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Social Representations in Action and Construction
in Media and Society



"Cultural and cross-cultural
approaches to social representations:
The implications of the globalised/localised cultural scenario"

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Participants Presentations

European Ph.D

on Social Representations and Communication

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On gold, pollution and other
troubles :
students' representations of

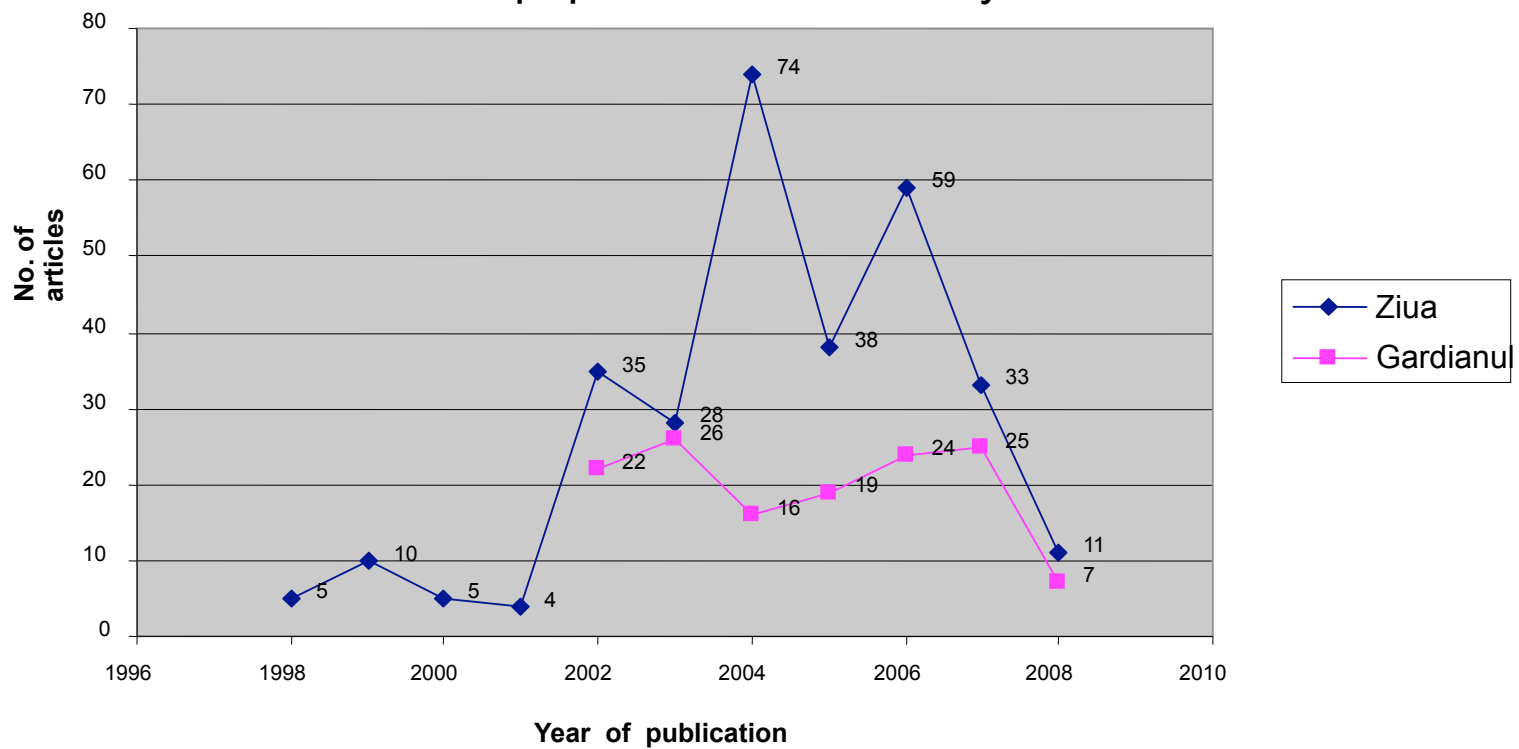
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A place that became famous: Rosia Montana



Press coverage of the “Rosia Montana case” in 2 national newspapers for the last 10 years



???

- Critical attitude of the researcher in relation with the object of study: “What for me is a phenomenon worth to be studied, is it indeed like that? ”
- What *is* Rosia Montana? → What *represents* Rosia Montana?
- ¿Rosia Montana – object of representation?

This study aims ...

- To identify the meanings attributed by students to Rosia Montana, meanings that could outline the social representation of Rosia Montana of young and educated people from Romania.
- To compare between the identified representations of students coming from two geographical areas: Bucharest (≈ 500 km far from Rosia Montana) and Alba Iulia (≈ 70 km far from Rosia Montana)

Population of the study and procedure of data collection

- Data collection procedure:
free associations to the stimulus word “Rosia Montana”
- Time of data collection: January / February 2009
- « Would you please write down 5 words or expressions that first come to your mind when you hear “Rosia Montana” »

	City		Total
	Bucharest	Alba Iulia	
♂	71	85	156
♀	87	73	160
Total	158	158	316

Methods of data analysis

- Quantitative analysis of the diversity and rarity of the terms associated
- Prototypical analysis - Vergès' method (Evoc 2003)
- Lexical analysis: typical lexicon detection (Spad-T, step Vospec)
- Correspondence analysis (Spad-T, step Corbit)

Quantitative description of the words associated to the stimulus “Rosia Montana”

Groups	Total words associated (N)	Mean number of associations made by one student	Unique words (types) associated (T)	Diversity index * (T/N)	Hapax (H)	Rarity index* (H/T)
București	723	4.5	139	0.19	57	0.41
Alba Iulia	752	4.7	109	0.14	42	0.38
Total	1475	4.6	175	0.11	68	0.38

*Minimization of the diversity combined with the maximization of the rarity permits the diagnosis of a structured social representation (Flament & Rouquette: 2003)

Results show that there is a shared knowledge – or at least a stereotypy – in students’ answers related to the topic “Rosia Montana”;

Confirmation of the fact that the long press coverage of the “Rosia Montana case” was about to generate representations to the young people from Romania

Prototypical analysis comparative results

Roşia Montană in Bucarest' students representation

	Mean rank <2.7		Mean rank > 2.7		
Freq. ≥ 17	gold	47	2,234	authorities'	
	cyanide	20	2,200	shortcomings	17 4,765
	environmental			beauty	19 3,053
	destruction	30	2,600	interests	20 3,300
	mining	36	2,472	nature	20 2,800
	mountain	24	2,500		
	pollution	51	2,569		
	poverty	18	2,500		
Freq. < 17	abuse	9	2,667	clean air	12 2,833
	wealth	10	2,300	Apuseni	14 2,929
	natural resources	10	2,500	corruption	12 3,167
	tourism	14	2,571	disaster	9 3,222
				development	9 4,556
				foreign investors	3 3,615
				jobs	11 3,818
				foreign profit	12 3,750
				relaxation	11 2,909
				Romania	10 3,200
				relocation	11 3,545

Roşia Montană" in Alba Iulia' students representation

	Mean rank <2.8		Mean rank > 2.8		
Freq. ≥ 22	gold	82	2,183	environmental	
	wealth	27	2,556	destruction	27 3,296
	beauty	25	2,480	mining	51 3,039
	mountain	36	2,528	tourism	22 3,545
	pollution	92	2,543		
	natural resources	22	2,364		
Freq. < 22	cyanide	10	2,800	clean air	11 3,000
	Gold Corporation	19	2,526	money	16 3,125
				disaster	12 3,083
				Fân Fest	13 3,615
				robbery	10 3,300
				inhabitants	11 4,091
				jobs	11 3,455
				nature	16 3,125
				forest	15 3,800
				radioactivity	15 3,267
				poverty	17 3,176
			abandoned village	11 3,364	

Typical lexicon of Bucarest and Alba Iulia subjects

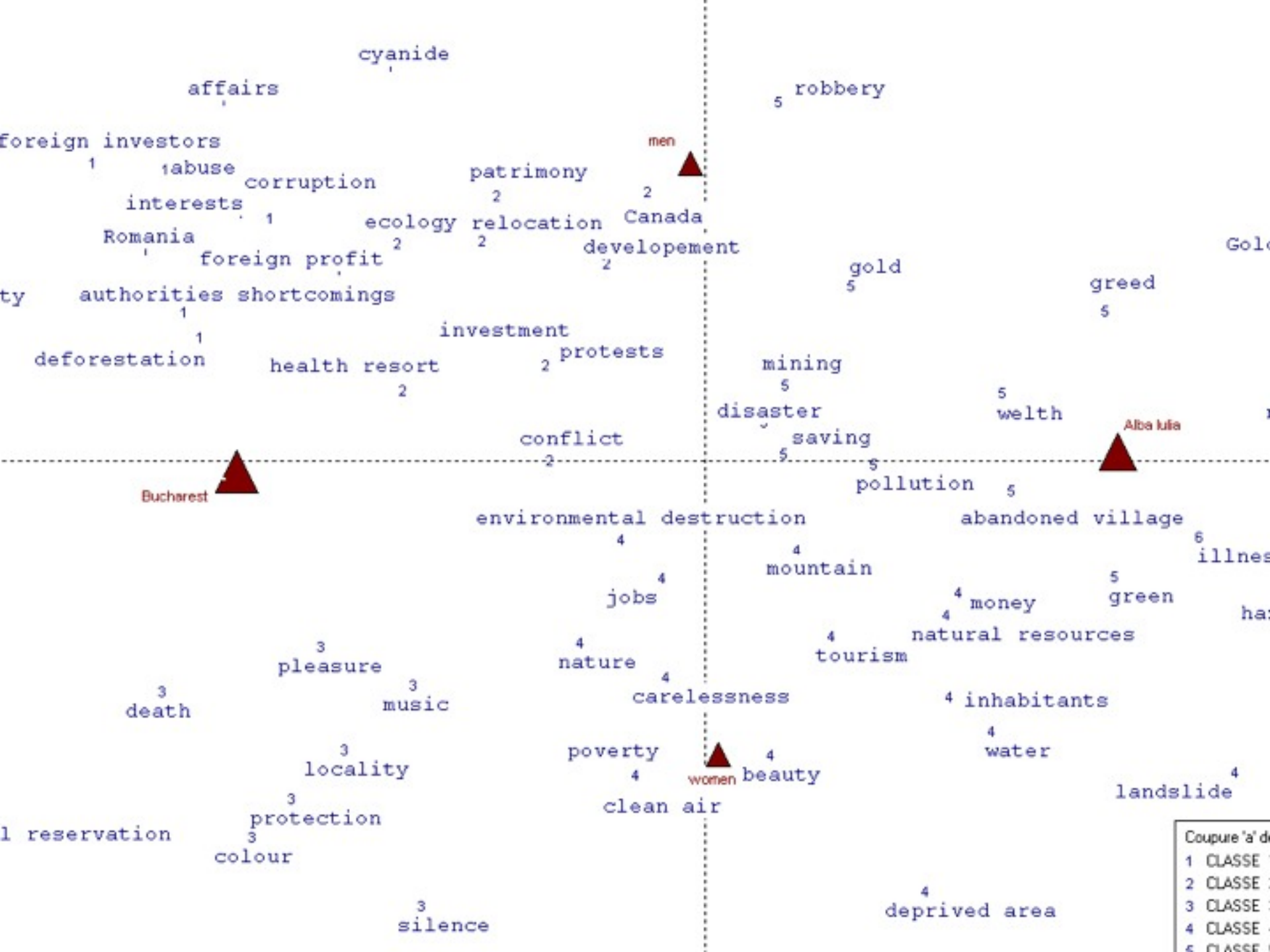
Students from Bucarest	
Specific terms associated	Probability
Apuseni	0,000
relaxation	0,003
authorities' shortcomings	0,003
foreign investors	0,003
publicity	0,003
natural reservation	0,003
interests	0,003
Romania	0,016
abuse	0,028
corruption	0,032
cyanide	0,039

Students from Alba Iulia	
Specific terms associated	Probability
Gold_Corporation	0,000
forest	0,000
radioactivity	0,000
pollution	0,000
Fân_Fest	0,001
gold	0,002
wealth	0,005
natural resources	0,030
hazardous waste	0,034
landslide	0,039

Typical lexicon of male and female subjects

Male students	
Specific terms associated	Probability
cyanide	0,001
gold	0,001
Fân Fest	0,006
robbery	0,021
interests	0,032

Female students	
Specific terms associated	Probability
beauty	0,002
relaxation	0,003
suffering	0,003
poverty	0,009
clean air	0,019



- Coupure 'a' d
- 1 CLASSE
 - 2 CLASSE
 - 3 CLASSE
 - 4 CLASSE
 - 5 CLASSE

Conclusions

- The polemics around the “Rosia Montana issue” generated indeed a representational process even for subjects not directly involved in the conflict
- Although not strictly opposed, there are important differences regarding the contents of SR, according to the geographical area of inhabitation of their owners.
- Contrasting significations: Common sense tolerates contradiction → Hypothesis of paradoxical social representations (Moscovici:1996)
- The SR of Rosia Montana is twofold:
 representation of a *place* + representation of a *case*

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