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Appreciative semiotic and hermeneutic practices in the analysis of ethnic minorities

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Abstract

Socio-cultural research of ethnic minorities, is a hermeneutical process involving simultaneously the analysis of discursive strategies available to communities (ethnic),and the meta-narrative material. The type of discourse research dominant in the community, produces changes in the social pragmatics of that community. Action research study presents the discursive strategy of socio-cultural action. It emphasizes on quality characteristics of the method, which can be interpreted as a semiotic analysis of communication practices in the community, with effects in changing behavior patterns. Community development resulting from changes to the rhetoric used by the community. Understood in the manner proposed by Gergen constructionism, community is the space where there is a process of constant renegotiation of the meaning of social reality. A specific way of social pragmatics which can be used in transforming the social rhetoric of ethnic and multi-ethnic communities is the appreciative inquiry, transformative method aimed at harnessing the resources within the community by exploring the discourse level of positive experiences.

Keywords: cultural minorities, ethnic communities, socio-cultural action, constructionism, social pragmatic, appreciative inquiry, social rhetoric, meta-naratives.

The theoretical framework in discourse analysis on minorities

The issue of protection of minorities, whether such ethnic, religious, cultural in general, can be analyzed from two different ideologies, namely: identifying the relationship between the "majority culture" on one side and "minority cultures" as a possible antagonistic relationship which in uncontrolled conditions may lead to mutual exclusion, on the other hand the need for conservation of a particular

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cultural identity in a context of cultural pluralism as a beneficial factor of stability in the society level. What are the premises of selecting one or other ideology? (Bradu, Sandu, 2008) It is in our view o question of of the nature of individual or a collective reporting on "otherness." Social construction of identity, whether individual or group one, is based on the assertion of an "own" which make the difference from an alterity. But their assertion of "own" particularity may be encumbered by anxiety, more or less conscious subject. "Identity" as a working concept was brought into actuality in sociological analysis, political and the geopolitical studies with the works of Erik Erikson (1968) which places the ethnicity at origin of the individual as wel as the collective identity of the person that constituting individual personality. Anthony Smith (1991:1-19) presents the following theoretical systems of constructing the national identity: primordialist, perenialist, modernist, and his own an ethno-symbolist system. Each of these theoretical systems promotes one of the most significant lines analysis: identity as belonging, identity as a diachronically referential, identity as legitimated frame-work and identity as contextual stability. In the context of the present study ethnic identity is considered a term affecting the dimensions of the sociological and anthropological dimension, with the sense of belonging to a community (ethno-cultural, etc.). We notice that in studies of minorities, including ethnic, but applicable to the sexual, religious, gender, or from a disability, etc., actually talk about intercultural identity - the term is a generalization of the term interethnic identity proposed Kim Young (2006: 5) as opposed to ethnic identity. In multi-cultural context, we can not separate ethnic identity, as a mere social construct, actually we can talk about intercultural identity. In the particular context of this study we use the term Italian ethnic from Romania for exemple to mean an intercultural identity. Do not speak thus to a loss of identity but rather an enriched cultural identity, which becomes part of the intangible cultural heritage.

Bălășoiu and Rusu presents two conceptual frameworks of identity:
– essentialist view that ethnic identity is derived from biological ties and the main cultural core (language, customs, religion);
– constructivist perspective: ethnic identity is a "social reality built and rebuilt or completely invented, malleable, and fluid" (2003:48).

Identity is a socio-cultural construct, depending to the dominant meta-narration existing in society, which finely defines the personality of the individual. Identity is also a constructive result of an ongoing symbolic interactions that take place in the social field in which the individual belongs, and which appreciate it as their own. Reference frames of socio-cultural system of the individual, which he considers as been its own, is the first level of the construct call the social identity. What Culianu called interpretative grid, or in other words the operating paradigm on the social level, is the determinative of the social construction of identity. In this respect Kenneth Gergen considers that the process of social construction of identity is accomplished first in the sense creating of a major flow of power and

by the exclusion from this cultural stream we create a minority identity (2001:169). Identity can be seen as a dialectical play between the system of social field of belonging and social field of the reference, as the subjective part of socialization. Identity is a construct that preserves an invariant system of structures, allowing a sense of belonging. Ethnic identity is the general socialization of individuals belonging to a given ethnic communities. Gergen notes that in the practice of public discourse, the rhetoric of *guilt,* even in the discourse of the majority is based mostly on *unequal voices.* It is virtually impossible to correctly identify a *majority stream* whitch can not be divided in the minoritary identities. Preservation of cultural identity and intangible cultural heritage is imposing itself as world-class project, in terms uniformity apparently promoted by globalization and gmondialization. Maintaining the identity of individuals and of community are significant elements of human rights. Deprivation of the right to cultural identity (and we refer here to any minority culture, not only to ethnic identity) is equivalent to subjecting the individual, or group of individuals and to put them into a stress of cultural uniformity, and of the separation of their symbolic universe. Matti Julia read the constructivist perspective identity issue considering it a condition of reduce minority issues (2006: 179-180) from the global security needs. Due to ethnic conflicts that have marked European history, the issue of minorities is an integral part of regional and national security strategy in European countries, including those from Eastern Europe. The construction of identity based on the complementarity of social values, desecurizarea lead to problems concerning ethnic relations.

In Yinger's opinion, the ethnic identity and attachment to ethnic, is the individual's *original culture,* the sense of historical integration of the individual (1986:21). Cultural uniformity as a totalitary point of wiew bring great disadvantages to humanity, eliminating many factors of regional cultural creativity. Mihaela Mihailescu in this study, on the *The Politics of Minimal "Consensus": Interethnic Opposition Coalitions in Post-Communist Romania (1990-96) and Slovakia (1990-98)* shows the importance of interethnic political cooperation at government level or in coalitions in oposition (2008:1-3). Korean-born American sociologist Kim Young, from Alvin Toffler's theories, believes that the current period is a true "quantum leap" in terms of restructuring of social creativity, in fact have been a reconstruction of the whole contemporary culture (2006:1-3). Precisely those factors that generate structural changes in the epistemic level, generate the social level polarization in the construction of identity, based on ethnicity, tribal, gender, minorities in general (2006:3).

Interculturality not primarily mean "else", but it means above all "other". "Otherwise" means a new horizon opening paradigmatic thinking, to experience factual social reality. Plurality of cultures, a transmodern dimension derives from what in sociology is circulated under the name of "plurality of worlds". Transmodern perspective, first defined by Paul Ray (1996) as *integral culture* is des-

cribded as: Ecological sustainability, beyond environmentalism, feminism, althruism, self-actualization, alternative health care, spirituality and spiritual psychology, Well-developed social conscience and social optimism. The Integral Cultere is a social construc emerging from and bz stimulating the Core of Cultural Creatives, described by Ray and Shery Anderson as a group of no more than a quarter of America's populaton but social actively, of more educated, leading-edge thinkers.Their concerns are pointed to their self-development and self-actualisation as wel as their social activism (Espedal, 2008). Specific of cultural creatives is a social optimism, The Integral Culture can be seen a network of social creatives, involved in reconstruction of global project. This network is based in our oppinion on integrate the minoritary culture, or minority stream into a fractalic global network, creating a Global Culture instead of minority cultures.

Intertextuality of the modern social hermeneutics is used to explain the dialogue of civilizations, is an explanation of coexistence in the specific social frame of several "worlds" with different cultural experiences. Tragic experience of ethnic conflicts in todays Europe, vulnerability of current European civilization from the risk of a return to barbarism and stupidity of inter-ethnic wars, new challenges of terrorism as a form of political action, all of which require the establishment of structures to enable the functioning of a Europe of minorities, and diversity. The process of Europeanization is seen by Trenz (2007: 167) as a process of "cultural mobilization" within the meaning of mutual social learning. However Trenz shows across Europe, a relative indifference of the majority population to minority issues. In this regard the author considers that the various minority groups may act exemplary, assuming the role to involve of other Europeans and teach them cultural tolerance (2007:157-185). Europeanisation can be viewed as social and political modernization in the form of horizontal dissemination of meanings (in the spirit of social negotiation of interpretations) and opportunities (2007:174). While regionalism receives a negative connotation, associated with historical experience of conflicts, Europeanisation receives a positive connotation linked to the construction of identity personally and socially (2007:175). Creating the social frameworks led to raising of institutional, and political tools of crisis management such as antiterrorist coalition, or legal such as European conventions on the protection of minorities, regional languages, etc. (Tesser, 2003:485-489). Problems of minorities and interethnic relations, it validates itself in a structural way by the existence of social and economic polarities. Unequal social development among different regions, is the source of social tension, by thaking the shape of the different cultural models. Here there is possible to happen incidents with regional specific and even with ethnic character. Actual state of vulnerability (Cojocaru 2005:29-31) but also self-victimisation (Miftode et all. 2003) may have a number of cases is the strategic nature in which some populations are part. We can see in the Romania situation of entire populations of Rroma ethnic origin , but also of Russian communities that are generating frustration for members of

those communities. The causes of vulnerability (Cojocaru, 2005:49) of the population belonging to ethno-cultural communities can be of strategic nature (marginal culture where a child is socialized in to seing the illegitimate opportunities), epistemological and axiological (dominant values of traditional culture adapted society postmodern), education (limited or even self-limited access to knowledge, illiteracy, or refuse to school).

Simulation studies show that collective behavior is a strong possibility that a minority whose percentage is 10% up in time to suffer an erosion of their cultural foundations to get to harmonize the mass majority, while a 30% minority can keep it's ethnic specific (Sumedrea, 2003). That is why it is imperative that minority protection is executed in the frames of regional development strategy. All the challenges of multiculturalism and the intertextuality of multiethnic communication, are necessary to guide intercultural education as a sphere of cultural dialogue, multicultural community resource development. Donald Young (apud. Miftode 2003) show in a constructivist manner that a minority is "which people labeled as ... minoritate". minority ". L. Wirth (cf. Miftode: 2003) believes that discriminatory treatment is a defining condition of a "minority group". In this respect, women constitute a "social minority" since they do not enjoy equal rights with men, though - the plan strictly demographic - is over 50% of global population. We speak thus of a "major minority".

Seminar in Strategies for combating discrimination on ethnic grounds, undertaken in Sighisoara in August 2002, have been proposed a number of definitions of discrimination, a review of forms of discrimination taking place in the Romanian society. The operational definition of discrimination has been proposed "deprive a minority group or a fundamental right necessary or deemed as important by that minority. In this context, stated that the definition refers to negative discrimination and there is a form of positive discrimination, which would be to grant additional rights to minorities, in order to avoid infringement of fundamental rights or fundamental rights of the achievement. Positive discrimination is an event beneficial and necessary in various circumstances particular ethnic-specific basis.

Action Research as a discursive practice

Traditional action research methodology was defined by the founder of social psychology and organizational and group dynamics of Kurt Lewin. His theories are based on the concept of force field analysis of what constitutes a constructive framework to identify the factors and forces that influence socially. The term action research was introduced by Kurt Lewin in the study of Action Research and Minority Problems (1946:34-36). Action research is described as a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and

research leading to social action. The method uses a spiral of steps each consisting of a circuit type planning, action, identification of social facts and results of action (1946:34-36). Fundamental characteristic of action research is *collaborative research practice and use of collaborative methods,* are forming a community of practice for processing methodologies to solve problems in the community concerned. Action Research is an interactive survey that put into action simultaneously solve the problems process with the collaborative data analysis of research to understanding the functioning and implementation of change within the organization (Reason & Bradbury, 2001 cf wikipedia.org: Action Research). From semiotico-hermeneutical perspective we note that we do actually with models of discursive practices, the research have a qualitative specific, involving a semiotic and phenomenological side, compared with traditional sociological research, whose side quantitative analysis with statistic nature was predominant. In action research, rather we are dealing with symbolic analyses, and with practices applicable to the particular socio-cultural situations, probably unrepeatable.

A taxonomy of Action-Research Studies in respect to a multicultural communities was proposed by the researchers Catherine Cassell and Phil Johnson:

– *Action Research as a social experiment:* the original one used by Kurt Lewin, Based upon an objectivistic epistemology in the methodological monism frame, and from a realist ontological assumption: social reality really exist, and can be studied objectively, the results can be obtained by applying the correct methodology, and specifically describing the social reality (Cassel and Johnson 2006:790).

– *Inductive Action Research:* it is also the positivist orientation, by following an induction to facilitate the access of researchers to the cultural context in its natural state. The inductive Action Research is based on a hermeneutical epistemology, and a semiotics of tha social facts, favoring comprehensive methods (based on understanding) in the development of qualitative methods in the form of "Grounded Theory", which guides subsequent intervention (Cassel and Johnson 2006:792). Grounded Theory is seen as a privileged qualitative methods of the social investigation, which involves the construction of categories and assumptions of research through a process of interpretation of the data collected, instead of the use of social research for validating theoretical hypotheses proposed a priori by the researcher (O'Connor et all, 2008:28-45). Simona Branc note that Grounded Theory assumes a systematic generation of concepts and theories based on data collected as an "inductive method that is based on general observations," and a primary data analysis process to form the conceptual theory (2008 : 83). Cojocaru points out the advantages of using qualitative research and particularly the Grounded Theory in the evaluation of social programs, to avoid contamination of results with predefined point views of the researcher (2008). In this respect qualitative research has the advantage of obtaining interpretations from the views expressed by those interviewed and not from the researcher own assumptions. An

interesting example is presented by Daniela Cojocaru, which examines the social construction of childhood and parenthood froma constructionist perspective using epistemic constraints of Grounded Theory (2009: 87-98).

– *Participatory Action Research:* starts from two different assumptions, first that community members are actively involved to he entire research from the conception of research to the evaluating and diagnostic of social environment, selection of development strategies. The researcher role is to facilitate social change (O'Connor 2008:796). A second approach addresses the entire community, looking at the "need for change" occurred in the community in its own terms. The research is based on interviews and focus groups, having intended to generate a further strategic planning, and to create opportunity for community members to give feedback on problem solving processing they face in theier organizational agenda (Fernando, 2010).

– *Intervention - Participatory Research:* aims community participation of individuals in political processes, such as democratization. The theory starts from the critical processes of democratization of social practices. Habermans bring to the attention of epistemologist the change of sensory-perceptual experiences under the influence of cultural experience, thus justifying criticism of positivist epistemology type (O'Connor, 2008:798).

– *Deconstructive Action Research:* characterized by the assumption that language-with reference to any kind of metadiscourse- cannot accurately describethe reality itself. Linguistic turn suggests (hyper)reality as consisting of a series of social constructs. You can build as many realities as many ways to describe them can be (O'Connor, 2008:803). Deconstructive action research paradigm has postmodernism as a constituent paradigm. A Deconstructive Action-Research model is proposed by Trevelen (2001:261) as *collaborative investigation,* in the issues of minority groups and in the investigation of gender as in Trevelen's original experiment. The researcher has facilitated the realization of a deconstructive research with the 11 young womens, co-participating in the research upon the critical experiences in their own situations. The researcher has facilitated the realization of a deconstructive research with the 11 young womens, co-participating in the research upon their critical experiences in their own situations. Individuals who are subject to a collaborative research have as a task to give interpretations on their cognitive patterns and their social actions and how it can be reconstructed by a discourse analysis, and by using the existing assumptions in their current language. For Trevelen (2001) the the role of deconstructive research is forming a new subjectivity, replacing the latent opposition to the otherness in the process of reconstruction of own subjectivity, starting from the experience of freedom by adopting of a multiple subjectivity experience. Another version of *Deconstructive Action Research* is in O'Connor's vision the social constructionism promoted by Gergen. It brings into question the annihilation of meaning through *"democratic consent" on the* interpretation of discourse (O'Connor,

2008:805). Constructionism is in our view partialy a constituient of postmodern deconstructive discourse, but may be considere as a basis for transmodern - integrative reinterpretation of reality, through affirmative action. We propose a version of fractalic-constructionism that start with an understanding of society as network. Constructionist –fractalic analysis method we propose (2010), is to identify a paradigmatic agreement of interpretative scales and thereby identify cultural epistemic, and social axioms, and restructuring successive interpretations of the facts of culture, or social facts in line with the paradigmatic model proposed in a specific community (such local communty, a professional, or scientific one etc.). We focused of specific of transmodern turn, the forming of reality as a construct, and reiteration of the constructs in the social networks looking as social fractals. Another social theory based on constructionism, has ben developed to Cooperrider (2006) as the "appreciative inquiry" and can be understand as part of affirmative paradigm (Madrid, 2008). This covers referral and enhance the positive, and the social construction of positivity from the positive elements inherent in any community or organisation (Chapagain, Ojha, 2008; Töpfer, 2008). Cojocaru (2006) sugest another theory coming from constructionism, and appreciative inquiry called social projectionism. Social projectionism, inspired by constructionism, asserts the creation of multiple realities through their very projection, recognising the existence of these multiple realities with permanent modifications in a multilinear evolution (Cojocaru 2006).

Another taxonomy based on the form of participation of researchers to the examined social group, defines the following major types of action research:

– *Știința Science Action* (Chris Argyris) aims to study design attitude of people in need. Argyris believes that human actions are planned to achieve the desired consequences, and they are governed by a number of environmental variables.

– *Cooperative Inquiry* also called *collaborative inquiry* (John Heron and Peter Reason). The model starts from the premise that all active participants in action research are actually fully involved in this research as co-researchers. (Heron 1996: 56)

– *Participatory Action Research* (Paulo Freire). This model involves all relevant parties in the common examination of current actions seen as problematic in order to change or improve them. The method is based on a collective critical reflection on the historical, political, cultural, and economic context, where action occurs (Vadswoith, 1998). Freire (1990) emphasizes on collaborative learning, as further developement in "adult education" models. Participatory Action Research is also originate in postmodern philosophy as a deconstruction of traditional educational sistems, and in phenomenology by emphasize on the collaborative learning instead a traditional relation between teachers and students.

– *Survey Development-Action* (William Torbert) is based on self-transformation in the organization's actions in a more active and sustainable way.

– *Living theory approach* (Witehead & Mc Niff) – consider that individuals generates theories and explanations on their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of social formations (Wikipedia: Action Research).

Social constructionism - the negotiation of meanings

Complementary to postmodern deconstruction, constructionism kept it's anti-realist character, the plurality of experiences and interpretations in a plural world or in a plurality of worlds, give us by linking the meaning with the interpretative will. It emerges from Derrida's postmodernism through the concept of "cultural mediation of the interpretation about social reality. There is not only one meaning that corresponding to a single truth, but a plurality of meanings, reflections of the whole in the various levels of existence. Constructionist epistemology concerns the development of paradigms in sciences, social and cultural fields as a "negotiation" of the interpretations (meanings) of given datas derived from empirical reality, or in other areas such as theoretical knowledge, models, etc. According the the the "*map*" by which we understand or "we read" the reality is no more than a continuous negotiations of interpretation. Understanding concepts, as they are taken from scientific language in cultural discourse, form a paradigmatic model, relatively independent from the science of their own. Cultural derivation of the meaning of the concepts underlying semantic convergence of any socio-cultural paradigms. In the mentality level occurs most profound restructuring, the transition from understanding a world objective, knowable and unique, to the pattern of a plurality of worlds, of which indetermination is theoretically predicted. Gergen argues that terms such as "real, true, rational and objective, have an inherent destructive potential" (2005:12). Of course, these concepts are of maximum utility in local communities, the affirmation of tradition to facilitate mutual trust, coordination of collective action and stimulate enthusiasm - finds the author quoted (2005:12). Potential hazardous updated occurs when community members extend meanings of these words universally as transcendent truth, rational in themselves, and of course objectives. As stated Stefan Cojocaru (2005:25), constructionism abandon the idea that the individual mind is the mirror of reality.

New epistemology can no longer be a positivist one but rather holistic and hermeneutic one, in the way of Diltay's understanding of the difference between understanding and explanation, having necessarily to the assumption that research should include the researcher system and its correlation with the object sought. It slipped from a hard core of the concept of reality as pure objectivity to which a plurality of possible realities by researcher intervention are due to a single set of results-consequences. Reconstruction of the *"painting of the world"* is a constant negotiation of scientific patterns correlated with new experimental data.

Constructionism is seen as part of the postmodern paradigm because of relativization of models and reporting the *reality* to the results of negotiation of the interpretation. Constructionist epistemology is by the structure close to postmodernism, specifically to the Lyotard vision that our image of reality is a *narration,* a consensus of speech - considered Hacking (1999:196).

Concepts such as the plausibility becomes more appropriate to describe the nature of new scientific laws formulated within science that departs ever more than what can be actually experienced or observed directly. Constructionism as an epistemology is drafted by Burr (1995: 9) the following fundamental assertions:

The *antiessentialist* and *critical understanding of access to knowledge.* This view precludes understanding the nature of knowledge, as equivalent to the existence. Our knowledge is dependent on construction that we rely to interpret the real, a construction completed daily by the interactions between individuals (1995:4).

Anti-realism. The version of reality in which we live is socially and culturally constructed through interaction and can not be talking about an objective fact but especially as the assumption of a significant model (1995: 6).

Historical and cultural relativism of knowledge and the concept of truth [Burr, 1995: 9]. All forms of knowledge, both scientific and common one, has a self historical and cultural specificity. Truth itself varies historically and culturally as a concept based on social interaction processes by which people are in relationship. Thus transdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity is possible because globalization is a construct of contemporary culture (Rath, 2010).

Language is a form of action by which the world receives constructs (Burr, 1995:6). "Understanding the world comes not directly from the objective reality but through other people both past and present" (Burr, 1995:9). Language is not simply a way of expression. The World receiving constructs through the communication and by that way world has a consistent reality for us.. Language is thus a form of action.

Constructionism says Gergen (2005) is concerned mainly with explaining, the processes by which people come to describe, explain and take note of the world they live and includes them in it . As a postmodern approache the Constructionism deconstruct the ontology (in terms of independent existence, moving experience of reality into the language). The significance and meaning of words are not given under a correspondence theory of truth but especially of a theory of social negotiation, the meaning and indirectly to replace the concept of truth at the adequacy and credibility.

In the analysis of ethnic communities constructionism can be used according to Gergen, starting from the idea that every form of social organization. virtually compresses in itself an ontology frm its own, as an accord about "what is reality

itself". When communities build "a new social consensus reality", this is fully reflected in the existing practices in the community. Expansion of community into social space of neighboring communities (Gergen 2005:138) in multicultural communities, creates a corresponding reality trough the derivation of meanings and of vision of reality coming from neighboring comnitāþile. Definitely interpretative conflicts may occure between visions of reality existing in the community in question and those existing in the other communities. For Gergen, globalization is an increase in ethical conflict. Organizations is extending in other cultural areas, by importing specific constructs from local cultures. Global practices are from a specific point of wiew of expansive organizations, current and beneficial, while that local practices are outdated and need to be changed, but from opposte perspective, those of local communities, the culture promote by the expansive organization is invasive one, insensitive to the regional or Community needs, sometimes even immoral (Gergen 2005:139).

Scott Harris, in his turn, highlight the prevalence of studies about social inequality in the concerns of constructionism, and interpretative sociology generally. The theme of social inequality related to the social construction of reality, take today head of poster of most scientific conferences in community sociology and organizational sociology (Harris, 2006:25). From Constructionist point of view (2006:224) must avoided understanding inequality as an objective social fact, research may be focus rather to the meanings given to inequality in the social processes that generated interpretations of social space as a field of inequality. Harris considered that social stratification can not be labeled in terms of inequality and power. For constructionists, is more specific for sociological research to examine the meaning that subjects give to social inequality, and its significance for social life, than the analysis of "objective reasons", visible effects, or of solutions that comes from outside the community. Constructionist aproache therefore proposed community itself as the main resource of its own development. The Constructionist perspective is multi-valent one, nore interpretation been favorised, contrary the same research may produce more interpretations of the same social reality. None of the competing interpretations not a priori a higher degree of truth, each is applied to a different universe of interpretations and of discourses. In other words, such a social reality as poverty, may have a number of different interpretations in communities itself or in diferit communities, and the researcher cannot claim to have discovered or imposed (in action research) a single, "Valid interpretation". From this perspective we can understand totalitarianism as a process of universalization of interpretations on behalf of "axiological supremacy" that are self proclamed. Unlike the axiological dictatorship of interpretations, globalization can be understood in terms of universalization of interpretations from epistemic reconstruction of reality by cultural contamination. Social development is by essence an integrative process is prone to transdisciplinarity and therefore I chose this dimension of social practice to illustrate the

interpretive adrift of some social techniques generated from the paradigmatic shift offered by the transition to a transmodern epistemology centered in interconnection. Integral culture, seen as a synthesis of traditionalism with modernity, is oppose from transmodern theorists (Codreanu 2006: 177) "culturii Coca-Cola" (a postmodern one), that by the deconstruction of any reality, suppresses the very area of action of the values. In this way, both postmodernism and transmodernism involves the full scope of human beings: culture, theology, philosophy, art, politics, science and technology.

"Spiritualization of borders", from the social-political level, is a natural extension of "Spiritualization of epistemological borders " and of the ontological unification, in a " Network Universe " where each component is linked seamlessly with all other elements of the system.

Replacing welfare society with the network society, globalization of interdependence and the social reconstruction of paradigms by replacing the postmodern society's obsession about individuality and particular, with "Spiritualization of any borders, political, cultural or epistemological" (Sandu: 2008, 10), will change the social interventions objectives from "dynamic potentialities of self-determination and self-update of the client " (Rogers, 1966), into the adaptive restructuring of social networks for positive development of the client.

Appreciative inquiry as a pragmatic of the discourse

The concept of appreciative inquiry is launched by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivatsva in their article *Appreciative inquiry in organizational life*, published in 1987.

The authors in this article emphasies upon a debate related to the importance of theory for (re)construction of social environment and organizational behavior, in the context debate about the potential of research-action. Article takes the ideas of Kenneth Gergen (2005), relates to the theoretical knowledge and its role in social transformation. Social and behavioral sciences should be defined in relation to "Their generative capacity", to challenge the guiding assumptions of culture, to ask fundamental questions about contemporary social life, to reconsider what is considered self-evident and thus provide new alternatives for social action (Gergen 2005:149-169).

Appreciative Inquirey is a particular way to interview subjects of organizational development while to anticipated and construct the future by adopting positive relationship from fundamental inherent positivity of each person, organization or a particular situation, by increasing system capacity for cooperation and change. The method has the fundamental assumption of individuals committed to improving himself, and changing its focus on performance.

Cojocaru Daniela (2003) starting from Cooperrider's statements identified a number of specific of appreciative inquiry:

– Social order is fundamentally unstable, at any time beeing the product of negotiations or agreements between people, tacit or explicit one and assumed by them.

– Social action is likely to be interpreted differently depending on the historical context in which there is none of the interpretations can not be considered objectively supperior of another.

– Human actions are prescribed by the ideas, beliefs, intentions or theories;

– Transformation of conventional human behavior is achieved by changing the ideas, theories, ideologies conventional;

– Theories we fallow, our beliefs and representations of social systems have a strong effect on the nature of social reality.

– The most powerful vehicle that communities have to convert agreements or arrangements in norms, values, goals, ideology is the act of dialogue, possibly through language, therefore, the changes taking place in linguistic practices can cause profound changes in social practices.

– Social theory can be seen as a language with hight level of development, witch possess it's own grammar, and it can be used as a linguistic tool able to create new models of social action.

– Any theory is normative, whether intended or not this and has the potential to influence social order whether or not people side of acceptance, rejection or indifference.

– Each social theory has moral significance and the potential to affect and regulate inter-personal relations in everyday life.

– Knowledge of social interaction lies in the collective, beeing created, maintained and used by human group.

Cooperrider we propose the following operational definition of appreciative inquiry: a (co)transforming research of positivity of individuals and organizations. Appreciative inquiry consists in a transforming discovery of generating sources of vitality of living systems in their times of maximum efficiency and maximum creative capacity in the economic, environmental, human field. Appreciative inquiry is a central way of action research using interrogative art uppon the strengths of the system to make them understand, predict and maximize their creative potential (Sandu, Cojocaru, Ponea, 2010). This approaches is based on mobilization of questioning (intterogative) capacity based of query on the positive of the questions. Research is correlative with changing, by setting free of the innovative potential and of the creative imagination of peoples in organisatin instead of denial and criticism (Cooperrider, 2005:3).

Stefan Cojocaru (2005) by interpreting Bushe's vision assert that any organization is an arbitrary social construction whose boundaries are drawn only by human imagination and collective will. We believe that the previous definition applies equally to cultural communities, and believes that language and words represent the foundation of social life, in line with post-modernist view of language seen as active agents in creating meanings. Therefore, the theory, especially that encoded in words or images has power to shape the social organization environment because we "see what we believe" (Cojocaru, 2005). With the desired change in an organization and the simlar in the community, aims to redefine how people within it explains the values that led to success. Change is thus seen primarily as a change of attitude in defining community by it's members. In any community change can be achieved by changing "stories" wich circulated informally (Cojocaru, 2010). These stories work on the human mind in an unconscious level.

The Appreciative Community Development is based on a semiotic analysis of metadiscurses that already exist in the community. Individuals in each community create a set of stories that come together in what is called the local culture. Reading these stories an be made in terms concern of increased favorable elements or success, the timing of assessment and valorisation of personal meanings, and valuating positive experiences of communication in the community. Culture of a community is linked to such moments of success; it's remarkable peoples, appreciating the community potential, and of moments of valorization Community's successful experiences which are intended to be submitted in future community development activities..

From the perspective of anthropology, we can see here a process to generate myths, in form of the storage of stories, in a hyperbolized form as the cultural heritage of the community.

Aaron deGrassi believes that in every community, as each organization studied by Cooperrider, there is something that works well and produces successful and appreciation within the community concerned. Community will evolve in the direction where members collectively focused their questions and efforts. Social Reality social as been multiple, the community its "select" it's own future according to agreed social reality. DeGrassi stresses that reality is created in the present moment, and therefore ability to apply a query process appreciative questioning, of the success stories, projecting them while turning them as a desirable reality, by which to develop community (2007:84).

A comparative analysis conducted by Peelle the third, between Appreciative Inquiry and Problem Solving as organizational development techniques that reveal the transformational ability of both techniques showing the complementarity of the two approaches in the organizational and community development (2006:459-460).

The fallowing dimensions of community were development by me, starting from thowse of Bruce Bernard, where it was strongly related to organizational developmen. Elements of Community analysis using appreciative inquiry are:

1. *Achievements*: The investigator will review the major achievements of the community, and of representative organizations acting in the community and representative organizations acting in the community such as: innovative products, success in the relationship of intercultural communication, way of life, their attitudes, traditions, mythical speech, etc.

2. *Strategic opportunities*: At this level the researcher will asses market opportunities of the organization or organizations active in the communities, its specific and existing human resources, forecasts and strategic plans, analysis of projects and programs implemented by the organization, quality policy and total quality management, etc.

3. *The uniqueness of products and strengths*: of products and services offered by the organization both in relation to their community and multicultural dialogue involved.

4. *Social and communications expertise* existing within the organization / community

5. *Innovations*: At this level the investigator must identify the actual innovations that have appeared in the organization, both at the technological level or productive processes and providing services and inventiveness services and inventiveness seen as an overall capacity of individuals in the organization to achieve paradigmatic leaps. We emphasize the distinction between the innovative process or technology transfer of knowledge from one area to another within the same aplicativitate paradigms and inventiveness that the ability to change the very structure of the operational paradigm. It also analyzes the existing innovative community level, and its possibility of becoming a learning -centered community (learning communities).

6. *Ideology:* research aimed at elements of community culture, success stories about the creation of identity and belonging through processes of socialization at Community level.

7. *Positive practices,* existence of standards of good practice of quality management with emphasis on analysis of the best ways to improve the community, and the stories inside them.

8. *Positive emotions and satisfaction of the superior needs:* It analyzes the stories of individuals aiming satisfaction on Community membership, adherence to particular cultural of specific community, etc. Bernie Carter introduced the term *research (inquiry) as a celebration* (2006: 51) to define the appreciative inquiry as a tool for working with "what works best. In community development

research (inquiry) as a celebration can be used to reiterating traditions, and facilitating the participation of members of their community life

9. Organizational intelligence considers the existence of community development strategies based on the strengths of the community and there is a unconditionally positive set of values wich adhere all the community members. Tojo Thatchenkery (2009) defines a special form of intelligence, as the appreciative intelligence, understood as the ability to to predict people and situations with potential for success and strategies required to obtein them – seeing the mighty oak in the acorn.

11. *Appreciation*: Represents the synthesis of visions of community members about its future and their own place within the community. Phase aims at building of strategic vision by assessing the potentialities of the community and ways to fulfill them in the form of selfrealisation prophecies. Monty Miller and collaborators, writes about application in the establishment survey appreciative transcultural strategic alliance. The authors consider the construction of a cross-cultural alliances and develop understanding in multicultural communities is a challenge for the practitioner of social development in multiethnic communities. Instruments used from action are comming from action-research methodology, appreciative inquiry, and organizational development. Area of cross-cultural alliance described by the authors, is corporate area, which coexist with small family businesses in multicultural communities (Miller, 2005:91). Transcultural alliances aimed at ensuring regional development in multiethnic areas, or where minorities coexist they have developed their own distinct culture. Cultural Cooperation presumed establishment of strategic alliances, enhance mutual trust among members of cultural communities, and thus a process of contamination, creating new cross-cultural identity. Participants were asked to view the alliance position over 10 years. Participants were related to concrete economic results, arising directly from alliance activity. It has made a strategic design from ordinary activities, is also making recommendations for improvement of communication processes.

12 Systems of rules values and traditions that community members join and offer it the originality and uniqueness.

13. Positive trends, existing in the community regarding the proposal of new social practices and services.

14. *Human capital* with emphasis on stories of individuals and their correlation in a single story of community (Rattanaphan, 2010): Values and performance of individuals making up the community, communication and mutual assistance, community relations with other communities that coexist in the social environment, social responsibility to the community.

16. Community Eco-system.

Reconstruction of ethnic identity. A semiotic analysis

Purpose of this paper is the analysis of semiotic reconstruction of ethnic identity, something which has not been enhanced in full in our previous research, which were related to institutional analysis and the programs implemented in the Italian minority. We speak about Italian families in Romania during the communist period that have undergone a process of assimilation by the totalitarian state that did not recognize only one nation composed of "Romanian, Hungarian, German, and other national minorities". The construction oftheir identity is achieved through a social mechanism to legitimize the bellonging of communities, through its specific, and valuing otherness. In the specific case of ethnic identity we talk about an awareness of their own , the element of specific ethnic origin, in conjunction with otherness that in the particulary case of Italians minority from Romania is double: the specific element of Romanian and and also Italian from Italy. Many ethnic Italians in Romania are found themself in words "Romanian ethnic with Italian ethnic origin", not only a „Romanian citizen of Italian origin". For many ethnic Italians in Romania, Italian origin is given a positive fact, a cultural benefit amoung other Romanians. Italians from Romania usually not considered themself to be not Romanian, not only Romanian citizen, but belonging to the Romanian cultural universe, and more as a Romanian participating in an addition to the Italian cultural world. Italian ethnic in Romania it perceives the Italian in Italy as an otherness, not foreign, but different whereas participation of Italian ethnic from Romania the Italian Cultural Universe is mediated by a Romanian type hermeneutical grid. Any participation in culture requires a hermeneutic of social messages from the social field with which the individual interacts. This particular hermeneutic use a grid of meaning to the social, a model of subjective reconstruction of reality, allowing the first referral meanings and secondly maintaining the individual (social identity of subject).

In this respect, in terms of methodology is relevant submission of "Significant portraits" (Socio-psychological portraits) of some ethnic Italians, using auto-biographical method qualitative analysis of the results of interviews taken of community members, and also analysis of significant documents, as well as literary works with auto-biographical performed by the Italian community. Ethnic Italians put great value on remembering the former members of community, being the pride of the community, and a legitimation of the status of new generations of ethnic Italians in Romania, as descendants of Italians who came from Italy.

Founders of the Italian families in Romania have emigrated from Italy in the period 1880-1940, due to the crisis facing Italy in the first half of last century. Moreover, Italy is one of the largest diasporas in the world, across the United States but also in Latin America, other Western European countries, etc.. A number of Italians over 60 million today live outside the borders of Italy (Popescu: 2003).

In Romania, the Italians came in two directions, in Transylvania and Banat, in the Habsburg Monarchy, especially as workers in stone, or farmers, craftsmen, etc.. on the one hand, and in the Old Romanian Kingdom on the other hand they come to work in Romania. The next generation of Italians, coming after 1918, were mostly artisans and small manufacturers, but also teachers, merchants and artists. Most of them, but their children, whether born in Romania, have retained Italian citizenship until 50-60 years when they were forced to give up citizenship Italian State by the communist regime in Romania. The loss of Italian citizenship meant a very painful loss for ethnic Italians who have experienced.

In the Italian ethnic group in Romania have shown two models of socialization of children from families of ethnic Italians. The "ethnic identity constructed" means raising children in an environment where the prevailing customs of Italy, speaking Italian, Family, and "join the Italian values. In an interview with the Italian ethnic he say "all my childhood was spent among Italian families. My father lost his Italian citizenship in 1959 when he was forced to choose between Romanian and Italian citizenship. As a boy I spoke in Italian in my family". This model assumes a strong transmission of social values and habits and of the Italian language, what we call intangible heritage of ethnic minority of Italians in Romania. The belonging group shall forward the child elements specific to Italian culture, amoung with cultural elements of Romanian society. Usually ethnic socialised in such an environment have and knows their relatives in Italy, which who has various social interactions (mutual visits, mail, phone, etc.).

The transparent ethnic identity involves a socialization mainly in Romanian, without substantial participation in the spiritual values of the Italian community, but the child is often stated that he is ethnically Italian, that his grandparents or great-grandparents came from Italy.

At home is not at all or very rarely speaks Italian, and sometimes he himself did not know Italian. This type of ethnic identity have called transparent because it is rather a model of intercultural identity, usually specific families of mixed ethnic or ethnic families subjected to a certain point a complex process of assimilation.

For the history of life we used the bibliographic sources making an analysis of their content and answers to interview give by some members of the Italian minority in Romania, about themselves or their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents. Romolo Betteil (Pappu: 2003) was born in Ancona, 1833. After the defeat of Garibaldi's troops near Rome, he worked with Giuseppe Mazzini, was forced to go into exile in Romania. It was established in Braila, where he was the pilot in port and naval expert. He gave the name of his doughter Italia in their wish to perpetuate the image of the country. He died in Bucharest in 1915, as an Italian citizen. His daughter, married James Pappu, and lost by marriage Italian citizenship, but kept its "consciousness and pride peninsular. Edgar, son of Italia

Pappu, made Italian Studies in Bucharest and in Florence, and teach Italian at the National High School in Iasi. Great-great grandson of Romolo Betteli, Vlad Ion Pappu, also attend Italian Studies, and translated from Italian poetry.

Gazza Orindo and Basi Maria di Antonio and their descendants, Italians Rovigo once, have been emigrated in Romania in 1898, in the Cataloi town, Tulcea District, as experts in rice cultivation. They gave birth to 6 children: 3 girls and 3 boys: on Gazzi's line Orlando Antonio son of Orindo Gazzai Gazzi descendants followed Ricardo Gazzi, which is in turn have 4 children, Gazzi Giovanni (2 children), Gazzi Elena (4 children), Gazzi Virginia, Gialdino Gazzi, Gazzi Margaret (2 children), Gazza Carolina (2 children). Children have Italian citizenship until 1959, but girls lost their own by marriage. It is immediately apparent from examining these materials self-biographical, interest members to know and maintaining ethnic Italian living spirit of Italian families, the knowledge of family history, but also to touch the soul of Italy, once the Italian citizenship.

The analysis of ethnic communities from significant metanarrations, such as those relating to ethnicity of family members from the community, and transforming them into success stories in terms of multicultural identity, can be an effective practice in promoting diversity and construction of an intercultural dialogue centered on mutual appreciation of cultural and spiritual values.

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