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NATIONALIZATION AS A DISTINCT URBAN PROCESS: STATE REMAKING, CLASS CHANGES AND THEIR SPATIAL EXPRESSION

1. INTRODUCTION: NATIONALIZATION AND URBAN SOCIOLOGY THEORY

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Romanian state confiscated a large number of privately owned houses and apartments. Nationalization meant the confiscation of about a quarter of all dwellings in Bucharest. This vast project aimed at eliminating housing inequalities among the urban population and produced long-lasting effects on the way urban life was subsequently lived.

This paper aims to describe how this rather unique historical process might inform theories of urban sociology. I situate nationalization and globalization in the same theoretical debate concerning the relation between the regime of accumulation and social organization of cities[1] (Harvey 1982; Sasken 1991; 2000). I import this same type of analysis for the political economy of state-socialism. What effects did the nationalization of capital goods (factories, trade, production facilities) in the Romanian economy have on the city, its classes and its buildings? Nationalization, I suggest, represents a specific urban process, distinct from suburbanization and gentrification. It concentrated the population by raising the rate of occupancy, bringing together people that formerly populated different geographic areas of the city. It also shrank residential space by increasing the share of office space for state bureaucracies. It also helped create a new class of privileged urban residents.

The effects of the global circulation of capital on the geography of housing and social classes have been well documented in the case of some cities. The best-known example is that of New York City (Sassen 2001, Sites 2003). The decentralization of production and the

concentration of the managerial classes and functions in selected, "global" cities such as New York (but also London or Tokyo) led to gentrification and class segregation of formerly integrated neighborhoods, or whatever remained integrated after suburbanization. Along with the growth of transnational corporate classes in such cities, the number of temporary, badly paid, casual jobs increased. Such cities responded less than before to the national states where they were located and more to larger, transnational entities. With increased flows of capital and people, they also witnessed the globalization of property markets. Seeking profit opportunities, international real estate firms built high class, "Grade A" office buildings, luxury condominium housing or rental housing or they purchased vacant suburban tracts of land, both for planning and for speculation (Olds 2001:23-24).

Some of the language and the assumptions used in this analysis are inspired by urban sociology, and particularly theories of urban political economy. According to this body of theory, the key processes that shape urban space reside in the division of labor of the international economy, the accumulation and concentration of capital and power, the relations between social classes, and the role of the state in the administration of a stable social order (Flanagan 1993:74). Such theories generally regard the built environment as an expression of the search for profit in capitalist economies. The owners of capital seek new opportunities to invest; sometimes these are found in the real estate industry. They also regard cities as physical extensions of market factors supplemented by state policy. As John Walton put it, "What we see and reify as the city is a physical network of factories, offices, schools, and roads, all hitched to the primary function of accumulating capital and all vulnerable to decay understood as devaluation (Walton 1993:308)." In other words, if one wants to understand the evolution of cities, one needs to pay attention to national and international markets, state formation and the circulation of capital.

Such an approach is useful for avoiding a "building by building" history of Bucharest. Existing histories are usually chronological, rather than structural, and focus not on districts nor the urban population, but on the construction of landmark buildings such as churches, inns, palaces, outstandingly beautiful houses, and landmark buildings hosting state institutions (*Clădirea CEC*, *Clădirea Poştei*, *Calea Victoriei*, *Casa Poporului*, etc.). As they rarely discuss the housing conditions of the majority of the population, they may be regarded as socially distorted.

This paper has the following structure. First, I will describe briefly the logic of nationalization, in order to have some basic context elements that would allow a judgment of the sociological significance of this process. Then I will describe two sets of social relations deeply transformed by nationalization. The first refers to relations between social classes and the state, a new set of engagements that transformed the class geography of the city. The second is focused on the relations between state expansion, capital centralization and the parasitism of the state institutions on the residential space. In the remainder of the paper, I will describe how the intervention of the state in the domestic domain produced new forms of governmentality and an increased power to dominate on the part of the socialist state.

2. HOUSING NATIONALIZATION 1945-1955: A SHORT OVERVIEW

Let me offer some brief elements about the way that nationalization happened during those years, before I turn to the question that I posed in the introduction. Basically, nationalization had two components. The first was the elimination of the rent market, by the creation of strict tenancy policies and the creation of administrative bodies aimed to allocate tenants to specific houses. The second was outright confiscation, which was carried out in a rather simplified and arbitrary manner.[2] The first component was related to the measures aimed regulate the use rights over housing.

Controlling access to residential space answered two different problems: (1) the particular historical moment of the post-war situation and (2) inequitable conditions in the realm of housing. The first problem was historically contingent and had to do with housing shortage, to be expected immediately after a war, especially in a period of rapid industrialization. Some buildings were destroyed or damaged during World War II. The situation was made worse by the post-war migration of about 200,000 persons into Bucharest within four to five years. Many individuals and families from the countryside moved to Bucharest in order to find jobs and to take advantage of new employment opportunities in industry, state institutions and political organizations. The second problem had to do with the creation of socialism in housing, i.e. elimination of the rent

market, a more balanced distribution of residential space among different classes from the city, and so on.

Between 1945 and 1948 there were two important tenancy policies. First there was the requisition of buildings from private owners.[3] Requisition was legislated in 1945 and it aimed to create room for both persons and institutions. In regard to persons, priority was given to people whose houses had been demolished during the war, people who had been deported for "antifascist activities" (i.e. the Jewish population), people who had been evicted because of requisition, and public officials transferred because of their job. If somebody's home was requisitioned for bringing in tenants, she or he was allowed to keep two rooms, and an additional room/person for each member of the family. If, however, the home was requisitioned for an institution, then the family had to be evicted altogether.

These were the legal specifications, but they were probably not fully respected. The number of houses requisitioned for institutions outnumbered the houses requisitioned for housing individuals and families. Moreover, as I will show below, the number of persons entitled to occupy such buildings according to the official criteria was small compared with those of powerful individuals (e.g., Ministry of Interior officers).

The second important policy was the automatic extension of leasing contracts, a measure implemented during the war.[4] This policy was not a novelty, since it resembled policies implemented after the unification at the end of the First World War in 1918. What was new, however, was the modification of the power relations between tenants and landowners. The legislation of 1946 granted decision-making power over the budget of maintenance costs to all residents, regardless of whether they were tenants or landlords.[5] After 1948, however, the state actions were no longer limited to renewing the existing tenancy contracts. The state began to pressure landlords and home-owners to accept tenants nominated by various institutions. From regulatory and arbitrating policies that established the relations between tenants and landowners, the state moved on to a redistribution function. This initiative was made possible by a census carried out in December 1948, which offered data about the number of homes and apartments. Possessing this knowledge, the state could establish norms about housing and assign persons to specific locations.

This action unfolded through an institution called the "Rental Authority."[6] It existed between 1948 and 1951 and its responsibility was to identify and distribute access to buildings that were "under-occupied"

by their owners. After these two decrees, as one internal report of MGCIL put it, "the landowner no longer uses the available space according to his own will; the Rental Authority is the one who oversees its use for satisfying the needs of the workers".[7] In other words, the families who had too much private space had to share it with persons selected by this Authority.

In 1949, the Rental Authority had 24 offices in Bucharest and 107 in the rest of the country. These were subordinated to both the Ministry of Interior and the civil authority of MGCIL. A few months after this authority was created, the government passed another decree that established the maximal residential space to which each citizen was entitled[8] at 8 m^2/person. This followed the Soviet housing policy of 1941 word for word.[9] The direct implication of this policy was that those individuals and families who had more space, usually from the former privileged classes and landlords, had to make it available for tenants. Combining the findings of the 1948 census with the new residential norm, MGCIL found that of 350,000 families living in Bucharest at that moment, 37% (i.e. 130,000 families) lived in "difficult conditions, with 4 to 10 persons in a room; 51% occupied the legal space, while 12% used more space than was legally admitted" (MGCIL, 81/1951).[10]

The actions of the Rental Authority were only temporary palliatives to the housing shortage. Its job was made worse by the expansion of state institutions into residential space (a process discussed later on in this paper) and by the demolition of some insalubrious houses (about 2% of the existing residential space). According to these archives, within only one year (1949) the average surface/inhabitant in Bucharest decreased from 7.78 square meters to 6.33 square meters.[11] The housing situation was further regulated in 1950, when the state pushed further its intervention and regulation of the domestic space.

The second dimension of the nationalization policies consisted of outright confiscation. In 1950, the state pursued systematic nationalization (decree 92/1950), targeting not undesirable groups, but housing inequalities in general. In a meeting of the Ministry of Interior, nationalization was described as the last important class battle. An official from that meeting declared that "housing is the site where the enemy has been hiding and it is here that the fight must be organized in a serious manner." After the nationalization of industry,[12] large agricultural estates,[13] trade,[14] medical institutions,[15] drug stores,[16] movie theatres,[17]

private and communal forests, gold and any foreign currency,[18] the housing decree represented the last important act of expropriation by the socialist state of the properties owned by private producers. Compared with the 1945-1950 isolated confiscation of property from political convicts, Decree 92/1950 was a systematic coming to terms of the socialist state with the private ownership of housing. It was more important numerically than all the other punitive and nationalization measures altogether. After this confiscation, no less than 22% of the existing apartments and houses in urban Romania were nationalized. This affected 138,000 apartments, half in Bucharest, half in the rest of the country.

The explanatory statement that accompanied the decree stated that nationalization was necessary in order to "withhold from the hands of the exploiters an important means of exploitation."[19] The philosophy of this decree was based on class categorization as the source of rights over existing private properties, but as anyone could say, establishing to what class one belongs is not an easy task. Social scientists have been debating this for decades, taking into account ownership, prestige, power, education, occupation, etc. For the socialist state, however, classification was simpler than that: it created a large number of "housing exploiters" by simplifying the life of those people. While in theory it might be easy to determine who exploits houses, in practice, especially when one needs to take practical action, things are far from black and white. Landlords, tenants and even state officials (Pătrășcanu 1947) knew that many house owners were not particularly rich. In order to get to draft lists with nationalizable house, the officials had to simplify dynamic social practices associated with housing construction and ownership into two sharply define categories: "exploiters" and "non-exploiters." An article from that period noted "When it came to housing, in the past, the demarcation line between exploiters and exploited was clear, sharply defined, as daylight. [...]"[20]

To many people from that period, this is far from representing reality. State simplifications, as James C. Scott observed,

> are basic givens of modern statecraft, [but they are] rather like abridged maps. They did not successfully represent the actual activity of the society they depicted, nor were they intended to; they represented only that slice of it that interested the official observer. They were, moreover, not just maps. Rather, they were maps that, when allied with state power, would enable much of the reality they depicted to be remade (Scott 1998:3).

Through its censuses and measurements, as well as it political will and power to transform inequalities, the state could be said to have created classes out of more complex social situations. As Pierre Bourdieu claims, the very attempt to define classifications and to describe classes is an exercise of power and a fundamental form of class struggle itself: "The power of imposing a vision of divisions, that is, the power of making visible and explicit social divisions that are implicit, is the political power par excellence: it is the power to make groups, to manipulate the objective structure of society" (1990:138). As much of the state activities consist in the management of taxonomies (Douglas 1986), the efforts to classify landlords and house owners into discrete categories made the state itself a site of class struggle (Poulanzas 1978; Verdery 2003). The definitions with which it operated, the factors it left out and the temporality it assumed, made the state the vehicle and the agent of creation of new forms of social divisions and residential arrangements.

How did the state simplify the social reality of housing? More than anything else, state socialist officials saw it in terms of *numbers* of apartments and of rooms. This brought about three simplifications: (1) seeing production and profit instead of reproduction and the pursuit of family continuity; (2) reducing class to size of buildings; (3) mistaking owners' identities – seeing individuals, instead of kin networks. The first one had to do with the radical divorce between what many people thought of themselves and what the state told them they were doing.

For most landlords and owners, houses meant primarily family reproduction across generations. The state stripped houses of this temporal regime, seeing only accumulation and pursuit of profit. According to my calculations, a little over 50% of the nationalized houses belonged to "serendipitous entrepreneurs," i.e. persons or families who happened to have some extra space at some point in their life, while the rest could have been considered active entrepreneurs. Before communism, such families pursued the accumulation of family space for their children, rather than the pursuit of profit. The evidence that I found indicated that owners and small landlords saw their houses in terms of consumption and family continuity rather than as means to derive rent, as the state did. Secondly, one could say that nationalization reduced landlordship to ownership (and thus the inferring of the exploitative character of the latter), through the number of rooms/apartments possessed. The larger the number of rooms, the more exploitation state officials saw.

Finally, a third simplification used in establishing housing classes and exploiters was that the state judged ownership to be exclusively <u>individual</u>, although there were networks of relatives rather than nuclear families who lived together in such homes. Moreover, defining real estate possession as individual ownership of houses (i.e. taking into account only the legal documents, rather than the much more complex reality of living and sharing resources in order to construct a house) had the effect of freezing the developmental phase of the domestic cycle into a "class" status.

The state suspended domestic time. For example, if somebody had just married and bought a house, therefore becoming able to rent out the surplus space, s/he was classified as an "exploiter." If another couple living in a similar house had three married children and therefore no or few tenants, they may have been exempt from nationalization. To put it simply, it was a blessing for the owners to be at the demographic peak of the domestic group at the moment of nationalization, just as it was devastating to have fewer members than the house was designed to accommodate. To give an example, one former owner said that, at least when the Rental Authority was initially created, they managed to avoid tenants, because a relatively friendly bureaucrat from the Rental Authority office suggested to his father that "You should be more!" The bureaucrat meant that as a family, and the remark prompted his father to bring a cousin's family to live in their house.[21]

Above I described the structural logic of nationalization, i.e., the accumulation of houses by the state. Nationalization took a particular form in Bucharest. As it was the main economic and administrative center of Romania, right after World War II Bucharest was confronted with more overcrowding and population mobility than the rest of the country. Suddenly, the existing buildings had to house more persons than the had housed before nationalization. How did that happen, and with what effects on the class geography of the city?

3. SOCIAL CLASSES AND THE STATE

The urban processes that developed in Western capitalist cities since the late 1940s transformed them from highly concentrated and centralized agglomerations into scattered, decentralized metropolitan areas. During that same period, just the opposite was happening in the cities of the

newly created socialist states. Nationalization led to a higher concentration of residents in existing housing units. The families who lost their homes usually had more residential space for their personal use than other residents of Bucharest.[22] New families or individuals were sent by the state to occupy such apartments.

The regulatory process was quite important: in Bucharest alone, within only two years (1949 and 1950), 88,830 tenants (individuals or families) who distributed into 116,219 rooms (out of a total of 686,970 rooms in Bucharest). This meant that 17% of all the housing space available in Bucharest had been reconfigured through state intervention.[23] This happened before nationalization; after that, I think the number easily surpassed 25% of the entire housing space. In terms of the distribution of social classes, nationalization desegregated, helped create a new urban gentry and relocated former privileged groups to less favorable conditions. I will discuss these trends in this order.

Systematic data on the agglomeration of new tenants into the space of families that lost their houses is not available. Based on a document of MGCIL from October 1950,[24] and on my interviews, I have the impression that the Rental Authority was granting a room per tenant. The tenants might have been an individual, or an entire family. Nationalization transformed apartments and houses with a diversified functional division of space into rooming houses.[25] In that document, the Ministry of Defense required the eviction of residents from 6 large buildings that contained 51 apartments. As they were situated in very close proximity to that institution, the request was justified on grounds of security. The Ministry of Defense wanted to replace the existing tenants with officers and their families. The request was granted and the Rental Authority provided the list with the residents who lived there at that moment. Let me discuss next the particulars of their situation.

What is striking about the distribution of rooms from the list is the sharing of apartments by persons from different social classes, as judged by the profession of the occupants. Almost all the apartments whose composition is listed contained families or individuals having high professional status (engineers, professors, doctors, army officers, etc) living together with workers, drivers, tailors and even persons with low social status (janitors, unemployed, students). Take, for instance, the case of an apartment with three rooms and a service room, which was occupied by a university professor and his wife, by a pensioner and her/his mother, by a mechanic and his wife (a hotel cleaner) and by a worker and his

unemployed wife. These groups of persons were not related in any obvious way. It is safe to assume that one of them owned the apartment, the family of either the university professor or the pensioner, and that the rest were brought in by the Rental Authority.

Except for the eight efficiency apartments, all others contain persons of unequal social status. In those tables, janitors share space with former army generals or office workers, students live with doctors, former traders live with workers, policemen live with chefs and so on. Social integration was achieved also through the increase of density of living in the existing, nationalized apartments. It rose not only because in multiple room apartments each family received one room, but also because hallways were also redesigned and used for living. I found some evidence that some owners resisted this, but the enforcement of such regulations did not leave much room for action. With minor adaptations such as constructing thin walls, hallways were transformed into temporary rooms. Other times, several single persons – especially the elderly – were brought to live in rooms that had a very large surface area. They would divide the room using blankets or bed-sheets.

While the mixing of population through geographical concentration was achieved through the redistribution of housing space by the Rental Authority, another process happened during those years. Along with class de-segregation in respect to housing, a new class of privileged residents also formed. There were two venues leading to the formation of this new urban gentry: one was spontaneous and carried out from below by powerful individuals; the other came from above and was organized by state institutions. First, I have found significant evidence showing that many state employees, especially those working for the Ministry of Interior (police and political police), seized this opportunity in order to acquire very good housing. Many times this happened spontaneously, without any administrative decision on the part of the authorities that regulated access to housing. Such spontaneous actions often produced conflicts between different state institutions. A report from 1951 said that there were persons who took the liberty to enter rooms made available by evictions, against the explicit directions of the Rental Authority.[26] The report goes on to say,

> Most unauthorized occupancies are provoked by the employees of the Ministry of Interior [and of] the Ministry of the Armed Forces. […] Illegal access to housing has become an ordinary strategy for some citizens [.]

Part of them are entitled to receive such apartments; but most of them moved from good to better housing conditions.

In the same report, the Rental Authority also expressed its powerlessness against such employees of the Ministry of Interior who had devised a particular bureaucratic trick in order to avoid leaving those apartments. In order to obtain eviction orders, one needed clear orders from the Attorney General's Office. But such orders could only be issued once the illegal tenants had received residency change approvals from the Ministry of Interior. They simply postponed getting such orders indefinitely.

Second, the formation of the group of well-located residents was also favored through the allocation of confiscated residential space by the state. Some data about the distribution of apartments in 1954 is particularly revealing in this sense. This may have been a turning point in the way these houses were appropriated and used, because the state, through MGCIL, began to evict some of its own institutions from illegally occupied buildings. After a first round of evictions took place, the space thus made available was allocated to families that requested it.

The data depict the situation at the level of each district of Bucharest, using the justification of allocation as a principle of classification. I grouped the reasons given there into three categories (see Table 1). The first group, which may be said to be the consequence of state expansion, included the requests of those transferred to their new employment in Bucharest and the requests of state institutions. The second group of requests was related to social welfare concerns: marriage formation, substandard housing, demolitions, tuberculosis, etc. The third group, which contained the ambiguous but fitting motivation of "various reasons," was due to intervention "from above," i.e., from ministries and Party organizations who requested houses for their personnel.

Table 1. Housing requests granted in 1954, by the type of justification

Requests by the logic of distribution	Justification of the request	Number of requests granted	% of Total requests (N =2609)	% of Total requests (N =2609)
State Apparatus Expansion 696	Job related transfers	654	26%	
	Institutions asking for housing	42	2%	**28%**
Social welfare 882	Divorced	31	1%	
	Married	62	2%	
	Demolished	61	2%	
	Overcrowding	299	12%	**32%**
	Insalubrious	269	10%	
	Tuberculosis	57	2%	
	Evicted	103	3%	
New Class Formation 1029	"Various reasons" [sic]	1029	40%	**40%**

Source: MGCIL, File 23/1954, p. 21.

Grouping them by their frequency, one may notice that the heaviest weight was the logic of new class formation, followed by social welfare and also the logic of state apparatus expansion.

Other evidence suggests that new class formation was given priority over social welfare considerations. In fact, there seemed to be a constant pressure in this regard. For instance, the minutes of Ministry meetings register the statement of a speaker who, categorizing the housing requests received, observed that many persons "request housing exchange: the houses of some comrades are very small for the responsibilities that they have."[27] Similarly, another participant noted, "We received very many requests made by the institutions on behalf of their employees. Too much interference was created." Part of the new class were selected artists who managed to stay afloat after the banning of an important number of

intellectuals. One of them, for instance, although occupying two efficiency apartments, asked for an apartment where the sun would shine from sunrise to sunset. The committee granted that, only to learn that it was not good enough, because the stairway was too tight and his furniture would have gotten scratched.

The logics outlined in the table above were opposing each other. To begin with, the way allocation was carried out diverged from the principles of nationalization, i.e., the elimination of housing exploitation. The state could not claim that it confiscated houses in order to give them to a new Communist privileged class, because its moral authority would have been even more seriously damaged.

The new criteria of housing allocation were, in theory, organized around the cult of labor, which should have replaced wealth as the main factor for distributing persons in the city. The criteria for allocating space privileged "labor" and "need." Priority was to be given to those transferred to the city because of employment (*transferați în interes de serviciu*) and to Stakhanovites, who had distinguished themselves in production activities (*spărgătorii de normă*). "Job-related transfers" was not a neutral category either, since as far as some people who lived in that period told me, it represented the military (Army or Political Police) and officialdom.

The next two criteria in terms of importance were inadequate housing (either insalubrious or overcrowded homes) and the situation of newlyweds without a separate house. The practice of allocating houses, however, differed from the theory. As one may notice from the table presented above, social welfare issues were not addressed as much as initially stated. Aside from that, there were tensions between the social welfare pressure and each of the two other logics. In the same file (23/1954), the report mentions that the allocation committee had, at one point, 300 apartments ready to be distributed. After reviewing 7,000 requests, it selected 1,000 for fieldwork investigations and decided on the 300 winners. Once selected, however, the committee had to readjust them so as to accommodate 170 requests (out of 257) pushed forth by the Municipal Council and other central state institutions. Similarly, as I will describe later on in the next section, there were strong conflicts between the welfare pressure and the pressure of state institutions that emerged after 1945. The Ministry wanted to evict these institutions in order to return the buildings to their initial function as residences.

After 1949, the Rental Authority had to <u>relocate</u> to the periphery of cities the former privileged classes, those who did not work, and the "enemies of the people." I did not find comprehensive data on the scale of such relocations, but I do have some anecdotal evidence from interviews. In 1949, an explicit task of the Rental Authority was to create lists of the former exploiters and the people who were not working (MGCIL, file 60/1949). The directive was that, based on these lists, their housing space had to be reduced by bringing in tenants or they even had to be relocated to the periphery or to smaller cities where there was less demand for space (cf. MGCIL, file 27/1950).[28] Later on, in those directives reaffirmed that the "spirit of the class struggle should prevail from now on, in the sense that the former privileged classes, those who do not work and the enemies of the regime should be removed to the peripheries."

My impression is that relocations to the periphery were not carried out on a large scale in Bucharest. Rather, the former privileged families circulated inside their former space, especially those who lived in villas. Many modernist villas had a sharp division of space by the type of activity and by the different periods of the day. Thus, the basement contained the support facilities (e.g. heating), the ground floor was designed for the daytime activities, while the upper floor was intended for the dormitory rooms. When the state nationalized those houses and apartment buildings, the former owners received the least attractive spaces (i.e. the basements and the attics), while the new tenants received the rest of the apartment or one room per family. Therefore, the spatial scope of relocation was vertical, rather than horizontal: many times the groups who became vulnerable after the Communist take-over remained in the same buildings, but in marginal dwelling spaces. I will move next to the description of changes on the ground, describing the effects of these legislation changes on the class geography of the city and on the transformations of the state.

4. STATE EXPANSION AND ITS PARASITISM ON RESIDENTIAL SPACE

In a process that Max Weber (1946:209-211) described as the "quantitative" expansion of the state apparatus, the state became physically bigger after the communist takeover both in size and in institutional complexity. Within only five years, between 1945 and 1950, the new socialist state added many new functions. These included the

administration of the capital acquired through the confiscation of private wealth (land, factories, manufactures, trade), the control of the population through increased surveillance and the overproduction of political institutions. Whereas before nationalization each factory had its own independent headquarters, the mechanism of central planning required new upper managerial levels to coordinate such formerly distinct production entities. These new administrative and managerial segments of the state had to be housed within the existing space. Ideally, they should have been concentrated in larger office buildings than existed at that moment, but their number was not significant.

Construction activity during these years was slow. These new segments of the state appropriated in a parasitical way the buildings accumulated before 1950, rather than constructing their own. The state requisitioned residential buildings in order to house the newly established managerial segments, Communist organizations and "popular" political associations, as well as for the Soviet Army that occupied Bucharest in 1944. According to the official figures (see Table 2) and reports, the new segments of the state were housed exclusively through evictions and subsequent transformation of the former residential space into office buildings.[29]

Table 2. Residential space, office space and residential density in Bucharest, 1948-1951 (IN SQUARE METERS)

Year	Surface area		Population	Density (sqm/person)	Necessary space according to the 8sqm/person norm
	Residential	Office			
1948	8,121,359	2,199,242	1,041,807	7.78	213,097
1949	7,950,651	2,389,950	1,091,807	7.26	803,805
1950	6.972.251	3,342,400	1,101.987	6.33	1,836,205
1951	6,688,451	3,632,200	1,130,807	5.91	2,359,005

Source: MGCIL, File 527/1950, *Direcţia Industriei Locale*, p. 55.

These figures show the reduction of residential space and the expansion of state institutions. As one may see from this table, nationalization significantly increased the density of the population. An internal report from 1950 mentioned that this conversion was accompanied by the

unlicensed modification and demolition of built space (MGCIL 81/1951). To give an example, in one residential building turned into office space, walls that separating apartments were broken down and the kitchen and WC were turned into offices (MGCIL 23/1954). According to that source, such transformations not only shrank more and more residential space, but they also threatened the very stability of buildings. The report estimated that when such a conversion took place, no less than 30% of the built space became unusable. The condition of buildings worsened quite quickly under such conditions, so state institutions had to move immediately to other buildings. In another report (dated 1953), state institutions that claimed office space were told to try to refurbish the buildings that were not being used because of their state of disrepair and then to move there (MGCIL 71/1953).[30]

How did these evictions take place? In a memoir of those years, the author of the above report described how Soviet soldiers and officers dressed in civilian clothes requisitioned apartments, buildings and even entire neighborhoods. Officers brought over their families from Russia and were looking for comfortable residencies. People had to leave their homes within 24 hours and were only allowed to take a single piece of luggage with strictly necessary belongings (Georgescu 1999[1951]:181). The rest of their possessions remained in the apartments and houses, sometimes to the present day. For instance, in a case presented in the media, the last foreign affairs minister of the Communist government lived in a requisitioned apartment that was reclaimed after 1989. The former owner declared that whatever his uncle had left there – carpets, paintings, the piano and about other 40 items – had been used by the tenants that occupied the apartment.

Unlike spontaneous evictions, nationalization or punitive policies, requisitions seemed to have been very meticulous. The commissions produced lists with the objects found in the house; they had to be signed by the owners and by the commission members. These procedures seem to have been taken seriously. For instance, in a requisition case, the commission stayed from late at night through the morning to catalog about 2,000 books that had existed in that apartment (Georgescu 1999[1951]:226). I managed to acquire several house inventories produced during the requisitions. What is striking about them is the fact that they are extremely detailed, listing objects found inside the houses that have little value (e.g. electric bulbs, lingerie) side by side with more valuable items (e.g. furniture).

In the case of requisitioned apartments and buildings, ownership was not formally canceled. The problem was that the owners could not return to these houses to the present day, because the state constantly introduced new tenants (institutions or families). Years after the requisition, the state would sometimes pass decrees declaring that a certain requisitioned building or group of buildings had become state property. The owners could not learn about this, because such decrees were not published. It was just an improvisation aimed at bringing some juridical coherence to something that was already in full effect from the moment of requisition. As a matter of fact, it emerged after 1990 that a decree had been passed in mid-1950s (511/1955) stating that any goods requisitioned up to that date were to be considered state property (cf. Stănescu 1997:188).

Along with the newly created political organizations, the older administrative institutions of the state evicted people from entire buildings that had been designed and used as residential space in order to turn them into office space. After such evictions, the institutions often asked for eviction of nearby buildings in order create kindergartens, cafeterias and more offices, or to insure security. In an executive meeting of the Housing Division of the newly created MGCIL, one official mentioned that 400 buildings containing 5,000 apartments had been appropriated by different state institutions and political organizations. All these apartments were initially used as housing for families.

Since this space was not designed for office use, the interior design of apartment space was an obstacle to proper functioning. Among other things, this space constraint produced pronounced variation in the density of office workers. Some institutions occupied as little as three m^2/person, while others had 26 m^2/person. Along with the situations when the state institutions really needed that space for its daily work, there were also cases when the space was not used at all. For instance, in the same meeting one official singled out the case of an allegedly peasant political organization (*Frontul Plugarilor*, Ploughmen's Front) that occupied 16 buildings. The official emphasized the absurdity of the fact that an agriculture-related association occupied so much built space in the city. Another example included the eviction of an entire apartment building to create a club for employees of the Ministry of Interior.

Upon such conversions, the new occupants usually altered the organization of buildings substantially. Kitchens, for instance were turned into office space and smaller rooms (e.g. dorms) were merged by tearing down the separating walls. To describe the occupation of the housing

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space by the state institutions as an invasion is more than just a metaphor. It was done in a chaotic manner. It was not an all-out strategy from above, but rather the sum of independent actions by different expansion centers acting from below. Throughout the documents of 1948, 1949, 1950, the "center" expressed its irritation that certain institutions and individuals used evictions without the approval of the Ministry of Interior and of the MGCIL.

After 1952, MGCIL attempted to gain more leverage over the allocations of confiscated houses. In 1952 they stated that any allocation of state owned office or residential space was legitimate only with the approval of the Ministry.[31] In late 1953, they tried to reconvert these buildings to their initial function, arguing that state institutions should build their own office space because it was much cheaper to build office buildings than apartments. The Government passed a nominal list of the institutions that should leave specific buildings, although this too created problems of insubordination. Several institutions were supposed to leave approximately 88,000 square meters of office space occupied abusively in former residential space. This represented a mere 2.2% of the total office space occupied by the state, but even under these circumstances state institutions resisted eviction.

After several visits aimed to see if the orders had been observed, the officials of the Ministry noted that while some buildings had not been modified by their tenants, others had undergone substantial transformations of interior space. One such institution that had resisted eviction arguing that it had installed gas heating equipment using its own funds occupied two large apartment buildings, which, according to the MGCIL officials, could have housed a large number of sizeable families. One of them had 19 rooms, two hallways, three closets, a kitchen, a bath-room and two storage areas. According to the MGCIL officials it could have housed ten sizeable families after the state institution left. Another, composed of 30 room, five hallways, and four closets, could have been occupied by 12 families.

The report found that most institutions did not comply with the eviction order and that MGCIL informed the Prosecutor Office of Bucharest in order to let them know that the legislation was not being respected. Another report (File 22/1955) declared that faced with increased pressure to return the office space to its initial function, some institutions restricted their office space, but instead of "handing" it over to the Ministry, decided to allocate it to its own top employees. The Ministry protested that such

space allocation was illegal: freed space was to be allocated both to people in difficult social situations and to members of the new elite (employees of the different state institution and artists).

The report mentions that the ministry received 5,000 housing requests, which represented the entire volume registered at the district level throughout Bucharest in 1952. Out of these 5,000, 1,900 were to be verified on the ground by employees of the ministry. At the date when the report was written, 534 requests had been verified through fieldwork. They approved 357 and rejected 117. There was some justification given for why these requests were rejected. Some of the claimants lived in acceptable conditions, by the standards of the day, while others under-declared the space they occupied. There was also the case of an "artist" who, trying to help some friends, exchanged her apartment for a smaller and less comfortable one because she heard that people like her were about to receive good apartments.

5. GOVERNMENTALITY AND HOUSES

Another effect of nationalization had to do with governmentality (Foucault 1991), particularly in reference to the new administration of domestic space. The scope of nationalization was not limited to the relocation of individuals and families in the existing residential space. Nationalization as an urban process increased the presence of the state not only in the geography of the city, but also in its domestic spaces. That by itself was political and purposive. David Harvey (2003) described that when Napoleon III and Baron Hausmann built the large boulevards in Paris, one of their goals was to avoid the illegibility of the old city, whose small and random streets had been used in the past by revolutionary groups. Similarly, the Romanian Ministry of Interior saw in the new reorganization of houses and of Bucharest a chance to increase its control over the population. I analyze the domestic space within an urban framework, precisely to make the point that the infrastructural power of the state, i.e., "the power of the state to penetrate and centrally co-ordinate the activities of civil society through its own infrastructure" (Mann 1994[1985], 334) increased in that period and that the more institutionally oriented analysis should pay greater attention to everyday life. That might be a useful way to reconceptualize the institutions themselves. Michel Foucault (1991) distinguished between two forms of power and politics

in the modern states. He differentiated between sovereignty, concerned with territory, legitimacy and obedience to law; and disciplines, prisons, schools, armies, hospitals, administration, which constitute governmentality, i.e. a less conspicuous form of surveillance and control of society formalized as statistics and carried out in a more subtle way.

The scope of the housing reforms of the late 1940's was a novelty for the Romanian state. Never before had the state inspected, gathered data, kept records and administered such a large number of apartments and persons.[32] The new socialist state's capacity to rule was substantially increased by the housing reforms. During those years, the state increased its presence in residential space, through inspections, censuses, imposition of tenants, and bookkeeping. The authorities of MGCIL were pressured by the Ministry of Interior, with whom they had close interaction, to keep detailed evidence of the population's movements. One may argue that housing reform provided a key support in helping the repressive state apparatus to carry out its mission.

In a meeting with the Ministry of Interior officials, the number two top official of that institution,[33] lamenting the fact that the housing census data was not adequate and that the follow-up bookkeeping had been neglected, expressed his interest in the activity of the Rental Authority. The Ministry of Interior (i.e. the Police), he said, could have benefited from this in a way similar to that of Soviet authorities: "One needed to keep adequate records for each building, in order to know everyone who lives there." He presented as an ideal situation what he saw in Moscow during one official visit, explaining to the other members of the meeting,

> Our Soviet counterpart explained that you go to the Militia and tell them "I am looking for a comrade who came here in 1934 or, let's say, 1920." You know that he is in Moscow and you know his name, but you do not know more. After 2-3 hours, if you go back [to them], they give you the exact address and even the name of the neighbors. They've got to be so good using scientific methods in order to know where the citizen lives. The file tells you where each citizen comes from and what is going on with him.

The activity of the Rental Authority (and from 1950 the administration of nationalized houses) also enabled the state to enter, survey and control the housing of persons.

One testimony from that period (Georgescu 1999[1951]) describes a long period of hiding from state officials who were searching for her. A

very intelligent person judging by her memoirs, she had been the secretary of the last non-Communist Prime Minister (1945-1946). She became a fugitive after the Communist Party fully seized power at the end of 1946. For about 3 years, her friends had been taken turns hiding her in their homes. Here is how she described the troubles that the creation of the Rental Authority produced for her attempt to continue her underground life:

> For two months I have been switching houses. [Our] group had to break up. Almost all the addresses have been exhausted. I cannot sleep for more than one night in the same place. Marc does not know any longer where to send us. In the city there is a rumor that a study has been carried out in order to create the Rental Authority. The fact is that this projected office has already begun its existence; there are commissions that come to measure the residential space of each house. [They allocate] a room for a two-member family, two-rooms for more sizeable families, and they appoint co-residents who come to share the apartment with you starting that very evening. Another decree, already made official, orders landowners and owners to forward to the office the full list of the persons whom they host, together with their biographies [.] The decree contains sanctions that may be applied for those who will not comply. *Under such circumstances it becomes almost impossible to hide anymore* (Georgescu 1999[1951]: 231, my emphasis).

This testimony shows that the domination of the socialist state was created also through the charting and administration of the domestic domain. Prior to the housing reforms of the late 1940s, the domestic domain was less exposed to state routines. Related to this obsession with residential tracking, the Ministry of Internal Affairs decided in 1949 "to put an end to the anarchy of identity proofs." From a statist point of view, the creation of identical citizens through papers that documented identity was, indeed, lagging behind. Take, for instance, the legal ways to establish the identity of an individual about 40 years before nationalization. In order to sign a housing leasing contract, the parts could certify their identity in no less than seven ways (cf. Demetriu 1909): (1) identification by a judge; (2) identification by a lawyer; (3) identification by two witnesses trusted by a judge; (4) an identity ticket (*bilet de identitate*) issued by the police or Local Council where the individuals had their legal residence; (5) a voter card accompanied with the receipts for the current year;[34] (6) a passport, in the case of foreign citizens; or (7) a letter issued by the local authority

or by the Police. A decree from 1949[35] asked the citizens to bring (1) their birth certificate; (2) evidence that that person had registered with the Population Bureau; (3) an Army Service book and, for women, (4) marriage registry evidence. The household head had to announce to police stations any person who sought join his/her residential space. The law also specified prison terms for those who failed to obtain new IDs. If the household head did not declare that he received a person without the new ID forms within three hours, she or he could go to jail and pay a substantial fine. According to same witness just mentioned above, identity papers were checked in the main public transportation sites, such as bus or train stations. That way, the government could more easily catch missing persons (Georgescu 1999[1951]: 195).

Along with new identity papers, another surveillance method was the creation of the office of street deputy, a kind of lay public administration recruited from among the population of residential communities. In a way they were similar to the neighborhood watch groups in the situations when they collaborate with the Police, with the important difference that street deputies were created from above (although the sources from that period present them as grass-roots). S/he was a contact person between the Party, Police and Municipal administration on the one hand, and individuals who inhabited a particular street on the other. Such local vigilantes existed not only in Romania, but also in China and Tanzania (cf. Abrahams 1996:45), Indonesia (after 1945), and possibly other places where the state attempted to intervene more strongly into everyday life. According to Roy Abrahams, in Tanzania, the Communist party created a "ten-house cell system, of sets of households with an elected leader and a set of local responsibilities for maintaining cooperation and good social order within party guidelines." Basically, street deputies were supposed to report how the public services to that part of the town might be improved, to make sure that public morality was respected, and to inform also on potentially outrageous events or comments. Officially, the street deputies were part of a larger hierarchical structure that was supposed to supplement the local municipal administration and to make the latter more efficient. Street deputies were elected from among "vanguard households and householders of each street[.] They will identify all the needs and will seek to solve them with local means, by mobilizing the citizens of their respective street" (PMB 2/1948). These were honorific, "voluntary" (unpaid) duties.

A socialist-realist reportage written in the early 1950s about Bucharest presents the street deputy as a strongly feminized, working-class, desexualized, motherly and ideal household keeper figure:

> [Walking through the city,] I ran across a street deputy. A simple and withered woman. Her eyes still have a certain freshness. Their gaze shows that kindness and gentleness so characteristic of women who get old and who are pleased that they have raised many strong and good children. […] She walks slowly and notices everything. […] She is pulling out a notebook and begins to take notes in a visible hurry, but with hand movements that betray her unfamiliarity with writing. She gives the impression of a householder who inspects her house, the closets and the yard (Vălmaru 1954:103).

After the writer allegedly approached her, she told him, "I also walk around [when I have free time]. I walk and when I don't like something, I pull out the notebook and write down that over here one might build a daycare center, over there we should enlarge the street, a little down the road the pavement should be repaired." Street deputies were part of several higher-level committees. The "Householding Committees" contained street deputies, youth and women representatives and municipal "elected"[36] officials. In turn, these Householding committees were organized at the level of neighborhoods, boroughs and the city level.

While these might have been noble intentions, in addition to community welfare proposals, street deputies were also responsible for delivering names and addresses of "housing exploiters" compiled by the municipal authorities in order to implement nationalization. In cases of vigilantism, Roy Abrahams (1996:45) tells us, "slippage may, however, take place across the boundary between autonomy and state control." In this case too, in order to facilitate such neighborhood knowledge, the state granted highly arbitrary power to those who were embedded in the local relations of street cooperation and conflict. This personalization of power explains at least some of the cases in which some modest houses (by local standards) were confiscated, while other identical houses managed to evade confiscation.

That these were not neutral community leaders is demonstrated by the same testimony I quoted at some length above. In it Adrian Georgescu (the lawyer mentioned above as hiding) described that the new

administrators of state owned residential space and the neighborhood-municipal intermediaries (such as street deputies) were feared as potential spies. The same testimony mentioned above reads as follows: "The entire city is divided into spy areas. Building administrators have been created. Soon there will be apartment administrators. As nobody knows who are in fact [the administrators], everybody avoids everybody" (Georgescu 1999[1951], 198). Again, this proves an increased intervention of the state in the residential spaces. Along with the permanent fear that anybody could become a spy, the state became more present in the residential space through Police inspection and requisitions. The testimony just mentioned above said that late at night when somebody knocked on their door, she felt that "it could be only the Police, or, let's hope, the requisition commission" (Georgescu 1999[1951]:223).

Another strategy that helped the Party and the socialist state achieve domination with the help of nationalized houses was through blackmail and complicity. Five years after nationalization, a modification made to the initial nationalization decree was a curious intervention of the highest administrative level into the process of nationalization going on at the municipal level. The Council of Ministers could "add or modify" the lists of nationalized housing produced by the municipal levels of administration. Moreover, the same body could "decide to cancel the nationalization of any building or apartment."[37] No justification or formal criteria were offered for this top-down intervention.

Between 1955 and 1957 the government drafted lists with the persons who were to receive their property rights back. The list was stamped "top secret" and was issued by the cabinet of the Prime Minister Chivu Stoica to MGCIL. The list contains 785 entries, most of which refer to persons living in Bucharest. Several of them were famous scientists, actors and musicians. For instance, a top mathematician (Serban Tiţeica) received an entire building, most likely the family house. A famous folk singer (Grigoraş Dinicu) received together with his wife two apartments. A member of the Romanian Academy (Ştefan Nicolau), received "the entire building" (probably an apartment house). Similarly, a scientist who later on became the president of the Romanian Academy (Miron Nicolescu) received "the entire building" back, whatever that meant. Others who received an apartment include famous pre-communist writers (Victor Eftimiu), artists (Luca and Maria Simion) or theatre actors (Jean Steriadi, Ion Făgărăşanu, Constantin Notara, Aristide Demetriade). The vast majority of restituted properties were a single apartment or a family house.

Sometimes the documents state also "one apartment of their choice" from the building that was nationalized.[38] There are two cases in which the state returned three or four apartments. Ironically, this decree also specified very clear and much more advantageous conditions for the restitution than the legislation of the 1990s.[39] I mention this episode in relation to the new capacity of the state to dominate, because the logic of restitution was linked to the Party's strategies to co-opt various intellectuals. Prestigious persons from the former regime who suffered because of the emergence of the communist party were won over to a certain extent through housing restitution.

6. CONCLUSIONS: NATIONALIZATION IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Asking a question similar to that of urban scholars who research how the global circulation of capital changes cities, I attempted to describe how amassing most wealth in the possession of the state changed Bucharest. Nationalization of production and of housing represented the opposite of what we call today globalization. If globalization implies de-territorialization and the absence of fixed actors, nationalization attached capital to the immutable space of the nation-state and to a permanent owner, "the whole people."

While deterritorialization is a distinctively geographical accumulation strategy encouraging "place wars" and the emergence of "competitive states" eager to attract capital (Brenner 1999:64), nationalization was a particular form of primitive accumulation of the state, trying to withdraw the socialist state from the competition to attract capital to its territory. In spatial terms, deterritorialization encourages centrifugal forces that invite people and production away from city centers. Nationalization, on the other hand, was centripetal, fixing people and production. In some cases, globalization erodes the power of municipalities and some segments of the nation-state. It makes cities, or at least central business districts and luxury residential areas, less accountable to local political power than to the demands of the transnational business class. Nationalization worked similarly, with the essential difference that was the state, rather the transnational business class, who influenced the urban geography. The power of the state to impose its interests in urban matters increased through nationalization. I am not suggesting that there was a

link between nationalization and globalization, but I seek to situate the former in terms of the latter.

I argued that the new political economy of socialism created a new type of urban process, different from almost anything that came before. The closest analogy would be the situation of post-World War I Germany (and, perhaps, war-time extraordinary policies in other countries):

> During the war, and especially after 1916 when a total war economy was launched and military offices established a controlled 'state socialism', intervention in the private housing market increased. Rent control, assignment of tenants, inspection of notices to quit, a prohibition of the demolition of houses all heralded the beginning of a state-planned economy in housing. […] Until the currency reform of 1923, the main aim of state housing policy was to improve the supply of dwellings and distribute housing as fairly as possible. National legislation had to be carried out by local communities. All living space had to be registered, and building demolition or under-use of living space was prohibited. Officially a flat was under-occupied if there was less than one person per room. There were also controlled rental contracts, restrictions on freedom of movement, the establishment of mass accommodation and even restrictions on marriage (Teuteberg and Wischermann 1992:251-252).

In that sense, nationalization in Romania resembled a permanent wartime policy. It created full occupancy, eliminating any vacancies and bringing together distinct families and individuals into overcrowded apartments. Nationalization also created class desegregation, by distributing people of different classes into a single apartment or house. During those years, the state also engaged in a process of relocating previous privileged residents to poorer housing units and of distributing houses to the new upper class, formed during socialism.

The socialist state during those years functioned according to three different logics. Because of its physical expansion (Weber 1946), the state institutions occupied an important number of residential units for its own use. The situation is similar to what happened in the Soviet Union after nationalization, where, according to the summary of John Hazard (1939:14).

> Ironically, a significant proportion of these were not then used as domestic residences, for with an expansion in the number of administrative bodies the more solidly built structures – which generally speaking were those

that had been nationalized – had to be designated for non-residential purposes. In so far as this withdrew 34% of the nationalized residential space from the housing sector, it only exacerbated the critical accommodation shortage.

Second, the socialist state functioned as a welfare state, distributing the houses it confiscated to people who had previously lived in over-crowded housing units, to newlywed or to tuberculosis patients. Finally, although the socialist state prided itself on creating equality, it functioned as the very site of creating inequality (Szelenyi 1983). These three different logics were competing among themselves, which shows that the socialist state, like any other state, is not a unified actor, but a field of forces (Bourdieu 1991).

As it is well known, states are not "formed" once and for all (Steinmetz 1991:9). Especially for the socialist state in its early days, it is more fruitful to view state-formation as an ongoing process of structural change and not as a one-time event. The way that the practices of the socialist state may be interpreted raises a difficult question. While they may be regarded as part of different things that states do in general, socialist state's practices do not easily fit any particular theory.

Marxist theories emphasize the parasitical nature of the state and its instrumental nature for the ruling classes. The state confiscation of houses from the population in order to use the as office space and the distribution of good nationalized houses primarily to privileged state officials, point, indeed, in that direction. The fact that it allocated them to the needy and to people who were under-privileged may support a view of the state similar to that described in structuralist approaches, where the capitalist state is viewed as relatively independent from the ruling class, having an agenda of its own and helping capitalism to save itself.

Finally, to a certain extent, the limits of the state (Mitchell 1992) became rather blurred during those years. Some used the state to their own immediate advantage (e.g. to evict an owner in order to move in him/herself), while other officials attempted to establish and follow bureaucratic rules and procedures. Instead, one may say that the socialist state was the sum of multiple projects that some times conflicted and other times merged. New class formation, welfare concerns and the elimination of the pre-communist privileged class were all part of the same state project. The state itself became a site of class conflict and class formation.

NOTES

[1] I do that not because there is any link between nationalization and globalization (they were separated by 30 years or so), but simply because much of the current debates in social geography and urban sociology is carried out around the issue of globalization, global cities, etc.

[2] There was another component which I do not analyze here, which had to do with the punitive policies directed towards war criminals, the German population and the confiscation of the belongings of large size agricultural owners.

[3] *Legea 439/1945 pentru efectuarea de rechiziții pentru cartiruirea de persoane, autorități și instituții.*

[4] More precisely from 1942. See *Legea 218 din 23 martie 1942 pentru prelungirea contractelor de închiriere.*

[5] *Reglementarea raporturilor între proprietari și chiriași: Legea nr.* 330/1946.

[6] Established through *Legea nr. 359/4 Decembrie 1948 pentru crearea, organizarea și funcționarea Oficiilor de Inchiriere.*

[7] Fond MGCIL, File 27/1950, page 55.

[8] Council of Ministers Decision nr. 55/February 4 1949.

[9] The same file contains the translation of the Soviet author who wrote about this issue.

[10] Part of the new regulations instituted by these Authorities was strict rent control. The new legislation established a uniform system of calculating rent for private and state apartments, all over the country.

[11] Fond MGCIL, *Direcția Industriei Locale*, File 527/1950, page 77.

[12] *Legea nr. 119 din 11/06/1948 pentru naționalizarea întreprinderilor industriale, bancare, de asigurări, miniere și de transporturi.* Along with the production facilities, the state soon confiscated the residential buildings and recreational resorts locations that belonged to the enterprises (*Legea 10/ 1949; Decret 358/49*).

[13] This was carried out in 1945 and it expropriated any agricultural holding larger than 50 hectares.

[14] The nationalization of craftsmen's workshops and of retail business also meant the nationalization of the domestic space of those who worked. Domestic space and the work space of this group were often contiguous in the same building. The ground floor was designed for work while the upper floor was used as home. The archives of MGCIL (file 527/1950) contain the contestation (and its positive answer) of a nationalization decision from Ghineș village (Ciuc County). The former owner describes that he had been evicted from his building when his workshop has been confiscated.

[15] *Decret nr. 302 din 03/11/1948.*

[16] *Decret nr. 134 din 02/04/1949.*

[17] *Decret* nr. 303 *din* 03/11/1948.

[18] *Lege nr. 284 din 14/08/1947.*

[19] Art. I, *Decret nr. 92/50 pentru nationalizarea unor imobile*, in *Buletinul Oficial* nr. 36, 20 aprilie 1950.

[20] *Cum îşi indeplinesc sarcinile funcţionarii de la Oficiile de închiriere*. In *Viaţa Capitalei, Anul 1, nr. 39, 18 iunie 1949.*

[21] Obviously, one may make an analogy here with the debates in Russia in the first part of the 20th century surrounding land ownership. Lenin suggested that there was capitalism in the countryside and therefore conflicting classes of "have" and "have-nots" A. Chayanov's theory (1966), and its echoes in Theodor Shannin's work (1972), suggested that inequalities were cyclical and that that they had to with the peasant family cycle, with accumulation in order to feed the family. One may also notice the simplification of state action by taking into account the notion of the developmental cycle in domestic groups advanced by Meyer Fortes (1958).

[22] I do not discuss here the space that was rented out by some of such former owners.

[23] MGCIL, Administrative Division, file 27/1950, page. 63.

[24] MGCIL, Administrative Division; file 24/1950, page. 22.

[25] This is similar to other situations of transformation of owner-occupied apartments into rentals. See, for instance, Plunz and Abu-Lughod (1994:64), who describe this process in mid 19th century New York City, where "former single-family row houses in older areas […] were frequently divided into substandard cubicles for poor people."

[26] MGCIL, Department of Housing; File 81/1951; pages 29-32.

[27] MGCIL, File 23/1954, page 20.

[28] While it is not clear to what extent relocation to the periphery and to other cities happened in Bucharest, such processes did happen in other cities. One file of MGCIL (24/1950) contained the justification as well as the list of 37 persons from Bistriţa that were to be relocated. I heard belatedly of other archival funds that described the relocation of families of Bucharest. This aspect needs further research and I limit the discussion to what I consulted during the fieldwork.

[29] MGCIL, *Direcţia Industriei Locale*, File 527/1950, page. 19.

[30] The agglomeration was worsened because of the demolition of insalubrious houses. Between 1948 and 1954 no less than 14% of the total area of the 1948 city was demolished (cf. MGCIL, File 208/1956).

[31] *Decretul 78/1952.*

[32] About ten years earlier there was another intrusive action of the Romanian state into the domestic space of the Jewish urban population, whose houses were confiscated (and then returned in 1945). But that was a one time intervention, without keeping track of the further residential movement of that group.

[33] Alexandru Drăghici an infamous Ministry of Interior, head of the Militia in the early 1950s, denounced after 1989 by the former political prisoners of

the Communist regime. At the time of that meeting, he was the head of the Bucharest Party organization.

[34] Before 1921, the Romania electoral system was restricted to those who possessed a certain amount of wealth.

[35] *Ordonanţa nr. 2 din 23 iulie 1949 a Direcţei Generale din Ministerul de Interne.*

[36] Obviously "election" is a misrepresentation for those years.

[37] *Decretul nr. 524/1950*, second paragraph.

[38] There is another interesting change. Whereas in the nationalization decree there is one person listed for that address, the restitution lists mention husband and wife as the re-endowed owners. This might be linked to the emergence of family legislation in 1955.

[39] This decree is even stranger to me because it was never published in any official bulletin.

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