

Violence in industrial towns in late-socialist Romania: practices and representations

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Violence consists, among other things, of concrete acts of physical aggression *and* their representation or re-contextualization (Theo van Leeuwen, Basil Bernstein). This means transforming a concrete fact or practice in a semiotic fact, thus enabling it to be transferred to other spatial and temporal settings, to be embedded in various discursive strategies, discourses and, finally, ideologies. The project attempts to study the “everyday” violence in its two interconnected dimensions (practices and representations) in the context of several Romanian industrial towns: Călan (“Victoria” Iron Works), Tîrnăveni (Tîrnăveni Glass Factory), Lupeni (Lupeni Coal Mine) in the last twenty years of the Romanian communist regime. Studying this process of re-contextualization of violence in an industrial environment is important, since both violence and work are linked to the issue of legitimacy of the communist regime.

More concretely, the project aims to study how the process of recontextualization is functioning by investigating how the violent acts occurring within the factory/industrial unit or in its social vicinity are dealt with by various instances: the party, factory administration, syndicate, judiciary, police, grass-roots/informal level (workers). Among other things, the following dimensions will be investigated: how is a violent act taken into account by relevant institutional or individual actors, what causality is assigned to violence by party or factory officials, participants, police etc., how a violent act is described linguistically (statically, as an *act* or dynamically as a *process*), how are the perpetrators and victims represented in successive recontextualizations of the same act, what is the relationship between violence and conflict.

Several categories of sources will be used: official and public sources (newspapers, magazines, official discourses, feature movies etc.), archival material from the party, trade union and factory archives and, finally, interviews with former employees.