Motto:

"the soul of a nation is as alive as its culture"62.

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE TODAY

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the crucial importance of culture for the harmonious development of individuals and society in a context in which the Romanian state values less and less this field. Neither man nor society can live outside culture, except in degrading and anomic forms, as Emile Durkheim would say, because culture generates social order, which is vital for survival. To demonstrate this idea, I first conceptually clarify the idea of culture and then highlight its significance. After establishing this, I will try to answer the question "How much money do we spend on culture today?". As I see that at least in Romania, culture has an insignificant "budgetary importance", I will conclude by underlining the disastrous effects of the financial neglect of culture.

Keywords: culture, society, budget, ignorance, crisis.

I. SHORT INTRODUCTION

The premise of this material, which is about society and social structure, is based on the idea that society is a cultural reality⁶⁵. From this perspective, culture is a key element that holds us together and helps us to progress, both individually and collectively. Considering that human biological survival is impossible in the absence of culture, there is no doubt that culture should receive the necessary attention, including financial support. Therefore, in the following, I will show that the importance of culture, which is, as I have said, vital for the survival and development of societies, is in an inverse proportionality relationship with the budgets allocated to it by the state, which has immediate and serious effects.

^{62 &}quot;atâta realitate are sufletul unui popor, câtă cultură are el", in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Cultura română și politicianismul [Romanian culture and politicianism], Socec, 1904, p. 736.

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65 Radu Baltasiu, Introducere în sociologie. Spiritualitate, națiune și capitalism. Considerații de sociologie românească și weberiană [Introduction to sociology. Spirituality, nation and capitalism. Considerations of Romanian and Weberian Sociology], Craiova, Beladi Publishing House, 2007, p. 170.

II. WHAT IS CULTURE? THEORETICAL CLARIFICATIONS

Culture refers to a logical system "that makes possible understanding between people, the production of things and services, social coherence and stability"66.

In other words, culture is "a set of shared meanings that circumscribes the social space"67; "the totality of learned and socially transmitted behaviours"68; "the totality of patterns of thought, attitude and action that characterize a population or a society"69.

Culture refers to the experience and knowledge that man records in his collective memory⁷⁰. It is "the sine qua non-of humanity"⁷¹ and "the foundation of social relations, and social relations make life itself possible"⁷².

From a Gustian perspective, culture contributes essentially to the structure of society. The two elements through which it accomplishes this is ideal and personality. Social reality is the fruit of social will; social actuality is the result of a community of will. In other words, social will is the element without which societies would not have actuality. The actualization of society depends on our ideals, i.e., on the community that we assume through our personality. Therefore, Dimitrie Gusti introduces the concept of cultural personality as a factor of social actualization through social will. Therefore, personality is also "cultural" because the development of an individual and society are culturally conditioned processes mediated by the process of socialization. We thus understand socialization as "actualized culture". The opportunity for the correct structuring of society, social justice, and individual dignity is provided by the establishment of the cultural state, which is an institutional ensemble based on cultural personality and vocation⁷³. Intelligence, coping skills, communion, faith, and identity are just a few typical human phenomena that cannot exist outside culture. Therefore, culture is more than the actual way in which individuals relate to each other; it is also about experiences and how it is transmitted⁷⁴.

In Nichifor Crainic's conception, culture is the totality of the creations of human genius. It has no meaning in itself but is integrated into religious conceptions. It radiates from faith, like the flame from a blazing fire⁷⁵. Culture also has a prophetic

⁷² Konrad Lorenz, On Aggression, HBJ, 1966, p. 248, in *Ibidem*.

^{66 &}quot;care face posibilă înțelegerea dintre oameni, producerea de lucruri și servicii, coerența și stabilitatea socială", în Ibidem, p. 16.

^{67 &}quot;un ansamblu de semnificații comune, care circumscrie spațiul social", in *Ibidem*, p. 23.

^{68 &}quot;reprezintă totalitatea comportamentelor învățate și social transmise", in Richard Schaefer and Robert Lamm, Student's guide to accompany Schaefer, Sociology, second edition, McGraw Hill, 1986, p. 28.

^{69 &}quot;ansamblul modelelor de gândire, atitudine și acțiune care caracterizează o populație sau o societate", in Ioan Mihăilescu, Sociologie generală. Concepte fundamentale și studii de caz [General sociology. Fundamental concepts and case studies], Bucharest, University of Bucharest Publishing House, 2000, p. 55.

⁷⁰ Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, p. 193.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 202.

⁷³ Radu Baltasiu, *quoted work*, 2007, pp. 188–189.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 190.

⁷⁵ Nichifor Crainic, "Modul teandric" ["Teandric mode"], in *Gândirea Journal*, January 1941, in Nichifor Crainic, Nostalgia paradisului [Paradise nostalgia], Iasi, Moldova Publishing House, 1994, p. V.

meaning, similar to the Christian doctrine of the finality of life and eternal order⁷⁶. It is through culture that man transcends his nature⁷⁷, that is, he is saved. For Nichifor Crainic, culture necessarily implies "the original mode of our ethnic personality. Its law cannot be imitation but autochthony. We define culture as the total of those developments of the spirit that are born spontaneously and have no claim to universal or constraining valorization (...) The spontaneous character attributed to the creations of culture in this definition shows us their intimate connection with the very essence of the spirit, that is, freedom. Culture is not decreed; it is born. This birth, which is usually called inspiration, is always a mystery that neighbors divinity and eludes attempts at explanation. But once born, culture can guide itself [and us]"⁷⁸.

In other words, our chance to be free and to recover our lost paradise is cultural because culture "is a symbolic relationship with the transcendent".79. This is why Nichifor Crainic sees culture as "an irradiation of the flame of the worship of God, as a concretization in objective forms of the religious essence"80.

III. WHY IS CULTURE IMPORTANT?

i. Individual level

Culture has a vital role in the liberation of individual vocations because it is only through culture that the individual discovers their true potential and can direct it toward their highest values: family, country, and God. It is only through culture that individuals acquire self-awareness of their capabilities and maximize their aptitudes and abilities.

Culture plays an essential role in human existence because "the soul of a nation is as alive as its culture"81. A healthy person can only develop in a healthy culture. Therefore, developing the health of the individual means improving society, which can only be achieved through culture⁸².

Personality shapes social reality. Although its vector is the individual, it sets goals in terms of social unity. We can therefore say that the social existence of an

⁷⁶ Nichifor Crainic, Nostalgia paradisului [Paradise nostalgia], Iași, Moldova Publishing House, 1994, p. 13.

77 *Ibidem*, p. 21.

^{78 &}quot;modul original al personalității noastre etnice. Legea ei nu poate fi imitația, ci autohtonia. Cultură numim întreaga sumă a acelor dezvoltări ale spiritului, care se nasc spontan și nu au nicio pretenție la o valorificare universală sau constrângătoare (...) Caracterul de spontaneitate atribuit creațiilor de cultură în această definiție ne arată legătura lor intimă cu însăși esența spiritului, care e libertatea. Cultura nu se decretează, ea se naște. Nașterea aceasta, care se numește de obicei inspirație, e de-a pururea o taină vecină cu divinitatea, ce scapă încercărilor de explicație. Dar odată născută, cultura se [și ne] poate călăuzi", in Ibidem, p. 26.

⁷⁹ "este un raport simbolic cu înălțimea transcedentă", in *Ibidem*, p. 29. ⁸⁰ "o iradiație din flacăra adorării lui Dumnezeu, ca o concretizare în forme obiective a esenței religioase", in Ibidem, p. 34.

^{81 &}quot;atâta realitate are sufletul unui popor, câtă cultură are el", in Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, quoted work, p. 736.

⁸² Ion Ungureanu, Paradigme ale cunoașterii societății [Paradigms of societal knowledge], Bucharest, Junimea Publishing House, 2002, p. 53.

individual is conditioned by the development of his personality⁸³. Dimitrie Gusti says that there are two principles that guide the development of personality and make it cultural, namely the principles of normative ethics:

- 1. "Act in such a way that in every moment of your action you reach the maximum realization of your personality" 84.
- 2. "Reach the maximum actuality of your personality, to develop it for creating the highest cultural values" 85.

The shaping power of values on individuals is determined by the level of internalized humanity, *i.e.*, how much a person is concerned about others' well-being. Values that correspond to society, nation, and humanity are cultural values⁸⁶. Thus, the ordering power of culture is also given by its ability to bring people together and hold them together in a moral way, thus creating solidarity.

ii. Community level

Culture is an ordering factor as it ensures the coherence of communities and large social groups⁸⁷. The form that order has taken over time, great successes or failures are determined by culture⁸⁸. Therefore, we can say that culture is the source of social order. The function expresses a set of maxims based on the orientation of individual interactions. Thus, order is the common denominator of subjectivities, having the capacity to organize in a predictable manner⁸⁹.

Sociality and sociability are the main concepts through which sociology explains an individual's relationship with society. Sociality refers to an individual's intrinsic ability to live collectively, while sociability refers to an individual's ability to integrate into a collective. On the other hand, sociability is the form that sociality takes in different types of civilizations and cultures. In other words, the individual's need to live in collectivities (sociality) manifests itself in different forms of soul aggregation (of culture) and material aggregation (of civilization)⁹⁰.

Ion Ungureanu demonstrated that sociability is "the individual variation or measure of sociality"⁹¹. Furthermore, sociability "measures, through the aspects of culture and civilization that it acquires over time, not only the individual abilities of integration, but the type and strength of social cohesion as a whole"⁹².

84 "Acţionează astfel încât în fiecare clipă a acţiunii tale să atingi realizarea maximală a personalității tale", in Dimitrie Gusti, Opere [Works], Vol. II, Bucharest, Academy Publishing House, 1969, p. 37.

88 *Ibidem*, p. 170.

⁸³ Radu Baltasiu, quoted work, 2007, p. 182.

^{85 &}quot;Atinge actualitatea maximală a personalității tale, spre a o desfășura pentru crearea celor mai înalte valori culturale", in *Ibidem*.

⁸⁶ Radu Baltasiu, quoted work, 2007, p. 182.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 176.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

^{91 &}quot;variația sau măsura individuală a socialității", in Ion Ungureanu, quoted work, p. 62.

^{92 &}quot;măsoară prin aspectele de cultură și civilizație pe care le capătă în timp, nu numai abilitățile individuale de integrare, ci tipul și tăria coeziunii sociale în ansamblul său", in Radu Baltasiu, quoted work, 2007, p. 93.

Culture is, as we have demonstrated, a key concept for the social order because society is based on it, as are adaptive or institution-building processes. In short, relations between people, between individuals and society, the very idea of society is culture⁹³. Last but not least, culture is our potential and capacity to adapt to the environment through which we adapt to our needs. In other words, culture refers to the potential for innovation, discovery, and invention, which are fundamental to the progress of a society⁹⁴.

iii. State level

The ordering function of culture is maintained at the individual, community, and state levels. The expression of cultural order in a state is the cultural state. This is a sociological and geopolitical concept introduced into universal culture by "Junimea" at the end of the 19th century. The cultural state is the response of the elites of a backward society to the competition for development. The cultural component refers to competence in society and the state. The Romanian state has an essential geostrategic role because it is a state of European necessity at the mouths of the Danube, i.e., a mandatory factor of order in the Danube and Black Sea areas. For this natural Romanian role to be useful to Romanians, Gusti points out that the state must be based on a hierarchy of competences, thus becoming a cultural state⁹⁵.

The cultural state has the mission of organizing competences, coagulating the initiatives of different departments, and creating a higher culture concerned with the promotion of science, literature, and art. This will put it in direct connection with the culture of the people, which is concerned with spreading the benefits of science, literature, and art to the common people⁹⁶. In other words, the cultural state is "the mediator between the higher culture and the needs of the community"97, but also the form of organization in which "politics is based on knowledge". On the other hand, the cultural state is a structure that organizes work through knowledge of the real needs of society. At the level of the social system, the cultural state is centered on the hierarchy of competences, which makes possible the just or fair character of government⁹⁹.

As long as we have a functional hierarchy of competences, we can talk about justice and therefore social order. However, Constantin Rădulescu Motru warns us that only goods that are actual are real 100. Only true culture exists in the consciousness of a society, making it an element of prime necessity for developing a nation¹⁰¹. The cultural state is the institutional framework within which the work

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 191.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 189.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 213–214.

⁹⁶ Dimitrie Gusti, *Opere [Works]*, Vol. III, Bucharest, Academy Publishing House, 1970, p. 239. 97 "mijlocitorul dintre cultura superioară și nevoile comunității", in Radu Baltasiu, quoted work, 2007, p. 231.

98 "politica se întemeiază pe cunoaștere", in *Ibidem*, p. 250.

99 *Ibidem*, p. 214.

Pădulacau-Motru. *auoted work*, pp. 51–52.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

and life of the community are organized according to the principle of scientific knowledge of reality and satisfying the real needs of society¹⁰². Therefore, culture is of vital importance to the state because it generates and maintains social order by organizing work according to competence criteria.

IV. HOW MUCH MONEY DO WE SPEND ON CULTURE TODAY?

i. Romania

Over the years, in Romania, no more than 1% of the total budget has been allocated to culture. In 2018, spending on culture as a proportion of GDP was around the European average of around 0,4% of GDP. Over the last 3 years, the money allocated to culture has been declining continuously. In 2020, due to the pandemic situation, only 0,39% of the total budget was allocated to the three institutions responsible for cultural services (the Ministry of Culture, the Romanian Academy and the Romanian Cultural Institute)¹⁰³. In 2022, the budget allocated to culture represented 0,1% of Gross Domestic Product¹⁰⁴. In 2021, the budget proposal for the Ministry of Culture was 980,94 million lei, compared to 880,83 million lei in 2020. The ministry's budget estimate for 2022 was 843,4 million lei, for 2023, 829,6 million lei, and for 2024, 835,9 million lei¹⁰⁵.

The share of state budget expenditure allocated to the Ministry of Culture decreased constantly from 0,41% in 2017 to 0,18% in 2020 (Chart 1). Over the four years, the budget for culture almost halved in percentage terms, but in absolute values, the allocated amounts increased by more than 100 million lei, from 630 million lei to 774 million lei (Chart 2). Thus, although the expenditure in absolute values increased both in the state budget and in the budget of the Ministry of Culture, the ratio between these two indicators shows that between 2017 and 2021, the amounts allocated to the Ministry of Culture accounted for an increasingly smaller share of the state budget 106.

¹⁰² Radu Baltasiu, quoted work, 2007, p. 229.

^{103 &}quot;Câți bani au fost alocați pentru cultură în ultimii 4 ani?" ["How much money has been allocated to culture in the last 4 years"], in *Wall Street*, n.d., Available at: https://www.wall street.ro/articol/Social/266786/cati- bani- au- fost- alocati- pentru- cultura- in ultimii 4 ani.html, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

¹⁰⁴ G4Media Newsroom, "Bugetul alocat Culturii, pentru 2022, reprezintă 0,1% din Produsul Intern Brut, fiind cu 45% mai mare decât în 2021" ["The budget allocated to culture in 2022 represents 0,1% of Gross Domestic Product, 45% more than in 2021"], in *G4Media*, December 24, 2021, Available at: https://www.g4media.ro/bugetul alocat culturii pentru 2022- reprezinta 01 din produsul intern brut fiind cu 45 mai mare decat- in- 2021.html, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

¹⁰⁵ Patricia Marinescu, "Bugetul Ministerului Culturii, creștere de 12% în 2021 – proiect" ["Ministry of Culture budget, 12% increase in 2021 – draft"], in *News*, February 12, 2021, Available at: https://www.news.ro/cultura- media/bugetul- ministerului culturii crestere de 12 in 2021 proiect-1922405612002021021119972066, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

¹⁰⁶ Finanțarea culturii la nivel național și local (2005–2020) [Culture financing at national and local level (2005–2020)], p. 3.

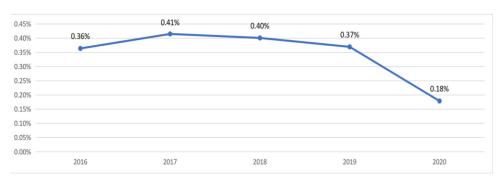


Chart 1. Expenditures of the Ministry of Culture as a percentage of state budgets expenditure 107.

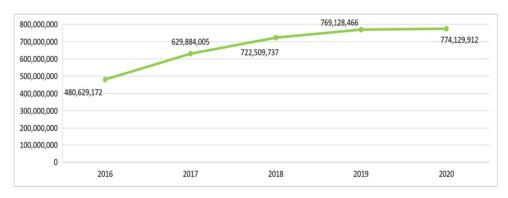


Chart 2. Ministry of Culture expenditure nominal values in lei¹⁰⁸

In rural areas, the amount spent on culture has shown a general trend of slow growth compared to municipalities and cities in Romania. However, for almost 20 years, from 2000 to 2017, spending on culture has not reached 100 lei/year/inhabitant 109 .

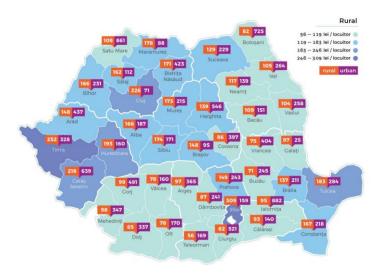
The rural environment has exceeded this level since 2018, reaching 129 lei per inhabitant in 2020. For comparison with the urban environment, in 2020, Bucharest allocated 686 lei per inhabitant for culture, the other municipalities allocated a little over a third of this amount, and the cities allocated 249 lei per inhabitant ¹¹⁰. We note that the money allocated to the cultural dimension is insufficient in relation to the needs and importance it has in people's lives and for the advancement of society.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem.

 $^{^{109}}$ Ibidem.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 6.



Map 1. Spending on culture per capita – rural compared to urban (in 2020)¹¹¹.

ii. Comparison with other countries

Overall EU public spending on "recreation, culture and religion" amounted to $\[\in \]$ 162 billion or 1,2% of EU GDP in 2019. In the same year, Hungary allocates 3% of its GDP, Estonia allocates 2% (with the highest allocations), and Romania allocates only $1\%^{112}$.

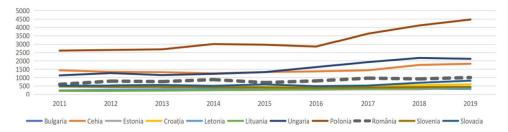


Chart 3. Evolution of public expenditure on "cultural services" and "broadcasting and publishing services" (2011–2019, million euro)¹¹³.

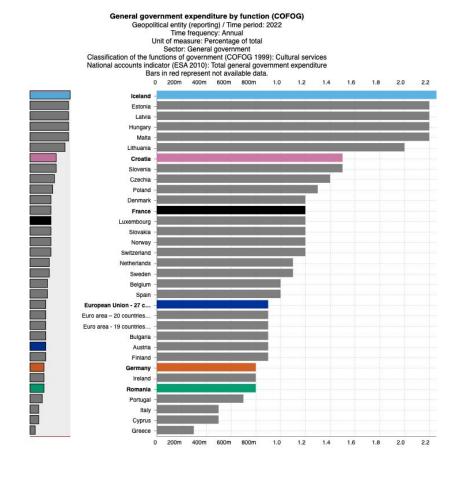
Between 2007 and 2014, the European average per capita spending on culture was 107 euro (about 450 lei, based on the average exchange rate for that period). In Eastern Europe, the average per capita spending on culture during the same period was the around 50 euro (about 210 lei). Thus, the average per capita spending on culture in Romania (165 lei) was about one-third of the European average and about

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 7.

¹¹³ Ibidem.

50 lei lower than the average for Eastern Europe¹¹⁴. The government allocates one of the lowest percentages to culture (0,8% of the public budget), placing Romania, for example, at the bottom of the European ranking in 2022 (26th out of 30 countries recorded by Eurostat):



Source of data: Eurostat (online data code: gov_10a_exp)
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Chart 4-based on data provided by Eurostat 115 .

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

¹¹⁵ Eurostat, "General government expenditure by function (COFOG)", July 22, 2024, Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/gov_10a_exp\$dv_578/default/bar?lang=en&category=cult.c ult_gov, Accessed on September 3, 2024.

V. THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING CULTURE

i. Theory explaining the link between culture and other social branches: Dimitrie Gusti's law of sociological parallelism

The theory that makes it possible to understand social logic is the Gustian theory of frames and manifestations because it is the only theory that can cover the entire reality in real time. For Dimitrie Gusti, reality is made up of frames and manifestations, and the relationship between them is called the "law of sociological parallelism" 116. The manifestations are economic, spiritual, political, and legal, and the frameworks are cosmological, biological, psychological, and historical. There is a parallelism between them: between frames, between manifestations, and between frames and manifestations¹¹⁷. This means that when we have an imbalance in one area, its effects will be felt in all other areas. For example, we understand the investment problem if we understand the attitudes of capital-owning classes. In other words, we can understand the economic action of those with money if we first understand their economic ethics. Mihai Eminescu, Max Weber, and Mihail Manoilescu have demonstrated that where the culture of money is centered on saving, advanced and prosperous democracies emerge, and where the culture of money in the ruling classes is centered on luxury consumption, we will experience underdevelopment, value disorientation among young people, and social depression in general. This is an example of the cultural conditioning of an indicator that is only apparently "economic". Any indicator also has serious sociological and cultural components. This is why policies of any kind that are out of the spirit often lead to disaster¹¹⁸.

ii. Concrete effects: A few statistics to illustrate the crisis that our country is facing – basically cultural

Social reality is determined by will, which in turn "is formed by culture and can be blocked by destroying culture" This means that we cannot speak of state, society or civilization without culture, except in its degraded form. For example, a state without culture becomes oligarchy; the "outside culture" would become a mass with minimal identity, and civilization becomes a historical impossibility 120. Malinowski calls sociocultural responses to social problems functions. He points out that in any culture, there are at least four response functions to the imperatives of survival through which the social order is secured: economic, social, educational and

¹¹⁶ Radu Baltasiu, Dosarul de problemă – instrument științific și instituție pentru relația dintre statul român și comunitățile istorice [The issue dossier – scientific tool and institution for the relationship between the Romanian state and historical communities], manuscript, 2023, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Dimitrie Gusti, Sociologia militans. Introducere în sociologia politică [Militans sociology. Introduction to political sociology], Vol. I, Bucharest, Romanian Social Institute Publishing House, 1934, pp. 45–46.

¹¹⁸ Radu Baltasiu, quoted work, 2007, p. 52.

^{119 &}quot;se formează prin cultură și poate fi blocată prin distrugerea culturii", in *Ibidem*, p. 131.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 233.

political¹²¹. Since the "budgetary importance" given to culture is very low in general and in Romania in particular, I will review some statistical data indicating a number of dysfunctions in the four responses identified by Branislav Malinovski, with the mention that they are not the only ones. I will use this approach to demonstrate that the source of social disorder at the economic, social, educational, and political levels is cultural after all.

Considering the economy, the undervaluation of culture is reflected in indicators such as inflation, indebtedness, and the borrowing rate. Eurostat data showed that in August 2024, Romania had, for the sixth month in a row, the highest inflation in the EU -5.3%, while the EU average was almost half $(2.8\%)^{122}$. Max Weber pointed out that inflation "is always and first a tool to increase purchasing power for certain interests" 123 .

Inflation is thus "the result of serious social imbalances between the dominant interests of political and financial circles, between them and the rest of the population" ¹²⁴.

On the other hand, in May 2023, Romania's public debt reached 50,1% of GDP¹²⁵, exceeding for the first time in history the 700 billion lei threshold, being twice as high as at the end of 2018 and three times higher than 10 years ago. In other words, at that time, each Romanian owed ϵ 7.500¹²⁶. Last but not least, interest expenditure tripled in just 3 years, from 12,1 billion lei in 2021 to more than 36 billion lei in 2023. Governments have paid an equivalent of ϵ 50 billion in interest over the past 25 years. Almost half of this amount has been accumulated in the last five years¹²⁷. This is (also) explained by Romania, which has been borrowing more than 10 years at the highest interest rates in Europe¹²⁸. As a result, debt increases

122 Digi 24 Newsroom, "România a avut cea mai mare inflație din UE pentru a şasea lună la rând" ["Romania had the highest inflation in the EU for the sixth month in a row"], in *Digi 24*, September 18, 2024, Available at: https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/romania-a-avut-cea-mai-mare-inflatie-din-ue-pentru-a-sasealunalarand2934287, Accessed on September 18, 2024.
123 Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, University of

¹²³ Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, University of California Press, Vol. I and II, 1978, p. 133.

124 "rezultatul unor grave dezechilibre sociale între interesele dominante ale cercurilor politicofinanciare, între acestea şi restul populației", in Radu Baltasiu, quoted work, 2007, p. 320.

125 Profit Newsroom, "Datoria publică a depășit din nou 50% din PIB" ["Public debt has again exceeded 50% of GDP"], in *Profit*, July 26, 2023, Available at: https://www.profit.ro/taxe-si-consultanta/datoria-publica-a-depasit-din-nou-50-din-pib-21266309. Accessed on August 9, 2024.

126 60m Newsroom, "Guvernele PSD, PNL, USR și UDMR au îndatorat fiecare român cu 7.500 de euro" ["The PSD, PNL, USR and UDMR governments have indebted each Romanian with 7.500 euro"], in 60m, May 18, 2023, Available at: https://60m.ro/2023/05/18/guvernele psd- pnl- usr- si- udmr- au indatorat fiecare roman cu 7 500 de euro datorii- de- peste- 700- de- miliarde/, Accessed on August 11, 2024.

127 Alexandru Pop, "707 miliarde de lei a ajuns datoria publică a României, depășind 50% din produsul intern brut" ["Romania's public debt has reached 707 billion lei, exceeding 50% of GDP"], in *Newsweek*, June 7, 2023, Available at: https://newsweek.ro/economie/707- miliarde- lei- datoria-romaniei, Accessed on August 11, 2024.

128 Agerpres Newsroom, "VIDEO Ministrul Finanțelor: România se împrumută la cele mai mari dobânzi din Europa de 10 ani, poate și mai mult" ["VIDEO Finance Minister: Romania has been borrowing at the highest interest rates in Europe for 10 years, maybe more"], in *Agerpres*, April 21, 2022, Available at: https://www.agerpres.ro/economic intern/2022/04/21/video- ministrul- finantelor- romania- se imprumuta la cele mai- mari- dobanzi- din- europa-de-10-ani-poate-si-maimult906513, Accessed on August 11, 2024.

¹²¹ Ion Ungureanu, *quoted work*, p. 50.

annually by 20 billion lei from the increase in interest. All this is happening while other countries borrow at much lower interest rates: Bulgaria for example borrows six times cheaper¹²⁹. We therefore see how these financial indicators, stripped of their cultural component, lead to poverty, a lower standard of living, and increasing dissatisfaction with life.

From a social perspective, I will review only a few socio-demographic dynamics to outline the significant decline that we are facing. Data from the National Institute of Statistics showed that in 2023, Romania recorded the lowest number of births in the last 100 years: only 155.000 new-borns, whereas the number of deaths was almost double, amounting to around 250.000. With a negative natural increase, we lose about one million people every 10 years¹³⁰. Another factor that has had a negative influence on the demographic decline we are facing is the recent massive emigration of Romanians. Romanian emigration has become a major social and economic phenomenon. The remarkable size of the Romanian diaspora places Romania in fifth place in the world¹³¹. According to official data, in 2019, there were 9,7¹³² million Romanians living outside Romania's borders, of which 5,6¹³³ million were in the diaspora, *i.e.*, about 58%. Unofficially, PMP deputy Constantin Codreanu claimed that the number of Romanians living abroad in 2019 exceeded 12 million¹³⁴.

¹²⁹ Gabriela Ținteanu, "România se împrumută cel mai scump dintre țările UE. Datoria crește anual cu 20 de miliarde de lei din majorarea dobânzii. Bulgaria se împrumută de șase ori mai ieftin" ["Romania is borrowing the most expensive among EU countries. 20 billion lei a year in debt increases due to higher interest rates. Bulgaria borrows six times cheaper"], in *Economica*, April 17, 2022, Available at: https://www.economica.net/romania- cea- mai- mare- dobanda- din- ue- la- titlurile- pe- 10- ani- datoria- creste- cu 20 de miliarde de lei doar din majorarea dobanzii- bulgaria se imprumuta de sase ori mai ieftin 576922.html, Accessed on June 21, 2024.

¹³⁰ Tamara Ceaicovschi, "STUDIU. 150.000 de copii s-au născut anul trecut în România. Este cel mai mic număr de nașteri din 1924 încoace" ["STUDY. 150.000 babies were born in Romania last year. The lowest number of births since 1924"], in *Aleph News*, February 13, 2024, Available at: https://alephnews.ro/guvern/studiu-150-000-de-copii-s-au-nascut-anul-trecut-in-romania-este-celmai-mic-numar-denasteridin1924-incoace/, Accessed on June 21, 2024.

¹³¹ Marilen Gabriel Pirtea, "COMUNICAT DE PRESĂ: Raportul OCDE asupra migrației românești: Prin impactul diasporei asupra pieței europene a muncii, România a devenit cea mai importantă contributoare netă de cetățeni activi în piața muncii, în cadrul grupei țărilor Noii Europe" ["PRESS RELEASE: OECD report on Romanian migration: Through the impact of diaspora on the European labor market, Romania has become the largest net contributor of active citizens to the labor market within the New Europe group of countries"], in *The Chamber of Deputies*, n.d., Available at: http://www.cdep.ro/relatii_publice/site2.text_presa?pid=18508&catg=3&timp=&asoc=G20162002, Accessed on May 27, 2024.

¹³² Europa Liberă Newsroom, "Ministrul pentru romanii de pretutindeni: 9,7 milioane de români trăiesc în afara granițelor țării, iar 5,6 milioane sunt în diaspora" ["Minister for Romanians Abroad: 9,7 million Romanians live abroad, 5,6 million in diaspora"], in *Europa Liberă*, July 24, 2019, Available at: https://romania.europalibera.org/a/ministrul pentru diaspora 9,7 milioane de romani traiesc in afara granitelor tarii iar mai mult de jmatate sunt in diaspora/30073056.html, Accessed on September 21, 2020.

 $^{^{133}}$ Ibidem.

¹³⁴ Ziarul Românesc Newsroom, "Cifre șocante avansate de un parlamentar român. 12 milioane de români în afara granițelor?" ["Shocking figures from a Romanian MP. 12 million Romanians abroad?"], in *Ziarul Românesc*, November 7, 2011, Available at: https://ziarulromanesc.net/diaspora/cifre- socante- avansate-de un parlamentar roman 12 milioane- de- romani- afara- granitelor/, Accessed on September 21, 2020.

Beyond the significant numbers of those who have emigrated, another interesting aspect to emphasize refers to the profile of those who have left they are primarily people who are able to work, primarily in the 25–29 age group, according to NIS¹³⁵. Second, because they are young people, we are referring to a fertile population. Therefore, in 2016, more children were born in the diaspora than in Romania¹³⁶. Based on the numbers of children born by Romanian emigrants in countries such as Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States, specialists estimated that in less than 20 years more than half a million Romanians were born abroad (630.000 children between 2000 and 2018) 137. Last but not least, we are talking about specialized people: recent years have revealed a migration of specialized people, the so-called brain-drain phenomenon¹³⁸ (IT, engineering and medicine are the main fields affected by this phenomenon). Romania has thus turned into a "machine" of specialized labor, working for the economies of other countries:

"Between 1990 and 2017, Romania registered the highest increase in migration stock among all EU states - 287 per cent. The boost of the migration phenomenon was supported by significant changes, including in the migrants' profiles, in terms of their level of education; consequently, the loss of human capital represented by highly skilled Romanians already has an impact on the key sectors of the Romanian economy" 139.

In short, since the 2000s, Romania has been among the top 30 countries with the highest emigration of highly qualified people 140. Another aspect that has a significant influence on the demographic problems we are facing at the national level

¹³⁵ Camelia Badea, "Jumătate dintre tinerii români vor să plece din țară. Se schimbă destinațiile, media de vârstă, euro-navetismul este în creștere" ["Half of young Romanians want to leave the country. Destinations are changing, the average age, Euronavetism is on the rise"], in Ziare, 2018, Available at: http://www.ziare.com/social/romani/jumatate- dintre tinerii- romani- vor- sa- plece- dintara- se schimba destinatiile media de varsta- euronavetismul- este- in crestere interviu i 1512827, Accessed on August 26, 2024.

¹³⁶ Pro TV News Newsroom, "2016 pentru prima data s-au născut mai mulți copii în Diaspora decât în țară" ["2016 for the first time more children were born in the Diaspora than in the country"], in Pro TV News, May 2, 2017, Available at: https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/international/anul- trecut- s- aunascut- mai- multi- copii in diaspora decat in romania multi dintre- acestia- nu-mai-invatalimbaromana.html, Accessed on August 26, 2024.

¹³⁷ Digi 24 Newsroom, "Cel puțin 630.000 de copii născuți în străinătate de românii care au emigrat. Datele surprinzătoare dintr-un raport OECD" ["At least 630.000 children born abroad by Romanians who emigrated. Surprising data from an OECD report"], in Digi 24, July 17, 2019, Available at: https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/social/cel- putin- 630- 000- de- copii- nascuti- instrainatate- de- romanii- care- au- emigrat- datele- surprinzatoare- dintr- un- raport- oecd- 1161085, Accessed on May 27, 2020.

¹³⁸ Raluca Iacob (Bâra), "Brain Drain Phenomenon in Romania: What Comes in Line after Corruption?", in Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2018), Available at: https://www.journalofcommunication.ro/index.php/journalofcommunication/article/view/259, Accessed on August 8, 2024.

¹³⁹ Ibidem<u>.</u>

¹⁴⁰ Luciana Lăzărescu (coord.) et al., Emigrația forței de muncă înalt calificată din România: o analiză a domeniilor de cercetare desvoltare, medicina și tehnologia informației și a comunicațiilor, [Emigration of the highly skilled labor force from Romania: an analysis of the fields of research and development, medicine and information and communication technology], 2017, Available at: http://www.cdcdi.ro/files/services/25_0_EMINET_Emigratia%20fortei%20de%20munca%20inalt%2 Ocalificate 2017.pdf, Accessed on August 8, 2024.

is abortion. In 2012, Romania had the highest abortion rate in the European Union (48%): 480 of 1000 births. This meant that half of the children conceived were aborted¹⁴¹. After 11 years, in 2023, Romania will rank second in the EU at a rate of 28% per 1.000 women¹⁴². From 1958 to 2011, 21.651.277 abortions were reported in Romania, according to a statistic compiled by the Pro-Vita Association of Bucharest at the end of 2013¹⁴³. We can therefore see that both health and family culture are directly affected by the devaluation of the idea of culture, and the immediate, medium, and long-term effects are not long in coming.

The education situation is also showing major imbalances: 30% of students who entered the public education system 12 years ago did not take the Baccalaureate exam, around 40% of young people wanted to move to another country in 2023, and the rate of young people in Romania aged 15–29 who were neither working nor attending any school or training was in 2022 the highest in the EU (20%), the number of young people with poor reading, science and math skills was twice the EU average between 2009 and 2018, and 49% of Romanian pupils were victims of physical violence or threats, making Romanian public schools the most important source of stress for teenagers in 2023 ¹⁴⁴. Another prominent indicator of educational dysfunction is the high rate of functional illiteracy, which exceeded 50% in 2021. Functional illiteracy refers to a lack of basic literacy and numeracy skills or limited ability to understand written text at a basic level¹⁴⁵.

At the political level, we are dealing with other dysfunctions. According to a survey conducted by the Laboratory for Information Warfare Analysis and Strategic Communication, in partnership with the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs and

¹⁴¹ Paula Rotaru, "România are cea mai ridicată rată de avort din Europa: 480 de avorturi la 1.000 de nașteri" ["Romania has the highest abortion rate in Europe: 480 abortions per 1.000 births"], in *Mediafax*, October 28, 2016, Available at: https://www.mediafax.ro/social/romania- are- cea mai- ridicata- rata- de-avort- din- europa- 480- de avorturi la 1 000 de nasteri- 15875649, Accessed on March 15, 2023.

¹⁴² World Population Review, "Abortion Rates by Country 2023", in *World Population Review*, n.d., Available at: https://worldpopulationreview.com/country- rankings/abortion- rates- by country, Accessed on March 15, 2023.

¹⁴³ Pro Vita Bucharest, "Oficial: 21,6 milioane de avorturi în România, în perioada 1958 – 2011. Regimul Iliescu-Roman a ucis aproape 1.000.000 de copii nenăscuți numai în 1990" ["Official: 21.6 million abortions in Romania between 1958 and 2011 the Iliescu Roman regime killed almost 1.000.000 unborn children in 1990 alone"], in *Active News*, January 8, 2014, Available at: https://www.activenews.ro/prima-pagina/Oficial-21-6-milioane- de- avorturi- in- Romania- in- perioada- 1958- 2011. Regimul- Iliescu- Roman- a- ucis- aproape-1.000.000- de- copii- nenascuti numai- in- 1990- 12730, Accessed on August 8, 2024.

¹⁴⁴ Zeno Sustac, "România, țara analfabetismului funcțional obligatoriu" ["Romania, the country of compulsory functional illiteracy"], in *Ziare*, September 23, 2024, Available at: https://ziare.com/romania/romania- tara- analfabetismului- functional-obligatoriu-1895599, Accessed on August 23, 2024.

¹⁴⁵ Dacian Dolean, "Analfabetismul funcțional din România depășește 50% și aceasta nu este cea mai mare problemă a sistemului educațional din România – cercetătorul Dacian Dolean" ["Functional illiteracy in Romania exceeds 50% and this is not the biggest problem of the Romanian education system researcher Dacian Dolean"], in *Edu Pedu*, October 23, 2021, Available at: https://www.edupedu.ro/analfabetismulfunctional- din-romania- depaseste- 50- si- aceasta- nu este cea mai mare problema- a sistemului educational din romania cercetatorul dacian dolean/, Accessed on August 23, 2024.

the Institute of Political Science and International Relations, Romanians in 2022 had the lowest trust in parties, parliament and government¹⁴⁶. Another survey conducted in 2024 by CURS showed that 79% of Romanians did not trust the Government, 83% did not trust the parliament, and 86% did not trust the Presidency, a percentage that is also maintained for political parties¹⁴⁷. Another IRES survey shows that the level of distrust in political parties is even higher among young people: 95% of them say they do not trust political parties¹⁴⁸. The lack of trust was generated by several factors, including the following:

"On the one hand, we are talking about the performance of the political class, the poor quality of the political class, the fact that lately it has started to be populated by all sorts of characters, more or less shady, and their quality has been declining over time; the way they interact with the public has also changed" 149.

High levels of distrust lead to low voting participation. This has a domino effect on other areas of society. Culture, or in this case, the devaluation of culture, causes social disorder at economic, social, educational, and political levels, leading to structural changes in society.

Dimitrie Gusti's law of sociological parallelism shows a co-determination relationship between frames and manifestations and between frames and manifestations. Therefore, when one dimension is affected, the consequences are felt in the other domains. When culture is neglected at the individual, community, and state levels, we can understand the emergence of imbalances such as inflation, emigration, and others. Moreover, if decision makers, *i.e.*, politicians, make decisions that affect the entire society on the basis of an unhealthy culture

¹⁴⁶ Hot News Newsroom, "Românii au cea mai mică încredere în partide, parlament şi guvern/Biserica şi Armata, în continuare în topul încrederii – sondaj" ["Romanians have the least trust in parties, parliament and government/Church and Army still top in trust poll"], in *Hot News*, December 14, 2022, Available at: https://hotnews.ro/romnii- au- cea mai mica- ncredere- n- partide- parlament si guvern biserica și armata n continuare- n- topul- ncrederii- sondaj- 91819, Accessed on August 23, 2024.

¹⁴⁷ Arina Delcea, "Aproape 90% dintre români nu au încredere în Președinție și nici în partide. Cum se raportează cetățenii la instituțiile politice în an electoral" ["Nearly 90% of Romanians do not trust the Presidency or the parties. How citizens relate to political institutions in an election year"], in *Euro News*, January 30, 2024, Available at: https://www.euronews.ro/articole/aproape- 90- dintre- romani- nu- au-incredere- in- presedintie- si- nici- in- partide- cum-se, Accessed on June 12, 2024.

¹⁴⁸ David Leonard Bularca, "STUDIU 3 din 4 tineri au încredere mică sau deloc în democrația din România: «Politicienii români au eșuat»/În ce instituții au încredere tinerii" ["3 out of 4 young people have little or no trust in democracy in Romania: 'Romanian politicians have failed'/Which institutions do young people trust?"], in *Hot News*, March 21, 2024, Available at: https://hotnews.ro/studiu- 3- din- 4- tineri- auncredere- mica- sau- deloc- n- democratia- din- romnia- politicienii- romni- au- esuat- n- ce- institutii- auncredere- tin- 10740, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

^{149 &}quot;Pe de o parte vorbim de performanța clasei politice, de slaba calitate a clasei politice, de faptul că în ultima vreme a început să fie populată de tot felul de personaje, mai mult sau mai puțin dubioase, iar calitatea lor a tot scăzut de-a lungul timpului; s-a modificat și modul în care interacționează cu publicul", in PS News Newsroom, "De ce nu mai au încredere românii în clasa politică" ["Why Romanians no longer trust the political class"], in *PS News*, September 23, 2023, Available at: https://psnews.ro/de- ce- nu- mai- au-incredere- romanii in clasa politica/, Accessed on September 2, 2024.

of money (*i.e.*, luxury consumption), the country is condemned to underdevelopment. Culture is therefore extremely important for any society because it makes possible its existence – not just any existence but a prosperous and harmonious one.

iii. The cultural state and anomic society: from social justice to relative frustration

We have seen that the cultural state is a form of social organization based on the hierarchy of competence, which generates social order. An anomic society, by contrast, is a social organization in which the power of the norm is diminished. Emile Durkheim refers to social imbalances and disorder in society as anomie. For the French sociologist, anomie is a social disease that reveals a crisis of social solidarity¹⁵⁰. In other words, anomie is the loss of social community control over individual actions¹⁵¹. In short, "anomie refers to the mutual alienation of individuals and the loss of the authority of the rules naturally recognized until then"¹⁵².

As the power of social norms diminishes, the state of social disorder increases, and feelings of relative frustration emerge. Relative frustration refers to "the degree of dissatisfaction increases as man realizes that he does not have what others have what he should or could have" ¹⁵³.

Equally, the feeling of relative frustration, theorized by Tocqueville and Durkheim, among others, is accompanied by "the feeling of injustice in that those who do not have often perceive the possession of that thing by those who have it as unjust"¹⁵⁴.

The devaluation of culture shifts the focus in contemporary societies from the cultural state, which is based on a hierarchy of competences, to a disordered society marked by major imbalances, economic, social, political, cultural, and so on. Along with this change, the idea of social justice has been replaced by relative frustration. Change is fundamental to the harmonious development of individuals and societies because it directly influences social stability.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Considering the importance of culture in our lives, its revaluation is imperative. This revaluation should occur at all levels, that is, at individual, community, and state levels. At the individual level, reading, classical music, visiting museums, and

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¹⁵⁰ Radu Baltasiu, quoted work, 2007, p. 87.

¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 157.

¹⁵² "anomia se referă la înstrăinarea reciprocă a indivizilor și la pierderea autorității regulilor în mod natural recunoscute până în acel moment", in *Ibidem*, p. 279.

^{153 &}quot;creșterea gradului de insatisfacție pe măsură ce insul conștientizează că nu are ceea ce alții au ceea ce ar trebui sau ar putea avea și el", in *Ibidem*, p. 157.

¹⁵⁴ "sentimentul de nedreptate prin aceea că cei care nu au adesea percep ca injustă posesiunea respectivului lucru de către cei ce-l au", in *Ibidem*, p. 158.

especially going to church are just some of the actions that can make this revaluation possible. Discovering and acting on the vocation are also pressing needs. These directions are all more important for young people because they are the most vulnerable to social imbalances and experience feelings of social frustration, which are reflected in high rates of anxiety, depression, and even suicide attempts. Given that for only 3% of Romanian high school students the desire to learn is an important value in life¹⁵⁵, it is not surprising that almost half of young people in Romania have had at least one thought of suicide¹⁵⁶. Therefore, a lack of culture can be deadly. It is culture, Nichifor Crainic said, that guides us to aspects that really matter. In its absence, man can no longer understand the meaning of life. The idea of meaning is fundamental because humans were created with meaning and cannot live in the absence of meaning except in degrading, anxious, depressive, and suicidal forms. Thus, at an individual level, culture not only saves us from our own ignorance but also guides us toward things with meaning.

At the community level, the orientation of our actions toward others must have a moral basis because this is the only way to create, maintain, and develop structural functionality. In addition to being a person concerned with the meaning of life, humans are also social beings. Thus, the discovery and pursuit of meaning occur almost exclusively within the community. As social and sociable beings who need community, which in turn is only possible if we have social order and discipline, humans cannot live outside the collective without suffering the consequences of being alone. From this perspective, the revaluation of culture at the community level is vital, as it is like a social link that provides coherence and consistency to a group, which is otherwise subject to social disintegration as a result of personal egos. From a state perspective, culture must be a priority for the state budget. At the same time, the organization of government and society should be based on competence. Governance based on knowledge is the only kind of governance that can generate social order and hence a sense of social justice. Last but not least, we note that societies ordered according to competence criteria are prosperous and productive because culture generates the adaptive processes necessary for survival and development.

¹⁵⁵ Edu Pedu Newsroom, "Studiu pe un eșantion de oportunitate: din peste 570 de liceeni care au răspuns la chestionare online, majoritatea au valori de stânga, iar nouă din zece vor ca statul să asigure sănătate și educație de calitate și să garanteze drepturile egale ale cetățenilor" ["Opportunity sample survey: of more than 570 high school students who responded to online questionnaires, the majority have left-leaning values, and nine out of ten want the state to provide quality health and education and guarantee equal rights for citizens"], in *Edu Pedu*, June 3, 2024, Available at: Studiu pe un eșantion de oportunitate: din peste 570 de liceeni care au răspuns la chestionare online, majoritatea au valori de stânga, iar nouă din zece vor ca statul să asigure sănătate și educație de calitate și să garanteze drepturile egale ale cetățenilor – Edupedu.ro, Accessed on June 7, 2024.

¹⁵⁶ Claudia Untaru, "Aproape jumătate dintre tinerii români au avut cel puțin o dată gânduri de sinucidere. Avertismentul unui medic arădean" ["Almost half of young people in Romania have had thoughts of suicide at least once. A doctor from Arad warns"], in *Adevărul*, 3 februarie 2024, Available at: https://adevarul.ro/stiri interne/sanatateaproape jumatate dintre tinerii romani au avut cel 2336914.html, Accessed on June 7, 2024.

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