National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

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DOCTORAL THESIS

Family Dynamics in Romanian Cinema: Patterns

A Comparative Study of Films From The Communist and Post-Communist Eras

SUMMARY

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Introduction

This doctoral thesis' main objective is to determine the family dynamics patterns in Romanian cinema, through a comparative study of films released during the communist and the post-communist periods. Stemming from cultivation theory, the study focuses on identifying the way in which family dynamics are presented within the Romanian motion pictures in order to establish if the representation of the relationship between family members is based on typified situations, behaviors, and attitudes, which transcend cinema's genres and eras.

According to cultivation theory, media patterns can be assimilated by individuals which are heavily exposed to mass media messages containing said patterns, this process resulting in cultivation effects, namely changes in perception regarding real life. To sum up, is media patterns are assimilated, then the individual can believe that the attitudes, behaviors, and situations shown within the media are vastly similar to ones in real life, thus modifying his or her own perception in line with the patterns.

Even if some patterns can have a basis adopted from real life, different characteristics are emphasized, others are suppressed, thus resulting in a typified rendering within the media messages, which can lead, through the occurrence of cultivation effects, to an inaccurate perception of real social interactions. In this sense, continuously integrating familial motifs within films can lead to accentuating certain behavioral and situational models which, in turn, can result in media patterns.

The analysis of these media patterns is an important area of research, especially considering the impact mass media messages can have in regards to the construction of the self. This aspect is that much more poignant given the omnipresence mass media have in the lives of so many individuals. Through this repeated contact, the construction of the self can be altered in accordance with the messages and their content. The perception of real life and interpersonal relationships within a real context can shift drastically.

Given the importance family has, not just on an individual level, through establishing a social basis which influences future interactions, but also on a societal level, through mirroring and emphasizing macro social shifts, analyzing the way in which this primary group is represented within a mass media context solidifies a noteworthy research goal.

In this sense, the main objective is to establish which are the main family dynamics patterns present in Romanian films launched in both cinema eras, followed by a comparative analysis in order to determine if--and to what degree--these patterns have been modified in time or if they have been fully adopted by the new generation of filmmakers.

The thesis is structured in two main sections, the first one focusing on the theoretical framework, while the second one is dedicated to the methodology, research, and findings, as well as the overall conclusions subchapter, as I will detail in the following pages.

Theoretical Framework

1. Cultivation Theory--patterns and effects

The first theoretical chapter is focused on detailing cultivation, which was first theorized by George Gerbner and his colleagues from the Annenberg Institute. According to the theory, each mass communication medium has a set of situational, behavioral, narrative etc. patterns which are repeatedly utilized in order to convey messages to the public and to create its own symbolic universe Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorelli & Shanahan, 2002). These patterns can include or lead to stereotypes, can legitimize a specific social order (Gerbner et al., 2002) and can crystallize and proclaim certain values, through establishing certain socially desirable behaviors depending on gender, status etc. (Kellner, 1995). As a result of assimilation, this standardization of roles and behaviors leads to changes in perception (Gerbner et al., 2002).

Cultivation was initially theorized within the television context, given the influence this medium had over half a century ago, which permitted viewing to become a daily ritual which both the elites and other categories of public (Gerbner et al., 2002; Gross, 2009). Through repeated exposure to patterns included in media messages, an individual internalizes those patterns, which can result in changes at a perceptional level in regards to real life, namely cultivation effects (Gerbner et al., 2002).

The gradual cultivation of the public's perception has the potential to lead to changes regarding the way in which an individual perceives and relates to social situations (Woo & Dominick, 2003), can encourage a higher acceptance of authority (Shanahan &

Morgan, 1999) and can result in stable attitudes which have the tendency of being repeated in real social situations (Nabi & Sullivan, 2001). Apart from having the potential to induce a higher degree of acceptance regarding censorship and oppressive measures (Gerbner et al., 2002) and supporting extreme governmental regulations, such as the death penalty (Mutz & Nir, 2010), pattern assimilation involves perceptual changes in regards to gender roles and race (Martins & Harrison, 2011) or other important facets, such as an attitude towards science (Signorelli, Dudo, Brossard, Shanahan, Scheufele, & Morgan, 2011).

In this chapter I have also detailed the processes included in cultivation theory, amongst which are mainsteaming and resonance. The "mainstreaming" process (Gerbner et al., 2002, p. 51) refers to the instance in which a high degree of media consumption has the capacity to reduce perceptual and attitudinal differences which result from personal experience. Through this process, experiences which are perceived as being direct are introduces, thus leading to an overlap with real life experiences (Shrum & Bishak, 2011). Therefore, in the absence of direct experience, the audience can perceive a mediated event as being more likely to occur in real life (Van den Bulck & Custers, 2013). When the viewed images are congruent with the everyday realities of the individual exposed to them, then resonance can appear (Shrum & Darmanin Bishak, 2011). If an individual has a real, unmediated basis (in situations where he was an eyewitness or an active agent in occurrences which are similar to those incorporated in patterns), then there's a higher likelihood of him being influenced by media messages (Shrum & Darmanin Bishak, 2011), because through this process, they gain a characteristic perceived as being universal.

Cultivation theory also includes "mean world syndrome" (Gerbner et al., 2002, p. 52), namely an overestimation of the degree of violence within a given society, which leads to enhancing a state of anxiety and mistrust in other people. The main cause is the disproportionate air time given to cases with a high level of aggression (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999), which results in a lack of trust regarding other members of society, an aspect of the theory which has been studied and confirmed repeatedly (Eschholz, 2003; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Ortiz 2007; Hetsroni & Lowenstein, 2012; Ze, 2015 etc.). The syndrome takes on a worrying note when taking into consideration the fact that media messages which include violence usually present members of a minority group as the

aggressors, not the victims, in most cases (Brown & Roemer, 2016), which perpetuates a specific social order.

As I have detailed in the thesis, even if cultivation theory was established in the context of television, it can be adapted to other mediums, such as cinema, especially when researching social interactions. Most films and TV shows can affect the perception of real relationships (Jin & Kim, 2015), as well as matrimonial objectives (Vu & Lee, 2013; Osborn, 2012, citat în Lai, Chung, & Po, 2015).

2. The Construction of the Self and Family Dynamics

The second theoretical chapter is focused on detailing the self--a direct result of social experience (Mead, 1934)--and the family, a concept which can be defined in terms of consanguine and legal connections (Durkheim, 2002), of social organization of reproducing and producing everyday life (Engels, 2004), and as a social group made up of a married couple and their offspring (Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998).

The development of the self is a circular process (Mead, 1934), conditioned by social bonds. The interactions observed both in a family context and in other social groups or mass media become ingrained in individuals' memory, being the basis for future behavior (Elmer & Reicher, 2005). Mimicking social roles is a process which starts from early childhood and results in the adoption of said roles (Gorbet & Kruczek, 2007). The self and identity suffer changes depending on social context (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002), and behaviors can mold on dominant social and cultural norms and expectations because of the need for acceptance (Foldy , 2012). An example in this sense are gender roles, made up of norms and expectations (Eagly & Chvala, 1986), the distinction between masculine and feminine being a social and contextual construct (Butler, 1990).

Given the current context, the formation process of the self is influenced by mediated symbols, because individuals can refer to a non-local knowledge in constructing their identity, through mass media (Thompson, 1998). Moreover, the emergence of mediated quasi-interaction (Thompson, 2005), which has a monologue nature and is characterized by a dominantly unidirectional communication style, leads to new forms of social relations. An individual can develop a strong dependency on mediated communication and on mass media, and the perception of the self is continuously

influenced by media messages, in a process called "the absorption of the self in mediated quasi-interaction" (Thompson, 1998, p. 209). This type of interaction leads to a phenomenon called non-reciprocal intimacy at a distance (Thompson, 2005), which includes a perspective primarily focused on the message and its symbolic content.

Parasocial interaction--the emotional bond between an individual and a media entity, be it a star or fictional character (Horton & Wohl, 1956, citat în Greenwood, Pietromonaco, & Long, 2008)--can result in attitude changes (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). Regarded as an extension of social interaction which occurs in real life (Greenwood & Long, 2008), a parasocial relation can be experienced like a real relationship, established in everyday life (Cohen, 2004; Bostwick & Lookadoo, 2016) and can enhance the likelihood of an individual adopting a media entity's perspective, thus changing his or her behavior and attitude (Phua, 2016).

Thus, patterns which include that media entity have considerable more chances of being assimilated, especially if the level of intimacy is perceived as being high by the individual. A higher degree of intimacy leads to a greater desire to consume media products (Chia & Poo, 2009).

Even when taking into account all the factors which can influence the construction of the self through media messages and the patterns included in them, the interaction which occurs in a familial setting represents the basis for understanding future social norms. The family has known numerous shifts throughout history (Freedman, 2002; Engels, 2004; Vlăsceanu, 2011; Hill, 2012), but the traditional family, as we understand it today, was perpetuated by the industrial society (Vlăsceanu, 2011). Through the promotion of the patriarchal structure, the concept of nuclear family was solidified, made up of a husband, wife and their children (Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998; Segalen, 2002). The family is both a reactive agent in regards to economical and social macro-changes, as well as a proactive agent (Hareven, 1991, citat în Hill, 2012). This mainstream family structure has enabled the perpetuation of role and responsibility differentiation, based on gender, a tendency which continues to this day Caplan, 2000; Estlein & Theiss, 2014) and which influences family dynamics.

3. Cinema--Between Cultural Industry and Art

The final theoretical chapter is dedicated to the medium analyzed in this paper, cinema, with a focus of this industry's evolution in Romania. This medium presents a high degree of adopting and adapting elements taken from other mediums such as literature and theatre (Bazin, 2005) and includes a mix of numerous creative areas (Christie, 2001). Even defining characteristics such as genre are taken from other mediums (Tudor, 2003), and some genres are so well defined in the audience's mind that they can be easily parodied by using their own conventions to satirize them (Gehring, 1999).

Genres have intrinsic structures, history, themes, a tradition of representation (Langford, 2005), and a mix of genres within a film can have succes, but can result in a hybrid without substance (Bazin, 2005). But the particularities which enable the audience to recognize each genre can lead to problematic representations which continue to this day, such as the dynamic between male and female characters in action and adventure films (Gallagher, 2005). In this sense, cinema uses patterns to create its own symbolic universe, some of which are transferred between genres.

In regards to the Romanian film industry, detailed in this chapter, it evolved unevenly, some of the countries regions being more prolific (Căliman, 2000). Moreover, but the political, economical, and audience consumption behavior from the past few decades have determined a notable difference on a production level, with over 250 films released in the 1980-1989 period (Căliman, 2000), the number gradually decreasing until only 2 films were launched in 1999 (Everett, 2005), followed by absolutely no new releases in the year 2000 (Uricaru, 2002).

In this paper, the two significant film eras are the 1970-1980 and the 2005-2015 ones, as I will detail in the following chapter. The films launched in the 1970-1980 period were heavily influenced by Nicolae Ceauşescu speech in July 1971 (The July Theses), which defined new creative rules regarding the allowance given to such themes as violence, celebrating a bourgeois lifestyle etc. (Popescu, 2011). Among the principal themes identified in this era are portraying the worked as a moral benchmark (correlated with integrating workers in factories), the negative representation of individualism and presenting the desire to leave the country as a capital mistake (Popescu, 2011). One of the preferred genres was the epic historical film, "the national cinematic saga" (Căliman,

2000, p. 211), which reinterpreted history in its attempt at establishing a correlation between Ceaușescu and certain historical figures deeply engraved in the collective psyche. One can also identify, especially in the case of successful films, a heavy western genre influence (Caranfil, 2002).

The 2005-2015 era is marked by films pertaining to the New Romanian Cinema, which has led to an almost constant appearance of Romanian films in the international festival circuit. If communist films were influenced by ideological restrictions, now we're discussing financial restriction, the New Cinema being characterized by the propensity for minimalist, aesthetic realism (Caranfil, 2008; Gorzo, 2009; Șerban, 2009), the movement being defined by "the minimalism of resources, the apparent simplicity of the "slice of life" narrative, discussing an issue greater than the story itself" (Caranfil, 2008, p. 9). There are also recurring themes, many of which are focused on family dynamics and criticizing the values of the communist era, among which are reinterpreting the concept of the West and a repositioning the roles ascribed to the mothers and fathers within the parent-child relation (Mihăilescu, 2011). Some situations and images are used so frequently that they become a leitmotif of the movement, for example, the shots which include one or more characters sitting down at a table (a possible critique of the food crisis in the communist era, according to Mihai Chirilov, 2011).

In this chapter I also detailed the current situation Romanian cinema faces and the way in which New Cinema films are legitimized--through their continued presence at international film festivals, not through their capacity of attracting audiences into movie theaters (Șerban, 2009; Pop, 2010), unlike communist films, where a film's popularity represented a goal in and of itself.

Methodology

1. Research Questions

As I have mentioned, the thesis' main objective is identifying family dynamics patterns in Romanian film, in a comparative study aimed at analyzing if, and to what degree, these patterns have been transferred between communist and post-communist films. Within this subchapter I have detailed the research questions:

RQ1. What are the family dynamics patterns in Romanian films launched in the 1970-1980 period?

RQ2. RQ1. What are the family dynamics patterns in Romanian films launched in the 2005-2015 period?

RQ3. What are the differentiating characteristics of family dynamics patterns between 1970-1980 and 2005-2015 films?

In an incipient phase, determining family dynamics patterns within the two film eras is crucial (as expressed in the first two research questions), in order to identify the way in which family members' relations are established and to detect if there are any significant trends. The final research question is focused on comparing the identified patterns in order to establish whether a transferring process took place between the film eras, without notable changes or if the films launched during the 2005-2015 period represent a total distancing from the narrative conventions of the past, within the context of family dynamics.

1.2 Methods

In order to reach the research goal, a complex analysis is required, in order to emphasize both the nature and the frequency of the patterns used in Romanian cinema. An empirical, comparative study, with a confirmative and evaluative research of the way in which family dynamics are represented in Romanian cinema is crucial for determining the patterns which can, according to cultivation theory, influence the audience's perception. In this sense, the research method used in this study is that of content analysis. Establishing a reference system was needed for identifying and analyzing the patterns, the focus being on frequently used characteristics used in the representation of family dynamics. In order to analyze the patterns I have devised an analysis grid, the measurement unit being represented by a single shot (a continuous portion of film, uninterrupted by the editing process), thus eliminating the research limitations another measurement unit (such as a sequence) would have imposed.

The analysis grid is comprised of 12 distinct categories, each with its own subcategories:

1. The allocation of household responsibilities (subcategories: predominantly husband, predominantly wife, predominantly child, equally between husband and wife);

2. Role reciprocity in raising the children (subcategories: predominantly husband, predominantly wife, equally between husband and wife, predominantly other relatives/people);

3. Financial contributions (subcategories: predominantly husband, predominantly wife, predominantly child, equally between husband and wife);

4. Family unity (subcategories: nuclear family, extended family, non-traditional family, single parent family);

5. Imparting values (subcategories: wife's responsibility, husband's responsibility, other relatives'/people's responsibility);

6. The degree of accepting values (subcategories: accepting, rejecting);

7. Interpersonal communication process (subcategories: initiated by the husband, initiated by the wife, initiated by the child, initiated by other relatives);

8. Interpersonal communication volume (categories: predominantly husband-wife, predominantly wife-child, predominantly husband-child, predominantly a parent-other relatives, predominantly child-other relatives);

9. Tense family relations (subcategories: husband-wife, wife-child, husband-child, other relatives-members of the nuclear family);

10. Level of explicit attachment (subcategories: husband-child, wife-child, husband-wife, child-other relatives/people, parent-other relatives/people);

11. Managing crisis situations (subcategories: husband's responsibility, wife's responsibility, child's responsibility, other relatives'/people's responsibility);

12. Violation of trust (subcategories: husband, child, wife, other relatives).

1.3. Analyzed Films

This subchapter details the methods through which the films were chosen, a number of 15 for each film period. One of the criteria was the release date, 1970-1980 and

2005-2015, respectively). Though the periods differ in regards to aesthetic and ideology, they have a series of similarities, among which are canonical directors, the influence of previous decades, obvious in establishing an aesthetic and in the propensity for certain narrative trends, a notable increase in production and releasing films, restrictions which influenced main themes, determined main creative movements etc., details which are detailed throughout the paper.

The second selection criterion is represented by visibility, a concept which is declined differently for each era. The social and technologic shifts have allowed a transformation of consumer behavior in regards to film, thus leading to a new system of legitimization for films. Visibility for the communist era will be represented by the total number of total spectators for each film, according to the National Centre for Romanian Cinema (CNC, 2017) data. For the 2005-2015 films, the visibility criterion will have two components, namely the total number of spectators and the debut at important international film festivals on a European level (Festival de Cannes, Berlinale, Warsaw festival etc.), as well as nominations and awards.

This selection criterion is based on how Romanian films are consumed today. Internet's evolution and the dissemination of films online have led to a restructuration of the cinema experience, which has moved from the movie theatre into homes. If during the communist period, the movie theatre represented the main source for viewing films, now online films have led to a notable shift. An example is "Marilena de la P7", a film directed by Cristian Nemescu, which only had 42 spectators in movie theaters (CNC, 2017), but has a number of 434.886 views on a single Youtube chanel ("Marilena de la P7", 2013).

Another aspect detailed in this subchapter is the fact that an award or a nomination at a major film festival results in an increased attention given to a film, both from the media and from the public, thus leading to the "Palme d'Or effect" (Șerban, 2009, p. 65). Taking these aspects into consideration, the research is focused on 30 films which meet the above-mentioned criteria.

The next two subchapters of the thesis (1.3.1 Communist Period (1970-1980) and 1.3.2 Post-Communist Period (2005-2015) offer an overall understanding regarding the films included in this study, by discussing the elements which are intrinsic to each film era, the accent being on directing style and narrative elements focused on family dynamics. Also, films which have resulted in statistic anomalies are discussed, such as

"Aventuri la Marea Neagră", which didn't include a single family dynamics pattern, as they have been defined within the analysis grid.

2. Findings

This chapter presents the data gathered through content analysis, as well as the subsequent graphs and tables. Regarding the total number of shots for each era, there aren't notable differences: 1590 shots for the 1970-1980 films and 1636 shots for the 2005-2015 period.

For the communist films, some recurring themes have been identified, which are worth mentioning: the concept of divorce appears in one instance and is associated with a society criticized throughout the film (in "Profetul, aurul și ardelenii"), all the main characters were male, the familial relations between parent and offspring is concentrated, in most cases, on the father's or a male child's interactions with another male relative, the single parent family is usually the result of a death, usually the mother's.

Among the main trends in 2005-2015 films is the focus, on a much bigger than the 1970-1980 films, on narrative structures developed around family dynamics, awarding a much bigger role to mothers, especially in decision-making, but this role can manifest itself in nuances of control, female main characters, tense family relations.

Even if the films from the two eras show differences, some patterns from the 1970-1980 films have been identified in the 2005-2015 era, which confirms one of the main premises of cultivation, namely the perpetuation of typified representation. Even if New Cinema's films assume a stylistic detachment in regards to communist films, they don't hesitate to adopt many of the family dynamics patterns observed in this film era.

In regards to the first research question, a significant portion of the 1970-1980 films favor the father's position as the centre of family unity and accentuate role assignment based on gender. Thus, according to the results of the content analysis, household responsibilities are most allocated to mothers/wives (59,6% of the frames in this category), and when these are allocated to the child (26,3%), they're usually female. A similar situation has been identified in the case of raising the children category, where mothers take on most of the duties, 67% (as opposed to the equal share of responsibilities between husband and wife, which only has 1% of the shots). An even more problematic

situation arises in the case of financial contributions, where most of the shots present the father as being the only one with financial power. No patterns were identified in which the mother/wife had financial power, which results in a worrying portrayal of the power dynamic between genders, as detailed in the thesis.

The family unity category shows a predilection towards presenting the nuclear family. Imparting values is shown as a responsibility allocated to the father (51%), and the values are accepted by the new generation in 72% of the shots. The process of interpersonal communication is initiated either by the father, or another male relative, in most cases, and a large part of this process takes place between the children and other relatives.

In regards to the tense familial relations, the most frequent pattern was that showing arguments between spouses (46,9%), and the explicit attachment shown on screen was mainly focused on the husband-child dynamic. Regarding managing crisis situations, there is another notable difference, 47% of the shots showing it as a husband's responsibility. Violation of trust was mostly shown as cheating in a relationship, and 35,9% of the shots portray the husband as an active agent in this situation.

In the case of films from the 2005-2015 era, some patterns are similar to the ones from the communist era, as I have specified. Among them are the allocation of household responsibilities (the mother takes most of the responsibility, even higher than the previous era, with a percentage of 67,6), the roles assigned in taking care of the children (47,2% of the shots for the predominantly mother subcategory, but with a significant change in the equal share between husband and wife subcategory, 16,5%) and the familial unity category. It's worth mentioning that the financial contributions category is still dominated by the husband (68,6%), but mothers/wives are shown as having financial power, in some cases being the only earners in the family or having a higher degree of control over money than their partners, but in a small proportion compared to the overall frame numbers in this category. Imparting values is still an area where the husband/father has the biggest contribution, and the values are accepted by the new generation in a 65,6% share. Surprisingly, since one of the defining elements of the New Romanian Cinema is the criticism leveled against communist values, both the political and social ones. But this is the point where each film movement's conventions come into play and how the aforementioned pattern is inserted to enable a subtle critique of the past systems. The

problem arises when these messages require film knowledge to be decoded, an asset which the public at large does not have. This characteristic of new films is detailed within the paper, the accent being placed on the difference between the explicit pattern and the implicit message.

The communication process is now initiated by the child, the number of shots being more evenly distributed among the subcategories (26,9% for the predominantly mother-child and 26,3% for the husband-child, respectively). Tense familial relations are mostly concentrated on the mother-child relationship 40,2%), the same as the explicit attachment category (32,5%), which hints at a restructuring of this familial relation within a film context, in terms of patterns and complexity which the 1970-1980 era lacks. Managing crisis situation is no longer the sole responsibility of the husband; instead, other relatives/people take care of it (as we can observe in films such as "4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days"). The Violation of trust is, once again, a category which is mostly aimed at cheating in a relationship, the husband being the cheater in most cases (a trend emphasized in films such as "Boogie" and "Tuesday, After Christmas", both directed by Radu Muntean).

In regards to the difference in patterns between the two eras, as I have mentioned, both a transfer of family dynamics representation from past films and a subtle restructuring of it in regards to the child-parent relations, especially in the mother's case. This aspect can be due to New Cinema's propensity to include female leads in its films, but the fact that in some cases, the patterns aren't depicted in the most positive notes needs to be mentioned. For example, the explicit attachment between mother and child has almost obsessive nuances in films such as "The Child's Pose". Even if these patterns have been identified, a noteworthy discussion is how they have been inserted into the films, an aspect which is detailed in the thesis.

A problematic aspect is that both film eras have a tendency to assign specific responsibilities based on gender. Such a predilection in constructing and perpetuating patterns which limit possible roles for some characters can lead, in case of assimilation, to attitude changes as well as perceptional shifts in regards to real life. Outright negating the financial potential of feminine characters places them in a subordinate position in comparison to the male characters. Moreover, one must note that for the 2005-2015 era, the film "The Child's Pose" represents a statistical anomaly and that it significantly

influenced some patterns pertaining to the financial input of mothers/wives. Even so, the pattern still favors the financial contributions of the husband, a similar situation to that of caring for the child. Mothers are still the ones taking care of the offspring, but the subcategories pertaining to the father's involvement present an increase compared to the communist era, especially in regards to the equal share of responsibility between mother and father, even if this representation appears in few shots. This tendency to symbolically isolate a character's potential based on gender can lead to cultivation effects with problematic implications.

3. Discussions and Conclusions

Within this chapter I have discussed the results of the content analysis and their implications within a cinema context, as well as cultivation theory and possible effects which might appear as a result of a frequent exposure to and assimilation of family dynamics patterns.

As I have mentioned, in films from the 2005-2015 era there is a tendency to insert certain patterns with the purpose of criticizing them, but this understanding can elude some individuals which are exposed to them, especially if these patterns are congruent with personal, unmediated experienced, as in the case of the resonance process. Of course, given the fact that these films aren't produced for the public, the target audience can decode the narrative nuances, but this is not a skill which every viewer which is exposed to them has, especially when taking into consideration the wide reach these films can have online.

In the case of family dynamics, the way in which this element is portrayed in mass media can have notable repercussions in regards to the interaction within the family unit, of members' behavior and on certain expectations they might develop. The representation of family dynamics in cinema has the potential to influence attitude in a familial setting, by promoting an imagine which has no real life correlation. Mass media patterns have a tendency of accentuating some facets in the detriment of others, thus neglecting important stages in constructing and maintaining some social situations.

Regarding the identified patterns, a significant number of them show an almost identical transfer between one era and the other, with no notable changes, thus supporting

one of the main premises of cultivation theory. In the case of patterns where differences have been identified, these were, for the most part, a result of films such as "The Child's Pose", a statistic anomaly. But the presence of main female characters indicates a wider direction in regards to the narratives ascribed to them. Also, there is a much more pronounced importance placed on mothers in family life, suggesting a nuanced understanding of family dynamics which hasn't been identified in the communist era.

Taking these factors into consideration, we can conclude that Romanian films obviously use family dynamics patterns and that these, in a significant portion, are similar between the two film eras, with small changes which have the potential of becoming patterns themselves.

The limitations of the research are detailed within this chapter, and they're aimed at the lack of a previous study focused on family dynamics, the criteria through which the films have been chosen and the measurement unit of the analysis grid (option which has still limited subjectivity). A possible restructuring of the research method can lead to a difference in results, but not a relevant one.

Stemming from cultivation theory, the objective of this study was to determine the family dynamics patterns in the context of Romanian cinema. By developing a research based on a comparative study between the two eras, the communist and post-communist ones, I have been able to analyze the way in which these patterns transcend genres and creative movements, in order to establish and sustain a symbolic universe intrinsic to each medium, cinema's, in this case. I have identified the way in which family dynamics are portrayed in a film context, in order to have a more complex understanding of the concept of family and the way it's interpreted in this medium.

Regarding future areas of research, this study can be a basis for identifying the level of pattern assimilation within Romanian audiences and if cultivation effects can be found in a family dynamics context. Given the impact mass media messages can have not only on the perception of reality, but also on the construction of the self, further research can reveal whether these patterns have resulted in behavioral shifts. Also, through a similar analysis of films from future decades, one can observe if these patterns have been transferred yet again, if they have changes or if the minute differences identified in this study have become patterns in their own right.

Relevance of the Study

Given the potential impact patterns can have on audiences, a detailed study focused on them is relevant for a wider perspective regarding the reinterpretation of social reality in a media context and the way in which these patterns contour and perpetuate a specific legitimization of a social order, through the symbolic allocation of certain roles and statuses.

By identifying family dynamics patterns, this study's aim was a complex understanding of the system through which this primary group, a key element of society, is represented in a cinema context. Analyzing the characteristics of familial relations shown in films from the communist and post-communist eras offers a larger perspective on social norms which govern each period, as they are transferred and interpreted in media messages. Through extrapolation, stemming from these results, the discussion can evolve towards examining the social limitations of each era, as they are presented on screen.

Family dynamics and interpersonal relationships reflect the main social paradigm, as it's spatially and temporally determined, and researching these aspects within a film context can offer clues as to how they are interpreted in media. Moreover, a detailed study on this subject has never been undertaken based on Romanian films, and the grid analysis developed in this paper can serve as a research basis for future analyses.

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