

INTELLECTUAL FIELD, NETWORKS, AND REPUTATION ECONOMY IN ROMANIA AFTER 1989

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ABSTRACT. In this article, I analyse the transformations of the Romanian post-communist intellectual elites, using as a case study the disputes in the cultural press in Romania from 2002 to 2004, disagreements that influenced the repositioning of the Romanian public intellectuals through ideological alignments. Those debates gave birth afterwards to a cohesive Conservative pole and to anti-conservative tendencies of diverse political orientations, which constitutes the origin of the current divisions of the intellectual space. The analysis combines the Bourdieusian perspective on the social field and the theory of social networks with the purpose to formulate a hypothesis concerning the competitions meant to produce and preserve the prestige of the status groups in the social space that generate conflicting ideological positions. It outlines an alternative form of reassessing the “reputation economy” outside the space of the commodity exchange economy, starting instead with symbolic exchanges. The study describes the social rationale behind status production, as a source of strategies for maintaining dominant positions in a social field.

Keywords: intellectuals, social field, social networks, reputation economy, Romania after 1989

Introduction

The present study aims to analyse the changes in the positioning of the Romanian public intellectuals that occurred at the beginning of the third millennium, especially between 2000 and 2004, from a perspective that combines the Bourdieusian analysis of the social field with the analysis of social networks. The term “public intellectual” used here is inspired by the sociology of the professions and follows the typology described by Gisèle Sapiro (Sapiro, 2009) for whom the intellectual professions are determined by three factors that structure their field: symbolic capital, autonomy from the political command and degree

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of specialization. The population targeted by this study thus includes an important number of essayists, philosophers, literates and cultural journalists who, in terms of the classification operated by Sapiro (2009), cover several easily recognizable categories: a) "critical intellectuals", generalists and universalists, who retain a strong autonomy from politics but, however, belong to the dominant space (essayists and prominent philosophers, such as Gabriel Liiceanu, Andrei Pleșu, Horia Roman Patapievici); those who are confronted with b) "contesting groups" from the same autonomous area, but concentrated in the dominated space, to which are joining c) various other categories of specialized intellectuals from the literary or journalistic field, critical spectators or mere supporters, who actively participate in the competition for producing and validating their symbolic capital (see also Gherghiu, 2007; Kurzman, 2002 and 2008).

The cut-off time sequence is not chosen by chance. Thus, after a decade in which the positions of the intellectual space were polarized only according to the acceptance or rejection of the new political arrangement resulting after the 1989 revolution, dominated by the parties associated with president Ion Iliescu and the National Salvation Front [*Frontul Salvării Naționale – FSN*], with all its metamorphoses, the beginning of the new millennium acknowledged a diversification of cultural divergences, opening lines of confrontation and inside the "front" - until then solidarity - of "opposition intellectuals" (anti-Iliescians)². The disputes were converging around several key issues of the post-89 cultural redefinition, such as the legacy of prominent Romanian inter-war authors and their sliding to the extreme right³, anti-Semitism (Livezeanu, 2003), or the influence of philosopher Constantin Noica and the members of the "Păltiniș School"⁴ in the contemporary time span. However, the present analysis mainly

² A description of the broader context of the transformations in this area after 1989 can be found in my article on the interdependence of the literary, intellectual and political fields that have marked these developments (Lazăr, 2015).

³ Relevant here are, for example, the heated controversies caused by the appearance of Alexandra Lavastine's book (*Cioran, Eliade, Ionesco: L'Oubli du fascisme*, Presses Universitaires de France - PUF, 2002), denouncing the complicity of some of the most admired, after 1989, inter-war authors, with the legionary movement.

⁴ "Păltiniș School" is the label ascribed to the few intellectuals of predominantly philosophical formation having informally gathered around Constantin Noica (1909-1987), a philosopher trained in the cultural ambience of the interwar period, whose proximity to the extreme Romanian right and links with post-war intellectual *expats* such as Emil Cioran and Mircea Eliade determined his supervision under compulsory domicile and then political detention, until 1964. Although socially marginalized, Noica exerted an enormous influence before 1989, through his essays and his philosophy, which combined a form of cultural ethnocentrism and the conceptual construction of an intended "specifically Romanian" ontology, but mostly through consistent meetings with his disciples, who were then growing for this personality a true cult (see Liiceanu, 1983 - Gabriel Liiceanu, *The Journal of Păltiniș: A paideia model in humanistic culture*, Bucharest, Romanian Book Publishing House, 1983). The most influential members of the group included Gabriel

revolves around two important moments, non-continuous but thematically close, which sharpen the controversies in the cultural space. The first is related to the contradictory response to one of the new intellectual stars' recent books, promoted by the members of the "Păltiniș School" in the late '90s and published at the beginning of 2002: *The Recent Man*, by Horia Roman Patapievici. The second moment - also anticipated by the disputes of 2002 - describes the intense and strongly polarizing debates caused by the unexpected challenge, in 2004, of the prominent role played by Andrei Pleșu, Gabriel Liiceanu and Horia Roman Patapievici in the cultural establishment of the time, labelled by the press as "the quarrel of the intellectuals". Both these disputes - and especially the second one - have determined new clashes between different categories of cultural producers (public intellectuals, cultural journalists, literary critics, and writers) and have largely established the main encampments according to which cultural producers position themselves. The controversies of this time span explain the creation of a conservative intellectual phalanx, defensively grouped behind Patapievici's anti-modernist manifesto in his book *The Recent Man*, as a reaction to the changes in the external perception of the group.

The background of the controversies

The debates stirred by *The Recent Man*⁵, a true anti-modernist intellectual manifesto, began with the critical positionings taken by representatives of what later would be the anti-conservative core.⁶ *Observator cultural* [Cultural Observer] magazine publishes in two consecutive issues, on February 5, 2002, and then on February 12⁷, six reviews on *The Recent Man*, a latest volume written by Horia Roman Patapievici, under a cap entitled "Opinions on a book with problems:

Liiceanu, Andrei Pleșu, Sorin Vieru, Victor Ieronim Stoichiță, Petru Creția, Andrei Cornea. Under Noica's charisma, a new intellectual movement emerged, as an alternative to the official cultural establishment of the communist period and taking also a critical distance towards the literary hegemony of the autonomous humanist elites before 1989. The prestige of Noica, as well as the influence of the Păltiniș School members, recognized mainly in the intellectual milieus before 1989, erupted immediately after 1989 and became a most desired dominant current (Verdery, 1991).

⁵ H.-R. Patapievici, „*Omul recent. O critica a modernității din perspectiva întrebării «Ce se pierde atunci când ceva se câștigă?»*”, București, Humanitas, 2001 [The Recent Man. A critique of modernity by answering the question: «What is lost when something is won», Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001].

⁶ Probably by coincidence, the first set of reviews occur simultaneously with the publication of an interview of Horia Roman Patapievici in the magazine 22, stating clearly his ideological self-positioning on a conservative side ("Liberal or conservative?", *Magazine 22*, XII YEAR (622) No. 6 (Feb. 5-11, 2002).

⁷ *Observator cultural* [Cultural Observer], No. 102 (37) and 103 (38)/ 2002.

The Recent Man”⁸. Those who sign in the first set of reviews are Ion Bogdan Lefter - the director of the publication (“On another spiral of history”), Gabriel Andreescu (“The reviewed man”), Adrian Miroiu (“An essay: The Recent Man”), Valentin Protopopescu (“The Postmodernism of a Conservative”), Dan J. Ungureanu (“Hit hard the upstart!”). The only supporting article from this issue of *Observator cultural* comes from Vlad Alexandrescu (“The recent man” and the time of the Spirit). The next issue, from February 12, adds another 4 criticisms: from Florin Buhuceanu (“A reply to Mr. Patapievici”), George Bălan (“Double facing? Ignorance?”), Liviu Andreescu (“Apocalypse after Patapievici”) and - more balanced - Paul Cernat (“Cathedral of translucent fundamentalism”). The comments were aimed at neutralizing the uncritical spell cast on the readers by this anti-modernist manifesto, assumed to be a “conservative” program. Patapievici’s book was meant to be a response to the tendencies of multicultural progressive liberalism and to the “political correctness” thinking, and his critics were, therefore, denouncing the reactionary side of this type of thinking, of the grandiloquent-amateurish infatuation, the alleged elitism, the Orthodox bigotry and the unsupported “spectral”, deceptively Spenglerian and outdated civilization analysis of that much acclaimed author.

The rationale formulated in the editorial cap of *Observator cultural* asserts that the two polemic sets of reviews are meant to make explicit the dissatisfaction of a part of the intellectual world with the content of Patapievici’s book, dissatisfaction inhibited by the author’s prestige (“Meanwhile, in the intellectual media there are to be found many opinions formulated about the book, many of them pretty negative. Why are they not formulated in writing? - it is a topic of reflection in itself ...”⁹). Thus, as the introductory note plays the card of courage, the publication is assuming to surpass a blockage and to overcome the fear caused by the possible critical confrontation of Patapievici as one of the new cultural stars promoted by the magazine *Revista 22*. Its association with the group of the “Păltiniș *coryphaei*” Andrei Pleșu and Gabriel Liiceanu makes the setting up of the upcoming discussion of Patapievici’s book that will destabilize the pre-established cultural hierarchies at that time. We need to recall that these hierarchies had been maintained by the opposition of self-entitled “democratic” intellectual circles to FSN policy, opposition by which intellectual solidarities are at the same time “front” solidarities, ways of grouping around principles and personalities with symbolic value (Gheorghiu, 2005).

⁸ The phrase “a book with problems” recalls how critical comments from the official press were framed in politically undesirable books during the communist regime.

⁹ *Observator cultural* [Cultural Observer], “Opinions about a book with problems: The Recent Man”, No. 102 (37)/ 2002.

Patapieviçi was one of these symbols of the opposition culture and, until then, his contestation came only from the adverse “ideological front”, through frequent attacks triggered by the extreme nationalist magazine *România Mare* and other publications belonging to the pro-Iliescian political groups. Or, now the appeal of *Observator cultural* was born inside the “opposition culture”, an attack that dismantles the symbol embodied by Patapieviçi’s and his high ranked supporters’ profiles altogether. But even so, the challenge of Patapieviçi and especially the openly premeditated group of negative reviews strengthened this prominent position that the successful young essayist held. Scandalized or supportive reactions will follow, accompanied by reproaches and attacks against “growlers”, on the behalf of his supporters and from magazines such as *România literară* [Literary Romania] and *Revista 22* (Andrei Cornea, Gabriela Adameșteanu, Andrei Pleșu, Bogdan Pascu, Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban, Livius Ciocârlie, Petru Cimpoeșu, Virgil Nemoianu, Traian Ungureanu, Mircea Mihăieș).

Papapieviçi’s contestants were considered as belonging to the same side as the former ideological enemies of the “civic” anti-Iliescian intellectuals: Corneliu Vadim Tudor, former communists, and the extremist nationalists, to whom this kind of challenge would only feed the raging attacks on the “opposition” characters. The “besieged fortress” complex, which had hitherto weakened dissensions, was losing its suppressing force. A first display of the cleavage that will occur inside an intellectual body plays its final scene here, but the cutting edge of the swords will sharpen in collateral polemics, until the emergence of new disputes - tougher, more divisive - during the “Fight of the intellectuals”, starting with the summer, and then throughout all the year 2004.

This new phase of the debates, prepared on the one hand by the previous attacks and the replies - not yet fully consumed - is on the other hand occasioned by two independent events, with a triggering role. In the first part of 2004, the public is notified about the publication of a book analysing the intellectual space, signed by a Romanian sociologist established in the United States of America, with a literary and journalistic background in the Romanian world of the 80s and 90s: Sorin Adam Matei. His book on intellectuals had a provocative title: “The Boyars of the Mind. Romanian intellectuals and the prestigious groups”¹⁰. The volume included a series of essays on the sources of intellectual power and elitist claims in the Romanian cultural tradition, however, and was discussing also the strong influence of the contemporary “prestige groups”, among which the most notorious was the “School of Păltiniș” group. An early alert about the book content came from Luminița Marcu, which gave

¹⁰ „Compania” Publishing House, 2004.

it a favorable assessment: “Romanian intellectuals provoked from overseas”¹¹ *Evenimentul zilei*, May 2, 2004, which drew attention on the exciting analysis proposed by “the American” Matei. On May 15, Horia Roman Patapievici reacts veiledly¹² to Matei’s statements. According to Matei, Patapievici’s public success was presented as an artificial orchestration linked to a political scandal about a former Securitate officer, Captain Soare, who was seemingly tracking Patapievici for his opinions on President Ion Iiescu, in 1995. Shortly after, Ciprian Şiulea published another positive comment on the book (“The Skeleton in the Library”, *Obsevator Cultural*, No. 73 (330), July 20-26, 2006).

At the same time, however, a second event was to divert the positive trend of response to Matei’s book and triggered the great “Quarrel of intellectuals”: the award of the ASPRO¹³ literary prizes for 2003. A jury composed of famous literary critics¹⁴ granted *ex-aequo*, by individual and from a distance votes, the great prize for both the essayist Gelu Ionescu (for the *Tree in the field*, Iaşi Polirom Publishing House), and Andrei Pleşu (for *About the angels*, Bucharest Humanitas Publishing House); Andrei Pleşu had also been rewarded, for the same book, with a prize for literary criticism and essay. As the customs of ASPRO required, the very respected president of the jury, Adrian Marino, wrote a brief motivation for both the great prize winners, but what he did was to build an antithesis between the two award-winning books, praising the rationalistic and lucid spirit of Gelu Ionescu and approaching an insinuating critical inflection in the characterization of Andrei Pleşu.¹⁵ On the latter, the president of the jury placed him in the extension of the “absolutist, potential or explicit totalitarian, mystical, metaphysical, ethnicist spirit, obsessed with « the Romanian being », under the influence of « Noica school », but he nevertheless recognized its

¹¹ *Evenimentul zilei* [The Daily Event], May 2, 2004.

¹² „Cetatea românească a încetat să mai fie o excepție patologică”. Iolanda Malamen in dialog cu: Horia Roman Patapievici [„The Romanian stronghold ceased to be a pathological exception”. Iolanda Malamen in dialog with Horia Roman Patapievici], *Ziua*, May 15, 2004.

¹³ ASPRO (The Association of Professional Writers of Romania) was at that time an alternative guild organization to the Writers Union of Romania. It was initiated by a group of writers, in majority representatives for the “80’s generation” group, an organisation which had attracted many other older writers, extremely prestigious, dissatisfied with the way things worked in the old “Union”. Among these prestigious veterans of the writing was also the critic of Cluj Adrian Marino, honorary president of the association.

¹⁴ Adrian Marino (chairman), Stefan Borbély, Al. Cistelean, Cornel Moraru, Ioana Pârvulescu, Monica Spiridon.

¹⁵ Adrian Marino’s distancing of the resolution of the members of the jury created a breach in the previous unanimous system, masking the apparent homogeneity of opinion in the field. All the members of the jury were, in fact, admirers of Pleşu, but Marino opposed the winner, for ideological reasons. It should be noted that Marino did not prevail over his position as honorary president of ASPRO, in order to impose or refuse an award, but accepted the decision of the others, with a separate opinion.

literary merits and, therefore, the legitimacy of the award. In his message, Marino lets it be understood that he made a somewhat forced concession. He invoked the difficulty of the jury he presides over (for which, says Marino, who was himself a former prominent member of the non-liberal Peasant Christian and Democratic Party, “The basic ideological orientation remains, indisputably, liberal”) of not being able to ignore “the intellectual quality of books written from an opposite perspective”¹⁶. This type of characterization immediately aroused the offended replica of Andrei Pleșu, who decided to return one of the prizes - the “big” one, keeping the other one out of respect for the ASPRO members. He referred that the argument drafted by Marino was “built in so as to justify the cancellation of the distinction offered, rather than its confirmation”, and that “the prize has been given to me as if it would be taken away”¹⁷, making also some malicious observations regarding the inconsistency in time before and after 1989, of the rationalist cultural options of the prestigious critic.

What followed next was almost a war. Press titles such as “The Quarrel of the Intellectuals” (Bogdan Ciubuc¹⁸) - but also the “Turbulence of the Intellectuals” (Claudiu Groza¹⁹) - came to describe, from outside, a whole whirl of justifications, personal attacks²⁰, declarations of solidarity, bitter replies, calls to orders and cries of disappointment - pigmented by ideological duels in which the older polemics reactivate. Thus, again and again, the pros and cons of *The Recent Man* book reappeared. The book of Sorin Adam Matei, *The Boyars of the Mind* will be processed as mainly following the point of view of the attacks on the hegemonic position of the “School of Păltiniș” people, to which the latter reacted with vituperation and extreme irritation; opinions polarized and gave rise to two camps: one of those regrouping and digging trenches around the conservative option, now programmatically and explicitly assumed by Patapievič’s supporters; the other one was the camp of anti-conservative contestants, who besieged the establishment controlled by Patapievič allies from all positions. I hesitate to label that last camp as “liberal”, despite the explicitly liberal initiative of the most active contributors to the articles in *Observator cultural*, where Ion Bogdan Lefter proved out by far the most engaged, because, at the time they were formulated, the criticism came from several different emerging ideological directions, not yet explicit enough.

¹⁶ Prizes of the Association of Professional Writers of Romania - ASPRO for the editorial year 2003, *Observator cultural*, No. 223 June 1, 2004 - June 7, 2004.

¹⁷ Andrei Pleșu, Replică [Reply], *Observator cultural*, No. 226, June 22, 2004 - June 28, 2004.

¹⁸ *Evenimentul zilei* [Daily Event] of June 27, 2004

¹⁹ *Clujeanul*, No. 224/June, 28 - July, 5, 2004.

²⁰ Gabriel Liiceanu would then publish a personal attack against Adrian Marino, accusing him of complicit hypocrisy with the communist power before 1989, unveiling a flattering written dedication of Adrian Marino on one of his books to the head of Ceausescu's propaganda of that period, Dumitru Popescu.

Bourdieu revisited: on “field” and “networks”

What I am interested in is the description of how these divisions occurred and also in observing the structural logic that created and nurtured their accentuation, along with understanding the role of conflicts in establishing hierarchies between producers. To reveal the mechanisms that describe their dynamics, I use the Bourdieusian theory of the field, as addressed through a perspective specific to the analysis of social networks. With all the mistrust Bourdieu has shown to the social media theory²¹ (Bourdieu, 2015: 539), I believe, along with other contemporary researchers (de Nooy, 2002; de Nooy, 2003; Bottero and Crossley, 2011), that field theory and network analysis are perfectly compatible. Moreover, Bourdieu’s reflection on the concept of social field itself encourages the premises of such an approach by the way it overlaps a “physicalist” and an “interactionist” model of analysis, in which the social field is defined at the same time as a “field of forces”, and “a battlefield” (Bourdieu, 2015 and 2016). Bourdieu emphasizes also the structuring effect, inherent to the field, which blends both its objective and subjective components. The structure is given by the system of external constraints which field agents are subjected to and by a system of structural oppositions between actors, determined by the components already mentioned. Thus, in Bourdieu’s terms, the field is configured by a system of (objectives) *positions*, (subjective) *dispositions* (both internalized, together, as *habitus*) and *position tokens* displayed through practices and strategies of action on behalf of the agents.

The Bourdieusian concept of “social field” overlaps two analogies. The first one, from a “physicalist” source, relates the social field to the magnetic field: the individuals are thus set in movement by the social field’s external forces in the same way as iron casting is ordered by the magnetic field’s power lines. Therefore, there is an objective determinism, external to individuals, which acts coercively upon the agents, independent of their subjective dispositions or personal characteristics. These forces are immanent to the field, being those that distribute the agents in a system of social positions according to the field’s structure and morphology. The second analogy emerges from comparing the social field to a battlefield, one in which individuals whose behaviours are guided by their own will and subjectivity, are using strategies of cooperation or, at the same time, strategies of competition or confrontation. Thus, there is,

²¹ Without abruptly rejecting the importance of methodology based on the description of social networks, Bourdieu believes that they can be responsible for producing a “finalist illusion” in the representation of social space, which creates the impression that the social is a byproduct of subjective forces, detached from external context, which imposes on them specific constraints (Bourdieu, 2015: 539).

consequently, a form of teleologism within the social field, which causes these subjectivities to interact, creating a compositional effect transformed into a structural constraint (interaction effect), endowed with a degree of independence to all these individual initiatives, as effective as that determined by the objective constraints. The interaction effect converts to an objectivized intersubjectivity.

Those two types of constraints infers that the conscious behaviour types within the field may be affected by a predetermined framework, which would be not a simple echo of the “objective historical forces”, as suggested by Marxist theory, and neither an effect of individual strategies (as proposed by methodological individualism, the theory of rational choice, the strategic analysis or various variants of neoclassical economism). The “social field” concept tries to overcome their limitations, proposing an autonomous ontology. What is specific to this ontology - which Bourdieu only suggests - is that it truly makes the two logics of the field (an objective positioning system, and a subjective one, determined by the struggles to impose a legitimate view on the world) intermingle: in other words, the social field is not just a sandwich with two separate mechanics - one objective and the other subjective - but a continuum, in which objective and subjective conditions coexist, but to varying degrees. The degree of subjectivization of the social field probably depends on the degree of autonomy of the actions in the field, on the ability of the actors in the field to act within it as if this is the only social reality - and the degree of denial of the objective properties by the properties - the symbolic attributes built by the actors, as it happens in the cultural field. The value of the segmentation of social groups, therefore, raises upon the symbolic factor, upon hierarchy and comparative valorisation of the subjects within the field – a trace that pre-determines the value magnitude of the segmentation of classes and social groups, as Bourdieu sees them.

From this perspective - and in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Bourdieusian analysis - the network is not properly an expression of the social field but rather a detector of it (Bourdieu, 2015: 539). Network interactions highlight the structure and the tensions of a social field to which the actors belong, revealing also the pre-existing constraints generated by the interactions within the analysed network. Those interactions themselves contribute to an ongoing reorganization of the relations defining the cultural field. The field itself is a package of forces, opportunities, and resources, objectified through subjected action rules and procedures (what “has to be done” or “has not to be done” in relationship to others) that express an opportunity structure for the way actors unfold their mutual contacts. Their interactions and the way they are organising the actors’ networks, in moments of a specific competition, are actualising the latencies of the field, highlighting their power lines and making

observable the social constraints of actor's behaviour. On this basis, the network is structuring gradually, in order to metonymically reflect the field as a whole, covering wider areas. The autonomous dynamics of the interactions in the network (their *autopoiesis*) manifest simultaneously as both an effect and a generator of the social field: the structure and the inside the field transformation of the networks affect subsequently the dynamics of the social space as a whole. Or at least this is the conclusion we can formulate by analysing "the quarrel of the intellectuals" in its evolution.

Thus, the prestige of the members of the "Păltiniş School" was already settled long before the beginning of the controversies in the early 2000s. Among the actors involved in the polemics, on both sides of the barricades, there existed affinities even before the time of the quarrels: for example, the conceptual project and the publication of *The Recent Man* had been encouraged from scratch by some of the New Europe College (NEC) students²². Also, Patapievici had already become one of the new editorial stars promoted by Gabriel Liiceanu's publishing house, Humanitas. On the other hand, Ion Bogdan Lefter - one of the initiators and promoters of ASPRO, was in amicable relations with Adrian Marino who, as Lefter testified in an 1988 interview, had recommended him for obtaining a Herder scholarship, which Marino had had previously obtained in 1986 (one must nonetheless notice that at the same time Marino had recommended the candidacy also of Sorin Antohi, Radu G. Țeposu, and Vasile Popovici²³).

Reputation Economy

By using network analysis, this raises an opportunity to isolate and observe how social networks help produce the symbolic capital of the actors in the social field, emerging status groups by establishing reputation hierarchies, understanding the divisions generated by these mechanisms and how all of these are maintained and reproduced. At the same time, I am interested in finding the demarcation strategies used by the competing agents, strategies matching the positions created through the divisions and hierarchies in the field, and their increasingly structuring forces. I am also interested in how the

²² This institute of advanced studies created and run at that time by Andrei Pleșu had among its alumni Vlad Alexandrescu, Mircea Mihăieș and Cristian Bădiliță. Patapievici thanked them in the preface for the effective support granted during the elaboration of *The Recent Man*. After the controversy generated by his reception, those former fellows of NEC will show solidarity with their colleague.

²³ Maria Dinu, "Ion Bogdan Lefter: Pumn de fier în mănușă de catifea" [Iron fist in velvet glove], *Mozaic*, No. 3 /2017.

dynamics of confrontations contribute to the reconfiguration, through and during the conflict, of all the relations in the field. The reputation economy is based on a “symbolic arithmetic” of competition, treating the reputation as a “symbolic good”, created by its circulation on a market of intersubjective opinions between competitors. Consider here the suggestions offered by other social network analysts, who treat the way of production of social prestige (DeNooy, 2002; DeNooy 2003), the complex dynamics that uniformize the space of opinions in structurally balanced networks²⁴ (Altafani, 2012) or the economic modelling of the reputation of an individual as “aggregate opinion of the others” about him. In the latter modelling, “an opinion is an asset trading in an imaginary market”²⁵ (Sawyer and Gygax, 2018; Sawyer and Gygax, 2019) and can be analysed by econometric parameters alike to the analysis of commodity markets.

The modelling suggested by this study, however, takes into account the distinction between the two types of markets (Bourdieu, 1992): one that corresponds to the “extended production field” of symbolic goods (equivalent to the economic space in a broad sense, a market where the success and commercial profitability are supposed to produce reputation as popularity validated by a public in the broadest sense) and the market corresponding to the field of “restricted production”, intended for circulation among producers, where reputation stakes aim at obtaining legitimacy by the recognition granted by peer agents. That is, the reputation of artists, writers or intellectuals is gained by gaining the admiration of other artists, writers or intellectuals.

The mechanisms of reputation production I am analysing envisage this second, restricted market. That is the place where competition aims to gain higher levels of appreciation towards other competitors, by accessing an area of authority that allows exercising the symbolic power that allows the making and unmaking of the reputation of others, as well as increasing their own reputation. Here, I identify the reputation as a form of prestige obtained by the gradual cumulation of several parameters, including notoriety, popularity, and recognition in the groups of equals. By cumulating the bonuses received from other agents in the field, those groups become “status groups” - in the Weberian sense - or “prestige groups” as conferred by Sorin Adam Matei’s analysis in *The Boyars of the Mind* (Matei, 2004).

²⁴ Altafani, C. (2012) Dynamics of Opinion Forming in Structurally Balanced Social Networks. PLoS ONE 7(6): e38135. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0038135.

²⁵ Sawyer, Kim Russell and Gygax, André, Reputation As an Option (December 17, 2018). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3165409> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3165409>.

An actor-network model and some basic parameters

Technically, my analysis starts by finding the positionings revealed by the participants in the intellectual debates, held between February 2002 and 2005, on judging the cultural hegemony of the members of the Păltiniș School. 294 press accounts²⁶s were retained, retrieved from various cultural publications, out of which 232 contained 671 direct nominations of other actors, active in the cultural field at the time. They also envisaged other cultural “heroes” with symbolic significance for the competitors. The period subjected to the analysis was divided into several time intervals: the discussions regarding the appearance of the book *The Recent Man* were taking place throughout the year of 2002, and those engaged by “the quarrel of the intellectuals” between May 2004 and August 2005. Other positionings, on topics such as the relation to the ideological heritage and the value of the inter-war authors, the intellectual anti-Semitism and the prestige of the members of the “Păltiniș School”, cover the whole period.

For the construction of the model, the mutual contacts were considered, as well as the modalities of inter-subjective evaluation between the agents. Thus, the unit of analysis considered stands for the reciprocal evaluations performed by each actor to others, as uttered in the articles mentioned in the selected corpus. Evaluations express positive, neutral or negative appreciation attitudes and are quantified by values of “1” (positive ratings), “0.5” (neutral mentions, no appreciation) and “-1” (negative ratings). So, each debate contributor enters into relationships of approval, disapproval or simple monitoring (in the case of neutral attitudes) towards each other. The visual depiction of deployed relations among polemicists, as the debates are developing, is showed in the charts 1-6 of the Annex. There can be seen the way the participants connect reciprocally, either by positive or by negative assessments on their competitors. These charts reveal also the prominent position some actors own in the ongoing debates, some of them already benefiting from a previous reputation, and others building their reputation throughout.

An elementary quantification of these relationships measures the prestige effect these relationships ultimately produce. The actors are divided into **issuers** (those from which a verdict starts) and **recipients** (those to whom the verdict is addressed). Each of these types of relationships defines an adjacency directive IxR type matrix, consisting of n Issuers (I) and m recipients (R). The matrix,

²⁶ The corpus of articles was selected mostly from the online press, during the debate on the “Intellectual Struggle”, between 2004-2005, and does not claim to be an exhaustive one. However, this proves to be sufficiently large in order to allow capturing the structural characteristics of the field under observation.

consisting of n lines (for issuers), and m columns (for recipients) describes the links between those issuers and recipients being unidirectionally connected (from I to R) through positive, neutral or negative value judgments (Table 1).

Table 1. Directive adjacent matrix model IxR linking issuers and recipients

	IxR	Recipients						Total
		r_1	r_2	...	r_j	...	r_m	α
Issuers	e_1							i_1
	e_2							i_2
	...							
	e_i				$k_{ij} * e_i r_j$			i_i
	...							
	e_n							i_n
N		n_1	n_2	...	n_j	...	n_m	Π

Source: Author's table.

Thus, a certain issuer, where $i = 1, \dots, n$, can send a finite number of appreciative verdicts $k_{ij} \neq 0$, with different meanings: positive, neutral or negative, (0 is the indicator for the absence of a verdict) to any container r_j , $j = 1, \dots, m$. Also, any recipient r_j can receive from a certain issuer a certain number of k_{ij} verdicts, measured by the same values. Now, here starts the dynamics of prestige and here we can see how a corresponding "reputation economy" works. This is because a matrix of directed relationships can be understood as a give and take structure, similar to an exchange of gifts (or the exchange of offenses!).

Reciprocity marks and maintains the solidity of social relationships. In the case of positive appreciation, it builds mutual recognition and mutual esteem. Mutual respect openly acknowledged - or just simulated, as in formal politeness relationship - is the foundation of group solidarity. Conversely, the reciprocity of attacks is, in the mirror, solidarity in enmity.²⁷ Those who attack each other recognize each other as each other and each other. The spiral of conflict is the reversed mirror image of group solidarity. Each individual in the network can be characterized by the amount he gives and receives, as his position is defined by the place he holds in the network positioning system describable by indicators such as betweenness, cohesiveness, structural equivalence, etc. (Wasserman and Faust, 1994; Scott, 2000), as well as by his ascribed prestige and influence.

²⁷ See *Addendum* to visualise the networks of positive and negative relations among the competitors of 2002-2004 debates.

The “reputation economy” comes with some measurable parameters, starting with two network indicators, the simplest and most intuitive.

The first is the **Notoriety index** (the *Indegree* measure). This is a centrality indicator that quantifies the interest expressed by the “issuers” towards an actor from the group of “recipients”, and is a measure obtained by simply summing the other actor’s verdicts to which the “recipient” is connected in the network.

In a mathematical expression, for the matrix $I \times R$, the notoriety (v_j) of a given recipient to r_j is given by the sum of the verdicts that recipient receives from all issuers, that is, by the sum of k_{ij} on the vertical r_j of the matrix:

$$(1) \quad v_j = \sum_{i=1}^n k_{ij} \text{ for } j = 1, \dots, m;$$

Another indicator of centrality is the **Index of influence** (i_i), measuring how many verdicts an issuer sends to the subjects in the group of recipients. The *Outdegree* of the issuer is the symmetrical equivalent of notoriety among the recipients: this is the sum of k_{ij} on its horizontal of the matrix:

$$(2) \quad i_i = \sum_{j=1}^m k_{ij} \text{ for } i = 1, \dots, n;$$

Here, however, some details need to be added. Prestige, notoriety, influence, success, popularity - all these ways of giving a meaning to reputation have to be understood in a more nuanced way. The subjects are linked by their attitudes which structure the network progressively. The matrix describing their formal relationships is a valued matrix (that is, the evaluations that the actors make of each other can be described as “positive”, “neutral” or “negative” - and can be scored appropriately, on a scale from, say, -1 to 1. Notoriety, in this case, differs from popularity: The notoriety is given by the totality of the votes, and it can be positive or negative. It can be “honourable” or “ill-famed”. Positive fame becomes synonymous with popularity.

Popularity is the equivalent of success and is therefore determined by the number of positive votes obtained from others. It is indifferent to the “weight” or “importance” - respectively the quality - of the verdicts it attracts. However, this “weight” can be moderated depending on the source of the assessment - that is the network prominence of the evaluators.

Thus, when we talk about the notoriety structure of a network (Katz, 1953), we can consider at first stage that notoriety can be attributed to those who occupy central positions in the network (so those who obtain more preferences from other members of the network). This means that in the network structure there will be a centre area, which groups individuals with high reputation scores, and a periphery area, where individuals with low scores are distributed. And the Centre will be the region of the “chosen” - of the

recipients who distinguish themselves from those at the periphery by their own success and are setting up a status group. Now it can be said that popularity has become prestige.

When those positioned at the Centre change their role from recipients to “donors” (issuers), that will produce a hierarchical differentiation between the recipients they target. The notoriety is transmitted to the other members of the network from Centre to Periphery, through choices following the principle: the chosen of the “chosen” are themselves “chosen”. That is, “the nominations made by the prestigious ones create more prestige to the nominees than the nominations of the less prestigious” (deNooy, 2002).

Prestige is therefore positive notoriety (popularity) validated by the status groups (prestigious in their turn). Instead, popularity can be devalued by prestigious groups. Otherwise considered, the prestige is popularity within the status groups. In other words, prestige can be measured as the number of positive appreciations that come from members of prestigious groups.

An indicator that takes into account this recursive and cumulative character of allocating recipients’ notoriety, directly dependent on the size of the issuer’s notoriety indices to which they are connected, is Bonacich’s power-based centrality measure. Thus, an appreciation from a prestigious person makes a prestigious transfer to the appreciated person. This means that the prestige score of the subject who in turn receives, as a recipient, an assessment from a person with a certain prestige score (issuer) should also contain the prestige score of the issuer. The prestige scores will thus multiply and will accentuate the differences between those who have many positive verdicts and those who have fewer, increasing the centrality of the first ones in the network.

For an adjacency matrix A , valued, with i subjects (c_i) the centrality of any subject is given by the formula:

$$3) \quad c_i = \sum A_{ij}(\alpha + \beta c_j),$$

where α and β are parameters that contribute to the construction of the prestige indicator, depending on the analysis strategy and the dimensions of the network.²⁸

The formula works both for the *indegree* values of the prestige index (*InBeta*), for the recipients, and for the *outdegree* values (*OutBeta*), which measure the influence power of each actor. For the type of network where the verdicts in the adjacent matrix are valued either positively or negatively, the *InBeta* and *OutBeta*

²⁸ „The parameter b reflects the degree to which an individual's status is a function of the statuses of those to whom he or she is connected. If β is positive, $c(\alpha, \beta)$ is a conventional centrality measure in which each unit's status is a positive function of the statuses of those with which it is in contact” (Bonacich, 1987, AJS Volume 92, Number 5 (March 1987): 1170-82).

scores will polarize the subjects according to their mutual attitudes expressed in the debates. Thus, in addition to the Centre-Periphery partition, the clustering of subjects with similar affinities and apprehensions will outline two antagonistic groups: “Conservative” and “Anti-conservative” camps, gradually structured, through controversial inter-group addresses and expressions of intra-group support.

**Competition and hierarchy in the intellectual field.
Making the distinction**

Table 2. Prestige and influence scores at the Centre and Periphery of the conflicting intellectual groups (average values, summed values, and the number of competitors)

		Centrality Bonachich - normalised:				Subjects
		OutBeta (module)		InBeta (module)		
		Mean	Sum	Mean	Sum	
Centre - Periphery	Centre - Conservatives	15.43	200.55	19.99	259.84	13
	Centre - Anti-Conservatives	17.84	303.26	11.51	195.65	17
	Periphery - Conservatives	3.20	115.07	1.52	54.63	36
	Periphery - Anti-Conservatives	2.48	116.52	1.80	84.37	47
Total		6.51	735.39	5.26	594.48	113

Source: Author’s computations and table.

Table 2 traces the structural effect of these partitions, based on means and sums of absolute values of the *OutBeta* and *InBeta* indices. Each of the two groups – “Anti-Conservatives” and “Conservatives”, has its own distribution in an area of Centre or Periphery. The fiercest competition proves to occur between the two Centres, which concentrate most of the prestigious capital in the two camps. As seen in the table, the Conservative Centre has higher prestige scores than the Anti-Conservative one; also, considering the influence capital, the Anti-Conservatives at the Centre transfer more capital than the Conservatives.

Data in Table 3 display the distribution of the two forms of reputation capital among the two Centres exclusively, reflected by the *InBeta* and *OutBeta* indices, as well as the hierarchies at the level of each group.

Table 3. The prestige capital and the influence capital of the competitors at the Centre of the conflict area in the intellectual field (2002-2004). Bonacich centrality indices, normalized. (Value of Beta: 0.111984649062573, $\alpha=1$)²⁹

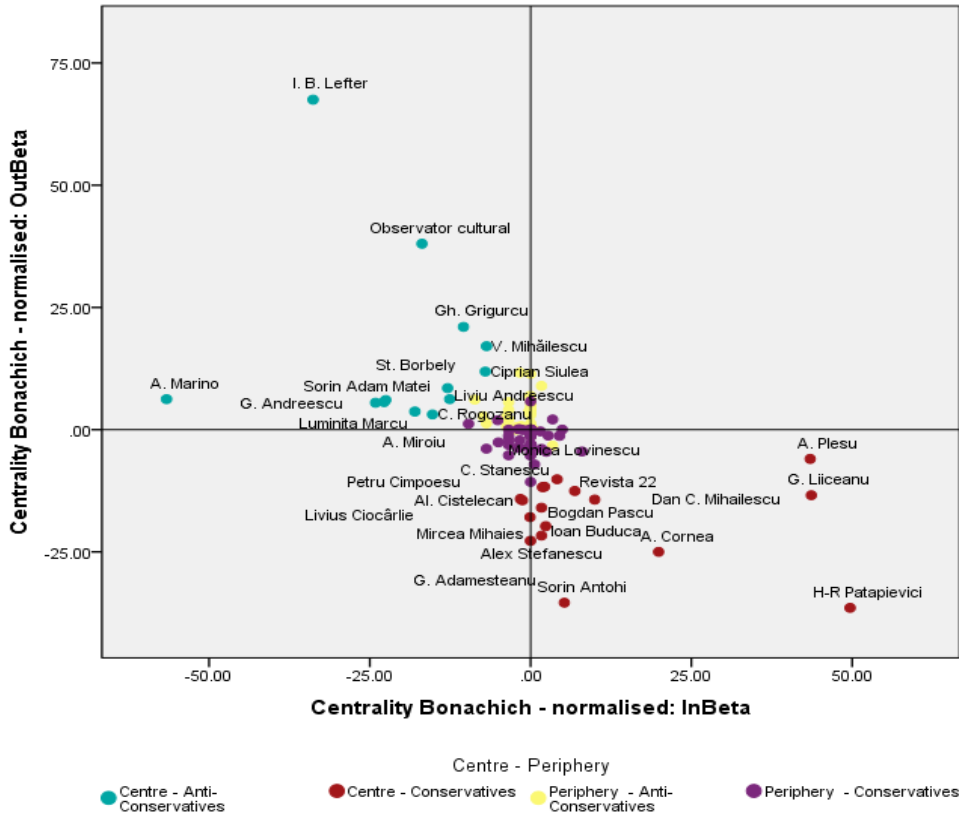
Competing Group	Competitor	Prestige (InBEta)	Influence (OutBeta)	Balance*
Anti-conservator	A. Marino	-56.62	6.24	50.37
Anti-conservator	A. Miroiu	-17.99	3.71	14.29
Anti-conservator	C. Rogozanu	-15.26	3.11	12.15
Anti-conservator	Ciprian Siulea	-7.05	11.89	-4.84
Anti-conservator	G. Andreescu	-24.11	5.51	18.61
Anti-conservator	Gh. Grigurcu	-10.44	21.03	-10.59
Anti-conservator	I. B. Lefter	-33.83	67.5	-33.66
Anti-conservator	Liviu Andreescu	-12.58	6.24	6.34
Anti-conservator	Luminita Marcu	-22.52	6.08	16.44
Anti-conservator	Observator cultural	-16.89	38.03	-21.14
Anti-conservator	Sorin Adam Matei	-22.79	5.64	17.15
Anti-conservator	St. Borbely	-12.91	8.5	4.41
Anti-conservator	V. Mihăilescu	-6.85	17.08	-10.23
Conservator	A. Cornea	19.91	-25	-5.08
Conservator	A. Plesu	43.48	-5.97	37.51
Conservator	Al. Cistelecan	-1.28	-14.46	-13.18
Conservator	Alex Stefanescu	1.69	-21.67	-19.98
Conservator	Bogdan Pascu	1.69	-15.96	-14.27
Conservator	C. Stanescu	1.85	-11.76	-9.91
Conservator	Dan C. Mihailescu	9.97	-14.31	-4.33
Conservator	G. Adamesteanu	-0.03	-22.73	-22.71
Conservator	G. Liiceanu	43.65	-13.41	30.24
Conservator	H-R Patapievici	49.68	-36.45	13.23
Conservator	Ioan Buduca	2.35	-19.74	-17.39
Conservator	Livius Ciocârlie	-1.59	-14.17	-12.58
Conservator	Mircea Mihaies	-0.09	-17.89	-17.81
Conservator	Monica Lovinescu	4.12	-10.15	-6.03
Conservator	Petru Cimpoesu	2.16	-11.66	-9.51
Conservator	Revista 22	6.87	-12.53	-5.66
Conservator	Sorin Antohi	5.25	-35.39	-30.14

* Balance = the difference between the absolute values of the prestige capital and influence capital.

Source: Author's computations and table.

²⁹ The indices are computed using the UCINET network analysis program, version 6.684 - Copyright (c) 2002-19 Analytic Technologies, in a normalized form. The Multiple Centrality Measures routine - Bonacich Power - was used.

Figure 1. Scatterplot - Distribution of actors by prestige and influence in groups engaged in the disputes within the intellectual field (2002-2004). Measurements based on the Bonachich centrality indices (standardized measures) shown in Table 3.



Source: Author's computations and graph.

Figure 1 represents the placing of the actors in the Conservative and Anti-conservative camps as well as their level of prestige and influence. The two axes divide the confrontation space into two symmetrical spaces, marking the competitors' distribution in two opposite camps: conservatives are mainly grouped in the lower-right rectangle and anti-conservatives in the upper-right rectangle. The degree to which their position distances them from the centre of the chart describes their importance in relation to the accumulated prestige and influence they exert. Thus, the farther a name is from the centre (where the value is 0), the higher its prestige or influence score.

The horizontal axis – expressing the value distribution of the Bonacich *InBeta* index, normalized, describes the hierarchy of the prestige in the two groups. The more a name is placed beyond the centre of the axis (either in the positive or negative direction), the more relevant its reputation capital is. On both sides of the axis, personalities are antagonistically polarized, Conservative and Anti-conservative. So, in the Conservative camp, the competitor with the highest prestige is Horia Roman Patapievici (with a score of 49.67 points): He is followed by Gabriel Liiceanu (43.6), Andrei Pleșu (43.5), and then by Andrei Cornea (19.9). The rest of the actors of the Conservative Centre have much lower scores, but their importance is given by the validation issued by the tops of the group, the four with the most prominent scores. Adrian Marino has the highest score at the Anti-Conservatives (score of 56.6 in absolute value), followed by Ion Bogdan Lefter, Gabriel Andreescu, Sorin Adam Matei, Luminița Marcu, Adrian Miroiu and the *Observator cultural* magazine.

The vertical axis ranks the most influential personalities by the *OutBeta* index; their prestige capital is transferred as such as it increases the scores of other team members. Here the hierarchy at the conservative centre is changed: if Patapievici keeps his place at the top of the hierarchy, closely followed, as important influencers, by Sorin Antohi, Andrei Cornea and Gabriela Adameșteanu - Gabriel Liiceanu and Andrei Pleșu are placed much lower. At Anti-conservatives, Ion Bogdan Lefter stands out as the most powerful of the influencers, followed by the anonymous editors *from Observator cultural* (among whom Lefter is, in fact, the most active), Gheorghe Grigurcu, Vintilă Mihăilescu, and Ciprian Șiulea, while Adrian Marino descends to the bottom of the standings.

In conclusion, Table 3 and its corresponding diagram describe the dynamic allocation of symbolic gratification resources accumulated within the support networks, during the four stages that were timing the intellectual confrontations between 2002-2004, at the main core.

The table summarizes how the accumulation of symbolic credit raises upon two different dynamics of prestige allocation. On the one hand, there is a segment whose popularity index (indegree) increases progressively in an exponential manner. Marino, Pleșu, Liiceanu, and Patapievici accumulate the most important popularity scores, an effect produced largely through their mutual support during the confrontations, as owners of the highest indexes. On the other hand, surprisingly, the contribution of Marino, Pleșu and Liiceanu to the growths of their neighbour's index - measured by the outdegree scores - is relatively modest, compared to their popularity: it is clear that they receive more sympathy than they are kin to offer. However, when they offer their support, the effect is considerable, and the mutual exchange of appreciation between the owners of high scores - such as Liiceanu, Pleșu, and Patapievici, in their group,

builds a real **prestige accelerator**, which finally raises the total conservatives notoriety score more than the score of their anti-conservative competitors. There seem to exist a sort of asymmetry rule in giving and receiving popularity, which can explain the exponential progression of prestige.

As for Patapievici, he responds with more generosity to the appreciation gestures expressed by others, being the person in his group who offers more than he receives. Its recognition capital is largely provided by his recruitment in the status group (by Pleșu and Liiceanu, in particular), but also by the appreciation of the others, his popularity being more democratically shared with others in his group. As a newcomer to the status group, Patapievici will also be the one to develop a courteous relationship with the semi-periphery. He will play an intermediary role in establishing amicable relationships between the members of the status group and the most appreciated supporters, as being at the heart of the intense traffic between those segments. His behaviour, on the one hand, makes the hierarchy bond through the consolidation of the leading position of the status group, and on the other hand, ensures the necessary legitimation of the status group among the others.

Holding a prestige capital (InBeta) lower than the influence capital (OutBeta), Ion Bogdan Leter is an illustrious influencer, whose authority is built through the abundance of nominations he produces, more than by recognizing the affinities that come from the peripheral literary area, although the one who transfers a capital of more substantial influence is the renowned Mircea Cărtărescu. It is worth noting here the role played by the writers' segment, following a tendency to polarize the literary field in a similar manner as the intellectual field (Lazăr, 2015).

The discrepancy between the *indegree* and the *outdegree* (the *balance* between what is received and what is offered) is a measure of self-preservation of the supremacy in the group hierarchy: the more prestige capital one accumulated, and at the same time the more it is scarcely managed by redistribution only within a group of equals - the stronger the dominant position of prestige group strengthens. If the bonuses were to be distributed equally to all the members in the support group, then the differences between the teammates would become minimal. The continuous reproduction and consolidation of a position in the hierarchy of members with high status members are made through an unequal allocation of rewards and by adopting *deference strategies*. The members of the Centre may call other members outside their status group either as "the talented young X" when they want to promote them or by calling them "some y guy" when they want to minimize a name. In the reputation economy, deference strategies make the reward value directly proportional to the rarity of acquiring it right from the "hands" of those who form the status group, not from intermediaries.

The production of symbolic capital is made by appealing to these strategies of marking their distinction by actors who rely on their uncontested recognition by a public who, through the act of recognition, will consider themselves as part of the social order represented by the elite (Bourdieu, 1984; Daloz, 2010). Those to whom these marks are addressed can accept without critical inquiry their exposure, especially if their reception is strengthened by the confirmation of the most prestigious actors. That is why mutual confirmation - the prestigious collective parades, through which Pleșu confirms Liiceanu and Liiceanu confirms Pleșu, for example - contributes to the mobilization of social capital, as part of the way of accumulation, consolidation, and reconfirmation of status and social credibility.

The mechanisms that produce the differentiations are thus governed by two social logics immanent to the field, which lead to the segregation and polarization of the groups. One deduction is, as we have seen, that of the exponential accumulation of prestige by those who are already validated, which multiplies with the accumulation of the scores of the most prestigious. Success continues to attract success. This is glory exhilaration. Another logic, however, relates to the struggle of accumulating symbolic capital in the group, due to the low status of those in the periphery, very little contributing to the value accumulation within the group. It is the despondency of symbolic capital accumulation.

Both these tendencies generate structural constraints, externally regulating the status of individuals in the network and providing a basis for individual escape strategies from marginalization. They can provide an explanatory framework for the movements of the actors inside and outside the group - promotions, downgrades, defection to other groups that might offer better chances for raising an individual symbolic capital. At the same time, the marginal position within the network can lead to a more probable chance of migration from in-group to out-group, higher than for those at the centre.

But these are the logics of the extremes because there are also intermediate situations, which lead to the increase of prestige indices by aggregating the behaviour of the marginal actors when they are numerous enough, as they issue positive or negative scores to the centre. The idea is that the “despondency of accumulation” of the symbolic capital can be broken by a “revolutionary” appeal to the strategies of mobilizing the “many” against the “few”. It is exactly the situation that lays at the origin of confrontations such as those related to *The Recent Man* or to the “quarrel of intellectuals”. These kinds of struggles are in fact true wars of repositioning and their deeper social stakes aim to the restoration of the group order and to increase the chances for status improvement by contesting the actual hierarchies.

The balance of forces and the distribution patterns of the judgments

But perhaps the key element for explaining the intellectual field dynamics during the analysed period is the balance of power in the two groups. These are not symmetrical and make it clear that there are different ways in conflict for mobilizing the conservatives and anti-conservatives. Table 4 summarizes the assessment exchanges between the two groups, both vertically, between Centre and Periphery, and horizontally, between the conservatives and anti-conservatives. Relationships within the table are directed, “give and take” like, oriented from issuers to recipients.

Table 4. Positive and negative acknowledgements, between Centre and Periphery and between anti-conservatives and conservatives in the debates in the intellectual field between 2002-2004

Value	Centrality of issuer	Centrality of recipient				Total
		Centre - Anti-Conservatives	Centre - Anti-Conservatives	Centre - Anti-Conservatives	Centre - Anti-Conservatives	
positive	Centre - Anti-Conservatives	31	9	13	13	66
	Centre - Conservatives	7	52	8	8	75
	Periphery - Anti-Conservatives	19	8	7	3	37
	Periphery - Conservatives	9	34	5	8	56
	Total	66	103	33	32	234
negative	Centre - Anti-Conservatives	4	64	3	14	85
	Centre - Conservatives	67	4	10	6	87
	Periphery - Anti-Conservatives	5	50	2	8	65
	Periphery - Conservatives	17	4	5	6	32
	Total	93	122	20	34	269

Source: Author’s computations and table.

Now, looking at the area in the table that shares positive feedback one can notice that the patterns of gratification between centre and periphery of the two opposed actors’ segments differ significantly. Thus, looking at the values of the entries expressing totals in the group anti-conservatives, the total positive feedback distributed and received by the anti-conservative centre are of the

same volume (66 to 66) and approximately equal to the anti-conservative periphery (37-32). Instead, at the conservatives, the centre receives many more positive appreciations than it distributes (receives 103 assessments and provides 75), while peripherals conservatives give more than they receive (56 appreciations made to others and only 32 received).

Thus, there is a tendency towards capitalizing on the positive reputation (popularity) more important towards the centre, in the conservatives, as compared to the anti-conservatives: the conservative subjects in the status group tend therefore to keep their own capital within the centre of their own segment (52 of the 75 positive appraisals being distributed in this prestigious nucleus). It is also noted that an important amount of appreciation is attained, towards the centre, and from the conservative periphery, concerned to send more positive messages to the group's core of authority than to its own peripheral area. Thus, a centralized structure of distribution and collection of bonuses is suggested, in which the prestigious capital accumulates more towards the centre and dissipates towards the periphery. A similar trend, but much weaker and "decentralized", can be observed also at the level of the anti-conservative segment, where the symbolic capital reproduces almost as well at the centre, without decreasing to the periphery.

One may note a more important trend towards capitalization of positive reputation (popularity) at the centre, the conservatives versus anti-conservative: conservative status group members show a stronger tendency to keep their own capital within the centre of their own segment (52 of the 75 positive reviews are distributed throughout this prestigious core). One can also observe that a significant amount of feedback arrives at the centre from the conservative periphery keen to send more positive messages to the authority nucleus of the group than to its own periphery. There exists a centralized structure for distribution and collection of gratifications through which the prestige capital accumulates more at the centre and dissipates at the periphery.

A similar trend, but much weaker and "decentralized" can be seen in the anti-conservative segment, where symbolic capital is reproduced almost as well at the centre, without being attenuated at the periphery. What we noticed in the previous paragraphs, namely that is a tendency in the conservative camp to capitalize prestige favouring their status group, it is also confirmed here. But it is balanced by the positive signals coming from the periphery towards the centre. Thus, proving its legitimacy, the conservative centre is much better supported, through approvals, by its own group, compared to the anti-conservative centre, where the in-group support is much weaker.

Now, returning to the area of Table 3. dedicated to negative values, we notice that the attacks exchanged between the two camps are close at the centre (85 attacks by the anti-conservatives and 87 attacks by the conservatives

towards the rival centre. However, it differs from the performance of the peripheries, where lower-status anti-conservatives deliver twice as many negative verdicts as the periphery conservatives. Most of the attacks of the anti-conservative periphery go to the conservative centre (50 out of 65), while the conservative periphery address almost half of their attacks to the anti-conservative centre (17 out of 32), compared to the periphery of the rivals.³⁰

In the end, we see conservatives being more cohesive in their judgments, more caring and more willing to fight for their leaders in the status group, while anti-conservatives are ready to challenge hierarchy symbolic of the cultural field, but do not get enough support from their own peers. Anti-conservative supporters have no other clotting solidarity points outside the urge for contestation and invest confidence neither in the opponents of their own camp.

Final remarks

The present study shows, overall, how the polarization of the intellectual field comes about by the progressive outline of a set of critical attitudes addressed to an intellectual fraction self-defined as conservative, attitudes that end by outlining a common reaction, but not quite a group, a form of solidarity, but not an assumed common ideology, throughout the criticism of cultural conservatism exposed by the conflicts of the “quarrel of intellectuals”. One can, therefore, observe a process of regrouping and self-recognition of the conservatives, coming from a progressive dissociation from the conservatives who until then have monopolized the public esteem. To this, the conservative camp reacts in solidarity and grouped but losing ground as the polemics deepens, putting them on the defensive.

On the other hand, the polemics around *The Recent Man* indicate a critical change in the level of the intellectual environment insufficiently controlled by the GDS and “Păltiniș School” members, threatened to be delegitimized in their sovereign place. Patapievici’s open positioning on the side of a nebulous philosophical conservatism is embraced and fully assumed by the “Păltinișeni”. This is the moment when Patapievici is fully accepted as an equal, continuing to be promoted with the same assiduity. All the disputes that followed have only strengthened this solidarity, multiplying the interventions of mutual support.

³⁰Another way to read Table 4 is by acknowledging the in-group support against the out-group attack initiative. This estimates the legitimacy of the attacks, being measured as a ratio between the number of out-group-oriented attacks (negative verdicts transmitted), at the numerator, and the number of positive verdicts received in-group that are supposed to endorse them, to the denominator. As a global indicator, the total number of claims in the entire population, based on the number of attacks ($234/269 = 0.87$) might be a relevant comparative index.

What happened during the “quarrel” led to a gradual dismantling of the consensus about the symbolic supremacy of the “Păltiniș School” group, but not to the emergence of a cohesive and coherent alternative group, with shared ideology, but, rather, to some temporary coalitions. The criticism initiated by the *Observator cultural*, on the other hand, provoked a reaction of solidarity in the conservative camp, which would then acquire group characteristics and assess common subordination to the ideology of their prestige group.

Without immediately cutting between winners and losers, “The Quarrel” puts an end to the monopoly on the symbolic capital that establishes the intellectual field, but, at the same time, transfers the competition outside, leaving some victims behind. In 2005, Gabriela Adameșteanu, the editor-in-chief of the *Revista 22* had to abandon her position as a reprimand following the publication of a series of critical essays on cultural strategy topics signed by Mircea Martin. The blame came from some “influential voices” (Adameșteanu, 2014: 353) within the GSD – The Group for Social Dialogue leadership (we might think was the voice of Liiceanu) accusing a less partisan position displayed during the *Revista 22*’ war with the anti-conservatives.³¹ In the same year, Ion Bogdan Lefter was also forced to leave the editorial office of *Observator cultural*, after a conflict with obscure roots against the magazine’s administration. Not accidentally, following these polemics, conservative groups reformed and counter-attacked, occupying positions in the institutional sphere, through an alliance with the political leadership.

The “Băsescu intellectuals”, as some of these conservative orientation protagonists will be labeled lately, will be pushed to a politicizing game as a strategy of reproducing the reputation supremacy made possible by controlling the institutions that ensure symbolic domination. This game implies, on the one hand, a courtship of the political factors in the immediate vicinity, towards which the intellectual field had already shown affinities, as the attraction to the anti-SDP (Social Democratic Party) opposition, manifested in 2004 by an alliance between the LDP (The Liberal Democratic Party) and NLP (National Liberal Party), the opposition forces that determined Traian Basescu’s victory in the presidential elections of 2004. In the new establishment, where both conservatives and anti-conservatives had their places, Andrei Pleșu will become presidential adviser and H-R Patapieviçi will lead RCI (The Romanian Cultural Institute), while a number of NEC (New Europe College – Pleșu’s former Institute for Advanced Studies) will occupy positions in diplomacy, administration or research institutes. They will control the means of accumulating symbolic capital in the intellectual field and the forms of institutionalized reproduction of the anti-communist nebula that formerly legitimized the opposition to the SPD in the post-socialist stage. The breakdown, later, of the political governing coalition

³¹ See also Gheorghiu, 2005; Runceanu, 2008.

under the pressure of Basescu and his party will deepen the clash between conservatives and anti-conservatives. The latter pushed to the brink, will seek refuge in liberalism or later in the fledgling movements to the left.

Parallel transformations and discrete tendencies of politicization will also affect the literary field, where the dominant intellectual conservative subfields influence the public discourse of more and more writers or literary critics (see also Lazăr, 2015). Denouncing “political correctness”, displaying new forms of orthodox pietism, re-inventing the “civilizational” discourse of a Europe that “had to be saved” by the assault of immigrants, emerging atheism and postmodern realism – that embodied the main trend conquering the new “junk conservatism”³² of the literary elites. Among them, there were also writers with a reputation for dissent and fight for freedom before 1989.

A new formula of ideological conformity, that sometimes received its reward, showed up. It is the symbolic investment, with double profit, for the author and for the publisher, which guides the careers of those who are launched at Humanitas publishing house, making them assured for their success and notoriety. Literary releases would be sumptuously announced by prefaces of the events in *Revista 22*, with discourses functioning as ways of transferring prestige from Liiceanu, or Pleșu, to chosen newcomers. Let us remember that H.R. Patapievici had been published through such a ceremony at the launch of the volume *Politice* [Of Politics] after the author was greeted in *Revista 22* by Gabriel Liiceanu as a revelation. Mircea Cărtărescu had started his career as a brand author at Humanitas in early 1997, with the launch of the volume *Orbitor* [Dazzling], at the Writers’ Union, in the presence of the famous critics Nicolae Manolescu and Laurențiu Ulici. Other “first shelf” authors promoted by Gabriel Liiceanu’s publishing house and becoming stars later were Dan C. Mihăilescu, Neagu Giuvara, Lucian Boia, Ioana Pârvulescu, Ana Blandiana, Andrei Cornea, Radu Paraschivescu.

On the opposite side, the anti-conservative spectrum remained little coagulated, fragmented in various political currents weakly institutionalized, but still waiting for the opening of new opportunities and moments of consecration. However, history is ironic: 30 years after the 1989 revolution, the fierce demand for intellectual and artistic autonomy from politics claimed by the most vocal intellectual opponents of the communist regime seems forgotten. The cultural field is re-politicized, and, as before, ideological demand seems to open the gates of public recognition and fame. Everything has changed for staying the same.

³² Gabriel Andreescu, „20 de ani de războaie culturale. Victoria junk-conservatorismului” [20 years of cultural wars. The victory of junk-conservatism], in Matei, S. A., & Momescu, M. (Eds.). (2010) *Forum idols: Why a middle class spirit is preferable to the "elite" of public intellectuals*. Indianapolis: Ideagora. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-54248-8>, pp. 67-81.

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Addendum:

Networks of support and dissent among of the competitors of the intellectual debates between 2002-2004

Figure A1. Adversative relations among competitors engaged in the debate of the book “The Recent Man” (negative feedback)

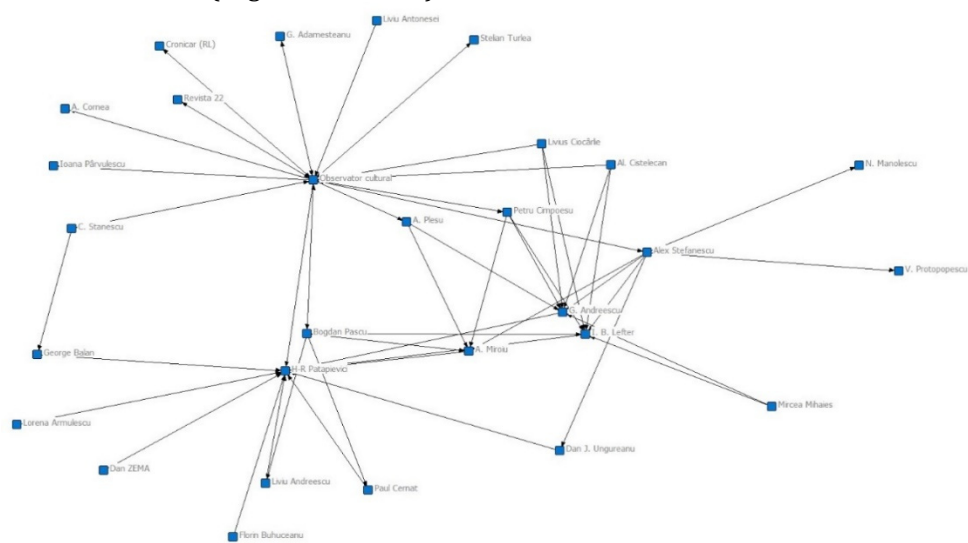


Figure 2. The support network among the competitors engaged in the debate of the book “The recent man” (positive reviews)

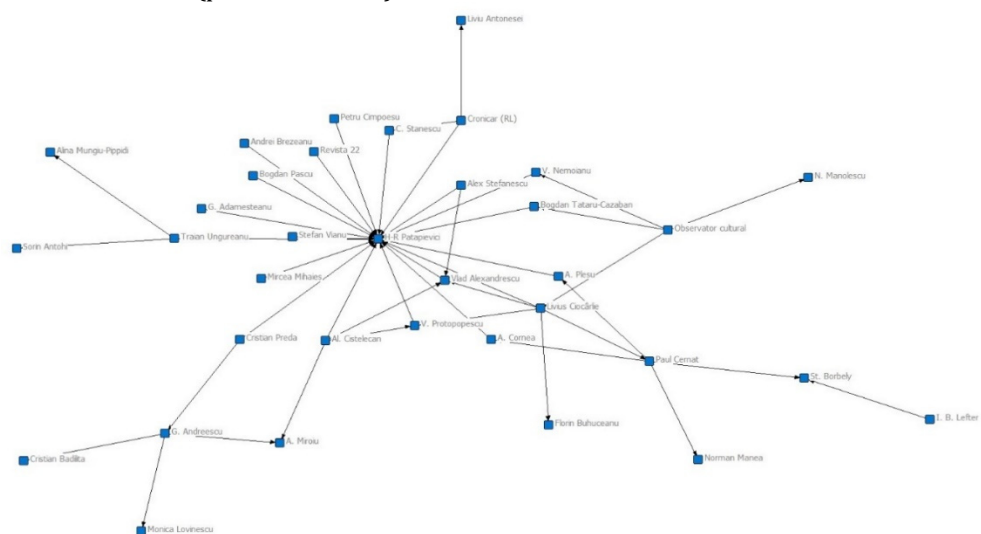


Figure 3. Adversative relations among competitors engaged in “The Quarrel of Intellectuals” (negative feedback)

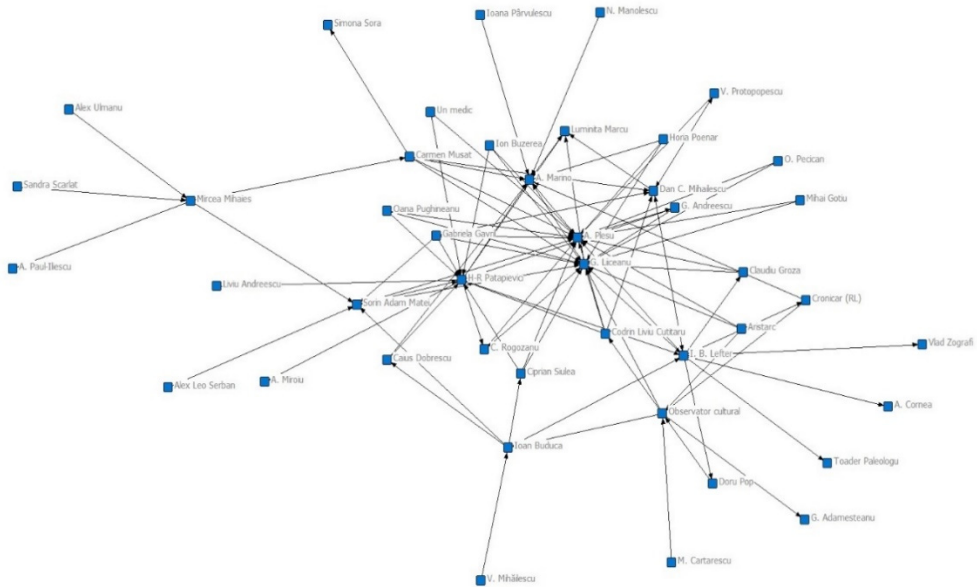


Figure 4. The support network among the competitors engaged in “The Quarrel of Intellectuals” (positive reviews)

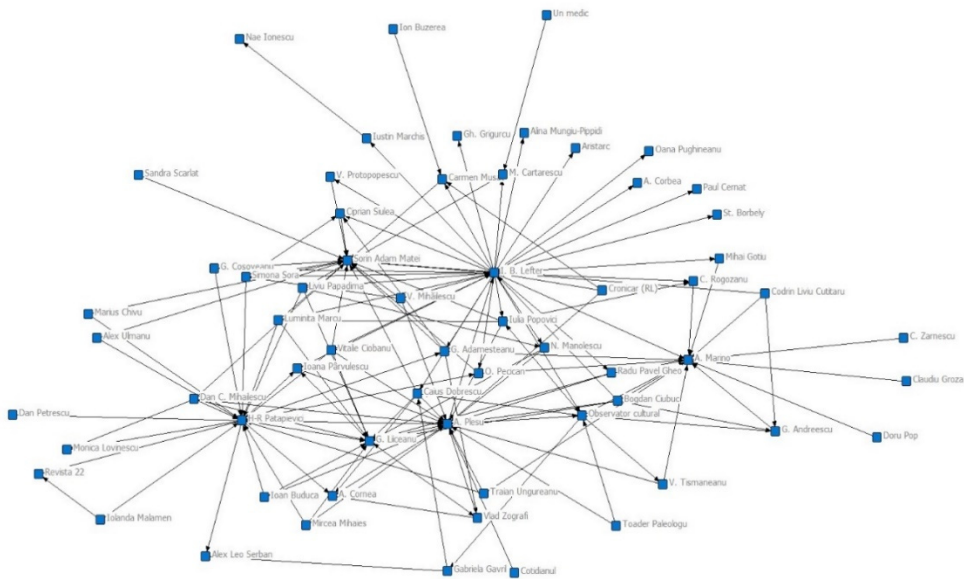


Figure 5. Adversative relations to other topics for discussion between 2002-2004 (negative evaluation)

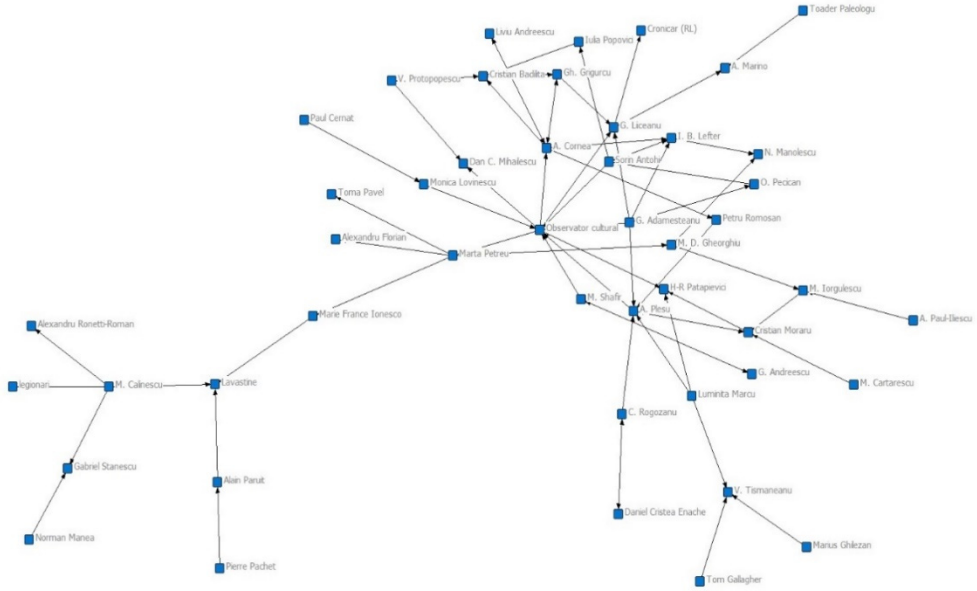


Figure 6. The support network for employment in the other topics of debate between 2002-2004 (positive evaluations)

