needs for work and relationships" and the "economic brotherhood", as well as between basic ordinary domestic functions and extra-domestic and extra-ordinary functions.

It is more and more obvious that all these can be properly defined and understood only in a correlated manner. Both the "domestic community" and the "village propinquity" set up their particular personality, when confronted. This is what Margaret Mead seems to suggest, starting from a comparison between *zadruga*, as a "communal" domestic unit and the Romanian community of a joint ownership type, seen as a "communitary village": "There where the affiliation to the village and its responsibilities are much more reinforced than kinship affiliation and responsibilities (...), each biological family - or, instead of a man and a woman, a man and his mother or sister - will set up a household which has the role of a full social unit within the structure of the village." (Mead, 1976:XXIV). Therefore, one might

say that the elementary co-residential units (the Romanian household, the Slavic *zadruga*) define their co-existence tasks in the context of their affiliation to larger units of "propinquity" and according to the relations of "economic brotherhood" which these units credit. As we will see, the Romanian household has usually not "expanded" while a series of "domestic" activities were usually passed on to certain communitary instances of the village of the "shared property" type (the representatives of the village about whom Henri Stahl talks, etc.). Complementary, in the Southern Slavic space, the domestic unit had the tendency to expand, more or less, as it assumed a wider repertoire of non-transferable domestic tasks for itself.

Beyond this more or less regional/particular context lays a general rule: "the smallest social units" are set up and define their own profile only inside and by their relations that are accepted by larger social units which include them and with which they have relations of "economic fraternity" of a more or less defined nature. Accordingly, "the analysis unit" must be wider itself, as it has to cover this defining context, as widely and as consistently as possible.

But what is this "economic brotherhood" referring to, precisely? "This brotherhood", says Weber, "expresses itself in the form of a mutual support, especially when the resources of a domestic community prove insufficient. It is a "voluntary support" [*Bittleihe*] - a loan of useful goods which has no reward, namely a support offered in the form of labour, in cases of extreme emergency." (Weber, op. cit., p.87). Furthermore, Weber explicitly invokes the Roman idea of *mutuum*, thus implicitly referring to the relations of gift and counter-gift, in general. The "economic brotherhood" refers, therefore, to certain forms of exchange and is constituted as "propinquity" - that is a certain affiliation unity - through and by means of performing these particular exchanges. In its turn, the more restricted affiliation unit of the "domestic community" will also be defined according to the means and degrees of participation/non-participation in these exchanges. In Weber's terms, we are dealing here with "a domestic communism with no deliberate distribution, as each member brings his own contribution according to his capabilities, while meeting his necessary needs (provided there are enough available goods)" (idem:83-84). In other words, we are dealing with a sort of "joint property" of exchanges which takes place inside the inner circle of the "domestic community", without ever being self-sufficient, but having to use different forms and degrees of extra-domestic "economic brotherhood". Moreover, we prefer to define the domestic unit as a unit of domestic functions which are usually, but not necessarily achieved, as Weber thinks, within the co-residence location unit. This co-residence location unit shouldn't be mistaken for the residence unit, even though, most often, the two notions are superposed¹. While defined by exchanges of the "domestic communism" type, the affiliation domestic unit must be permanently co-defined, by means of extra-domestic relations, with the "economic brotherhood" which defines another affiliation unit, that of "propinquity". Which, in its turn... Finally, all these steps must be followed to ensure the access to the resources of the respective peasant communities and to the way of their distribution and capitalization between the various units which make up those communities.

Thus, we are dealing with a much broader issue: that of the relation between *resources* and *affiliation units*, negotiated by *forms of exchange*.

3. Forms of exchange

For reasons which we will clarify later, we will start with the problem of the forms of exchange. In this sense, we will start with several general remarks about exchange, now seen in its broadest sense, as a circulation of goods and signs.

First of all, we must admit from the very beginning that we chose to approach this issue starting with the exchanges, mostly because we embrace the approaches that see the exchange as a primary and fundamental phenomenon of social life. From this perspective, the socialized exchange is no less than a *cultural* solution of the *natural* fight for subsistence, which thus marks the dichotomy between animals and man as a social being.

As regards the anthropological territories of exchange, they are "as diverse as ethnography itself, but there are two main views: (1) Some theorists choose the traditional trend of Hobbes, Adam Smith and Bentham. Society is seen as a collection of egotistical actors, while the exchange between them is seen as a *means* to achieve personal gains or mere satisfaction. *Kula*, for instance, has been explained as a sort of non-aggression pact; under this cover, the trade with useful goods can be carried on safely. Certain exchange structures, says this group of theorists, are meant to produce certain "political" consequences, and, through these, to secure the territory and gain access to the wanted resources; the participation in the exchanges may be a means to gain social prestige. (2) According to an alternative theory derived from the works of Malinowski, Mauss and Levi-Strauss, the exchange itself is a *means*, as it sets up and, at the same time, mediates the distinction between the self and the other. Material exchanges express the moral order of society. From this perspective, the exchange is a fundamental condition of social life and cannot be reduced to egotism. Thus, Malinowski insisted on the fact that the *kula* phenomenon is based only on reciprocity, while Levi-Strauss made similar statements about marriage." (Gudeman, 1985:284).

In fact, any exchange, seen in its broad sense - maybe even too broad - that we have adopted here, refers to the *relations* of exchange. This means that any exchange "sets up and, at the same time, mediates the distinction between the self and the other", from this point of view being both a means and an end to the formation of groups of *We* and *Them*, as well as a means to mediate the exchange relations between these groups. Thus, we'd rather refer in short to a possible classification of the main typical forms of *relations of exchange*.

Usually, the exchange is seen as a relation that is socially settled by two subjects between whom goods and signs circulate under specific circumstances. This circulation and the ways to settle cover a wide range which can be ordered according to several essential types. From this point of view, we may remind Karl Polanyi, for instance, who identifies three types of exchanges: a) *mutual exchanges* (of the gift exchange type), which mainly activate social relations; b) *redistributed exchanges* (taxes etc.), which are linked to the authorities and c) *market exchanges* (barter and sales), which aim at a good redistribution (Polanyi, 1957). From another perspective, certain more recent theories of exchange criticize the "classic" formula for its simplicity which tends to assimilate society with market, while considering not only individual interactions, but mostly the exchanges between groups or entire social systems. The fundamental idea which this approach brings is that, while participating in systems based on loyalty and good sharing, individuals can produce and obtain benefits, not necessarily from their interaction with others, but from their general participation in the system. This vision wants to assimilate societies or activities which do not depend on the market system, thus becoming a *general* theory of

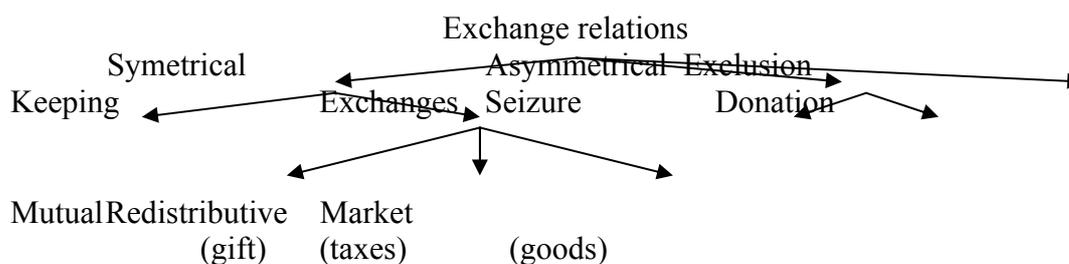
exchange (e.g. Cook, 1987). Finally, again from another perspective, a series of anthropologists proposed to approach the exchange from the perspective of the significances assigned to it by the actors themselves. In this sense, "to see what actually is achieved by an exchange, one must examine the cultural metaphors on which the exchange is founded", in various social contexts, instead of having assigned a general nature of one type or another (Gudeman, op. cit.: 284).

No matter how the exchange partners and their relations are conceived, these forms of exchange do not cover what we understand here by circulation of goods and signs, that is the broadest meaning of exchange. Thus, starting from Mauss, but meaning to go beyond his theories, Annette Weiner (1992) stressed the fact that not everything makes the object of exchange, not even in those societies famous for their wide gift exchange area. Even for the Kwakiutl population, whom Mauss also studied, there are, for instance, two types of bronze: the first ones circulate through the collective gift and counter-gift networks and the other ones cannot be estranged (Mauss himself calls these *sacra* for families), which circulate only inside a group set by kinship. Therefore, Godelier concludes that "human society owes its existence to two sources: *exchange* and contract, on the one hand, and non-contractual bonds or *assignment*, on the other hand." (Godelier, 1996:53). In fact, this "assignment" which Godelier, starting from Weiner's assertions, opposes to the "exchange" is rather a *keeping* (Annette Weiner explicitly mentions the *keeping* inside a group determined by affiliation, which defines itself through this keeping; this identity keeping may take the form of certain assignments from generation to generation, provided that the respective group also "preserves" itself in time, together with his representative possessions. But what is obvious is that the exchange relations are of another nature, when centered upon keeping in circulation goods and signs, inside a well defined group - which defines itself (also) through this keeping - and when this circulation is much more extended, crossing many other groups, among which there are only reciprocity and parity constraints.

We cannot close this very brief presentation of the main forms of exchange relations, before making mention of the timeless temptation for *seizure* relations, that is that particular type of *asymmetrical* "exchange" in which all is taken and nothing is given back, where goods and signs have only a one-way circulating pattern - intentionally, at least. Logically, this asymmetrical form of seizure should find its mirrored pattern in the asymmetrical form of *donation*. From a sociological point of view, however, this is rather a suspicious case, as it usually disintegrates into one or the other forms of exchange.

Finally, the approach on forms of exchange relations would not be complete without invoking *exclusion*, non-relation, and those limits of one nature or another which forbid, in one way or the other, the circulation of goods and signs beyond this limit. Moreover, the specific consistency of the exchanges is always formed as opposed to what and/or who is excluded from these exchanges. The sphere of exclusion is, therefore, beside the sphere of legitimate exchange relations, like a sort of a shadow.

All these could be summed up into the following scheme:



4. Units of affiliation (I): *community and organization*

If we look at these exchange forms from the perspective of the partners involved in the exchange and their mutual relations, it seems that these are developing between an extreme coordinate, centered on a restricted group of participants, who keep the circulation of goods and signs only for themselves, sharing all these in one way or the other, and the opposed extreme, where circulation is made in one sense or the other between partners who are more or less different and distant. We could mention an extreme of "closing" and one of "opening" the exchanges. But it would be wrong to think that these extremes are social exchange "forms", or closed "social units" and open "social units", respectively. Any community, no matter how small or large, knows both orientations to various degrees and is closed in certain ways and open in others - and this is for the simple reason that any community defines itself and functions by and through its relations of exchanges with a minimal number of other communities. Even the smallest and most isolated community cannot "keep" everything inside its affiliation unit, as well as it doesn't let everything circulate in other mutual exchanges which are simpler or more complicated, as both orientations exist to a lesser or greater extent. Therefore, it would be more accurate to talk about opening and closing *processes*. This is what Max Weber suggests in his particular perspective on economic relations.

While classifying the economic field in the sphere of access to "rare resources" (which are in their turn defined by their relation to a "subjective feeling" - Weber, op. cit.:51), Weber proposes - without actually calling it "a law" - a true economic *law*: "the more the number of competitors, as related to the possible success opportunities, the more the persons participating in this fight are interested in limiting competition, one way or the other." (idem:55). This "limitation" is made by the closing and opening processes, both related to the "outside medium" and the "inside" one. Thus, for instance, "the competitors who adopt a common behaviour towards the outside medium make up a "community of interests", while competing with each other." "The aim is always to more or less *block* these strangers' access to the social or economic chances which exist in a certain definite context." (idem:55, 56). This does not necessarily mean that, on the "inside", all members have free and equal access to the respective resources, as "these chances can also be, in various ways, closed from inside" (idem:57), thus setting the line between more or less strict categories of beneficiaries (which finally means other "closing" circles). At the other extreme, Weber sets up the freedom "of chances adopted by individuals inside the monopoly", which offer them the possibility to "make exchanges from the outside" (ibidem). Weber seems to place this maximal "opening" within the market sphere, as a "break-up" from all the former tendencies to make up a community.

Inspired by Lemieux, Godbout proposes a distinction which belongs to this perspective, to a certain extent, namely between *networks* and *machinery* (the concept having the same sense as in "state machinery"): here is how Lemieux defines the

concept of "machinery": "By machinery we understand the group of social actors who are specifically organized for the external regulation of the public." The main trait of this definition is that there is a *public*, a group of individuals who have an external relationship with the organization, without being total strangers (...) This functioning way may be described by saying that these systems of organization are regulated by different sources or that they are heteronomous in themselves. They are founded upon this dual background, upon the break-up between them and those who are their very reason to exist: their public. On the contrary, the networks don't have any public. They refer to regulation processes which address an entire group of members. This is why we can say that a network functions by regulating itself. (...) This lack of hiatus between producer and user is typical of networks and intrinsic for the communitary pattern." (Godbout, 2000:10-11). Even though this "breach between producers and users" is essential and can be found at the foundation of Market and State - as Godbout insists on reminding us - the polarity between self-regulation and hetero-regulation is much wider and does not wait the formation of Market and State, in order to function. Any exchange between a "We" and a "They" instance, whoever these might be, implies such a differentiation. This kind of exchanges, even if minimal, has taken place and still does all around the world. Although community networks do not have a properly set "public", they always have other communities with which they entertain relations of one kind or another, while having a different way of organizing their activity when compared to other communities, thus introducing one "hetero-regulation" form or another in their own functioning way. In other words, the breach between producer and user, as well as the crystallization of a "public" is just a form in itself, which makes a difference through quality, it's true, but which exists as a continuation of other less strict and more embedded forms of "opening" and "hetero-regulation", which can be found anywhere.

While keeping in mind the notion of the closing and opening processes, which are in many ways complementary to the concept of self/hetero-regulation, we have to get them out of the (relatively) strict field of economy, where Weber - and to a certain extent Godbout - places and analyzes them, to see them in the larger context of exchange. Here, the criterion of "rare resources" stressed by Weber becomes questionable, for a "matter of fact": "rareness is not to be found at the dawn of humanity, but at its dusk." (Caille, 2000:81). The "resources" of the exchange must be therefore considered from a larger perspective than the economic one, referring to everything that is legitimately perceived - and to the extent to which it is perceived - as a potential object of this goods and signs circulation, in any of its forms, from "keeping" to "seizing". Moreover, and much more importantly in a certain sense, these openings and closures do not refer only to the goods and signs circulation, but they refer to the participants' affiliation and exclusion within the exchanges, in different ways and to a various extent. As Gudeman puts it, exchanges and their orientation towards opening or closure are not only a means, but an end in themselves, as they produce or confirm certain appearances. Certain goods and signs circulate not only to achieve the transfer between the participants of the exchange, but to (re)produce relations between them. The "rationality" of these exchanges is not necessarily and permanently oriented towards the goal (*zweckrationalität*): "during most of their life," says Geller, "people do not maximize anything and do not try to reach a goal which can be actually identified. They simply want to be integrated or to stay in a play that is currently running. The role is its own reward and not a means to reach a situation which is seen as a goal." (Gellner, 1986:11). To stay in the play, to keep a certain affiliation is therefore a goal in itself, a deep and specific sense of

social life, even though this affiliation may be generally instrumented, at any time, for a specific goal or another. *The fight for resources* and *the fight for affiliation*, although seen side by side, mustn't be mistaken or reduced, by one another, saying for instance that affiliation is a form of "capital" and therefore a means among others, for fighting for resources. Although at various moments or contexts in time, stress may fall differently upon "resources" or upon "affiliation", finally, "the fight for resources" molds the configuration of the affiliation units to the same extent that "fighting for affiliation" gives an orientation to the exchange configuration.²

Going back to the processes of closing and opening, these will have to be analyzed according to the wider significance of resource circulation in and between "affiliation units". The closings and openings thus articulate the exchanges and affiliations and are conditioned by them.

We can then define a process of "closing" as being the orientation of the goods and signs circulation to a self-regulated affiliation unit which entertains and confirms itself as a social unit, while an "opening" process refers to the orientation of this circulation to an affiliation unit which is perceived as (more or less) distinct, thus creating a hetero-regulation and entertaining its distinction. From this perspective, we can turn back to Weber, for whom "human communities are always, to various extents, open and closed towards the outside world and inner world." (Weber, op. cit., p.58). Going further, we can say that the closing processes are also "communitary" processes (*Vergemeinschaftung*), which tend to keep the exchanges in self-regulated affiliation units of the **community** type, while the opening processes tend to structure the exchange relations in hetero-regulated affiliation units of the **organization** type. Therefore, there are **communitary processes** and **organizational processes** everywhere, and everybody belongs therefore in various ways and to various extents, to different forms and degrees - sometimes competing with one another - to a *community* and an *organization*.

This is true even when organizations are extremely specialized under market circumstances, when communitarizing instances inside the organizations keep occurring - while the recent management of the organizations tends to reintroduce communitary aspects within the organization, after separating from Taylor's perspective, for "rational" reasons.

If we were to give a most simplified version of all this, these distinctions could be represented as follows:

Closing processes > the orientation of the exchange relation towards US > keeping > autonomy > „community”

Opening processes > the orientation of the exchange relations towards THEM > exchanges > heteronomy > „organization”

5. Affiliation units (II): horizontal and vertical boundaries.

The dynamics and orientation of the exchange relations define and structure

²The privileged status of the "fight for resources" or of the "fight for affiliation" as *origin* of the social dynamics - and as *principle* which explains it - obviously expresses a fundamental methodological choice, with its inherent exclusivist or reductionist temptations. In this attempt, we will try to stay as close as possible to the *interaction* of these two principles, which is more faithful to the way in which communities function.

affiliation units between which take place these relations of one kind or another. But these relations are defined and structured in their turn by the existence of certain affiliation units, separated by visible or invisible lines, which are *boundaries* that make the difference between individuals which belong to *Us*, and those who belong to *Them*, or the conditions in which such a separation is activated. As Edmund Leach says, "the central human problem, the persistent question is not only "Who am I?", but also "Who are we?" (Leach, 1980, p. 367). The boundaries are the structural landmarks which guide the answers to this matter.

To the extent to which they can make the difference between the most varied affiliations, from working groups to nations and from neighbours to the two sexes, these boundaries are indefinitely polymorphous. They have been assigned many strange descriptions, from the beginnings of social sciences up to now. They all have in common a societal process of category formation which constantly defines those social spaces which are more or less well marked and which do not have a stable affiliation or exclusion. Also, this process defines the relations between them.

From now on, we will be interested only in those boundaries and in the affiliation spaces they mark, which can define the wider space where the domestic unit can and must be placed. In other words, as the domestic unit is our main object of interest, we will focus upon the boundaries that are woven around it and that form its relation with other "social spaces".

From this point of view, we can start only with *the domestic space* itself, where, in the shape of a "domestic communism", a domestic economy is being developed, mainly oriented towards "keeping" within the domestic community. In its proximity - but always separated by a boundary of one kind or another - we will then find *the propinquity space* with its economic brotherhood achieved by various forms of "mutual exchanges". At the other extreme, thus eluding a series of other intermediate spaces, not so well defined, there is what we call *the space of the public*. Without being strongly connected with the classical (and controversial) distinction between the public and private spaces, this particular space refers to the "organizational" activities oriented towards a "public", in the sense mentioned by Godbout earlier, in its most elaborate form - the market. But the space of the public is wider than "the space of the market", for, besides the activity of the "organizations" themselves, which result in market exchanges, this space includes what we might call "the economy of domestic groups", which in no way can be reduced to the "domestic economy" - and which aren't a "market economy", either - where the access to the market exchanges is negotiated, distributed and used within the domestic units, in ways and to certain degrees we have to detail in our analysis.

This elementary topography of the social spaces of affiliation and exchange are clearly founded on the dynamics of the closing and opening processes that have been named above and which do not form a continuous string, but a "curled" dimension, where each space has its own inner closing and opening mechanisms. Therefore, certain individuals and/or entire communities can have a prevailing position by referring to one space or another, but, usually, they can also transgress the boundaries they mark and can play a role in other spaces, too, as all communities have a general knowledge of all these spaces. Therefore, we are also interested in the social conditions of this mobility, in the legitimate degree of perviousness/imperviousness of the boundaries that separate these spaces.

From this perspective, various authors or schools have differently described the "perviousness" of boundaries, in various fields of occurrence. Thus, for instance, Mary Douglas proposed in 1970 a typology that combines *the group* and *the grid*,

(group/grid), as two coordinates, each having a "strong" and a "weak" pole. Thus, the *group* variable will be smaller when the individuals negotiate their way of life on their own, as individuals, without depending and counting on a stable group of *Us*. At the other *strong* extreme, the individuals focus their interaction on members of a social unit to which they must submit and from whom they expect support. The boundary of the group will thus be relatively pervious in the first case and rather impervious, in the last one. The *category* variable regards the social constraints which result from placing individuals in a category such as sex, age, class, descent, color etc. At the "strong" extreme, the category assigns precise and constraining roles to the members of the respective category, roles which cannot transgress the boundary of the affiliation category (a black woman, for instance, by the very fact that she belongs to this category, must do some things and is not allowed to do others). At the other extreme, the placement of an individual into such a category does not have actual prescriptive implications (generally, and from a social perspective, one cannot expect different things from a black woman than from a white woman or from men).

From other perspectives and judged differently, the "group" dimension has many similar features with the distinction between the *weak ties* and the *strong ties* from network analysis. But this dimension evokes even more the *embedded-disembedded* problems used in other contexts. While rephrased from the perspective of the boundaries, this issue could be stated as follows: to which extent is the boundary of an affiliation unit pervious or not, which may or may not allow its members to engage in other exchange relations than those practiced and allowed by the affiliation group? In other words, to which extent can a recognized member of a group get out of an affiliation, in a legitimate and practical manner? This is what Hirschman (1999), using another term, calls *exit* - as seen not so much as an individual option, but as a structural perviousness of the system itself.

Here we should make a clear mention. In the analysis of networks, the term *embedded* is used rather frequently, to show the way human relations are fixed within the social interaction networks: "By network we mean a regulated number of contacts or continuous social relations between individuals." (Swedberg and Granovetter, 1994:121). In Polanyi's view - which was a source of inspiration for Granovetter - as well as in the analysis of gift systems, the term *embedded* seems to refer more to persons, and not only to their actions. This is important, to the extent to which the two references are not necessarily superposed, because an individual's actions may be *embedded* in the interaction system of the network without his staying *embedded* as an individual in the respective affiliation network. Here, the term *embedded* will therefore be used with reference to persons and not actions - or, to avoid any confusion, we will choose the final term *exit* to define the maximal perviousness of a boundary, more exactly, the maximal openness of an affiliation unit which recognizes the legitimate character of its members' abandonment." In the context referred to by Hirschman, these "organizations where abandonment is impossible or inconceivable have certain ways to expel or excommunicate a member, in certain circumstances." (Hirschman, op. cit.:93). This is a much more frequent case of communities of different types, which are not characterized by "the presence of an option for abandonment" (idem) and which, precisely to control it, resort to excommunication practices.

The boundaries between the social spaces of exchange that we mentioned earlier are controlled in different ways by different communities. Many times, they are differentiated within the community, and gender is one of the most frequent categories. Therefore, a woman may be assigned, for instance, only the domestic

space, while man has the freedom - and responsibility - of a greater mobility at the level of several spaces. The economic brotherhood is also genderized to a great extent, and women are assigned only certain activities pertaining to the economic brotherhood, while being denied other activities to which only men have access. Finally, when there are such rules of differentiation, men are generally those who have access to the public space. Only a detailed ethnographic study can accurately show what the situation is from this perspective, in one case or another.

So far, we have discussed only about what we could call "horizontal boundaries", laid between various structures of affiliation units (or ways to conceive them), as would be categories, classes, groups, networks etc., all these marking the border between units of *Us* and *Them*, with their more constraining forms (collectivism, strong group, strong ties, *embeddedness*, etc.) or more relaxed forms (individualism, weak group, weak ties, *exit*, etc.) These forms define and preserve the individual affiliation to these units. Many of these affiliation units have their own specific projections in space, as they are more or less assigned a territory by more or less material and visible boundaries. The crossing of these boundaries is generally more or less expressed through rituals, thus strengthening the significance of coming in and going out of these affiliation units. About all these have spoken many of the works around the world, ever since the beginning of sociology.

However, to these "horizontal boundaries" that are somehow more visible and "classical", we must add what we could call "vertical boundaries", which set the border between "levels" of affiliation, from simple "communities of interest" to "lawful communities", as Max Weber says, or, in a wider sense, from virtual to institutional affiliations.

Finally, the feeling of belonging to a group of *Us* is given by the mutual expectations shared by a group of individuals who, through these mutual expectations, consciously or unconsciously form an "affiliation". This is the way in which we all belong to a culture, seen as a shared system of symbolic codes, be it marked by national, ethnic, local, or confessional and professional criteria. Thus, there are virtual affiliations to Christianity or anthropology, but there are also institutionalized levels of these affiliations, in the shape of religious congregations and professional associations, respectively, which legally define the mutual expectations in the shape of status and role norms. Between the general *symbolic* level of making *cultural* affiliations and the *legal* one, typical of *institutions*, there are all forms of *interpersonal* regulations of affiliation, pertaining of what we might possibly call *networks*. Thus, there are certain vertical markings between the affiliation levels, between which individuals can move with more or less consistency, while contextually updating one affiliation level or another. We may sketch these remarks in the following diagram:

Formalized
relations (+)

	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Motivation</i>
Institutions	Assurance	
	Networks	Trust
	Cultures	Beliefs

Formalized
relations (-)

Thus, we reach a last aspect we would like to mention here: the contextual dynamics of these affiliations. Not all of the time and not to an equal extent are we Christians, Romanians or anthropologists. These affiliations become active in certain contexts and are latent in other context. Social order is full of "signs" that mark space and/or time units, in which we wait for one affiliation or another to be activated. We can therefore speak about another type of boundaries, like those between notions like *public* and *private*, *festive* and *daily*, *inner* and *outer* etc. These boundaries do not mark the affiliation units in themselves, but the moments and ways of performing the affiliation unit: we are "more Romanian" on the national day, or when Romania wins a soccer game, "more Orthodox" inside a church or at Easter and Christmas, "more anthropologists" at a congress or inside a library etc.

Shortly, never and nowhere may be found a unique affiliation. There is no total or constant affiliation. Though in place, most of the times boundaries are made to be transgressed one way or another, at one moment or another. Truly enough, there are usually some boundaries less pervious than others and certain affiliations more absorbing than others. *Identity* is thus the representative factor in the space of "horizontal" and "vertical" affiliations.

6. Some historical illustrations

We may now turn to some historical illustration of this complex process of householding as community building and check our approach against some well documented forms of peasant domestic groups in the Balkans: the *Zadruga*, the *Obste devalmasa* (joint property) and the *Nachbarschaft* (Neighbourhood).

a) The Zadruga

"Zadruga" is the name by which a form of "extended family" entered the international circuit, as being "typical of the South Slavs". In the current language, the term can be found only in its adjectival forms (*zadruzhen*, *zadrugarski*, etc.), these being used with the meaning of "together", "as a whole", "communitary" etc., and referring to work and relations of the kind. The actual term may be a late educated invention found in Vuk Karadzic's dictionary, published in Vienna in 1818, where he defines a "home association" where several families of the same household gather (more Serbico). The term is seen as specifically ethnic (see Todorova, 1993). However, during the same period, the Habsburg code of laws defines the dwelling of this part of the empire as a communitary form of household, named "Hauskommunion" (see Kaser, 1985).

The national imaginary context and the imperial administration thus created the definition of a social form of organization, typical to the area.

To what refers this relative neologism? "Although not a single definition can cover all the variants of zadruga, this can be approximately considered a household made of two or more biological or small families, closely related through blood or adoption and having in common the means of production, while producing and consuming their means of joint life and regulating together the control of property, work and means of life." (Mosley, 1976:19). The zadruga is hard to define because, on the one hand, the domestic group's component is very variable and can reach, in exceptional instances, up to 50 people or even more, as the servants are considered being part of the zadruga, and, on the other hand, as some scientists say, zadruga is a process (Hammel, 1975), which means it can pass through various configurations during its cycles of life.

Paul Stahl makes the difference between two main forms: "a) the first gathers

the father and the bachelor sons; the brothers will separate after the father's death; b) the second reunites the father and the married sons, and other relatives, as well: uncles, cousins in the first or second degree, more distantly related kin, but who all have the same ancestor. (...) The father, the natural leader of the Romanian domestic group, can be a leader in the *zadruga*, too, as based on the association between the father and his married sons, but this won't happen anymore when the domestic group is made of several dozens of persons and several married couples (...)" (P. Stahl, 2000:60-61). In the latter case, the leader of the *zadruga* is elected, and the hierarchy to be established isn't based on kinship.

Obviously, these two forms are far from being identical; why are they both considered as being *zadruga*?

Starting from the difference between *kuca ikonosna* (the domestic group of a "small" family) and *kuca zadruzna* (the household inhabited by an "extended" or "multiple" family), Baltasar Bogisic was the first to argue, in 1884, that these are not two separate social morphological units, but they are evolution phases of the same family institution, which allows the understanding of the *zadruga* dynamics.

There are many social history issues raised by the *zadruga*. Is it typical of the South Slavs and in what sense? For extended or multiple families, obviously not; these have existed all over the world. Maria Todorova thus concludes that "we may surely consider that all *zadrugas* were extended or multiple families. At the same time, (...) not all the extended or multiple families were *zadrugas*." (Todorova, op. cit.:158). Therefore, the *zadruga* maintained its own, though not very convincing, specific character. However, we don't know how expanded this institution was. The available documents suggest the existence of certain areas of *zadruga* clusters, but these are far from homogeneously covering the South-Slavic area, generally assigned to the *zadruga*. This is why some authors rather talk about "an ideal type" of *zadruga* (Halpern and Wagner, 1984). Any general statement on this issue seems risky. But this also depends on the age given to the *zadruga*: is this an old form of organization which has deteriorated at different paces in different regions, as says Paul Stahl, or, on the contrary, is the so-called *zadruga* only a recently new or rather cyclic phenomenon, which occurred due to specific factors and contexts, as Todorova suggests in her alternative theory?

Leaving aside these debates, we will insist here only upon two aspects of the problem, essential from our point of view.

On the one hand, one cannot deny a strong "kinship communitary ideology" that exists here. "The blood-related community is present in the conscience of the *zadruga* members and is invoked as an explanation of life led in common, and as justifying the rights over property." (P. Stahl, op. cit.: 60-61). But this ideology must be followed in its larger context, not only in the current practices of a *zadruga*. Thus, for instance, the system of names speaks for itself: "the domestic group of each household had a patronym usually related to the founder of the family, whom it was added the name of the leader of the group. This is how Friederich Krauss explains the assignment of a name for a specific person (1885, cap. III, p.45): '1) Christian name, Jovo; 2) the name of the father in its adjectival form, Jovo Petrov (Jovo, son of Petro); 3) if, within the same household, there are several persons with the name of Jovo Petrov, the grandfather's name is attached in front of the name, in its adjectival form, Jovo Petra Markova (Jovo, son of Petro, son of Marko); 4) then, the name of the house is added; if this name is Jancovic, Jovo's name will be Jovo Petra Markova Jankovica Kovacevica (Jovo, son of Petro, son of Marko, of the Jancovic house, of the Kovacevic brotherhood.)" The naming system is typical: besides the Christian

name, which is personal (and even here, traditional norm states that people should be named after their ancestors), all the others are classified and used according to the circumstances during which they are evoked." (idem:59-60). In another context, Maria Todorova reminds of the way in which the peasants themselves referred to the *zadruga*: "As I said before, the most usual terms (in Bulgaria, n.n.) were those of *kuca* (house) or *celjad* (children, lot), and where almost invariably preceded by adjectives such as *velika* or *goljama* (big). Certainly, people saw the size of the *zadruga* as an important feature and it seems obvious that this had to be taken into account, although none of the strictly quantitative criteria can be deducted from here." (Todorova, op. cit.:146). Finally, let's remind Hammel, for whom "an ideology which allows the adoption of the organization of the joint families" is one of the main factors in explaining the *zadruga* phenomenon (Hammel, 1975:148). Shortly, the affiliation seems mainly structured in terms of kinship, while its boundaries are mainly formed according to kinship criteria.

On the other hand, these kinship units tend to distribute inside them most of the duties that arise from the management and use of the detained properties. These are made of "the genetic household patrimony (...) (and of) the rights of the household upon the communitary parts of the territory (*komunica*), "which belong to certain relatives, brotherhoods, villages or tribes") (P. Stahl, op. cit.:68). All this patrimony cannot be estranged, and its transfer does not have anything to do with death and marriage. It perpetuates itself inside the domestic kinship unit, as long as it exists. Property is evenly split among brothers only when a *zadruga* breaks or, which is the same thing, when a young family does not want (anymore) to live inside the same residential unit with the husband's parents. Inside these domestic units, "the larger the group and the more important its property, the more specialized its members. If the cattle are sent far away, on the joint properties, one of the *zadruga* members herds them, accompanied (or not) by his wife; they are called 'baca' and 'bacica' (...), names taken from Macedo-Romanian shepherds. The members of a group may specialize in a specific craft - pottery, for instance - and work in this quality for the group, but also for strangers. The case of the 'pecalbari' is well known, those people who are gone to work far away, and who keep belonging to their original domestic group, with whom they divide their earnings; once back, they are received inside the group as members with full rights. The *zadruga* from the Metohjia region, studied by Milisav Lutovac (1935, p. 38), presents a specialized feature which goes to extreme: "Each job is assigned to a specialist; the beekeeper, the ploughman, the shepherds (one for the big cattle, one for sheep, one for goat), the mountain man, the trader, the housewife etc... Everybody has its own place here. Thus, the jobs are done quickly and in time." (P. Stahl, op. cit.:63).

In his turn, Hammel thinks that "we must admit that agriculture, together with sheep and pig raising, as was usually the case, was a task for a larger group, rather than a nuclear family, especially a young one. These factors and the defense and deforesting requirements in case of new fields, in certain areas, as well as the military and economic constraints, in other ones, tended to keep the family extended (Hammel, 1968:19).

Based on a sample of 549 communities, Todorova used Nimkoff and Middleton's correlation between family and economy types (extended families are typical of those communities with mixed agricultural and cattle raising economies). Therefore, she took one step further and studied this thesis in the agrarian history of the Balkans, while underlining the factors and contexts which led to systematic changes of the report between land cultivation and cattle raising. She thus concludes that "the

zadruga may be seen not as an archaic survival, but as the development of a new (cyclic) answer to the challenges caused by new circumstances (Todorova, op. cit.:156). In other words, the alternative interpretation would be that of certain dynamic adaptations of the domestic group to different economic pressures, namely the enlargement of the domestic group in the circumstances of an economy which has to combine agriculture and cattle raising.

But Romanian peasants were confronted with the same problems, in quite similar contexts! Why then is there no zadruga on the Romanian territory? This is what Daniel Chirot logically asks himself.

b) The community founded on joint property (*obște* devălmașă) and the villages organized by lineage (*sate umlătoare pe moși*)

Let us therefore look at the social history of the Romanian villages, especially at the features and evolution of the community based on joint property, as we first know it from Henri Stahl's fundamental research in this field.

While rejecting the inaugural theories of the "settling down" (*descălecat*), H. Stahl suggests another hypothesis which "starts from ancient social gentile organizations which break and become territorial, so that they may later keep fragmenting into village communities, then into groups, to finally reach the status of autonomous family households" (H. Stahl, 1959, vol. I:55). Following this line of thought, H. Stahl will then identify two main types of rural organization, which historically succeed one another: *the archaic village* and *the evolved village*.

"The archaic village has an equalitarian democratic community, with a vague gerontocratic tendency, with a homogenous population, made exclusively of natives who form one "group" (*ceata*), closed to the non-natives, and who make use of the land in "absolute sharing", through "land ownership" and, in exceptional cases, "on a number of fathoms", based on a natural economy, dominated by the "use" of land through direct work, within the primitive techniques of permanent deforesting and land turning up (idem, vol. II:9). As compared to what would happen later, the "archaic" village may be seen as the village of the "total joint property". The body of land which is owned jointly by the village community is divided into two areas: one includes those lands which are workable only through temporary use, and the other one refers to lands which can be permanently exploited. In the archaic village, the first was the most prevailing area.

The evolved villages are those organized by lineage, where the absolute sharing of the property breaks up, while the community also splits into groups. It is a kind of "village whose community suffered wealth differentiations, with unequal rights to inherit, as an expression of a population that was divided into multiple groups and various social categories, with the rich ones starting to prevail over the other members of the community, and with clashing interests. This is a community invaded by local monopolizing non-natives who based their rights not on the goods owned by natives, but on contracts and who were leading a harsh social battle, to seize "income" and to own land separately, as based on an economy of exchange and of certain working techniques that allowed the yearly exploitation of the same land." (idem:10) Typical of this organization is the so-called village organized by lineage, characterized by Stahl as follows: a) by the existence of a "border", that is a collective patrimony of the village; b) by the organization of a community of joint properties, which comprises several groups, in the shape of a common kin in which, from an ancestor, are born several "old men", while the group represented by the "old man" is in its turn subdivided into "small brothers", etc.; c) by an organization of the property over the

village patrimony into unequal quotas; d) by a ratio of the quotas, according to the kinship relations (idem, vol.I:66-67).

An overview on the legends of the eponymous hero who founds a village may help us better understand how these transformation occurred. As he constantly rejects the hypothesis of the colonization, Henri Stahl rejects the idea that these legends, whose memory can be still found today in many villages, would simply be the folklorised memory of the "true" origin of the village. On the contrary, Henri Stahl shows that, first, all these various long social changes took place, and, certainly, it was only after this that the legend was born. In other words, first there was a dramatic change in the ratio between area I and area II within the village collective patrimony, the land that was permanently exploited became inheritable and, thus, it was possible to estrange it in favour of certain "local monopolisers", by means of "contracts", but also by strategic and sometimes fictitious kinship relations; then, to a greater extent, as a defense reaction against this dissolution, the rights of certain native groups are recognized as unequal rights, provided they are kept within these groups and are not estranged to any "monopolisers" or "non-natives". Under these circumstances, as Daniel Chirot noticed, "it was crucial that the individual be placed within the genealogy of the village" (Chirot, 1976:142), as his belonging to a "great" or "ancient" descent would ensure higher inheritance quotas. Affiliation creates and justifies the right to property, thus becoming a value in itself.

In these circumstances, as Daniel Chirot said, "the placement of an individual within the village genealogy was crucial" (Chirot, 1976:142), while his belonging to a "great" or "ancient" family would ensure higher inheritance quotas. The affiliation sets up property and gives it legitimacy, thus becoming a value in itself, to a great extent.

The process of setting up these groups and the shares that they are entitled to is long and can sometimes make the object of renegotiations in time (in the community of Cimpulung, for instance, the 42nd inheritor is introduced only during the 19th century). The customary crystallization of this distribution takes place in the shape of "kinship relations" that set up these groups and their relative rights. "... These villages become common at a certain moment of their history, during a certain development stage, that is at the moment when, from a social perspective, the passage can and must be made, from a global village joint ownership to joint ownership on restrained family groups. In other words, the kinship relations which appear at a certain moment of the development of the village joint property are nothing but etiological legal legends. (idem, vol.II:71). Thus, "the biological phenomenon of kinship makes way for a merely legal phenomenon. Each family is represented by an ancestor or by an old kin. After long probing, the number of these elders is set once and for all. Then the etiological legend is born, which smoothes all these coarse aspects." (H. Stahl, 1938:565).

The fact that the division by ancestors was essentially a calculation of customary right, and not the memory of a real genealogy is illustrated almost like a caricature by the existence of villages organized by partial lineage, for instance, for 9 and a half ancestors. Also, this division on families becomes useful there when even joint ownership community is not working properly. This fact is sustained by the lack of eponymous legends in regions such as Vrancea, where joint ownership communities functioned until recently, during the first half of the 20th century (H. Stahl, 1940, vol.I:131-132).

As a conclusion, from the "perspective of the general development of the village, we see a gradual increase of the second area, to the loss of the first one, both

in surface and in economic weight" (idem, vol.II:12). "At the moment when the second area is starting to prevail, the general principles on which the entire village is based will also become hereditary" (idem, vol.II:13). To put it differently, ownership of the household and its equal transfer between various inheritors will prevail.

Which were the responsibilities of a household in these circumstances, and which, those of the community, that is of the village as a whole?

Let's look again at these descriptions, while comparing them to the *zadruga*.

First of all, in the case of Romanian villages, the territorial criterion seems to have been the origin or even to have preceded the "evolved villages", as it was stayed intact for a long time, as in the exceptional case of Vrancea area. "The village in itself was founded on the grounds of an estate which had a higher juridical status than that of the people who used it. This estate has a clear antique feature. Even today, the entire country is still divided into this kind of traditional estate lots, which are fixed forever into the landscape by land delimitations and by toponymy." Despite all transformations suffered during historical changes, "the land preserves its individuality" - asserts Henri Stahl (1938:567). More than the physical existence of the "estate lot", this joint ownership actually meant "sharing work and the results of that work" (P. Stahl, op. cit.:191). "The legal notion of 'property' is therefore replaced by a fact: the performance of work within a community." (H. Stahl, 1953, vol.II:123). This community can be made up of all the inhabitants of the place who share the "estate lots" of the village in joint property, or its related kin seen as locals, or the household itself. In case of the household, the joint property relations are valid during its entire period of existence, while the notion of "inheritance" becomes quite relative: "the inheritance plays a minimal role, at least in the past. The obligation to endow someone with certain goods during the father's lifetime is so strong, that it was difficult to change it and it was applied until land collectivization, despite modern law codes" (P. Stahl, op. cit.:137). Up to the present day, members of Romanian households are still the individual owners of the goods of the household seen as co-residence unit, provided they work together and share the results of their work.

Somewhere else in his work, H. Stahl mentions the fact that "the joint property village" is an association of family households, based on a jointly owned territory, where the community in itself has previous rights, higher than those of the composing households exerted by a leading organism called *obstie*." (H. Stahl, 1959, vol.II:25). This is a form of leadership at local level (sometimes larger, as is the case with joint ownership federations), characterized by a "primitive democracy", where all working men - except non-locals and, sometimes, women - have equal voting rights, while the right to vote becomes proportional only in the "evolved villages".

The village seen as a territorial unit will have to cope with the kind of problems raised within the *zadrugas*, and not one form or another of kinship unit which, although present, are subordinated to the general rules of the village. The village seen as a "community" unit will distribute the tasks between the members of the community, in order to cope with these issues, and not some kind of kinship unit which is inevitably far more comprehensive. These are what the same Henri Stahl call "the owners of the village": "the community assigns one or several of its members a supervisor, thus transferring part of the power it detains. Typical of these mandates is the fact that their object and duration are always limited and that they are revocable at any moment in time, as the community reserves the right to permanently and directly control the way in which its supervisors perform their given tasks." (idem, vol.II:39). Of these "owners" will be selected in time the village clerks, who will eventually have an official status, stated by organic regulations.

The same type of special function described within larger zadrugas may be found in Romanian communities, with their cattle man, forest man, field watcher, official guard etc., all of whom are "village representatives". This is why Chirot concluded: "in Romania, the village as a whole was communal, and not the extended family. (...) In other words, the Romanian communal village must be seen as a functional alternative to the zadruga, which, by means of its existence, rendered useless the development of a zadruga." (Chirot, op.cit.:141-142). This idea comes back in the Margaret Mead's works: "the affiliation to the village and to its responsibilities are much more important than kinship affiliation and responsibilities."³ This explains why, "within the village, families were considerably smaller than in the zadruga areas." (idem:141). Paul Stahl reminds, in his turn, that "that which makes the difference between the traditional household of the South Slavs and the household of their Romanian neighbors (...) is, in the first place, the composition of the domestic group. Indeed, with the Romanians, the domestic group is based on the existence of a single married couple and its unmarried children; inside the zadruga, we are always talking about several married couples." (P. Stahl, op.cit.:60).

Then, what about kinship and its role in the "communitary village"?

Chirot abusively sees them also as a kind of "extended families", which would be against the ideas mentioned earlier. In order to understand the peculiarity of this form of kinship, we must keep in mind Paul Stahl's fundamental assertion (op.cit.), namely that kin, seen as kinship structure, first classifies lands, and then people according to land. Therefore, kinship basically represents a "legal fiction", taken seriously, of course, upon which are organized all social relations. Kinship is, if we may say so, a selective relation based on property criteria, a sort of *land kinship* - which doesn't exclude, however, the true existence of descent relations.

Shortly, it seems that the zadruga and the community based on joint property, each with their own dynamics of adaptation, encourage two types of complementary solutions to the same type of problems: first, a tendency to develop domestic units, when circumstances ask for it and in the required manner; secondly, a tendency to stress the affiliation and responsibilities of the village, with the corresponding reduction of its domestic units. This inverse ratio relation between the "domestic community" and the "neighborhood community" seems to be confirmed by the conclusions of Traian Stoianovich who claims, based on statistics recorded in Serbia in the 18th century, that the regions which had the smallest villages also had the largest households, while towards east, where agriculture was prevailing, extended families were very rare (Stoianovich, 1980). If we resume this rather morphological relation in the terms mentioned above, we might say that, in the joint circumstances of a complementary relation between a communitary, jointly owned part, on the one

³This relative differentiation in the distribution of the responsibilities may be illustrated otherwise. In case of a zadruga, P. Stahl reminds the fact that its members "are collectively responsible of each person's actions. Thus, the head of the group must pay the damages that were caused by any of its members." (P. Stahl, op.cit., p.69). On the contrary, in Romania, Cristina Codarcea reminds that the state could try in court and punish an entire village, invoking in this sense the origin of the well-known expression "to be caught with the dead man in the corn field". This refers to the fact that, when a dead man was found on the territory of a village, the entire village could be punished, if the true murderer was not identified. This is why there were macabre situations when a dead body would be moved from one territory to another, in order to avoid punishment (Codarcea, 2002, p.49). Both situations are significantly different from that of the Transylvanian Saxon Neighborhoods, where, as we will see, each individual had the duty to pay the community a fine which was proportional to the seriousness of the committed crime.

hand, and a patrimony part of the domestic units, on the other hand, the legitimate way of socially distributing the access to and use of the available resources is applied either through the concentration of property relations within the domestic units, followed by their development and domestic communism (as is the case with the *zadruga*), or through the rather superior distribution of property relations at the level of the neighboring units, followed by their development and the economic brotherhood specific to these units, and by the corresponding and relative reduction of the role of the composing households (as is the case with the communities based on joint property). Still, both options may seem extreme to an adapting transformation system, rather than being stable, "ethnic" morphological forms.

In the case of the community, for instance, the "economic brotherhood" that had been initially managed in a communitarian way will change its configuration and will distribute otherwise, between other forms of affiliation, less adequate to new situations (kinship relations, then, more and more, mere neighborhood networks between households). Although militant references to the Danish model did not miss, the organization of the "economic brotherhood" into cooperatist forms will not know a substantial and stable development in Romania, as it reached its pike during the '20s. Thus, if we don't take into account the credit coops, at the end of 1936 there were 1,808 rural Romanian coops. Together with the credit coops, the total number of various coop units reached 6,441, less than that of the "minorities", who had 7,612 coop units, which numbered 1,401,126 persons (Mladenatz, 1939). "Economic brotherhood" stays mostly a local "communitary" problem.

Communist cooperativization will introduce a new form of ownership which, in fact, hugely reduces the household's access to those agricultural resources actually controlled by the state. However, industrialization brings resources to town, while at least some of the household members follow them there. Thus, a new trans-residential affiliation unit starts to build up, to which take part both members who have left to town, and those who stayed in the village, who combine human and rural resources within selective forms of "domestic communism": "the diffuse mixed household" (Mihăilescu and Nicolau, 1995, Mihăilescu, 2000). The exchanges performed within this frame will result in a perverted effect at a macro level, from the perspective of communist ideology and aims: industry becomes "domestic" (Creed, 1998). Finally, after 1990, certain regions of the country witnessed an interesting attempt to reconstruct certain affiliations to a joint ownership community, as a means to claim certain joint owned properties, which had existed long before communism. The offspring of the more than half a century old households, who had left the village a long time ago, after several generations, people who had even left abroad, saw themselves reunited as "joint owners" in a recreated affiliation form.

Thus, "the smallest social unit", the household, changes its configuration and its relations with other social spaces, together with these changes of the social context in which they function.

c) the *Nachbarschaft* (Neighbourhood)

Let's make a short comparative analysis regarding a social form of organization from Romania, but which is significantly different and typical of Transylvanian Saxons. These are the so-called neighbourhoods or *vecinii*, as they were adopted in Romanian, as a translation of the *Nachbarschaft* term (not to be mistaken for the mere fact of the existence of a neighbouring relation!).

So what makes them different?

The origin of Neighbourhoods must be searched in various forms of funerary

corporations and *Fraternitas*, typical of the mediaeval western tradition, which were seemingly brought by the Transylvanian Saxons when they settled in Transylvania. These communities developed ever since the beginning of the 16th century, and were strictly related to the spreading of Protestantism, first in towns, then within the entire rural world. Typical of the Saxon communities, the neighbourhoods stayed the same until 1781, when the imperial rule imposed by *Concivitas* forced a certain mixed ethnic structure of these villages. This is also the time of occurrence of the first Romanian neighbourhoods, encouraged by the Habsburg Empire for administrative reasons, and initially having a Transylvanian Saxon leader ("neighbourhood father").

But from our perspective, the essential aspect is that neighbourhoods were organized according to an explicit and exclusively territorial criterion, as all the households of a street - or of part of a street, when the street was too long - set up such a Neighbourhood. Therefore, the reference unit is neither kinship, nor "joint ownership", of an affiliation to a community which jointly has an estate lot, but a space and rather administrative unit which separates the propinquity units, by means of inner strict rules and clear relations between them and higher ranking institutions (the church, the administration etc.). As for the rest, the "domestic" and "economic brotherhood" tasks and problems with which the members of the Neighbourhood had to cope were essentially the same as for the rest of the peasant communities of the region.

The main features of the Neighbourhoods - beyond their variations in time and space - could be seen as follows⁴:

- the Neighbourhoods are forms of **spatial organization**, thus separating both from kinship communities, and from joint ownership communities. Seen as "household associations", they are ruled by a "great father of the Neighbourhood", elected by rotation by the members of the Neighbourhood, helped by a "little father of the Neighbourhood", which generally succeeds the great father, as well as by a cashier. The wives of the first two, called "great mother and little mother of the Neighbourhood" also play fundamental roles within certain events that take place inside the Neighbourhood;

- there is a kind of **formal belonging** to the Neighbourhood, as each member has to claim his being accepted as such, which is done during a ceremony on the occasion of the yearly gathering of the entire Neighborhood, when newcomers are presented their rights and duties. Also, in principle, any member must decide his getting out of the Neighborhood, although, as Annemie Schenk points out, life outside the Neighborhood was unimaginable for a Transylvanian Saxon (Schenk, 1995);

- there is a kind of **written norm of the "economic brotherhood"** inside the Neighborhood. Thus, the main mutual duties of the members are settled in writing, in the "statute" of the Neighborhood, an essential document kept inside the "case of the Neighborhood" and passed on from one father of the Neighborhood to the next, and read to all new members at the yearly gathering;

- there is a kind of **"moral accounting"**, also prescribed in writing, within the statute of the Neighborhood, which provides the specific "fines" (*Bussgeld*) which any member of the Neighborhood must pay on the "judgment day" (*Richttag*), for not observing the various specific duties, while the amount is proportional with the seriousness of the crime. While paying this fine, the member of the Neighborhood is considered to be absolved of all his sins, of course, on condition that he does not keep repeating them, case in which he can be excluded in principle from the

⁴For more details, see V. Mihăilescu (coordinator), *Neighbors and Neighborhoods in Transylvania* (2002).

Neighborhood. Besides the evaluation of the guilt into money, we are dealing with a strongly significant individualization of responsibility;

- finally, at least recently, there is a certain *transferability of responsibilities*. Thus, for instance, the most important responsibility of the Neighborhood is, up to these days, the organization of the funerals for its deceased members. To these takes part at least one representative of each included household, while each of them has to perform certain precise tasks, by rotation. Not fulfilling these obligations is seen as guilt and is punished through a corresponding fine. However, an individual whose turn is for such a task within the Neighborhood may still pay another member - or even an outsider - to perform the task in his or her place.

- the Neighborhood as a whole is also *a unit of communitarian services*, to the benefit of its members, of the church, of the village or even of the ethnic Transylvanian Saxon community, in general.

With these features which are strongly fixed in the Protestant character of this community, the Neighborhood develops the *organizational orientation* to a greater extent: from the point of view of its contents, the "economic brotherhood" does not differ much from the one encountered in other forms of organization of the peasant communities in the area, but its "reciprocity" rules take the shape of precise and written regulations, which limits its diffuse traits, to a great extent. It therefore has a higher degree of "institutionalization"; the Neighborhood members are *embedded* in their affiliation group as any other peasant, but there is at least the virtual option of entering and exiting such a community, so that, when historical conditions allow it, this virtual character may naturally transform into action - therefore, it will have a stronger degree of "individualism"; finally, although households preserve their individual character and their property, what defines them to a great extent is their rational association within higher ranking units of the Neighborhoods - therefore, a form of affiliation which asks to a greater extent for "associative" practices.

After the period in which they were imposed on an administrative line, Neighborhoods were also adopted by Romanians, but selectively, almost as a "means of organization", as it was well-known that certain mutual activities of "economic brotherhood" were more efficient this way. Thus, for instance, the strict organization by the Transylvanian Saxon Neighborhoods, of all presumed burial activities will be taken as a model by many Romanian communities, thus allowing a certain "rationalization" of the ritual. However, this calls for an essential mention: the Neighborhood **helps** the family at the funeral - as a Romanian woman explains - while for the Transylvanian Saxons, the Neighborhood practically **replaces** the family, while organizing the funeral. Although it denies its belonging to the Neighborhood, to various degrees and in various ways, the "reference criterion is still kinship", concludes Vasile Soflău, while analyzing the situation of Drăguș, a joint ownership village which adopted, at a certain moment, the Transylvanian Saxon model of the Neighborhoods (Soflău, 2002:91).

After 1990, this activity of the Neighborhood could almost naturally turn from an element of "economic brotherhood" within a community into communitarian organizations for explicit mortuary services and, in exceptional cases, into other associative forms of services or production. Neighborhoods could also be used to institutionalize certain "inner closings" which occurred in the new context: in certain villages, the "old" elite got organized into their own Neighborhood, without considering the initial criterion of propinquity, the same way "newcomers", although they were accepted in the village, in principle, organized their own Neighborhoods, in order to mark their identity and protect their position inside their community. In their

turn, the few Transylvanian Saxons who stayed in Romania regrouped into one Neighborhood with a strong ethnic character. The belonging to the Neighborhood - there where it exists and as long as it exists - has therefore changed its configuration and purpose, either by developing its organizational orientation, or, more frequently, by capitalizing this belonging into a local fight for "symbolic resources".

* * *

Back to these more or less different cases, we may say that the "economic brotherhood" which is characteristic to any local community⁵ is negotiated in different ways, according to the specific role distribution between the elementary units of the "domestic communities" and those higher in rank, of the "neighboring communities". The three evoked cases are also three relatively distinct types of basic social geography, to which local communities prefer to resort to, in order to solve certain common problems. The flexibility and power of adaptation of these organization forms to certain specific economic requirements - as would be the relation between agriculture and cattle raising, mentioned by Maria Todorova - is certainly very important and is a fundamental factor in the variable geometry of these organization forms in time and space. We mustn't underestimate the role of these "social geographies", with their specific borders between affiliation units, which offers a strategic "long-term" solution cherished by the locals who tend to reproduce them according to a customary pattern, if possible. As Max Weber noted, there is also a reverse, when the "economy itself is under the influence of certain structural laws, typical of the community inside which they develop. As for setting the moment when and the way in which this influence takes place, one cannot formulate a general comprehensive rule." (Weber, op.cit.:54). However, certain typical conservatory communitarian reactions to much more general economic contexts may be seen frequently. In this sense, H. Stahl remarked in the '30s that "for an entire century, all peasants did was to interpret in a "joint ownership" manner all state reforms and, curiously enough, the series of property endowments that followed did not lead to the strengthening of the individual property sense, but, on the contrary, to the strengthening of the faith in the joint property of all lands in the country, which they, the peasants, had the right to use according to their needs, while obviously paying taxes and quitrent." (H. Stahl, 1938). Maybe this is how we can explain the fact that, once the time of national values was there, the Serbs, for instance, would proclaim the *zadruga* their prototype institution, while the equivalent Romanian reference was to be the *village* in itself, seen as the cradle and soul of the Romanian essence - even though neither the *zadruga*, nor the village, built like identity images, existed in real rural life. Beyond the village of the Enlightenment, full of "superstitions", which was probably best described by the Romanian literary current of the Transylvanian School, the main image of the village in our culture is that of the romantic village of patriarchal "tradition". But, even when we are dealing with a militant positivist approach, as is the case with the sociological school of Bucharest, the village, seen as a representative "social unit", remains the point of reference for the *typical* way of life of the Romanian people, to such an extent, that Gusti would fight for "a science of the nation, based on the science of the village" (Gusti, 1938:41). Finally, the Neighborhood was considered to such an extent as typically Saxon, as it made the preferred and exclusive object of study for many German scientists, while it was

⁵By "local community" we understand a group which occupies a definite territory which has relatively limited resources and exchanges and which organizes its existence by reporting to this territory.

strongly overseen by the Romanian ones⁶, although it is hard to understand the Transylvanian community without knowing the Neighborhoods.

This more or less particular distribution of property relations and of responsibilities between the affiliation units of local communities is never a permanent and utterly stable one, although, in many cases, it is considered as an "archetype" for one nation or another.

On the one hand, it is the object of permanent internal conflicts and negotiations, mostly related to the ownership rights (and the relations which derive from them) of the domestic units and of their relations reported to the joint ownership relations, belonging to larger territorial communities. The disintegration of joint ownership communities, due to the growing and frequently renewed claims over the jointly owned lands from the "first area", as well as the hereditary taking over of the land by households are both very significant aspects in this case. The process is similar, in certain aspects, to the one of the South Slavic area, where "lands which were otherwise owned by communities now gradually turned into farming land and formed the descent of the village or family groups." (P. Stahl, op.cit.:80). The individual rights of the households and the joint property rights of the Transylvanian Saxon community are then permanently renegotiated, taking into account the social, political and economic changes that occurred. Thus, for instance, even the villages of serfs, where the community had no autonomous status whatsoever, these regulations appear again, *sui generis*. "It seems that the purpose of the inner life of the serfs, that is the life of the serfs between them, after they had given the lord what was his, was represented by the same joint ownership which stood at the foundation of the free peasants' life. Quite late, after the expropriation of 1864, and after the individual allotment of serfs, (...) these serfs went on living according to the joint ownership principle." (Stahl, 1938:568). Moreover, the separation and individualization of the domestic units, possibly in the shape of nuclear families, does not necessarily mean to give up all previous forms of joint property and communitarian life. In this sense, P. Stahl relates about certain cases from Macedonia, where, although each brother had his house, where he lived with his family, "food was being prepared for all, in a small barrack, and children were raised in common" (P. Stahl, op.cit.:67). Other similar, if not systematic cases can be seen in our days, in Romanian villages.

From time to time, the tensions and renegotiations which accompany them are tuned into new or renewed regulations, which should guarantee, as much as possible, social peace. The separation on kinship relations and the setting up of the villages organized by lineage are an example in this sense. The evolution of the Neighborhood statutes, under the control of the church and in accordance to the interests of the entire ethnic community of the Transylvanian Saxons is quite significant as regards the change of the positions inside the Transylvanian Saxon community. However, these "understandings" are much more frequent.

On the other hand, though, the distribution of property relations and responsibilities between the affiliation units of local communities isn't just the result of internal transformations, and not just the result of their adapting to external constraints. It can also make the object of certain external pressures, which are explicit one way or another. For administrative, fiscal, or military reasons, imperial rules were often interested in maintaining and/or promoting certain larger social units. This was the case of the *zadruga* and the *Neighbourhoods*. As for Romania, the community was for many years a collective subject related to the ruling forces. Also,

6. With the remarkable exceptions of H. Stahl, Herseni, Muslea and a few others.

from the times of Moruzi and until 1864, the so-called *tiersaj* settled the third part of the land that was owned by the lord, as reported to the property of the village, and not to the members of the community. Moreover, this situation would go on after 1864: "For 27 years, the rural law has been applied and today there still isn't any separation between the properties of those who were given land in 1864. Those who applied the rural law only made the difference between two parts, for each village: the part of the owner and the part of the inhabitants, without clearly separating the place of each villager. Thus, villagers are still owning their land in joint possession", noted Kogălniceanu in 1906. It was the same way up to the 20th century: "the decree of December 1918 did not mention any provision regarding allotment, which was to be made according to a special law, later on. The expropriated land was to be cultivated inside the community", stated Garoflid, in his turn, in 1938. This situation is then strengthened by a continuous farming policy which was centered on ownership and not on productivity. Therefore, Garoflid remarked in 1938 that "the farming policy of our political parties should be replaced by an agricultural policy", while Beatrice von Hirschhausen-Leclerc made the same remark in 1994: "Romania has a farming law, but it lacks a law on agriculture." This concern for ownership, used for popularity to a great extent ("allotment of land for peasants") led to frequent "transplants" of land, which resulted in medium lots of more or less 4 hectares for each household. For a long time, the land was subject to the 'agricultural negotiations' which were constantly degrading, because of the equalitarian transfer of the property and which were never enough, while Romania lacked a supporting agricultural policy, for the maintenance of more households. The recourse to joint property forms of ownership relations inside the household and to the bright solution of "economic brotherhood" outside the household were conditions for survival, and not the mere expression of an autarchic conservatory spirit.

The distribution of ownership relations at the level of the local peasant communities will thus be made in the context of power games which strongly surpassed the local level and which could not be understood without taking into account the wider institutional status of the country.

Until now, we discussed about the peasant communities of the Balkans, as if those would have all been permanently autarchic, and oriented towards their own affiliation group. In other words, the "organizational orientation" was overlooked.

But this type of orientation is prevailing everywhere, starting with the very particular form of the taxes. The peasant communities, no matter what are their inner property relations, have always been submitted to various forms of rather "asymmetrical" exchanges which belong to the "general field of power", existing during that age and in that region. One variable part of their activity would therefore permanently aim at a *sui generis* "public" which defined, through the power games, a larger frame of "property relations."

Inside the community, the "organizational orientation" starts with the specialized functions performed within local communities, besides the general occupation of "household owner". This is the case of the specialized functions from the *zadruga* and, mostly, the case of the "proxies" (*mandatari*) inside the community, from which the clerks of the state organization would later emerge. This is the case, of course, of the village craftsmen, of which the miller, the blacksmith and the pub owner would play an essential role. Much more important is the case of an entire domestic production, meant for the exchange within fairs or even for a more or less developed village trade. A number of people from within a village - or, sometimes, entire villages - specialize in one production or another (pottery, wooden objects,

wool tissues, vegetables, fruit etc.), which they eventually sell in a nearer or farther place. Other times, a certain activity is being "sold", which is more or less specialized, from carting to work in the woods or mowing. Without systematically taking into account the nature and importance of these activities oriented towards one or another form of "public", even though they can be subordinated to a communitarian orientation and redistribution, it would be impossible to understand the way in which these local communities function and their transformation trends.

No matter what the geographical particularities or the historical trends of the circumstances, the general, obvious tendency is represented by the dissipation of larger "propinquity communities" and the reduction of corresponding manners of "economic brotherhood", accompanied by a (re)organization on more restricted and individualized domestic units, even in the cases that were presented here. This process is much too familiar for us to insist upon it, while it supposes the gradual transformation and replacement of the "economic brotherhood" with more general and institutional forms of exchange, in the circumstances of a specialized market. The simple reverse aspect of this "ordinary" circumstance is the fact that, when these institutions that structure social life are not working and/or when access to them is denied, local communities will tend to make recourse, to various degrees and in different ways, to new forms of "domestic communism" and to selective forms of "economic brotherhood", adapted to the new environment. The "informal economy" that will result in most of these cases is hard to understand outside the context of the historical relationships and recent dynamics of the "domestic units" and "propinquity units", caught in their turn inside the mechanism that we tried to present here.

7. An actual illustration: the "diffuse household"

This is the case of the phenomenon which we called "diffuse household" (Mihailescu and Nicolau, 1995, Mihailescu, 2000).

The phenomenon we will try to describe by analyzing its recent particularities is not an actual recent one, but belongs rather to the contextual flexibility of the domestic units inside the peasant communities. As we have seen, domestic groups do not necessarily identify with kinship groups (families), as extended households may be present, as in the case of the *zadruga*, while the domestic unit of the household may include members who are not blood related (servants etc.). However, the domestic unit, although inconceivable in the absence of a localized community, does not necessarily require a permanent status of the residence. I have already mentioned the case of "*pecalbari*", people who have gone far away to work and who keep belonging to the domestic group of origin, with which they share their earnings, once they are back. Work outside their own domestic unit and apart from the mutual obligations related to the "economic brotherhood" of the neighborhood was widely spread within Europe and varied, of course, according to the existing constraints of time and place. In this sense, Fernand Braudel reminds certain statistics of France, from the end of the 17th century, where it is stated that "from a total active population (working in agriculture, n.n.) of about 120,000, we have more than 67,000 employees, grooms, servants and daily workers included!" (Braudel, 1985, vol.I, p.305). It is still Braudel who reminds us, in the same context, that "the peasant succeeds in making ends meet", "but he generally does so due to hundreds of supplementary jobs" (idem, p. 306). This refers to various domestic crafts which make the peasants go to certain fairs, and therefore change their function to become extra-community. Also, they do various activities of fixed-term catering on short or long distances, and even "industrial" works inside the salt or ore mines, for a long

time. To a great extent, these works do not belong to the original context of peasant household from which this kind of labor came. All these activities needed by the peasant households in order to survive - especially during periods when their agricultural income wasn't enough - carry their subjects outside their domestic space and outside the communitary space of local communities, for shorter or longer periods of time, without necessarily breaking the rule of "domestic communism", where resources inside the reference household are being redistributed. Max Weber goes even further by showing that, despite the growing separation of "domestic economies", "in order to save the unity of labor and goods, a medium term is found, in a geographical de-centralization without a real separation, which resulted in the unavoidable occurrence of certain private rights for each of the separate holdings. Such dissipation may reach juridical separation and total independence from the economic accounting, while it doesn't trigger the elimination of a surprising share of domestic communism. Such a situation may be still found in Europe, especially in the alpine regions, where the families of Swiss hotel keepers may be given for example, but it can also be found in other places, in the case of big global businesses which are hereditary inherited by certain families. Here we are dealing with the survival of a communism of risk and profit, where we may see a rest of the domestic community and of the domestic authority that are already gone, at least externally" (Weber, op. cit., p.84).

It would therefore be more adequate for us to keep a vision of the residence unit which is rather functional than morphological and structural. In circumstances that are always constraining, this unit can change its volume and structure, thus adopting a variable geometry, forced by adaptation needs, without giving up its defining functions of domestic unit. In other words, the analysis unit is rather a community of functions, centered on the contribution in work, through the possible exploitation of the household, in accordance with its available resources and focused on the (more or less) equal redistribution of the results of this work within a consumption domestic unit, of those who participated in the working process. Therefore, despite certain juridical separations of "rights" to property of the household and, possibly, of each of its members, it is possible that the household regroups over its residential frame, around certain "uses" of the property which include larger or tighter forms of "domestic communism". Of course, this "unit of analysis" stays adequate as long as and to the extent to which the members of certain domestic units are "stubborn" enough to keep seeing this level of the domestic unit as the most appropriate - or, in any case, indispensable - for the successful negotiation of the distribution of work and redistribution of its benefits. On the other hand, such a conviction obviously depends on the existence, within our accessible space, of other negotiable "offers".

We may now take a closer look to an existing, present particular case.

8. A diffuse household in Sateni

The village of Sateni does not exist. It is a sort of Middletown I created, more precisely, the name that I gave to a most typical village, in order to be able to talk about a real household, to which I came back many times and on many occasions, starting with the year 2000. "A diffuse household in Sateni" is the story of those people whom I will give fictitious names, in order to better tell their story, that I learned while living in the same house as they, while eating and drinking together and following their activities and, sometimes, while taking particular interviews with my recording machine on the table. From the minute I decided to do it, I told them that I

would write "a book" about them and asked for their approval, which they didn't deny me. Still, they were somehow puzzled.

However, the description of this household consists of many other households more or less similar to the first one, where I have worked for the past 15 years. Also, the told facts are privileged by the quantum of facts observed, as I see them as significant, as they were all encountered in many other households. From a methodological point of view, the result is rather *an ideal fact*, that is the ideal perspective not of certain social actors - as in Max Weber's case - but of something close to the total social facts mentioned by Marcel Mauss. To be precise, this is about building a *descriptive model of representative social relations*.

Placement

Sateni is a big village with a population of over 3,000 inhabitants. It is placed at about 30 kms away from the capital of the county, with no railway near it, but linked to the town through an asphalt national road. Recently, it has been declared a town, though without having suffered any notable change in its engineering or demographic structure.

In the village there used to be a craftsmen cooperative shop employing several hundred women living there. Men used to work in the town's industrial facilities, at a power dam near the village and in the woods. There is also a nearby famous monastery which attracted, along with its faithful, a great number of tourists. In this respect there was also a union hotel, always filled with guests, as well as a "recreation house" for the employees of the power plant. At present, the cooperative is about to close its doors and cannot provide any more jobs for the women of the village. The union hotel is deserted, the monastery bought the recreation house and turned it into a hotel. Enterprises in the next town are not undergoing major restructuring operations or have closed up, so that only about half of the active male population in the village was able to preserve their jobs. About 20% of its active population was or is currently away, working abroad.

There is also a gypsy neighbourhood in the village, that is separated from the rest of the dwellings by a river, as in most of the Romanian villages. The neighbourhood ("gypsy quarter") consists of about 150 households with an average of 5 inhabitants per household. The great majority of the locals are daily workers on construction sites. The household we are referring to is right after one crosses the bridge, the first house of the "gypsy quarter". On the maternal line, family A has been living in the gypsy quarter for at least three generations, while men entered the family came from other villages. Still, the origins and older history of this kin is shrouded in mystery, as none of the family members with whom I spoke would talk about it.

The Apetrei Household

People know them as Apetrei, "of the Apetrei family". In fact, there are at least three families living under the same roof: Maria (who had died before my first visit there) and her husband Ion, also deceased in 2004, in an accident at the working place - on the one hand- and their son (Marius) and daughter (Olga), both married with children - on the other hand. I said "at least" because the two separate houses of their old parents are across the road, one belonging to the mother, the other, to Maria's grandmother. Now the two women are living in the same house, the one near the road. When they have many tourists (Apetrei has joined the so-called "agrotourism" network very early), they are moving together, all of them or part of them, as is the case, to live inside the old houses.

V.M.: Officially, are you registered as one or more households?

Olga: What do you mean? As one household.

V.M.: But there are several families here!

Olga: There is one house. We are living here, the old women, there.

V.M.: So they form another household.

Olga: Yes. I mean they have two households: my grandmother's and my great grandmother's.

V.M.: But aren't they living together?

Olga: Yes, they are now, but they each had their house and this is how it stayed... There are two houses there.

The fact that the parents live with their married children and with the children of the latter is not a typical issue. But Ion, "the household's son-in-law" of Sateni, wanted to build a big house ever since the beginning.

Ion: "We stayed in one room. There was a big room and father was also working there, mother was cooking sometimes... Ever since I was a child, I've wanted to have a bigger house... When I started to build this one, there was a lady here, a doctor. I used to say: "My God, what a big house she has!" I envied her! (laughing). I wanted to build a house bigger than hers, but I didn't realize how much money would be needed for its maintenance and how much work was involved. But I did it. I also was the first one of the village to have an inside toilet. The lady doctor didn't have one, so this was a big incentive!"

V.M.: How did you figure things out at that time, what was the deal?

Ion: The garage was down here, where we now have the cellar. This was the working shop... We weren't supposed to have any living space down there. And then I felt sorry. What was I to do with all that space? I could have easily turned it into a room... I made many changes. I still have the cellar. I haven't finished the attic.

V.M.: What was supposed to be there?

Ion: (laughs)

Olga: Grandchildren, great grandchildren... (also laughs).

Ion: We have everything ready, but the entire woodwork burnt down.

Olga: And Florin died, the carpenter who was supposed to do the attic.

V.M.: And now what do you want to build up there?

Ion: If I manage to find the money, I want to raise a light summer building. If these young girls come here (we were with some students), I'll get 20 of them there, to see the landscape.

Olga: We might build 6 upper rooms or 4 big ones, with a bathroom.

At present, the house has "6 rooms with a wooden floor", five at the upper floor, where they all live, one on the ground floor - between the "fine room" and the living room which is reserved for guests - with a near kitchen where they all eat. The garage and the workshop have been transformed into a closet and storing space. Recently, these were turned into a large modern kitchen, with a dining room for the clients. The bridge, decorated by a nice wooden gazebo is yet to be finished. There is a big yard, with a small orchard where there are some beehives, and a garden spot in the back, towards the river. The cows are kept across the road, "at the old women's place", where a larger garage was built when Ion wanted to raise more cows. Right after 1990, next to the road, the family raised a small building where they opened a

convenience store and a bar next to it. In 2005, Olga and her husband Marcel started to build a new house on their grandmother's land, where they recently moved the convenience store. Once with the European integration and the new trade regulations, the two are asking themselves if it's still worth keeping the bar:

Olga: We made all the calculations. It would cost us about 100 million to do everything they ask us to, after 2007.

V.M.: What do you mean?

Olga: First of all, there would be the toilets - one for men and a separate one for women, the storing space should be separated from the serving one, we would have to have tiling, also windows with PVC frames... What do we need all this for, when people are coming here just to drink a coffee or a schnapps, to leave right after? How will we cover our expenses out of three small coffees and four vodkas a day?

V.M.: What will you do then?

Olga: We'll close up, that's what we'll do! Trust me, most of the small village bars will close up. They'll won't have any choice !

In fact, we could talk about a single "domestic unit", even though it is distributed on several houses. Its covering five generations is a rather rare phenomenon. However, "the old women" are not seen by the rest of the family as part of the same household. The reason seems to be one in particular - an economic one, so to speak: he or she who does not take part in the chores of the household and/or doesn't control its goods does not have a full member status and doesn't have a word in the running of the household. One of the first things that caught my interest in these people was the functioning of their "household", more exactly what they meant by this. I first asked Mr Ion if he saw himself as a good manager of the household.

V.M.: Would you tell me if you see yourself as a good manager of the household, as seen by the other villagers? I for one see you as such.

Ion: Maybe I haven't been one lately. I'm over 60 years' old now.

V.M.: Well, let's say you're a good 60 years' manager of the household! (we are both laughing)

Ion: I feel I'm starting to... regress. I have certain problems, my children are not helping me enough, one has an opinion, the other, another one... I am alone now, I don't have... any support, so to speak. If I could say I had someone near me with the same perspective as mine, it would be easier for me to gather the rest of the family. But now we are three people with three different views.

V.M.: I was talking about you.

Ion: You can't do everything by yourself! You have to have a family where everybody goes in the same direction. There is no way you can cope otherwise. If you want to have cows, pigs, beehives, a garden and everything else, you can't cope by yourself, with an entire household. Not to speak of cleaning up! You need so much time to do it! Even when you don't do anything and keep the doors closed for a week, you'll see the dust clouding everything!

V.M.: How do you tell that someone is a good manager of the household? Can you see someone in the street and say: "Look, there he is?" How do you know him?

Ion: He has a garden full of flowers and trees, a well-groomed garden, he has a cart, a chariot, horses... Well, he has everything a man needs... A shovel, a small tractor.... Some land... What can I say? I bought another 3 hectares of land and this Sunday I just bought 4,000 square meters of land.

V.M.: Is the house important for a good manager of the household?

Ion: Why, yes! Very important. And its comfort matters, however modest... There's no need to have a big house, and there are plenty of those who built themselves big houses, as I did with this one - and they are living in the old ones - as would be our old women's house - while they are saving the new house.

Mr Ion sees his household as different from how it was when his wife was alive, even if he built many other things since then. When they were together, "they would work hard as two oxen in the same yolk, drawing in the same direction". Now, sometimes at least, one of his children says "white", the other says "black". In his opinion, this is not the way to run a household. This was probably the first lesson: *one can't be a good manager of the household on his own!* A manager of the household has *everything a man needs*, as Mr Ion would put it, and in order to get it, you need... several people. Therefore, a household seems to be a relatively constant set of activities necessary for its members to have *what a man needs*, which supposes that several individuals share those activities which are difficult or impossible to achieve by only one person. The result of these activities - if not commonly shared, then consensual - will then be divided and shared in common. The Apetrei household shares the "expenses", that is the consumption, but not "the income" - as they claim. This implies, as we will see, an assignment of the chores inside the household, each member dealing with a certain "income" sector. Other members of the household may temporarily take over certain roles, in case the "lead person" is not available. This assignment is far from being self-intended or perfectly harmonious, as it is in fact subject to constant negotiations and renegotiations. The views on "what a man needs" and on development, on "what could be done further" don't always coincide and strong conflicts occur sometimes on this subject, as Mr Ion would confess. They could have separated from each other and left for their own household. So it's not kinship that binds the household together; it is the preservation of its domestic unit along successive negotiations that kept them together. In a maybe more obvious way than in other cases, the Apetrei household was a continuing *process*. *"I don't know if we are to be separated, we'll see..."* This is what Olga told me in the winter of 2006, the last time I called on them.

The characters

Ion came to Sateni in 1971, from a village of the same county. He was a hydro mechanic and was performing maintenance works at the hydraulic pumps of the county. This is how he reached Sateni, where he met Maria. Shortly after this he married her and settled in the village. *"Three years I did nothing. I didn't know what to start,"* he says. In 1985, he started to work in Sateni as foreman at a small water power plant in the region. He has four more brothers, one in Craiova, one in Cluj, one who's left for Germany and another who stayed in their old parents' house.

Coming from a very poor family, Ion started from scratch. The house was his first and maybe greatest ambition. Then he worked hard as a bee-keeper and even got a prize in Germany for his chestnut honey. This work brought him a fair amount of money during the Communist years, and allowed him to round up his income as a worker. While working at the enterprise, he was permanently running his household, as most of the villagers. He also raised several cows and owned 20 or 30 sheep in the farming cooperative. Much to his help was the fact that he did surveillance work at the power plant. When he worked night shifts, he could sleep two or three hours and then have the entire day to work in the household. This was the reason why he never

wanted to promote, as this would have meant more responsibilities, more work and therefore less time for his household.

After the fall of Communism, he had initiated more projects than he could achieve. He was among the first who joined the "agrotourism" network, while making a boarding house of the house built before 1989. Together with his wife, they built near the road a small bar and a convenience store. He turned back to his bee-keeping and, after a bad year when he lost most of his swarms, he started raising otters. They ate the animals and sold their furs. After this, he had some goats which he sold, then he bought more cows for whom he built a stable across the road, at "the old women's house" ("*Cows are a safer investment*", he concluded, arguing with Olga who wanted to invest in a pool for tourists). Ion made plans for a trout farm, then wanted to install a heating central unit for heating a greenhouse and a sauna for tourists - and many more others. Each time I came to Sateni, he had other projects in mind. "*This life is too short, too short to do all you have to!*", he used to moan, half-joking.

In 2003 he fell off the staircase while he was fixing something and died.

There is very little I know about his wife **Maria**. She had already died when I first came to Sateni and no one of the family seemed willing to talk about her to a stranger. Still, I know that she was head of a section at the "Domestic Crafts" small enterprise of the village, a business which was going very well when it produced many textiles for export. She supervised 40 women and was working a lot at home, thus being able to take care of the household, as well. Together with her husband, she must have earned pretty well, as both had jobs that allowed them to take extensive care of their household.

Olga, Ion and Maria's daughter, is a hyperactive woman. She quickly gave up her studies after 10 grades of elementary school. Ever since the beginning of the '90s, she left for Austria, where she first worked in a pizza-shop, then in a greenhouse where there were other young people from her county. "*The lady owner had many connections. It was like in Romania. She arranged our visas with the police, she was hiring us almost legally, but didn't pay any taxes. And she gave us smaller fees. It's true, she told us that, if we wanted, she could pay us all the taxes, but there would be no salary for us. Who could have said yes?*"

In 1994, she met a wealthy Austrian who did business with the lady she worked for and they lived together for a while. "*The first thing about him was that I liked his car. Poor man, he was thinking I liked him, but I was more interested in his car.*" (laughing). She didn't work any more, as "*he took me away from my job, he said he would pay me my salary, only to stay home and take care of the cats.*" (...) *You can't imagine his house! When I saw all that waste... I felt bad! This is one way to put it; in fact, I couldn't care less!*" (laughing) *The cat food would cost more than ours.*" Then she came back to the country for the marriage papers. When she got back to Austria, three weeks later, she found her future husband with a friend of hers. "*I left for home. Why stay any longer? I was one too many.*"

When she got back, she spent all the money she had earned in Austria ("*I spent it so quickly!*"), then she worked at a bar in the capital of the county, where salaries were scarcely paid. "*But when I saw how much I made out of the tips, I told myself it was all right. One time for Christmas, when the owner wanted to pay our salaries, we all refused, bought champagne with that money and drank it together.*" Here, someone from a neighbouring village introduced her to another Austrian. "*He was pressing me to get the paperwork done. I said I would leave at once, I didn't care about his fortune. I would work and make money. He also had some advantages if he married me: he didn't have to pay certain bachelor taxes...*" They were sort of

married, but the Austrian would not let her free once Olga came back to Romania. This is why she couldn't marry another Austrian, *"a very rich but older one, a refined special person"*, with whom she lived for a while.

I don't know how and why she decided to come back for good. *"I had had enough."* This is all she told me. Since then, she takes care of the convenience store (for which she graduated *"a one-day course, so that they could give me the licence"*) and of the bar. When tourists come, she takes care of them, too, and her sister-in-law helps her. She knows everything that moves in *"the neighbourhood"* and she *"comes to terms with everyone"*, as she says herself. As they keep tabs at the only bar of the *"neighbourhood"*, it couldn't be otherwise.

When I first came to Sateni, **Marcel** was Olga's boyfriend. She wasn't officially married yet to the *"Austrian"*.

Marcel's grandmother had saved a lot of money during the Communist years: she had two cows and would sell their milk and cheese to the village hospital, she made doughnuts and toasted sunflower seeds which she sold at the high-school near her house. She left all her money to Marcel's uncle, the only child who stayed with her in her house. He was a driver and earned a good salary, too. When Marcel asked him for money once, he told him that, if he wanted money, he had to work for them. He had a stable contract with Plafar, for gathering medical plants, so he sent Marcel to pick up those plants and paid him a little more than the official fee. Marcel got used to having money, so he quit high-school and, right after his military service, he got married for a short while.

He had a connection that helped him leave for Germany. He worked for some time on the construction sites, as a woodwork assembler. This is how he met a guy who was interested in doing business in Romania, in the wood field. Near Sateni there is plenty of wood (*"Statistics say we can exploit wood here for another 80 years"*), so they decided to open up a wood processing workshop in the village. *"We had arranged to buy land here and to set up a stable working place for him to take orders only for Austria. When he didn't have any orders there, he would work for the domestic market."* The workshop would produce *"doors and other home appliances"*, but it didn't work out. *"I wanted to have a big business, and he wanted to have fun. These don't go together. He thought that coming to Romania meant running away from duties at home."* Marcel's partner came about ten times to Romania in a 6 to 7 year' period, but each time he did, he would spend more on having fun than on doing business. His family started to resent his escapades, so he didn't come here any more. As Olga would put it: *"They come here for a week or a month, they say they do business, but all they think about is having fun and then..."*

Marcel is taking care of everything, he is in charge with supplies at the shop and bar, he transports various stuff for people. Sometimes he does small businesses but, ever since I've known him, not one that might be big or enduring.

Marius is the other child of the Apetrei family, Olga's brother. In most of my visits there, he was gone, as he was trying to do business in Germany. He bought several cars, among which a VW van, but he got fooled and had to go back there for buying all sorts of spare parts, thus making many debts. His father, Ion, had to help him with a lot of money, which led to an unspoken conflict between father and son. Marius had other plans, but the results were scarce. Each time I spoke with Ion, he would mumble when talking about his son and say *"he's more of an idler."* I wasn't able to communicate much with Marius. Our first long discussion took place after his father's death, when Marius was suddenly forced to take over the role of head of household. He was much more relaxed and was saying reasonable things. He had

bought a wood mill and was installing it: *"I took the land and closed it and I prepared it. I started to bring wood in collaboration with somebody else. It's burning wood and I can still choose some pieces for other purposes. Now I'm chasing some contracts - at first only for timber. I cannot do more."* However, he had the ambition to produce *"solid furniture with Romanian traditional motives"*. The next time I went to Sateni, Marcel had made some progress with his woodwork business and was speaking like a true businessman who knows what to do. Therefore, I was quite surprised when, during the winter of 2006, when I passed through Sateni, I saw that his wood mill business was dying away (it was proven that the seller had fooled him and sold him defective machinery, which had become almost unusable). Still, Marius had decided to get a job with the state, as he suddenly wanted *"to have a safer job, even though less well paid."* In this sense, during the summer he tried to get a job as a fireman, with a fair salary and a working schedule that allowed him to work more in his household. The "bribe" he had to pay was much more consistent than he had expected, so he had to abandon the plan. Now he was looking for something else, without having a precise idea about it.

Marcel's wife **Roxana** is "the daughter-in-law" of the household. A quiet and modest woman, she takes care of the children and of the current chores of the household. Practically, she doesn't play any role in the other members' various businesses or in their projects. She may keep Olga's place at the bar when she is away. Once, during the summer of 2000, while being exceeded by this passive role, she decided to have a life of her own and got a job in the city, without telling anyone anything. In the evening, when Marcel found out, he beat her awfully. I happened to be there and I saw the whole scene from a distance. Since then, Roxana is even quieter and I was able to exchange but a few words with her. The others speak very rarely about Roxana. As in Zadruga, the last woman arrived inside someone's kin is everybody's servant...

The domestic economy of the Apetrei household

By "domestic economy" we mean the economic dimension of that which Polanyi named, as we have seen, *the principle of house holding*. We will therefore describe some of the most important and systemic activities developed by the members of the described household, starting with 1995, when I visited them for the first time, up to the present day.

First of all, we must reveal the fact that we are dealing indeed with a social unit, with a *diffuse household* that suffered fusions and fissions and includes five generations and more nuclear families that separate and reunite in a sum of interests and activities. There were periods when this kinship network functioned on a dispersed basis in Sateni, Craiova (where one of Ion's brothers lived), in Germany and Austria, where the two kids and Ion's other brother were living and with whom the rest of the family kept close relations. At present, Ion and "the old women" are dead and the relation with the uncle in Germany has been severed. But Olga, Marius and their families are still living together and sharing the chores of the household, their resources, as well as calculating in common "their expenses, but not their income". *"We are used like this, it's simple,"* they explain. *"We are helping each other, even if we fight sometimes."* However, there is at any time the possibility that this symbiosis ceases, a wish that both Olga and Marcel have expressed.

a) *The social division of labour*. As Ion used to say, members of a household must work hard as oxen in the same yolk, drawing in the same direction. His children,

Marcel and Olga, have chosen different directions. When they worked abroad, each of the children had his or her own plans, while the parents' household was more of a "safety net" to which they used to turn to whenever these plans would not succeed or whenever they failed. Generally, Olga contributed with a large amount of money for building the convenience store and improving the house (although she spent her money repeatedly), while Marcel brought a van with which he uses to help carry products for the store and go to the village (even though his father had to help him several times with money, in order to repair the car).

After finally (?) having settled in Sateni, they got married and settled in their parents' house. Then, the assignment of the household chores started to be more systemic: besides his job, Ion took care of the beehives, cows and other major chores. He was also the one to take the major decisions regarding the household strategies. Olga and her husband take care of the store and the bar; her husband is in charge with supplying them, while Olga takes care of potential tourists. Marius is driving the villagers wherever they need with his van and helps them set up contracts or with negotiations. Moreover, he founded the wood mill business. His wife "tends to the house", prepares meals and takes care of both families' children. All members of the household take part in field works (vintage, mowing, harvesting). However, this flexible assignment depends upon momentary strategies and contexts. Thus, for instance, after Ion's death, the children were assigned the chore of grooming all eight cows, which they refused to do, and sold the cattle. Still, Marius decided to take up bee-keeping and fixed the hives left by Ion, thus providing honey for his children and tourists.

The two women of the household have completely different gender statutes. Olga is more of a modern businesswoman, as in many instances and occasions she is the modernising factor of the household, much more than her brother or husband. On the contrary, Roxana is a typical example of a woman coming from a traditional patriarchal family. Still, this assignment seems to be working, and Roxana gave up any struggle a long time ago and is now happy with her obligations and rights inside the household. Marcel has also definitely changed his status in this association, from the moment his father died, as he is the one who has the final word upon the household decisions. Finally, as long as they were alive, "the old women" had no decisional roles and weren't asked to bring any contribution to the work of the household, as they would not be the subject of any special affection or respect. They were "properly taken care of" and nothing more.

As for the household's expenses, they were and still are "kept in common".

V.M.: How do you do it? Does each family know its own business or do you share everything?

Olga: Well, we keep track of what each of us spent and then we split everything. At the end of the month we draw the line and do the calculations.

Marcel: We split the expenses, but not the income. Each knows what he earns, but expenses are shared.

Olga: We are sharing the same house, aren't we? (laughs)

Marcel: Of course we borrow money from each other when we need it...

V.M.: What do you do with "the old woman"?

Olga: She doesn't have any more money! We give her something from the store, we give her food or we take her eat with us, as is the case...

V.M.: As if you had everything in common...

Olga: Of course.

b) *Economic activities*

Opinion polls show that, when asked what they would choose between a poorly paid but secure job and a less secure but better paid one, three quarters of the Romanians still pick up the first version. Even among businessmen, a substantial percentage have still kept their "job with the state". Ion gave the same answer when asked, although he had been a daring businessman all his life. It seems that his son Marcel reached the same conclusion after failing in the wood mill business, and tried to get a job "with the state". For Roxana, such a job would simply mean being independent from her husband's family. However, she had to go back to her household chores. This hesitation tends to become typical, but the most common rule seems to be picking up an easier job which may allow people work in their households.

After having analysed the Apetrei household for more than ten years, I cannot say I have identified any medium-term coherent and consistent strategy. All their economic activities were envisaged and were possibly achieved according to how they perceived certain opportunities in a local restraint space or in a large globalized one. Thus, for instance, woodwork business was a recurrent theme in the Apetrei household, influenced both by similar local initiatives, and due to certain tempting international offers. Still, the success or failure of one or other of these businesses would influence their decisions upon other businesses in the family. Therefore, in a profitable year regarding "agrotourism", Olga and her husband closed the convenience store during the winter, as they thought "it was not worth the effort". Now they want to turn the bar into a more profitable second-hand store, in the context of the European integration.

In this context, their longest activities remain the running of the bar and the tourist business.

The convenience store and the bar cover one room each and are in the same building which faces the road, inside the yard of the Apetrei family. Olga and Marcel are taking turns in working both at the bar and at the store, and they sometimes let Roxana in their place when they have work inside the house. At other times they just close both places. If people have an emergency, they can come inside and call for them. In fact, their clients come only from "the gypsy neighbourhood." Therefore, the amount and kind of stuff in the bar and store are calculated according to their needs and financial abilities.

Like three quarters of villages of the region (cf. Latea and Chelcea, 2001), the stores of Sateni grant a sort of informal credit. Only one grocery in the centre of the village, owned by a businessman living in the city, officially refuses to sell on tab. However, saleswomen secretly sell on tab - using a short-term credit - in order not to lose their customers. Obviously, Olga and Marcel make no exception. Only their strategies differ to a certain extent, as they adapt to the particular conditions in which they develop their activities. Thus, prices are at the same level with those of the village, while the maximum credit line goes up to one million lei over three months at the most. Still, like in any other circumstances, there are exceptions. Practically, all families in the neighbourhood buy on tab, less three notorious drunks which are excluded by the entire community and are given "special" treatment. As Latea and Chelcea noticed (op.cit.) in many other villages, bread is a particular merchandise in this case and is often sold at its production price, is never refused to anyone, even if the respective person has surpassed the credit line or period or even if he doesn't pay

his debts. Bread is still seen as a sort of Christian obligation and does not suffer the strict regime of being mere "merchandise".

During summertime, every Friday night, when daily workers come back from work, Olga and Marcel hire some fiddlers from the neighbouring village and take a "mici" grill out in the street. In such a good spot, right when one enters the neighbourhood, every man passes by the bar while going back home and few resist the temptation of entering and staying there a while... Olga and Marcel are thus almost sure that they will recover the money spent by their families during the week, during the weekend. In certain cases, the family would rather recover its money in services, while their customers are working in their vineyard or doing other household chores, for goods purchased on credit. However, winter is a more difficult time of the year, as money is scarce, as most of the daily workers can't find any work. Therefore, the couple prefers to sometimes close both the bar and store.

In 2004, a junior businessman living in the city opened a store in the neighbourhood and started selling everything on credit, at prices lower than those in Olga and Marcel's store. The two never told me what they did (if they did anything about it), but they laugh every time we talk about it. Still, it is certain that, after one year, the businessman from the city went bankrupt and had to leave, for many reasons, it seems: many clients were long overdue with their credit payment, as they didn't feel they had to pay their debts to a "stranger". Some went on buying only from Olga and Marcel, out of solidarity. Marius and Marcel tried to offer their services for transportation and contract set-up to those who bought their stuff at the competing store... This is how the Apetrei convenience store was still the only one left in the "gypsy quarter".

The other constant activity of the household is the "agrotourism" business. Ion joined the official tourism network ever since its foundation. At the beginning, there were about 40 households that joined the network, out of which 14 are now its current members. Only one is open on a full-time basis. Ion paid the necessary taxes and tried to take some money on credit from a bank, within certain agrotourism development projects. The only time I saw him angry and heard him swear was when he told me about it. I didn't quite understand what had happened, but it seems that the setting up of the credit file lasted for many months and implied many efforts. Finally, the interest proved to be much higher than the initial one. Therefore, the family had no result and has refused any idea of collaborating with a bank or other financial institution, ever since. *"I don't want to hear anything about banks any more. They're the biggest thieves of them all!"*, Ion told me on our first interview.

A similar outcome occurred in their relations with the county branch of agrotourism. The Apetrei family is dissatisfied for different reasons: on the one hand, the much too high commission cashed in by the agency for the tourists lodged and the much too small number of tourists who reach them through this network; on the other hand, the fact that they can't control the quality of their tourists. *"I don't want to see in my house whatever person they send!"*, Marcel once said to me, speaking on behalf of the entire family. Another time they told me that they had kicked some tourists out because they were making too much noise, while they told others at their departure not to come there any more: *"They were pigs, they were. They thought that, if they paid me, I was their slave and they could do whatever they wanted."*, Olga once explained to me. For them, tourists aren't just clients. They must be "likeable", "we must all feel well together."

This is why the Apetrei family has few clients. Their most faithful clients are the employees of an enterprise from another county, who has a maintenance contract

with a nearby enterprise. The team of technicians who come to Sateni sleep at Apetrei's, on the one hand because there is good food and they feel "like home", on the other hand, because the family writes the receipts in such a way that they can keep some money for themselves, out of the delegation.

Another category of constant clients are some Belgians who accidentally got there and are now coming here almost each year and bring their friends, too. As they would like to have mostly foreign tourists, the young members of the household have imagined various modern ways to improve their pension, starting with a bathroom with jacuzzi for each room, and ending with a swimming pool. They started by arranging a dining room with a TV set, apart from the rest of the house, which they kept only for tourists. As a result, no foreign tourist would eat there, as they all preferred having lunch with the rest of the family, in their joint kitchen. Sometimes Marius takes these clients - whom he calls "friends" - in the woods, for a barbecue.

I reached them with a group of students, during our practice courses. We were after a week's hard field work, we hadn't slept and eaten properly. With our last money we decided to afford the luxury of staying at a "guest house". This is how we ended up at Apetrei's, as we understood they had the most convenient conditions in the village. We set the price after a long negotiation and, after many days of eating cold food and cans, we ordered ourselves a hot meal. Then we stayed and talked with Ion, over a glass of tzuika. After a while, we found out we had some mutual friends in the region. Marcel came over, then Olga, and we had a long talk in the night. The next day, they sacrificed two hens and we all had a gorgeous meal. Drinks were "on the house" and the price dropped to half of what we had negotiated the day before. We had become friends overnight. Since then, we came back there two or three times during one year.

For some time now, Olga dreams to leave from this condominium for agrotourism business, as she has a different angle of how a tourist pension should look, than that of his father's, Ion. During his lifetime, any radical changes were out of question. Last time I saw them, Olga told me that she might get a piece of land facing the main road, for which her family has been struggling for long now. In this case, she thought about building her own pension there, a house with no more than 3 or 4 rooms, each "with its own bathroom" and arranged to her taste.

To these relatively constant activities should add a permanent project: wood processing. Both Marius and Marcel have dreamed of doing such business, and both started one with Western partners. They made several trips to Germany and Belgium to this purpose, but neither of them managed to succeed in their feat. Both say that they have been swindled, which seems to be true, at least partially.

c) The community

Olga and Marcel know the problems of every family in the neighbourhood. In the morning, the bar is mostly filled with women who come for a coffee and chat with Olga. Also, they tell her about their troubles when they ask something for credit, when one bad thing or another just happened to them. Men come mostly at the end of the week and would rather talk to Marcel, to whom they tell where they went, what they found for work and to whom they sometimes ask a favour. Therefore, our two people know rather well to whom and how much they can lend money without taking too great risks, due to the intertwining of their relationships. Also, even if she mumbles each time, Olga is in fact forced to reopen the store whenever someone has an emergency.

Marcel helps the daily masons of the "slums" with their papers and contracts, when they don't know anything about them. Many times, employers take advantage of this situation and fool them, and this is why they go to Marcel for advice or for him to read the contracts before signing them. *"They are our means of living"*, he explains to me. *"So we must help them, for they don't know anything. Then, if they have what they want, we have what we want..."* Other times, he or his brother-in-law takes the daily workers with the family van to the villages or towns where they are employed, and they negotiate the price as is the case.

This involvement in the life of the community has given the Apetrei family an asset that is not seen with good eyes by everyone in the village. Thus, for instance, in 2004, two brothers from a wealthier family of the neighbourhood tried to incite the daily workers against Marcel and to set up a sort of association ruled by them. I don't know how things evolved, but when I passed by Sateni in 2006 and asked Marcel what happened to the association of the two brothers, he told me that it didn't work and that the two brothers had separated.

In 2004, the entire family was involved in the local elections.

They had a clear objective: to defeat the running mayor who didn't want to give them a piece of land as compensation for a part of their garden, taken away by the state for building a local soccer stadium. Ion had ongoing trials with the Mayor's office for quite some time, but never obtained anything. After his death, his children pursued the matter in court and decided to defeat the mayor. When I visited them in 2005, they were very happy: they had made it. *"I brought him at least 300 or 400 votes. That's no joke!"*, bragged Olga, who seems to have been the head of the entire operation. There was a simple explanation: they told all the voters in the neighbourhood that, if they didn't vote for their candidate, they could go and buy their stuff from somebody else.

In the winter of 2006, the last time I spoke with them, they were waiting to become the owners of the much expected land. For Olga, this meant above anything else a chance to "get out of the gypsy quarter", which seemed to be her dearest dream, even though she didn't speak about it at all. Only once, when one of my students said she wasn't sure she'd leave for Italy with a scholarship, I heard her burst out: *"Had I the chance to escape the curse of the gypsy quarter!"* The other members of the household seem rather at peace with life in this neighbourhood of Sateni.

We may now sum up the main features of this „ideal household” as follows:

- *a flexible design*, the household space moving by fusions and fissions between one nuclear family to four generations and collateral network(s) depending on contexts and periods of life and work cycles of their members;
- *an adaptive (re)distribution of tasks* between individual members according to common strategies of the household, affecting gender roles too;
- *the hybridity* of economic activities and strategies, transgressing and combining formal defined spaces of public and private, market and non-market (combining state jobs and private work, public services run on credit according to community criteria, tourism enterprises moving between commerce and hospitality, etc.);
- *the mobility* of economic activities and strategies, (“locational movements” in Polanyi’s terms), moving between the local and the global mainly via migration;
- *the embedded character* of household activities, positioning the larger householding network as the “unit of meaning” beyond the individual and specialized needs and activities;

➤ *recognition* (Ricoeur, 2004) as a main motivational force in householding rationality, involving identity-seeking and defining processes.

8. Conclusions

Starting with 1 January 2007, Romania can be considered as officially being a *post-peasant society*. By this I mean a society still deeply and structurally defined by peasant type of life, which is now explicitly out-ruled, the still existing “peasants” having to be transformed, eventually, into “farmers”. A long lasting process, of course, which started many decades ago, but which is now at its climax.

In this context, one should wonder what the role of household still is and, eventually, will be? Is it aimed to disappear, or is the kind of domestic economy it embodies still functional? Are the existing – and still emerging – forms of householding economic strategies just pre-market survivals or dysfunctions, are the ways of tricking with the system via “domestication” (e.g. Gerhard Creed), or do they play a functional role in “oiling the system”?

We believe that “common economies” such as householding are rather a permanent and dynamic complement of “public economies” such as market, reinforcing and/or opposing each other according to broader societal designs. In the present market dominated prospect, householding may be projected in the in-formal and built as the “alterity” of market, being nevertheless its reactive by-product and helping people to find their way and even get involved in a market-seeking context. In this respect, we may speak about a permanent and necessarily *domestication of the market*, actually implying a kind of “domestication of Europe” by the new coming states such as Romania and Bulgaria. Further on, if this is true, it implies a need for refinement of the dominant cognitive frame of representation in order to better approach, describe, and understand this lasting complementarity.

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