Alina Pop

# ROȘIA MONTANĂ
# Social representations around an environmental controversy in Romania

# Roşia Montană: Social Representations around an Environmental Controversy in Romania

The Romanian village Roşia Montană is said to be the site of Europe's largest gold and silver deposits. Plans to extract these precious metals were launched in the late nineties by the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation, a joint venture between a Canadian-based mining company and the Romanian State. The Roşia Montană Project met with strong opposition from various social players who coalesced in the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement, thus generating a long-lasting controversy that exceeded local boundaries and making Roşia Montană internationally renowned. The ongoing conflict over Roşia Montană is, in many respects, a unique phenomenon that marks an important part of Romania's recent democratic history.

This book proposes a social psychological analysis of this phenomenon, by focusing on the social representations emerged in Romanian society due to this conflict. In analyzing social dynamics, the conflict between groups is interpreted in terms of a conflict between social representations. At the same time, the research presented here aims contributing to social representation theory, by broadening knowledge about polemic social representations. Contrary to hegemonic and emancipated representations, polemic social representations are generated in the course of social conflict and are not shared by the whole society. For studying polemic social representations in a real setting, the Roşia Montană affair proved indeed to be a 'gold mine'.

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**Alina Pop**

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ALINA POP




With an Introduction by
ANNAMARIA SILVANA DE ROSA

# Contents

# Introduction: Social Representations and controversial environmental issues

Annamaria Silvana de Rosa[1]

"Le scandale de la pensée sociale" (The scandal of social thought) is the title of the last book published in 2013 by Moscovici. It contains a collection of re-edited French articles previously published in English across several decades of the development of social representation theory (SRT). In line with the provocative title of the book by the founder of SRT, the controversial case study of the Roşia Montană affair, chosen by Alina Pop, is a key example of how to study 'polemical' social representations (those most closely associated with the identities and objectives of particular groups: Moscovici, 1988) in a real setting and in the media: a 'gold mine' indeed for social scientists – as Pop interestingly argues, exploiting the metaphorical meaning of Roşia Montană, supposed to be the largest gold and silver deposit in Europe.

With her interest in the role of social representations in driving people's attitudes and positioning different social groups on the basis of their conflicting ideas, Alina Pop has certainly identified an excellent research object in the progressive transformation of Roşia Montană from an ancient (and almost unknown) village situated in the Apuseni Mountains into an well-known matter of animated international debate. Having leapt onto the media agenda even outside Romanian

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borders, Roşia Montană has become a symbolic controversial place 'to be protected' or 'to be exploited', thereby opposing the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement to the Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) with their contrasting economic-environmental views generating opposite political decision-making options and outcomes.

There are several thematic areas (health, science, politics, work and organizations, etc.), which animate controversies among various social actors (citizens, policy-makers, scientists, journalists, etc.) in the social arena, doing so within different interactive contexts and through polyphonic media scenarios (de Rosa, 2013a). But the environment is certainly a macro-thematic field that has attracted increasing interest in recent decades. It involves cross-cutting perspectives and topics also from economics and politics, but it also has implications for health, science education and the underlying system of values, worldviews and identities,  especially if the connectivity with nature is perceived as a part of environmental identity (Clayton, 2003, 2012; Orr, 2003; Whiteside, 2002; de Rosa, 2013c).

Taking up the invitation by Jodelet and Scipion (1992) to improve understanding of environmental beliefs and values in order to explain the puzzling gap between concern and behaviour (following pioneering research reports for the Ministère de l'environnement: Chiva,  Jodelet, , Moscovici,  Pujol & Scipion, 1983 ; Jodelet & Scipion, 1990, 1992; Jodelet, Moulin & Scipion, 1994; Jodelet & Montforte, 1994, and the first book chapters on social representations of the environment : Jodelet, 1982a, 1982b), Castro and Lima (2001), for example, conducted a study on the links between the belief systems concerning the environment and vision of science among Portuguese respondents on new ecological beliefs (the so-called NEP: New Environmental Paradigm: Dunlap and Van Liere, 1978; Dunlap, VanLiere, Mertig, Catton, and Howell, 1992; Bechtel, Corral-Verdugo, and Pinheiro, 1999). After reconstructing two belief systems: "prudence, linking new ecological ideas with a relativist view of science, and confidence, linking old anthropocentric ideas with a positivist view of science", the results of Castro and Lima's study supported the hypothesis that, although these systems can be viewed as contradictory, some respondents managed to agree with both of them.

Castro (2006) has reviewed the contribution of social representations to research on public environmental concerns and worldviews that emerged within the larger literature in the 1970s as a problem for the social sciences. She has identified three problematic areas: (1) incipient theoretical integration among the frameworks dominating research; (2) insufficient reflection on the assumptions and inadequate measurement of the concepts employed; (3) a need for new research questions that push studies beyond analysis of the socio-demographical correlates of beliefs.

The increasing interest in environmental topics over recent decades, also in the social representations literature, has followed the explosion of this issue both among lay people and scientists. It has also been due, on the one hand, to the worldwide visibility gained by the pro-environmental ecologist movement of the 1970s which battled to bring the environmental issue onto the political agenda, and on the other, to the creation of a trans-disciplinary field: 'environmental studies',

which has branches from the natural and social sciences, including 'environmental psychology'.

In line with the 'new environmental paradigm' (Dunlap et Al., 1992), the 2011 special Eurobarometer survey on attitudes of European citizens towards the environment found that 95% of EU citizens believe that protecting the environment is important to them personally, and that 69% of European citizens still believe that people are "currently not doing enough to use natural resources efficiently" (Eurobarometer, 2011).

Updated meta-theoretical analyses of scientific production in social representations archived in the So.Re.Com. 'A.S. de Rosa' @-library in the form of articles, book chapters, and contributions to the dedicated series of biannual international scientific conferences and other serial or occasional conferences on social representations (de Rosa, 2014a, 2015, forthcoming), allow the continuous and repeated development of results published in previous studies (de Rosa, 2001; 2013b; de Rosa and D'Ambrosio, 2003, 2008). On using the author's institution country as the criterion for geo-localization of scientific production, it emerges that the macro-area of studies on social representations of the environment developed mostly in Europe in the decades 1972-2001, whereas from 2002 to 2013 this focus of interest became even more prominent in Latin America. The macro-thematic area centred on the social representation of the 'environment' comprises a wide range of specific topics: for instance, the 'city-country-continent as an object of investigation, 'ecology, eco-village', 'genetic manipulation', 'nuclear energy and radioactivity', 'pollution', 'rurality', 'tourism', 'urban mobility', etc.

The illustration below visualizes the geo-mapping of scientific production on social representations throughout the world in the macro-thematic area of environments, as archived in the So.Re.Com. 'A.S. de Rosa' @-library repositories.



**World Geo-mapping of the scientific production of the Social Representations of the Environment. Source "So.Re.Com. 'A.S. de Rosa' @-library" meta-analyzed repository (2013)**

Furthermore, confirming what was said above about the cross-cutting perspectives involved in research on the 'environment', analysis of the results relative to the 'thematic areas' by means of the grid for the meta-theoretical analysis showed that most of the scientific production filled in the So.Re.Com. 'A.S. de Rosa' @-library has been subject to multiple categorizations. This concerns, to cite only some examples, the macro-thematic area of 'identity', in which case places, cities, and capitals are investigated in relation to their identity or to the multi-dimensional processes of identification by residents or tourists (place-identity, city-identity, national and supra-national identity, etc.); or the macro-thematic area of 'health' (when investigation of the social representations of a particular environmental issue also refers to the health conditions of the inhabitants or workers); or the macro-thematic area of 'politics' (when for example the polemical representations of a controversial environmental issue are investigated also in relation to other dimensions, such political activism, political change, social control, citizenship, etc.).

However common to all these different sub-topics included in the categorization of the macro-area concerning the environment, and also the multiple cross-categorization of studies on other macro-thematic areas and some of their specific sub-topics, is the theme of the fundamental nature-society relation and practices-actions related to the environment.

Indeed, from the 1960s onwards, Moscovici has been sensitive to the 'ecological revolution' both intellectually and politically. He devoted to this theme one of his first books *Essai sur l'historie humaine de la nature* (1968-1977), followed a few years later by other books: *La societé contre nature* (1972-1994) and *Homme domestique et homme savage* (1974-1979) and many other book chapters or articles (Moscovici, 1969, 1976b, 1978, 1985b, 1992, 1993, 1996a, 1998a, 1998b, 2012a) and interviews (Moscovici, 1968, 1985, 2000a, 2000b, 2002b). This theme is much more than a topic for Moscovici. It is a worldview and a philosophical assumption representing a sort of fil rouge in his entire intellectual life and political commitment. Moscovici has aimed, not at a 'cult of nature', but at a 'praxis of nature', promoting in the 1970s the movement of ecological activists expressing the desire "to adhere tightly to the ground of society, of nature, and to challenge them violently, and to provoke history" (Moscovici, 1974: 32).

Contrary to the traditional nature-society opposition, Moscovici believes in the co-evolution of nature and society. He maintains that, in our current cybernetic era, this co-evolution has reached a decisive point, given that humanity is now obliged to "take charge of nature". "Nature and society are still dichotomized. The difference is only that now we are invited to side with nature 'against society'". The first task of such a 'society for nature' is therefore to redirect the current inner movement. "It would seek not to arrest growth but to challenge the necessity of technologies and products that are destructive or polluting or that are likely to exacerbate social stratification. More than aiming to protect nature directly, it would problematize the natural categories" of today's societies: their division of labour, their production of knowledge, the qualities implicit in different categories. Moscovici commends

a 're-enchantment of the world'. This kind of re-enchanted world would dismantle needless prohibitions on individual experimentation, stimulate creativity, and value the diversity of ethnic communities (Moscovici 1976: 123-129) (Whiteside, 2002).

"Society is not outside or against nature"; it is "within nature and for nature". It is essential to bear in mind that for Moscovici (2002b: 37) "La nature n'est pas l'environnement, sort de bôite dans laquelle on est enfermé, elle est toujiours un rapport…"[2] Furthermore, this conception of nature-society and of the human history of the nature has political implications, given that for Moscovici (2002b: 38) "Le deuxième aspect peut-être plus prétentieux de ma formule est politique: en fait, lorsqu'on établit un rapport à la nature, on le choisir. Certains prétendent que si l'on peut faire quelque chose du point de vue scientifique et technique, on doit le faire automatiquement. Je ne suis pas de cet avis. Il faut toujours se poser la question: doit-on le faire? Car l'effet d'un telle initiative ne se réduit pas à une experience de laboratoire ou un article de journal, c'est tout un monde – le vôtre, le nôtre – qui en est affecté"[3]. The 'return to nature' is not backward-looking.

In light of this dynamic vision of the nature-society relationship, the sphere of pro-against environmental representations/actions becomes a privileged field of investigation in which to integrate as heuristic tools the three interrelated theories conceived by Moscovici: a) the social representations theory (1961/1976, 1981, 1984, 1995, 1996b, 1997, 1999, 2000d, 2000e, 2001, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b; Farr & Moscovici 1984; & Marková, 2000 among others contributions), b) the theory of minorities influence and innovation (1976a/1979; Moscovici, Mugny & Van Avermaet, 1985; Moscovici, Mucchi-Faina & Maass 1994; Pérez, Moscovici & Buschini, 2000 among others contributions); c) the theory of social consensus and collective decisions (Moscovici & Doise, 1992/1994 among other contributions).

This background should be considered in order to understand the interest of the controversial case study chosen by Alina Pop and finely presented in her book. She also shows the role played by communication in the construction and use of media representations as 'symbolic weapons' mobilizing behaviours, media discourses, and campaigns guided by incompatible goals pursued by different actors, which has served their own interests by describing Rosia Montană as a dual 'fictitious entity':

> "Over the last ten years of conflict, Roşia Montană has been portrayed as poor or rich, old-fashioned or modern, industrial or agricultural, "green" or "red" from pollution by communist industrialization and as either historic enough to be included in UNESCO's world heritage or as a traditional mining town. While the corporate side attempted to

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2 Nature is not simply the environment, a kind of box within which one is enclosed. It is always a relationship (my translation).

3 The second, perhaps more pretentious, aspect of my formula is political: in fact, when establishing a relationship with nature, we choose. Some argue that if we can do something from the scientific and technical point of view, it should be done automatically. I do not think so. Always ask the question: should we do it? Because the effect of such an initiative is not limited to a laboratory experiment or a newspaper article, it is a whole world - yours and ours - that is affected (my translation).

create the image of a troubled and empty town in need of help, NGO's were producing the "Save Roşia Montană" campaign by portraying Roşia Montană as unspoilt and pristine as a beautiful place and community, a place of sacred spirituality and national identity threatened by corporate plans. The mining project was either presented as an economic and ecological solution for Roşia Montană development and restoration, or as an unacceptable environmental risk that would eventually lead to Roşia Montană's doom while at the same time negatively affecting the entire area because of cyanide use. The involvement of foreign investors was either perceived as mutually beneficial, natural course of action in Romania's transition to global capitalism or as the detrimental plunder of national resources. Furthermore, politicians were either accused of being ineffective in their decision about the Roşia Montană affair or of having corrupt hidden interests." (p. 199)

The multi-step interrelated lines of inquiry pursued by Alina Pop have enabled her to investigate the polemical representations in action both in the media and people's minds. She detects three psychological dimensions: a) general environmental awareness, b) personal involvement, c) agentic dispositions. These dimensions, identified in three groups (supporters, opponents, undecided), are compared to provide empirical evidence that the group of opponents were generally associated with a high level of environmental awareness, strong personal involvement, and agentic dispositions associated with the perception of foreign investors as belonging to corrupt Romania culture. By contrast, the project's supporters showed low levels of environmental awareness, and weak personal involvement and agentic disposition, and their representations of the foreign investors were positively anchored to economic benefits.

"Finally, throughout this research, we have emphasized the mobilizing role of polemical social representations, which are deliberately created to influence others and whose success is proved by their ability to impose themselves. For this research, however, their degree of success was not measured in terms of majority/minority influences because these were almost impossible to determine for the Roşia Montană conflict; the least financially powerful actors are also the most numerous (i.e. the "Save Roşia Montană campaign"), while the most financially powerful ones (i.e. the Corporation) were unable to increase support with the exception of a small number of players. Locally, the situation is quite different. The majority of the Roşia Montană population favored the mining company, whereas the local NGOs fighting against the project progressively lost local support." (p. 201).

Being personally involved in research areas concerned with both environmental and political issues, I found the Alina Pop's multi-layer empirical study presented in this book of especial interest. Some of our investigations also focus on the social representations of the relations among citizens, community and institutions in the political arena and social actors' perceptions of their capacity to influence each other in the public sphere, orienting actions and policies (Mannarini, 2009; Guareschi, Hernandez & Carderenas, 2010; Catellani & Sensales, 2011).  For example, an exemplary case study on the No TAV social movement has been conducted by means of media analysis, also including social networks. The No

TAV movement focuses on polemical representations concerning the EU's political decision to cross the French-Italian border with a high-speed railway. The various social actors and target groups are positioned on the basis of their contrasting views of the environmental impact on the local community in Valle Susa versus national economic interests concerning Italy's inclusion in the new European high-speed rail system (de Rosa & Bocci, 2012, 2013, 2014).

Our case study carried out in Italy – as well as Alina Pop's investigation of Rosia Montană in Romania – shows the epistemological interest of identifying interconnections among the theory of social representations, the theory of active minorities, and the theory of social consensus and collective decisions in empirical field investigations attentive to the phenomenology of the genesis, development and potential decline or deviation of such movements from their statu nascendi to collective organized actions, and to their potential influence on political decisions at the global-local scale.

In order to study polemical representations in action in social movements at the global scale, we are conducting another empirical investigation on the Occupy Wall Street (the 99%) social movement. It is well known that – since the economic crisis exploded in 2008 – economy and finance are "under accusation or defence" (de Rosa, Bocci & Bulgarella, 2010). Polemical representations are voiced by different social actors (citizens, community, institutions), also according to their ideological beliefs and perceptions of their capacity to influence each other in the public sphere, orienting actions and policies. The Occupy Wall Street movement – which rapidly expanded from the USA to the world – has been characterised by its focus on controversial issues concerning economic policies and the global effect of the financial crisis within various geo-cultural contexts where the movement has assumed different forms of expression. In parallel with a cross-national research programme on social representations of the stock market in Europe and China (de Rosa, Sun & Bocci, 2014 forthcoming), we have investigated the Occupy Wall Street movement by means of media analysis, including traditional (generalist and specialised newspapers) and new media (websites and social networks) in the USA, Europe (Italy) and China over eight months (July 2011 to March 2012) (de Rosa &. Bocci, 2012, 2013; de Rosa, Bocci & Wang, 2014). Also in this case, in light of Moscovici's theories of active minorities and social representations, results selected from multiple media sources illustrate the dynamics among the movement's life-cycle, the different stages of the protest ("from occupying tent camps to occupying the national conscience"), and its communicative strategies (like the use of social networks to generate shared representations of the richest people, the 1%, to organise the protest by the 99%). The spread of this movement, which self-defines itself as a 'majority '(99%) adopting minority behavioural styles, is also interesting for investigation of how ideological conflicts are anchored in different geo-political scenarios (Žižek, 2011).

Central to both our empirical studies is the attention paid to the new media and the use of social networks as strategic tools to organize collective actions and make sense of the reality concerning relations among citizens, politics and

community/world views, in the attempt to promote social awareness, although generating polemical and controversial representations. The exploration of social networks – as complementary and fundamental new media spaces for building, sharing and transmitting social representations – in addition to the traditional media may represent a potential extension of the research pursued by Alina Pop in the case of the Roşia Montană affair or other investigations.

It would also be interesting to verify empirically by means of a systematic meta-theoretical analysis on the complete research production on the social representations of the environment, especially those of a controversial nature.

    a.  if the opposition between a high level of environmental awareness (associated with strong personal involvement, and agentic disposition) and a low level of environmental awareness (associated with weak personal involvement and agentic dispositions) occurs systematically so that pro-environment attitudes (against its commercial exploitation) and attitudes anchored to economic benefits are opposed;

    b.  if there is a constant opposition between environment awareness and economic benefits, even when the latter coincide with survival of the local population and when other important elements of their lives are involved, like health: emblematic in this regard the case of ILVA (Taranto, Italy)[4], where arguments centred on the residents' economic need to work strongly animate the controversial social debate in the media and within or between institutions (parliament, trade unions, judiciary, etc.) on the forced closure of the industrial site, because of the risks to health of environmental pollution by the steelworks, in an area with high cancer rates among the population. The dilemma is this: to work in a polluted environment at the risk of dying or to protect one's health in a safe environment at the risk of being unemployed, in the case where people wish to work and to survive together with the healthy environment.

Other potential future developments of the research programme have been outlined by Alina Pop herself in the conclusions of her book, since the Roşia Montană controversy is far from being a closed case, but rather a 'gold mine' with unlimited resources for social scientific research.

Whether Alina Pop will go even deeper into exploration of the Roşia Montană affair or whether she will choose other 'gold mines', we hope that she has a brilliant

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4 see the history of the case ILVA  on Wikipedia : http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilva
and the photodossier ( Images for Ilva Taranto - Report images ) that can be analysed as the tools used in community psychology, like the Photovoice (Wang, Burris, 1994; Mastrilli,  Nicosia & Santinello, 2013) or Participatory Photo-Mapping (Dennis, Gaulocher, Carpiano & Brown, 2009) or more specifically for detecting the iconic representations and their symbolic values (de Rosa and Farr, 2001 ) at the link:
http://www.google.com/search?q=ilva+taranto&client=safari&rls=en&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=tg4KU733F6ed7gbczYEw&ved=0CC8QsAQ&biw=1187&bih=925

career as a researcher and lecturer, continuing along the endless road of knowledge with increasing enthusiasm and competence, sharing her results with others and inspiring her students.

A final remark concerns appreciation of Alina Pop's effort to transform her doctoral dissertation into a book, a still valuable format even for social sciences and not only for the humanities, despite its de-evaluation in favour of articles in high-impact journals in the contemporary academic scenario largely dominated by the obsession with bibliometric tools as quality indicators and by the pressure for short publications and knowledge "tweeting" (de Rosa, 2014b). Indeed, as creator and programme director of the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication (http://www.europhd.eu) – in which Alina Pop was enrolled between the 2007-08 and 2011-12 academic years – I am very proud that she has succeeded in describing and discussing the rich research material collected for her multi-step investigation, presenting the main empirical findings in the double format (book and article) adopted by our international joint doctoral programme in order to train the early-stage researchers enrolled to disseminate the scientific knowledge that they have helped to produce in our supra-disciplinary field of social representations.

I am even more proud if I consider that Alina has been able to transform her thesis into a book published also outside Romania, in a  crucial phase of her life-cycle development when she is involved in multiple demanding roles and tasks, as an early-stage researcher, wife and mother of two children. She thus shows that an intellectual and academic career may be pursued if strong motivation and serious commitment are possessed. I hope that she will continue to pursue her various life paths with harmony and creative equilibrium.

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# 1 Roşia Montană - a 'gold mine' for the study of polemic social representations

This introductory chapter is organized into different subsections that follow the wording of its title. The first part is an introduction to what can be called 'the Roşia Montană phenomenon'. We briefly present the main features of the ongoing conflict over Roşia Montană, by also making reference to the larger socio-political context in which it occurred. Second, we outline our own research choices and objectives related to the Roşia Montană conflict and defend the suitability of analyzing it in terms of a conflict between social representations. Then, the last part of this introduction focuses on the notion of polemic social representations. In turn, this part is divided into three sections. Firstly, we will present several theoretical references to this concept, and, secondly, we will introduce empirical contributions to the study of polemic social representations of scholars. In the final section, we will attempt to give a concise view of the way we understand the approach to polemic social representations in our research, integrating other notions and concepts of social representations theory as well.

This book intends to offer a comprehensive analysis of a phenomenon that is, in many respects, unique and which has marked an important stage in Romania's recent democratic history: the Roşia Montană environmental conflict. In doing this research, we adopt a social psychological perspective, which, as said by Moscovici (2000), is the study of social representations, their properties, their origins and their impact, – while bearing in mind that in analyzing social dynamics, "the conflict between groups" and the "conflict between social representations" are substitutable expressions (Rouquette, 1994b). In this view, the gold-mine project, which is the prime source of the conflict in the Roşia Montană issue, stands for a particular event which groups have to face in order to constitute and control their world, and thus institutes the emergence of social representations (Moscovici, 2000).

This research is both intended as a contribution to social representation theory and deepening knowledge about *polemic social representations* (Moscovici, 1988). The village of Roşia Montană is supposedly the site of Europe's largest gold deposit,

and the plans initiated by a foreign company to mine that gold have generated a long lasting dispute which has gone far beyond the local level, even exceeding national boundaries, and made Roşia Montană internationally renowned. As the title of this introductory chapter suggests, we consider the Roşia Montană case to be a 'gold mine' for studying polemic social representations and, in large part, it was the notion of polemic social representations (Moscovici, 1988) that guided us in designing the research project. After reading the relevant literature, this concept seemed to be, with some notable exceptions (see sections 1.3.1; 1.3.2 in this chapter), somewhat insufficiently developed within the social representations paradigm. Thus the first motivation was to widen the knowledge about polemic social representations and to comprehend how they emerge and function. Our intention was then to study polemic representations in a real setting, as it was indeed suggested (Moscovici, 2000). For doing this, the Roşia Montană affair seemed most appropriate.

## 1.1    The Roşia Montană affair

The brief description of what we could call "the Roşia Montană phenomenon" is not an easy task at all. It is indeed challenging to summarize how this phenomenon appeared and what are its most important characteristics, if we take into account the multiple and contrasting interpretations or "forms of truth" about Roşia Montană that currently circulate, and which constitute the object of our analysis. One thing is certain: Roşia Montană is a place in Romania whose fame cannot be disputed. What raised awareness about this place beyond a few passages in history books – Roşia Montană being the oldest documented place in Romania – is the controversy related to the gold and silver mining plan, the precious metals existing in huge amounts in the subsoil of the area[1] (Ganzelewski, 2002). But the presence of gold alone does not make this a unique phenomenon; Roşia Montană is not a virgin territory in which the discovery of gold is surprising. The ancient mining town, situated in the southern part of the Apuseni Mountains (the Western Carpathians), approximately 79 km away from the city of Alba Iulia and 130 km away from Cluj-Napoca (the biggest city in Transylvania), is part of a geological area renowned for its richness in precious metals, also known as the Golden Quadrilateral.

The origin of the village itself is related to the gold exploitation practices from Antiquity. The "pioneers" of gold extraction in these mountains were the Romans, after Emperor Trajan, at the beginning of the second century A.D., conquered the Dacian provinces north of the Danube that largely form Romania's present-day territory. It is historically recorded that Dacia's rich gold resources represented an important stimulus for the conquest of this province by the Romans (Roman *et al.*: 1982). The first market for the Roşia Montană gold was Rome in its moments of historical triumph. The ancient name of the village, Alburnus Maior, was first

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1 Practically, at Roşia Montană there is thought to be located the largest deposit of precious metals in Romania and Europe, estimated at over 300 tons of gold and 1,600 tons of silver.

documented on a wax tablet dating from the 6th February 131, which summarizes a contract related to mining. Since then, Roşia Montană can boast an almost uninterrupted history of gold extraction (Dordea, 2003)[2]. In medieval times, the actual place Roşia Montană was known under the Latin name *Rubeo Fluminae* (Red River) or the Hungarian name Verespatak. When freely translated into English, this name signifies 'the Red from the Mountain'[3]. The river crossing the place, popularly known as "Roşia River" (Red River), has a yellow-red color, resulting from the waters drained from the mine galleries.

Thus, what makes the Roşia Montană case surprising is not the intention to extract the gold still present in the subsoil, but the very fact that this intention was met with so much resistance. The initial plans of the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation company, which wants to extract the Roşia Montană gold, anticipated that it would obtain the first gold ingot in 2005. At the time of writing (July 2013), the mining project announced at the end of the last century is far from being put into practice and there is no certainty that it will ever be. The controversy generated by this mining project makes Roşia Montană more than just a Romanian village whose history is known and which can be easily situated geographically. Roşia Montană has become a polemic social object, the source of an unprecedented phenomenon in Romania's history, a country in which environmentalism as a factor of explaining the opposition to the mining project is not a tradition (Pavlinek & Pickles: 2000).

We cannot understand the particularities of this phenomenon without placing it in the socio-political context in which it manifests. In 1948, the communist plan of nationalization and centralization of national economy nationalized all the natural resources of the soil and subsoil and all "means of production" generating "the exploitation of man by man". According to the same plan, history was rewritten in favor of the political regime, and propaganda asserted by all means the superiority of 'socialist property', the praise of traditions and of communism's "New Man, a category that included miners. During the four and a half decades of communism, through communist institutions, ideology and propaganda, social representations were formed to serve the purposes of the ruling party (Betea, 2001). Backed by social and economic policies that not only avoided unemployment but also favored miners as a 'vanguard detachment of the working class', limited access to real information regarding the country's economic situation and censorship of the press,

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2 The Romans withdrew from Dacia in the 3rd century A.D. Mining activities in Roşia Montană continued during the Middle Ages, were expanded under the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, after a brief period of private small-scale underground mining (in the interwar period), the mines were taken over by the Romanian state in 1948 and gold exploitation on a large scale was conducted by state-owned companies. After 1989, the mining companies all around the country continued their activities benefiting primarily from state-subsidies. However, many of them encountered financial problems and were restructured or even closed down. Until 2006, Roşia Montană's gold was extracted by the state mining company. Once the government subsidy had stopped, mining activities, which had been progressively reduced, ceased altogether.

3 In Romanian, "Roşia" is the articulated feminine form of the adjective "roşu" wich means the colour red. As a substantive, "Roşia" also signifies the fruit tomato.

the inhabitants of Roşia Montană, as well as the entire Romanian population, were to a great extent convinced that mining continued to be a very profitable activity.

The technological obsolescence typical of communist economies made the profitability of the Roşia Montană exploitation decrease progressively, even if, in terms of extraction methods, the exploitation was moved from underground to surface quarrying at the beginning of the 1970s (Sîntimbrean *et al.*, 2002, 2006). The huge costs of obsolete technologies made it difficult to keep the exploitation active, even for a centralized economy like socialism. Given that during the communist regime the idea of unemployment corresponded to an ideological 'enemy' that had to be countered at all costs and by any means, the economic inefficiency of the gold mine, just as it happened with an important part of Romanian industry, was countered by massive redirection of money coming from more efficient sectors, especially agriculture.

The fall of the communist regime in Romania (1989) did not have an immediate impact. At the beginning of the 1990s the state exploitation at Roşia Montană received budget transfers as direct subsidies, which kept the activity of the state mining company "alive", although its economic efficiency did by no means justify any such government decision. The explanations are generally political: the new political power from Bucharest outright rejected the 'shock therapy' paradigm, which was nevertheless used by states with a history relatively similar to Romania's, such as Poland or, in certain aspects, the Czech Republic, after its separation from Czechoslovakia. Thus, the shift from the centralized and controlled state economy towards one in which the market dictated the balance between supply and demand was slow in Romania, and it happened over many years in which the central government pumped money in order to cover the 'black holes' of economic inefficiency. Moreover, in the equation of full control over political power, Romanian miners, especially the most numerous and well-organized ones, who dealt with the extraction of industrial coal, were 'used' (the polemic debate over this 'historical stain' has not yet been clarified) in violent acts in the streets of Bucharest in order to stifle and neutralize the opposition groups to the newly-instated regime at the beginning of 1990 (Gledhill, 2005). As a direct effect, the mining unions' power of negotiation with the government soared. In fact, substantial subsidizing to the mining sectors, even in conditions of economic inefficiency, continued to be a state policy. With this background, the gold miners from the Roşia Montană area became the beneficiaries of this policy, even if they did not actively take part in the political power games in Romania's capital. Specifically, government subsidies infused the mining industry that was considered bankrupt. In 1996, the political developments in Romania brought about the appearance of a democratic alternation in power. The new political regime resulting from the 1996 elections displayed an attitude of extreme caution to the massive subsidy requirements of the mining industry. At the same time, Romania's economy continued to weaken as well, witnessing decreases in the GDP every year from December 1989. Hence, explicit recommendations by international financial institutions from which Romania borrowed money called for a reform of the mining sector, but also underlined the inability of the gradually

failing economy to cover the costs of mining subsidies, in turn leading to a relatively sudden reduction of mining across Romania, and by extension, Roşia Montană.

What makes the Roşia Montană phenomenon stand out entirely is the fact that it manifests itself in a country in which environmentalist protest movements had no tradition whatsoever. On the contrary, the giant industrial projects achieved during the communist era were not only unopposed, but they were received with a lot of enthusiasm by a population convinced by the communist propaganda supporting the country's industrialization. This took place even at the cost of destruction of entire villages with the purpose of building dams, industrial sites, or of extending agricultural areas. Communist authorities ignored the pollution resulting from industrial activity, with strong negative effects on the environment and on the health of the population, even though, officially, environmental protection laws existed (Pavlinek & Pickles, 2000). The change of regime did not produce overnight environmental consciousness or the firm adoption of policies inspired by it. Even if the self-proclaimed environmental parties were set up in the multi-party fever immediately after 1989, their success was and still remains rather modest. Regarding governmental action, although a new Ministry of Water, Forests and Environmental Protection was created in 1990 and a new law of environmental protection was adopted, thus institutionalizing the protection of the environment for the first time in Romania, the serious socio-economic problems affecting the population and the political and legislative instability made the problem of the environment a rather tertiary issue on the agenda of the governments that rose to power in the 1990s, hence efforts to maintain the polluting industries in order to control the soaring unemployment rate, which worsened the quality of the environment in Romania (Kruger & Carius, 2001). Romania's process of accession to the European Union, a process that was meant to symbolically confirm the country's place among consolidated democracies, triggered the adoption of environmentalist legislation and policies. The negotiations that started in the late 1990s and continued until the end of 2004 created political and media awareness about environmental issues; negotiations about protecting the environment were in fact the most sensitive. From then on, the authorities could no longer ignore pollution issues, and the adoption and implementation of the *acquis communautaire* regarding environmental protection had become a condition to come to power.

In terms of population, environmental problems were beginning to be noticed, but the apolitical environmentalist organizations that had appeared as a result of the democratization process, and winning the freedom of speech did not have a major social impact, their actions being limited to the capital and to some hot spots (Kruger & Carius, 2001). For example, the disastrous cyanide spill that happened in January 2000 in Baia Mare, after the dam of a lake retaining polluted gold ore processing waters broke, failed to generate any Romanian protest, except at a local level. This accident caused major damage both in Romania and neighboring countries. The cyanide-contaminated water discharged in the Tisza basin severely affected the soil and surface waters in Romania, Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria, killed tens of thousands of fish and other forms of life, and intoxicated sources of drinking water.

Considered a second Chernobyl by international press, the severity of this event was minimized by Romanian authorities and media (Argeseanu Cunningham, 2005), and produced a national hysteria in which Hungary, the most affected country by the cyanide-spill, was accused of intentionally polluting the Tisza river in order to tarnish Romania's image (Ban & Romanţan, 2008). As will be shown later in this book, this event served as an anchor for the representations of Roşia Montană, constructed especially by the opponents to the gold mine project.

We have briefly described the Romanian socio-political context in the first decade after 1989, amid intentions of the Canadian company Gabriel Resources to take over gold mining at Roşia Montană from the state-owned mining company. In partnership with this company, the Canadian company undertook geologic prospecting revealing the existence of a much larger deposit than what was previously thought. The plans to exploit it were thus outlined. In 1997 a Romanian-Canadian joint venture was set up in which the Romanian state, represented by the mining company Minvest Deva who owned a little over 19% of the mine, and the Canadian company who owned 80%. The means through which the newly set up company, Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC; initially named Euro Gold Resources), was licensed to exploit the ore in the Roşia Montană area is a contentious issue. Initially, the license owner was the state company Minvest, which was still holding mining operations in the area through its subsidiary Roşiamin, but in 2000 the title was transferred to RMGC. This company launched the Roşia Montană gold and silver exploitation project at the end of the 1990's.

As mentioned above, gold exploitation at Roşia Montană is not a new practice. The RGMC's project introduced novelties such as exploitation by a company with mostly private (and foreign) capital, and especially building a massive industrial complex engulfing Roşia Montană and two small nearby villages in order to exploit the huge ore deposits discovered, hence causing the displacement of around 2 000 people[4]. Moreover, the area also includes a rich archaeological site, with vestiges dating from the Roman and mediaeval periods. Gold extraction would be undertaken in four surface quarries of a size that would make the mine at Roşia Montană the largest surface mine in Europe. The project also plans the building of a processing plant in which the separation of gold and silver from the ore will be done by means of cyanide-leaching technology. The tailings resulting from this process would be stored in a pond that would completely cover the Corna Valley and nearby village.

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4 The old mining town of Roşia Montană is now part of a commune of the same name that includes 16 villages and covers an area of 42 km2. The initial exploitation plans of the deposit around the Roşia Montană village, announced at the end of the 1990s, required that the entire village of Roşia Montană and two other villages from the commune be displaced. Subsequently, after evaluation by archeologists and architects who did research in the area, as part of a research program that RMGC was forced to fund before mining began, some areas with rich archeological vestiges were declared historical monuments by law while other buildings, especially in the historical center of the village, were classified as national cultural property. Moreover, the existence of geological formations considered natural monuments imposed the declaration of a secure area that should be protected from mining operations, which the company was compelled to respect.

Opposition to the project started mainly locally in 2000, when a few hundred people calling themselves "property owners" gathered in order to show their dissatisfaction with the companies plans to relocate their village. They formed an organization called Alburnus Maior, named after the village's original appellation under Roman occupation. But, as it turned out from our analysis (see Chapter 4) the Roşia Montană case only started to be known beyond local boundaries in 2002. Several events then took place. On the one hand, the mining company started to prepare the necessary documentation to obtain permits in order to start mining operations. Moreover, the company started to buy houses and lands from people who agreed[5] to leave the area. All this made the mining project proposed by RMGC appear very close to being achieved. On the other hand, local opposition around *Alburnus Maior,* although it was losing more and more local members because of people changing their minds and selling their properties, was beginning to get more and more national and international support. The direct involvement of international environmental activists in the opposition to the mining project was considered by some scholars in political science (Kűhlne, 2009; Parău, 2009) a decisive factor for the subsequent extent and efficiency of the protest movement against the mining project at Roşia Montană. In 2002, the Swiss-born activist Stephanie Roth moved to Roşia Montană and started to coordinate the actions of the Alburnus Maior[6] association, actions that had been rather modest until then. With the slogan 'Save Roşia Montană', an unprecedented protest movement started in Romania. It was joined by a considerable number of actors (environmental and civic rights NGOs, scientific fora, clerical organizations, the Romanian Royal House, public personalities and artists), from local to international levels (international environmental organizations like Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Mining Watch Canada, Bankwatch CEE, to name but a few; celebrities like the actress Vanessa Redgrave gave their support for the Save Roşia Montană campaign), who motivated their opposition to the mining project for environmental, cultural, legal, economical and ethical considerations and took diverse actions to support their cause (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.). For this movement, Roşia Montană must be saved from disappearance and from serious environmental degradation. The corporate mining project was first and foremost criticized for the destruction of the place, with its mountains and community, and for being an environmental hazard due to the use of cyanide. But along with the ecological arguments for opposing the project, a variety of other topics were addressed. These include cultural arguments such as

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5 The acquisition of properties is also a matter of polemic interpretations. According to the representatives of the company, the locals willingly sold their properties motivated by the important compensations offered by the company and by the desire to move to more developed areas. Furthermore, representatives of the opposition mention pressure from the company to convince people to sell and leave. Indeed, threats were made about less or no compensation if the residents didn'y leave freely.

6 For her activity at Roşia Montană, Stephanie Roth was awarded the Goldman environmental prize for grassroots environmentalism in Europe in 2005.

the important archeological vestiges dating from Roman and medieval times and the heritage buildings of the old mining town must be saved from destruction. Also, the project was considered in violation of the civil rights of people living in Roşia Montană, by forcing them to sell their properties, leave their homes, their community, their life style and their ancestors. Furthermore, legal issues, including illegalizing mining licenses and other certificates for the mining company led to corruption. Subsequently, especially after 2004, local or state authorities were sued in court for their favorable decisions to the mining projects. Faced with the economic arguments of job creation and development of the Roşia Montană area, frequently invoked by the mining company to maintain the realization of its project, the counter-arguments of 'Save Roşia Montană' focused on demonstrating that the project is economically inefficient, that it contravenes the principles of sustainable development and that tourism and agriculture may be viable alternatives to mining in the region. At the intersection between economic and moral grounds for contesting the corporate project, the uneven distribution of benefits between the foreign company and the Romanian state, the actual owner of the country's natural resources was the focal point.

Faced with such contestations, the mining company deemed it necessary to redirect their PR strategy, which until then had been mainly focused locally. As it will be detailed in chapter 2 (section 2.4.), the mining company initiated an anti-opposition campaign, counteracting all the arguments launched by the Save Roşia Montană campaign and presenting itself as the real savior of Roşia Montană. During that time, the mining project was presented as the only solution for the economic development of the Roşia Montană area, but also as the ecological solution for the already degraded and polluted environment in Roşia Montană. Moreover, its economic benefits were presented as expanding the local area, the mining project being presented as contributing to the revival of the Romanian economy facing difficulties in the context of the economic crisis.

Thus, Roşia Montană found itself at the center of a heated debate between those who wanted and those who didn't want to see the mine succeed, a debate that went far beyond the local level. With different resources and strategies, each side engaged in major public campaigns for gathering popular support and, implicitly, for influencing political decision makers to support its cause. The debate around the Roşia Montană Project issue is now highly polarized.

The future of no other place in Romania was ever discussed so intensely as Roşia Montană's future. No other environmentally sensitive issue that occurred in Romania ever had the echo of the one created around the mining project proposed at Roşia Montană. It became a key issue in election campaigns and a subject of negotiation at an international level. Moreover, Roşia Montană became a source of inspiration for artistic productions, and is present in a few songs, and more recently an entire play[7] was dedicated to this issue.

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7 The play "Roşia Montană on physical and political line" was staged at the Hungarian Theater in Cluj-Napoca in 2011.

## 1.2 The Roşia Montană conflict as an object of study for social representations

The intention to study polemic social representations in a real setting led us to the analysis of the Roşia Montană conflict. In this section, we defend that the Roşia Montană conflict qualifies as an object of study for social representations. Second we will announce our research options in dealing with this conflict by indicating the level at which we situate our analysis.

The distinction between object of study and object of representation needs to be outlined here. It is not the representations of the 'the Roşia Montană conflict' that are to be studied in this research, but rather the representations emerged during this conflict. Thus, the conflict over Roşia Montană serves here as the real setting where we intend to study social representations, which we assume to be polemic.

When one wants to study social representations one must keep in mind Ivana Marková's (2003) warning that social representations exist in society only insofar as they occur in public discourse and that usually problematic phenomena that give rise to tensions become subjects of debate. She continues by saying that if the researcher decides to study phenomena that are not relevant to society he/she will be unable to reach social representations. Previously, while defending that social psychology should be seen as a kind of anthropology of modern culture, Moscovici (Moscovici & Marková, 1998, p. 407) stated that social psychology "is a discipline that really depends on historical and cultural phenomena and on those phenomena which are also politically sensitive".

The very first question that guided our research was whether the Roşia Montană conflict is as an appropriate object of study, or a study case, for social representations. Given the intense and long lasting debate this issue generated, the novelty of such a phenomenon in Romanian society, and also its political sensitiveness as previously showed, we gave a positive answer to this question, considering indeed that this event should be seen as generating a representational process. Moreover we considered, in line with Rouquette (1994b), that it is the confrontation between social representations, as powerful symbolic tools, that should be studied for understanding this conflict.

In its initial elaboration (Moscovici, 1961/1976), social representation theory revealed how scientific knowledge is transformed into common sense knowledge, using psychoanalysis, a new scientific domain, as the object studied. Multiple studies based on social representation theory following Moscovici's pivotal work led some scholars to look for a systematization of the research field. For example, Wagner (1994) distinguished three fields of research on social representations. The first follows the original approach to social representations as folk-science or popularization of scientific ideas. Science in general, technology, scientific domains or professions, intelligence, medicine and economy were all studied as objects of social representations within this particular field. The second research field he identified was dedicated to the study of objects of cultural imagination with a longstanding history, like sex-roles, women, mothers, children, the human body,

illness, madness, or handicaps. The third research field identified concerning objects with rather short-term historic significance, that are inscribed in representations about social structure and events. The characteristic topics of this research field are considered to be the ones that revolve around social conflict, such as social inequality, xenophobia, national conflicts, protest movements, unemployment, social movements, ecology debates and abortion. The social representations studied within this field were considered to be the products of an explicit process of societal evaluation of people, groups and social phenomena. It is easy to ascertain that it is within this third field that our analysis of social representations emerged around the fallout of the Roşia Montană conflict.

The Roşia Montană conflict gave rise to an intense public debate that surpassed local boundaries. Also, the debate about the suitability of building the gold mine in Roşia Montană is marked by complexity in the sense that a variety of topics are addressed. Determining what representational object(s) to analyze was constantly focused on when designing this research. But first, can 'Roşia Montană' itself be considered an object of representation?

Before conducting a study on social representations, Moliner (1993) invited researchers to reflect upon the appropriateness of considering the object they decide to study as an object able to generate a representational process. He explicitly stated that while every social representation is the representation of an object (Jodelet, 1989), not all objects actually have a social representation. Referring to the characteristics of the object, he argued that only polymorphic objects may generate a representational process, and that this polymorphism is mainly assured by the fact that the object resumes a class or category of other more specific objects. Flament and Rouquette (2003) also outlined the idea that the object of representation should be an abstract notion with a concept value and referring to a class of objects. With these restrictive conditions in mind, one may have difficulties to defend that the particular object 'Roşia Montană' may be considered an object of social representation. Still, within the rich social representation research field, the work of Milgram and Jodelet (1976) and Milgram (1984) opened a line of research studying cities as objects of representation. Roşia Montană, the small village in the Romanian Apuseni Mountains, cannot of course compare to big cities like Paris, New York or Rome, for which social representations have been studied. Still, its fame surpasses the rather modest territorial dimensions this place actually has. Lahlou (1998) admits that both immaterial and material objects could be social objects, but in the latter case he considers that the physical object should be very well known, like for example the Eiffel Tower. Marchand (2000, cited in Mariotti, 2003) stresses that only polemic objects should be considered as generating representational processes, since only these objects cause different appraisals within groups and give rise to social relations based on alliance and opposition. Roşia Montană is without doubt such a polemic object. Moreover, we consider that the debate around Roşia Montană made this object more than a place with fixed physical reality. It became a socially constructed place, invested with different and opposing meanings directly related to the intentions, goals or projects (Bauer  and Gaskell, 1999) individuals or groups

have with regard to this object. Also, after the initial examination of the debate around Roşia Montană, it was obvious that this object was referred to both as a *place* and as a *case*. Therefore we considered that there is no single physical object known as 'Roşia Montană', but multiple objects into which 'Roşia Montană' might be decomposed, and that this ensures its polymorphic character.

In the first phase of our analysis we investigated the discourses of the main social actors involved in the Roşia Montană conflict and how the 'Roşia Montană affair' was represented in newspaper articles for over a decade. This allowed careful inspection of what the debate over Roşia Montană was actually about. This also made us aware that we should take into consideration multiple objects for which social representations were brought about in the course of the debate. Consequently, we adopted a view already expressed in literature that social representations do not occur isolated from public discourse. According to Rouquette (1994b), representational objects should not be conceived independently of each other since social representations interact among themselves. Mannoni (1998) compares representational systems with fairytales that contain several differently distributed social representations, according to their value or force. At the kernel, social representations are stronger (i.e. they have autonomy; centrality and capacity to systematize other more feeble representations). Abric (2001b) emphasizes that each representation is in relation with many others, which constitutes and individual's social and symbolic environment. In order to highlight the relations between two or more social representations, terms like 'constellation of social representations' (de Rosa, 1995a), representational systems (Garnier, 1999) or 'family of social representations' (Milland, 2001, cited in Camargo & Wachelke, 2010) were used. For example, objects like 'work' and 'unemployment' (Milland, 2001, cited in Camargo & Wachelke, 2010), 'female-male beauty' and 'plastic surgery' (Holman, 2011, de Rosa & Holman, 2011), 'aging', 'AIDS' and 'the body' (Camargo & Wachelke, 2010), 'security' and 'insecurity' (Guimelli & Rouquette, 2004) were studied together as parts of social representational sets. For this specific case, we chose to limit our analysis to the social representations of 'Roşia Montană', 'gold mining', 'the environment' and 'foreign investors', expressed by ordinary people, and which for the most part summarize the debate in the Roşia Montană conflict.

When we decided to study the Roşia Montană conflict in terms of polemic social representations, several research options could be envisaged. Social representations are formed in the triadic relation between the Subject, Object and Other, which define the particular area of analysis in social psychology (Moscovici, 1984b). A psychosocial analysis of the conflict over Roşia Montană could take for example Roşia Montană both as a Subject and an Object of social representations. In the case of the former, analysis would consist of a community-based study taking the local actors involved in the conflict or the inhabitants from Roşia Montană as subjects that construct and carry representations in order to define the reality they face in an exceptional time in the history of the community, one in which the very existence of the community itself is threatened. In the latter case, analysis would consist in a study focusing on the presumably divergent representations of Roşia Montană

and of other objects that are created and transmitted by actors with different stakes in the conflict and that circulate in the wider space of the social arena. Although our initial ambition was to adopt a research design that would integrate both these research options, the valuable advice we got in the early stages of research made us aware that a choice should be made between the two research alternatives. In the end we decided to consider Roşia Montană as an Object of social representations in this research.

Our approach is in line with a newly re-emerged research trend in social psychology, which defends the application of the social representation paradigm in environmental studies (see, for example: Rouquette *et al*, 2005; Fasanelli & Galli, 1996; Galli & Fasanelli, 2001; Castro & Lima, 2001; Castro, 2006; Baggio & Rouquette, 2006), thus following the fist steps taken by the work of Milgram and Jodelet (1976) and Milgram (1984). The advantages in attaining this connection are related to the production of more effective explanations and richer descriptions by researchers in the environmental field, due to the methodological eclecticism of the social representation paradigm (Rouquette *et al*, 2005).

## 1.3    Polemic social representations

In this book, we extensively use the concept of polemic social representations, which we consider a very helpful tool for the analysis of the Roşia Montană conflict. In the next two sub-chapters, we will first present theoretical references to this concept, and second, we will expose empirical contributions to the study of polemic representations in the framework of social representation theory. In the final section of this chapter, we will provide a summarized view of the way we understand the approach to polemic social representations in our research, integrating other notions and concepts from social representation theory as well.

### 1.3.1    Theoretical references to polemic social representations

A classic definition of a social representation is "a form of knowledge, socially produced and shared, having practical ends and competing for the construction of a common reality of a social setting" (Jodelet, 1989, p.36, our translation). It follows that a social representation is always the representation of something (object) belonging to someone (subject), and that it is social not only in the sense of the tautological definition referring to the social nature of the object itself, but becomes social in the very aspect of being shared (Jodelet, 1989). Polemic representations, a notion introduced by Moscovici in 1988, are always related to the limits of sharing of social representations in society as a whole due to the conflicting nature of relationships between groups.

In what can be called the fertile debate about the notion of social representations, which marked the period of revival of social representation theory in European sociopsychological research in the eighties (de Rosa, 1992; Jodelet, 2008), one critical point referred to the insufficient conceptual clarification of the difference

between collective and social representations (Jahoda, 1988), hence not justifying the replacement of 'collective' with 'social' in describing the phenomenon, as was proposed by Moscovici (1984). In his extensive answer to Jahoda's criticism, Moscovici (1988) made a specific point about the ways in which a representation can become social, which he considered to be directly related to the relations between group members. Moscovici suggested therefore a classification of representations into three types, depending on the different degrees of sharing them. He labeled the three types of representations considered as *hegemonic, emancipated*, and *polemic*.

*Hegemonic* representations were defined as:

"Representations shared by all members of a highly structured group – a party, city or a nation – without having been produced by the group. [They] prevail implicitly in all symbolic or affective practices. They seem to be uniform and coercive. They reflect the homogeneity and stability that the French sociologists had in mind when they called these representations collective." (p. 221).

*Emancipated* representations were considered:

"(…) the outgrowth of the circulation of knowledge and ideas belonging to subgroups that are in more or less close contact. Each subgroup creates its own version and shares it with others. These are *emancipated* representations with a certain degree of autonomy with regard to the interacting segments of society. They have a complementary function in so far as they result from exchanging and sharing a set of interpretations or symbols. They are social by virtue of the divisions of functions and the information brought together and coordinated by their means." (p. 221).

Lastly, *polemic* representations were described as:

"They are representations generated in the course of social conflict, social controversy, and society as a whole does not share them. They are determined by the antagonistic relations between its members and intended to be mutually exclusive. These *polemic* representations must be viewed in the context of an opposition or struggle between groups and are often expressed in terms of a dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor." (p. 221-222). The example used to illustrate this last type of social representation was the representation of Marxism in France, where different versions of Marxism could be identified, each shaped by the polemic relations between believers and non-believers, or communists and liberals.

This differentiated view of social representations was considered to be in opposition with the uniform view that characterized collective representations and also more suited to characterize the current state of society.

Even though the main factor invoked by Moscovici for differentiating between the types of representations refers to the context of social relations existing between their holders, another important aspect is implied by these definitions: the degree of autonomy/freedom individuals have in relation to different representations. In this sense, the classification suggested in 1988 followed another one, also tripartite, which Moscovici made two years earlier in an editorial to a special issue of the Italian journal *Psicologia e Società* (1986, cited in Galli, 2006). There, a differentiation was proposed between: *closed* social representations, whose elements are uniform

and similar for all populations; *agonal* or *critical* social representations, whose elements are more or less the same in an entire population, but whose significance is determined by contrasting values; *open* social representations, whose elements are distributed among various categories of the population, therefore it is required to combine them so that they can find their coherence.

We can easily see the similarities between closed and hegemonic representations, between open and emancipated representations, and between agonal/critical and polemic representations. But the differences in labels are suggestive for the aspect that is prominent in defining them, i.e. the degree of individual autonomy vs. the social relations that characterize the context of interaction between individuals. While in the case of closed/hegemonic representations, individuals' autonomy or freedom to choose them is rather absent, these representations being coercive, in the case of open/emancipated representations individuals and subgroups have the entire liberty to create, communicate and make use of them. However, in the case of agonal/polemic representations, the degree of autonomy for single individuals is not very clear. By mentioning this category second in the classification Moscovici made in 1986, we might suppose that social representations of this type are something between *closed* and *open* with respect to the degree of liberty they imply, being uniform and coercive at the level of the group where they are shared, but diverse and autonomous at the level of society.

To sum up this point, a representation is considered social not only in the sense of the tautological definition referring to the social nature of the object itself, but becomes social in the very aspect of being shared. Polemic representations are always related to the limits of sharing social representations in society as a whole due to a context characterized by conflicts between groups in society.

However comprehensible the taxonomic definition of social representations might be, the operational definitions of the different representation types, the relationships between them, and also the evolution of one social representation from one type or status to another, were not always very clear. This led to various conceptions about the three types of social representations, sometimes even denying the categorization into hegemonic, emancipated, and polemic social representations in a strict Aristotelian sense. Michel-Louis Rouquette (1994b) suggested that every social representation has a polemic value underlining inter-group differences and intra-group identity. In analyzing social dynamics, he argued that the 'conflict between groups' and the 'conflict between representations' are two substitutable expressions. Also being opaque to itself, a social representation always stands for 'a form of truth'. The practical consequence of the two aspects is that, when situated within inter-group relationships, the confrontation between representations implies the intervention of specific rhetoric and even polemics, everyone trying to undermine the other's position and to impose their own 'truth'. While clearly explaining how social representations in general work and how they are used to shape reality, thus determining a conflicting social context, this conception about the existence of a polemic trait in every social representation complicates the classification of different representational types, or at least rejects the idea of

polemic representations distinguishable from the other types.

A similar idea was expressed by Gerard Duveen (2000) in the introduction of the book of essays on social representations gathered from Serge Moscovici that he edited. According to Duveen, social representations are "forms of collective in conditions of modernity" (p. 8), and since modernity is characterized by "diverse centers of power which claim authority and legitimacy (…), the phenomenon of social representations can be seen as the form in which collective life has adapted to decentred conditions of legitimation. (…) Legitimacy is no longer guaranteed by divine intervention, but becomes part of a more complex and contested social dynamic in which representations of different groups seek to establish a hegemony." (p. 9) Even if there is no explicit reference to polemic representations, we can interpret these considerations as also indicating an intrinsic polemic value of social representations in general.

These ideas directly relate to the functional aspects of social representations and to their obvious intentional characteristics. The metaphor of the 'battle of ideas' suggested by Moscovici (Moscovici & Marková, 1998) brilliantly condenses these thoughts about how social representations work. For Jost & Ignatow (2001), the most striking aspect of social representation theory is that "groups develop social representations and attempt to influence others to adopt those representations as a way for achieving social and political goals" (p. 196). For these authors this function is precisely related to the polemic type of social representations, which they consider to be rather overlooked in the social representation research field.

Also defending that 'a social representation is a not a quiet thing' (Moscovici & Marková, 1998), Howarth (2006) stresses the role representations have in the ideological construction of social realities, by protecting some interests over others. The question of power immediately arises, since social representations act in a world where power is unequally distributed in the social sphere (Jovchelovitch, 2001). Thus, for Howarth, "hegemonic representations pervade the dominant social construction of reality; oppositional representations contest these versions". (p. 79). She makes a precise point in stating that social representation research should be devoted to the study of the role of conflict and dispute in shaping social representations, and that of the social and political consequences of different representations and the relationships between representations and social order: "This would demand the recognition of the reproduction of power in the reification and legitimization of social representations, as well as in the collaborative struggle for recognition and in possibilities for resistance and transformation. This would expose the dialectics of coding and transcoding, consensus and dispute, cooperation and conflict, imposition and resistance at the heart of all meaning, practice and communication. Without these tensions, representations would stagnate." (p. 80). However, we should note that this author does not make full use of the classification into three representational types suggested by Moscovici, and even if she insists on taking conflict as a context of studying social representations, no reference to the polemic type of social representations is made. On the contrary, she stresses the difference in status between hegemonic representations and all the others, which

she calls *oppositional*, to point to representational types pertaining to those who dominate and, respectively, to those who are dominated in society.

Glynis Breakwell (2001) keeps the distinction between the three different representational types in discussing the scope for personal representations. She refers precisely to the degree of freedom that the different types give to individuals in constructing a personal representation. Hegemonic representations allow little individual variations, while emancipated and polemic representations *suppose* individual variations. Individual variation is based upon differential exposure within group contexts in emancipated representations, and upon the prevailing conditions of intergroup conflict in polemic representations. More than that, this author acknowledges an active role for individuals in mediating the emancipated and polemic representations, since "personal representations will be perpetually under pressure to change from the social representations that surround them. Individuals who are powerful (through position, expertise, or other route) are more likely to be able to retain their own personal representations and to be able to influence the development of social representations". (p. 275). Thus, this is judged to be the essential condition for innovation and change to take place.

Another idea brought about by this author in the same article regards the viability of the tripartite classification of social representations. She questions whether there are actually different types of social representations, or whether these are just different stages in the lifespan of a social representation, but without going any further into this debate. However, in a later work, Breakwell (2007) explicitly assumes the existence of these categories when discussing social representations of hazards in the social amplification of risk framework (SARF). In function to what type the social representation of a specific hazard is, there are significant implications for the type of intervention needed to intensify or attenuate individuals' representations of that risk.

An explicit point for rejecting the classification into hegemonic, emancipated, and polemic representations in a strict Aristotelian sense is made by Li Liu (2004). Within the dialogical perspective in the study of social representations (Marková, 2000, 2003), Liu discusses the relationship between themata and different ways for sharing social representations. A central concept within the dialogical perspective is that of themata, defined as 'source ideas', 'primary notions', 'image concepts', 'first principles' or 'preconceptions' that generate social representations and also form their fundamental structure (Moscovici & Vignaux, 2000). Themata were also defined as "such oppositional categories which, in the course of history, become problematized; for one reason or another they become the focus of attention and a source of tension and conflict". (Marková, 2000, p. 446). For Liu, it is precisely the emergence of social representations from themata that complicates the classification of representations into three types. Rather, she considers that there are three ways of sharing a social representation (i.e. hegemonic, emancipated, and polemic) that can simultaneously apply to a social representation in a complementary way. To cite her fully, "different layers and different aspects of a representation entail different ways of sharing. A representation is generated through hegemonic, widely

shared themata, but it also involves more emancipated and polemic dimensions. The emancipated and polemic dimensions of a representation express the particular societal conditions of social actors who activate them in their specific contexts and in relation to diverse life spheres. At the same time, they reflect broadly social, economic, political and ideological changes and conflicts. Thus, a social representation may be hegemonic, emancipated and/or polemic at the same time." (2004, p. 261). This conception is defended referencing the social representation of quality of life in China, organized around the thema "Having/Being", historically rooted and widely shared in Chinese culture and thus *hegemonic*, but which also contains, according to the author, elements of emancipated and polemic nature, which are linked to the different social positions of social actors. Thus, these non-hegemonic elements of the social representation are related to differences between rural and urban populations of China, or between older and younger generations. In the next sub-chapter, we show that this conception is to also be found in some other works directly linked to research on polemic representations.

Still, Gillespie (2008), another scholar whose work on social representations is strongly based on the dialogical perspective, keeps the classic distinction between the three types of social representations when describing the concept of alternative representations. For this author, the plurality of social representations in contemporary society makes it necessary to conceive the existence of alternative representations, whose primary function is to make individuals who share a specific representation deal with and adapt to the plurality of other and potentially competing social representations. Simply defined as 'representations of other people's representations, alternative representations are considered to be dialogical sub-categories within certain representations that can either destabilize or, on the contrary, strengthen a particular social representation. We can find similarities of this notion with those of holomorphism (Wagner, 1995a; Wagner & Hayes, 2005) and meta-knowledge (Elchroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011) within the field of social representations.

According to Gillespie, hegemonic representations are completely devoid of alternative representations, since they are completely egocentric. On the contrary, alternative representations "only exist as dialogical shadows within polemic or emancipated representations. They are shadows reflecting, usually in a distorted and very simplified form, the social representation of other groups. They are also shadows in the sense that they are firmly attached to what the speaker wants to say, and are in a way opposite to what the speaker wants to say. Alternative representations are "alter" in that they are attributed to other people and that they are foreign objects within the given representation. Alternative representations are the Alter within the given social representation." (p. 382). Evidence for alternative representations is obtained after reinterpreting data from Moscovici's famous *La Psychanalyse* (1961/1976). Gillespie ascribes emancipated social representations to diffusion and propagation, while polemic representations are assigned to propaganda, as communication genres that characterized the different media originally analyzed by Moscovici. Gillespie considers an emancipated

representation to be forged in a context of diverse alternatives with which it is constantly in dialogue. On the contrary, polemic representations are judged to have one major alternative representation functioning like a rhetorical counterpoint. Usually, the alternative representation within a polemic social representation is a caricature, a Straw Man, and serves as reinforcement to the in-group representation of the object. To illustrate this, Gillespie makes reference to French communists' representation of psychoanalysis in the fifties studied by Moscovici. For them, psychoanalysis was a kind of capitalist ideology. However, their responses revealed the fact that they were aware of an alternative definition of psychoanalysis; in fact a caricaturized, working model of psychoanalysis, but that was outright rejected. The conclusion is that despite their ever presence within polemic representations, alternative representations are kept at a distance and not much dialogical exchange between the main and alternative representations takes place, all this assuring the protection of the representation from the potential change implied by recognition of the alternatives. This is possible due to several *semantic barriers* that prevent such dialogue. Two of them, i.e. maintaining rigid opposition and transferring meaning, were originally identified by Moscovici (1961/1976). Besides these two, Gillespie identified prohibited thought, separation, stigma, undermining motives, and bracketing, all concurring to keep the alternative representation at a distance. The article by Gillespie is a good illustration of how polemic representations work in contemporary society, where they can no longer ignore the existence of alternatives. This author includes alternative representations in the main one, suggesting that they could be located in the periphery of the main representation. Directly related to polemic representations, the oppositional relation between main representation and its alternative is an indication of cognitive polyphasia (Moscovici, 1961/1976).

### 1.3.2    Empirical contributions to the study of polemic social representations

Polemic social representations were a rather neglected concept in the field of social representations (Jost & Ignatow, 2001). By this we mean that they did not generate a systematic line of research within the paradigm. There are however some scholars who explicitly employed this notion in their empirical studies, some of them even trying to clarify and develop the classification of social representations proposed by Moscovici in 1988. In this section, we will briefly expose some contributions to the study of polemic representations that we were able to identify in the social representation literature.

Five years after the article in which Serge Moscovici suggested the tripartite classification of social representations, the study by David Canter and Circe Monteiro (1993) was a first attempt to examine the different types of social representations. The authors proposed the hypothesis of a network (lattice) of interrelating and overlapping social representations existing in a culture, which they considered inherent to the idea of distinguishing between hegemonic, emancipated and polemic representations. One theoretical implication of this premise, according to the authors, is that "it is the interplay of social representations that have enough in common to

allow communication, but are also different enough to require accommodation or assimilation that creates the dynamics of society". (p. 225). A practical implication arising from this conception was considered to be the finding of methodologies allowing the identification of social representations within a particular subgroup and of the representation's boundaries, i.e. where a representation "merges into the social representations of other subgroups whose world is distinct" (p. 226). A challenge for social representation theory has to be, according to these scholars, to determine if it is possible to identify the range of people who share a particular representation and to establish ways for distinguishing between hegemonic, emancipated, and polemic representations. In order to illustrate this kind of empirical approach, the authors chose to study the social representations of occupations held by different groups of people living in three different residential areas of Brazil. The study was based on a rather complex methodology, strongly influenced by researce derived from place theory in environmental psychology, to which one of the authors, namely David Canter, had an important contribution (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995). Instead of analyzing the explicit verbal expression of social representations of jobs held by subjects from different residential environments (favelas, public housing, and middle class neighborhoods) and with different social status, directly deriving from their place of residence, the authors analyzed the respondents' conceptual system as a result from different classifications made by them through a multiple sorting procedure. Twenty five manikins, with identical shape but each labeled as having a particular job, were presented to them; subjects were asked to specify what they considered to be the specific neighborhood of residence for people with the respective jobs, what they considered to be their specific social class, and what kind of occupations their own children could have. However complicated the data analysis procedure may have been[8], it is important to stress here how the two authors knew to interpret the results in terms of different types of social representations. Concretely, they considered the presence of a hegemonic representation in the case of unanimous agreement regarding the assignment of a residential area to a specific job (for example, if all respondents, regardless of their own social status and residential area, considered a politician as inhabiting middle-class neighborhoods). Emancipated representations would imply differences between subgroups that would be complex, "any group which shared that representation would be expected to assign components of it to the same category" (p.232) (here the authors gave the example of the occupation "street-trader" which could be assigned to a variety of residential areas by different subjects). Polemic representations were judged to lie somewhere in between hegemonic and emancipated representations, revealing coherence within subgroups and distinction between them (for example, members of one subgroup could assign an occupation to the same city area as the others, but to a different city area to the other subgroups with whom they share a controversy). The empirical results were interpreted as indicating in all cases the presence of polemic

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8 Data was analyzed with a non-metric multiple scaling procedure, the Partial Order Scalogram analysis by the use of coordinates (POSAC)

representations of jobs in Brazilian society. The authors concluded: "the distinctions in representations across a general pattern of agreement suggest that, for the present context at least, most social representations may most closely fit what Moscovici called polemic, but in English this term carries the implications of conflict and belligerence. Yet, our analyses here suggest that many representations, if not all, may derive their social quality from the fact that they reflect interactions between groups. The question may be raised in a pluralist society of what the dynamics of social interaction can be if social representations are totally shared throughout a society. What can people have to say to each other? Perhaps there is a fourth type of social representation that covers most social representations dynamics" (p. 246). The methodological approach to the types of social representations presented above did not prove much validity over time, remaining, at least to our knowledge, singular in the literature on social representations. However, we have to recognize the merit of this study for being the first practical analysis addressing the tripartite classification of social representations and, to some extent, for remaining singular in its ambition to test its validity empirically.

In an article by Vala *et al.* (1998) the functional aspect of polemic representations was addressed; the mechanisms through which representations pertaining to opposite social groups are validated were stressed out. The authors considered that an important aspect of studying representations that oppose groups, along with the matter of content, is a matter of validity of such content. One of the mechanisms by which a group's social representations are supposed to be defended is activated through intergroup consensus differentiation. Another such mechanism refers to the validation of polemic representations through intergroup differentiation of variability. In the first case, what is consensual among in-group members is considered to be true (valid) and, on the contrary, consensus among out-group members is believed to be invalid. In the second case, it is the perception of in- and out-group members that determines the validation of contrasting representations: the validity of what members of the in-group think derives from the heterogeneity of those members; on the contrary, the out-group's errors are due to the homogeneity of its members. The first line of argument, discussed in social psychological literature on social validation of beliefs and opinions, was considered to be insufficient: "if both groups have equally and widely consensual but opposite positions, their positions should be viewed as equally true because they are shared" (p. 474). This is why a second strategy of inter-group differentiation is usually employed, because "only the variability of the ingroup guarantees that consensus information is a reliable cue to validity" (*idem*). This mechanism works on the basis of another representation: the validation of a representation that is polemic in relation to the representation held by the rival group is achieved by differently representing the in-group and the out-group subjects. In the representation of the "in-group", its members are considered heterogenous regarding their personal traits and attributes, but still homogenous regarding the values and beliefs of the in-group. On the contrary, members of the out-group are considered to be homogeneous regarding their psychological traits (stereotypical) and less homogenous in their beliefs. Besides reference to

the literature, this second strategy of validation was demonstrated in three semi-experimental studies set up both in a context of simple intergroup differentiation and in an open political conflict (during an electoral campaign).

Also in the nineties, the notion of polemic social representation was tackled in studies analyzing Benetton's communication strategies (de Rosa & Losito, 1996; de Rosa & Smith, 1998). In the early nineties, the Italian company launched a very unusual form of advertising, one in which the commercial product or the brand name was entirely absent (de Rosa, 2001). The company based its communication strategy on critical advertising, addressing crucial social problems that were objectified through shocking images on posters. By creating public controversy, related to the specific issues addressed through advertisement, but above all to the publicity campaign itself, the company attained social visibility and ultimately reached its profit oriented goals. Advertising was seen as a communication genre that activated and diffused polemic (controversial) social representations about the appropriateness of such publicity: on one side it was strongly disapproved for being "necrophile", cynical and based on the principle of selling at any cost; on the other it was judged to be original, efficient, remarkable and socially beneficial. The associative network, using pictures from the autumn-winter 92-93 campaign and brand name as stimuli, was used for collecting empirical evidence of polemics. The results revealed a bipolarized attitude towards the images that constituted Bennetton's advertisement, with a trend for judging them negatively. However, in spite of a major negative evaluation of the Benetton campaign, the representation of the Benetton brand remained mainly positive, confirming the success of the strategy "[selling] pullovers by provoking discussion on social issues" (de Rosa, 1998).

Directly related to our interests in conflicts about environmental issues, the study of Twigger-Ross and Breakwell (1999, cited in Breakwell, 2001) analyzed how a community responded to a potential waste incinerator, planned to be built in an already highly industrialized area. The plans for introducing the new facility raised opposition from environmental groups like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. The research focus of the study was on local residents' consent for the new incinerator, which was studied in relation to their perception of the risks entailed, their trust in governmental regulation of such risk, their image of the company, and their concern about the environment and acceptance of "green" beliefs. The results showed that local residents were divided in their representations of risk and, more importantly, that the representation they reproduced depended upon the extent to which respondents identified themselves with environmentalist groups or the company seen as a traditional and trusted employer in the area. These results suggest that "polemic representations of risk are most significantly mediated by identity processes" (Breakwell, 2001, p. 282). This kind of approach to polemic representations, linked to identity process theory elaborated by one of the authors (Breakwell, 1986), demonstrates that individuals reject social representations that might threaten aspects of their identity, the feeling of belonging to various groups (environmentalists, company) determining rival social representations.

The idea of representations of a polemic nature constructed with the purpose

to protect individual and group identities is maintained also by Deaux and Wiley (2007). They illustrate this in reference to the representation of citizenship constructed by immigrants who reject being called and represented as 'illegal citizens' due to the fact they entered the country illegally. The new representation is a conflicting alternative as it introduces a change in meaning from 'illegal citizens', using instead 'undocumented citizens', like in the United States, or 'sans papiers', in France.

A research line that employed the distinction between hegemonic, emancipated, and polemic social representations can be found in different studies on social representations of history, one example being the work of James Liu and collaborators on the social representations of history in multiethnic societies (Liu et al., 1999; Liu et al., 2002). These studies linked social identity theory with the theory of social representations and emphasized the relevance of studying the social representations of history for the understanding of the present state of inter-group relations from a cultural perspective, thus outlining "how the past weighs on the present" (Liu & Hilton, 2005). History is seen as providing raw materials for symbols that can either unite, divide or something in between. In the first case, these symbols are part of hegemonic representations; in the second case they inspire polemic representations; and in the third case they are contained in emancipated representations (Liu, 2004). The three different types of representations of history are described as follows:

> "When social representations [of history] are hegemonic, or consensual among all groups, they are treated as though they were a reality. (…) They can be used to understand how strong consensus allows societies and peoples to move together as one, and enact culture specific solutions to their problems. When something that is social is treated as though it were a reality, it has the power to create new realities through social policies. (…)

> By contrast, when social representations of history are polemic, or in serious disagreement across different groups, they indicate the presence of historically rooted conflict. One group may have an historical grievance against another group, and this may require special treatment to resolve. Polemic representations indicate "fault lines" in society where the relationships between groups may become tense or break. (…)

> The final type of social representation is emancipated. This means that different versions co-exist in different groups of society, but they are either generally not in conflict, or only in conflict under limited circumstances" (Liu, 2004, pp 9-10).

The empirical findings confirmed in one case the existence of polemic representations of history held by members of an ethnic minority group (i.e. Maori population in New Zealand) which confront the hegemonic representation of New Zealand's history of the dominant group (Paheka – European descendants in New Zealand), as identified from the list of important historical events cited by different subjects. However, a kind of conceptual ambiguity is to be found in the description of the representation of Maori subjects, judged to be both "emancipated from and polemic to that of Paheka students" (Liu *et al.*, 1999, p. 1042). More consensual representations of history were found among different ethnic groups in Malaysia and Singapore, suggesting that multi-ethnicity is not a sufficient condition for polemic

representations of history to emerge. The lack of polemics on specific issues (e.g. the border between Singapore and Malaysia) may explain the absence of polemic representations. Also, a higher control exercised by the state on education, media and freedom of speech (as it happens more in Eastern societies rather than in the West) can block alternative views about history from being expressed, and thus stop polemic representations from emerging (Liu *et al.*, 2002).

Another study inspired by the same research area focused on historical representations in Taiwan (Huang *et al.*, 2004). The authors found evidence for both consensus (regarding main historical events) and disagreement (regarding the evaluation of political leaders) in the representation of Taiwan's history, concluding that this representation is a blend of consensus and controversy which further causes ambivalence towards Taiwanese national identity (see also Huang, 2010). For this author, it seems that a representation can be consensual/hegemonic and polemic at the same time.

In a more recent study, Liu and Atsumi (2008) addressed the question of polemic representations in a wider context determined by international relations between Japan and China. Here again, representations of history and the remembering the historical conflict between the two states, as circulated in dominant narratives within each nation and mobilized by current political agenda, are considered to forge a present state of affairs in bilateral relations between the two countries. An important practical aspect is outlined: conflict resolution depends on the type of representation political actors convey. Moreover, representations are transformed depending on the pragmatic goals and interests each country has. For example, it is considered that Japan's long-term objectives regarding its relations to China may determine the construction of less polemic representations about the history of the interactions between them. This idea, pointing to the intentional character in shaping social representations of history, resembles the idea of representational politics (Sen & Wagner, 2005) discussed below.

Also focusing on inter-group relations, Ragini Sen and Wolfgang Wagner (2005) considered the religious cleavage in Indian society as a starting point for the study of social representations of historical events. Their analysis – based on interviews with 20 Hindu and Muslim males, using pictures depicting dramatic historical events as stimuli in the course of the interviews – demonstrated the antagonism in the appraisal and significations attributed to symbolic events by members of the two conflicting religious groups. However, the preferred term to label this kind of representations was not "polemic". The authors proposed instead a new label of "hetero-referential representational systems". These are considered to occur when "two groups refer to the same series of events that are represented in a '180 degree' antagonistic fashion, and in the shape of a zero-sum game in each group. Each group's enjoyable experience entails the other's group loss and each group's painful experience entails the other's joy" (ibid, p. 2.19). Conflicting situations determined by claims for a geographic area, for resources, for ideological or religious supremacy may fuel such antagonism between historical ethnic groups or even states. To define this new concept, reference is made both to polemic representations (Moscovici,

1988) and holomorphic representations (Wagner, 1995a; Wagner & Hayes, 2005), hetero-referential representations being "polemic because they imply antagonism in interaction and access to resources" and "holomorphic because each of the two groups is not only aware of its own course of action and justification thereof, but also has some general knowledge of patterns of perception, feelings and judgment and the course of action of the other group" (p. 2.19).

Another important idea in this study is worth mentioning here, one that reviews the process of construction of social representations in a conflicting context. In the particular socio-historic context determined by Hindu-revivalism in India, historical social representations identified by interviewing lay subjects are judged to be the results of representational politics rather than that of a representational work implying the discursive elaboration of representations in a consensual group. The evident intentional character of representational politics, seeking to produce affective connotation and symbolic meaning, is judged to be most effective. It seems that the conflicting context leaves little room for lay representations to emerge. Rather, members of the conflicting groups share prefabricated representations specially created for serving power interests and communicated through populist rhetoric, thus maintaining the tensions existing in society.

Finally, the last example of research about historical representations that also touched on the subject of polemic representations can be found in studies by Páez *et al.* (2004) and Valencia *et al.* (2004) on social memory in the case of a traumatic episode in recent Spanish history, namely the Spanish Civil War. Generational differences were found in lay representations of the negative event. The emotional and temporal distance from this traumatic event was thought to explain a certain dynamism of social representations; polemic representations were considered to transform into hegemonic ones, especially for third-generation subjects in relation to the the traumatic event.

In an ethnographic study carried out on families of Israeli soldiers exposed to health risks during their training in military service, Ben-Asher (2003) also used the distinction between different types of social representations and tried to demonstrate the role of dialog in the evolution from hegemonic and emancipated representations of the Israeli army (Israeli Defense Forces) to polemic representations. The author considered that initially, hegemonic representations of the Israeli Defense Forces – in a country with a long history of military conflicts and where military service, apart from being compulsory, is seen as an essential civic duty and constitutes a national Zionist narrative – account for high levels of faith in the army by soldiers and their parents, who consent by signing a contract of trust to relinquish absolute responsibility for the safeguard and welfare of their children/soldiers to the army, in the absence of any information regarding military activities. New information regarding the training of naval commando soldiers in polluted waters and the health risks involved – contained in emancipated representations constructed by small sections of society and the media – was seen as conflicting with the "hegemonic notion of absolute faith in the contract of trust with the army" (p.6.4) and, as a result, parents of risk exposed soldiers gather around to form an association and

start to construct, through their dialogue, polemic representations opposed to the official version of the authorities' hegemonic representation. The evolution of social representations is seen in a linear way, passing through all three types of representations described by Moscovici (1988). First, hegemonic representations are challenged by emancipated representations that emerge from new information. Then it is assumed that social change occurs when emancipated representations evolve into polemic representations "that render the self-evident existence of hegemonic representations impossible, at least for some members of the group, and call for innovation and change" (p.6.4). When confronted with the information about health risks and at the same time with the initial refusal of state authorities to take responsibility to tend to sick soldiers and their families, parents formed an organization that acted both as a support group and as a pressure group in the new conflicting context with authorities. During their meetings and through social interaction, a polemic representation of the army was considered to emerge. The reorganization of the social representation into a polemic one underwent a process of creating group identity, a parental group, which provides the group internal empowerment and the ability to face new circumstances. However, after the official recognition of the state's responsibility to care for the sick soldiers and for the families of soldiers who died after training in contaminated water, the parents' organization ceased to exist and at that point, the study concludes, parents "preferred to return to the hegemonic representations of the army as a foster parent, which are shared by Israeli society as a whole" (p.6.4).

One merit of this study is that it emphasizes the role of environmental hazards in generating polemic social representations. However, a certain misuse of the concepts related to the types of social representations can lead to some confusion. For example, the "silence breaker" parents group constructs a "hegemonic" representation with regard to the new parents group, necessary for the group's cohesiveness, but "polemic" regarding the surrounding social institutions (p. 6.8). Then, after explaining the linear evolution from hegemonic to polemic representations, all this through the intermediary of emancipated representations, the study shows how parents of naval commandos "adopt the universal hegemonic representation of parental obligation to safeguard their children" (p.6.8). Hence, the author introduces a distinction between "state's hegemonic representations" and "universal hegemonic representations", the latter remaining unchallenged. The emphasis put by the study on communication processes rather than on content of social representations makes it difficult to fully seize the nature and structure of polemic representations. It is also not very clear why and how emancipated representations are considered in this case to evolve into polemic ones. The initial refusal of the authorities to acknowledge their responsibility is cited as a source of dispute with authorities and as a reason for building polemic representations by the parents of soldiers who have been directly exposed to water pollution. But the parents' polemic representations are considered to come into conflict with the same parents' hegemonic representations of the army. Due to the resolution of the dispute, parents abandon polemic representations and "return" to the hegemonic ones, the

only evidence for this in the study being the dissolution of the contesting parents organization after the state authorities fulfilled their demands. This assumption may be considered both evasive and intriguing: it is hard to acknowledge that hegemonic representations, with their stability in society and coercive character as described by Moscovici (1988), once challenged still remain unchanged.

In a more recent study, Ben-Asher and Lebel (2010) further employed the distinction between different types of social representations in their analysis of another public controversy in Israeli society, this time related to a law stipulating the loss of entitlement to rehabilitation for IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) widows once they remarried. The confrontation between IDF widows and state institutions, considered to be a struggle between a republican-collectivist and a liberal-individualist perception of social policy, was analyzed in terms of hegemonic, emancipated and polemic representations co-existing in the public discourse on the issue. The concrete manifestations of these three types of representations in the specific context studied are summarized as follows: hegemonic representations are dominant narratives that embed the conviction in the social ethos of the 'IDF spirit', entailing the central value of sacrificing one's life for the state, and the state's commitment to care for its wounded and for the bereaved families; emancipated representations are new information, or 'winds of change' that challenge the traditional view, manifested in the case of IDF through widows forming a new intimate relationship aiming contesting the previsions of the restrictive law; polemic representations are thought to emerge precisely because of the clash between hegemonic representations and emancipated ones and are manifested through a strong criticism of the state. Several statements, identified in Internet forums and considered to illustrate the different types of social representations held on the issue, were tested for agreement in a wider population. Analysis revealed that social representations of different status (i.e. hegemonic, emancipated and polemical) indeed co-exist in social thinking. This would suggest that the three categories of social representations are not mutually exclusive, nor even evolve and transform in a linear way as was previously suggested (2003).

With the overall intention to cross a communication barrier between social representation theory and studies derived from social cognition, Angelica Muchi-Faina (2004) applied Moscovici's distinction between hegemonic and polemic representations to research in the domain of inter-group relations and social stereotypes. The social representation of women was identified from definitional traits ascribed by male and female students. The author followed the hypothesis that if one removes the hegemonic elements from the representation of a group or category, it is possible to seize the polemic elements, considered to be typical in inter-group representations. According to this author, the distinction between two different "levels" of a social representation, i.e. hegemonic and respectively polemic (p.609), enables the dissociation of aspects linked to social stereotypes from aspects of in-group favoritism. "Hegemonic elements" and "polemic elements" are established according to their frequencies of appearance in the subjects' responses. "Polemic elements" are found in the differences in women's traits mentioned by the members

of the in-group (female students) and of the out-group (male students). Hence, Moscovici's differentiation between types of social representations is reduced to the difference in status of the elements of a single social representation. However, the study concludes, consensual elements cited by both groups investigated are thought to be part of a hegemonic representation of women, shared within the whole culture, whereas representations linked to group membership are polemic. This kind of approach to the different categories of social representations is in agreement with with Li Liu's suggestions (2004) that hegemonic and polemic features may coexist within the same social representation due to the antinomy entailed by themata as source ideas for social representations (see previous section).

This brief overview of studies that employed the classification of social representations suggested by Moscovici (1988) and explicitly focused on the polemic type of social representations was intended to demonstrate the variety of thematic areas in which this concept is used. What unites them is the conflicting context in which polemic representations normally occur. While we do not wish to comment on why studies that analyse intergroup conflicts from a social representational perspective don't all use the concept of polemic representation[9], we would like to mention in the end of this section the study by di Giacomo (1980), written before the concept of polemic representation was suggested by Moscovici, which can be considered a good example of research that stresses the role of conflict for studying the dynamics of social representations. Di Giacomo analyzed the social representations that emerged in a students protest in a Belgian university and tried to find out what could explain its failure. The representations that students had about the protest movement itself, about the leaders of the movement and their strategies were identified from data obtained through a free association technique. It was found that the majority of students rejected the ad-hoc created protest committee, which they considered incompatible with them regarding symbols, beliefs, and norms. This explained the students' lack of long-term adhesion, which ultimately determined the failure of the protest movement. Criticism has been raised that di Giacomo's analysis did not trace the development of incompatible social representations or that it did not explore the shape of communications or the process of social interaction in the generation and transformation of such representations (Purkhardt, 1993). With or without this, the results of di Giacomo's study were indeed interpreted in terms of a struggle between discrepant (polemic) sets of social representations (Wagner, 1995b).

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9 For example, in the recent book edited by Ivana Marková and Alex Gillespie (2012) which was specifically dedicated to the study of trust and conflict from a social representational perspective, the notion of polemic representation was mentioned only once. It was mentioned (only once) in a study by Raudsepp and Wagner, which focused on the analysis of the escalation of an inter-ethnic conflict in Estonian society around a symbolic issue. But it was totally absent in the analyses of the conflicts in Cyprus (Psaltis, 2012) or Georgia (Wertsch & Batiashvili, 2012).

### 1.3.3    Framework for studying polemic social representations in the Roşia Montană conflict

For the purpose of this research, we assume that there are indeed three distinct types of social representation and not just different dimensions contained within one social representation, as was suggested by Li Liu (2004). Although polemic representations may be generated by the same themata, we consider that they should be treated as different representations and not just dimensions in a single social representation. When discussing about the generative force of themata, Moscovici (2001, p. 33) made a clear point in sustaining that "social representations occur in pairs, each one having its alternative, such as sacred and profane representations in religion or standard and nonstandard paradigms in science. When we say that a representation is shared, we mean that it is normative, not that it is unique". Polemic representations are always related to the limits of sharing of social representations in society as a whole due to the conflicting nature of relationships between groups (Moscovici, 1988).

Nevertheless we should admit that a representation could qualify for all three types but in distinct periods of time (Breakwell, 2001). Polemic social representations occur in a context determined by conflict between different groups and coincide with the maintaining of such conflict. We can imagine that when the context changes and the conflict becomes obsolete, polemic representations turn into emancipated ones. With reference to our specific case of study, the Roşia Montană conflict, this could happen, for example, if the mining Company entirely abandoned its gold exploitation plans in Roşia Montană. Also, we can imagine that if in the 'battle' between polemic representations, one group succeeds in universally imposing its own 'version of the truth', this would contribute to the emergence of a hegemonic social representation of the object. Since this is not the case with the Roşia Montană conflict, these intuitive ideas cannot be demonstrated, or at least not yet.

However, in contemporary societies we should expect to find more evidence for polemic representations rather than for hegemonic ones. This idea was explicitly stated by Vala (1992, p. 70): "When studying a social representation in our societies, the hypothesis of different and conflictual representations about the same object is probably today more heuristically valuable than the hypothesis that an object is represented in an hegemonic way (…). Its consensuality within groups is constructed and deconstructed side by side with the conflictuality that crosses the social relations and the strategic activity of individual and groups actors".

When searching for an operational definition of polemic social representations, one must keep in mind that a necessary condition for polemic representations to occur is a situation characterized by inter-group conflict. There are two situations that can be envisaged in relation to the history of the conflict characterizing the situation. First, conflict between groups may already exist, having historical or ideological roots. In this situation, the antagonistic relations will lead to the creation of opposing social representations of a given object that will further maintain the conflict. A second situation that can be envisaged is the emergence of a new and

problematic object that raises polemics. In this case, representational processes that divide groups can take place (Flament & Rouquette, 2003; Raudsepp & Wagner, 2012). This will lead to the creation of polemic representations that not only maintain the conflict but can also be considered as the very sources of the conflict itself. Our research deals undoubtedly with this second situation.

Furthermore, besides the conflicting context, in order to be able to highlight polemic representations one must look at the content and structure of such representations. Different or even antonymic contents may certainly be a clue of polemic representations. But focusing only on the content could be a trap. Within the structural approach, it is considered that two representations about a same object are different if they don't have the same central core (Abric, 2001a, 2003). Thus, two representations with similar content may radically differ if that content is organized differently in terms of peripheral and central elements. According to Flament and Rouquette (2003), in order to judge two representations as being opposite, there is no need to even consider that one is contrary to the other. To be considered opposite, hence polemic, their central cores should not be the same and, in addition, "the thematic valorization of at least one element from the central cores should be opposite for the groups" (p. 37). In our research, especially in its second phase dedicated to the study of polemic representations in people's mind (Farr, 1990, 1995), we employ certain methodological tools inspired by the structuralist approach in order to determine whether we can distinguish different central cores in the representations expressed by ordinary people with different attitudes towards the mine project in Roşia Montană.

Apart from studying content, our research will focus on the construction processes of polemic representations, since social representations are both the product and the process through which common sense knowledge is formed (Jodelet, 1984). From the very beginning (Moscovici, 1961/1976), the creation of social representations was described as implying two main socio-cognitive processes – anchoring and objectification. Described briefly, anchoring involves making something unfamiliar familiar, and objectification involves rendering something abstract more concrete (Moscovici, 2000). Social representations are generated through these two processes that work complementarily. However, even if the mechanisms are the same, the outcomes, i.e. polemic representations, must differ.

Objectification is a threefold process. Firstly, it implies the selection of information about the new object and its de-contextualization, secondly, the schematization of the selected information for constructing a figurative nucleus, and thirdly, naturalization, giving reality to the new image (Jodelet, 1984). When we consider objectification, we must keep in mind that this process depends on the characteristics of the social unit where the representation is being elaborated in terms of social structure, history, culture, generation, education (Wagner *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, through the objectification process, a social representation is elaborated for serving the needs, values, and interests of the group. Hence, this process brings about significant distortions of the object, through the concealment or accentuation of some of its elements (Jodelet, 1984). We believe that comparatively

studying polemic social representations is a good opportunity to analyze such significant distortions that occur when representing the same object by people with incompatible goals related to that object, or preferably, by people with different projects (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999).

Anchoring was briefly described by Moscovici (2000) as the process by which the new object is given meaning by integrating it into pre-existing knowledge categories, thus familiarising what was first unknown or even strange. This results from classifying and naming the new object. By classifying, the new object is compared to a prototype, representing the class to which the object is supposed to belong to. This can be achieved either by generalization, which implies reducing the differences between the object to be classified and the prototype to which it is compared, or by particularization, implying that the particularities of the new object are emphasized and the differences are exacerbated so that the new object will end up being considered different from the prototype. However, the tendency to generalize or to particularize is not an intellectual choice, nor is it innocent, because, and let us cite Moscovici (2000, p. 45), it "reflects a given attitude towards the object, a desire to define it as normal or aberrant. These are the stakes of every classification of unfamiliar things – the need to define them as conforming to, or diverging from, the norm". Classifying is always accompanied by the process of naming, although with a name, the new object loses its disturbing anonymity and becomes part of a complex set of specific words located in the *identity matrix* of our culture (*idem*, p 46). Once named, the new object will be describable, distinct, and it becomes the object of an agreement between those who adopt and share the same name. But also in this case, "it is obvious that naming is not a purely intellectual operation aiming at clarity or logical coherence. It is an operation related to a social attitude" (*idem*, p. 47).

More recently, Kalampalikis and Haas (2008) have advanced an interesting hypothesis regarding the anchoring process. For these authors, two types of anchoring can be envisaged that can be considered directly related to the intentions and motives of those who construct social representations of a new object. In the traditional view, anchoring serves for making the unfamiliar, familiar and is compatible with symbolic thinking, and therefore called symbolic anchoring. There are however situations in which anchoring may function in the opposite way, guaranteeing that the unfamiliar remains strange. This kind of anchoring is compatible with stigmatic thinking, by which the strange is ostracized and thus kept at a distance. This process of negative familiarization resembles somewhat particularization, already described by Moscovici (2000) as "*familiarisation with the uncommon, the non familiar, the strange, the not me, that guarantees, orchestrates or institutes a difference*" (Kalampalikis & Haas, 2008, p. 456; italics in original). Among others, evidence for stigmatic anchoring was provided with reference to work by Kalampalikis (2007), who studied the social representations of young Greeks in an antagonistic international context around the use of the name "Macedonia" to denominate the newly created ex-Yugoslavia republic. In order to protect their own identity, the studied individuals clearly refused the name

Macedonia to the neighboring country created in the nineties, or Macedonians for its citizens. They even had difficulties when finding another suitable name. The acronym 'FYROM' (Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia), for the state entity, and 'Yugoslavs', for its citizens, were preferred labels, thus ensuring that the "other" remains different, and even strange or uncommon. With regard to our subject of study, we can expect to find evidence for both symbolic and stigmatic anchoring, which can explain the rival interpretations of the same objects.

Anchoring is also a bi-directional process, working both up- and downstream in the formation of representations (Jodelet, 1989). In the construction phase, it serves to inscribe the representation in a network of significations. After the formation, anchoring acquires instrumental functions for the interpretation and mastering of the environment, the new representation becoming a grid for interpreting and understanding reality. When describing how social representations work as common-sense theories (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1983; 1984), it was acknowledged that social representations determine the way new information is treated. Thus, people with divergent social representations will also classify new information in different ways, which can become a source of misunderstanding, on interpersonal or political levels. One person's fact is another person's opinion, or even fiction. Later, Moscovici (1994) also explicitly emphasized, besides social representations' dependency on context, their potential for generating context. In our research, we will comparatively examine social representations of multiple objects, trying to observe whether the hypothesized polemic representations of Roşia Montană are also accompanied by polemic representations of other objects, like gold mining, the environment and foreign investors.

This leads us to another important point. Rather than taking into consideration isolated social representations (i.e. a group's social representation of a single object) we emphasize a network-structured display of various social representations. The narrative organization of social representations already emphasized (Laszlo, 1997) may also imply that the systems of shared social representations function themselves as narratives. Mannoni (1998) compared them with fairy-tales. According to this author, they contain several social representations, distributed differently according to their value or force. At the core, social representations are stronger (i.e. they have the autonomy, centrality and ability to systematize other, more feeble representations). With regard to our research, we assumed that every side in the conflict shares its own version of the *Roşia Montană story* and one of our objectives was to detect the elements and the structure of each story and then to compare them.

The framework we adopt for the study of the social representations emerged in the Roşia Montană conflict also takes communication processes into account. From the very beginning of the elaboration of the theory in Moscovici's seminal work *La psychanalyse* (1961/1976), it was obvious that we should not separate social representations and communication. However, as Moscovici himself affirmed in his conversation with Ivana Marková (1998), "when people talk about La Psychanalyse they focus on representations, but they usually overlook the second part of the book that deals with communication and language" (p. 402). He further states that

representations are generated and expressed in the process of communication, that this context brings a social representation into existence, and to cite him fully, a representation is "not a quiet thing consisting of an object and a science and the transformation of that object. Usually, there is a kind of ideological battle, a battle of ideas (…). I think that what is very much lacking in social psychology today is concern for the strife of ideas." (p. 403). It is precisely these considerations that led us to choose the Roșia Montană conflict as a case study for social representations. We took the challenge to analyze 'the battle of ideas' over Roșia Montană, which marks an important part of Romania's recent democratic history.

Within the framework of social representation theory, mass communication is conceived as a social practice that builds public spaces within which people act, imitate, control and constantly influence reciprocally (Rouquette, 1996). The second part of *La Psychanalyse* is an analysis of the circulation of social representations of psychoanalysis in French media. Three communication systems or genres were detected and described – diffusion, propagation, and propaganda – each with different underlying mechanisms and intentions related to the audience. According to Farr (1995), Moscovici's approach signifies a 'retro-revolution', a return to the healthy symbiosis between social psychology and media studies, which marked American social psychology early. Farr therefore states: "representations are in the media as well as in people's minds: they form part of culture as well as cognition and they need to be sampled and analyzed in both contexts" (p.8). In this thesis, we followed this recommendation and employed a research strategy intended to expose polemic social representations in both contexts, with all the methodological implications that follow. An important part of our research will be dedicated to analysing the diffusion of social representations about the Roșia Montană affair in national or local newspapers, either asserting or not a clear position (for or against) the gold mine project in Roșia Montană.

Besides the study of social representations in newspaper articles, we will analyze the transmission of polemic representations by the social actors directly involved in the conflict over Roșia Montană on both sides. It is through their various and divergent communication practices that social representations become *instruments of action* (Moscovici, 1961/1976), their transmission aiming influencing others. In a recent article by Elcheroth, Doise, and Reicher (2011), while encouraging the adoption of the social representation approach in the realm of political psychology, the authors make a specific point of defending that social representation theory must be seen as a theory of power, in the sense that by shaping representational systems, individuals or groups (political leaders, activists, or, in our case, we would say economic actors like a corporation) seek to create social realities that serve their vision or interests. To make this point clear, let us fully cite these authors: "we have argued that representations do not simply arise spontaneously from looking at the world. We are constantly exposed to representations from leaders and activists through mass communication. To argue that social knowledge is rooted in practice and, at least in part, used in order to make people create new social practices (in this sense, the source of social power lies in the creation of forms of

social knowledge) is to suggest that the various forms of knowledge are embedded in a process of mobilization and that change depends upon effective mobilization. That is to say, people do not come to understand the world through a neutral process of contemplation. Rather, they are directed to see the world in particular ways. This then leads us to think in terms of those who mobilize and those who are mobilized." (p. 745). Here, we find similarities with Sen and Wagner's (2005) idea that representational politics shape polemic representations.

In this light, it is easy to defend that communication that characterizes the transmission of polemic social representations by conflicting actors is propaganda. Propaganda, envisaged by Moscovici (1961/1976) in relation to the circulation of the social representation of psychoanalysis in French communist press in the 1950's, was defined as "a modality of group expression in a conflicting situation and instrumental elaboration, with the intention of action, of the representation that the group generates about the object of the conflict" (p, 442, our translation). By creating social representations, propaganda seeks to control opinions and shape behaviours. The cognitive organization of representations originated in propaganda simplifies and distorts reality, is built around dichotomized themes, and hence, is highly stereotypical.

We will analyze *what* and *how* the divergent sides involved in the Roşia Montană conflict  communicated to a larger audience in order to legitimize and impose their version of the Roşia Montană story, or, better said, in order to transform *matters of opinion* into *matters of fact* (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1984) about Roşia Montană. In order to summerize the bulk of messages that condense these versions of the 'Roşia Montană story', our analysis takes into account the numerous communication channels that were used by the conflicting sides during this long lasting public controversy (public documents, books, photographs, travel guides, web-sites, web-blogs, facebook pages, advertising, on line videogames, posters, slogans).

Progress in communication technology has thrown us into the "multimedia era" (Sartori, 1999) in which words, sounds and images are unified, and may be both "real" and "virtual". In our opinion, rather than being reluctant to analyse social phenomena in this new communicative environment due to the methodological problems it could entail, the researcher should take advantage and see this change as an opportunity to enrich his field of knowledge. With regard to social psychology and social representation theory in particular, the suggestion has now been made explicit (de Rosa, 1995b; 2001). What new media brings to the table is interactive communication, replacing the unidirectional flow of mass media (Windahl & McQuail, 1993). The internet offers an open space for expression – which although it is 'virtual', is at the same time public – where everyone concurs to be both the transmitter and the receiver of knowledge. Seen in this light, there is no reason not to consider the World Wide Web one of the places, among others, of confrontation between polemic representations.

Directly derived from this, this reseach will take into consideration both verbal and visual expressions of social representations, considered to be two sides of the same coin in the study of social representations (de Rosa & Farr, 2001). Nowadays,

there is a growing interest for analyzing visual productions, manifested in a variety of disciplines and approaches, such as semiotics, rhetoric, cultural studies, media studies, anthropology, sociology, neurosciences etc., and their contributions shape the emerging scientific field of visual communication (Smith, 2005). This trend is explainable as the logical consequence of what Moscovici (1983) labeled 'iconic revolution', the explosive return of images in communication to our world culture. It also indicates a dual change of perspective about visual images: first, from considering them as an area of resistance to meaning, being an extremely rudimentary system in comparison to language, or being totally self-referenced because of their ineffable richness in signification, to the recognition that images include meaning (Barthes, 1985). And second, the acceptance that, in spite of the polysemy of images that makes individuals interpret them according to spatial and temporal context or to their personal psychological traits, the meaning attributed to images may well be commonly shared due to the audience's mutual socio-cultural codes (Moliner, 1996; de Rosa & Farr, 2001; Freyssinet –Dominjon, 1997).

The social representation paradigm explicitly suggests switching from the "monotheistic" verbally-centered approach, which especially dominates discursive psychology, to a more integrative perspective which admits that, besides words, there are other means, like images, sounds, conducts, rites, that contribute to the social construction of reality (de Rosa & Farr, 2001; Mamali, 2006). The very formula suggested by Moscovici (2000) for defining social representations is "representation = image/meaning", in the sense that a representation equates every image to an idea and every idea to an image. By studying the imagistic content, along with the verbal content, we are thus able to seize the complex nature of the representational phenomena. The investigation of the iconic/figurative way of expression of social representations characterizes an impetus from conceiving images only in pure ideational terms, like image-based thinking. Therefore, visual image is considered jointly a *source* for activating and/or favoring the emergence of social representations, a *product* of social representations (the social representation itself, as an iconic-symbolic synthesis, a materialization of one SR, a direct expression of the objectification process), and a *means*, a form of transmission of social representations (de Rosa & Farr, 2001).

The framework we adopt in this research on polemic social representations tries to follow most of the seven paradigmatic principles formulated by Bauer and Gaskell (1999) when suggesting an ideal form of research on social representations. The first principle states that both content and processus should be explored for the comparative analysis of common sense. In order to determine whether the social representations of the 'Roşia Montană affair' are indeed polemic we will focus on the content and structure of these representations and also take into account construction (anchoring and objectification), and communication processes.

The second principle supports the consideration of social settings or natural groups formed around different projects, whether with weak or strong affiliation, which are representations' carrier systems and functional references. Although our research refers to taxonomic groupings, the main focus remains on the study of

representations precisely in groups with specific (and incompatible) projects in relation to the polemic object: to start or to stop the Roşia Montană gold mining project.

A third principle calls for the consideration of both formal and informal communication engagements in order to examine the differential cultivation of an issue among different groups. Although more emphasis in this research is put on formal communication (newspaper articles, web-sites, advertising), we also refer to informal communication, even if this was demonstrated in virtual space, like comments and conversations on the social platform Facebook.

The fourth principle suggests the use of multiple methods adapted to the analysis of various levels (individual cognition, behaviour, formal and informal communication) and means (words, visual images, movement, non-linguistic sounds) of social representations. After all that has already been said, the adoption of an intergrated multi-methodological approach (de Rosa, 1990; Moscovici and Buschini,eds., 2003) in our research is obvious. We will analyze the social representations related to the Roşia Montană conflict in both media and in people's minds, as part of the culture and of cognition (Farr, 1990, 1995). We also take into consideration both verbal and visual ways of expression of social representations. This implies the triangulation of different data sources (in our case: media contents, documents, questionnaires, free associations) and, subsequently, of different methodologies used to analyze the data (Apostolidis, 2003).

The fifth principle suggests the adoption of a research design that incorporates the temporal perspective for studying the changing structure and the evolution of a social representation. We apply this principle merely with regard to the study of media content. We collected longitudinal data from newspapers in order to reveal the changing discourses about Roşia Montană in the media. The temporal perspective was also taken into account when we analyzed the communication strategies used in different periods of time by the social actors directly involved in the Roşia Montană conflict.

The sixth principle considers the situations and objects that can be productive for the study of representations, and underlines that social representations occur and should be studied in times of challenge, or societal fault-lines, where 'new' concerns arise for different groups. We believe that the Roşia Montană conflict stands for such a situation of rupture in Romanian society, where conceptions about economic development vs. environmental protection and also about old vs. new ways of economic production clash, and thus cause the construction of social representations. The ongoing conflict over Roşia Montană is at the same time a new and, in many respects, a singular phenomenon in Romania, a country with no previous tradition of environmental concern or movements. This also makes this event particularly interesting to be studied.

Finally, the last principle calls for a disinterested and 'melancholic' attitude of the researcher who studies social representations, in the sense that he should avoid imposing his/her own beliefs about what might be the appropriate representation and that he/she should abstain from engagement or social engineering, especially in

the course of the empirical inquiry. Although the viability of this recommendation was put into question in the case of community studies dealing with stigmatizing representations of groups with less access to power, thus calling for a more participatory research approach (Foster, 2011), we considered it crucial when comparatively analysing representations born in a conflictual context. Since the Roşia Montană conflict is still ongoing, we sought emotional distance from it, as a condition to guarantee the neutrality and pertinence of our scientific approach. We also refused to make any public statement about our own position in the polemics; in fact we forced ourselves to not have any position at all. Thus, when repeatedly asked about which side of the conflict we are on – as was always the case when physically or virtually interacting with members of the conflicting parts – we always insisted on the pure research interest we had in the topic. Managing the status of an independent researcher was not always easy; from the feed-back we sometimes got it was clear that we were judged as conducting this research for the interests of one of the conflicting sides, usually the opposite of the one feedback was sent from. We shall give an anecdotic example. For one particular study we collected data from an on-line questionnaire. In order to get answers from people with direct interest in the Roşia Montană issue, we extensively used the social platform Facebook to promote our questionnaire. On Facebook, several pages are dedicated to the issue, created by both conflicting sides of the conflict, such as a group uniting opponents to the mine projects called the 'Save Roşia Montană group', which actually gathers more than 5000 members. In some cases we were able to simply publish the link to the questionnaire on the 'walls' of different Facebook members, groups or organizations, without the need to get any special permission for doing so. Usually, opponents to the Roşia Montană mining project were more open to receive our questionnaire and we actually received positive feedback and even congratulations from some subjects. It took us about two weeks in order to convince the mining company's staff in charge with public relations to accept to publish the questionnaire's link on the 'wall' of the "Roşia Montană project page" they administered. However, when this was finally done, we got strong criticism and even accusations expressed on the "Save Roşia Montană group" Facebook 'wall', of conducting our study for serving the interests of the mining company. Sometimes, this criticism came from the same people who previously appreciated our independent work. With this book, we hope to have demonstrated the impartiality of our scientific approach and the disinterested research attitude that conditions it.

# 2 The 'battle of ideas' over Roşia Montană

This chapter offers a summarized view of the development of incompatible social representations generated in the Roşia Montană conflict by the main social actors, whose goals related to the future of Roşia Montană are deeply incompatible. On the one side, the mining company, which obviously aims financial gain, launched the Roşia Montană gold mining project. On the other side, a more diffuse group of actors engaged in the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign, declared their intention to block the realization of this mining project on environmental, cultural, legal, economic or ethical grounds. Our assumption is that in order to justify their opinion regarding the future of Roşia Montană, both sides constructed and transmitted social representations with a view to influence the public and decision makers to adopt a favorable position to the cause they are supporting. This symbolic competition for Roşia Montană will be discussed here. In the subsequent segments of this chapter, we will summarize the main themes, strategies and communication channels addressed, as well as support gained by actors in the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign and by the mining company that introduced the mining project. This inventory enables us to examine what can be called a 'biography' of the social representations emerged in the particular conflict we chose to analyze, and to observe the relationships between polemic social representations.

## 2.1    Research goals

The general aim of this analysis was to offer a summarized account of the development of incompatible social representations generated by the Roşia Montană conflict, constructed and transmitted by the main stakeholders involved in the Roşia Montană conflict, whose aims regarding the future of Roşia Montană are deeply incompatible. We consider that through their actions and discourses, they compete for the creation of social reality through social representations, which should be regarded as symbolic "weapons" in their fight.

The specific goals that guided our investigation were:

- to identify the dominant themes/statements by which the Roşia Montană issue was addressed throughout the controversy in the discourses and practices of the two conflicting sides;

- to  make an inventory of the main strategies, styles of action, communication channels and supports used by the conflicting sides in the transmission of social representations

- to observe the relationships between the representations constructed by the conflicting sides

To demonstrate that the representations constructed and transmitted by the actors who form the main sides in the Roşia Montană conflict are polemic is tautological, given the very definition of this concept, as a type of social representation produced by groups engaged in antagonistic relations (Moscovici, 1988). This kind of demonstration will be undertaken in the second part of our empirical research, which focuses on the study of social representations ''in people's minds'' in order to determine whether there are connections between the representations created by the main stakeholders of the Roşia Montană conflict and those formed in social thinking. Also, to say that polemic social representations are transmitted through propaganda would be a truism, given the very definition of this communication system is ''a modality of group expression in a conflicting situation'' (Moscovici, 1961/1976).

The hypothesis we advance in this study concerns how polemic social representations relate to one another. When suggesting this concept, Moscovici described polemic social representations as mutually exclusive and expressed ''in terms of dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor'' (1988, p. 222). When analyzing the relationship with alternative representations within polemic social representations, Gillespie (2008) pointed out that although the alternative is present as a shadow or even as a caricature within the polemic representation, there is not much dialogical inter-change between the main representation and the alternative, the latter existing only to be rejected. Our hypothesis is that in their evolution, polemic social representations can be regarded as mutually exclusive and inter-dependent, in the sense that they also influence each other; to use the philosopher Michel Foucault's words, they are mutually constitutive. Moreover, we suspect that due to reciprocal influence, the dialogical inter-change between polemic representations and the alternative is not only based on rejection.

## 2.2    Method

Serge Moscovici, the founding father of social representation theory, often used the metaphor of the living being to describe social representations. The "almost tangible" entities, as they were portrayed in *La psychanalyse*, are created in the

course of social interaction; "once created, however, they lead a life of their own, circulate, merge, attract and repel each other, and generate new representations while old ones die out". He continued by stating that for understanding and explaining a social representation, it is necessary to start "from that, or those, from which it originated" (Moscovici, 2000, p.27).

This study, based on qualitative methods combining discourse analysis and observation, focuses on the 'life story' of the social representations emerged in the Roşia Montană conflict. The method we employed in this study, if we may extend the metaphor, could be paralleled to the biographical method in that "interviewing" of the representations was made through analysis of their communication. The discourses and practices of the main social actors involved in the conflict – the mining company, on one side and the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement on the other, were interpreted here.

In conducting this study, we collected a wide range of materials (documents, press releases, books, photographs, travel guides, web-sites, web-blogs, Facebook pages, emails, advertising, documentaries, on-line videogames, posters, slogans, emblems), contained in various media (texts, visual images, audio-video), which throughout the controversy were produced and transmitted by the main actors through various communication channels and actions. It must be said that internet proved to be a very useful tool for obtaining data, almost all the broadcast materials and information about the actions taken being filed in the 'virtual archive'. However, in many cases, the abundant material was also redundant, and our analysis was not intended to quantify it all. On the contrary, we were interested in detecting the main themes addressed by the stakeholders throughout the controversy and in identifying eventual significant changes in their discourses. To achieve this, we selected what we assumed were the most significant materials, and took into account their range and specificity.

As well as the analysis of various communicative media, in this study we refer to the most significant actions taken by the social actors throughout the controversy. Different events and actions, especially those undertaken by the numerous actors united in the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement, were considered as a form of communication of social representations through practice.

## 2.3   From 'save Roşia Montană' to 'save Romania' -  a chronological overview of the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign

The 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign against the corporate mining project started nationally in 2002 when several NGOs joined the fight of the locally based association of 'property owners' from Roşia Montană refusing to leave their village. The first official gathering in support of the association named 'Gold-miners Association Alburnus Maior' took place on the 28th of July 2002 in Roşia Montană and was attended by over 300 people. This meeting produced the 'Roşia Montană Declaration', a document that articulated and legitimated Alburnus'

endeavor to protest against the corporate project. The Declaration was supported (signed) by a group of 31 environmental NGOs from Romania and the international environmental organization Greenpeace, represented by its Central East European division[10]. Below, we reproduce its main tenants:

"We consider that the project does not meet the principles of sustainable development on the following accounts:

- It has overall negative social impact (more than 900 households and more than 2000 people relocated
- It has irreversible effects on all the environmental factors (water, air, soil) and will directly affect all forms of life on a surface of at least 1,600 ha and indirectly on a larger surface which is almost impossible to estimate
- It will quickly exploit natural resources to extinction
- It will compromise the sustainable development of the locality and several regional economic activities (i.e. tourism and agro-tourism) for a very long period of time
- The project is in contradiction with the European Convention for Landscape Preservation that Romania has ratified.
- The gold extraction technology proposed by the project is in contradiction with the 2001 Berlin Declaration that has banned cyanide use if the process irreversibly affects ecosystems.
- The project leads to the destruction of the natural, cultural and historic Heritage of an important area of the Apuseni Mountains and Romania in general.
- The project violates legislation on environmental protection and natural protected areas"[11].

Thus, the beginning of the fight against the mining project was particularly characterised by critical messages towards the displacement of Rosia's inhabitants and against the proposed form of mining (surface mining and cyanide use). 'Roşia Montană is Not for sale' and environmental protection campaigning messages have started to become publicly known in Romania, but the cause of Roşia Montană also traveled abroad through protests organized in Washington at the World Bank in order to block a financial investment for the mining project by the International Finance Corporation, the private investment division of the World Bank. When the IFC refused to fund the corporate project in Roşia Montană, opponents to the project

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10 The organizations that signed this declaration are the following: Alburnus Maior, Sighisoara Durabila, Pro Bicycles Urbo Association, Alma-Ro Association, TERRA Mileniul III Foundation, The Consortium 'Baia Mare without Pollution', Piatra Altarului-Cluj Club, Districtual Foundation for Youth –Constanta, A.S.C.O.R Cluj-Napoca, A.R.M.E.D.D Bucharest, Romanian Institute for Peace, Eco-Alpex 024, Perpetuum Mobile Tourist Association, Ecologic Club ''Transilvania', Ciclotourism Club Napoca, CETM ALBAMont, Greenpeace CEE, A.R.I.N Braila, Romantic Club Association, Roman Alpin Club, Association –  Timisoara, ECOMEDIA 21 Association, TACTIC Logistic Centre, Mare Nostrum Constanta, AIDRom.

11 The Roşia Montană Declaration was retrieved from: http://www.rosiamontana.ro/img_upload/472 936e3bca2bc61045730fbb1869240/Rosia_Montana_Declaration.pdf , accesed on 11.11.2011

**Figure 1. Emblem of the 'Save
Roşia Montană' campaign**

considered it to be a major and rapid success of their newly started anti-mining campaign. Over the next ten years, the persistent movement took further action against RMGC, but also against state officials, campaigning in multiple various forms: the 'Cyanide-Free Romania' Coalition (a national coalition of NGOs and some political figures calling for banning the use of cyanide in the mining industry), 'Hay-Fest' (the first environmental festival in Romania, which has been organized in Roşia Montană since 2004 and to which various artists participated voluntarily), public debates, protests, petitions sent to different national and European institutions, court actions. In other words, the grassroots movement triggered mobilization in important Romanian cities (Bucharest, Alba Iulia, Cluj-Napoca), as well as the participation of international organizations such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Mining Watch Canada, etc. As one can read on the website created by NGOs for this movement[12], the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign has grown to be the biggest social and environmental movement in Romania, a movement actively supported by hundreds of NGOs and scientific fora (the Romanian Academy, universities), churches, public personalities and tens of thousands of private people who fight against the mining project and wish for the preservation of Roşia Montană and for the sustainable development of the area.

The movement adopted the slogan "Salvaţi  Roşia Montană" ( 'Save Roşia Montană'), and the emblem of a horizontally lying oak leaf, colored half green and half red, symbolising the name of the place (*Roşia*, the name that means the colour red, and *Montană* that means 'from the mountain', thus green). The green part of the leaf on top looks like mountain peaks, the red part on the bottom has the appearance of drops of blood falling from the leaf.

During the ten years of campaigning against the gold mining project, the various social actors building this movement raised ecological, cultural, economic, legal and ethical arguments. Several types of action and communication channels were used in order to make their voice public. In Table 1 we present chronologically the major thematic statements of the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign and some of the main tactics, styles of action and communication media used in the fight against the corporate mining project. The main information that helped us build the table was obtained from the official web site of the Save Roşia Montană campaign (www. rosiamontana.org). The main thematic statements were identified by interpreting the very rich material that the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign produced over the time.

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12 www.rosiamontana.org , accesed on 11.11.2011

**Table 1. Chronological overview of the Save Roşia Montană campaign**

| Thematic statements | Tactics, styles of action and communicative supports |
|---|---|
| **2002**<br>**Opposing displacement, 'Roşia Montană is NOT for sale'**<br>**"No-Open Cast, No Cyanide mining",**<br>**Environmental protection, Importance of Heritage;**<br>**Tourism and agriculture - alternatives to mining.** | Local demonstrations; "The Roşia Montană Declaration"; Position papers.<br>Appeal to motifs of religious and patriotic importance with the support of the Unitarian and Orthodox church.<br>The value of ancient Romanian Heritage proclaimed by important archeologists and historians, ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites), the Romanian Academy. |
| **2003**<br>**Environmental and Heritage protection**<br>**Insufficient economic rewards for Romania** | National protests, solidarity marches, public gatherings<br>Public statements and resolutions of other actors (European Federation of Green Parties; Romanian Academy; Greenpeace<br>Banners, posters, press releases. |
| **2004**<br>**'Save Roşia Montană'**<br>**Economic inefficiency of the Project - economic risk for investors**<br>**Environmental hazards with transboundary effects**<br>**Tourism and agriculture as alternatives to mining** | Public statements by the Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest against RMGC.<br>Solidarity March<br>Symbolic actions ('Save Roşia Montană' was taken to Mont Blanc mountain)<br>Protest Concert 'FânFest' (HeyFest) in Roşia Montană with 4000 participants.<br>public actions in front of the Victoria Palace: activists from Romania, Hungary, Germany and Austria pressure the Nastase government to act against the RMGC. |
| **2005**<br>**Environmental Protection**<br>**Corruption allegations**<br>**"Not for sale"** | Court actions<br>Flash mobs against public officials declaring to support the Project<br>Petitions to the European Union bodies and the Romanian Environmental Minister against corrupt practices regarding the environmental impact evaluation process. |
| **2006**<br>**Drama of people from Roşia Montană living in a divided community**<br><br>**The mining project as an environmental hazard**<br><br>**Corruption allegations;**<br>**Denouncing RMGC's publicity** | Documentary movie: New Eldorado (Tibor Kocsis, Hungarian movie maker)<br>Declaration of the Romanian Academy<br>Protest letters of Hungarian NGOs and other public actions such as boycotting TIFF (Transylvania International Film Festival, sponsored by RMGC that year)<br>Contesting the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process<br>FânFest (HeyFest).<br>Mindbomb posters denouncing corruption of state officials who support the RMGC Project |

| Thematic statements | Tactics, styles of action and communicative supports |
|---|---|
| **2007-2008**<br><br>**"No Cyanide Romania"**<br>**"Cyanide kills"**<br><br><br>**"This property is not for sale",**<br><br>**Roşia Montană – piece of Heaven** | The "No Cyanide Romania" Coalition is formed to support a legislative proposal by Senators Peter Eckstein-Kovacs and Gheorghe Funar ([www.faracianura.ro](www.faracianura.ro))<br>Joining the international campaign of Earthworks: "No dirty gold";<br>Letters and declarations by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), church leaders;<br>"Roşia Montană – the hooded light" Soros photographic exhibition showing the beauty of Roşia Montană;<br>'This property is not for sale": Tablets on local houses in Roşia Montană not willing to resettle;<br>Brochures; web pages; blogs; on-line broadcasts |
| **2009**<br>**Denouncing RMGC's publicity** | Accusations of 'prostitution' against important marketing managers producing RMGC's publicity material and against the media accepting the publicity;<br>Posters; brochures; web pages; blogs; on-line broadcast |
| **2010-2011**<br><br>**Criticism of governmental support for the mining project**<br><br>**"Roşia Montană in UNESCO"**<br><br>**"Revolution starts at Roşia Montană"**<br><br>**Denouncing RMGC's publicity**<br><br>**"Save Roşia Montană -**<br>**Save Romania!"** | NGOs' common declaration against the inclusion of RMGC's project in the governmental economic program and against politicians' support for the mining project;<br>Photographic petition: **Roşia Montană in UNESCO**<br>Roşia Montană cultural and tourist guide;<br>Theater play: "Roşia Montană – pe line fizică şi pe linie politică" ("Roşia Montană – on physical and political lines")<br>Street protests and symbolic actions<br>Solidarity camps: Reclaim the fields<br>Internet networks (Facebook, forums, NGO email lists)<br>Posters; brochures; web pages; blogs; on-line broadcasts |

Taking stock of the dominant thematic statements that characterise the fight against the Roşia Montană mining project over time is suggestive of the evolution and transformations in the opponents' discourse. It should however be said that their discourse is characterised by continuity. Even though certain themes become more pronounced over time, which in turn depends on the type of social actor taking action against the mining project (environmental NGOs, scientific or religious organisations…) and on the issue's specific evolutionary path (publicity campaigns sponsored by the mining company, governmental decisions, public statements, judicial decisions), other themes previously mentioned by the opposition aren't necessarily abandoned.

Thus, an assortment of motives characterizes the campaigners' discourse about how to 'save Roşia Montană'. For ecological reasons, the mining project is considered to bring about Roşia Montană's destruction, by seriously damaging the environment through open pit mining and cyanide use. It represents a serious environmental hazard not only for the Roşia Montană area, but also for the entire region, country and even neighboring countries. The most emblematic event used to draw attention to the environmental dangers of the mine was the Baia Mare cyanide spill in 2000, portrayed through the image of dead fish due to the cyanide poisoned waters, which was intensively used in publicity issued by the opponents. For example, a publicity spot produced in 2007 for transmitting the message 'No cyanide Romania' showed a young man proposing to his beloved with the following message: "My darling, accept this ring as a sign of my love to you. For obtaining it I demolished mountains, I poisoned waters, I killed all the fish that stood in my way. So… what do you say: Will you marry me?"[13].

For the opponents, the mining project will bring about the extinction of the Roşia Montană community, forcing its people to leave, destroying their houses, churches, cemeteries and traditional way of life. It will only bring death to Roşia Montană.

For cultural reasons, the Roşia Montană site has unique archeological remnants from the Roman and Medieval periods, historical and natural monuments, all these making it worthy to be included in the UNESCO world heritage. A post card issued by the Bucharest based NGO 'Regeneration' and distributed to the participants of Fân Fest (Hey Fest) in 2010 suggests the historic value of the Roşia Montană site by comparing it with a strong symbol of the Roman Empire, the Coliseum of Rome (see Figure 2).

For economical reasons, opponents consider that the benefits of extracting the gold deposits that belong to the nation are insufficient for the Romanian state. On the contrary, the largest benefits will be for the foreign company. "RMGC gives us poison, while we're offering it gold for nothing!", "Take your hands off our gold" were some of the most popular slogans transmitting this message in public demonstrations, but the idea of insufficient economic rewards was demonstrated in studies and public statements by economists and academics who joined the campaign.

On legal grounds, the mining project is considered to infringe environmental and property rights, contravening Romanian, European and International legal requirements. Also, the legality in the authorization process is questioned. Subsequently, especially after 2004, the symbolic fight against the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign was coupled with a battle in court in which the main actors fought amongst themselves but also with local or state authorities.

For the actors joining the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement, no compromise to the mining project should be made. It essentially represents the destruction of

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13 Video available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MDTAmji0ko (accessed in December 2011)

Text message:
"What if gold was discovered
under the Coliseum?
Save Roşia Montană!"

**Figure2. Gold mining as a threat
to Roşia Montană's heritage
(postcard, Regeneration: 2010)**

*Cum ar fi dacă am descoperi aur sub Colosseum?
Salvaţi Roşia Montană! www.rosiamontana.org*

a unique place in Romania that should be preserved by all means. Challenged by the developmentalist discourse of the mining company insisting on the economic advantages the mine would bring to Roşia Montană and the region, opponents were forced to adapt their own discourse by including the theme of *alternative solutions* for the economic development of Roşia Montană, such as tourism and agriculture.

The campaigners' attacks were not only directed against the mining company that wants to exploit Roşia Montană's gold, but also against the politicians favorable to the project[14]. Corruption allegations were made whenever a governmental decision favorable to the project was issued (like the Archeological Discharge Certificate issued by the Ministry of Culture[15]) or when Romanian politicians publicly declared their support of the project or initiated legislative action so as to facilitate its undertaking (for example, the 2010 Parliamentary initiative to modify Mine

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14 Traian Băsescu, who was first elected president in Romania in 2004 and who was a constant supporter of the Roşia Montană gold mine project, was probably the most criticized political figure by the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement. Mindbomb, an artistic organization that produces and diffuses street posters with socio-political messages in order to counteract the discourse of mainstream politics, media, and advertising industry, created in 2006 a poster that depicted a golden bust of president Băsescu, imitating the Oscar statue he should receive for sustaining the cyanide-project, and naming him "Lingoule", a word suggesting the name "gold ingot" but also the appellative "bootlicker". This poster was always used during demonstrations against the president. President Băsescu was accused of lobbying in favor of the mining company, his public declarations having a direct impact on raising the price of the company's shares on the stock market. Since Băsescu often declared being a player-president, he was shown the red card during a spontaneous protest that took place in august 2011 in front of his office at the Cotroceni Palace, indicating that he violated the rules of fair play.

15 The then Minister of Culture, Kelemen Hunor, who changed his mind about his initial commitment to initiate procedures for including Roşia Montană in the UNESCO world heritage sites and signed in June 2011 the Archeological Discharge Certificate for the Mountain Cârnic, thus enabling the construction of an open pit on this mountain full of archeological vestiges, became the target of attacks. The "Hunoriada" street movement started, protesters demanding the resignation of the Minister considered 'guilty of environmental and cultural murder'.

Law by including a provision that would make expropriating landowners easier[16]; the 2009 declaration of the then Minister of Economy Adrian Videanu that the Roşia Montană mining project shall be included as a priority in the governmental program[17]).    Romanian media institutions were also criticized and accused of 'prostitution' for diffusing the RMGC's publicity.

The table also shows how the 'Roşia Montană case' evolved from being a local issue to becoming a national and even European issue. This is especially suggested by the slogan intensively used during the protests initiated in the last 2-3 years, "Save Roşia Montană – Save Romania", that indicates not only that Roşia Montană is an important symbol for Romanian identity but also how the fight against the mining project in Roşia Montană became an anchor to other Romanian citizens' grievances.

The style of action varied considerably depending on the actors initiating the numerous events created to support the movement. Formal meetings and events that required careful preparations (like FânFest, the festival organized yearly since 2004; seminars; meetings of the Romanian Academy Assembly; the recent International Conference "Roşia Montană in universal world history" organized by the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca) were accompanied by more spontaneous actions, like flashmobs, photobombing, occupations, surprising street events, all suited to attract public attention for the 'Save Roşia Montană' cause. Particularly in the last years of campaigning, virtual social networks like Facebook or Twitter became efficient mobilizing tools and communication channels for these types of actions. Some symbolic actions were taken more individually, like taking the 'Save Roşia Montană' emblem to the Mont Blanc by four Romanian alpinists in 2004, or the 'march of gold' of two young men who walked in the autumn of 2011 for about 300 kilometers from Bacău to Bucharest in order to protest against president Traian Băsescu's declaration that Romania needs the gold of Roşia Montană to be president for 'satisfying his needs of gold'.

As a retaliation to the allegedly low media attention to the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement, especially since 2009 when the mining company started its second large publicity campaign (see next section) raising the suspicion that the media institutions signed secret agreements with the company so as not to transmit news that would negatively affect its image, a series of creative and also surprising street events were organized in Romania's big cities, especially in Cluj-Napoca, the largest city in Transylvania, and in Bucharest, the capital. One    example of such action is detailed below.

In November 2011, a series of events began in Cluj-Napoca and were replicated in Bucharest and other large Romanian cities.  On the 6th of November 2011, a group of

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16    Several headquarters of public institutions and of political parties, private properties of politicians were symbolically "expropriated" by activists in 2010 when the change of the mining law was initiated.

17    On this occasion posters of the Minister was bombarded with tomatoes with the claim "Let's give Roşia [the tomato] to Videanu".

seven activists of the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign 'occupied' a disused building, the former Continental hotel in downtown Cluj-Napoca, and posted on its walls messages like 'Save Roşia Montană', "The revolution starts at Roşia Montană" and "OCCUPY Conti, Pre-OCCUPY Cluj".

The symbolic sources of inspiration for this action are twofold. Firstly, the Russian October Revolution that started in the night of the 6th to 7th of November when the Bolsheviks lead by Lenin occupied the Winter Palace from Sankt Petersburg, the residence of the Russian Tsar. The date of 7th of November became the anniversary date of the communist revolution, celebrated in all socialist states, including Romania. The choice of this date was hence not innocent. Secondly, the more recent protest movement "Occupy Wall Street", which started in September in New York but soon became internationally widespread.

In Cluj, after a few hours of occupation of the building, police forcibly removed the activists, causing protests from other activists who, in the meantime, had gathered in front of the building. The protests continued the following day in front of the national and local headquarters of the public television, TVR, which had not broadcast any news regarding what had happened in Cluj-Napoca. On that occasion, the protesters duct-taped their mouths, denouncing the censorship that public television and mainstream media had decided to practice in order to serve the mining company's interests. As a result of the police's action to block the protests on the grounds that the activists did not have official authorization to protest, a civil disobedience kit was conceived and transmitted by means of websites and on Facebook. Because Romanian law regarding public meetings does not envisage the need for special authorization in the case of cultural and artistic acts, the following evenings several "artistic" events were organized in the center of Cluj-Napoca, and, at a smaller scale, in the center of Bucharest. Three days after the initial event, a few tens of people gathered in the city squares. "Country, country, we want soldiers", a game often played by Romanian children, became "Country, country we want soldiers for Roşia Montană" and was played by a few hundred protesters in Piaţa Unirii (Union Square) in Cluj-Napoca. A highly visible event that followed the same week was named "Occupy your body with cyanide". A few hundred people from Cluj and Bucharest took part in a symbolic suicide with cyanide. Mascots of president Basescu and Kelemen Hunor, the then minister of culture, distributed "cyanide" to the participants, who then lay down on the ground and lit their own bedside candles. The tone of the protests became less bleak the following days when the activists of the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign distributed hugs to passers-by or 'danced for Roşia Montană' (allusion to a popular TV show). All these actions were duplicated in the virtual space by the 'Facebook events' created by activists for each day, thus extending public 'participation'.

Unlike the mining corporation who's financial means facilitated the availability of its messages through TV and newspaper ads (see next section), the communication channel most used by opponents was the internet. An official campaign web site was created from the beginning (www.rosiamontana.org) and several other web pages promoted particular events, causes, on-line petitions, or tourist itineraries (www.fanfest.ro; www.faracianura.ro; www.rosiamontana.net; www.drumulaurului.ro). Web blogs representing the new media communication era were created by members of the movement (http://rosiamontana-unesco.blogspot.com; http://luptapentrurosiamontana.wordpress.com), but the fight to 'Save Roşia Montană'

was addressed on numerous other personal blogs, a complete inventory not being made here.

As mentioned before, virtual social networks like Twitter or Facebook became intensively used as communicative channels but also for mobilizing actions, especially in the last years of campaigning. On Facebook, the page dedicated to the inclusion of Roşia Montană in the UNESCO world heritage (http://www. facebook.com/rosia.montana.in.unesco) was created in 2010 and is now (July 2013) supported by more than 100.000 fans. But this is not the movement's only presence on Facebook. 'S.O.S. Roşia Montană' (http://www.facebook.com/SOS. Rosia.Montana) was created in 2009 as well as the 'Save Roşia Montană' Facebook group, now gathering more than 6100 members (http://www.facebook.com/groups/ saverosiamontana/). Facebook became a veritable battlefield in the conflict over Roşia Montană, characterised as 'a battle for likes'. When the Facebook page dedicated to the gold mine project created by the corporation reached a number of 200.000 fans, the company's PR department was accused of artificially creating Facebook members or of stealing IDs in order to increase the number of 'likes' on the page. Private messages were sent to members of the 'Save Roşia Montană' Facebook group who also indicated to 'like' the mining project facebook page, in order to make them aware that this contradicts their status of member of the group or of Facebook 'friend' with those engaged in the fight against the corporate project.

The on-line self broadcasting site Youtube was also intensively used for transmitting images, spots, news, and documentaries on the campaign. E-mails were also sent to transmit documents and declarations issued by diverse institutional actors (like the documents produced by the group of opponents to the mine project from the Bucharest's Academy of Economic Science) but also for transmitting information that can be catalogued as rumors about the mine project and the company. Such rumors were for example the disclosure that the mining company's secret intentions were not to extract Roşia Montană's gold and silver, but other more rare precious metals and even uranium; in other rumors the gold and silver deposit was considered to be much larger than was officially recognized, thus amplifying the stake in the Roşia Montană issue; a rather contradicting rumor disseminated through emails and on-line comments revealed on the contrary that the gold deposit in Roşia Montană is not that big and that the company's real intention is to make profit from speculations on the stock market.

Although it could not reach the traditional media channels through sponsored publicity, some journalists voluntarily joined the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign. Beginning in 2002, the weekly magazine Formula As (analyzed in Chapter 4.) constantly published articles in support of the cause. More recently, the newly founded magazine of political satire Kamikaze has a permanent section dedicated to the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign, which is suggestively called "Menţineţi Roşia Verde" [Keep Roşia [the RED] Green].

The most popular communication tools used by the campaigners have been posters, brochures, slogans, banners, flyers, postcards, photographs, in general those materials that require less financial resources. In 2007, the "No cyanide Romania"

coalition produced an advert that was denied on TV channels by the National Audio-Visual Council and was transmitted only on the Internet. Three other adverts supporting the inclusion of Roşia Montană in the UNESCO world heritage were diffused from with 2010, also on Youtube.

Press releases issued by the Alburnus Maior association and other NGOs, documents produced by different experts (environmental practitioners, economists, historians, archeologists, chemists, geographers, geologists), the proceedings of the International Conference "Roşia Montană in universal world history" (November, 2011; Cocean (ed.), 2012), a cultural and tourist guidebook of Roşia Montană (2011) were also communicative supports in the fight against the corporate mining project.

The 'Save Roşia Montană' movement also inspired documentary movies, such as the "New Eldorado" (2006) by the Hungarian filmmaker Tibor Kocsis, distinguished with several international awards, or the "Twilight of Gold Miners" (2007) by Cristina Oancea, also distinguished with several national and international awards. Although these documentaries were announced as independent from the movement, the underlying idea in both of them is that the mining project should be rejected. For example, Tibor Kocsis' documentary starts with the message: "In making a gold ring, 20 tons of mineral waste are generated", while a significant part of the movie shows images filmed in the director's native country after the Baia Mare cyanide spill, with the fish, birds and other wild or domestic animals killed as a result of that accident.

Finally, the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement inspired artistic creations, like the musical "Weapons always prepared" (2006) by the hip-hop artist Bitză who explicitly refers to the fight for Roşia Montană in his lyrics, while images from Roşia Montană are included in the video clip; the musical "My street with only one streetlamp" (2011) by the pop music band Taxi, which speaks about several social, economic and political Romanian issues including Roşia Montană, is referred to as a 'common wound' of Romanians; the play "Roşia Montană – on physical and political lines", played at the Hungarian Theatre of Cluj-Napoca in 2011, showed the drama of people from Roşia Montană living in a disharmonious community, threatened with losing their roots and living with the uncertainty about their future.

To sum up this section, opposition to the Roşia Montană gold mining project generated an unprecedented movement in Romanian society, a movement that nurtured a long lasting debate about a previously unheard of place in Romania and making it famous. The movement was joined by numerous social actors from Romania and abroad who justified their opposition to the corporate project on environmental, cultural, social, legal, economic and ethical grounds. A variety of actions were undertaken, from those more formalized to those generally used in protest movements. A huge amount of materials were used as communicative tools, produced and transmitted in both the physical and virtual space. This contributed to framing the Roşia Montană issue as a national and global matter, but also made the fight against the gold mining project an anchor to other grievances on political, social, economic and environmental matters in Romania. It most likely contributed highly to raising environmental awareness in Romania. For example, in a recently

occurred environmental controversy about the exploitation of shale gas by the American company Chevron, the Roşia Montană issue was always referred to and used as an anchor, while the activists of the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign were some of the first people involved.

The 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign is now considered to be a success story, demonstrating the revival of civil society in Romania. Some scholars (Parău, 2009, Ban & Roman, 2008) considered it to be an effect and proof of the Europeanization and democratization of Romanian society. The long delay in constructing the gold mine in Roşia Montană, although formally due to court and governmental decisions, was considered to be due to the success of the campaigners against it; and the battle still goes on.

## 2.4    From God's gift to the Moţi to the corporate gift to Romania - overview of corporate communication about Roşia Montană

Decidedly, in the absence of opposition to the Roşia Montană gold mine project, the company that wants to carry it out would not have felt the need to talk too much about its project or, very likely, would have already started the mining operations. But the controversy created by the actions of the Save Roşia Montană campaign and the institutional blockage encountered in obtaining the approvals necessary for starting the project, determined the mining company to enroll in a communication campaign which, at least at times, spread to an unprecedented scale, becoming at the same time a unique case in Romania. Never before in Romania had a company that didn't (yet) perform economic and lucrative activities promoted its image or its economic project. But its discourse was largely reactive, so as to counteract the topics of objection to the mining project raised by the opposition. Mirroring the previous section of this chapter, this section inventories the dominant themes in the company's discourse through time and presents the strategies, channels and communication tools it used. We must mention that our analysis targets the discourse and actions of the company directed towards the general public and less those addressed to the local community in Roşia Montană [18].

The Roşia Montană Gold Corporation company (initially called EuroGold Resources) was founded in a 1997 by fusing the company Gabriel Resources Ltd., listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, Canada, with the state mining company Minvest Deva that performed mining operations in Roşia Montană through its

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18 In time, the mining company initiated numerous actions in order to convince the locals to accept relocation or to raise awareness about the mining project's benefits as well as the good faith of the company. An entire public relations department was created especially for the local community, which initiated various social and cultural actions in order to prove that it supports the interests of the community, but also in order to ensure the support of the population directly affected by the project. This type of action, usually practiced by big mining companies, was classified as efforts to get "a social license for mining" (Solomon et al., 2008)

branch RoşiaMin. The newly created joint venture was initially based in the county capital, Alba Iulia. Only after the local opposition to the project started to coalesce and get the support of other national and international institutions and organizations did the company open an information center at Roşia Montană in 2002. Among the material (brochures, leaflets) received by the visitors to this information center, there was inevitably a small bottle with reddish water, contaminated with heavy metals, from the river that crosses the village. But in the first years, promotion focused almost exclusively on the local and regional plan and insisted mainly on the need for foreign investments in the mining sector as the only way for the area's economic development. During this period of time, the communicative tools used by the company to promote its project were various informative brochures and leaflets distributed for free during cultural events in the area or during national celebrations. Such an example is the brochure sponsored by Gabriel Resources "The Great Union and the Land of Moţi. The gold issue of Roşia Montană", which was distributed for free at the National Day festivities in Alba Iulia[19] in 2002 or the brochure "Roşia Montană - queen of the Apuseni Mountains", distributed to the participants of the traditional Fair on Mount Găina[20], near Roşia Montană. The preface of the first brochure, written by Vasile Frank Timis, the Romanian-born businessman who is the initiator of the business in Roşia Montană and founder of Gabriel Resources and whose image has also become controversial, was entitled "Roşia Montană – God's gift to the Moţi" (2002) and introduced the gold mine project as a duty to the divinity:

> "I am not hiding from you the fact that the investment started in Roşia Montană represents my will, my dream and my responsibility, it represents my life and my contribution to the prosperity of my country and my people. (…) It must provide welfare both to the families of Roşia Montană and Abrud, as well as to the Apuseni. For over 2000 years, the Apuseni have been a reserve of gold and riches. God wanted to give this priceless treasure to the Moţi who have been so heavily tried by the times and by work. Not to bring the gold to the surface means giving up and intentionally mocking God's gift and the memory of our ancestors. Something like that is impossible! For thousands of years, it has been demonstrated that one cannot refuse the divine gift and we, in turn, must continue the work of our ancestors, do what WE know best, what we have learned from father to son: TO BE MINERS!"[21]

Since March 2004, a local weekly newspaper was issued called "Ziarul de Apuseni" (The Apuseni Newspaper), a publication entirely sponsored by the

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19 On the 1st December 1918 in Alba Iulia, the Union of Transylvania, Banat, Crişana and Maramureş with Romania was decided, Alba Iulia becoming the symbolic capital of Greater Romania; until then these provinces had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

20 A tradition in the Apuseni Mountains region is the Maiden Fair at Mount Găina, an annual celebration during which unmarried young women were proposed to and marital agreements between the families were made.

21 Gabriel Resources (2002) Brochure: "The Great Union and the Land of Moţi. The gold issue of Roşia Montană", p.3

company and distributed for free to the inhabitants of the Roşia Montană commune and its neighboring villages. Although it was not officially recognized during this period, the company supported the establishment of associations of local supporters of the mining project whose aim was to counteract the opponents' local association, 'Alburnus Maior'. Pro Roşia Montană, Pro Justice (ProDreptatea) and the Future of Mining Trade Union (Sindicatul Viitorul Mineritului) were thus created with the purpose of showing that the people of Roşia and the neighboring area wanted this project to succeed. Subsequently, some of the actions of these organizations were presented as being independent of the company's PR policy.

At the end of 2005, the company resorted to professional help from a company specialized in advertising and public relations, GMP, which conceived the first communication campaign in support of the mining project, a nationwide campaign that took place in 2006. That year, the company organized 16 public consultations (14 in Romania – at Roşia Montană and neighboring villages, but also in Bucharest and other big Transylvanian cities, as well as 2 in the neighboring country, Hungary), as a mandatory procedure for the process of obtaining the Environmental Impact Assessment from the Ministry of the Environment. The purpose of the communication campaign in favor of the mining project was to improve the image of the Gabriel Roşia Montană company (sic!), the extremely negative image they had until then being attributed to 7 years of non-communication[22]. Through the slogan they used, "Let's [truly] save Roşia Montană!", it was obvious that the entire campaign was conceived so as to refute the alternative representations created and transmitted by the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement and to present the mining company as being the true savior of Roşia, a village presented as having serious social and environmental problems. In a press release by the company, also posted on the company's website, which was then specially re-designed for the campaign, one could read:

> "By opposing, you condemn the people of Roşia Montană to something that will kill them worse than cyanide: illiteracy, poverty deriving from unemployment. Agriculture in Roşia Montană is not a solution at the moment; it is not 21st century agriculture, but mearly subsistence. We cannot even talk about tourism, as we do not have roads, infrastructures. I think that in order to develop agriculture and tourism, we need a reasonable monthly pay-off, which shall be reinvested in all these structures. So far, I think that the only reasonable and real investment is Gabriel Roşia Montană. We are too rich not be able to live an honorable life, here at home!"[23]

It is important to emphasize the fact that publicity around the mining project during that period was in the name of the Gabriel Resources Company, represented

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22 This specification can be found in the case study of the GMP campaign for the client Roşia Montană Gold Corporation available on the site of the advertising agency, http://www.gmp.ro/ro/sc/ Roşia_Montană.html (accessed on 10.12. 2011)

23 "At the public consultation for the Evaluation Report on Environmental Impact from Cluj - Napoca almost 1.000 people participated" press release, August 7th 2006 on www.rmgc.ro, accessed on 20.08.2009.

as being the solution for Roşia Montană. The campaign consisted of two stages. In the first stage, Roşia Montană was represented as a place facing serious social (because of the dying mining industry offering employment to people in the area) and environmental problems (due to historic pollution resulted from previous mining activities) for which "Gabriel has the solution".

The most broadcast TV advert of the company's campaign during this period was conceived so as to refute the opposition's arguments about the beauty of the place, and was based on irony: the opposition's visual representation of the project, although present in the textual content, was strongly rejected in the images presented. Against a background showing distressing images in Roşia Montană, the spoken text was the following:

> "Somewhere in the middle of Transylvania there is a place, an idyllic land of unearthly beauty. Pristine rivers flow through valleys with grass greener than anywhere else. Daring peaks rest on the blue sky, whispering an ancient tale. This place is so magic you'd think it doesn't exist. It's called Roşia Montană. Something has to be done. Something professional. Something responsible. Gabriel has the solution." [24]

During its second stage, the 'Gabriel solution' was detailed through mini-documentaries showing how mining in Roşia Montană would be carried out professionally and responsibly, and would determine the economic and environmental rehabilitation of the region. One such mini-documentary contained the following message:

> "Mining is a tradition in Roşia Montană, a tradition that has cost it dearly: the soil, the water and the people's health have had to suffer. We take on the responsibility for the greening of this region. We will deal with the acid water in treatment plants, we will reduce toxic metals and we will cover the degraded areas with fertile soil. We will leave this region cleaner than we found it. Modern mining, at European and international standards, can make a difference. Find out more about our solution. Join the public debate. Let's save Roşia Montană."[25]

TV and newspaper ads were intensively broadcast in 2006, which profoundly displeased the opposition united in the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement[26]. A website, suggestively called www.truestory.ro, was specially created in 2006 in order to transmit all information from the communication campaign, which was available online until 2009, when a second large-scale media campaign was launched. On the official site of the company, through webcams set in various places in Roşia Montană, they started to broadcast live images supposed to convince about the reality of the region (old degraded houses, polluted waters, the quarry built in the 1970's, all could be seen live by interested people).

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24 source: http://www.gmp.ro/ro/sc/Roşia_Montană.html (accesed on 10.12. 2011)

25 source: http://www.gmp.ro/ro/sc/Roşia_Montană.html (accesed on 10.12. 2011)

26 Among the actions undertaken at the time by the opponents there was also the pressure made so that the National Geographic magazine to give up broadcasting advertising paid for by the company, advertising that was thought inconsistent with the specific of the magazine.

In 2006, a documentary sponsored by the company but introduced as independent, was made by the Irish filmmaker Phelim McAleer. "Mind your own business. The dark side of environmentalism" has become the first anti-environmentalist film in the world, casting a real stigma on the environmentalists. The central idea of this documentary was that the residents of Roşia Montană, as well as those from other parts of the world where mining projects were contested by environmentalists, are the victims of rich western environmentalists who condemn the local population to poverty and backwardness and try to impose values that are not their own. Moreover, the local population of Roşia Montană was unanimously presented as being favorable to the mining project, which brings them employment and refuses the idea of tourism or agriculture as an alternative economic solution for development.

Another sponsored documentary was produced in 2007 by the Romanian filmmaker Dan Chişu. In "Roşia Montană, un destin de Sisif" ("Roşia Montană a Sisyphus' destiny") the filmmaker aimed revealing the *truth* about "the best known unknown place in Romania". But the biggest part of the documentary consisted in presenting gold mines from other countries (New Zealand, Turkey, Spain, USA) the filmmaker had visited, in order to strengthen the idea that an environmentally friendly mine based on modern and safe technologies was possible. Unlike the previous documentary, Dan Chişu's film reminds us that there are also residents who are against the project, but advances the hypothesis that the desire to get a better price for their properties determines them to oppose. The desolate image of Roşia Montană promoted the previous year can be found in this film as well.

In 2007, the mining company faced set-backs because the Ministry of Environment put the procedure on hold for the evaluation of the impact on the environment, following after being challenged in court over the Urban Area Plan on which the environmental impact study filed in 2006 was based. Thus, in 2009, the year when the procedures to obtain the environmental permit were to be resumed, a new media campaign followed by a PR campaign made by the Romanian division of the international advertising agency Leo Burnett was launched, a campaign that continued for three years. The company's financial means enabled it to transmit its messages to the public through advertising on TV and in print, which are considered conventional marketing methods. But the company's adverts also included the cyberworld through Google, Yahoo or Facebook, or were transmitted on various websites and personal blogs.

In this case, the slogan used for the campaign was "The Roşia Montană Project – a project for Romania" and the emphasis was more on the presentation of the economic benefits brought by the project to Romania's economy, even though the subject of the "environmentally friendly mine" or of the benefits for the Roşia Montană residents was not abandoned. Unlike in the previous campaign, in this new national communication campaign, advertising was done in the name of the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC), defined as being first and foremost a Romanian company, based in Roşia Montană, so as to obviously counteract accusations that the exploitation benefit a foreign investor.

From the spring of 2009, four series of adverts began to be transmitted through

various channels (TV, written press, Internet). Because the transmitted messages were similar regardless of the channel, we will refer strictly to those broadcast on TV. A first series comprised 5 commercials, 30 seconds each, which began with the question "In what should Romania invest 4 billion dollars?" Dialogues then followed with anonymous people interviewed in the street who attempted to answer the question. Their answers indicated that the money should be invested in areas such as education, tourism, health, and infrastructures, in building social houses for young people or to increase salaries. Some respondents seemed clearly impressed at the huge amount of money announced. The commercials ended with the written and spoken message "The new project at Roşia Montană brings \$4 billion to Romania, while complying with European environmental standards". The opponents to the project immediately contested this advertisement made by the RMGC at the National Audio-Visual Council on the grounds that it presents false data regarding the \$4 billion that could be available for investment in Romania. The council's decision to stop broadcasting the commercials containing these messages was made in June 2009, but did not stop RMGC's media campaign.

After the initial phase in which only these commercials were broadcast, a new commercial presented the RMGC director, Dragoş Tănase, who was talking about the benefits of the Roşia Montană project for the Romanian state and economy, which were much bigger than the profit that the foreign investor would make.

"The RM project will bring 4 billion USD to Romania out of which 1.8 billion \$ to state budget and another \$ 2.2 billion spent in the Romanian economy. Since I announced these figures, many people have said that the 1.8 billion USD received by the Romanian Government from mining royalties, dividends, excises and taxes is not enough. But let's see what 1.8 billion USD really means? Did you know that with this money, Romania could build 20.000 social houses? Or build another 270 km of highway, more than what Romania has at the moment? With 1.8 billion USD, 40 municipal hospitals with 300 beds each could be built. With the money received by the Romanian government from the Roşia Montană project 400.000 apartments could be thermo-rehabilitated, or over 400 km of railroad could be built. The other 2.2 billion spent in Romania seems an abstract figure. But what if we split them in pay checks? They are the equivalent of the medium wage for 300.000 people for a whole year. All this, while the company making this investment estimates a profit of 1.3 billion USD."[27]

In 2010, four more 30-second commercials countered the criticism of the project on environmental grounds. Two of them transmitted messages regarding the greening of the region, which the company promised to achieve and regarding the planting of 1000 hectares of forest, although through the project only 250 hectares will be cleared. Two other commercials presented information regarding cyanide-based technology. One of them presented it as being widely used in Europe and in the entire world and as being the optimal solution for the exploitation of gold deposits in Roşia Montană. The second one showed that the European Union allows the use of cyanide in the gold mining industry provided that its concentration

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27 source:  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3w0P14DXNw&feature=relmfu (accesed on 22.01.2012)

does not exceed 10 milligrams per liter, whereas the technology used in the Roşia Montană guarantees concentrations from 3 to 7 mg/l. All these commercials ended with the same message as the previous commercial series: "The new Roşia Montană project brings to Romania $4 billion, while meeting the European environmental standards".

In 2010 and in the first half of 2011, two commercials with similar content were widely broadcast on media channels. The main theme of these commercials was the jobs that the mining project will create. In one of them, the financial analyst Bogdan Baltazar, a then renowned public figure in Romania, presented the Roşia Montană project as a solution for unemployment in Romania and especially in Roşia Montană during economic crisis:

> "We're in crisis. We can all see it and feel it. I don't think there is a single person in this country who doesn't have a friend or acquaintance who lost their job. It's even worse in Roşia Montană. Eighty percent of its population is unemployed. The mining company has the solutions, but nobody wants to listen to them. Does anyone ever think about the number of people that will work on the most important industrial project in Romania? 2300 direct jobs during the construction of the mine and another 880 direct jobs during operations. But the jobs that nobody considers are the indirect ones, all over the country. From the sailors who transport the equipment and components, to drivers, architects, builders, chemists and electricians. We cannot ignore this project. It's a project for all Romania." Written text: "Roşia Montană project is a project for Romania. Find out more on rmgc.ro".[28]

In 2011, the slogan used in commercials was "The Roşia Montană Project: Gold for Romania". A commercial broadcast for a short while, and withdrawn immediately because of opposition, approached and disputed another theme of opposition to the mining project: the fact that through its achievement, it brings about the destruction of Roşia Montană's heritage. The commercial stated that the RMGC will actually save Roşia Montană's heritage by investing $70 million for its preservation, and by bringing solutions not "fairytales" (a term through which the opponents' alternative presentation was alluded).

Since mid-2011, the mining project's public promotion strategy through advertising has changed. Until then, arguments were based on data, statistics, calculations and expert opinions, but the new wave of commercials was built on emotional arguments, which extrapolated Roşia Montană residents' need for jobs. The commercials were designed as letters by Roşia Montană residents to all Romania in order to convince the population about the need for the mining project to succeed. They were introduced as an initiative by the Roşia Montană residents, supported by the mining company RMGC. Twelve people from Roşia Montană, men and women, young and old, some of them very poor, presented the (sad) story of their life full of scarcity and invoked the need for the mining project to start so that they or their children may have a job in order to be able to provide for themselves and for

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28 source:   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGOhg3OwNEc (accesed on 22.01.2012)

their children as well as for the safety of tomorrow. In their "letters" they rejected the opposition's arguments regarding alternative development solutions, such as tourism, agriculture, picking berries and herbs, and insisted that the only solution for them is mining. Emigration abroad in order to find a job was presented as a major drama that could be stopped if young people had a job provided by the start of the project. Some of the speakers stated that the company, which allows them to lead a decent life, currently employs them but their jobs are temporary and depend on the start of the project. Furthermore, these commercials provide information about Roşia Montană's 70% rate of unemployment, and that the company, despite not having extracted a single ounce of gold from Roşia Montană, has already hired 450 locals and that the mining project will create 3600 jobs. In the background images, one can see various banners with the following text: "Roşia Montană mining town". The final message, written and delivered by a female voice, said: "The people of Roşia Montană only want to work".

**Table 2. Chronological overview of corporate communication on  Roşia Montană**

| *Thematic statemets* | Tactics, styles of actions and communicative supports |
|---|---|
| **2002-2004**<br>**"Roşia Montană - God's gift to the Moţi" (duty to extract natural resources);**<br>**Mining - the only solution for the economic development of Roşia Montană** | Information Centre in Roşia Montană;<br>Brochures;<br>Local newspaper "Ziarul de Apuseni" |
| **2005-2006**<br>**"Let's save Roşia Montană!" –**<br>**mining is the only solution for development**<br>**Emphasis on Roşia Montană's social and environmental problems**<br>**Responsible mining - the economic and ecological solution for Roşia Montană and the region**<br>**Denouncing western environmentalists** | Public debates organized for obtaining the EIA<br>First media campaign at national level<br>Advertising on TV, written press<br>Web page www.truestory.ro;<br>Live images transmitted through webcams<br>Brochures, Red water bottle, Posters<br>Phelim McAleer's documentary: "Mine your own business"<br>Sponsorships for cultural events |
| **2007-2008**<br>**Building the environmentally friendly mine with safe technologies**<br><br>**The company cares about the community in Roşia Montană** | Documentary: "Roşia Montană - a Sisyphus' destiny" (Dan Chişu)<br>Web page www.truestory.ro;<br>Live images transmitted through webcams<br>Brochures, Red water bottle |

| Thematic statemets | Tactics, styles of actions and communicative supports |
|---|---|
| **2009**<br>**Major economic benefit for the Romanian state: "The Roșia Montană brings $4 billion to Romania"** | Start of the second large media campaign at national level<br>Advertising on TV, written and on-line media<br>Internet networks (Facebook, Twitter)<br>Brochures, blogs, web-pages |
| **2010**<br>**Job creation**<br>**Roșia Montană project – a solution for Romania in the economic crisis**<br><br>**Building the environmentally friendly mine, respecting EU standards** | Advertising on TV, written and on-line media<br>Internet networks (Facebook, Twitter)<br>Brochures, blogs, web-pages<br>TV and on-line debates, seminars, lobby at the European Parliament<br>Sponsorships for cultural events, sport clubs, prestigious persons |
| **2011**<br>**The Roșia Montană project - a project for Romania**<br>**RMGC protects Roșia Montană's patrimony and tradition**<br>**"The people from Roșia Montană only want to work" - Emotional appeals to all Romanians to accept the building of the mine**<br>**Tourism – a complementary solution to mining in Roșia Montană, supported by RMGC**<br>**Denouncing the dictatorship of environmentalists** | Advertising on TV, written and on-line media<br>Internet networks (Facebook, Twitter)<br>Brochures, blogs, web-pages<br>Webcams, virtual journey to Roșia Montană and the newly built mining museum<br>Virtual games;<br>TV and on-line debates, seminars<br>Tourist guide "Journey in the Land of Gold";<br>Sponsorships for cultural events, sport clubs, prestigious persons<br>Support groups |

The PR campaign in favor of the mining project is still in progress. Although so far we have talked mainly about advertising on TV, we must mention that besides traditional media channels, the internet has been widely used in order to promote the company's messages. Besides the official RMGC (www.rmgc.ro) or Gabriel Resources (www.gabrielresources.com) web pages, another webpage was specially created for transmitting the specific messages of the campaign made in the name of the Roșia Montană residents (www.scrisoarecatreromania.ro) or apparently independent websites promoting modern mining (http://mineritmodern.ro). Since 2009 a webpage of the mining project was created on Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/ProiectulRoșiaMontană), which, when we are writing these words (July 2013), seems to have gathered over 650.000 fans. In the competition to attract Facebook fans, the company paid for publicity on Facebook, sponsored several Facebook games or associated its image with famous characters, one of which is the teenage alpinist Crina Coco Popescu, a record breaking climber, or with sports clubs through sponsorship.

The last stage of confrontation included innovative and creative new media techniques that imitated virtual games such as Farmville on Facebook or Grekopolis. 'The Mining town' on Facebook and 'The gold mine' are such examples of virtual games. Users and visitors are invited to become 'investors' and create their own mine in an attempt to once again stimulate what is considered as lacking in post-communist Romania - the spirit of profit-making and entrepreneurship. The invitation on WWW is to not only extract gold but also create facilities for the welfare of the entire community, for protecting its heritage, thus emphasizing the social responsibility of the corporate project. Beyond the pleasure of playing, the most active players were rewarded with real prizes. After several months of inviting virtual actors to play such games, whereas only implicit reference was made to Roşia Montană[29], more recently a new message was mailed to the 'investors' in the "Mining Town", showing them that "their dream can come true", that the virtual mining town can become reality, and invited them to show their commitment by signing a petition for the start of the Roşia Montană project.

Since 2011, the promotion of the mining project was also used one of the opponents' themes, this time without refuting it: promotion of tourism in Roşia Montană. The webcams previously set up in Roşia Montană in order to show the desolation of the place and the intensive pollution in the region started to broadcast live images of a fully restored house by the RMGC in which they set up a mining museum, a virtual tour of the museum being possible on the company's website; on another website, visitors can take a virtual tour of the Roşia Montană village, guided by an RMGC employee (http://Roşia-Montană.ro/ ) who presents "the main local attractions", such as the Roman galleries or the historic houses. Moreover, in the spring of 2011, the company published a tourist guide of Roşia Montană. "Roşia Montană. A journey across the gold country. A legendary destination in the Apuseni Mountains" was launched at the same time as the "Roşia Montană Cultural and tourist guide" launched by the opposition. Although it produced messages that contradicted the company's previous messages invoking the impossibility of tourism in Roşia Montană or those transmitted during the same period of time (such as those of the locals from the ads, who said that tourism is not a viable solution), the new theme in the representation constructed by the company was that tourism could be an additional activity that could take place only through investments coming from mining. In the visual representation of Roşia Montană, a new dimension was added: the virtual Roşia Montană, how it would look after care of its nature and heritage by the mining company.

Blogs were also created in order to inform about the project or in order to comment upon the positions adopted for or against the project. One of them belongs to the communication manager Cătălin Hosu (http://www.catalinhosu.ro), intensively promoted through Google ads in 2011 and 2012, but other blogs whose authors

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29 Such implicit suggestions were made through messages like: "You can create 3600 jobs", "Demolish old houses in order to build new and modern ones", "Plant trees", "Build a mining museum for encouraging tourists to come see the area".

do not reveal their identity were also created. An interesting case is the satiric blog Comedia Montană (The Montană Comedy) that fights the "environmentalist dictatorship" of the opponents to the mining project (http://comediaMontană.org/about).

Apart from publicity and project promotion through media, the mining company organized seminars in Romania and Brussels, encouraged debates that were broadcast online and on TV. Some of the company's more controversial actions were a trip to a gold mine in New Zealand in 2010 for several romanian journalists and opinion leaders, or trips to Roşia Montană for journalists from local media and other areas of Romania, or for the most successful bloggers, in order to convince them to write about the "reality" of Roşia Montană (the lack of jobs, area degradation in the absence of investments).

In parallel, the company's employees (officially, on their own initiative) tried to mirror the street movements by organizing rallies or protests in Roşia Montană or outside of governmental institutions in Bucharest. One such recent example is the rally in the Central Square of Roşia Montană organized on 28th January 2012 at the same time as the rally organized in Bucharest, in order to stop the project.

Although officially still independent of the company, in 2011, a support group was created for the Roşia Montană project that unites 71 organizations, most of which were neighboring town halls and communes, but also nongovernmental, employers' organizations and opinion leaders. In 2010, the Independent Group for the Monitoring of the Roşia Montană Heritage was created, which drew in members from the Romanian Academy, in order to dismiss the theses put forward by historians and archeologists who joined the opposition, claiming that Roşia Montană's heritage would be destroyed.

To sum up this section, because of the controversy generated by its plans to mine Roşia Montană's gold, the mining company was forced to take a reactive stance, based mainly on the dismissal of the main theories raised by the opposition. Its financial capacity enabled it to counteract the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign messages through two national media campaigns unprecedented by any other communicative actions of an economic agent in Romania. The chronological inventory of the dominant thematic statements (synthetized in Table 2) allowed us to observe, as was for the opposition, how the Roşia Montană issue transformed from a local to a national issue in the corporate communication. But, as different from the opponents communication, we could identify that the change in the mining company's discourse was marked in some cases by incongruence. However, unlike the opposition's communication campaign, we noticed that certain changes in the company's discourse were incongruent.

## 2.5    Relationships between polemic social representations

The chronological overview of the communication about Roşia Montană by the main actors involved in the conflict allows the assessment of relationships that occur between the social representations created in the course of the disagreement. In this

section, we use specific examples to illustrate that these relations, beyond being based on mutual exclusion, should also be seen as based on reciprocal influence.

These types of relations are however not incompatible. Firstly, the reciprocal influence should be seen as a factor determining the very generation of polemic representations. As said, the formation of the opposition to the mining project, which had an important contribution to the delocalization of the conflict and its transformation into a national issue, forced the mining corporation to produce its own discourse steeped in social representations of Roşia Montană and the mining project.

Also, we could identify the same reciprocal influence between the representations of each conflicting side with regard to their evolution and transformation throughout the controversy. The introduction of one theme in the debate, by one side or another, as a new element of the representations they were creating, determined the opposing side to counteract on the same topic. In the previous section we have shown how the company articulated its discourse so as to invalidate the ideas supported by the opposition about specific issues (such as the insufficient rewards of the project for the Romanian state, the hazard it presupposes, the destruction of Roşia Montană's heritage). But this reactive discourse is also characteristic on the other side in the conflict. One good example is the adoption of the theme of "alternative solutions" for the economic development of Roşia Montană, strongly emphasized by opponents when faced with the developmentalist discourse of the corporation. Someone unfamiliar with the Roşia Montană conflict may think that it opposes two sets of representations anchored exclusively to two different worldviews, ecology vs. economy. The economic factor on both sides mirrors two different versions of a similar intent: that of selling what is considered of value, of winning the 'hearts and minds' of potential 'buyers' depending on the value to be cherished. Whether it is gold, silver, a job or money, Rosia is a place of economic exploitation through mining. Whether it is the beautiful nature, the ancient relics, or the cultural patrimony, Rosia is a place of economic exploitation through other means such as tourism. In different ways, both sides use the past to justify their cause, to conserve what they perceive and construct as being the tradition and the ancient spirit of the area.

The mining company initially portrayed the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign's environmental messages as exogenous (coming from western environmentalists), inappropriate (given the "conventional technologies" widely accepted for gold extraction) and even dangerous[30]. However, despite the rejection of environmentalists' arguments - especially in the first years of the controversy, the

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30 "Is the G-8 wrong about cyanide? Are the heads of the world's foremost democracies violating the law? Is the UN a co-conspirator in the lawless use of cyanide? Or is it the case that the Soros website simply chooses to mislead its visitors, in hopes that they will remain ignorant of the facts?" "Open letter to Renate Weber and the Soros Foundation", August 28, 2007 on www.rmgc.ro, accessed on 20.08.2009.

focus being placed more on job creation and poverty - the corporation eventually started to portray itself as "the good environmentalist". This new approach, translated through themes like "the environmentally-friendly mine" or "the ecological restoration of the already polluted Roşia Montană", is accompanied by pictures of people taking care of baby-trees and of land and reflects values of environmentalism in support for their project.

This reciprocal influence is thus evident in that they mutually inform each other through the creation and evolution of polemic social representations. But this does not make them mutually exclusive. Instead, they should be seen as mirror images of the same object, all its elements being present on both sides of the mirror but in reversed order. By this metaphor, we insist on the fact that polemic social representations are strongly inter-dependent. Our second study (presented in Chapter 3.), which was actually the first we conducted for the purpose of this research and that explored iconic dimensions in the social representations of Roşia Montană, gave us a first clue of this inter-dependence in the relations between polemic representations, hence confirming Moscovici's idea that social representations occur in pairs (2001). In the case of polemic representations, the pairs are shaped by dichotomized themes, which however refer to the same subject.  In the next paragraphs we bring further evidence of the reciprocal influence that intervenes in the process of construction of polemic social representations.

As mentioned above, some of the most vehement attacks by the opposition concerned the use of cyanide-leaching technology for the extraction of gold. This argument had an important role in representing the mining project as an environmental hazard. Posters with the message "Cyanide kills" accompanied by the image of the Jolly Roger were commonly used to objectify the hazard. Another frequently used image was that of dead fish killed because of the cyanide spill in Baia Mare in 2000. When constructing a representation to refute that of the opposition, the company used both of these objectifying elements in reverse. Within the representation created by the company was that its project is not an environmental hazard because cyanide doesn't kill. When presenting data about the concentration of cyanide that will be present in the residue at the end of the technological process, these data



Text Message:
"The Children of Roşia Montană dream of a better future. We want to make their dreams come true. The mine we'll build will be designed, managed and closed using the best techniques and practices available within the toughest EU environmental standards. Our mine will make the existing red waters containing heavy metals to be clean and running clear for the first time in 2000 years. Gabriel Roşia Montană – investing in Romania"

**Figure 3. Gold mining as a solution for Roşia Montană (poster, Gabriel Resources Ltd., 2006)**

Text message:
Comedy Montana

"Laughing and crying in Roşia Montană"



**Figure 4. The Comedia Montană blog's logo**

were accompanied by images like the 'cup of coffee' or the 'apricot kernel' that also contain cyanide, in even bigger concentrations than in the residual waters from ore processing in Roşia Montană. Another strong image used to objectify the absence of danger was that of clear water resulting from the safe technologies used, water in which fish can live and is even fit for human consumption. This image was strongly suggested when presenting the Martha Mine in New Zealand, to which the company organized trips for journalists. Some of these 'tourists' even wrote on their blogs that they have indeed drunken water resulting from the mining process. The image of the dead fish was also counteracted by claming that fish are imaginery, and inexistent in Roşia Montană's polluted waters. This is shown in a poster published as part of the 2006 media campaign presented in Figure 3.

"Comedia Montana" (The Comedy Montana), a blog created in support of the project offers is yet another example regarding the denial of the alternative representation in the case of polemic representations. This is the introductory message of this blog:

> "If life were a comedy, Roşia Montană would be a very good comedy. In fact, a tragicomedy (but the domain name was too long). I thought that I'd rather laugh than cry, and the Roşia Montană case offers me on a daily basis reasons to play the game of "don't know whether to laugh or cry". I hope you'll laugh (unless you feel like crying). I also have a belief: aberatio humano est and every day I see countless nonsense about Roşia Montană." [31]

The logo (Figure 4) used by this blog is similar to the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement, but transformed into a vertical leaf, each part of the leaf having the aspect of a mask, one crying and the other one laughing.

The recent publicity campaign paid for by the company gave rise to controversy and was challenged by the opposition. Besides filing appeals at the National Audio-Visual Council (CNA), the campaign activists created various material (pictures, posters, short films) distributed mainly in the cyberworld but also in Kamikaze Magazine, meant to denounce what they called the *badvertising* in favor of the project. The locals who appeared in RMGC ads were accused of dishonesty and lack of truth in their stories. For instance, Florea Bolog, a local who claimed that the tourist guest house he had built was not earning, was accused of lying and that his

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31   Comedia Montana blog (2011). http://comediamontana.org/about, accesed on 12.04.2012.

business was profitable, given the fact that he had recently expanded his building so as to be able to receive as many clients as possible. The satirical Kamikaze Magazine published a short article[32] that revealed he regretted having accepted to appear in those commercials because it made the tourists in Roşia Montană avoid his guest-house. Carol Mignea, the oldest local included in the commercials was relatively well-known to the activists because he had been a guide at the Mining Museum founded in the 1980's for a very long time. He had in fact probably led most of them through the historical mine galleries that were open to the public, and hence was accused of having earned good money from the tourists he had guided. In the commercial, however, he rejects tourism as an alternative. These messages were included in an anonymous email that was forwarded countless times during the period when the commercial with Carol Mignea was broadcast on TV.

But the most serious accusation brought to the speakers in the commercial was that of pleading in favor of the RMGC and of selling their freedom of conscience. A photo (Figure 5) posted on the Save Roşia Montană Facebook group by an activist caricatures the image of Sanda Lungu[33].

In opposition to the locals who, by accepting the mining project "sold their souls to the company", the other locals were represented through posters or at street events as being "the real Roşieni" (people from Roşia) or "free people from Roşia Montană". Figure 6 shows such a poster[34] with the well-known face of Eugen David,

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32   Kamikaze Magazine from the 9th January  2012: http://www.kmkz.ro/investigatii-2/Roşia-verde/costul-minciunilor-la-Roşia-Montană/

33 In the most recent publicity paid for by the mining company, Sanda Lungu, a Roşia Montană resident whom the ads have made famous all over the country, presents her desperate appeal to the Romanians in order to convince them that the Roşia Montană project must start with the following message: „I am Sanda Lungu, 42 years old, I have two children, both students, 18 and 12 years of age. I don't have a job. I've never imagined that at my age I'd be living off my mother's pension! I've always hoped that I'd have a job, that I could build a future for my children, but that didn't happen. We live in Roşia Montană's recotory, out of the priest's mercy. My children are among the best in their class. My daughter will graduate from high school and won't be able to go to university because we don't have any money. She should get a job but she has nowhere to turn to anyway. My son is in the 6th grade and lives away from home, at a boarding school, where he needs money. Last year, Elissa's average was 9.20 and Robert's was 9.53. It's painful for parents who not to have anything to offer their children. Our total revenue amounts to 134 lei, which I have to split in 3 every month. I'm very sad and shocked that some people oppose the mining project. They actually don't know the real situation in our region. I knitted socks, I knitted pullovers, I sewed sheets, whatever I was asked to. I made cookies, but it's not enough. A pair of socks costs 5 lei. How many pairs of socks can you knit in a month to be able to live and keep two children in school? Maybe it's easy for those who give us all kinds of solutions when they have a home, a warm place, food and a job. But I hope that in this country, there are also people who are thinking of others a little. There are many Romanians who need help, but we, the people of Roşia, can live off what we know best: mining. Without mining, it's a disaster. Please help me and give a chance to mining in Roşia Montană! We, the people of Roşia Montană, only want to work! This is an appeal, it is a cry, it is despair…" (http://www.scrisoarecatreromania.ro/sanda-lungu/)

34 Poster anouncing a street demonstration on the 28th of January 2012, retrieved on 20.01.2012 from: http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.286272891427924.72576.246215482100332&type=1#!/photo.php?fbid=286272974761249&set=a.286272891427924.72576.246215482100332&type=3&theater

Text message:
"My name is Sanda Lungu. You see me every day, but you try to ignore me. I picked mushrooms and knitted stockings in order to support my family. By now I have a job. I practice begging for the RMGC, a company that promises billions of dollars to Romania. You can save me. Help them rob Roşia Montană. Learn to love cyanide."



**Figure 5. Denouncing RMGC's publicity: caricature of Sanda Lungu**

Text message:
"My name is Eugen David and I am a FREE MAN from Roşia Montană. On January 28th I am coming to Bucharest for those who believe in true values: the right to a clean life, the right to freedom, the right to democracy, I am coming so that we may continue the fight together! See you in Bucharest! Eugen David, Roşia Montană. January 28th 2012, 11 a.m; Constitution Square, Bucharest. BE there! Together with the free people! For Roşia Montană! For freedom!"



**Figure 6. Denouncing the RMGC's publicity:**
**"The free men from Roşia Montană"**

the president of Alburnus Maior and leader of the local opposition.

Another series of posters extensively transmitted through the Facebook network used the final message of the RMGC commercials "The people from Roşia Montană only want to work" in order to stigmatize the activity that they are trying to rescue. In order to suggest that the Roşia Montană project will bring about destruction, the opposition's counter-attack associated the message with the most damaging, dangerous and even immoral activities practiced by people, such as theft, intensive deforestation of national parks, extermination of people in Nazi camps, war and illegal building. These posters give an example of the relationships between polemic representations; the alternative representation produced by the opposition is only used to reject its premise, without any communication between the two representations to exist (Gillespie, 2008). Moreover, this is an example of stigmatic anchoring (Kalampalikis & Haas, 2008) functioning in the case of polemic representations. The poster in Figure 7 shows the image of a little girl promoting

Text message:
BOMB Corporation Roşia Montană.
Weapon factory BOMB Corporation.
3600 jobs at Roşia Montană. 4 billion
USD for the Romanian economy. The
European Commission allows the use
of bombs during wars. David Claudia
(10 years) - child from Roşia Montană:
"I hope the war in Iran starts so that
my parents have a job". The people
from Roşia Montană only want to
work.
Find out more on Iranians-are-bad-
people.ro

**Figure 7. Denouncing RMGC's publicity: stigmatic anchoring (I)**

Text message:
Zyklon – B Corporation
The guards from the Nazi
concentration camps ONLY
WANTED TO WORK, and to
crown it all, still with cyanide



**Figure 8. Denouncing RMGC's publicity:
stigmatic anchoring (II).**

the ironically named "Bomb Corporation" from Roşia Montană, a weapons factory
that, once opened, would ensure jobs for her parents[35]. The second example from
the same series of posters uses the dominant theme of opposition to the mining
project, the use of cyanide in the gold extraction process, alluding to the use of the
cyanide based pesticide Zyklon-B in Nazi concentration camps (Figure 8)[36].

   The examples used so far were intended to illustrate that mutually exclusive
polemic social representations are inter-dependent, and reciprocally inform and
influence each other in their development. As Gillespie (2008) pointed out, we found
evidence that most dialogical exchange between polemic representations is based

35 Poster retrieved on 12.12.2011 from:  http://www.facebook.com/#!/photo.php?fbid=41395579195
1128&set=a.346308595382515.99816.145342615479115&type=3&theater

36  Poster retrieved on 3.04.2012  from: http://www.facebook.com/#!/photo.php?fbid=40724843262
1864&set=a.346308595382515.99816.145342615479115&type=3&theater

Text message:
"At the end of a risky journey, you'll be some of the last men lucky enough to see Roman remainsm going extinct. DO NOT remove your helmet! In case of accidents we don't take any responsibility! Have a pleasant trip!"
Tourism in Roşia Montană, year 2030

**Figure 9. Gold mining as an environmental hazard. (Postcard: Regeneration, 2010)**

on rejection. However, from the data we collected we found evidence of another type of dialogical exchange that is not based on rejection but on acceptance of the alternative representation, or at least in part. As mentioned in the chronological overview of the corporate communication, a theme of opposition that was generally strongly refuted, namely that Roşia Montană could develop through tourism, was recently integrated in the representation of Roşia Montană created by the company. In order to not destabilize it, the theme of 'tourism' was linked to the theme of 'mining'. In the company's discursive strategy, mining was presented as the main tourist attraction of Roşia Montană, both as traditional mining, whose relics will be preserved by the company, and as modern mining using the latest technologies. To strengthen the idea, the company announced that in the historical center of Roşia Montană, that it is obliged by law to protect, two hotels will be built in order to welcome tourists interested in seeing the 2000 years of mining history. The disproof of this theme was quick to appear: a postcard (Figure 9) made by the Regeneration organization, which is part of the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement, ridiculed the theme that tourism would be possible after the use of huge amounts of cyanide in the area, providing yet another example of the rejection of the alternative representation.

## 2.6    Conclusions

The 'Save Roşia Montană' movement vs. the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC), should be regarded as source-makers for the representations emerged in society due to this conflict. Through our analysis, we were able to identify how their polemics are built and are still being created. A closer look at the controversy in a historically chronological manner made us see that both parties have gradually shifted their rhetoric to counteract each other, and to create a highly polarized debate around major themes such as: economic versus sustainable development, mining as hazardous versus environmentally friendly, national versus local significance. This led us to the conclusion that polemic social representations, albeit mutually exclusive, emerge and evolve in inter-dependent relationships. These polemic 'forms of truth' projected by both parties have been intertwined and mutually transforming each other throughout the twelve years since the corporation announced its project.

Our analysis generally confirmed what was previously demonstrated (Gillespie, 2008): there is not much dialogical exchange between a polemic representation and its alternative. However, we were able to find at least one example of integration of one theme of the alternative in the main representation. This change in the strategy of the mining company, that of integrating the previous refuted theme "Roşia Montană as a touristic place" will be discussed in the conclusions of Chapter 5).

# 3 PICTORIAL SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF ROŞIA MONTANĂ: IS IT RED OR GREEN?

In the last fifteen years since Roşia Montană first became the center of polemic debate, both sides of the conflict have made efforts to construct and impose their own "forms of truth" about Roşia Montană. The conflicting sides pleaded in favor of "saving Roşia Montană" according to their definitions of the place. In this chapter, we present the results of an exploratory study, carried out at the beginning of our scientific questioning about the Roşia Montană issue, whose aim was the comparative analysis of the visual representations of Roşia Montană as a place constructed and transmitted by each conflicting side. For this purpose, we chose to analyze two sets of photographs of Roşia Montană, which were circulated on the internet in 2007 (the year our research on polemic social representations in the Roşia Montană conflict began). The results of this analysis were already presented in a scientific article published in 2008 (Pop, 2008).

## 3.1    Research goal

The aim of the second study presented in this book was to comparatively explore the visual dimension in the representantions of Roşia Montană as a place. We were interested in observing how the "reality" of Roşia Montană was objectified through visual images by the each side involved in the conflict: the mining company and the opponents coalesced in the Save Roşia Montană campaign.

## 3.2    Samples and methods

There were hundreds of pictures of the Roşia Montană site and people, which were circulating on the Internet when we were first interested in the scientific analysis of polemic social representations emerged in the Roşia Montană conflict.  For this analysis, we collected two sets of photographs, representative of each conflicting

side.  Three criteria were defined in building the samples:

- The photographs should be accessible on the Internet;
- The photograph's authors' position vis-à-vis the Roşia Montană issue (FOR or AGAINST the gold mine project) should be clearly identifiable;
- The samples should contain a similar amount of units.

All the pictures included in the samples were downloaded from Internet sites[37]. In order to respect the second criteria, we did not include any private photographs posted on different Internet sites or blogs, but chose those pertaining to institutional players directly involved in the conflict.

In fact, the idea to carry out this analysis came after we went to see a highly publicized photography exhibition, given the title "Roşia Montană: The hooded light". It took place in February 2007 in a hall at the Romanian Palace of the Parliament, in Bucharest, and was sponsored by the NGO "Soros Foundation – Romania"[38], as part of the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign. The architect Lorin Niculae was the exhibited photographer. The foundation also provided a photo album, available for free in printed and electronic formats. The focal purpose of organizing the exhibition was clearly not for artistic reasons, but, as mentioned in the preface of the album, for sustaining the community based NGO "Alburnus Maior" in their fight against the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation's mining project. All 67 photographs from that catalog constitute the "Against mining project" photo-dossier analyzed here.

The "For mining project" dossier comprises 74 photographs that were downloaded from the photo-galleries of two closely related web sites. One owned by the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation, the joint venture that holds the mining license in the area and initially put forward the conflict-ridden mining project (51 photographs); the other one is the web site home page of Gabriel Resources Ltd., the Canadian company that actually owns 80% of the Roşia Montană gold project (23 photographs). The reason for including photographs from two web sources in the sample was in respect of the third criteria.

The analysis of the two photo-dossiers was done separately, but according to the same criteria and in order to achieve a comparison between the narrative structures and contents of each, implying both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

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37 The "For mining pictures" were dowloaded from: http://www.rmgc.ro/rosia_montana.php?page=galerie;  http://www.gabrielresources.com/images.htm , accessed in December 2007 The "Against mining pictures" were downloaded from: http://www.osf.ro/ro/publicatii.php?pag=2#_(catalog_Rosia_Montana), accessed in December 2007; currently available at http://www.soros.ro/sites/default/files/ro_57_catalog_rosia_montana.pdf

38    Initially called "Open Society Foundation - Romania", this NGO is part of a network of similar organizations all over Central and Eastern Europe created and financed by the businessman George Soros after the collapse of the communist regimes, with the goal of promoting the values of an open society  (i.e. in Popperian terms: liberty, democracy, civic culture).

First, we conducted a visual content analysis of the photo-dossiers[39]. The first phase consisted in describing the iconic composition of each photograph by making an inventory of the objects represented and their arrangement in the frame, or in other words,  what they depict.  The unit of analysis was the photograph. Every picture was coded into a theme, depending on the focal object represented in that picture. Next, themes were successively grouped into categories. Five major categories were defined: PEOPLE; ENVIRONMENT; TOWNSHIP; MINING; and PAST. The frequency of each theme was used as an indicator to detect the salience of each category.

Quantitative content analysis proved to be limited for deciphering the meaning of the visual message because of its focus on the manifest content, i.e. the elements present in the images, thus disregarding suggested elements. This is why we also completed a semiotic analysis of the photographs. The aim was to identify the narratives that result from the visual messages of the photo-dossiers, from what the pictures tell[40]. For the analysis, we considered equally plastic figures (relevant for the analysis: composition, framing, colors and brightness), iconic figures (objects represented in the image and resemblance relationship), and the text[41] accompanying the image (name and foreword of the "Against" album, caption of the single photograph, heading in the photo-gallery).

## 3.3    Comparative results of visual content analysis

Content analysis gives quantitative evidence for dissimilarities in the narrative structure of the two photo-dossiers. Figure 10. shows the amount of each category of pictures in every dossier. Frequencies were calculated to test the salience of each category. According to this, we can determine the position each category has in the entire narrative structure of the dossiers. As the figure shows, the focus varies from one dossier to another. Photographs about the **environment**, **township** and **people** (in this order) from Roşia Montană organize the storyline in the "Against photo-dossier".  **Township**, **environment** and **past** (in this order) form, in the "For dossier", the subject matter around which the visual message is structured.

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39 Visual content analysis is a systematic observational method used to explicitly test comparative hypothesis' by means of quantification of categories of manifest contents (Bell, 2001)

40 The main methodological problem faced when analyzing images is the difficulty of cutting the image in elementary units, since the picture seems to have meaning only in its entirety. The researcher who wants to "read" the image encounters a kind of paralysis and the feeling is that "it makes no sense, because it has too much sense". To get over this problem implies a "freeze frame" and the description of the elements that compose it in order to transform the "visible" into "readable" (P. Fresnault-Dernelle, cited in Freyssinet-Dominjon, 1997:279).

41 Barthes (1985), describing the anchorage of meaning in images states: "the text directs the reader through the meanings of the image, causing him to avoid some and to receive others; by means of an often subtle dispatching, it remote-controls him towards a pre-determined meaning" (p. 198)
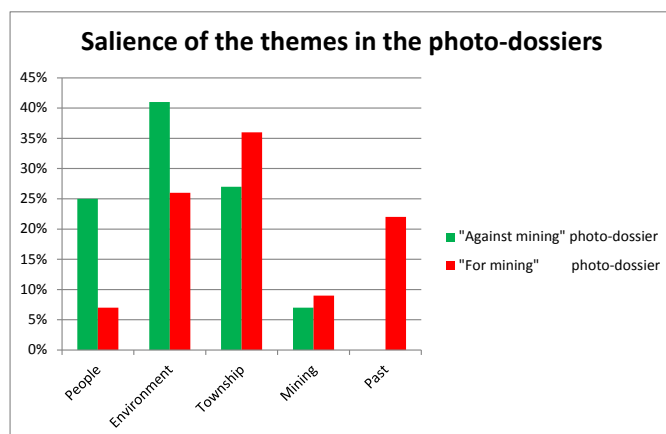
**Figure 10. Salience of the themes in each photo-dossier**

At this stage, we note some significant differences. First, the "Past" category of pictures is missing from the "Against" dossier. In this category, all 16 historical black and white photographs posted on the mining company's website were included, showing the Roşia Montană town, surroundings and people about one century ago. The message the mining company transmits through visual images is constructed through the opposition between past and present "reality" of Roşia Montană.

Second, we note that there is a discrepancy in depicting people. The frequency with which people appear in pictures posted on the company's websites showing today's Roşia Montană is more than three times lower than in those from the Against photo-dossier. The FOR category contains the least photographs of people, but the highest rate that depict township. This evidence is already a clue for the symbolic message that Roşia Montană is a village without people.

## 3.4 The 'battle of ideas' through images

Two differing 'realities' of the Roşia Montană site and people were objectified by means of photographs. It seems that each photo-dossier was intended to be a retort to the other, indicating group polarization. This situation stimulates each group to generate a representation of the object, which is precisely caused by the existence of an opposition (Moscovici, 1961/1976). The analysis reveals the two pictorial representations of the Roşia Montană site and people, which are highly contrasting.

The objective feature that strikingly characterises the difference between pictorial representations is light. Photographs transmitted by the "against" group were taken mostly during serene days at the beginning of autumn and the light effect makes almost all photos bright and shiny. On the contrary, the photos presented by the mining company depict the site in cloudy days of late autumn, and the objects represented are colorless and sober. "Beauty/ugliness" is one of the opposites

from which pictorial representations of Roșia Montană are sourced. For revealing the differences in the contents of the polemic representations, we will present the analysis' conclusions simultaneously, ordered according to the thematic categories previously identified.

### *The environment*
<u>In the "Against mining project" photo-dossier</u>



**Figure 11. Clear water pond and Orchard. Photographs from the 'Against mining photo-dossier', theme: Environment**

Photographs of the Roșia Montană environment depicted mostly natural landscapes, specifically the low mountains of the area. The landscapes show rocky peaks of mountains, forest slopes, flower meadows, trees, ponds, sunsets over the mountains and animals in meadows. The colors of the objects in the photos are bright. When shot in daylight hours, the sky is always blue and cloudless. The predominant color in the photos is green (the grass, the trees) but the vegetation is sometimes the red-brown color of autumn. Water is relevant for comparison. In the ponds (stagnant waters), the water is clear and clean and people are even fishing. In general, the photos present beautiful and clean spaces, dominated by green nature, in other words, a wonderful place to live. The comparison with Scotland suggested by one photograph's caption contributes to the message about the area's potential for tourism.

Three kinds of human influence over the environment are signified: agriculture (mowed hay, orchards, cultivable fields), mining in the pre-industrial period and traces of industrial activity. Agriculture, performed through traditional non-mechanized technologies is benefitial (one of the photos representing an orchard has as caption "True gold"). Traces of gold extraction during the pre-industrial period (ancient mine entrances, old barren mountain peaks covered with trees and vegetation) are increasing the area's spectacular features. Only four photographs represent icons suggestive of industrial mining influences. Two panoramic photographs depict the open pit in the backdrop from far away; another two pictures show tailing plans in

the foreground (the waste resulting from ore extraction from rock). One of them, entitled "Metastasis" helps us understand the connoted message: on the tailing mound on which ditches appear, dry stumps indicate the trees whose life was affected by toxic waste. However, only a few meters away, a small fir tree managed to survive, suggesting that there is still hope for environmental recovery in the area.

In the "For mining project" photo-dossier



**Figure 12. Polluted river and Open pit. Photographs from the 'For mining photo-dossier', theme: Environment**

The visual message is fundamentally different in this set. Two iconic figures are redundant in the photos: water and the quarry. The open mine constructed under the communist regime in the seventies, depicted in close and panoramic shots, has yellow-gray shades, gives the impression of an alien area dominating the mountain landscape and is proof of the extremely damaged environment in the area, as well as the water of the Rosia River or in puddles. Depicted in close-up and very close-up shots, the water is red and dirty due to pollution by mineral residues resulting from long time gold extraction. The polluted river causes the further contamination of the rivers in which it flows. Moreover, the domestic waste thrown on the riverbanks suggests that the Roşia Montană people do not care about the environment. The same idea is suggested by the depiction of non-recycled scraps abandoned in the field.

In pictures of landscapes, the vegetation is either completely dry (due to the season) or in pale colors. In all pictures, the sky is gray. The hill slopes have little vegetation and show soil slipping. Therefore, the pictures seem to suggest that the Roşia Montană site has no beauty.

### The township

In the "Against mining project" photo-dossier

One-third of the photos depicting the Roşia Montană town and surrounding villages were taken in panoramic shots and include iconic elements of the surroundings. The typical architecture of the villages in the Western Carpathians is represented, with houses spread out over mountain slopes, churches being the central element. Other photographs depict in close-ups of buildings in Roşia Montană: houses, churches and an ancient school building. Old and damaged, these houses are presented as

**Figure 13. Heritage building in Roșia Montană. Photograph from the 'Against mining photo-dossier', theme: Township**

the area's cultural heritage. The connoted message, strongly suggested by the texts indicating their historical attestation, is that the precious national heritage will be destroyed. An important element in the location's representation is religion. The churches and graveyards, cultural monuments threatened by the company's mining project, suggest the natives' religious traditions, enabling them to maintain the faith/ hope that the town will not be demolished. In some pictures, the old square in Roșia Montană is depicted as deserted, with old neglected buildings or even ruins. Two separate photos present close-ups of the glassless windows of two ruined buildings; one of them is very old, the other is a block of flats built during the communist regime, deserted and with a "RMGC property" sign attached to the façade. The message suggests that the main blame for the degradation of the town belongs to the mining company, which bought the people's properties, tempting them to leave. But here again, among these photographs of the town, one suggests an optimistic view of the town's future: a picture of a recently built house by new Roșia Montană settlers.

In the "For mining project" photo-dossier

Today's Roșia Montană is represented as a desolate place.  The largest category of photographs in this dossier depicts houses in an advanced state of deterioration, with damaged walls and rooves or completely falling down. The courtyards of the still occupied houses are unkempt and poultry wanders unrestrained in the mud-covered streets or in the ditches filled with red water. There is a cow in the center of



**Figure 14. House in nowadays Roșia Montană Photograph from the 'For mining photo-dossier', theme: Township**

the town square. Everything suggests the extreme state of poverty of the inhabitants. This stereotypical image is also constructed in stark contrast to the town's ancient prosperity, connoted in period photographs of the town mostly by panoramic shots (newly built white houses, large office buildings).

### *The people*
In the "Against mining project" photo-dossier



**Figure 15. Child on the meadow and Traditional farmers. Photograph from the 'Aainst mining photo-dossier', theme: People**

Roşia Montană's people are hardworking peasants living in harmony with nature. Nearly all of the photographs depict elderly or adult people engaged in their daily activities in the open air. Their clothes and hands are dirty, symbolizing manual labour. They practice agriculture with ancient methods, using traction animals (horses, bulls), as did their ancestors two thousand years ago. However, this holds a positive connotation: it is organic agriculture, not harming the environment. Despite hard work, Roşia Montană' natives appear healthy (they have red cheeks; even the very old are still capable of hard work) and content with their life. In one photograph that depicts an old man manually stacking hay in ricks, hay is associated with gold, symbolizing the humans' worship of nature. Another photograph shows a little boy standing on a meadow. He has red cheeks and a serene smile. In the right foreground of the picture is the head of a cow. The meaning of this picture is linked to the healthy environment for raising children, which is priceless.

This idyllic world suggested by the photographs is threatened by the company's mining project. For the elderly, it would be traumatic to have to relocate because of their strong attachment to the place, developed over a lifetime of living and working there. By asking a question in the picture's caption (*Quo vadis?*), it is suggested that there is no other place for them to go. People are nevertheless prepared to resist. A photo shows a tanned adult man wearing a straw hat, with dirty hands and scratched crossed arms (a typical defense position), frowning and seemingly angry.

The caption suggests he is intent on remaining in Roşia Montană, despite his hard life and the compensation offered by the company for his relocation.

Only two black and white photos are reminders of the inhabitants' previous employment in mining. They are suggestive of the contrast between the past (pessimism) and the future (hope). One shows three men at a table drinking in the middle of the day (unemployed) and a younger fourth, shot from behind going away. In the background, a neglected building in the old square is depicted. The caption "The Abandoned" suggests that nobody cares for them and their problems and that the mining company will dump the Roşia Montană people after the exhaustion of resources. Another photograph shows a man in partial darkness on the stairs of a mine gallery. The caption reads "The light at the end of the tunnel" (a frequently used expression by Romanians, suggesting the hope to get over the difficult moments of transitioning towards democracy and market economy). Two light sources are depicted: the daylight coming from the front door of the gallery (in the background) and the weaker light of an electrical lamp (in the foreground). The man is looking towards the inside of the mine (where the camera is located), but his body is turned to the right suggesting that the former miner is ready to go outside but he stopped for a moment to say good-bye to his old occupation.

In the "For mining project" photo-dossier



**Figure 16. Photographs from the 'For mining photo-dossier', theme: People**

The people's portraits are infrequent in the 'present day Roşia Montană' photographs posted on the mining company's web sites. One picture depicts a lonely man sitting on a bench in the old square watching a cow. Another depicts four children and their teacher standing in front of their school. The children are laughing. They have just played in the snow but the building in the background indicates they are studying in an old school without modern equipment. The same idea of lack of future for children and youngsters is suggested in another photograph of two children spending their spare time in the garbage of the town's roads. By contrast, the image of the old Roşia Montană town is animated by the people's presence. At the beginning of the 20th century, hundreds of people gathered in Roşia Montană and their carts crowded the square. According to their clothing, the people in the historical photos had the double socio-professional role of peasants and miners. Others are entrepreneurs and merchants. The opposition past/present suggests, as before, the past wealth of the people in that area, thanks to the mining industry.

**Figure 17. Photograph from the
'Against mining photo-dossier',
theme: Mining**

*Mining*

In the "Against mining project" photo-dossier

The few photos referring explicitly the mining activities merely depict the pre-industrial past. The Roman and medieval galleries are presented as historical artifacts of inestimable archaeological value. In three photos of ancient mine galleries, the lighting is orange and makes the inside look fabulous, calling for visitors. The same goes for the old wooden rails and tubs that once transported the excavated ore out of the mine. The only depiction of industrial mining is in a black and white photograph of mine tunnels in which the mining company is negatively connoted by an allusion to a local superstition about the "Mine Ghost" who kills the greedy and dishonest.

In the "For mining project" photo-dossier

The actual state of the mining industry in Roşia Montană is on the wane. The pictures depict some iconic figures of the communist legacy: broken equipment and infrastructure, rusty iron rails once used for ore transportation, and abandoned industrial structures. In stark contrast to the wealth that mining brought (as shown by the historical pictures of Roşia Montană), the suggestion is made clear: the community is dependent on the mining industry. However, it is important to notice that what is positively connoted is not the communist past of intense mining, but interwar mining, thus favoring a representation anchored in the "golden age" myth, which corresponds to that period in Romanian culture.



**Figure 18. Photograph from the 'For
mining photo-dossier', theme: Mining**

## 3.5    Conclusions

The photo-dossiers analyzed in this study illustrate different realities of Roşia Montană as a social object and provide evidence of Moscovici's idea (2001) that social representations occur in pairs, each one having its alternative. Even if they are very different in structure and content, the two identified pictorial representations are strongly connected, the rationale of each being to refute the other.  Due to the confrontational context in which they occurred, their transmission pertains to the communicative genre of propaganda, whose main ambition is, as Moscovici described in his seminal work (1961/1976), to generate a representation with a view of action. The efficacy of propaganda depends on its ability to transform a representation into a stereotype, and for achieving this rapidly it uses pre-existing representations.

Images possess the power of hypostatization, of transforming concept into substance, and that makes them particularly adapted to the representation of social stereotypes (de Rosa & Farr, 2001). By focusing on the iconic-code of expression of social representations, our analysis revealed the emergence of two highly contrasting but equally stereotypical representations about Roşia Montană as a place. They are both rooted in general beliefs that coexist in Romanian social memory. The "optimistic" representation of the "against mining group" pertains to the general conception of Romania's natural and cultural richness and beauty, an idea highlighted in literature and arts ever since the emergence of the national feeling in the 19th century, and further overemphasized through communist propaganda. Another "irresistible belief" (de Rosa & Farr, 2001) in which it is rooted exceeds national frontiers: it is the belief in healthy country life, of humans living in communion with nature, which is the essence of environmentalism as an ideology.

The opposite representation finds its roots in an equally old belief about Romania's economic backwardness and poverty that was mostly re-emphasized after the fall of communism in Romania. However, the pro-development representation that the mining company tries to impose is reinforced by the myth of past prosperity pertaining, as mentioned, to the interwar period.

Social representation theory explicitly states that reality is socially constructed. This study shows that photographs are one of the means by which different groups compete for the construction of reality, by developing social representations and attempting to influence others to adopt them, in order to achieve social and political goals, as it was still supposedly needed (Jost & Ignatow 2001. The analyzed photographs have a clear persuasive intention. The lay-viewer of the images is supposed to adopt a position towards the Roşia Montană mining-project and the more one group's representation is accepted by the public the more this will render the group more powerful in sustaining its cause. But beyond these speculations, explanation is needed that could only be reached by linking "the media" and "people's minds", to put it in Farr's words. The notion of context generativity of public representations (Moscovici, 1994), or how the more a representation is diffused in a culture, the more it becomes a meaningful context of communication,

seems useful for achieving this connection. Depending on the predominant aspect of the social representation – conceptual or iconic – the context "overflows the literal toward the metaphorical or the imaginary" because of the contagious association, but contexts primarily have an iconic origin (p.173). This is why Moscovici re-designates the "figurative nucleus" by the notion of figurative texture of the context in general. Concerning this research, the idea is that we can regard the contrasting and stereotypical representations expressed through photographs (which thus become prototypical images of Roşia Montană) as composing the figurative texture of the context in which meaning of the Roşia Montană conflict is anchored.

# 4 The Roşia Montană affair in Romanian press

This chaper presents the results of a study focused on the newspaper coverage of the "Roşia Montană affair". It was intended to be an extended analysis of a huge corpus of data, composed of newspaper articles about the Roşia Montană case in five newspapers. Initially, we were interested in examining the content and dynamics of the media's representation of the Roşia Montană issue in newspapers over a period of time, and then in comparing between the different newspapers. Automatic text analysis of the corpus was performed with the aid of the software T-LAB. The results, both from the longitudinal and the transversal analysis, show important differences in the way the Roşia Montană case was represented in written media.

## 4.1    Research questions and goals

Without doubt, the controversy around the gold mine construction in Roşia Montană ensured media coverage of the subject in Romania and elsewhere. In a way, one can also say that the controversy in itself was supported by the media's attention to the issue over an important period of time, thus contributing to the creation of "the famous Roşia Montană case" in Romania and worldwide. In this study, we limited our analysis to the Romanian media. Interesting as it may be, a comparison between national and foreign media on this topic would have saturated our resources at the time.

What was the discourse of the various media actors in the controversy around the gold mine project in Roşia Montană? How much attention was paid to the subject over time? How did the authors of the newspaper articles choose to represent the issue? What differences can be noted with regard to the focus of the articles over time? Can differences in presenting and representing the Roşia Montană case in national and local newspapers be identified? What makes those differences? Can we identify, after analyzing the contents and organization of the media's discourse,

a clear position maintained by the media actors with regard to the proposed mining project in Roşia Montană? These are the main questions that inspired our research.

The specific research goals were:

a. To classify the content of all newspaper articles into relevant categories, allowing the study of dominant frames in public discourse about Roşia Montană.

b. To identify how the Roşia Montană case was thematized in each of the five analyzed newspapers, allowing the study of the contents of media representations of Roşia Montană.

c. To identify, for each sample, change in discourse about Roşia Montană over time, allowing the study of the dynamics of media representations.

## 4.2    Methods

### 4.2.1    Data Collection

Our analysis was based on the articles available in newspapers' electronic databases. In the construction of the corpus, there were important limitations due to the fact that Romania does not yet possess a unitary database containing all press articles, and not all Romanian newspapers have even created an electronic database of their published articles. Because we wanted to perform a longitudinal analysis through which to observe the evolution of the Roşia Montană issue in Romanian newspapers, one criterion for choosing a certain newspaper was also the existence of an electronic database for the longest period of time possible. The choice of five newspapers was made after careful scrutiny of the websites of several Romanian periodicals in order to identify those that, over time, have systematically dedicated column space news to the Roşia Montană issue. We also wanted to identify, at first glance, the possible position that the newspaper adopted regarding the mining project. This was achieved by carefully reading the headlines of the articles dedicated to the Roşia Montană issue, because our intention was to compare the media discourse and to identify polemic representations.

In one of the cases, this was a simple task because we knew that the weekly magazine *Formula As* is a periodical that is openly committed to the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign, supporting the opponents to the mining project. So, the first newspaper included in this analysis was Formula AS. Roşia Montană first started to be a subject for Formula As magazine in 2002, once the opposition to the Roşia Montană Project began to fuse. In total, 241 articles published in Formula As were included in our analysis.

Another newspaper that has systematically dealt with the Roşia Montană subject, again from the opposition's point of view, was the daily newspaper *Ziua*. This newspaper was the only one that in the first stages of data collection (the year 2008) had an archive that included articles from the late 1990's. Unfortunately, due to financial difficulties, the printed version of the newspaper ceased to appear in the beginning of 2009 and soon after, the newspaper disappeared altogether (and with

it, the electronic archive). Ziua newspaper was included in the analysis, although no article from the year 2009 could be downloaded (in the second stage of data collection, 2010), and for the year 2010 we used articles for the www.ziuaonline.ro portal, where a large number of journalists from Ziua newspaper continued to publish their articles. In total, 225 articles from the Ziua newspaper and from the ziuaonline.ro portal were included in the analysis.

No Romanian periodical (daily periodical or magazine) has ever publicly expressed support of the mining project (publicity paid for by the mining company was always considered a separate issue). The choice of a national newspaper, which should counterweigh the two aforementioned periodicals, was a rather difficult task. Although we could not strongly state that the position of the following newspaper clearly in favor of the mining project over time, after carefully reading the newspaper headlines, we included România Liberă in the corpus to be analyzed. Starting with the year 2005, 189 articles were selected in this newspaper.

Our intention was also to compare national and local press. Two newspapers that are published in Alba County, where Roşia Montană is located, were selected for analysis: Unirea and Informaţia de Alba. Unirea's electronic archive is available from 2006 onwards. 177 articles from this newspaper were included in the analysis. Unfortunately, Informaţia de Alba's archive only contains the issues from the previous year and from the year when the data was collected, 2009 and 2010, respectively. Only 84 articles from this publication could be collected for analysis.

As mentioned before, the data were collected at two different times: the end of 2008 and the end of 2010. For each newspaper, we performed a search of relevant articles for the subject of our research by searching for the keywords "Roşia Montană" in the newspaper archive and reading each displayed result. Not all the articles displayed in the search results were kept for analysis, only those that, in one way or another, referred to the "Roşia Montană case" in its various respects (for instance, the articles in which the weather in Roşia Montană was mentioned or those that presented isolated events in the life of the community not related to the mining project were not selected). A few criteria guided the selection: if the keywords appeared in the headline; if the matter of Roşia Montană was the main theme of the article and was not only partially dealt with; if the keywords "Roşia Montană" appeared at least 5 times in the article. Finally, 916 articles from the aforementioned 5 newspapers made up the corpus of analysis.

### 4.2.2 Corpus preparation and pre-analysis

This huge amount of data was analyzed with the aid of the software T-LAB, a linguistic and statistical tool for text analysis, developed by Franco Lancia (Lancia, 2004). Version 7.2 of this software was used. Among the advantages of using this software, two were decisive for choosing T-LAB rather than other software: the multitude of instruments offered for text analysis and the possibility to use them in an integrated way (i.e. for thematic analysis, co-occurrence analysis, comparative analysis), and the possibility of analyzing a very large text, up to 18000 pages in

ASCII format.

T-LAB works on a *corpus* that can be comprised of one or more texts and can be divided in different sub-sets, according to the variables employed for differencing and describing the texts. In our case the corpus gathered all the 916 articles. Several steps were taken in order to prepare the corpus: after collecting the articles for analysis (see previous section), all articles were saved in simple text format in a separate folder on the computer (one article per file). Each file was assigned a name according to the origin of the article and the year of publication. This name was important in the next step of text gathering, an option of text assembly offered by T-LAB. During this procedure, the articles were coded according to the newspaper they appeared in and their year of publication. Variables and categories were inserted manually and then ascribed to each text. Additionally, each text was automatically assigned an identification number. The software then produced a new file in txt format, the *corpus,* containing all previous 916 texts, with a coding line at the beginning of the text.

A very challenging and time-consuming phase followed. An orthographic review of the material was first undertaken. Acronyms separated by punctuation (like E.U.) were transformed in a single string (E_U), because T-LAB interprets punctuation marks as separators and these could have affected the results of the automatic analysis of the corpus, especially in the normalization phase. The corpus was then imported into the program, and processed several times. We used a customized list for detecting multi-words and stop-words. Multi-words (names and expressions consisting of several words) were transformed into single strings (i.e. "Rosia_ Montana"). After running this option, the original corpus was transformed and a new corpus file was generated by the program, which had to be properly renamed in order to be further imported and analyzed. An even more difficult job was to identify homographic words. Among its lexical tools, T-LAB offers word disambiguation that allows to select the homographic words and perform customized disambiguation, by using "find/replace" while having direct access to the original text which helps a lot in identifying the meaning of the word. Synonyms were used mainly to replace one or all of the homographic words. Sometimes, one of the words was written in a different way, i.e. by adding a supplementary letter, in order to differentiate between them. This was for example the case of the word "church" ("biserica" in Romanian) which was sometimes used to name the building where religious rituals normally take place, and at other times to name the institution (e.g. The Orthodox Church). Because T-Lab doesn't treat capital letters differently, a supplementary character "B" was added at the beginning of the word Church-institution. After the disambiguation phase,  a new corpus was once again generated. In total, to reach our final corpus, the material was transformed six times.

The final corpus was once again processed by T-LAB. An important step of pre-analysis, performed entirely by the software with minimal external intervention, was the segmentation of the text into Elementary contexts. The only option selected by us was to segment the text into "chunks", which are elementary contexts of comparable length made up of one or more sentences. In this case, T-LAB considers

an elementary context to be every sequence of words seperated by a full stop and a carriage return, whose dimensions do not exceed 400 characters. In the case where a full stop (".") is not detected, other punctuation marks are considered (? ! : ; ,) and if not found, segmentation is performed on the basis of statistical criteria (T-LAB Users manual). At the end of this process the corpus was "cut" into 14 906 sets, the elementary contexts.

In T-LAB terms, the *elementary contexts* or context units are composed of several *lexical units* (single words or multi-words), which can be grouped and assigned to a *lemma*. A lemma is generally defined as a set of words with the same lexical root (lexeme) and belonging to the same grammatical category (T-Lab, Users Manual). The language of our material was Romanian and the dimensions of our gathered text were too big to be translated into a language that is available for automatic lemmatization in T-LAB. Because no automatic lemmatization was possible, we had to use the dictionary-building tool provided by the software in order to reduce the corpus' vocabulary. All lexical units of the corpus were listed in alphabetical order in the first column of a table. The next column contained the lemmas, which in our case were the same as the lexical units. Two operating modalities (one-by-one and by groups) were used in order to change the labels of the lemmas where it was the case. In this phase, verb forms were taken back to their base forms, nouns to the singular form and so on. All inflected words were reduced to their root. Sometimes plural forms were kept as lemmas. Synonyms were grouped in the same category and designated by the same label. In some cases, the resulted lemma was a content analysis category, grouping words of the same semantic family (e.g. "deputy" and "senator" became "M_P" = Member of Parliament). Undoubtedly, this was the most demanding and challenging job in the course of this study. The software makes it possible to see the concordances of every single lexical unit or lemma by checking the contexts in which they appeared; this option was of great help.

The last step before starting the analysis was the selection of key-terms. In T-LAB logic, the Key-Terms (or Key-Words) refer to all the lexical units (words, lemmas, categories) that, are always included in the tables to be analyzed. They normally belong to the category of "content words": nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Operationally, the selection of key words can be achieved by using two procedures: automatic and customized. Since we used a customized dictionary, we also opted for the customized selection of the keywords. From the 37 000 listed words and 26 265 indexed lemmas, our intention was to use around 500 key-terms. The threshold frequency value was set at 40. Articles, conjunctions and prepositions were eliminated from the start. Lexical units of different grammatical categories but same semantic families were combined to form a single unit (e.g. the adjective "beautiful" was combined with the noun "beauty"; "poor" was indexed as "poverty"). Sometimes, we re-labeled key terms. In general, nouns were preferred as key words. In the end, analysis was conducted on 494 selected lemmas. The final step before conducting the analysis was to translate the selected key words into English, in order to facilitate exemplification in discussing the results.

### 4.2.3    Data analysis

As mentioned already, T-LAB offers multiple data analysis instruments that can be used integratively. However, as in the case of all automatic text analysis, the software does not account for the interpretation of data. In turn, the graphs and tables produced by the software following the analysis phase are icons that require iconographic analysis that presupposes understanding statistical logic and an iconological interpretation by the researcher (Villano et all, 2008).

We tested all the software's instruments on our corpus in order to check which of the functions best answered our needs. In the end, we chose the following: Thematic analysis of elementary contexts (attainment of objectives a. and b.); Co-word analysis and concept mapping (attainment of objective b.); Specificity Analysis (objectives b. and c.). Depending on the research goal and stage of analysis, the whole corpus or just a subset was submitted to analysis.

The *thematic analysis of elementary contexts* (EC) allows obtaining and exploring a representation of corpus content through significant thematic clusters that consist of a set of elementary contexts characterized by the same patterns of key words. The method for obtaining the clusters is bisecting K-means and measuring the cosine coefficient. The data matrix on which they are applied intersects the elementary contexts with the key terms. After obtaining these clusters, the software allows exploring the characteristics of each cluster by showing the typical words (computed by a chi-square test) of each cluster as well as significant elementary contexts. Also, the software generates a new html file of the corpus where all relevant elementary contexts belonging to each cluster are highlighted in different colors. An important operation used after the cluster construction phase was to explore the relationship between clusters and independent variables through the percentage distribution of cluster loads for each category of the independent variable. Then, the relationship between clusters was explored in a bi-dimensional space obtained after correspondence analysis of the contingency table lexical units X clusters.

*Co-word analysis and concept mapping* enalbled us to explore the content of articles about Roşia Montană in each newspaper by identifying and mapping the relationship between and within small word clusters co-occurring in the elementary contexts and named *thematic nuclei* (because the number of key-words was superior to 100, we chose hierarchical clustering of key-words. The association index to compute was the cosine coefficient. The name of each cluster was set according to the word with the highest frequency in the cluster). The rationale behind this method is to detect and interpret isotopies (iso = same; topos = place) in texts, or reference contexts shared by any number of words, which do not necessarily result from their specific meaning (Rastier, 1987). The results of automatic analysis can be explored with help from various charts. We chose the multidimensional scaling (MDS) map to provide a visual representation of the relationships between data within a space of reduced dimensions. We can interpret the meaning of the data on the map by observing and interpreting the isotopes in the articles or, in other terms, groups of words/objects that share the same place on the map. The rationale

is that the meaning of the text is not the result of the specific meanings of separate words it contains, but rather that it is an effect of the context. This analysis was run separately for every subset, in this case each category of the variable newspaper.

*Specificity analysis* enables to detect which lexical units are typical in a text or corpus subset defined by certain variables. The typical lexical units, defined for over-using or under-using, are detected by means of chi-square computation. By submitting the corpus and its subsets to *Specificity analysis* in T-LAB, we were able to identify both the specific lines of arguments regarding the Roşia Montană issue used by each newspaper, and the changes over time within the same sample of articles. In both cases the comparison was made between "part" and "whole".

## 4.3    Results

In the following sections, we present the results of the three analyses carried out on the corpus of newspaper articles in the following order: results of thematic analysis of elementary contexts; of co-word analysis; of specificity analysis.

### 4.3.1    Thematic clusters

One purpose of this study was to classify all newspaper articles' content into relevant categories in order to study the dominant themes regarding Roşia Montană in the Romanian media's discourse. The next sections of this sub-chapter present the results of the thematic analysis of elementary contexts.

### 4.3.1.1 Hierarchical clustering

The *hierarchical clustering* of our corpus generated 10 potential partitions. Figure 19 presents the tree structure of the various bisections.
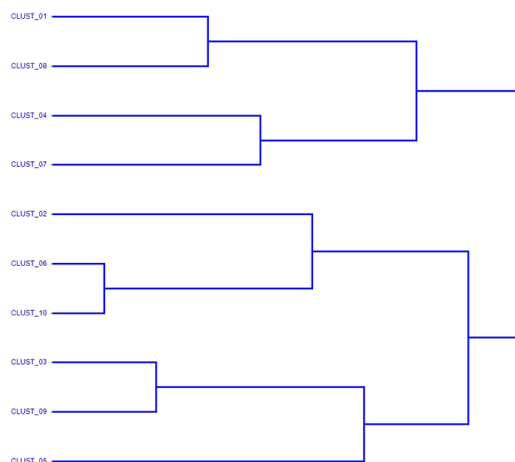


**Figure 19. Hierarchical clustering. Dendogram of the available corpus partitions**

The partition with the largest gap (the difference between its index value and the value of the immediately previous partition) was the one that divided the corpus into 6 clusters. Of the 14906 elementary contexts in which the corpus was "cut" in the pre-analysis phase, 14569 were classified through hierarchical clustering. The percentages of elementary contexts that belong to each cluster are presented in Figure 20.
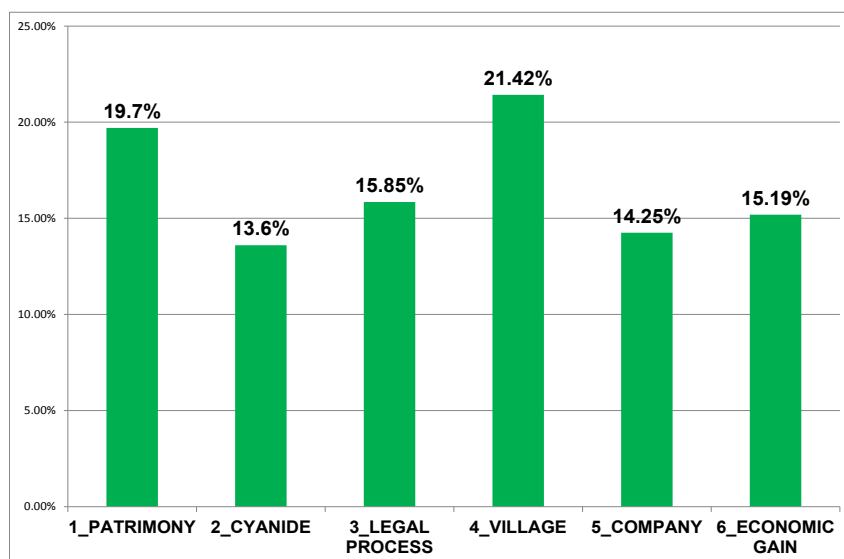


**Figure 20. The percentages of elementary contexts belonging to each cluster**

### 4.3.1.2 Contents of the six clusters

Clusters' labels were set after careful inspection of each thematic cluster's characteristics, precisely the specific lemmas and variables that define the contained ECs. Table 3 shows the most significant lexical elements of the first cluster (the first 50 lemmas in descending order of chi-square value).

This first cluster was labeled "Patrimony". The variable categories that best define the ECs in this cluster are the newspaper "Formula As" (Chi²= 303.463) and "Year 2002" (Chi²=180.339).

The specific words that form elementary contexts refer to the historic-cultural patrimony (*Galleries, History, Museum, Vestiges, Archeology, Dacia, Culture, Wax_tablets, Unesco* etc.) and natural patrimony (*Nature, Uniqueness, Mountains, Landscape, Beauty*) of Roşia Montană. All these are real values (*Value, Treasure*) of Roşia Montană and reasons for saving the place (*Salvation, Preservation, Protection, Restoration*), and the solution clearly offered for it is *tourism*. At the same time, the EC in this thematic cluster presents Roşia Montană as an question of national identity (*The People, Romanians, Apuseni Mountains, Motzi, Heritage, Identity, Transylvania*). By studying the most significant ECs in this cluster, it is easy to determine that the dominant discourse is against the mining project, which

is considered bringing about the destruction of an extremely valued and important place in Romanian history, culture and identity. Natural beauty, although present in the articles, is somewhat left in the background, the strength of Roşia Montană being its cultural and historical value.

**Table 3. Significant lemmas of the first cluster**

| LEMMAS | CHI² | LEMMAS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Archeology | 2041.787 | Treasure | 222.391 |
| History | 1701.817 | Restoration | 216.874 |
| Galleries | 964.3 | Digging | 196.692 |
| Destruction | 924.619 | Romanians | 196.104 |
| Patrimony | 903.651 | Apuseni_Mountains | 192.914 |
| Museum | 881.742 | Value | 180.063 |
| Research | 591.521 | Ioan_Piso | 179.481 |
| Dacia | 578.325 | Carnic | 176.688 |
| Culture | 552.968 | Locality | 172.854 |
| Vestiges | 490.553 | Motzi | 171.305 |
| Monuments | 481.054 | Unesco | 159.586 |
| Preservation | 378.852 | Architecture | 150.498 |
| Tourism | 362.975 | Gold | 146.904 |
| Nature | 338.541 | Wax_Tablets | 145.575 |
| Uniqueness | 334.564 | Protection | 142.193 |
| Mountains | 302.302 | Professor | 135.387 |
| Rosia_Montana | 292.115 | Heritage | 116.124 |
| The_People | 290.997 | Beauty | 100.602 |
| Antiquity | 275.225 | Arch_Discharge | 99.748 |
| Landscape | 274.403 | Defense | 99.365 |
| Ministry_Of_Culture | 264.364 | Europe | 92.109 |
| Discovery | 255.374 | Underground | 90.5 |
| Salvation | 225.132 | Transylvania | 86.46 |
| Roman_Emp | 224.388 | Identity | 84.49 |

In Table 4 the specific lexical elements of the second cluster, which was labeled "Cyanide", are presented. Significantly, the ECs in the second cluster come mostly from the articles published in the Ziua newspaper (Chi²=32.401). After carefully analysing the significant lemmas and consulting the ECs specific to this Cluster, we can argue that this is a discourse frame that defines the most vehement theme of attack of the mining project, namely the use of cyanide in the gold extraction process. The dominant words are those that describe the project as being an "environmental hazard" (*environment, pollution, risk, danger, toxicity, worry*). When it comes to cyanide, the newspaper articles appeal to social memory reiterating the accident in January 2000 in Baia Mare (*Baia Mare, accident, Tisa, Danube*), when a large quantity of cyanide-contaminated water was discharged into the hydrographic basin of Romania and its neighboring countries, following the collapse of a dam at the tailings pond of a goldmine. Because of its devastating effects on the environment in Romania, Hungary, and Serbia, and Western media considered this accident as the second largest environmental disaster in Eastern Europe after Chernobyl (see, for example, Argeseanu Cunningham, 2005).

In this cluster, we also find words relating to the technological process (*technology, substance, neutralization, flotation*) that cyanide gold mining requires,

as well as words that define mining (*waste, tailings pond*).

Another important issue covered in the newspapers concerning cyanide refers to the regulation of its use (*Law, Directives, Standards, Resolution, Recommendation*), to the *Environmentalists'* and some Romanian politicians' efforts (*UDMR, Peter Eckstein-Kovacs, Gheorghe Funar*) to obtain the *prohibition* of cyanide use by the *mining industry,* as well as to the decision makers (*EU Parliament, EU Commission, Romanian Parliament, Member of the European Parliament*). It is worth mentioning the importance given to the supra-national level (European institutions) for the decision regarding cyanide use in mining (*European Union, Bruxelles*).

The cross-border effects that the proposed project might have is suggested through the words *Hungary, border*, which were used considerably when writing about the mining project as an environmental hazard (Hungary was by far the most affected by the accident in Baia Mare, thousands of tons of dead fish and animals having been found in the Tisa's waters, a river that passes through the country. Since then, the subject of cyanide has become a leitmotif in bilateral relations between Romania and Hungary, the latter supporting by all means the need to ban cyanide use for mining in Romania).

**Table 4. Significant lemmas of the second cluster**

| LEMMAS | CHI² | LEMMAS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cyanide_ | 2556.658 | Exploitation | 151.073 |
| Environment | 1606.115 | Impact | 147.047 |
| E_U | 1437.877 | Warranty | 132.642 |
| Interdiction | 909.24 | Resolution | 132.52 |
| Technology | 673.287 | Substance | 127.392 |
| Law | 519.393 | UDMR | 121.104 |
| Hungary | 456.557 | Toxicity | 114.768 |
| Eu_Parliament | 437.695 | Recommendation | 108.892 |
| Risk | 382.073 | Border | 108.04 |
| Europe | 375.531 | Waste | 107.717 |
| Pollution | 361.326 | Environmentalists | 89.666 |
| Directive | 341.531 | Bruxelles | 89.166 |
| Eu_Comission | 322.83 | Hungarians | 87.766 |
| Romania | 277.705 | Problems | 78.457 |
| Parliament | 215.798 | Industry | 69.761 |
| Accident | 199.075 | Worry | 68.318 |
| Baia_Mare | 194.131 | Tisa | 65.392 |
| M_E_P | 188.229 | Neutralization | 60.889 |
| Danger | 176.478 | Tailings_Pond | 60.026 |
| Ecology | 172.529 | Politics | 55.686 |
| Compliance | 170.747 | Danube | 52.435 |
| Mining_Ind | 166.33 | Committee | 52.197 |
| Consequences | 157.216 | Adina_Valean | 50.615 |
| Env_Protection | 152.549 | Flotation | 50.615 |
| Standards | 152.297 | Eckstein-Kovacs | 44.552 |

The following cluster was named "Legal process" and contains specific lexical units listed in Table 5. Significantly, this cluster contains the ECs belonging to articles published in 2007 (Chi²= 58.048) in Unirea (Chi²= 49.079) and România Liberă (Chi²= 31.907).

**Table 5. Significant lemmas in the third cluster**

| LEMMAS | CHI² | LEMMAS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Court_of_Law | 2896.646 | Attila_Korodi | 223.795 |
| Env-Ministry | 2412.076 | Analysis | 212.824 |
| Planning_Certificate | 1528.758 | The_Project | 210.105 |
| Decision | 1428.789 | PDL | 205.411 |
| Adjournment | 1215.702 | APM | 195.431 |
| E_I_A | 1100.129 | Laszlo_Borbely | 195.327 |
| Authorization | 1012.854 | Authorities | 188.683 |
| Procedure | 742.338 | Rapport | 188.484 |
| Documents | 593.6 | Approval | 187.674 |
| County_Authorities | 586.719 | Parliament | 180.249 |
| Minister | 546.47 | Legality | 170.827 |
| Env_Permit | 475.337 | PSD | 156.685 |
| Cancellation | 434.078 | Press_Release | 152.793 |
| Ministry | 417.048 | Ion_Dumitrel | 139.587 |
| M_P | 397.286 | Answer | 126.499 |
| Request | 373.204 | RMGC | 122.168 |
| Government | 340.897 | Eugen_Nicolaescu | 119.394 |
| Committee | 328.963 | Illegality | 112.043 |
| Alba_County | 274.383 | Law | 111.645 |
| Sulfina_Barbu | 267.864 | Lificiu_Petru | 99.624 |
| Sentence | 247.419 | Videanu_Adrian | 86.677 |
| Certificate | 245.686 | Consultation | 86.241 |

This third thematic cluster contains the ECs referring to two legal aspects connected to the mining project. On the one hand, the court battle (Court of law, Sentence, Cancellation, Illegality, Law, Adjournment) to which the project's opposition committed in order to stop the project, by attacking various decisions or certificates issued by competent authorities (Planning Certificate, Illegality).

On the other side, we found terms referring to the authorization process required for the beginning of the mining project (Environmental Impact Assessment - EIA, Environmental Permit, Authorization, Documents, Certificate, Rapport) and to key decision makers (Environmental Ministry, Sulfina Barbu, Attila Korodi, Laszlo Borbely, Lificiu Petru – the ministers of environment in the Romanian governments over time, Members of Parliament, County authorities, Agency for the Environment -APM).

Again referring to the legal process, the names of certain political parties (Social Democratic Party – PSD, Liberal Democratic Party – PDL) and national (Videanu Adrian, Eugen Nicolaescu) or local (Ion Dumitrel) politicians are mentioned, because they took a stand against the mining project regarding its legality or suitability.

Cluster number four contains the most elementary contexts from the analyzed material (21.42%). Its specific terms are presented in Table 6. Significantly, the ECs of this cluster appear in articles published in Formula As magazine (Chi²= 187.662) in 2009 (Chi²= 121.202) and 2002 (Chi²= 114).

The dominant frame identified in this cluster refers to the Roşia Montană village, community and environment (for economy of space, the label chosen was "Village"). There are several sub-themes that resurface from the analysis of

the keywords and the ECs specific to this cluster. Great emphasis is laid on the built environment in Roşia Montană (Houses, Churches). First of all, we have the image of a village that was negatively affected by the proposed mining project (*Relocation, Abandonment, Demolition*). In particular the demolition of *houses,* but also of *churches* and *cemeteries in* Roşia Montană and *Corna* (a village that belongs to the Roşia Montană commune and that would be entirely destroyed; the tailings pond is to be built in its place) are presented as the most serious consequences of building the gold mine. The relocation of the *dead* from *the cemeteries* is the most frequently used physical argument for the objectification of the Roşia Montană *relocation* plans. This discourse is typical for the opponents to the mining project, a discourse recorded by the newspaper articles included in this cluster. However, terms referring to Roşia Montană's built environment are also present in the articles that report on the restoration of houses in Roşia Montană, an effort undertaken by the mining company in its effort to improve its image and gain 'a social license to mine' (Solomon *et al.,* 2008). There are also images of the village as a commodity, where houses and people's property are sold and bought (S*ale, Purchase, Money*) and a new town is built for the relocated population (*Neighborhood)*.

**Table 6. Significant lemmas in the fourth cluster**

| LEMMAS | CHI² | LEMMAS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Houses | 2776.203 | Purchase | 227.236 |
| Churches | 1225.042 | Stone | 221.749 |
| Village | 1015.859 | Death | 221.096 |
| People | 917.55 | Land | 219.987 |
| Residents | 866.166 | Hay-Festival | 212.015 |
| Relocation | 787.385 | Dead_People | 202.018 |
| Sale | 656.712 | Illness | 201.477 |
| Family | 581.383 | School_ | 191.348 |
| Miner | 544.095 | Zeno_Cornea | 186.795 |
| Commune | 540.047 | Stamp_Mills | 182.309 |
| Local_Authorities | 510.884 | Town | 181.563 |
| Children | 502.708 | Poison | 180.493 |
| Priest | 449.472 | Tradition | 174.162 |
| Abrud | 426.969 | Life | 173.726 |
| Water | 426.609 | Neighborhood | 172.129 |
| Money | 383.627 | Parents | 163.794 |
| The_Elders | 380.062 | Tailings_Pond | 159.968 |
| Corna | 349.274 | Community | 159.127 |
| Concert | 339.701 | Miners_Day | 157.988 |
| God | 338.919 | Soul | 153.603 |
| Celebration | 316.885 | Ponds | 151.607 |
| Property | 293.868 | Wood | 141.851 |
| Cemeteries | 247.021 | Abandonment | 124.64 |
| Demolition | 231.912 | Furdui_Eugen | 121.898 |
| Hills | 228.575 | Hay | 118.498 |

Some words specific to this cluster remind us of the image of the traditional mining town where mining is placed in the distant past when it was done traditionally (T*radition, Stamp mills*). Other words refer to the traces that mining left on Roşia Montană's environment (*Water, Ponds*), but also to the effects that it might have on

the environment in the mining project zone (*Tailings pond, Poison*).

When the Roşia Montană people are mentioned, they are *Elders, Children, Family, Parents*, but also *Dead people,* who, as we mentioned before, are part of the Roşia Montană community and to whom the village also belongs. In the list above, there also the names of two real people from Roşia Montană, *Furdui Eugen*, the current mayor of the town and *Zeno Cornea*, a vehement member of the local opposition.

Finally, two holiday events (*Celebration*) in the life of the Roşia Montană community are mentioned in the articles on Roşia Montană. The first one is *Fan-Fest (Hay-Festival),* a music festival organized on a volunteer basis since 2004 by the local and extra-local opponents to the mining project, in view of promoting tourism in Roşia Montană. The second event, *miner's day,* is a local celebration organized by the local authorities with the direct involvement of the mining company.

To sum up, although assembled in the same Elementay Context cluster, these lexical elements describe a complex image of the Roşia Montană village and community, which conforms to the dual representations of Roşia Montană transmitted by the conflicting sides.

Significantly, the articles whose ECs were included in the fith cluster (see Table 7) were published in 2006 (Chi²= 219.618) in the two national daily newspapers that we analyzed: Ziua (Chi²=148.01) and România Liberă (Chi²=122.979).

This cluster, labeled "Company", contains elementary contexts in which the emphasis is laid mainly on the initiator of the Roşia Montană mining project (*the company*, *Roşia Montană Gold Corporation – RMGC*, *Gabriel Resources*). By analysing the keywords in this cluster, as for the previous cluster, we notice several subthemes mentioned in the newspaper articles when writing about the mining company. It should be noted that the name referred to was both "*Gabriel Resources*", the name of the Canadian company involved in the mining project and "*Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC)*", a joint venture between Gabriel Resources and the Romanian state (represented by *Minvest* company from Deva). Beyond the denominative terms used to inform about the company (*The company, Canada, Jersey, Shareholders, Shares, The State, Partnership, The Project*), there are terms related to economic activity (*Capital, Stock-market, Financing, World Bank, Business, Employment, Payments*) and to management of the company (*CEO, Alan Hill, Frank Timis*).

But there are also significant words that criticize the company and its representatives (*Accusation, Investigation)*. The names of some businessmen, whose involvement in the matter was controversial, are significantly present in this cluster (*Frank Timis*, the Romanian businessman who owned an important part of the shares of the Gabriel Resources company, was its CEO when the project was launched and was often portrayed in negative terms; *George Soros,* a very wealthy Hungarian businessman whose indirect support for the opposition to the project through the NGO "Open society foundation", also known as "Soros foundation",

raised some suspicion). The name of the current president of Romania, Traian Basescu, who took a stand numerous times especially in favor of the mining project at Roşia Montană, also appears here frequently.

However, the elementary contexts included in this cluster also contain terms referring to the actors involved in the Roşia Montană conflict on the other side (*Opposition, NGO, Greenpeace, Alburnus Maior, Romanian Academy, Civil society, Eugen David,* the leader of the local opposition). The fact that they are found in the same cluster identified by the software after statistical calculation could indicate the secondary place of importance generally given to these actors by the newspapers.

In 2006 (the specific ECs category characterizing this cluster) the company's first PR campaign was launched (*Publicity, Mass-media, Televison, Campaign, Image).* It was accompanied by the opposition's reaction to the company's mass-media publicity campaign, notably by complaining to the competent institutions (*CNA* - Consiliul National al Audiovizualului or *National Audiovisual Council of Romania*), or through a counter-campaign initiated by the organizations united in the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign (*Mindbomb, Poster*). To sum up, the dominant frame identified in this cluster is about the stakeholders that were directly involved in the conflict around the mining project, but with greater emphasis on the mining company.

**Table 7. Significant lemmas in the fifth cluster**

| LEMMAS | CHI² | LEMMAS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gabriel_Resources | 2707.36 | Deva | 104.677 |
| The_Company | 1548.893 | George_Soros | 104.292 |
| RMGC | 865.332 | Capital | 100.904 |
| NGO | 670.124 | Greenpeace | 98.364 |
| Shareholders | 560.311 | Stock_Market | 92.69 |
| CEO | 557.201 | Employment | 91.202 |
| Alan_Hill | 490.126 | GMP | 89.753 |
| Shares | 426.765 | Civil_Society | 77.06 |
| The_Project | 383.615 | C_N_A | 73.333 |
| Publicity | 324.468 | Alburnus_Maior | 71.414 |
| Mass-Media | 251.63 | The_State | 70.33 |
| Management | 246.923 | World_Bank | 69.028 |
| Television | 201.456 | Partnership_ | 66.318 |
| Opposition | 196.28 | Information_ | 53.972 |
| Minvest_Rosiamin | 187.61 | Romanian_Academy | 52.836 |
| Canada | 187.481 | Supporter | 48.475 |
| Campaign | 166.715 | Debates | 46.59 |
| Traian_Basescu | 121.004 | Payments | 43.97 |
| Frank_Timis | 119.689 | Businesss | 42.379 |
| Image | 115.183 | Investigation | 41.935 |
| Mindbomb | 112.257 | Accusation | 40.616 |
| Jersey | 110.407 | Financing | 40.39 |
| Newmont_Mining | 108.596 | Eugen_David | 36.082 |
| Poster | 106.904 | | |

Finally, the sixth cluster that classifies the Elementary contexts specifically contains articles from the years 1998 (Chi²=83.76) and 2010 (Chi²=73.005) which were published mainly in the local newspaper "Informaţia de Alba". The label

chosen for this cluster was that of "Economic gain" because this aspect of the project is the one problematized here. The following lexical elements are characteristic of this cluster.

**Table 8. Specific lemmas of the sixth cluster**

| LEMMAS | CHI² | LEMMAS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dollars | 1708.425 | Closure | 133.05 |
| Exploitation | 941.242 | Growth | 131.433 |
| Investment_ | 873.091 | Expenditures | 126.629 |
| Economy | 864.022 | Ounce | 125.534 |
| Benefits | 826.643 | Costs | 116.01 |
| Developmentt | 766.412 | Business | 106.514 |
| Millions | 733.598 | Infrastructure | 100.359 |
| Billions | 634.539 | Silver_ | 99.588 |
| Romania | 575.78 | Revival | 95.766 |
| Taxes | 382.483 | Euro | 92.415 |
| Ore_ | 335.43 | Mining_Ind | 86.641 |
| Jobs | 331.055 | Lease | 83.655 |
| The_State | 286.092 | Experts | 66.586 |
| Profit | 234.061 | The_Project | 66.477 |
| Budget | 205.542 | Alternatives | 64.386 |
| Resources | 188.944 | Solution | 62.036 |
| Mine | 183.599 | Gold_Reserve | 61.297 |
| Tone | 183.301 | Minvest_Rosiamin | 59.287 |
| Production | 165.623 | Payments | 58.003 |
| Gold | 159.227 | Price | 55.035 |
| Crisis | 155.558 | Industry | 54.895 |
| Investors | 150.233 | Canada | 52.431 |
| Revenue | 141.129 | Studies | 49.259 |
|  |  | Strategy | 49.09 |

The Elementary contexts classified here are related to economic aspects involved in the construction of the gold mine at Roşia Montană. It is about the gold and silver deposits at Roşia Montană, regarded as an exploitable resource in order to get economic growth and development (*Exploitation, Economy, Gold, Tons, Ore, Mine, Production, Development, Jobs*), especially in the context of the current economic *Crisis* and the shutting down of the state mine that was working in Roşia Montană (*Closure, Minvest Rosiamin, revival, Mining industry).* Here, we find terms referring to investment or value (*Investment, Dollars, Millions, Billions, Investors*).

Journalists have also taken on the theme of gold as a national reserve (*Gold reserve*), whose exploitation can be much more profitable for the Romanian state (*The State, Profit, Due, Benefits, Budget*). This constitutes the main economic criticism of the Roşia Montană Project, formulated mainly by experts from the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest. The procurement of a gold mining licence by Roşia Montană was also a theme approached by the opponents to the project from an economic point of view and taken on by journalists (*Expert, Lease*). In continuation of this discourse, references to other solutions for the development of the region follow (*Alternatives, Solution, Revival*).

### 4.3.1.3    Relationship between the clusters and the variable "Newspaper"

The percentage loads of the six clusters in each category of the independent variable "newspaper" are presented in the the figure below.
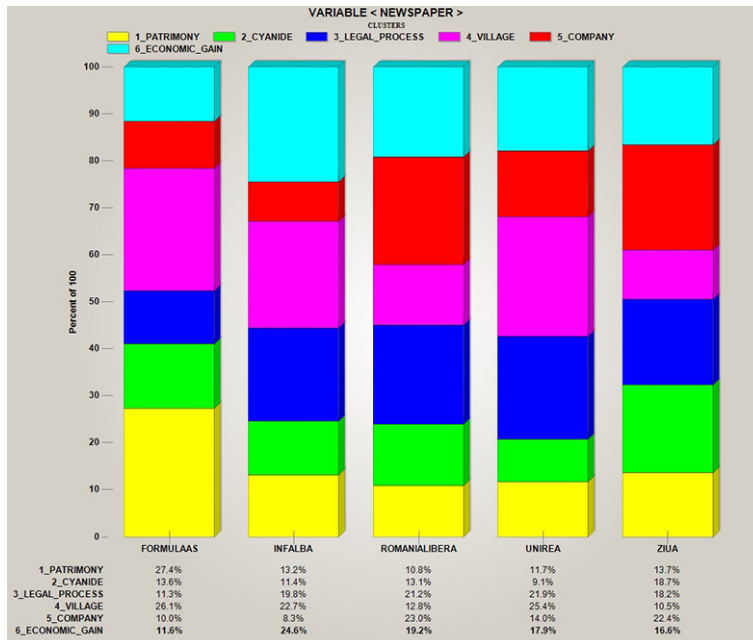


**Figure 21. Percentage distribution of cluster loads in each sample of newspaper articles**

First, we notice that the six dominant frames in the media discourse about Roșia Montană are all present in our five subsets of media articles. However, their proportion in each sample differs. This helped us draw a comparison between the selected newspaper articles.

More than half the content of the articles about Roșia Montană from the weekly magazine Formula As referred to values of heritage and community regarding Roșia Montană. This periodical, which is actively involved the 'Save Roșia Montană' campaign, had an important role in making the "Roșia Montană case" known to the masses, by means of their published newspaper reports promoting the place and the people from that region, and familiarizing people with what had been unknown until then. The four other main themes identified through cluster analysis in this newspaper share a fairly equal percentage.

If we consider daily newspapers, we notice symmetry between the two national newspapers, on the one hand, and between the two local newspapers from Alba County, on the other hand, regarding the issues written about the Roșia Montană case. Differences between the two are clear from the point of view of content about the village and lives of its inhabitants (more frequent in local newspapers), and about the mining company and other stakeholders in the Roșia Montană conflict (ore frequent in national newspapers). A less obvious difference lies within the "cyanide"

cluster, whose lexical elements refer directly to the mining projects' environmental impacts; this is more frequent in national rather than local newpapers. The Ziua newspaper contains 5% more articles about cyanide use than any other.

One may also notice differences between two local publications; Informaţia de Alba assigned more space to the economic aspects of the mining project, and less to the stakeholders involved in the controversy, than the other local newspaper, Unirea.

### 4.3.1.4   Relationship between the thematic clusters

The relationship between the six identified clusters was explored with correspondence analysis on a contingency table that crossed the lexical units with the thematic clusters. The analysis extracted five factors. The first three factors explain altogether 73.76 % of the data inertia (variance). Below, we present the correspondence analysis results of these three factors.

Factor 1 (horizontal) explains 33.71% of the data inertia. The contributions of the clusters to the factor, as well as the significant modalities of the illustrative variable "Newspaper" on this factor, are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9. Cluster contributions and significant illustrative variables of Factor 1**

| *Semi-axis negative* | | *Semi-axis positive* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Cluster* | *Absolute Contribution* | *Cluster* | *Absolute Contribution* |
| Cluster 4 | 38.56% | Cluster 3 | 33.81% |
| *Illustrative variable* | | | |
| *Variable modality* | *Test value* | *Variable modality* | *Test Values* |
| Formula As | 26.38 | InfAlba | 6.65 |
| | | România Liberă | 32.86 |
| | | Unirea | 9.31 |
| | | Ziua | 30.41 |

Studying the contribution of the clusters, we notice that the first factor mostly involves opposition between the contents of the fourth cluster (describing the village and community of Roşia Montană) and the third cluster (focusing on the legal process for starting or stopping the project). With regard to the variable "Newspaper", this factor opposes the articles published in Formula As to the others.

Factor 2 (vertical) explains 20.95% of the data inertia. The clusters' contribution to this factor and significant modalities of the illustrative variable "Newspaper" are shown in Table 10 below.

**Table 10. Clusters contributions and significant illustrative variables of Factor 2**

| *Semi-axis negative* | | *Semi-axis positive* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Cluster* | *Abs. contribution* | *Cluster* | *Abs. Contribution* |
| Cluster 4 | 33.62% | Cluster 1 | 21.7% |
| Cluster 3 | 18.71% | | |
| *Illustrative variable* | | | |
| *Variable modality* | *Test value* | *Variable modality* | *Test Values* |
| Inf Alba | 7.37 | Formula As | 4.74 |
| România Liberă | 6.34 | Ziua | 6.89 |
| Unirea | 19.37 | | |

The second factor opposes the contents of cluster 4 (Village) and 3 (Legal Process) to the content of the first cluster (Patrimony). This dimension significantly divides the local and national (România Liberă) newspapers on the negative extreme, and the weekly (Formula As) and daily (Ziua) newspapers on the positive extreme.

Factor 3 explains 19.08% of the data inertia. The clusters' contribution to this factor and significant modalities of the illustrative variable "Newspaper" are shown in Table 11. For this factor, the opposition is between the content of the sixth cluster (which problematizes the Project's economic gain) and the contents of the first and third cluster (focusing on the heritage value of Roşia Montană and on the legal procedure or the judicial battle around the Project). As for the first extracted factor, Formula As stands in opposition to all the other newspapers on this dimension.

**Table 11. Clusters contributions and significant illustrative variables of Factor 3**

| Semi-axis negative | | Semi-axis positive | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Cluster* | *Abs. contribution* | *Cluster* | *Abs. Contribution* |
| Cluster 6 | 22.91% | Cluster 1 | 37.06% |
| | | Cluster 3 | 23.62% |
| *Illustrative variable* | | | |
| *Variable modality* | *Test value* | *Variable modality* | *Test Values* |
| Inf Alba | 7.09 | Formula As | 7.18 |
| România Liberă | 6.97 | | |
| Unirea | 7.67 | | |
| Ziua | 6.44 | | |

### 4.3.2     Thematization of Roşia Montană in each newspaper

The results in the previous sections showed the main themes that newspaper articles used when referring to the Roşia Montană case. With the purpose of further investigating the media representations of Roşia Montană, we first looked at *how* the Roşia Montană affair was represented in each newspaper included in the overall study, and then we tried to observe changes in discourse about Roşia Montană in each newspaper over the years. The next sections of this sub-chapter present the results of the *co-word analysis and concept mapping* and of the *specificity analysis* run in T-LAB for each newspaper independently.

### 4.3.2.1     Newspaper Formula As

The weekly newspaper "Formula As" started to publish articles about the Roşia Montană issue in 2002. As already mentioned, 241 articles overall from this newspaper were included in our corpus. Figure 22 shows the distribution over the years of the articles published in Formula As and included in the analysis.

Roşia Montană became a constant focus in the columns of the weekly magazine Formula As from February 2002, several months before the extra-local opposition to the project started to coalesce. However, no article about Roşia Montană was published in the columns of Formula AS prior to that date, even if local controversy had already manifested two years earlier. Since then, attention to the case has been constant. In Figure 22, only articles specifically about Roşia Montană were
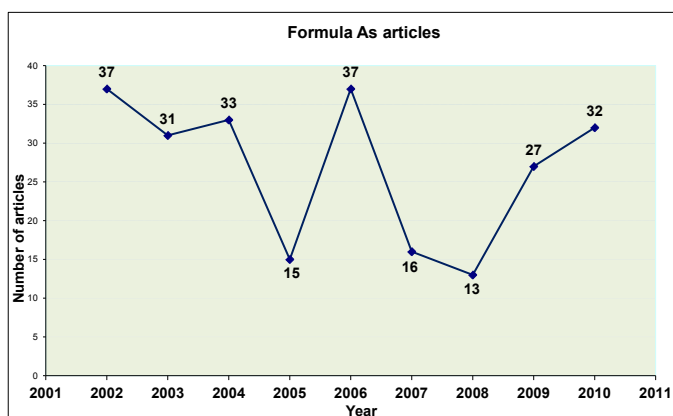
**Figure 22. Annual ditribution of Formula As articles on Roşia Montană**

considered. Let us specify that many of the articles in this weekly newspaper contained the keywords „Roşia Montană", but those that only mentioned this matter were not included. Roşia Montană became an issue that Formula As' journalists took on fully, and that they themselves felt a part of. Even if it was sometimes treated subsidiarily, the subject of Roşia Montană was definitely not of less importance for the journalists of this newspaper (for instance, for a long period of time, interviews with various celebrities to whom they usually dedicate an entire page in each issue, all contained the question "What is your opinion regarding Roşia Montană?"). We do however notice a constant group of articles about Roşia Montană in the first three years of the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign, that decrease in frequency and make a come-back in 2006 thanks to the mining company's publicity campaign. The same thing happened in 2009 when the company launched another series of advertisements in favor of the mining project.

The following subchapters present how the Roşia Montană case was thematized in the weekly newspaper Formula As, but also the changes that took place over time in this discourse.

*4.3.2.1.1        Thematic nuclei in Formula As articles*

In the first phase of co-word analysis, the 482 selected key words in Formula As articles were reduced to 70 thematic nuclei by hierarchical clustering. On the MDS map produced (see Figure 23), the dominant words (labels of clusters with high frequencies of words) are larger. The different colors of words have no meaning in themselves, but contribute to a better visualization of the terms on the map.

On the map, we identified several isotopies in the articles produced by Formula As. One of them is placed around the nucleus "*The project*". When referring to the mining project, the Formula As journalists wrote especially about the main actors involved in the Roşia Montană conflict (*NGO's, Romanian Academy, Gabriel Resources, The company*). For the Formula As magazine, positioned against the mine's construction since the beginning, the mining project is first of all a polemic object among several actors, forcing state institutions (parliament, ministries) to quickly make a decision based on expert opinions.

**Figure 23. MDS Map with the thematic nuclei in Formula As**
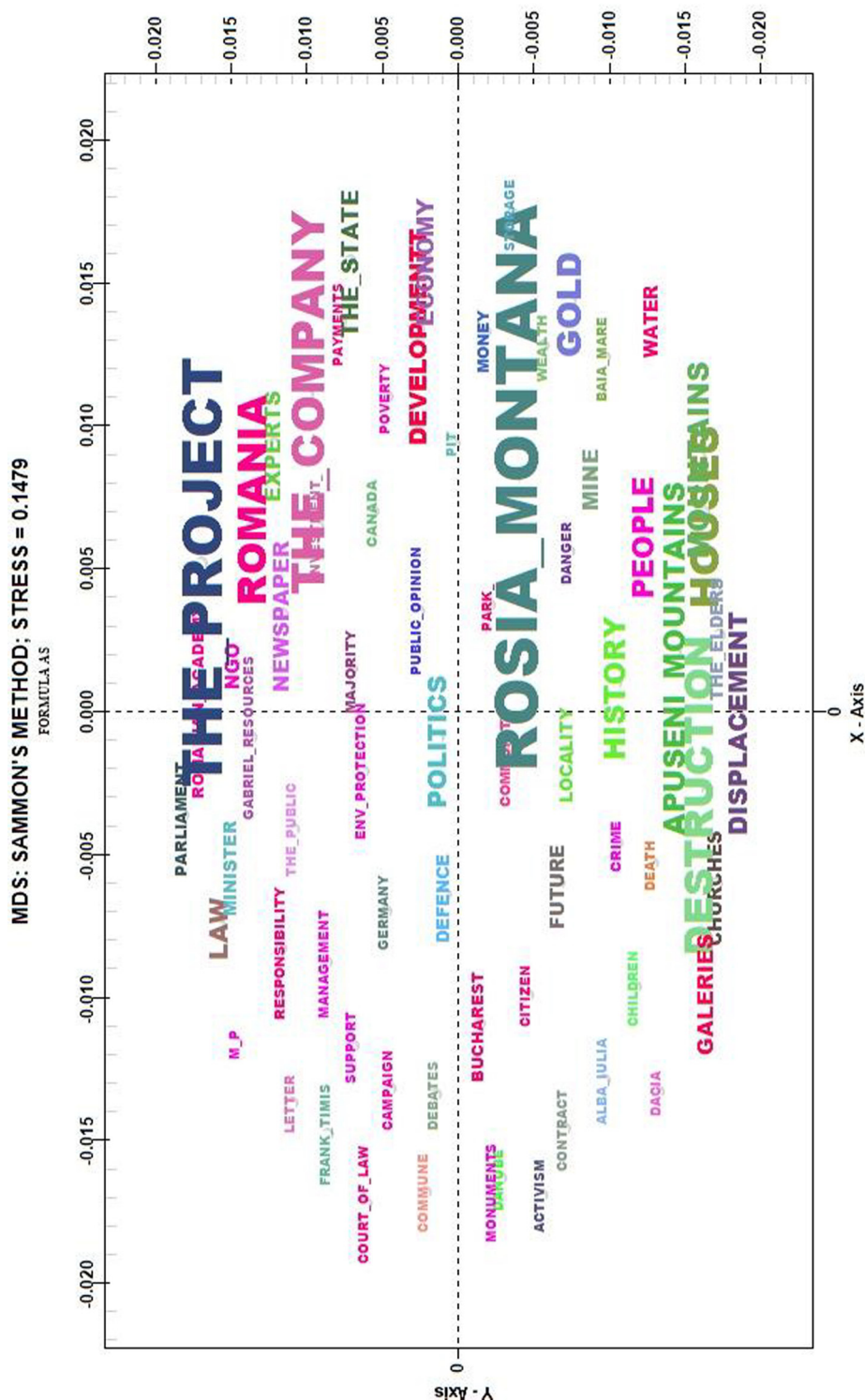
According to Formula As, Roşia Montană is a place under threat. The gold, the element that brought wealth (*Wealth, Money*) to the place in the past, now represents a threat to the environment. References to the environmental accident in Baia Mare in 2000 are common in the pages of the Formula As weekly magazine (thematic nuclei *danger, mine, Baia Mare, water*). Roşia Montană, as a place, with its history and people, is extremely valued in the magazine's pages. Its destruction and the relocation of the population are seen as a real crime (see the cluster of thematic nuclei from the lower part of Figure 23).

Another isotopy can be found on the left side of the map, around the terms that refer to activism and the fight against the mining project in court and in public debates, to which the Formula As journalists have been particularly attentive (*Activism, Monuments, Debates, Campaign, Court of law, Support, Citizen, Bucharest*). At the center of the map, we find terms that can offer us a key to interpreting the intentions in the messages sent by the Formula AS magazine over time: in the pages of this magazine, the Roşia Montană issue was especially approached with the purpose of mobilizing public opinion and influencing political factors, thus contributing to a decision for the *defense* of Roşia Montană, and in agreement with the the necessity of protecting the environment (*Environmental_protection*).

### 4.3.2.1.2 *Characteristics of the Formula As discourse*

Overall, we have identified the main differences in the discourse regarding the Roşia Montană issue among the newspapers through analysis of the specific terms used in the articles in each publication.

In concordance with the results of the previous analysis (see Section 4.3.1.4. in this chapter), Formula As differs from all the other newspapers included in the analysis, even from the point of view of the vocabulary used in its pages. The software calculated more than 200 over-used words in Formula As, the double of those identified as being typical in other newspapers. Table 12 presents the first 30 "over-used" words, opposed to the first 30 "under-used" words in Formula As articles.

What sets Formula As apart from the other newspapers is its emphasis on Roşia Montană as a place. With its geography (*mountains, beauty*), its history (*history, galleries, houses, churches*) and its people (*Motzi, People, Elders*), it is seen as a sacred place (for example, the use of the words "God", "soul"), which relates to Romanian national identity (*Romanians, the people*).

This place is threatened by destruction and disaster, which could take place because of foreign activities (the company), with help from corrupt authorities. Faced with this threat, Romanians have to fight to protect Roşia Montană; it is especially their responsibility for younger generations. This summarizes the core of the representation of Roşia Montană in the Formula As newspaper.

**Table 12. Over- and Under-used words in Formula AS**

| OVER-USED WORDS | CHI² | UNDER-USED WORDS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Romanians | 189.24 | The_Project | 378.40 |
| Mountains | 180.95 | Alba_County | 346.77 |
| History | 175.94 | Gabriel_Resources | 336.71 |
| Destruction | 158.12 | Rmgc | 263.02 |
| Houses | 148.70 | Investment_ | 221.65 |
| God | 137.86 | Authorization | 170.74 |
| Fight | 137.44 | Exploitation | 164.41 |
| The_People | 133.07 | Planning_Certificate | 138.49 |
| Motzi | 124.96 | Adjournment | 135.80 |
| People | 108.03 | Env-Ministry | 135.72 |
| Priest | 106.54 | Dollars | 126.58 |
| Defense | 106.46 | Alan_Hill | 114.36 |
| Sale | 99.91 | County_Authorities | 113.58 |
| Churches | 92.59 | Procedure | 113.32 |
| Village | 89.04 | Documents | 102.58 |
| Newspaper | 87.92 | Env_Impact_Assesstment | 101.33 |
| The_Elders | 87.57 | Press_Release | 101.14 |
| Corruption | 87.19 | Commune | 93.70 |
| Threat | 86.94 | Capital | 90.34 |
| Formula_As | 86.94 | Minvest_Rosiamin | 88.76 |
| Professor | 83.68 | Investors | 88.41 |
| Galleries | 83.43 | Shareholders | 84.90 |
| Soul | 82.29 | Management | 82.04 |
| Life | 80.94 | Court_Of_Law | 71.80 |
| Future_Generations | 80.18 | Deva | 66.48 |
| Beauty | 79.67 | Alba_Iulia | 64.60 |
| Truth | 77.39 | Cuprumin | 64.18 |
| Money | 76.19 | Standards | 61.13 |
| Disaster | 75.62 | Celebration | 57.67 |
| Foreign_ | 75.62 | Neighborhood | 57.28 |

*4.3.2.1.3        Changes in Formula As' discourse about Roşia Montană.*

The Formula As articles included in our analysis were published over nine years starting in 2002. We were able to identify significant changes that took place in the newspaper's discourse in the course of those nine years by analyzing each year's specific terminology. Unlike in the previous section where the results were obtained through comparison between Formula As articles and the entire corpus, the results were obtained here by comparing Formula As articles year-by-year. Table 13 shows the first 20 over-used words in Formula As articles each year.

The articles published in the& first year (2002) inform the reader on the Roşia Montană issue, but from a clear perspective of opposition to the mining project. The envisioned mining project is presented as being a real disaster for the region of the

**Table 13. First 20 over-used words in Formula As articles for each year**

| 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| Gold | Priest | The_Church | Prize | GabrielResources |
| Motzi | March | Newmont_Min. | Tariceanu | Hay-Festival |
| World_Bank | Displacement | Air | Investigation | Debates |
| Bucium | M_P | Environment | Adjournment | Sulfina_Barbu |
| Reporter | Corna | Neighbor | Illegality | Concert |
| Mountains | Campeni | Ecology | Court of Law | Publicity |
| Frank_Timis | Ro_Academy | Archeology | ANRM | Television |
| Disaster | Motzi | Water | Banking_Syst | EIA |
| Eurogold | Carpinis | Poison | Carnic | Music |
| Env_Protection | People | Loss | Government | Organizer |
| Horea | THE_Company | Research | Film | Env-Ministry |
| People | The_Church | Tailings | Economy | Property |
| Avram_Iancu | Rapport | God | Archeology | Theft |
| Geology | Village | Traian_Basescu | Control | Proposal |
| Baia_Mare | Cemeteries | Adrian_Nastase | Professor | Alternatives |
| Story | Police | The_Elders | The_Project | Warranty |
| Apuseni | Churches | Resources | Capital | Planning_Certif. |
| Wealth | Apuseni | Directive | County_Auth. | PDL |
| Soul | Compensations | Industry | Efforts | Rmgc |
| Tailings | Signatures | Jobs | Arch_Discharge | APM |

| 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|------|------|------|------|
| Cyanide | Restoration | Tourism | Videanu_Adriean |
| PNL | Furdui_E1ugen | Hostel | Crisis |
| Interdiction | Court_Of_Law | Patrimony | Budget |
| Parliament | Psd | Wax_Tablets | Hungarians |
| Icomos | Procedure | Contract | Technology |
| Attila_Korodi | Patrimony | Publicity | Taxes |
| Exhibition | PDL | Rosia_Montana | Unesco |
| PER | Planning_Certif. | Rmgc | Benefits |
| Ecologists | Elections | Miner | Hungary |
| Law | Law | Dacia | Consciousness |
| UDMR | ANRM | Property | M_E_P |
| M_P | Park | Purchase | The_State |
| Hungary | Cancellation | Uniqueness | UDMR |
| Rivers | Mining_Licence | Cancellation | Citizen |
| Zeno_Cornea | Monuments | Family | Romania |
| Accident | Mining_Ind | Declassification | Shame |
| PSD | Agriculture | Lies | Production |
| Photograph | Adjournment | Galleries | Blockage |
| Environment | Sanctions | Cetate_Pit | Romanians |
| President | RMGC | Houses | Expenditures |

Apuseni Mountains. Headlines such as "After the disaster in Baia Mare, a second Jolly Roger is being prepared on the map of our country: Roșia Montană", "Roșia Montană the feeling of a catastrophe" or "Environmental catastrophes, such as the one underway in Roșia Montană are the result of a Ceausescu way of thinking" are some of the first articles published in Formula As on this issue. We can identify here an environmental frame of discourse that Formula As promoted regarding Roșia Montană.

Far from being singular, this environmental discourse was accompanied by an identity discourse. From the beginning, the Formula As articles present Roșia Montană as an emblem of national identity (*Apuseni Mountains*, "*the cradle of Romanian civilization*", the place where the national heroes *Avram Iancu, Horea* came from).

An important set of articles published at the beginning are real "disclosures" with regard to the Roșia Montană investor the mafia behind the project. The key negative character is *Frank Timis*, who, although Romanian, is the objectification of the foreigner who wants to profit from the gold belonging to all Romanians by triggering a disaster at Roșia Montană. All this made possible with the help of corrupt authorities. Emblematic articles with headlines such as: "The murmured history of villainy", "Roșia Montană - The octopus' tentacles are spreading – Cyanide will kill with the official stamp".

At the same time, through the articles published in the beginning, Formula As took on the role of actor engaged in the conflict over Roșia Montană and made an appeal for the salvation of the village. Some exemplary headlines from this period include: "Roșia Montană does not die!" or "Let's save the Apuseni Mountains. These places have always belonged to the Motzi and have to remain theirs!".

In the 2003 Formula As articles, emphasis was specifically put on the description of the project's effects on Roșia Montană and its community, as well as on describing the fight and the actors engaged in battle with the mining company (Romanian Academy, The Church). The relocation of the population, the demolition of the churches and the relocation of the cemeteries are presented as the most serious issues involved and that must be fought for. We must say that in its pages, Formula As did not give a "voice" to anyone except the locals who opposed the mining project, often giving the impression that the company and the inhabitants were locally separated.

In 2004, Formula As steered its attention in three directions: firstly, they resumed environmentalist advocacy, drawing attention to the environmental hazards the project entails (specifically, words such as *air, water, environment, ecology, poison* and *tailings* appear); secondly, economic aspects implied by the project surfaced in the newspaper's articles (*resources,, jobs, industry, Newmont Mining);* thirdly, the names of two Romanian politicians, both running for presidency in 2004 (*Adrian Nastase*, the then Prime-Minister, and *Traian Basescu*, the then Mayor of Bucharest and leader of the opposition) are indicative of the place occupied by the Roșia Montană issue in a larger political context in Romania in 2004 (the year of the general election).

In 2005, the specific pattern of discourse about Roşia Montană shifts. The emphasis is now put on the legal aspects of the project. These include the *authorization* process that is the government's responsibility, then led by *Călin Popescu Tăriceanu*; *investigating* the legality of certain decisions made by the National Agency for Mineral Resources (*ANRM*), the *county authorities*, or the judicial struggle initiated by the opposition regarding matters involving Roşia Montană's archaeological heritage (*Court of law, Adjournment, Carnic, Archeology, Archeological discharge*).

This type of discourse is also maintained in 2006, mainly regarding obtaining the Ministry of the Environment's authorization (*Sulfina Barbu, Environmental Ministry, Environmental Impact Assessment, Planning Certificate*). In the 2006 articles, critical reference to the mining company's publicity campaign, launched in the same year, is particularly emblematic. To oppose this publicity, Formula As promoted events organized in relation to the Save Roşia Montană campaign (*Hay-Festival*).

In 2007, Formula As' message was again focused on environmental arguments, more specifically the danger of using cyanide to extract gold and appeals to national and European officials to have it banned. In 2008, the court battle over Roşia Montană and the political context are frequent subjects of Formula As articles.

In 2009, promotion of Roşia Montană as a place resurfaced, made possible especially by supporting its historical heritage, seen as a true source of development. Roşia Montană's "archeological treasure" is the key to the area's development through tourism. Formula As was still reporting on Roşia Montană's people who refused to sell and leave their home. Again, the subject of national identity is upheld ("Through Roşia Montană, they are really selling Romania", asserts the headline of an interview published in 2009).

In 2010, the problematisation of of economic gain was typical (in reaction, of course, to the mining company's PR campaign launched in 2009 that emphasizes the project's economic benefits for Romania). Again in 2010, Romania's relations with Hungary in the context of trans-border issues with regard to the project were still present in Formula As' articles.

Beyond simply observing the specificities of Formula As' position year-by-year, this summarized inventory of specific words led us to identify the discursive strategy of a media player that throughout the conflict, took on a role of active involvement and was an agent in constructing and transmitting the opposition's representations of Roşia Montană and the gold-mining project. We could say that after three years of reporting on the case, objectification and anchoring were emphasized, which are fundamental processes in the construction of a social representation. Once created and transmitted, the social representations of Roşia Montană generated a context of reference for Formula As' reports on the issue in the following years, as Moscovici (1994) pointed out when he wrote about the potential of social representations to become a context for communication. This is why, years later, the articles typically referred to the legal and political fight to stop the project, to the extralocal players,

and less to Roşia Montană as a town and a community. After the victory in court in 2008, the opposition was once again provoked by the return of a campaign to promote the mining project in 2009, and Formula As' articles became what they were in the beginning.

### 4.3.2.2  Ziua newspaper

The Roşia Montană issue became a constant focus in Ziua's articles from 2002. Before that year, only 5 articles were dedicated to the topic, two in 1998, just one in 2000 and again two in 2001. Ziua published no articles about Roşia Montană in 1999. The missing data from the year 2009 does not mean that Roşia Montană was an absent topic, but that, as we previously mentioned, due to financial difficulties this newspaper ceased to appear in printed format in 2010 and the electronic archive was no longer available since then, so that we were not able to download articles published in 2009 in the second phase of data collection.
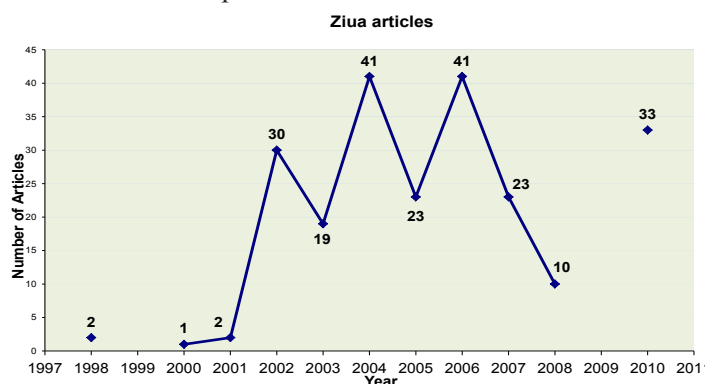


**Figure 24. Annual distribution of Ziua articles on Roşia Montană**

### 4.3.2.2.1  *Thematic nuclei in Ziua's articles*

The map in Figure 25 is the result of multidimensional scaling of 70 thematic nuclei, identified by hierarchical clustering of the key-terms in the first phase of co-word analysis. Compared to the MDS map of thematic nuclei in Formula As, we notice that on this map contains less dominant words. This may suggest that Ziua gave to same importance to each sub-theme when presenting the case.

When writing about the Roşia Montană gold mine project, Ziua's journalists wrote mainly about the effects of the mine's construction on the environment, and considered the use of cyanide as its most controversial aspect. The thematic nuclei *Cyanide, Substance, Baia Mare, Tailings Pond, Water, Technology, Tisa* or *Environment* are all very close to the nuclei *The Project* and *Company*. In its view, this is a real *danger* implied by the gold-mine. The "cyanide issue" is also referred to when writing about the relationship between Romania and its neighboring country, Hungary. If we move to the upper left corner of the MDS map, we observe that the mining project is viewed as a clashing object (*War*) for which the *decision* of the Romanian authorities and that of the judicial courts is required.
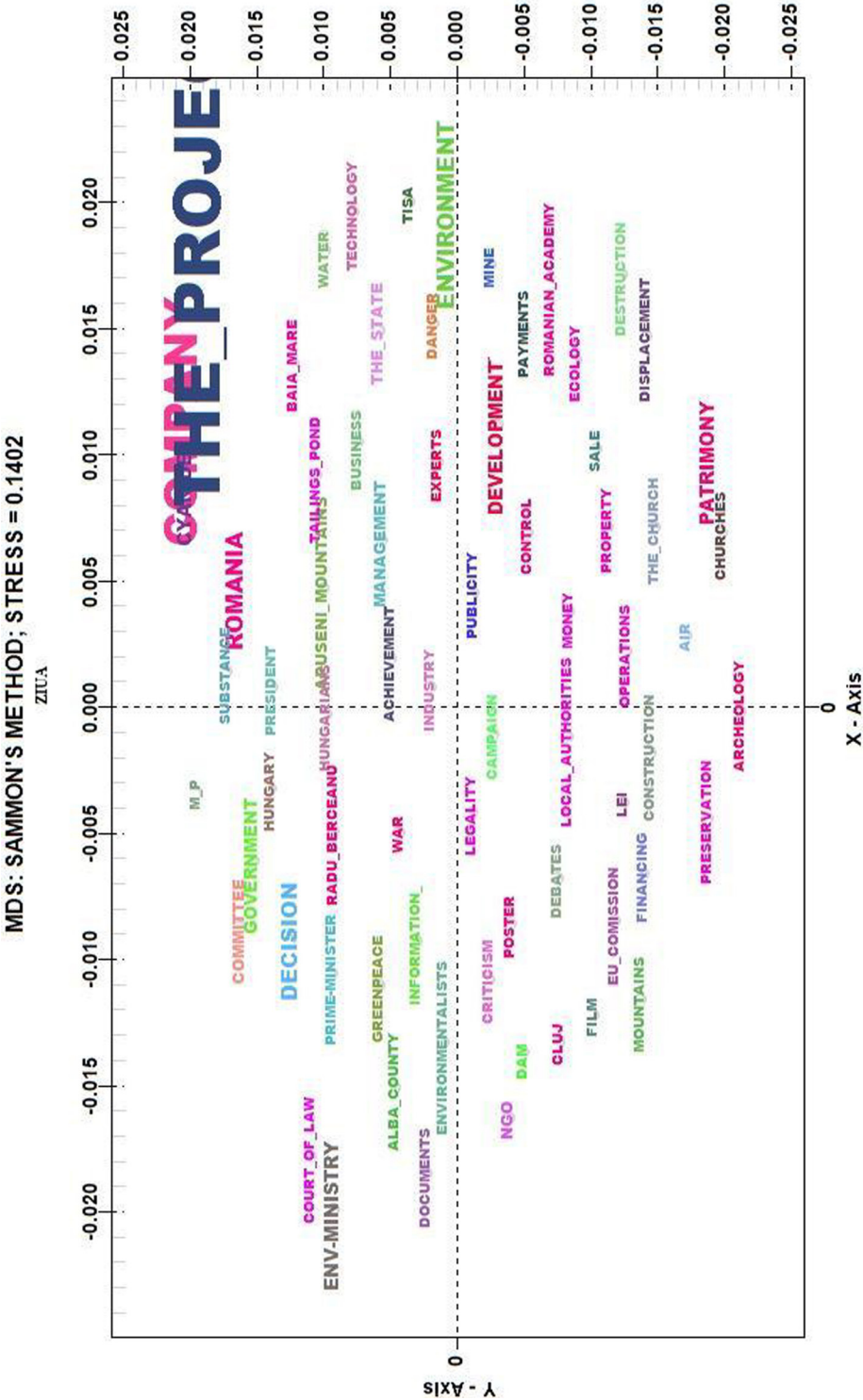
**Figure 25. MDS Map with the thematic nuclei in Ziua articles**

Also, as we have already observed from the results of the previous analysis (see Section 4.3.1.3 of this chapter), the newspaper Ziua granted significant space to discussions about the company and the economic aspects of the mining project, but also to the potential environmental hazard in relation to the use of cyanide. The thematic nucleus *Development* is surrounded on the map by nuclei like *Environment, Danger, Experts, Romanian Academy, Control*, *Ecology*, which may suggest that in Ziua's discourse, the opposition economy vs. ecology is important when presenting the case of Roşia Montană. Also, the relationship between business and the state is outlined in this newspaper.

Regarding the local aspects, the articles focused on the population's expropriation and the destruction of important heritage, as a direct result of the mine's construction. But the newspaper also wrote about Roşia Montană's merchandising potential as a source of revenue for the local population.

Ziua generally paid a lot of attention to the opposition, identified as *Environmentalist, Greenpeace, NGO, The Church, Romanian Academy*. What is interesting is that their location on the map differs. For example, *Greenpeace* and *environmentalists* were mentioned mainly when writing about the legal aspects the project entails. Other institutional opponents, like *The Church*, the *Romanian Academy* were mainly mentioned when the focus was on the local aspects of the mine's construction (placed in the lower right corner of the map). Thematic nuclei in the lower left corner are suggestive of the voice Ziua gave to criticism raised by the project's opposition.

### 4.3.2.2.2 Particularities in Ziua's discourse about Roşia Montană.

The 30 most over- and under-used words in Ziua newspaper are shown in Table 14. Compared to all the other samples, the articles published in Ziua focused more on the controversial aspects of the mine construction project, mostly regarding the use of cyanide (*Cyanide, Technology, Toxicity, Consequences, Hungary*), and the authorization procedures (*Environmental Impact Assessment, Environmental Ministry, Environmental Permit, Standards*). What is also important to note is the fact that Ziua's articles devoted significantly more space to the institutional actors involved in the conflict over Roşia Montană, the company on one side (*Gabriel Resources, Shares*), and various local, national and international organizations on the other (*Alburnus Maior, Romanian Academy, Greenpeace, Protest, Campaign, Poster*). On the contrary, Ziua's articles referred significantly less to the local aspects, i.e. the village and community of Roşia Montană. We can say that the social object "Roşia Montană" represented in the articles published in the nationwide daily Ziua is essentially a controversial issue regarding the gold mine construction project. Moreover, in Ziua's articles the controversy over Roşia Montană is de-localized, represented as occuring rather on national or supranational level.

**Table 14. Over- and Under-used words in Ziua**

| OVER-USED WORDS | CHI² | UNDER-USED WORDS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gabriel_Resources | 261.39 | Local_Authorities | 85.90 |
| Exploitation | 162.69 | Houses | 78.81 |
| Cyanide_ | 154.84 | People | 56.20 |
| The_Project | 147.21 | Life | 55.76 |
| Romanian_Academy | 120.10 | Mountains | 50.83 |
| Greenpeace | 106.09 | Motzi | 43.46 |
| Press_Release | 100.91 | Miner | 42.71 |
| Newmont_Mining | 90.69 | Children | 41.74 |
| Alburnus_Maior | 82.73 | Tourism | 38.37 |
| Traian_Basescu | 74.84 | Community | 32.86 |
| Shares | 62.03 | Work | 32.02 |
| Protest | 56.72 | Defense | 31.54 |
| Technology | 51.87 | Sale | 30.51 |
| Silver_ | 49.32 | Hope | 30.39 |
| Toxicity | 48.32 | Fight | 30.36 |
| Consequences | 46.00 | God | 29.67 |
| Rapport | 45.50 | Galleries | 29.37 |
| Poster | 44.73 | Beauty | 28.58 |
| PRM | 42.63 | The_People | 28.39 |
| Standards | 38.33 | Romanians | 25.97 |
| Env_Impact_Assessm | 37.00 | Development | 24.92 |
| Campaign | 36.98 | Mining_Ind | 23.22 |
| Env-Ministry | 36.76 | Priest | 23.17 |
| Achievement | 34.96 | Loss | 23.13 |
| Radu_Berceanu | 34.89 | Foreign | 22.52 |
| Information_ | 34.48 | Alba_Iulia | 22.25 |
| Hungary | 32.90 | Poverty | 22.03 |
| Impact | 31.58 | Dacia | 21.98 |
| Population | 31.06 | Park | 21.90 |
| Env_Permit | 30.92 | Apuseni_Mountains | 20.62 |

*4.3.2.2.3      Changes in the discourse about Roşia Montană in Ziua articles.*

The different nuances in Ziua's discourse about Roşia Montană over the last decade were observed with help from specificity analysis run in T-Lab for the subset of Ziua articles. Table 15 shows the first 20 over-used words in the Ziua articles each year, starting with 2002.

Roşia Montană did not constitute an important subject for Ziua's journalists before 2002, when the opposition became more noticeable. The few articles published before this year in Ziua are nevertheless very different regarding the attitude towards the possibility of gold mining by a foreign investor in Roşia Montană. The first two articles collected for our analysis, both from the year 1998, are truly

**Table 15. First 20 over-used words in Ziua articles for each year**

| 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|---|---|---|---|
| World_Bank | Romanian_Academy | Churches | Alburnus_Maior |
| PRM | Trade_Union | Adrian_Nastase | Env_Permit |
| Police | Committee | Danger | Monitoring |
| Motzi | Campeni | The_Church | Hay-Festival |
| Residents | Locality | Scientist | Attractiveness |
| Negociation | Miner | March | Prize |
| Archeology | Residents | Death | Concert |
| Lease | Lificiu_Petru | Ecosystem | Neighbor |
| Museum_ | March | Greenpeace | Science_ |
| Financing | Local_Authorities | Population | Impact |
| PER | Analysis | Priest | Consultation |
| Future | School_ | Water | Frank_Timis |
| Illegality | Research_ | Displacement | Court_of_Law |
| Env_Protection | Rosia_Montana | E_U | Chief |
| Property | Parliament | Europe | Wood |
| Houses | Science_ | Benefits | Archeology |
| Banking_Syst | Benefits | Life | The_Project |
| Research_ | Aries | Courage | Destruction |
| Digging | Pug-Puz | Salaries | Adjournment |
| Construction | Infrastructure | Business | Border |

| 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gabriel_Resources | Adjournment | Interdiction | Videanu_Adriean |
| Newmont_Mining | George_Soros | M_P | Resolution |
| E_I_A | Attila_Korodi | Cyanide_ | Ministry_of_Culture |
| Poster | Authorization | Law | Planning_Certificate |
| Sulfina_Barbu | Alan_Hill | UDMR | Patrimony |
| Film | Icomos | Psd | Eu_Parliament |
| Debates | Village | A-N_R_M | Substance |
| Publicity | Planning_Certificate | Cancellation | Carnic |
| Campaign | Procedure | Pol_Party | Mining_Ind |
| LIES | LAW | Industry | Interdiction |
| Landscape | Court_of_Law | Committee | Unesco |
| Studies | UDMR | Court_of_Law | Decision |
| Information_ | Hungarians | Directive | Crisis |
| Television | Demolition | Haiduc_Ionel | Ministry-of-Economy |
| County_Authorities | Disappearance | Parliament | Trust |
| C_N_A | Interdiction | Decision | Cancellation |
| Traian_Basescu | Illness | Mining_Licence | Technology |
| Answer | Poverty | Park_ | Analysis |
| Historic_Center | Legality | Friendship | Cyanide_ |
| Architecture | Certificate | Mountains | Trip |

disclosures after journalistic investigations. The obtention of the license for the exploration and the exploitation of the gold and silver resources in Roşia Montană by Gabriel Resources were considered *at the edge of the law*, and the ins and outs of the business as well as the involvement of the state authorities were exposed to the public. Both articles were part of a series regarding the involvement of state-owned mining companies in unprofitable businesses for the Romanian state. It is interesting to see how, in two days, the headlines about Roşia Montană's gold deposits shifted from "The gold in the Apuseni Mountains in the hands of foreigners" (Ziua, 10th May 1998), to "The gold in the Apuseni Mountains in the hands of crooks" (Ziua, 12th May 1998). Thus, the early days of Romanian capitalism are described in very critical terms.

The tone changed entirely, becoming one of approval of the possibility of gold exploitation in Roşia Montană by a foreign investor. The headline of the only article published in 2000 is "The capitalists dig out the gold from below us. Romania lies on the largest gold mine in Europe"; the content of this article presents the project for the exploitation of Roşia Montană's deposits by a Romanian-Canadian joint venture, as an unproblematic and "interesting project". Ziua does not present the relocation of the Roşia Montană village as a subject of discord in 2000. The same tone is also kept in the articles from 2001, which mainly present the economic implications of the proposed project.

From the year 2002, articles dealing with Roşia Montană's exploitation project began to multiply. The company's attempts to launch the mine's construction occupy almost exclusively the 30-article corpus. These articles include subjects such as obtaining financial support (*World bank, Banking system, Financing*); the preparation of the area by conducting archaeological research (*Archeology, Museum, Digging*); the start of the relocation process of Roşia Montană's residents, through buying houses and properties by the company. However, from 2002 the construction of the Roşia Montană mine was presented as problematic, especially in articles that report on the steps taken by some Romanian political parties to block the project on the grounds that national resources should not be alienated (*PRM*, Great Romania Party, known as a nationalist party) or that the environment needs protection (*PER*, Romanian Ecologist Party).

Articles published in 2003 that report on the project's local implications are not very different from those published in the previous year. They are, however, set apart by reports on the involvement of certain institutions, especially the Romanian Academy, in the debate about the Roşia Montană project (*Romanian Academy, Parliament, Trade Union*). But in general, this newspaper's attitude towards the envisaged project was neutral in the two years that the subject matter of Roşia Montană first entered public debate.

This attitude changed radically in 2004, when we could say that the subject matter of the mine construction in Roşia Montană started to be a "case" for Ziua. During this year, the newspaper resumed its journalistic investigations on "The Roşia Montană affair". The mining project was then described as a *danger* for Roşia Montană's environment and community, but also as bringing too little profit

to the Romanian state. Its serious implications, the demolition of churches, the relocation of the population and the destruction of the ecosystem are all placed in the foreground, next to the actors explicitly engaged in the fight against it (*The Church, Greenpeace, Scientists*). The Roşia Montană subject matter was sometimes associated to Romania's integration into the European Union, because the EU negotiations were concluded that same year; the subject matter was exploited/used by the opposition who often presented the project as an obstacle in the path of integrating the EU and who called for the expertise of European authorities.

In the following years, Ziua's articles regularly reported on the "scandal" surrounding the project in its various aspects: environmental, economic, political, and legal. The articles reported on the actions of the opposition, on the court decisions regarding the project, on the Romanian and foreign position on the project, on the media publicity campaign launched by the mining company and on the developments in the project's authorization process. In 2006 and 2007, the articles also focused on the project's impact on Roşia Montană, particularly regarding the disappearance of the place due to the relocation of people who had decided to leave, and regarding the destruction of houses with historic value. In 2008, the articles mainly reported on the opposition's efforts to pass a law prohibiting the use of cyanide in mining as well as regarding the attitude of political parties towards this matter. Ziua journalists' attitude regarding this issue was straightforward, in favor of banning cyanide use, demonstrated by headlines such as "PSD and PD, cyanide-loving parties", "Lobby for cyanide", or "Dangerous games with cyanide".

Ziua journalists maintained their disapproval of the Roşia Montană gold-mine project by continuing to publish their articles on Ziua's website (ziuaonline.ro). The project-cyanide association practically became a leitmotif in the 33 articles published in 2010 that we selected for analysis. The position of certain politicians or public institutions in favor of the project was strongly criticized ("The Ministry of economy loves cyanide", "Closer and closer to cyanide: The Ministry of the Environment will authorize the dams in Roşia Montană" are 2 headlines suggestive of the contents of the 2010 articles). The project was presented as being in conflict with the European Parliament Resolution on banning the use of cyanide in mining and the backbone of contention in relations between Romania and Hungary. Developments in the authorization process or in the legal battle between the opponents were reported in the same critical tone towards the project. Although references to the economic *crisis* were significantly more numerous in 2010, this did not cause the former Ziua journalists to change their view and see the project as Roşia Montană's salvation. On the contrary, they continued to regularly report on the opposition's actions and to consider tourism as an alternative for the development of the area.

Provided that the subset of articles from the Ziua newspaper analyzed here is complete and uniform, we can suggest conclusions concerning the policy of this newspaper on the matter of Roşia Montană: after a hesitating attitude towards the project in the early years, starting in 2004, Ziua's position was clearly opposed to the mining project. For Ziua, it was rather "the case" than "the place" that was thematized. In the social representation of the Roşia Montană issue, controversy

occupies a central place, even if the dominant reasons for the debate changed over time.

### 4.3.2.3    Newspaper România Liberă

România Liberă's (hereafter: RL) electronic archive was unable to identify articles on Roşia Montană published before 2005. In the figure 26, we observe the annual distribution of the RL articles collected for our analysis.What stands out first is the increased number of articles dedicated to the issue of Roşia Montană in 2006. We will explain the specificities of that year's articles in the following sections.

#### 4.3.2.3.1        *Thematic nuclei in the România Liberă newspaper*

Figure 27 shows the multidimensional scaling map including 67 thematic nuclei, identified by hierarchical clustering of the key-terms in RL. As was the case with
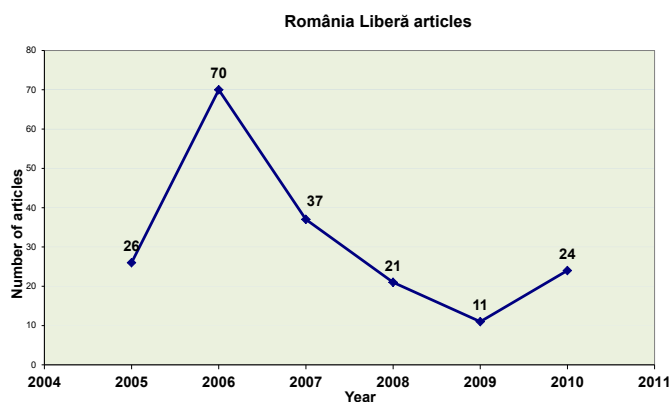


**Figure 26. Annual distribution of România Liberă articles on Roşia Montană**

the other national daily newspaper discussed in the previous sections, there are fewer dominant thematic nuclei in RL than in Formula As. The dominant themes identified here (placed in the upper left corner of the map) refer to the gold mine construction project in Roşia Montană and to the company it originated from. If we look more in detail at the upper left corner of the map, we notice the similarity between these thematic nuclei and those referring to the economic aspects of mine building in Roşia Montană.  Unlike the articles in Ziua, where the project was often described in relation to its effects on the environment, the mine project was described in RL mainly in relation to its economic outcomes (*Development, Money, Payments, Dollars, Investors, Employment, Work*). Although the main focus of RL's articles was the economic aspects of the project, the RL articles from the period 2005-2010 generally corresponded to the evolution of the Roşia Montană issue. An important theme identified by the analysis referred to legal aspects: the court battle for the start or stop of the project, or the authorization and decision-making processes concerning the project (the lower left corner of the map).
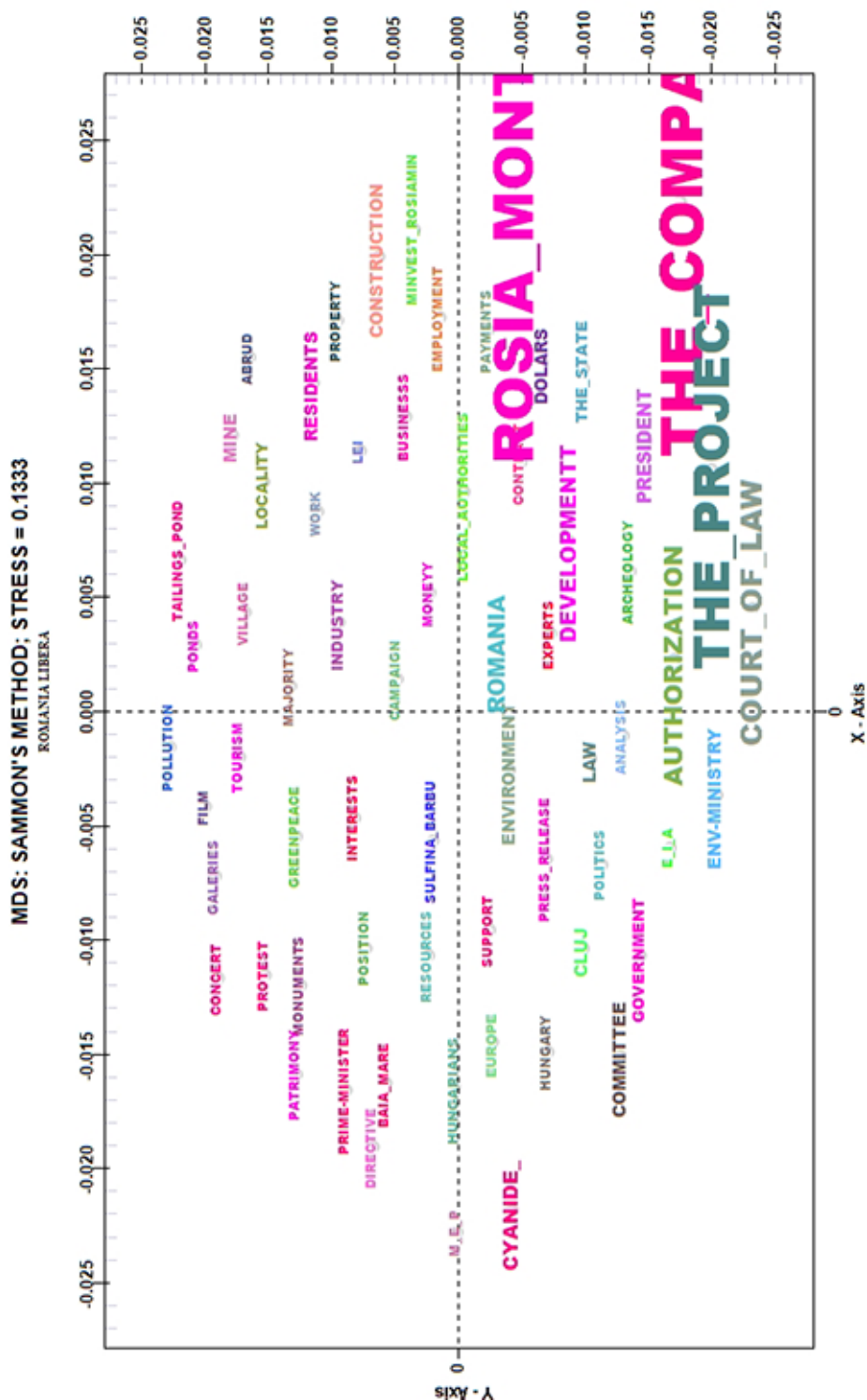
**Figure 27. MDS Map with the thematic nuclei in România Liberă articles**

On the right side of the MDS map two isotopies can be distinguished: on the upper side, one referring to the place and the community of Roşia Montană. What is noteworthy is that the key terms referring to the historic value of the place (*Monuments, patrimony, galleries*) are next to the thematic nuclei *industry, mine, business*, *funds*, thus suggesting that, for the RL journalists, the image of the Roşia Montană village is more subtle than, for example, the one suggested by Formula As. In the lower right corner, key words that refer to the protest against the mining project can be found. On the one hand, there are references to the reasons for opposing the construction of the mine (*Cyanide, Risk, Pollution, Tailings Pond*), to some of the institutional players who opposed the project (*Greenpeace*) and to their actions (*protest, concert*), on the other hand. It is worth noting that, unlike the newspaper Ziua, the matter of cyanide use was mainly approached from its political point of view, the newspaper referring to the European legislation on the matter (*Directive*) and to the involvement of decision-makers in the Roşia Montană issue. The position on the map of the thematic nucleus *interests* (maybe not the most fortunate translation of the Romanian word ''interes'', whose plural form in Romanian has negative connotations) may offer a key to understanding RL's position with regard to the project's opposition: RL's articles have often described it as being fuelled by obscure intentions, not necessarily of ecological origin, thus painting the picture of an attack by the mining company.

*4.3.2.3.2*        *Particularities in Romania Liberă discourse about Roşia Montană*

The 30 most over- and under-used words in the România Liberă newspaper are shown in Table 16 on the next page. The Specificity analysis showed that compared to all other samples of articles in our study, România Liberă's articles focused especially on the economic aspects of the mining project and on the company that launched it, and paid less attention to the place and community of Roşia Montană or to the institutional players who opposed to the project.

Unlike in Ziua, the other nationwide daily  analyzed, the controversial aspects did not stand out in RL. On the contrary, we could say that at least from 2005 onwards, RL's articles sought to familiarize its readers with developments in the Roşia Montană *case,* whether they were about the company's management and its relations with the local authorities, about the legal action initiated by the opposition or by the company, about the evolution of the project's authorization process, or about the influence of this case on bilateral relations with Hungary. For România Liberă, the Roşia Montană ore exploitation project was essentially not a controversial case, but a case to be solved, one way or another.

**Table 16. Over- and Under-used words in România Liberă**

| OVER-USED WORDS | CHI² | UNDER-USED WORDS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alan_Hill | 296.42 | History | 46.22 |
| Gabriel_Resources | 162.97 | Destruction | 43.23 |
| Dismissal | 125.34 | Churches | 42.87 |
| The_Company | 108.85 | Romanian_Academy | 35.5 |
| The_Project | 108.14 | Houses | 34.08 |
| Management | 88.07 | Motzi | 31.79 |
| Deva | 86.96 | People | 31.78 |
| Shareholders | 85.03 | Patrimony | 29.44 |
| Alba_County | 67.02 | Children | 28.33 |
| Minvest_Rosiamin | 62.01 | God | 27.63 |
| Adjournment | 60.42 | Newspaper | 27.19 |
| Investment_ | 58.7 | Life | 24.24 |
| Env_Impact_Assessment | 55.42 | Romanians | 22.96 |
| Construction | 53.27 | Lies | 21.47 |
| RMGC | 50.43 | Corruption | 20.76 |
| Virgil_Narita | 47.12 | The_Church | 20.7 |
| Dollars | 43.1 | Forest | 20.09 |
| Authorization | 41.1 | Priest | 19.73 |
| Documents | 37.53 | Poison | 19.48 |
| Planning_Certificate | 36.48 | Landscape | 18.8 |
| Ponds | 34.8 | Tradition | 18.6 |
| Closure | 32.15 | The_Elders | 18.24 |
| Court_of_Law | 29.19 | Water | 17.73 |
| Accusation | 28.06 | Beauty | 17.51 |
| Hungarians | 27.55 | Power | 17.36 |
| Exploitation | 27.06 | Displacement | 16.25 |
| County_Authorities | 25.48 | The_People | 15.74 |
| Hungary | 24.25 | Disaster | 14.47 |
| Procedure | 23.56 | Fight | 14.29 |
| Discontent | 22.64 | Mass-Media | 14.1 |

### 4.3.2.3.3   *Changes in discourse about Roşia Montană in România Liberă articles*

Let us remind the reader that the lists of over-used words from each year were obtained by comparing RL's articles from one year to the rest of its articles, in an analysis emphasizing differences between keywords. By comparing the words typically used each year, one can determine which aspects were highlighted by this newspaper over six years, while also taking into account the results presented in the previous section on the specificity of RL's articles overall. The lists of the first 20 over-used words each year in RL's articles are presented in Table 17.

**Table 17. First 20 over-used words in România Liberă articles for each year**

| 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|---|---|---|
| Dollars | Debates | Planning_Certificate |
| Ore_ | Campaign | Certificate |
| Management | Image | Monuments |
| Investigation | E_I_A | Declassification |
| Directive | The_Public | Adjournment |
| Arch_Discharge | Film | Priest |
| Deva | Concert | Ministry_of_Culture |
| Museum_ | Work | Law |
| Gold_Reserve | Gabriel_Resources | Legality |
| Alan_Hill | Promises | A-N_R_M |
| Frank_Timis | Alba_County | Digging |
| Consequences | Problems | Letter |
| Building_Site | Risk | Attila_Korodi |
| Copper | Studies | Cuprumin |
| Transparency | Consultation | Churches |
| Capital | Ion_Dumitrel | PSD |
| Investment_ | Music_ | Virgil_Narita |
| Gabriel_Resources | Referendum | Business |
| Production | The_Company | Defense |
| Exploitation | Management | Duty |

| 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|
| Ponds | Videanu_Adriean | Cyanide |
| Galleries | Emil_Boc | Laszlo_Borbely |
| Property | Mistake | M_E_P |
| Dismissal | Budget | Romania |
| Wax_Tablets | Operations | Resolution |
| Court_of_Law | Park_ | Interdiction |
| Lease | Traian_Basescu | Eu_Comission |
| Neighborhood | Euro | Mining_Ind |
| Age | Minister | Gold |
| Roman_Imp | Danube | EU_Parliament |
| Tailings | Mircea_Hava | Analysis |
| Sale | Government | Chemical_Plant |
| Wood | PDL | Jobs |
| Env_Rehabilitation | Strategy | PNL |
| Transylvania | Resources | Economy |
| Adjournment | Science_ | E_U |
| Tailings_Pond | Bucharest | Baia_Mare |
| Stone | Uniqueness | Industry |
| Museum_ | Haiduc_Ionel | Unesco |
| Minerals | Poster | Technology |

What sets the 2005 articles apart from the rest is the focus on the mining project, described mainly as an investment for the Apuseni Mountain region (*Dollars, Capital, Investment, Gold reserve, Ore, Production, Exploitation*), and on the company that launched it. Many articles published in this year reported management changes within the company or the various statements made by its CEOs, particularly regarding the project's authorization process. The tone of this year's articles was quite neutral, while the mining company stood out and the opposition fell into the background. In order to keep up appearances of neutrality regarding the project, this year's articles usually ended with the following remark: "The investment is opposed both by a part of the region's population, and by environmental organizations or members of the Romanian Academy. They claim that the project *may have* a negative impact on the archaeological vestiges, on the population and on the entire Apuseni Mountain environment".

The specificity of RL's position from 2006 is determined by words referring to the actions or the media campaign launched by the mining company the previous year, and continued throughout the year 2006 (*Campaign, Images, Debates*) and counteracted by the opposition's initiatives to transmit their messages (*Film, Concert, Music*). Otherwise, the rest of the typical words still reveal RL's interest in the mining company either in its efforts to start the project (*public consultations, Environmental Impact Assessment, Studies*), or in its relations, particularly with the local authorities (*Ion Dumitrel, Alba County, Referendum*).

In 2007 and 2008, RL's articles expressed a clear position opposed to the project. The legal aspects concerning the project are more evident. Apart from reports concerning the development of the authorization process, RL's articles now question the legality of the permit obtained for the start of the mine or even the exploitation license obtained by the company. That same year, RL paid more attention to the opposition, relaying its statements and reporting on its actions. In 2008, RL's discourse was set apart by emphasizing Roșia Montană's historical relics (*Galleries, Wax tablets, Roman Empire, Museum*).

In 2009, however, the critical tone about the project changed. Typically, this year's articles presented the Roșia Montană issue as being intensely politicized (see the names of certain top politicians mentioned in the list of typical words from this year), and needing a political decision. But little attention was paid to the case in 2009; only 11 of RL's articles focused on the Roșia Montană issue.

In 2010, slightly more attention was paid to the issue. Compared to articles published in other years, these articles stood out because they addressed the cyanide issue, particularly regarding European debates about banning cyanide use in the mining industry. RL's articles reported on the different institutional players' positions on this matter and on the effects of their decisions on the construction of the Roșia Montană mine. But unlike the articles in Ziua, the tone of RL's articles remains neutral regarding this issue.

Overall, România Liberă reported on the evolution of the Roșia Montană issue, with greater emphasis on the project's authorization process and on the

company that launched it. The newspaper's position on the prospect of mine construction in Roşia Montană was not always easily identifiable. By observing typical words used each year, RL's attitude to the mining project seemed rather unfavorable between 2007 and 2008, but the detailed reading of all articles outside this period is necessary to draw conclusions as to the newspaper's overall position on the Roşia Montană issue. We were surprised to discover that apart from the neutral articles that offered information on this case, the newspaper also published articles that very same year that were somewhat favorable to the start of the mine's construction (which insisted for instance on the region's need for development, on the benefits of the project), but also articles that were obviously opposed to the project (especially on account of heritage destruction and of too few benefits for the Romanian state).

### 4.3.2.4    Newspaper Unirea

Unirea is a newspaper published in Alba Iulia, the main town from Alba county when Roşia Montană lies. Articles about Roşia Montană in its electronic archive go back as far as September 2006 The yearly distribution of the 177 articles retrieved from the local newspaper Unirea since 2006 can be found in the Figure 28.
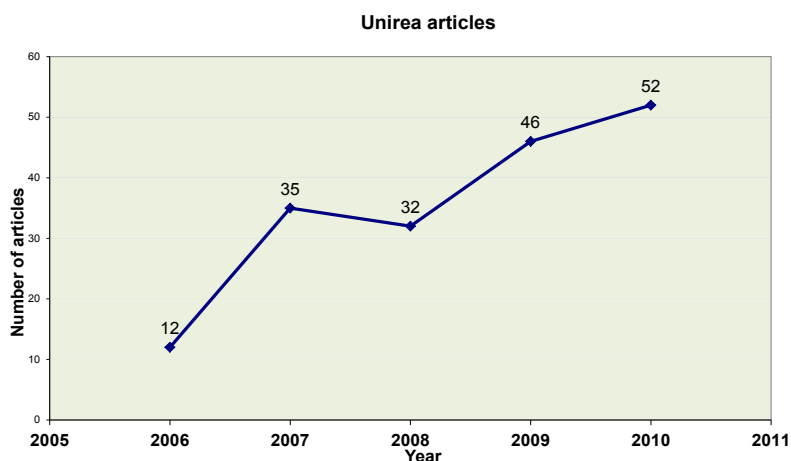


**Figure 28. Annual distribution of Unirea articles on Roşia Montană**

*4.3.2.4.1        Thematic nuclei in the Unirea newspaper*

Figure 29 shows the multidimensional scaling map containing 70 thematic nuclei identified by hierarchical clustering of Unirea's key-terms in phase one of co-word analysis.

The dominant thematic nuclei can be found on the right side of the map. In the upper right corner, thematic nuclei referring to Roşia Montană as a place and a community can be found. Economic and social aspects were dominant when

**Figure 29. MDS map with the thematic nuclei in UNIREA articles**

local journalists referred to Roşia Montană's community, mainly described in relation to the mining industry. Topics such as *Unemployment, Jobs, Benefits, Employment, Problems,* and *Solution* describe the reality of a community facing economic problems that could be solved by mining. Another dominant theme is the *Displacement* of Roşia Montană's inhabitants, which is no longer presented as a tragedy for the locals, but as a benefit; some of them were to move to a newly built district in the city of Alba Iulia.  Some of the themes identified in Unirea's articles also referred to the historic fallout of gold exploitation in Roşia Montană, which was also underlined by writing about the company's activities (*Museum, Restoration, Patrimony*).

The dominant thematic nuclei in the lower part of the map form another isotopy that refers to the mining project and the economic players behind it (*RMGC- Roşia Montană Gold Corporation, the company*).  When referring to the Project, Unirea's articles reported on the anticipated investment (*Dollars, Price, Mining license*), and described the players involved, (*Canada, Business*) as well as their relationship with the state authorities (*Government, Contract*).

Similarly, another dominant thematic nucleus refers to the legal battle spawned by the Project; Unirea's articles reported every time on the court decisions following lawsuits filed by each side over the course of the Roşia Montană conflict. On the upper section of the map, a series of themes identified by co-word analysis of Unirea's articles refers to local or national decision makers (*Parliament, Authorities, County authorities, Bucharest, Institution, Documents*) and to the influence of various political processes (*Elections*) on decisions surrounding the mining project. The issues the autothirities must decide upon are also present in the same area of the map (*Dam, Environmental Permit*).

Even though it did not occupy a central place, the controversy surrounding the mining project was also present in the pages of this local newspaper. The publication referred to the players opposed to the construction of the mine (*NGO, Environmentalists, Opposition, Experts*) and reported on the actions they took with in view of promoting their messages (*Concert, Letters, Fight*). In the upper left corner of the map, thematic nuclei reveal the reasons for opposing the Roşia Montană mining project. Interestingly, these reasons were approached together, whether about the environmental risks (Cyanide, Baia Mare, Accident, Chemical plant, Pollution, Tailings Pond), or the destruction of national heritage (History, Archeology, Patrimony).

### 4.3.2.4.2      *Specificity of the Unirea discourse about Roşia Montană*

As expected, analysis of key-terms in comparison with the other samples showed that Unirea focused on the thematization of certain aspects of life in Roşia Montană commune. The first section of typically used words (in Table 18) includes references to the local authorities (*Local authorities, Furdui Eugen*, mayor of Roşia Montană from 2008 to the present day) and to various festive events organized in recent years with the help of the mining company (*Celebration, Miners Day*). Also, Unirea's articles often referred to the relocation of a part of Roşia Montană's population to

the newly built Recea district in Alba Iulia. However, let us note that the articles reported mainly on Roşia Montană's institutional players, representatives of the local administration or the mining companies (*Minvest Rosiamin*, the state mine that had exploited Roşia Montană's deposits until the ceasing of its activity in 2006; *RMGC,* the joint venture that wants to carry out the controversial mining project), and less on the Roşia Montan's general population. Local opposition to the Project, supported by the Alburnus Maior association, was also somehow overlooked in Unirea's pages. Typically, Unirea's journalists also reported on the developments of the mining project authorization process or on the court decisions regarding this case.

**Table 18. Over - and Under - used words in Unirea**

| OVER-USED WORDS | CHI² | UNDER-USED WORDS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Local_Authorities | 242.84 | Destruction | 90.65 |
| Celebration | 241.87 | Romanians | 46.26 |
| Capital | 224.26 | Romanian_Academy | 45.83 |
| Commune | 211.22 | History | 42.31 |
| Eugen_Nicolaescu | 155.27 | Europe | 38.51 |
| Recea | 152.09 | Disaster | 36.95 |
| Mining_Ind | 131.29 | Mountains | 31.4 |
| Furdui_Eugen | 117.63 | Publicity | 30.38 |
| Investors | 116.58 | Population | 28.88 |
| Community | 109.71 | Fight | 28.81 |
| Court_of_Law | 97.89 | Hungary | 27.39 |
| Miners_Day | 97.21 | Threat | 27.34 |
| RMGC | 94.32 | Government | 26.33 |
| Neighborhood | 76.43 | Landscape | 23.7 |
| Investment_ | 72.43 | Disappearance | 20.18 |
| Dragos_Tanase | 60.34 | Danger | 20.1 |
| Authorization | 58.76 | Gold | 19.85 |
| Alba_County | 53.49 | Corruption | 19.84 |
| Dollars | 52.15 | Archeology | 19.32 |
| Abrud | 51.64 | Salvation | 18.96 |
| Revival | 50.44 | E_U | 18.84 |
| Employment | 49.01 | The_People | 18.38 |
| Carpinis | 48.47 | Civil_Society | 17.94 |
| Alba_Iulia | 41.72 | Romania | 17.72 |
| A-N_R_M | 40.29 | Illegality | 17.71 |
| Minvest_Rosiamin | 40.01 | World_Bank | 17.5 |
| Adjournment | 39.04 | Newspaper | 17.41 |
| Miner | 38.96 | Television | 17.35 |
| Tradition | 37.47 | Galleries | 17.29 |
| Jobs | 33.16 | The_Church | 17.28 |

By comparing both lists, it becomes apparent that Unirea regards the mining project as beneficial. Roşia Montană's community is described as marked by industrial activities (*Miner, Tradition, Mining Industry*), and the investment proposed by the corporation is seen as a chance to revitalize the region's mining industry (*Revival, Employment, Jobs*). Suffice it to say that Unirea's representation of the project is that of a solution for Roşia Montană.

### 4.3.2.4.3          *Changes in Unirea's discourse about Roşia Montană*

The data collected from Unirea only allowed longitudinal analysis from September 2006. Although we cannot draw conclusions regarding how the Roşia Montană issue was represented in local newspapers in the early years of the project, we attempted to identify any changes in Unirea's discourse between 2006 and 2010, when the debate over Roşia Montană's fate extended far beyond local boundaries, using the inventory of typical words. In Table 19, the 20 most typical words in Unirea's articles are listed yearly:

**Table 19. First 20 over-used words in Unirea articles for each year**

| 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Film | County_Auth. | Park_ | Tradition | Capital |
| Hungary | Virgil_Narita | Accident | Rosia_Poieni | Restoration |
| Campaign | Adjournment | Mining_Ind | Miners_Day | Shareholders |
| Sulfina_Barbu | Ch_Plant | Parliament | Community | Investors |
| Tombs | Plan_Certificate | Law | Abrud | Videanu_Adriean |
| Greenpeace | Police | Prize | Celebration | PNL |
| Architecture | Baia_Mare | Dismissal | Miner | Court_of_Law |
| Compensations | Carnic | Explosion | Rosia_Montana | Patrimony |
| Property | Attila_Korodi | Drama | Research_ | Buildings |
| Env_Protection | Investment_ | Payments | Alba_Iulia | Business |
| Env_Permit | Chief | Work | Apuseni_Mount. | Crisis |
| Pug-Puz | Approval | Local_Auth. | Family | Europe |
| Expenditures | Elections | Signatures | Local_Auth. | Romania |
| Committee | Certificate | Student | Recea | RMGC |
| Age | Water | Furdui_Eugen | Cuprumin | Min_Economy |
| Ecologists | Authorization | Embassy | People | Eu_Parliament |
| Env-Ministry | Price | God | Copper | The_Elders |
| Banking_Syst | Tailings_Pond | Happiness | Neighborhood | M_P |
| Impact | Arch_Discharge | Children | Traian_Basescu | Experts |
| GabrielRes. | PER | Parents | Town | Economy |

What set the 2006 articles apart was mainly the emphasis on the controversy aroused by the mining project, especially on environmental grounds. Specifically, this year's articles referred to the various extralocal players who opposed the mine's construction (*Greenpeace, Environmentalists, Hungary*). This did not reoccur in the

following years. Since 2007, the specificity of Unirea's articles lay in legal aspects, either reporting on the judicial battle initiated by the opposition for the withdrawal of certain permits needed to start the mine's construction (*Archeological discharge, Planning certificate, Adjournment*), or on developments in the authorization process (*Authorization, Attila Korodi* – the then minister of the environment, *Approval*).

In 2008, the articles' specificity resided mainly in references to a parliamentary initiative to ban cyanide use in mining and to create the 'Roşia Montană natural and archaeological reserve' (neither of which actually happened), and to the reactions of certain local authorities as well as of some Roşia Montană inhabitants when faced with such proposals. The very same year, a series of articles was dedicated to the description of mining activities and to the danger it represents for human life.

Figure 28 shows an increase in articles about Roşia Montană between 2009 and 2010. However, the mining project's controversial aspects disappeared almost entirely over the course of this year. Most of the identified typical words emphasize mining as the main activity in Roşia Montană and in the neighboring Apuseni Mountain area. Furthermore, it presented the mining project as the best solution for solving the region's social problems. The mining company was systematically described in positive terms in 2009; the articles focused on its beneficial presence in community life by regularly reporting on actions designed to obtain a "social license to mine" (Solomon *et al.*, 2008). These articles could also be found in 2010. The words *Patrimony* or *Restoration*, generally used in the 2010 articles, could lead us to believe that Unirea took on themes from those who opposed the mine construction because of the destruction of the region's heritage. On the contrary, these themes appeared in articles reporting on the company's actions regarding the preservation of heritage or the restoration of houses that had been declared historical monuments, through which the mining company wanted to cleanse its image of destroyers of the region's historical values, attributed by the opposition. The evolution of the authorization process, the various statements made by Romanian politicians and the court decisions on the issue of Roşia Montană once again won the attention of local Unirea journalists. The 2010 articles are also characterized by a developmentalist position on the benefits of constructing the mine, not only for the Roşia Montană area, but also for all of Romania given the credit crunch crisis. Article headlines at the time include: "Only Roşia Montană's gold is able to bring the country out of the crisis" or "The investors at RMGC are making tempting proposals to Romania in times of crisis - 19 billion dollars in 16 years".

By comparing the content of the specific terms used by Unirea over five years, we notice how the case generated by the Roşia Montană gold mine construction plans passed from problematic to unproblematic in the representations circulated by this newspaper. The themes used in contest of the project appeared at the beginning of the analyzed time period; at the end of the time period, however, the project was approached more favorably, and the controversy surrounding the project was minimized. Moreover, when the themes cited in the opposition's fight to stop the project were still present, they were either heavily contested, or even taken lightly. This is demonstrated by the two following paragraphs in which we find the *cyanide*

theme, extracted from 2 articles from the spring of 2010. The first one questions the opposition's honesty with regard to the mining Project and cyanide use, and launches a real conspiracy theory concerning the Hungarian state's interests in the Transylvanian gold deposits:

"Everyone is an expert on football and agriculture (that is why things are going so well) and lately everyone is an expert on the Roşia Montană project, so there is no wonder that mere nobodies express their opinions on the gold of the Apuseni Mountains and the difficult life of the Motzi, although many of the "experts" on this matter have never set foot in this region and have no idea about the poverty in which the former miners and their families struggle today, even if they are standing on a mountain of gold. Apparently, the biggest specialist on this matter has become MP of Călăraşi, namely Mr. Eugen Nicolăescu who, coincidence or not, comes from the area of Târgu Mureş, the headquarters of UDMR, the biggest enemy of the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation project. The Hungarians are continually brandishing the danger of cyanide infestation as if it were a scarecrow and propose that in Romania and in the whole of Europe, cyanide-based mining be banned. However, as far as we know, there are no gold deposits in Europe that match the size of Roşia Montană's, so let's not beat about the bush; I mean, the Hungarians are hoping that one day, they will once again lay their hands on Transylvania and its gold. And then you will see how good cyanide exploitation will be and how Hungary will get rid of all that abject poverty in which it is now struggling" (newspaper Unirea, 8.03.2010).

The second one, under the headline "At Roşia Montană in the time when mining was still significant, the Motzi were curing their rheumatisms with cyanide water from the gold mines", presents the surprising and barely credible testimony of a former miner who refers to the chemical compound cyanide as a remedy and not at all as a danger for human life:

From 1941 until around 1960, Graţian Cioară worked in the Roşia Montană gold mines. In turn, he was a surface laborer, cleaner, stamp day laborer, stamp worker and miner aid. At the time he was a stamp worker (between 1945 and 1948) in the Nan Valley, Graţian Cioară told us incredible things, which he lived, and now, at the age of 83, passes them on to others: "At the stamp mills, we would wash the copper tables on which the ground ore came out. On the copper tables we would put mercury to which the gold stuck. We washed these tables with a wire brush and a cyanide solution in order to clean the gold. In large tin vessels, we would dissolve the cyanide; a piece as small as a nut. I'm telling you that, in Summer pr Winter, we washed the copper plates with our bare hands and with a wire brush covered in cyanide solution and look at me: there's nothing wrong with me now, I've got no rheumatisms, only this silicosis that I got in the mine because in the old days, we didn't work with wet drilling so we would raise so much dust that you weren't able to see more than an inch in front of you. Please believe me when I say that there were people who came to us to stick their arms and legs in that cyanide water with which we washed the plates, so that they would heal rheumatisms. I worked with cyanide and I can tell you that there's no danger unless you swallow it. Women came to us even in winter, after the pig slaughtering, to give them a dash of cyanide to add to the pork fat, instead of lye, to make laundry detergent. No one died from it", says the old man. (newspaper Unirea, 5.03.2010)

**4.3.2.5    Newspaper Informaţia de Alba**

In order to be able to compare the discourse about Roşia Montană in the newspapers published in Alba County, we also selected articles from the daily newspaper Informaţia de Alba for analysis, hereafter InfAlba (The Alba Information). The number of articles that could be included in our corpus was rather small: the newspaper's archive did not contain articles older than January 2009. Of the 84 articles analyzed, 31 were published in 2009 and 53 in 2010. Because there were only articles available for these two years, we considered that analysis of the changes in discourse over Roşia Montană in this newspaper is not appropriate.

*4.3.2.5.1        Thematic nuclei in Informaţia de Alba*

The figure 30 shows the MDS map including 42 thematic nuclei identified by the software in the articles of Informaţia de Alba after running co-word analysis and the concept mapping option.

The dominant themes in this local newspaper's articles on Roşia Montană refer to the mining project. Through their content concerning this issue, Informaţia de Alba's articles do not differ much from those written during the same period of time (2009-2010) in the other local newspaper analyzed, Unirea. Here as well, the project is described in positive terms, as a solution for the economic development of Roşia Montană, of the Apuseni Mountain region, and even of Romania. No article in this newspaper was critical of the Project or its initiator. Likewise, the controversy surrounding the Roşia Montană issue is almost entirely overlooked, the voice of those opposing the mine construction being almost non-existent in the pages of this newspaper during the time period analyzed.

Roşia Montană was described in InfAlba's articles as a community heavily dependent on the mining industry, with serious economic problems, and whose inhabitants, the miners, face unemployment, just like the majority of the population in the neighboring regions.

This community's future depends on the success of the mining Project, seen as a solution-investment. Apart from the economic aspects of the Project, InfAlba's articles present the image of an environmentally friendly mine that will solve the region's historic problem with pollution, and which respects environmental protection norms, including safe technology for cyanide use, the storage of residues resulting from the exploitation and the environmental rehabilitation at the end of the activity. Actually, these are also the main themes of the company that promotes the mining Project.

The state authorities must decide on this important investment; when it came to the authorization process, the articles took on a tone militating for a favorable decision regarding the start of the mining by state institutions (*Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Culture*). The views and statements of local or top politicians in favor of starting mining were regularly reported.
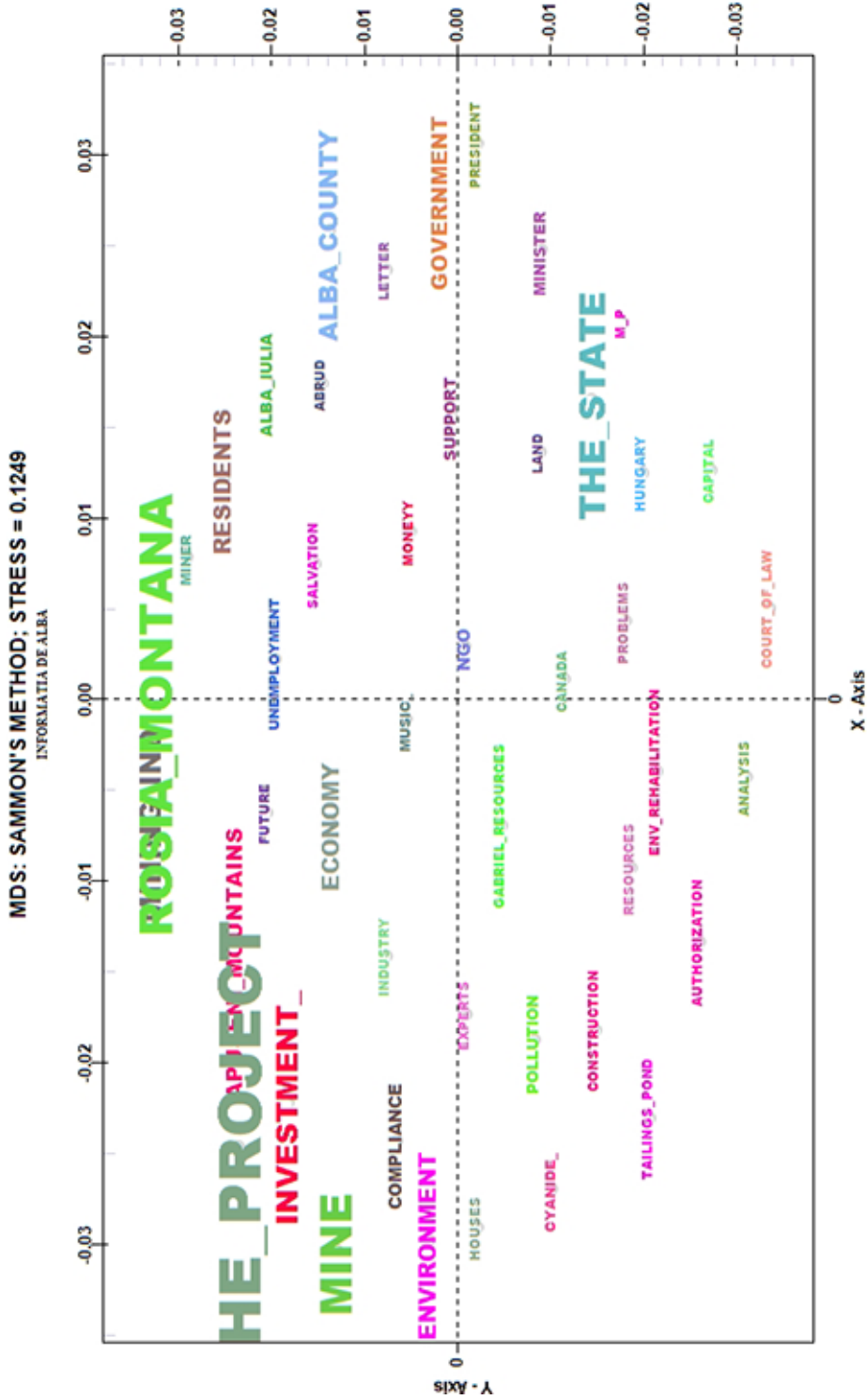
**Figure 30. MDS map with the thematic nuclei in Informaţia de Alba articles**

The words in the left column of Table 20 confirm what was previously asserted regarding the focus of InfAlba's articles on the Roşia Montană issue (See Section 4.3.1.3 in this chapter). The content of this list is almost similar to that of the over-used words in Unirea's articles, our analysis not being able to highlight important differences in the reports on this case in the two local newspapers, at least regarding the last two years we analyzed.

**Table 20. Over- and Under-used words in Informaţia de Alba**

| OVER-USED WORDS | CHI² | UNDER-USED WORDS | CHI² |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alba_County | 465.45 | Gabriel_Resources | 46.4 |
| Ion_Dumitrel | 213.63 | The_Company | 37.97 |
| Unemployment | 191.51 | Archeology | 33.35 |
| County_Authorities | 137.6 | Destruction | 26.34 |
| Dragos_Tanase | 129.78 | Displacement | 24.26 |
| Videanu_Adrien | 109.52 | Romanian_Academy | 22.48 |
| Mircea_Hava | 107.6 | Cyanide_ | 17.86 |
| Economy | 105.13 | Alburnus_Maior | 17.72 |
| Laszlo_Borbely | 102.42 | Sale | 16.79 |
| Community | 93.97 | Property | 16.28 |
| Alba_Iulia | 90.39 | Village | 15.03 |
| Mining_Ind | 77.31 | Nature | 14.96 |
| Neighborhood | 73.72 | Vestiges | 14.59 |
| Env_Rehabilitation | 67.54 | Ecology | 14.38 |
| Investment_ | 64.72 | Mountains | 14.34 |
| Furdui_Eugen | 62.78 | Protest | 13.31 |
| Miners_Day | 55.71 | Law | 12.1 |
| Crisis | 50.88 | Romanians | 11.65 |
| Tradition | 49.9 | Illegality | 11.6 |
| Concert | 45.4 | Threat | 11.2 |
| Local_Authorities | 41.15 | The_People | 10.77 |
| Music_ | 39.22 | Houses | 10.6 |
| Infrastructure | 38.1 | Payments | 10.57 |
| Exhibition | 38.06 | Arch_Discharge | 10.56 |
| UDMR | 34.89 | Motzi | 10.48 |
| Abrud | 34.81 | Television | 10.37 |
| Emil_Boc | 34.78 | E_U | 9.96 |
| Miner | 27.46 | Civil_Society | 9.79 |
| Jobs | 27.37 | Culture | 9.79 |
| Ministry_of_Economy | 26.77 | Environmentalists | 9.78 |

In the list of under-used words in the InfAlba's articles, we surprisingly observed (but in accordance with our previous analysis of the relation between thematic clusters and the newspaper variable, see section 4.3.1.3. in this chapter)

that references to the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation or to its main shareholders, Gabriel Resources, were rather sporadic. Criticism of the project (the use of cyanide, the destruction of archeological vestiges, the relocation of the population, the effects on the environment) and the plight of certain organizations (*Alburnus Maior, Romanian Academy, Environmentalists*) to stop it are specifically less present in Informaţia de Alba's articles.

After a decade of controversy around the construction of the Roşia Montană gold mine, the representation transmitted by the local Informaţia de Alba newspaper is located at one extreme, and is favorable to those who support the project's success.

## 4.4 Conclusions

The agency of the media in the construction and transmission of social representations was acknowledged as early as 1961, when Moscovici first published his seminal work. For studying polemic social representations, we found it necessary to include in our research an analysis of newspaper articles written on the Roşia Montană issue. For the the purpose of our research, we considered the press as an intermediary between the representations constructed by the main stakeholders of the Roşia Montană conflict, discussed in the previous chapter, and the representations pertaining to lay-people, discussed in the second part of our empirical investigation. Our main purpose in conducting this study was to compare how the Roşia Montană issue was represented in the Romanian media since the beginning of the controversy.

The corpus analyzed was comprised of 916 articles published in three national newspapers (two daily and one weekly magazine) and two local newspapers from the Alba County, where Roşia Montană is located. The main limit of this study comes from the fact that the corpus lacks uniformity, as it is built of articles available on the newspapers' electronic databases that did not all span the same time period. Instead of reducing the corpus' dimensions by only including articles published over a shorter, common and more recent period of time, we decided to neglect this impediment to observe, as much as it was possible and for each newspaper separately, the dynamics in their discourses about the Roşia Montană affair.

This study was based on an automatic text analysis carried out with the software T-Lab. The text-driven automatic approach enabled us to detect meaningful patterns of words and themes that emerged in the newspaper articles dealing with the Roşia Montană issue. Several types of information related to the press coverage of the Roşia Montană case were discovered.

From the thematic clusters of the elementary contexts into which the entire corpus was segmented, we were able to observe the dominant frames through which the issue was addressed in the five newspapers included in the analysis. The top two clusters, according to the percentage of elementary contexts contained within, referred to the village and community of Roşia Montană (Cluster: Village; about 21% of ECs) and to its heritage (Cluster: Patrimony; about 20% of ECs). Together,

these frames convey the local aspects in the Roşia Montană issue, emphasizing the cultural and social stakes around the mining project. With almost the same loads (about 15% of ECs), three other frames identified in the media's discourse emphasized the controversy in the Roşia Montană issue first, in relation to the authorization process for the gold-mine construction project and the court fight over the authorization procedures (Cluster: Legal Process), second, with regard to the main stakeholders involved in the conflict over Roşia Montană, but especially the mining company (Cluster: Company), and third, in relation to a developmentalist frame focusing on the potential economic gains (or losses) brought on by the construction of the gold mine in Roşia Montană (Cluster: Economic gain). Surprisingly, the least loaded cluster (about 13% of ECs) indicates a frame of discourse conveying the environmental hazards the mining project involves. The focus in this frame is on what we considered to be (and the subsequent analyses presented in the second part of our investigation also confirmed; see section 6.6.3. in Chapter 6.) the most vehement theme of attack against the mining project, namely the use of cyanide in the gold extraction process (Cluster: Cyanide). But an important amount of typical lemmas in this cluster reveal that the 'cyanide issue' in the Roşia Montană conflict was approached by the press as both an environmental and a political issue, thus causing the environmental matter to lose importance. In fact, the political theme (identified by the lemmas referring to national and international political players or institutions) emerged in each of the dominant frames, thus demonstrating its use as an additional anchor in the media's representations of the Roşia Montană issue.

Although the six dominant frames identified were all present in the five subsets of the analysed newspaper articles, their proportion varied in each sample. Statistical calculations (chi-square tests) enabled us to determine that the top two clusters ('Patrimony' and 'Village') were significantly more present in the articles in the weekly magazine Formula As, which constantly published articles about Roşia Montană from February 2002 onwards, while openly affirming its opposition to the gold-mine project. The other two national newspapers, Ziua and România Liberă, commonly and significantly focused on the players directly involved in the conflict over Roşia Montană, although they focused more on the mining company that initiated the project. However, they differ with respect to the other dominant frames that their articles are significantly associated to. While Ziua published significantly more articles about the environmental dispute concerning the use of cyanide, România Liberă's articles highlighted more significantly the project's authorization procedures and the court battle in which the main stakeholders engaged during the controversy. The same frame of discourse, labeled 'Legal process', was significantly more present in the local newspaper Unirea. The other local newspaper analyzed, Informaţia de Alba, was the only newspaper that focused more significantly on the economic benefits that the proposed mining project would bring if realized.

However, each of the six dominant frames of discourse identified actually comprises several sub-themes and nuances that, although sharing a common anchoring process, reveal the contrasting positions on the topic, either for or against the construction of the mine in Roşia Montană. This is why we extended the

analysis in order to identify how the Roşia Montană issue was thematized in each newspaper, and also the transformations of their discourses. The main findings are presented below.

Formula As' articles were entirely devoted to the fight against the mining project. However, no article about Roşia Montană was written in Formula As before February 2002, even if local controversy first manifested two years earlier. The fact that the extra-local opposition started to coalesce in the same year, but several months after the publication of the first article, may suggest that by putting the Roşia Montană issue on the public agenda, Formula As had an active role in shaping the national opposition. By writing about the Roşia Montană issue, the major emphasis was on Roşia Montană as a place, represented in Formula As' articles as extremely valuable not for the gold in its ground, but for its history, geography and people, making it a sacred place, a source and symbol of national identity. This place is threatened by extinction, and the entire area by an ecological disaster (because of open-pit mining and cyanide use), because of the deliberate actions of a foreigner (the mining company) who wants to take advantage of the natural resources that belong to the nation, all this with the backing of corrupt authorities. Faced with this threat, countrywide mobilization is demanded, in order to support the fight of a community ('David') against the corporate 'Goliath'. The scheme of this narrative includes all four political myths described by Raoul Girardet in his book on *Mythes et mythologies politiques* (1986), namely: the conspiracy myth, the myth of the savior, the myth of the golden age and the myth of unity. This discourse also reveals the fact that the debate around the mining project in Roşia Montană is built upon a combination of arguments, fueled by environmentalist, anti-capitalist and nationalist views. When its dynamics are examined, Formula As' discourse about Roşia Montană reveals the discursive strategy of a media player that, throughout the conflict, took on a role of active involvement and was an agent of the construction and transmission of the opposition's representations of Roşia Montană. In the first three years since Formula As journalists started to report on the case, the emphasis was laid on objectification and anchoring, fundamental processes in the construction of social representations. Once created and transmitted, the social representations of Roşia Montană generated a context of reference (Moscovici: 1994) for Formula As' discourse about the issue in the following years. This could explain why, in the following years, the articles typically referred to the legal and political fight to stop the project, to extra-local players, and less to the place and the community of Roşia Montană. However, when provoked by the messages of the recent media campaigns sponsored by the corporation that began in 2009, Formula As' articles returned to their original focus, once more confirming the inter-dependent relationships in which polemic social representations emerge and evolve.

In the nationwide daily newspaper Ziua, the Roşia Montană issue became a constant focus from 2002; only three articles were published on the issue before that year. After hesitating or fluctuating attitudes towards the project in the early years, from 2004, Ziua's position constantly disapproved the mining project. Ziua thematized more the "case" than the "place", and the controversy surrounding

the mining project was particularly dominant in its articles. In presenting the controversy, Ziua's articles focused on describing the actions of institutional players – both local and international – that became involved in the conflict on the opposite side.  In general, Ziua paid less attention to local conditions, i.e. the village and community of Roşia Montană. Ziua's discourse was built on the ecology vs. economy antagonism, and generally outlined the ecological costs of economic development. Compared to all the other samples, the 'cyanide issue' was prominent in Ziua's articles, still represented as both an environmental hazard and a political bargain. Another noteworthy theme that occurred in Ziua's discourse was the relationship between business and state, generally considered unfair due to the insufficient income the state would earn from selling its natural resources. This demonstrates that the ecological and economic arguments were equally important in the media's representation contesting the realization of the mining project in Roşia Montană.

From 2005, România Liberă's articles reported on the evolution of events in the Roşia Montană case, with greater emphasis on the project's authorization process or the court actions. When referring to the stakeholders involved in the Roşia Montană conflict, România Liberă's articles report mostly on the mining company and less on its opponents. Unlike Ziua's articles where the mining project was often criticized in relation to its consequences for the environment, România Liberă mostly discussed the mining project in terms of its economic outcomes. Also, România Liberă mostly presented the 'cyanide issue' as a political matter, requiring the decision of national and supra-national (European) authorities, or affecting bilateral relations with the neighboring country, Hungary. Unlike Formula As' articles, the Roşia Montană as a place was equally represented as a historical and an industrial site. For România Liberă, the Roşia Montană issue was not necessarily a controversial case, but a case to be solved, one way or another. The newspaper's position regarding the mine's construction at Roşia Montană was not always easily identifiable. Through words typically used each year, we noticed the rather unfavorable attitude towards the mine construction in 2007 and 2008. Outside of this time period, we discovered that its discourse was somewhat more balanced. Apart from the neutral articles that presented information on this case, the newspaper also published the very same year articles that were favorable to the beginning of the mine's construction (insisting on the region's need for development, on the benefits of the project), but also articles in which opposition to the mine's construction was obvious (especially on account of heritage destruction and of too few benefits for the Romanian state).

We retrieved articles in Unirea from the year 2006 onwards. As previously mentioned, the content of this newspaper's articles was significantly linked to the frame describing the legal process around building the gold mine at Roşia Montană; it regularly reported on the evolution of authorizing procedures or court actions. As expected, the local conditions in Roşia Montană were also emphasized in the columns of the county's newspaper. Roşia Montană was represented as underlined by social and economic problems, and the investment proposed by the corporation was described as a chance to revitalize the mining industry in the region and to

create jobs. The controversy surrounding the project was merely outlined with regard to extra-local players and little voice was given to the residents forming the local opposition to the project. On the contrary, residents of Roşia Montană were represented as beneficiaries of the company's property acquisition program and generally willing to resettle elsewhere. In the articles published over the five years analyzed, we noticed how the case generated by the Roşia Montană gold mine construction plans went from problematic to unproblematic in the representations transmitted by this newspaper. The themes contesting the project appeared in the presentation of the case at the beginning of the studies time period; however, at the end of the time period, the approach to this subject proved to be much more biased in support of the project, and the controversy surrounding it was minimized.

The articles retrieved in the second local newspaper, Informaţia de Alba, did not present many differences from those published in Unirea in the same period (2009-2010). The project was described in positive terms, as a solution for the economic development of Roşia Montană, of the Apuseni region, and even of Romania. No article in this newspaper was critical of the project or its initiator and the opposition had no voice. Roşia Montană was described in Informaţia de Alba's articles as a community heavily dependent on the mining industry, and currently facing serious economic problems, thus needing investment. Along with the project's economic benefits, the theme of an environmentally friendly mine, strongly sustained in the corporate discourse (as shown in section 2.2. of this thesis), was also emphasized in Informaţia de Alba's articles. When writing about the project's authorization procedure, the articles' tone defended a favorable political decision regarding the start of the mine.

The automatic text analysis conducted in this study allowed us to decipher the media's representations of Roşia Montană by focusing principally on the content, while only tangential reference was made to the formal or stylistic aspects occurring in the communication process. However, from the inventory of the prevailing themes in each newspaper's discourse we could observe that, at least in some cases, these were roughly related to the main thematic statements advanced by the two conflicting sides (as resumed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis). Added to this was the observation of the dynamics of the contents of the articles, enabling us to identify the specific positions expressed with regard to the suitability of the mine's construction in Roşia Montană, leading us to advance hypotheses regarding the communication genres predominantly cultivated in the newspapers analyzed. Through their militant approach to the Roşia Montană issue and their almost exclusive focus on the themes typically defended by the two opposing sides in the conflict, the magazine Formula As and the local newspaper Informaţia de Alba could be equally ascribed the communication genre of propaganda, which is typically present in conflictual communication contexts and whose principal aim is the construction of a representation in view of action (Moscovici, 1961/1976). The same communication genre characterizes the discourse of the other local newspaper, Unirea, in the last two years of the period analyzed (2009-2010), whereas for the other time period (2006-2008) it was mainly diffusion that marked the communication of

social representations about Roşia Montană in this newspaper. Overall, the articles published in România Liberă reveal a more balanced discourse about the issue, mainly reporting on the evolution of the case but generally putting less emphasis on the controversy or on the actors involved from the opponents' side. The simultaneous presence of articles expressing both favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards the mining project, along with rather neutral articles about the topic, may suggest that the communication genre best describing this newspaper is that of diffusion. With regard to the other national daily newspaper, Ziua, diffusion and propaganda in the transmission of social representations of the Roşia Montană issue were combined, even if militant messages, like those promoted in Formula As, were less present. Still, more research concerning the communication genres is needed.

# 5 Representational systems related to the Roşia Montană affair in people's minds

In the last stage of empirical analysis of polemic social representations generated in the Roşia Montană controversy, we focused on the social representations expressed by lay-people. Given the construction and transmission of divergent social representations by the main players involved in the conflict over Roşia Montană and by the media, we assumed that lay-people who were exposed to contrasting and conflicting discourses about Roşia Montană do not necessarily share the same representations about the issue. We hypothesized that polemic social representations cannot only be identified in the media, but also in people's minds. Our main objective was to investigate whether a particular attitude towards the gold mine project in Roşia Montană (for or against its construction) is part of a different, polemic set of social representations of the issue. For the purpose of this research, we considered it essential to compare the representations elicited by subjects with opposite attitudes regarding the mine construction project in Roşia Montană, which, we assume, is the only situation where polemic social representations are expressed in everyday thought. It is however interesting to observe the meanings attributed to "Roşia Montană" by subjects who did not formulate a clear position on the controversial issue, but who were indeed exposed to the contrasting messages of the players directly involved in the conflict over Roşia Montană or to the media communication regarding this topic. Three groups of subjects (divided according to their position towards the mine's construction: for, against and undecided) were studied with help from an online questionnaire that combined several instruments, both projective and structured, for collecting data. Socio-demographic variables (gender, age, education, county of residence) and psychological variables (environmental concern, personal involvement, agentic disposition) were further employed in order to make comparisons between groups.

## 5.1    Research questions and goals

Can polemic social representations be identified *vis-à-vis* the Roşia Montană issue at the level of common sense knowledge? Do laypeople with divergent attitudes towards the mine construction project in Roşia Montană also think completely differently about this topic? Are there differences in the contents and structures of their social representations of Roşia Montană, gold mining, the environment and foreign investors, which, in our view, build a set of representations defining the Roşia Montană issue? Do laypeople that were exposed over time to contrasting pictorial representations of Roşia Montană "see" Roşia Montană with different eyes, according to their attitude regarding the project? Are there any other differences between the groups identified, regarding mainly psychological aspects, such as their general environmental awareness, their perceived personal involvement with the Roşia Montană issue, their willingness to act in order to support one's attitude regarding the mine construction? What are the main motives for supporting/opposing the construction of the mine in Rosia Motana? These were the main questions that guided this research.

The specific research goals were:

- To compare the content, structure and dimensions of the social representations of the following objects: *Roşia Montană, gold mining, the environment,* and *the foreign investor*, which we considered to form a representational system related to the Roşia Montană issue, for three different groups of people, divided according to their position with regard to the mine construction project in Roşia Montană.

- To observe the relevance of social and psychological variables for these social representations, through the comparison of social groups with various levels of environmental concern, perceived personal involvement with the Roşia Montană issue, and different rates of willingness to take action in order to support one's position regarding the gold mine construction in Roşia Montană.

- To investigate whether there are differences in the pictorial facets of the social representations of Roşia Montană of the three aforementioned groups of subjects.

- To examine the relevance of different arguments for or against the mine construction project in adopting a clear position on the issue.

- To observe differences between supporters and opponents of the mine project regarding the attribution of responsibility in decision making on the issue of Roşia Montană and the preferred media sources for getting information regarding the topic.

- To observe comparatively the perceptions and explanations about others positioning for opponents and supporters of the mine project in Roşia Montană.

## 5.2    Population and variable definition

A total of 276 people participated in our study by completing an online questionnaire. At the end of the data collection phase, we identified three groups for our study: 141 subjects, representing 51.1% of the total sample, declared to be against the gold mine construction project (OPPONENTS); 69 subjects, representing 25% of the total sample, declared to be in favor of the mine construction project (SUPPORTERS); and 66 subjects, representing 23.9% of the total sample, declared to have no clear position regarding the gold mine construction project in Roşia Montană (UNDECIDED). The configuration of the three groups according to the socio-demographic variables gender, age, education, and county[42] of residence is summarized in Table 21.

**Table 21. The Groups' configuration according to socio-demographic variables**

| VARIABLE | POSITION REGARDING THE MINE CONSTRUCTION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| GENDER | OPPONENTS | SUPPORTERS | UNDECIDED | Total |
| Female | 85 | 44 | 38 | 167 |
| Male | 56 | 25 | 28 | 109 |
| AGE | | | | |
| 18to25 | 34 | 18 | 16 | 68 |
| 26to40 | 81 | 34 | 34 | 149 |
| 41to59 | 22 | 14 | 13 | 49 |
| over60 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 10 |
| LEVEL OF EDUCATION | | | | |
| High | 78 | 44 | 41 | 163 |
| Medium[1] | 38 | 22 | 15 | 75 |
| Phd | 25 | 3 | 10 | 38 |
| COUNTY OF RESIDENCE | | | | |
| Abroad | 12 | 4 | 12 | 28 |
| Alba | 12 | 13 | 4 | 29 |
| Arad | 9 | 6 | 7 | 22 |
| Brasov | 12 | 7 | 4 | 23 |
| Bucarest | 55 | 16 | 23 | 94 |
| Cluj | 29 | 9 | 3 | 41 |
| Other | 12 | 14 | 13 | 39 |
| Grand Total | 141 | 69 | 66 | 276 |

According to the psychological variables identified by our research tools, the participants of this study were distributed as follows:

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42    The county, "judet" in Romanian, is an intermediary territorial and administrative unit comprising several cities and villages. It is similar to the province in France or Italy, or the "Kreis" in Germany.

Level of general environmental concern:
  • low (58 participants) / high (218 participants)

Personal involvement in the topic of Roşia Montană:
  • weak (123 participants) / strong (153 participants)

Agentic disposition (eagerness to act in order to sustain one's position to the mine construction project):
  • weak (110 participants) / strong (166 participants)

Additionally, the subjects were distributed according to a factual variable related to the subjects' experience with Roşia Montană as a place. To the question "Have you ever been in Roşia Montană?" 108 subjects gave a positive answer and 168 a negative one.

## 5.3    Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided this research:

  • Opponents and Supporters of the Roşia Montană gold mine project hold different, and polemic, social representations of *Roşia Montană*, *gold mining*, the *environment*, and *foreign investors*.

  • The social representations of *Roşia Montană* are related to the others, by functioning as an anchor for the social representations of *gold mining*, *environment*, and *foreign investors*.

  • The pictorial representation of Roşia Montană as a place is significantly different for subjects *for* or *against* the mine's construction.

  • The psychological dimensions, environmental concern, personal involvement, and agentic disposition have an influence on attitudes regarding the mine construction project in Roşia Montană and on the representational systems underlying the Roşia Montană affair.

## 5.4    Procedure

Data were collected during the month of November 2011 with using an online questionnaire. Since our intention was to compare subjects with divergent attitudes regarding the mine construction project in Roşia Montană, we tried to collect answers from people with high awareness of the Roşia Montană topic. We used both the personal and social networks on Facebook to invite people to complete our questionnaire. Firstly, we mailed a link to the questionnaire to friends and acquaintances that we knew from experience were interested in the Roşia Montană issue. Secondly, we repeatedly posted the link to the questionnaire on various groups' and organizations' Facebook "walls", which publicly stated their position *for* or *against* the mining project. Furthermore, individual invitations were sent to Facebook members judged as for or against the project according to their personal comments or memberships. At the end of the questionnaire, besides the thankyou

message and an invitation to contact the researcher in case they wanted to be informed about the results of the survey, respondents were kindly asked to forward the link to the questionnaire to their friends and acquaintances. This method of sampling is vey similar to the snowball sampling procedure.

The questionnaire contained about 40 items. Most of the questions required an answer, as the respondent was unable to skip to the next page without having answered the previous questions. For the free associations to stimulus words, only the first three of the five requested words or expressions were compulsory. Respondents could however choose not to answer our questions by simply closing the questionnaire. Incomplete questionnaires were eliminated from the study.

## 5.5     Instruments for data collection and data analysis

a. The verbal facet of social representations was studied using the **free association technique**, a procedure that has become standard for exploring the semantic universe of a social representation, as it allows the study of its content and organization (di Giacomo, 1981; Le Bouedec, 1984 ; de Rosa, 1988 ; Vergès, 1992; Abric, 1994; Seca, 2001; Flament & Rouquette, 2003). The online procedure used for collecting data complicated the use of more complex tools, such as the associative network (de Rosa, 2002a, 2003) or the two-phase hierarchical association technique (free associations followed by hierarchical ordering of the induced words) as suggested by J. C. Abric (2003). Given our limitations, we used hierarchical associations based on the work of Vergès (1992). The rank of importance was considered the same as the rank of appearance.

Associations to four stimulus words were requested. At the very beginning of the questionnaire, participants were asked to write down the first 5 words or expressions that came to their mind when they thought about *Roşia Montană, gold mining, the environment* and *foreign investors*. In each case, they had to provide a minimum of three words. Their responses were analyzed in multiple steps. The pre-analysis phase consisted of preparing the corpus of freely associated terms. We normalized the vocabulary by reducing various grammatical differences between similar words (plural to singular, feminine to masculine…), by identifying and eliminating synonyms, and by identifying and standardizing words or expressions within the same semantic field. Subsequently, four types of complementary methods for data analysis were used, as follows:

*I. Quantitative analysis of the associated terms based on diversity and rarity*

In order to check for the presence of a shared knowledge regarding the object of representation for each of the three groups of subjects, we calculated a diversity index and a rarity index of the associated terms (Flament & Rouquette, 2003).  The diversity index was calculated by the proportion of word types (T) over the total number of associated words (N) by each group of subjects[43]. The rarity index was calculated by the number of Hapax(H) (words which occur only once in a corpus)

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43   This measure is very similar to the stereotyping index described by de Rosa (2003).

over the total number of associated word types (T).

The value of both indexes range between 0 and 1. According to Flament and Rouquette (2003), the maximum degree of diversity in the population of responses is a diversity index equal to 1, hence indicating that all subjects associated entirely different terms to the stimulus. If this were the case, we would be in the presence of an idiosyncratic phenomenon and we should exclude the existence of a social representation of the object referred to by the stimulus for the studied group. On the contrary, when this ratio decreases and approaches 0, there would be a small number of word types repeated by different subjects or at least by a majority of them. For the rarity index, a value equal to 1 would mean that every term associated with the stimulus occurred just once. The two measures are complementary. According to the same authors, a decrease in diversity (T/N) combined with an increase in rarity (H/T) reinforces the diagnosis of the existence of a structured social representations for the group studied.

*II. Analysis of hierarchical associations*

This method, created by Pierre Vergès (1992), takes into consideration the frequency of occurrence and the average rank of appearence as indicators of hierarchy among the associated terms, which are considered to constitute the social representation. By calculating the correlation between the two indexes, the elements of a social representation can be divided into four categories, represented in a two-input table. Abric (2003) describes the configuration of this table as follows: The first category contains elements with high frequency and low rank of appearance, thus indicating they are highly important; these elements are candidates for the social representation's central core. Not every element in this first category is necessarily central, but the central core is definitely contained within. The second category contains elements with low importance and high frequency, and is considered the first periphery. The third category contains elements with high importance and low frequency, and is a zone of the contrasting elements. Elements in this category were enunciated by few people but still considered very important by those people. This configuration could indicate the existence of a sub-group representing a minority that has a different representation of the object. But it could also just be a complement of the first periphery. The fourth category includes elements with low frequency and low importance and forms the second periphery, where individual inflections reside around the central core (Abric, 1994a). To highlight the structural differences between the representations produced by the three studied groups, we compared the configuration of each two-input table for each stimulus word, paying special attention to the lexical elements with a high probability of belonging to the central core. To generate the tables, data were processed using Evoc 2003 software.

*III. Lexical correspondence analysis*

Lexical correspondence analysis is a factorial analysis technique that enabled us to synthesize the obtained lexical corpus. The method is based on the extraction of new dimensions (factors) that summarize and organize any significant information in a contingency table, crossing descriptive variables with words associated by the subjects. Applied to the results of the free association task, this method allows the detection of variations in the contents of a social representation and is considered

more convenient than traditional content analysis, which consist in building, more or less intuitively, categories for the meanings produced by the subjects (Deschamps, 2003). This analysis was carried out with T-Lab software. Subjects' position to the mine construction project in Roșia Montană was employed as an active variable in the correspondence analysis. Participants' gender, age, education, county of residence, level of environmental awareness, level of personal involvement, level of agentic disposition, and place experience were used as illustrative variables.

*IV. Cluster analysis*

Cluster analysis allowed for a more articulated understanding of the representations that emerged according to the aggregation of subjects (de Rosa, 2003). This analysis, carried out with the same T-Lab software, was based on the results of the previous correspondence analysis. More specifically, clusters were obtained depending on the objects' coordinates (lexical units and independent variables) on the factorial axis. The technique chosen was hierarchical clustering. This analysis helped us to decide whether the variations in the content of social representations outlined by correspondence analysis were sufficient enough to support the existence of polemic social representations in two groups with a clear attitude regarding the mine construction project in Roșia Montană.

b. A projective method was used to investigate the visual facets of the social representation of the place Roșia Montană for our groups of study. The final section of the questionnaire included ten photographs depicting various aspects of Roșia Montană. On a scale from 1 (minimum) to 10 (maximum), respondents were asked to rate each picture in terms of how well they represented Roșia Montană. The pictures used as stimuli were selected on the basis of previous research (Pop, 2008), also included in this book (see Chapter 3), which focused on the iconic code of expression of the social representations of Roșia Montană. The study compared two sets of photographs that institutional players (an NGO and the mining company) circulated on the Internet. Two different "realities" of Roșia Montană and its people were objectified by means of photographs. Analysis revealed the emergence of two pictorial representations of Roșia Montană, which are highly contrasting and stereotypical. Although pictures were analyzed as **products** and **channels** in our previous study, they are considered here as **sources** that activate particular representations of Roșia Montană (de Rosa & Farr, 2001). Of the 141 pictures previously analyzed, we chose 5 for each category (FOR or AGAINST the mine construction project in Roșia Montană). The ten pictures (see Appendix) were presented randomly and no indications were given to the participants other than a label from A to J.

Picture A (from the "For mining" dossier) contains a landscape and depicts the discharge of polluted (red) water from the mine galleries in the Aries River in Roșia Montană.

Picture B ("Against mining" dossier) contains a landscape and shows a horse in the middle of a green lawn.

Picture C ("For mining" dossier) shows traces of decaying industrial mining, by

focusing on the railtracks used for ore transportation that are flooded by red water.

Picture D ("Against mining" dossier) is a natural landscape focusing on the clear water of a lake.

Picture E ("Against mining" dossier) is of an old house in Roşia Montană, with a big white gate and covered in vegetation.

Picture F ("For mining" dossier) offers a panoramic image of Cetate's open-pit, which is illustrative for the way gold was extracted in Roşia Montană from the seventies onwards.

Picture G ("For mining" dossier) depicts Roşia Montană's built environment, portraying an old house in an advanced state of decay.

Picture H ("Against mining" dossier) depicts a panoramic image of the Carnic Mountain, landscape that is illustrative of the ancient gold extraction technique in Roşia Montană.

Picture I ("For mining" dossier) once again depicts the built environment, and portrays the desolate, seemingly abandoned Central Square in Roşia Montană, where a cow walks free.

Picture J ("Against mining" dossier) depicts a medieval mining tunnel, suggestive of the importance of Roşia Montană's heritage.

The respondents' views regarding the pictures were analyzed both individually and collectively according to the categories the photos belong to. In order to test differences in the means obtained by both sets of pictures, we used one-way ANOVA with Tukey's post hoc multiple comparisons.

c. Data for the psychological variables employed in this study was collected and analyzed as follows:

General environmental awareness was measured using a scale taken from Ellis and Thompson's (1997) study on environmental activism and cultural bias. It contained the following five items:

1. If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe;
2. The environment's problems are not as bad as most people think;
3. We are quickly using up the world's natural resources;
4. People worry too much about human progress harming the environment;
5. We are spending too little money on improving and protecting the environment.

Respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement. Each item was scored on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); items 2 and 4 are reverse coded. Averaging scores across the five questions created a score for each subject. Scores ranged from 1 (high level of environmental awareness) to 5 (low level of environmental awareness). Subjects with scores lower or equal to 3 were included in the category "Low level of environmental awareness"; whereas the "High level of environmental awareness" category included subjects with scores higher than 3.

The use of a **personal involvement variable** with regard to Roşia Montană was

inspired by Rouquette's considerations about the role of proximity to the object of a representation (1994a). Three independent dimensions define this variable, considered to be intermediary: personal identification with the object of the representation, enhancement of the object, and perceived ability to act (Flament & Rouquette, 2003). In order to determine each of these dimensions, the participants in the study were asked to answer the following questions:

- On a scale from 1 (it does not concern me more than others) to 6 (it concerns me personally), where do you rank the Roşia Montană issue?
- On a scale from 1 (of little importance to me) to 6 (of utmost importance to me) how important is the Roşia Montană issue?
- On a scale from 1 (there is nothing I can do) to 6 (it only depends on me), where do you stand on solving the Roşia Montană issue one way or the other?

In order to differentiate between subjects we considered two analytical subsets for this variable, respectively weak and strong personal involvement. Each dimension was dichotomized to build these categories: answers from 1 to 3 were considered weak, and strong from 4 to 6. The eight possible combinations of answers on the three dimensions were first reduced to four categories and then to two. Personal involvement was considered weak when one or less answer was situated on the right side of the scale (strong side). Personal involvement was considered strong when at least two answers were placed on the strong side. Flament and Rouquette (2003) recommended this measurement in their manual for the study of social representations.

The **agentic disposition** variable represents eagerness to act to support one's attitude regarding the Roşia Montană affair. It was inspired by a scale used by Guagnano (1995) to measure environmental agentic disposition, or the eagerness to take part in pro-environmental activities. In our case, the concept was measured on a three-item scale where each item was binary. Subjects were asked to give a positive or negative response to the three following statements:

- I would sign a petition to support my opinion regarding the Roşia Montană project.
- I would take part in a protest march in order to support my option regarding the Roşia Montană project.
- I would be willing to contribute money to a campaign that defends the same ideals as me regarding the Roşia Montană project.

The two sub-sets (representing weak and strong agentic disposition) used for differentiating between subjects on this variable were built in a similar way as previously for the personal involvement variable.

d. A 36-item scale, listing 18 typical arguments in favor of the Roşia Montană gold mine project and 18 typical arguments against, was used to measure the relevance of various motives for opposing or supporting the project (see Box 1). The previous question about people's position to the mine project was used as a filter. Those who declared they were opposed to the project were required to express

how important the different reasons against the project were to them. Those who declared their support for the project had to express how important the different reasons in favor of the project were to them. Both cases used a scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much). Subjects not having declared a clear attitude towards the project were not required to answer.

The procedures proposed by Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson (2010) were used to determine how the groups of items form the latent dimensions of motives. In stage one of analysis, a principal component factor was used to determine the number of latent dimensions represented by the variables. In stage two, the analysis was rerun using a varimax rotation after having determined the number of latent factors in stage one. This enabled us to identify which variables measure each dimension. If the factor structure was still too complex, that is to say if one item still bared weight on two or more dimensions, oblimin rotation was used. If this in turn provided a clearer picture of the relationship between variables and latent factors, it was used as a reference for the scale's creation. The final step in creating the latent dimensions was a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha. If this test confirmed reliable dimensions, summative scales were created. This procedure helped us understand how both groups' motives form latent factors thus providing the basis for a typology.

In order to dive more deeply into the investigation of the "against mining project" reasons, we used a supplementary question, which was inspired by the *mise en cause* (calling into question) technique developed by Moliner (1989) and judged to be very effective for the identification of central elements of a social representation (Abric & Tafani, 1995; Mugny, Moliner & Flament, 1997; Rateau, 2000; Moliner et all, 2002). Opponents to the mine project were asked to mention in which situation they could ultimately agree with the gold mine project in Roşia Montană. Response options were: "if the exploitation was underground, without destroying the mountains and the town"; "if technologies other than those based on cyanide were used to extract the gold"; "if the benefits for the Romanian state were higher"; "if the exploitation was carried out by the state or by a Romanian company"; and "on no account could I agree".

A similar question was put to respondents declared in favor of the mine project, but for a different reason. They were asked under what circumstances the opposition could be brought around to the project. Response variations were the same as in the previous case, except the last option that was eliminated. We consider that this question provided two types of information: it can suggest the perceived weak points of the mining project for those who agree with it, and it can indicate awareness of the alternative representation (Gillespie, 2008).

e. The question about the subjects' position to the mine project was asked immediately after the free association task and was phrased as follows: "the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) proposed a mining project a few years ago in Roşia Montană. What is your opinion regarding this project ?" Participants could provide the following answers: "I'm AGAINST the RMGC's project, it should be stopped immediately"; "I'm FOR the RMGC's project, it should start as soon as

**Box 1. List of reasons for building or not building the Roşia Montană mine**

| Reasons AGAINST | Reasons FOR |
|---|---|
| The project is destroying the mountains by opencast mining. | Gold extraction technology is safe. |
| The use of cyanide in the gold extraction process poses a major threat. | The project will help improve an already degraded environment because of historical pollution. |
| Post-exploitation residues (tailings, waste pond, dam) represent a major threat. | The project does not represent a major environmental threat. |
| Relocating Roşia Montană's population will destroy its community. | The project will create new jobs in the region. |
| The project requires the demolition of houses and churches (some of which have a historic value). | The project will improve people's standard of living in that area. |
| The project requires the destruction of archaeological remains in the area. | The mine's exploitation will lead to economic prosperity in the region. |
| Romania's gold resources should remain unexploited for the time being. | The project is the only solution for the development of the region. |
| The project will contribute to the deterioration of relations with our neighboring countries because of cross-border impacts. | The project will protect the region's values and cultural heritage. |
| The project's economic benefits are too small for the Romanian state. | The project will be very beneficial to the Romanian state. |
| A foreign company extracts Romanian gold. | The project will contribute to improving Romania's economy. |
| The project does not create enough jobs to solve the area's poverty and unemployment problems. | The project may contribute to ending the economic crisis in Romania |
| The company that wants to extract the gold is unreliable. | The project will increase Romania's gold. |
| The company has resorted to corrupt practices in order to obtain permits and to attract politicians on its side. | The project meets the European environmental standards. |
| The proposed exploitation does not comply with European and international legislation. | The project complies with this country's laws. |
| The project blocks any alternative developments in the area, such as tourism. | The project is led by a foreign investor, which guarantees professionalism and rigor in the project's execution. |
| Roşia Montană's people's property rights are violated. | Mining is an important tradition in Roşia Montană and must be continued. |
| The place has a special beauty and it would be a shame to destroy it. | The place is not beautiful because of past mining. |
| The people of Roşia Montană do not want the exploitation to begin. | The people of Roşia Montană want the mining to begin. |

possible"; "I do not have a clear opinion about the RMGC's project".

As mentioned previously, the variable *place experience* was measured by the question: "have you ever been to Roşia Montană?" Besides "yes" or "no", a third possible answer to this question was: "I live/lived in Roşia Montană." Only 13 subjects chose this answer, too small a number to take into consideration differences between residents and non-residents of Roşia Montană. Consequently, this answer was recoded positively.

In addition, the questionnaire contained two more questions. First, subjects were asked to indicate the sources (newspapers, TV, radio, internet, other sources) they mostly use for getting information about the Roşia Montană issue. Second, they were asked to indicate their opinion about who should make a decision regarding the future of Roşia Montană. They could choose multiple answers from the following: the people of Roşia Montană and of the surrounding area; the local authorities in Roşia Montană and the Alba county (mayor, local council, county council); The central Romanian authorities (the Government, the Parliament, the President); The European institutions (the European Parliament, the European Commission); The civil society of Romania; The courts; The Romanian citizens by referendum.

The final part of the questionnaire contained the questions for collecting information about socio-demographic variables.

## 5.6    Results

In the following sub-chapters, we present the results of the different analyses carried out. We will begin with the results obtained studying various psychological dimensions. Next, we will concentrate on the verbal expression of social representations, by presenting the results of the free association task, the motivation scale, and finally those obtained about decision-making, sources of information and representations of others. Then, we will focus on the visual expression of the social representation of Roşia Montană, presenting the results obtained by using photographs as stimuli. To finish, we will show the relationships between the different dimensions using Pearson correlations.

### 5.6.1    Psychological dimensions and attitude towards the mine project in Roşia Montană

#### 5.6.1.1    Environmental concern

We expected to find that attitudes regarding the environment had an influence on opinions about the mine construction project in Roşia Montană. Respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with five statements about environmental issues. Table 22 shows how they answered these questions by pointing out the differences between answers supporting or opposing the project, and those that remain undecided. The scale's reliability was tested using Cronbach's

Alpha. The overall score of the scale was 0,606; while it is not a big score, it is a reasonable argument to trust the results of the scale.

**Table 22. Environmental concern by attitude towards the mine project in Roşia Montană**

|  |  | Opponents | Supporters | Undecided |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe** | Strongly disagree | 2,1% | 8,7% | 3,0% |
|  | Moderately disagree | 2,8% | 15,9% | 16,7% |
|  | Nor agree nor disagree | 7,1% | 33,3% | 45,5% |
|  | Moderately agree | 27,0% | 20,3% | 19,7% |
|  | Strongly agree | 61,0% | 21,7% | 15,2% |
| **The environment's problems are not as bad as most people think.** *Reversed answers* | Strongly disagree | 4,3% | 11,6% | 3,0% |
|  | Moderately disagree | 7,8% | 33,3% | 16,7% |
|  | Nor agree nor disagree | 6,4% | 18,8% | 33,3% |
|  | Moderately agree | 21,3% | 21,7% | 33,3% |
|  | Strongly agree | 60,3% | 14,5% | 13,6% |
| **We are fast depleting the world's natural resources.** | Strongly disagree | 7,8% | 23,2% | 6,1% |
|  | Moderately disagree | 7,1% | 33,3% | 18,2% |
|  | Nor agree nor disagree | 8,5% | 17,4% | 31,8% |
|  | Moderately agree | 23,4% | 10,1% | 24,2% |
|  | Strongly agree | 53,2% | 15,9% | 19,7% |
| **People worry too much about human progress harming the environment.** *Reversed answers* | Strongly disagree | 4,3% | 1,4% | 7,6% |
|  | Moderately disagree | 7,8% | 8,7% | 4,5% |
|  | Nor agree nor disagree | 5,7% | 24,6% | 21,2% |
|  | Moderately agree | 24,8% | 26,1% | 36,4% |
|  | Strongly agree | 57,4% | 39,1% | 30,3% |
| **We are spending too little money on improving and protecting the environment.** | Strongly disagree | 8,5% | 14,5% | 10,6% |
|  | Moderately disagree | 3,5% | 8,7% | 6,1% |
|  | Nor agree nor disagree | 5,0% | 2,9% | 12,1% |
|  | Moderately agree | 13,5% | 26,1% | 22,7% |
|  | Strongly agree | 69,5% | 47,8% | 48,5% |

We can see a clear trend according to which the project's opponents are more environmentally aware and concerned. Thus, 88% of them agree that the present course of action will lead to a major ecological catastrophe. Only 42% of the project's supporters agree, and 35% are undecided. Also noteworthy is the fact that the percentage of the middle category (neither agree nor disagree) is the lowest for the opponents, showing that these subjects are more convinced of their opinions. On the other hand, the undecided chose the middle category the most often, almost 46% opting for this answer. When asked if the ecological problems are overestimated,

the project's supporters tend to agree (45%), followed by the undecided (20%) and those against the project, but at a big distance (12%). The project's supporters tend to disagree the most with the overuse of natural ressources (57%), followed by the undecided (24%) and the project's opponents (15%). Once again, the undecided preferred the middle category (32%), unlike the project's opponents (9%). When asked if people are too concerned about the effects of human progress on the environment, differences between groups were smaller; 12% of those against the project, 10% of the project's supporters, and 12% of the undecided. While this is true, however, differences between groups for this question were still apparent; 82% of the project's opponents and 65% of the project's supporters disagreed. This large difference was caused by variations in the middle category: only 6% of the project's opponents chose to "neither agree nor disagree", 25% of the project's supporters, and 21% of the undecided.

On the other hand, small differences were detected between answers to the following statement: "We spend too little money on improving and protecting the environment". The percentage was around 73% for all participants, regardless of their specific attitude against the gold mine project in Roşia Montană.

Mean values obtained from the environmental awareness scale for key groups (presented in Figure 31) show that highly educated subjects are more concerned with the environment (with a mean value of 7.1) than the moderately educated or the PhD graduates (average values of 6.8 respectively 6.9). Also, subjects residing in Bucharest are more concerned with the environment, with an average of 7.6 on the relative dimension, compared to those living in other parts of Romania and abroad (6.4). Age-wise, it seems that the young and middle-aged respondents are the most environmentally aware, with a mean value of 7 on our dimension, compared to 5.3 for those older than 60. Female respondents also tend to be more environmentally concerned, with an average score 0.5 times bigger than the males, respectively 7.2 and 6.7. As we were expecting from our previous analyses, the project's opponents are the most environmentally aware, with a mean score of 8 on the latent dimension. In contrast, the project's supporters have the lowest concern for the environment, with a mean score of only 5.6. The undecided are somewhere in between, although closer to the supporters, with 6.1.

When testing for statistically significant differences between groups (using ANOVA with Bonferroni post-hoc calculations), only a few of these differences remained. We observe no significant differences between the three education-groups, which highlights the small differences found in our sample. A similar result was found when comparing age groups, except for the difference between the middle-aged (26-40 years old) and the over 60 (mean dif. 1.85, std. er. 0.68, P 0.042), the former having a higher mean value. Significant differences were also found between men and women (F 54.3, df. 2, P 0.000) and between Bucharestians and Transylvanians (mean dif. 0.81, std. er. 0.29, P 0.029) or foreigners (mean dif. 1.19, std. er. 0.39, P 0.016). Nevertheless the biggest differences were observed when comparing attitudes towards the project. Those opposed to the project had significantly more positive environmental attitudes than the project's supporters

(mean dif. 2.47, std. er. 0.26, P 0.000) or the undecided (mean dif. 1.91, std. er. 0.27, P 0.000). A *t*-test comparing the project's opponents to the other two groups also revealed significant differences (t 10.2, df. 274, P 0.000).

### 5.6.1.2   Personal involvement with the Roşia Montană issue

This subjective dimension was based on personal identification to the Roşia Montană issue, it importance for the participants, and their perceived ability to act to solve the controversy surrounding Roşia Montană. Subjects' answers to the three items are presented in Table 23.

Table 23. Personal involvement with the topic of Roşia Montană by attitude towards the mining project

|  |  | Opponents | Supporters | Undecided |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Personal identification with the issue of Rosia Montană** | It does not concern me more than the others | 12,1% | 18,8% | 19,7% |
|  | 2 | 4,3% | 13,0% | 12,1% |
|  | 3 | 14,2% | 13,0% | 34,8% |
|  | 4 | 22,7% | 26,1% | 21,2% |
|  | 5 | 20,6% | 14,5% | 12,1% |
|  | It concerns me personally | 26,2% | 14,5% | ,0% |
| **Importance of the Rosia Montană issue** | It has little importance for me | ,7% | 10,1% | 6,1% |
|  | 2 | 2,8% | 14,5% | 16,7% |
|  | 3 | 15,6% | 14,5% | 39,4% |
|  | 4 | 27,0% | 21,7% | 19,7% |
|  | 5 | 23,4% | 18,8% | 16,7% |
|  | It is of capital importance for me | 30,5% | 20,3% | 1,5% |
| **Perceived capacity to act for solving the Roşia Montană controversy in one way or another** | I cannot do anything about it | 15,7% | 33,3% | 37,9% |
|  | 2 | 25,7% | 34,8% | 25,8% |
|  | 3 | 22,1% | 15,9% | 16,7% |
|  | 4 | 19,3% | 10,1% | 15,2% |
|  | 5 | 12,1% | 2,9% | 3,0% |
|  | It depends only on me | 5,0% | 2,9% | 1,5% |

With regard to personal identification with the Roşia Montană issue, it seems that opponents to the project tend to feel directly involved. The project's supporters perceive the issue less personally. As expected, the undecided identify themselves

with Roşia Montană less than subjects of the other two groups.

The second question takes into consideration the importance given to the object of representation, i.e. the Rosia Montană issue. Here, we find a similar trend. The opponents of the project more often see the issue as capital. This percentage decreases for the project's supporters and even more for the undecided. Also noteworthy is the fact that the difference between groups is smaller than for the previous question.

The last question, which measures personal involvement, focuses on respondents' perceived ability to influence the decision making process surrounding Roşia Montană. Here, perceived ability is low for all groups, reaching a maximum of 5% in the "it only depends on me" category for the project's opponents, 2.9% for the project's supporters and 1.5% for the undecided. These small percentages should be discussed, especially with regard to the project's opponents to whom the issue is of the utmost importance. In other words, this is a capital issue for them, but at the same time, they feel unable to influence it. This perceived lack of power may be one of the reasons for the general low civic involvement of the Romanian population.

Once again, the combination of these three questions formed a measure of personal involvement, from 1 (no personal involvement) to 10 (absolute involvement). Cronbach's Alpha is .773 for this scale, indicating reasonable internal reliability.

Subsequently, we calculated different groups' mean score (presented in Figure 31). For example, it seems that the PhD graduates have the lowest involvement in the Rosia Montană issue within our sample. Similarly, people who reside in other parts of Romania than Bucharest or Transylvania have a lower score of 3.9 compared to 5.7 for Transylvanians and Bucharestians. Also, the medium age group seems to be the most involved in the issue, with a mean score of 5.7 for the 26-59 year-olds. This score was somewhat lower for the 18-25 year olds (5.8) and even lower for the over 60 (3.8). No differences were observed between males and females whose mean scores were identical (5.4). Finally, as suggested by data shown in Table 23, those against the project seem to be the most involved in the issue, with a mean value of 6.2. At a considerable distance is the mean score of those supporting the project (4.9) and those undecided (4.3).

Bonferroni's post-hoc comparison only revealed a few significant differences between groups. Indeed, it appears that both Bucharest (Mean dif. 1.85, std. er. 0.46, P 0.000) and Transylvania (Mean dif. 1.85, std. er. 0.46, P 0.000) have significantly higher mean scores on this dimension than those living abroad. Another statistical difference was revealed when comparing the undecided with the project's supporters (t 6.53, df. 274, P 0.000).

### 5.6.1.3   Agentic disposition

This dimension measures how willing people are to do different activities to support or oppose the Rosia Montană project. Table 24 shows the answers to three specific actions (signing a petition, participating in a march, donating money) that subjects had to declare they would or would not do in order to support their position in the Roşia Montană affair, pointing to the difference between the three categories

of interest. We see that the majority of both those opposing and those supporting the project would be willing to sign a petition that represents their opinion. The percentages are respectively 95% and 96%. We see that when the "cost" of the activity increases the percentage of those willing to do it decreases as well. As a result, 77% of those opposing the project and 44% of those supporting the project would be willing to participate in a march on the topic of Rosia Montană. The final question asks about their willingness to donate money to the cause. Once again, fewer people are willing to do this; 62% of those against the project, and 29% of those who support the project. Let us note that those who oppose the project are more willing to take action to support their position regarding the Rosia Montană controversy.

**Table 24. Agentic disposition by attitude towards the project**

|  | **Opponents** | **Supporters** | **Undecided** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Would sign a petition for Rosia Montană** | 95,0% | 95,7% | 59,1% |
| **Would participate in a march for Rosia Montană** | 76,6% | 43,5% | 24,2% |
| **Would contribute with money for Rosia Montană** | 62,4% | 29,0% | 21,2% |

Once again, a summative scale was created to measure agentic disposition. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.676 indicates acceptable, yet moderate, internal reliability and affords us the possibility to further our analysis. Subsequently, we calculated the mean score of the dimension for different categories of respondents (presented in Figure 31). First, we observed that the least educated within our sample, high school and college graduates, are the most willing to do the three aforementioned tasks. Their mean score on the latent variable is 7.2, larger than the graduates' (6.5) and the PhD students' (6). Also, people who live closer to Rosia Montană, namely those from Transylvania, seem to have the highest agentic disposition, with a score of 7.1. At the other extreme, those who live abroad only have a mean score of 5.9. We observed small differences between the younger and middle-aged participants whose mean scores were around 6.5; on the other hand, the over 60 obtained a mean score of 5.5. Differences also appear between the sexes. Females in our sample are apparently more willing to to partake in the three activities than the males, with respective mean scores of 7 and 6.1. Important differences also appear depending on the attitudes towards the project. Those against the project appear to possess the highest agentic disposition with an average score of 8, compared to 6 in the case of the project's supporters, and as expected, only 4.1 regarding the undecided.

Variance analysis and t-tests showed mostly non-significant differences between socio-demographic variables. For example, only the difference between men and women (0.9 mean difference) is statistically significant (t 2.22, df. 200, P 0.027). But a difference was observed between the project's opponents on the one hand, and

the supporters and undecided on the other (2.9 mean difference). This difference is also statistically significant (t 8.54, df. 255, P 0.000).
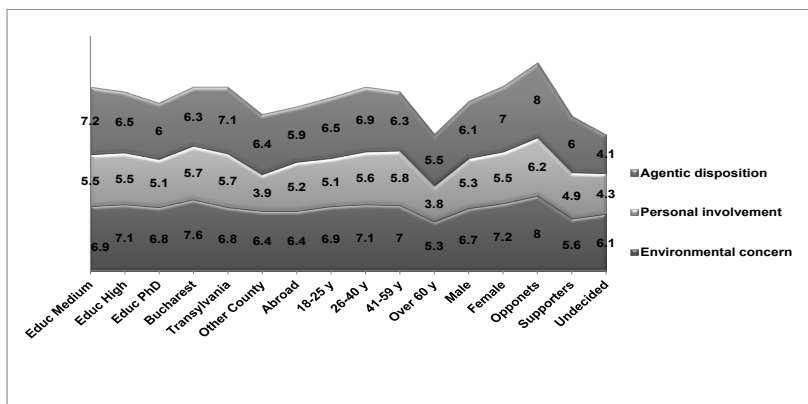


**Figure 31. Mean values for environmental concern, personal involvement and agentic disposition by different categories of subjects**

### 5.6.2    Free association results

### 5.6.2.1    Social representations of Roşia Montană

*5.6.2.1.1  Diversity and rarity indexes*

The very first analysis to be carried out on our corpus of freely associated terms about *Roşia Montană* sought to determine the presence (or absence) of a shared knowledge about our object, and to assess the existence of a structured social representation of *Roşia Montană*.

On the whole, 1333 expressions were associated to the stimulus *Roşia Montană*, of which 205 were single terms and 92 words that occurred only once. The diversity and rarity indexes, calculated without differentiating between groups, were respectively 0.15 and 0.44. These values suggest that our subjects share knowledge about the social object *Roşia Montană*.

The indexes for each independent group in the study are as follows:

- The project's opponents obtained a diversity index of .22 and a rarity index of .46
- The project's supporters obtained a diversity index of .28 and a rarity index of .53
- The undecided obtained a diversity index of .32 and a rarity index of .50.

In all three cases, we observed a rather low level of diversity in the corpora produced by our subjects. This in turn reveals a high level of stereotypy with regard to Roşia Montană. Also, around half of the expressions associated were hapax legomena. The two measures combined support the existence of at least one structured social representation of Roşia Montană within our sample.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the project's opponents' free associations were less varied than those of both other groups, hence suggesting that their social

representation of Roşia Montană is more structured than the others, especially the undecided. The following analyses will determine if differences in the structure and content of social representations would allow us to consider the existence of different social representations within the groups studied.

### 5.6.2.1.2 Candidates for the Central Core

In line with the structural approach to social representations developed on the basis of the *central core theory* first formulated by Jean-Claude Abric (1976, cited in Abric, 1994a, 1994b), we focused on the internal structure of the social representations of Roşia Montană within the three different groups included in the study in order to observe whether they are opposed. According to Flament and Rouquette (2003), two representations are opposed when they do not have the same central cores and when the groups to which they belong appraise at least one core element differently. From the frequency * rank distribution of the terms associated with 'Roşia Montană', we were able to detect which lexical elements are most likely to belong to the central core of the representation of Roşia Montană for each group studied. These elements, distributed and separated according to two statistical criteria, are shown in the Table 25.

**Table 25. Candidates for the central core of the social representation of Roşia Montană**

| OPPONENTS group (frequency >12; mean rank < 2.5) | SUPPORTERS group (frequency >10; mean rank < 2.6) | UNDECIDED group (frequency > 10; mean rank <2.5 |
|---|---|---|
| gold | gold | gold |
| theft | wealth | cyanide |
| nature | mining industry | mountain |
| patrimony | poverty | |

Focusing on the elements around which the representations of Roşia Montană are organized, we observe that there is only one element common to all three groups. For all our subjects, the connection between *Roşia Montană* and *gold* is highly relevant; this suggests that the Roşia Montană affair is basically interpreted as a *matter about gold*. Besides this common element, which can be considered prototypic for Roşia Montană, there are important differences between the potentially central elements that change depending on subjects' attitudes towards the Roşia Montană project.

For the project's opponents, Roşia Montană is a place loaded with numerous positive connotations (gold, nature, patrimony) but that is also under threat. Gold, which is Roşia Montană's most precious resource, can be stolen. Theft was linked to other words that were first and foremost associated to Roşia Montană, which is indicative of peoples' interpretation of the affair. The presence of this term in the central core and the absence of other terms about, for example, the environmental implications of building a mine in Roşia Montană, suggest that for our sample at least, the strongest reason for opposing the mine project is that it would be detrimental to the Romanian state.

The project's supporters paint a different picture of the issue, as demonstrated by dissimilar potential central elements. For them, Roşia Montană is a place essentially characterized by industrial mining practices, where gold is the only source of wealth. The threat, which is also present among the priority elements of the representation, is generated in this case by the area's socio-economic problems, especially poverty. The fact that two antonymic terms such as *wealth* and *poverty* are potentially present in the central core is, in our opinion, indicative of one of the *themata* that generates social representations in the Roşia Montană affair.

The representation of our undecided subjects seems to be organized around the concept of *gold* and *cyanide*, and the *mountain* becomes an element indicative of the village's name. The presence of cyanide among the potentially central elements is obviously due to the importance of this theme in the media's reports on this topic (see Section 4.3.1.2. in Chapter 4.).

Comparing the potential central elements for each group suggests a fundamentally different appreciation of Roşia Montană between the project's supporters and its opponents; on the one hand, *nature* and *patrimony*, and on the other, the *mining industry*. This fundamental difference is consistent with the contrasting representations of Roşia Montană promoted and transmitted by the players directly involved in the conflict.

The first implication of these results is that more than one social representation of Roşia Montană exists at one time in society. Moreover, the meanings associated to Roşia Montană by subjects with opposing attitudes towards the mining project lead us to confirm the existence of polemic social representations in lay thinking about the affair. The results relative to the potential central core of each group's representation will be considered and integrated into the following analysis.

### 5.6.2.1.3  Lexical correspondence analysis

This analysis was conducted in order to investigate more deeply the differences (but also similarities) in the lexical corpuses produced by subjects from the three different groups studied. As mentioned before, it was carried out using the software T-Lab; the active variable chosen for building the factors along with the associated words to the stimulus 'Roşia Montană' was the subjects' attitude regarding the mining project. The threshold value for the associated terms was set at 5.

Two factors were extracted from this analysis. The graphic representation of the results is presented in Figure 32.

The first (horizontal) factor alone explains 78.3% of data inertia. All relevant information regarding factor 1 is listed in Table 26. The first section of the table presents the active variables (words associated with the stimulus and the subjects' position regarding the mining project) that define this dimension, in terms of their absolute contribution to the construction of the factor.  The second section of this table presents the modalities of other independent variables not used for constructing the factors and that are significantly explained by this factor.

The positive semi-axis of this factor contains words associated to "Roşia Montană" by the project's opponents. The main line of argument here is focused on

LEMMAS-VARIABLES: ROSIA MONTANA

X = Fact. 1 (78.31%) ; Y = Fact. 2 (21.69%)
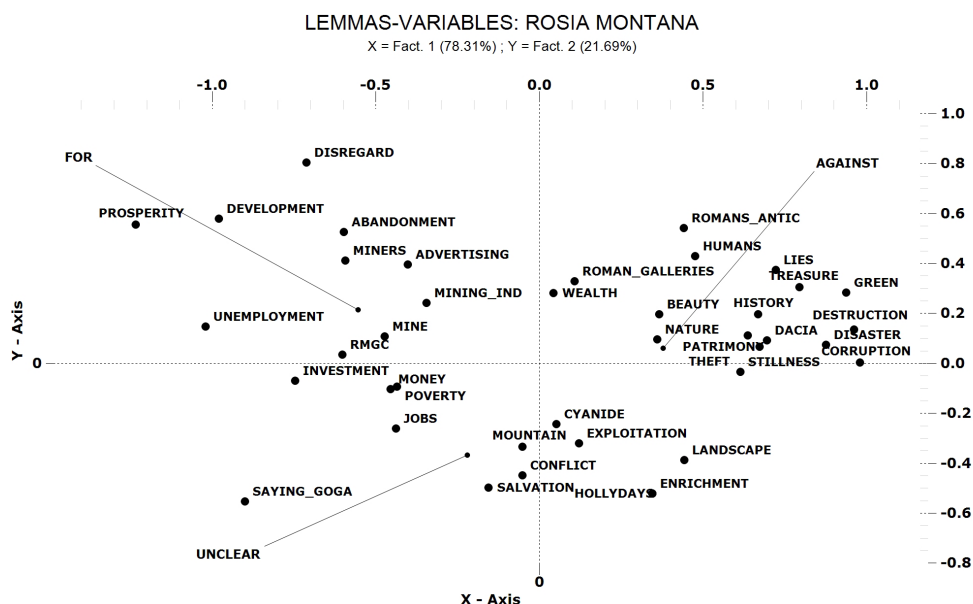


**Figure 32. Graphic representation of the correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by associations to the stimulus "Roşia Montană"**

the idea that the mine will bring about destruction. The reality of Roşia Montană is described in completely different terms, with no connection to the mining industry. The place's importance lies in its natural beauty (*nature, green, beauty, stillness*) and historical value (*history, patrimony, Dacia*[44]). The unwanted project is a threat to the place (*disaster, destruction, hazard*), it is not trusted (*lies*), and it is believed to be a *theft* made possible because of *corruption*. This kind of meaning attributed to Roşia Montană was provided essentially by highly educated respondents (PhDs), by subjects that felt strongly involved with the issue, and that had a strong willingness to act to support their position. Also, these are subjects with a direct experience of Roşia Montană.

The second (vertical) factor only explains 21.7% of data inertia. All relevant information about this factor is summarized in Table 27. Only answers from subjects with no clear attitude regarding the mine project had a noteworthy contribution to the construction of this factor. However, the test values of the other sub-groups of the attitudinal variable (4.72 for the sub-group "For"; 2.29 for the sub-group "Against") show the separation between the Undecided group (positioned towards the negative pole of the factor) and the groups of Supporters and Opponents on this factor (positioned to the positive pole of the factor). We can interpret this factor as opposing more general views about Roşia Montană, both the place (*mountain, landscape, holydays, exploitation*) and the case (*conflict, salvation, jobs, cyanide*),

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44    The ancient province of the Dacs, conquered by the Romans at the beginning of the 2nd century A.D.

to the specific arguments in favor or against building the mine in Roşia Montană, also identified on the first factor obtained. Regarding the illustrative variables used, analysis revealed the only significant positioning on the negative semi-axis of subjects over 60. Furthermore, 25 to 60 year olds who either live in the counties of Alba, Cluj or in another country, are significantly positioned on the positive semi-axis. These are moderately educated individuals with a low level of environmental awareness. Others in this area also manifest strong involvement in the Roşia Montană affair and a strong willingness to take action. More subjects in this area include those who know Roşia Montană from experience.

**Table 26. Defining active variables and significant illustrative variables of Factor 1, obtained from the correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by the stimulus "Roşia Montană"**

| POLE (-) | ABS.CONTR. | | POLE (+) | ABS.CONTR. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Active variables** | | | | | |
| **VAR** | FOR | 48.16% | **VAR** | AGAINST | 44.88% |
| --- | --------------- | --------- | --- | --------------- | --------- |
| **LEM** | unemployment | 10.45% | **LEM** | history | 5.44% |
| **LEM** | poverty | 4.31% | **LEM** | corruption | 4.47% |
| **LEM** | prosperity | 3.99% | **LEM** | theft | 4.33% |
| **LEM** | investment | 3.41% | **LEM** | disaster | 3.96% |
| **LEM** | development | 3.35% | **LEM** | patrimony | 3.59% |
| **LEM** | jobs | 3.18% | **LEM** | destruction | 3.10% |
| **LEM** | mining_ind | 2.61% | **LEM** | lies | 2.54% |
| **LEM** | saying_goga | 2.47% | **LEM** | nature | 2.15% |
| **LEM** | mine | 1.95% | **LEM** | treasure | 1.92% |
| **LEM** | RMGC | 1.88% | **LEM** | hazard | 1.92% |
| **LEM** | money | 1.63% | **LEM** | green | 1.92% |
| **LEM** | disregard | 1.55% | **LEM** | beauty | 1.64% |
| **LEM** | abandonment | 1.55% | **LEM** | stillness | 1.61% |
| | | | **LEM** | Dacia | 1.61% |
| | | | | | |
| **Illustrative variables** | | | | | |
| | Variable mode | **Test value** | | Variable mode | **Test value** |
| **ILL** | AGDISP_WEAK | -7.99 | **ILL** | AGDISP_STRONG | 3.89 |
| **ILL** | AGE_18TO25 | -2.33 | **ILL** | EDUC_PHD | 6.37 |
| **ILL** | AGE_OVER60 | -9.27 | **ILL** | PERSINV_STRONG | 2.87 |
| **ILL** | COUNTY_ALBA | -2.29 | **ILL** | PLACEEXP_YES | 3.69 |
| **ILL** | COUNTY_ARAD | -2.91 | | | |
| **ILL** | COUNTY_BRASOV | -3.76 | | | |
| **ILL** | EDUC_MEDIUM | -2.76 | | | |
| **ILL** | ENVCONC_LOW | -8.5 | | | |
| **ILL** | PERSINV_WEAK | -5.21 | | | |
| **ILL** | PLACEEXP_NO | -3.8 | | | |

**Table 27. Defining active variables and significant illustrative variables of Factor 2, obtained using correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by the stimulus "Roşia Montană"**

| POLE (-) | ABS.CONTR. | | POLE (+) | | ABS.CONTR. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Active variables** | | | | | |
| VAR | UNCLER | 69.66% | VAR | - | |
| --- | ---------------- | --------- | --- | | |
| LEM | mountain | 8.43% | LEM | disregard | 7.14% |
| LEM | conflict | 6.01% | LEM | mining_ind | 4.64% |
| LEM | salvation | 4.3% | LEM | wealth | 4.41% |
| LEM | jobs | 4.07% | LEM | abandonment | 4.26% |
| LEM | exploitation | 3.73% | LEM | development | 4.23% |
| LEM | cyanide | 3.7% | LEM | roman_galleries | 2.98% |
| LEM | saying_goga | 3.37% | LEM | prosperity | 2.93% |
| LEM | holydays | 2.14% | LEM | lies | 2.12% |
| LEM | enrichment | 2.14% | LEM | advertising | 1.99% |
| LEM | landscape | 2.12% | LEM | miners | 1.88% |
| LEM | | | LEM | beauty | 1.73% |
| LEM | | | LEM | history | 1.62% |
| LEM | | | LEM | romans_antiq | 1.45% |
| **Illustrative variables** | | | | | |
| | **Variable mode** | **Test value** | | **Variable mode** | **Test value** |
| ILL | AGE_OVER60 | -3.43 | ILL | AGDISP_STRONG | 2.43 |
| | | | ILL | AGE_26TO40 | 2.15 |
| | | | ILL | AGE_40TO59 | 2.8 |
| | | | ILL | COUNTY_ABROAD | 3.09 |
| | | | ILL | COUNTY_ALBA | 4.4 |
| | | | ILL | COUNTY_CLUJ | 3.89 |
| | | | ILL | EDUC_MEDIUM | 2.97 |
| | | | ILL | ENVCONC_LOW | 2.58 |
| | | | ILL | PERSINV_STRONG | 2.27 |
| | | | ILL | PLACEEXP_YES | 3.58 |

*5.6.2.1.4 Cluster analysis*

This stage of data analysis focused on hierarchical clustering of the objects in the factorial space generated by the previous correspondence analysis. The software best divided the corpus into just two clusters. Figure 33 presents the graph of clusters in the space detected by correspondence analysis.

By showing the chi-square value for each variable, the software allowed us to detect which modalities of the independent variables are significantly associated with each cluster. Thus, we determined that the lexical elements of the first cluster were produced most significantly by subjects in favor of the mining project (CHI²: 92.021), by subjects with low environmental awareness (CHI²: 11.21), weak personal involvement (CHI²: 13.18), weak agentic disposition (CHI²: 35.51), and

with no direct experience of the place Roşia Montană (CHI²: 10.502). Regarding the socio-demographic variables, only subjects with medium education (CHI²: 4.061) are significantly associated with this cluster.

## CLUSTERS & VARIABLES: ROSIA MONTANA
### X = Fact. 1 (78.31%) ; Y = Fact. 2 (21.69%)
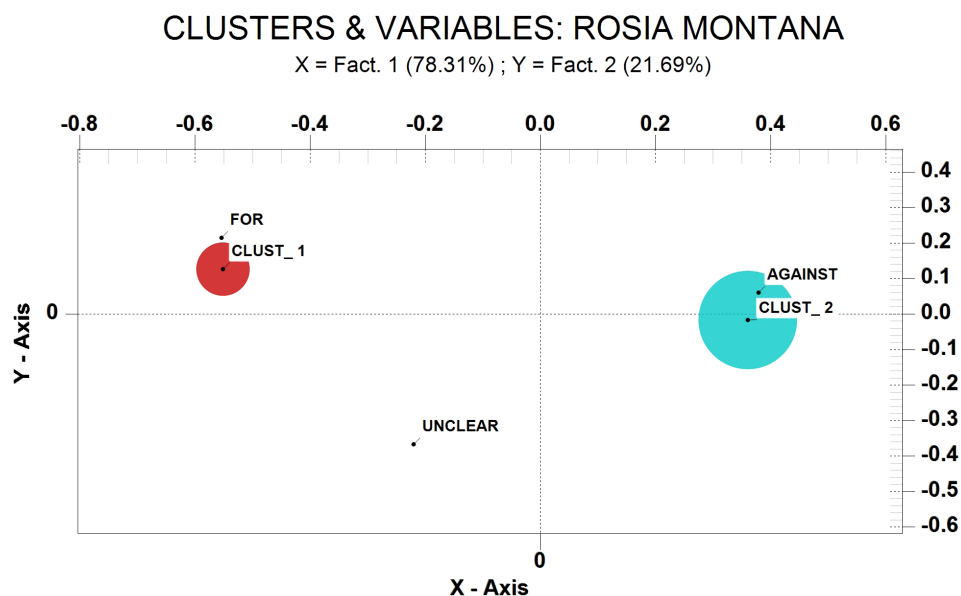


**Figure 33. Graphic representation of the clusters containing lexical elements associated to the stimulus "Roşia Montană" in the factorial space detected by correspondence analysis.**

The lexical elements that form the second cluster were significantly produced by subjects who oppose the mining project (CHI²: 102.713), who have a high level of environmental awareness (CHI²: 11.21), strong personal involvement with the Roşia Montană issue (CHI²: 13.18), strong agentic disposition (CHI²: 35.561), direct experience of the place Roşia Montană (CHI²: 10.502). PhD candidates (CHI²: 5.242) and residents of Cluj County (CHI²: 3.984) are the respondents significantly associated with the second cluster.

The first cluster includes one third of the lexical elements analyzed while the second is double that size[45]. The contents of each cluster are presented in Table 28. This dual distribution of lexical elements, supported by the equal distribution of undecided subjects in each cluster, clearly indicates the polarization of the semantic field.

The content of each cluster summarizes one of the contradictory representations constructed and conveyed by the players directly involved in the Roşia Montană conflict. For the project's supporters, the gold exploitation proposed by the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation represents a solution. The Roşia Montană area, strongly associated with the mining industry, is facing serious social problems (poverty,

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45   This is explainable by the fact that the number of opponents to the project was bigger in our sample.

unemployment, abandonment suffering). The proposed investment is a ray of hope for the inhabitants of the region - miners will have a job and the region will become prosperous. In this cluster, the presence of the term *advertising*[46] is very suggestive; it is used to indicate, more or less consciously, one of the sources of representation that they express. The current situation in Roșia Montană, represented in negative terms, is caused by the [authorities'] indifference and inefficiency in the management of economic problems.

**Table 28. Contents of the two clusters that regroup lexical elements associated with the stimulus "Roșia Montană"**

| 1st CLUSTER | 2nd CLUSTER | |
|---|---|---|
| gold | mountain | landscape |
| poverty | cyanide | environment |
| mining_industry | nature | motzi |
| jobs | Apuseni | village |
| unemployment | pollution | Traian_Basescu |
| mine | beauty | ecology |
| wealth | history | childhood |
| money | exploitation | Dacia |
| RMGC | Roman_galleries | stillness |
| Romania | corruption | home |
| investment | tourism | humans |
| suffering | conflict | relocation |
| abandonment | interests | holydays |
| development | theft | forest |
| advertising | disaster | protest |
| saying_goga | resources | green |
| disregard | patrimony | hayfestival |
| miners | manipulation | treasure |
| ore | lies | hazard |
| prosperity | destruction | company |
| profit | salvation | romans_antiq |
| project | politics | enrichment |
| hope | tradition | |

The terms found in the second cluster constitute the opposite representation of Roșia Montană, both the place and the case. In the representation of those opposing the project, the Roșia Montană place is valued through the beauty of nature, the importance of archeological and architectural heritage, the preservation of folk traditions, as well as through the Apuseni Mountains' distinctiveness, which is a

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46    We need to remind the reader that the period of data collection for this study coincided with the intense broadcasting of RMGC advertisements in favor of the beginning of the mining project on all the media channels.

powerful symbol of Romanian national identity. The mining project is seen as a threat to the environment and the community of Roşia Montană, and its achievement is equal to disaster and the theft of national wealth. The complicity of corrupt authorities represents another type of threat to Roşia Montană. All these are reasons for stopping the project and for saving Roşia Montană.

These results, together with the results from the previous analyses, allow us to consider the social representations of Roşia Montană expressed polemically by ordinary people.

### 5.6.2.2    The social representations of gold mining

#### 5.6.2.2.1  Diversity and rarity indexes

In total we collected 1261 associations to the stimulus *gold mining*, of which 242 were single terms and 124 hapax legomena. The values of the diversity index (0.19) and of the rarity index (0.51) allow us to assume the existence of a common understanding about this object of representation for our subjects.

Calculated separately for subjects of the three different groups, the values of the two indexes are as follows:

• A diversity index of .26 and a rarity index of .50 for the project's opponents
• A diversity index of .34 and a rarity index of .56 for the project's supporters
• A diversity index of .35 and a rarity index of .55 for the undecided group.

These results are very similar to those obtained in the case of associations to the stimulus *Roşia Montană*: the diversity indexes are quite small while the rarity indices are sufficiently large so as to consider the presence of structured social representations of this object for all three groups. The following analysis will attempt to detect differences in the structure and content of social representations that would allow us to validate the existence of dissimilar social representations in the groups studied.

#### 5.6.2.2.2  Candidates for the Central Core

Table 29 presents the lexical elements most likely to belong to the central core of the social representation of gold mining for each group studied, as well as the statistical thresholds used to define them.

**Table 29. Candidates for the central core of the social representation of gold mining**

| OPPONENTS group (frequency >12; mean rank < 2.5) | SUPPORTERS group (frequency >10; mean rank < 2.5) | UNDECIDED group (frequency > 10; Mean rank <2.5) |
|---|---|---|
| cyanide | jobs | *money* |
| pollution | *wealth* | jobs |
| *wealth* | hard work | *wealth* |
| *money* | *money* | hard work |
| | | cyanide |

We observe that two elements are common in all three lists: *money* and *wealth*. For all our subjects the link between gold mining and its economic outcomes is very important. Hence, it would seem that both of these elements, which all our subjects share, organize the social representation of gold mining. Beyond this common meaning, several inflections relate to the subject's specific position *vis-à*-vis gold mining in Roşia Montană. The opposition continues to associate gold mining with the negative environmental consequences this activity implies (*cyanide, pollution*). On the contrary, the project's supporters outline gold mining's positive economic outcomes; it creates *jobs* and is worthy of appreciation because of its difficulty (*hard work*). Interestingly, the list of significant elements produced by the undecided subjects summarizes both views of gold mining, combining the positive economic outcomes with the negative consequences for the environment. Lexical correspondence analysis will enable further exploration of the semantic field of associations to gold mining.

### 5.6.2.2.3 *Lexical correspondence analysis*

Figure 34 contains the results of this analysis, conducted on the corpus generated by the stimulus "gold mining". As in the previous case, attitudes and the lexical units played an active role in the construction of the factors. For these lexical units (lemmas), a threshold value was set at 5.

Two factors were extracted by correspondence analysis. The first explained 66.5% of data inertia. Information regarding defining words, active variables and significant illustrative variables is presented in the Table 30.
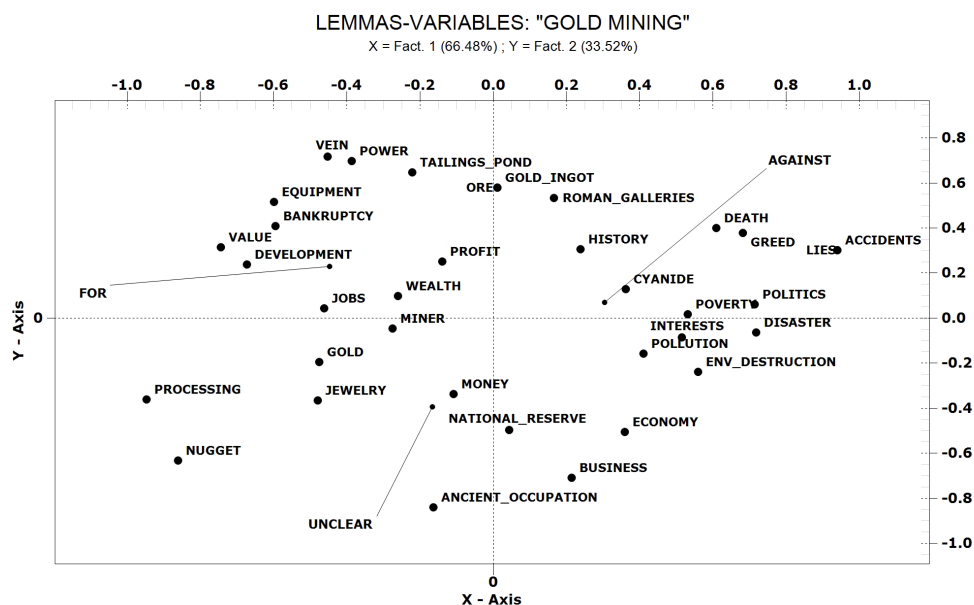


**Figure 34. Graphic representation of the results from the correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by associations to the stimulus "gold mining"**

Similar to the first factor extracted in the previous correspondence analysis, this factor opposes subjects with divergent attitudes about the mining project. Individuals on the negative pole of these attitudes support the mining project and outline the positive outcomes of gold mining, such as the creation of jobs, further development of Roşia Montană and enrichment. The terms *processing, nugget, gold, equipment* and *miner* objectify this kind of activity. The term *bankrupcy*, also present on the negative semi-axis of the first factor, is the only word with negative connotations on the list. This can be explained as objectifying the state of gold mining in Romania. These associations to gold mining were expressed by the same subjects found on the negative semi-axis of the first extracted factor in the case of the stimulus "Roşia Montană"; they are characterized by low environmental awareness, weak agentic disposition and medium education. They are either very young or over 40, and inhabit the counties of Brasov and Arad.

**Table 30. Defining active variables and significant illustrative variables of Factor 1, obtained from correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by the stimulus "gold mining"**

| POLE (-) | | ABS.CONTR. | POLE (+) | | ABS.CONTR. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Active variables** | | | | | |
| VAR | FOR | 48.98% | VAR | AGAINST | 44.77% |
| --- | ---------------- | --------- | --- | ---------------- | -------- |
| LEM | jobs | 9.39% | LEM | environmental destruction | 8.62% |
| LEM | development | 6.19% | LEM | pollution | 5.85% |
| LEM | processing | 5.46% | LEM | interests | 5.42% |
| LEM | wealth | 4.26% | LEM | cyanide | 4.15% |
| LEM | nugget | 2.81% | LEM | poverty | 3.87% |
| LEM | gold | 2.75% | LEM | lies | 3.36% |
| LEM | equipment | 2.72% | LEM | accidents | 3.36% |
| LEM | miner | 2.18% | LEM | disaster | 3.21% |
| LEM | value | 2.1% | LEM | greed | 3.18% |
| LEM | bankruptcy | 1.88% | LEM | politics | 2.22% |
| | | | LEM | death | 1.97% |
| | | | | | |
| **Illustrative variables** | | | | | |
| | Variable mode | Test value | | Variable mode | Test value |
| ILL | AGDISP_WEAK | -3.78 | ILL | AGDISP_STRONG | 2.36 |
| ILL | AGE_18TO25 | -2.51 | ILL | AGE_26TO40 | 2.25 |
| ILL | AGE_41TO59 | -2.86 | ILL | COUNTY_BUCHAREST | 2.99 |
| ILL | AGE_OVER60 | -5.59 | ILL | COUNTY_CLUJ | 3.37 |
| ILL | COUNTY_ARAD | -5.7 | ILL | EDUC_PHD | 4.62 |
| ILL | COUNTY_BRASOV | -1.99 | ILL | ENVCONC_HIGH | 2.25 |
| ILL | EDUC_MEDIUM | -3.19 | | | |
| ILL | ENVCONC_LOW | -8.99 | | | |

On the contrary, the positive semi-axis of this factor contains subjects who oppose the mining project, have high environmental awareness and strong agentic

disposition. They are also highly educated (PhD), reside in Bucharest or Cluj County, and are between 26 and 40 years old. For them, gold mining is a dangerous activity (*accidents, death*) that has a strong negative impact on the environment (*environmental destruction, pollution, cyanide, disaster*). Negative terms such as interest, lies, greed and politics suggest that this representation is anchored in a context created by their representation of the Roşia Montană affair.

**Table 31. Defining active variables and significant illustrative variables of Factor 2, obtained by correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by the stimulus "gold mining"**

| POLE (-) | ABS.CONTR. | | POLE (+) | ABS.CONTR. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Active variables** | | | | | |
| **VAR** | UNCLEAR | 70.02% | **VAR** | - | |
| **---** | ---------------- | --------- | **---** | ---------------- | --------- |
| **LEM** | money | 11.49% | **LEM** | power | 5.13% |
| **LEM** | ancient_occupat | 10.65% | **LEM** | ore | 5.05% |
| **LEM** | business | 4.54% | **LEM** | profit | 4.34% |
| **LEM** | national_reserve | 4.21% | **LEM** | equipment | 4.01% |
| **LEM** | nugget | 3.02% | **LEM** | vein | 3.88% |
| **LEM** | economy | 1.93% | **LEM** | tailings_pond | 3.8% |
| **LEM** | jewelry | 1.81% | **LEM** | Roman_galleries | 2.56% |
| | | | **LEM** | gold_ingot | 2.52% |
| | | | **LEM** | greed | 1.94% |
| | | | **LEM** | bankruptcy | 1.77% |
| | | | **LEM** | history | 1.7% |
| **Illustrative variables** | | | | | |
| | **Variable mode** | **Test value** | | **Variable mode** | **Test value** |
| **ILL** | AGE_OVER60 | -9.79 | **ILL** | COUNTY_ALBA | 3.65 |
| **ILL** | COUNTY_BRASOV | -5.33 | **ILL** | PLACEEXP_YES | 2.26 |
| **ILL** | PERSINV_WEAK | -3.42 | | | |
| **ILL** | PLACEEXP_NO | -2.7 | | | |

The second extracted factor explains 33.5% of data inertia. Relevant information regarding contributions to the construction of this factor and the significant positioning of subjects on its axis is presented in Table 31.

The key for interpreting this second factor is the distance to the object 'Roşia Montană'. On the negative semi-axis there are subjects who did not express a clear attitude about this issue, who do not feel personally involved, and who have no experience of Roşia Montană. They have a general view about gold mining, expressed through terms like *ancient occupation, business, money, national reserve.* They also mention the products of this activity (*nugget* – lump of gold in its natural state; *jewelry* – the end product).

A more specific reference to gold mining, principally related to gold mining in Roşia Montană, can be found on the positive semi-axis of the factor. The test values obtained for the modalities "against" (2.48) and "for" (4.75) of the attitude variable

indicate that both opponents and supporters of the mine project are significantly positioned on this side of the factorial axis. Subjects from Alba County (where Roşia Montană is located), and who by extension know the place directly, are also positioned here. The lists of terms defining the positive pole of the factor present dual facets of gold mining. There are words that describe industrial activities (*ore, equipment, vein, tailings pond, gold ingot*) and terms that relate to *power* and *profit* (most of them expressed by the project's supporters, as we can see in Figure 34). There are also words (expressed by the project's opposition) that place this activity in Roşia Montană's past (*Roman galleries, history*).

### 5.6.2.2.4  Cluster analysis results

The lexical elements associated to the stimulus "gold mining" were automatically reorganized into three clusters. Their location in the factorial space is represented in figure 35.
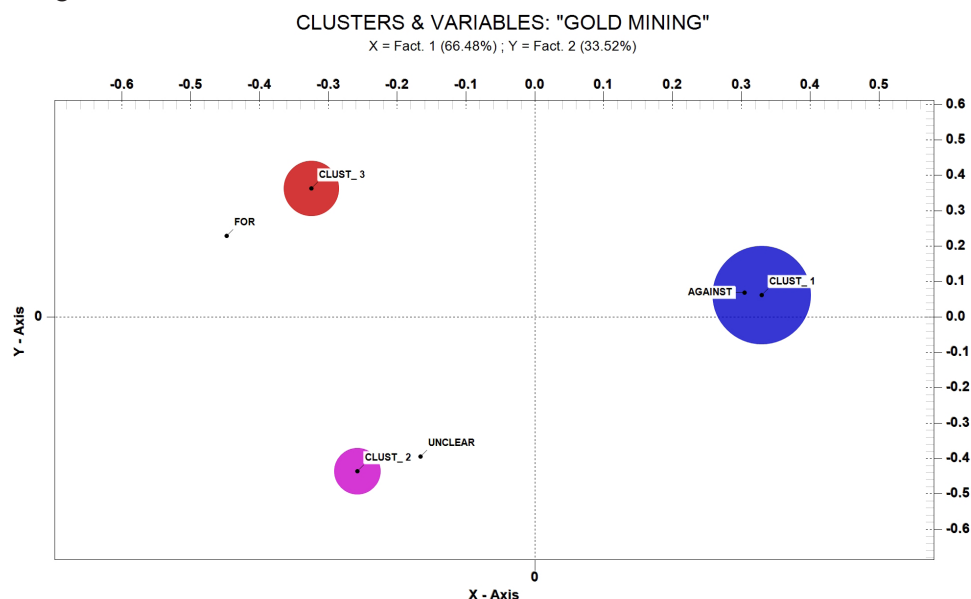


**Figure 35. Graphic representation of the clusters containing lexical elements associated to the stimulus "gold mining" in the factorial space detected by correspondence analysis.**

The first cluster includes 51.6% of all lexical elements. This cluster's content was most significantly produced by the project's opponents (CHI²: 58.594), by subjects with high environmental awareness (CHI²: 20.11), who know Roşia Montană (CHI²: 13.23) and who have strong agentic disposition (CHI²: 6.27). These subjects also have a PhD, come from Bucharest or Cluj County, and are between 26 and 40 years old. The elements that make up this cluster are presented in Table 32.

The second cluster includes 21.6% of the lexical elements. These were significantly more associated to gold mining by undecided subjects (CHI²: 35.951), who have never been to Roşia Montană (CHI²: 13.469), and who do not feel involved

with the Roşia Montană affair (CHI²: 6.184).

The third cluster contains 26.6% of the overall corpus, with words generally expressed by the prject's supporters (CHI²: 57.976) and who have a low level of environmental awareness (CHI²: 17.976).

**Table 32. Contents of the three clusters combining lexical elements associated to the stimulus "gold mining".**

| 1st CLUSTER | | 2nd CLUSTER | 3rd CLUSTER |
|---|---|---|---|
| cyanide | disaster | money | wealth |
| hard_work | greed | gold | jobs |
| pollution | pit | national_reserve | profit |
| underground | enrichment | mine | miner |
| hazard | death | ancient_occupation | development |
| env_destruction | extraction | jewelry | equipment |
| exploitation | industry | processing | ore |
| tradition | politics | opportunity | technology |
| poverty | corruption | business | Romania |
| interests | illness | safety | bankruptcy |
| toxicity | accidents | nugget | power |
| resources | unprofitability | economy | tailings_pond |
| dirt | lies | ecology | gold_ingot |
| Roşia Montană | tailings | | value |
| investment | | | vein |
| history | | | roman_galleries |

It would seem that each cluster varies from a negative image (1st cluster) to a more positive one (3rd cluster), both attributed specifically to gold mining in Roşia Montană. Somewhere in the middle, we find a more general view of gold mining with no explicit reference to gold mining in Roşia Montană. To determine whether there are one, two, or even three social representations of gold mining in this case, these results must be taken into consideration alongside those obtained by analyzing the hierarchical associations that put into light two potential central elements common to the three groups studied. A cautious solution would be to support the existence of one single social representation of gold mining, shared by all our subjects and organized around the terms "wealth" and "money", and whose periphery strongly varies according to the divergent objectifications surrounding the Roşia Montană affair.

### 5.6.2.3   Social representations of the environment

*5.6.2.3.1  Diversity and rarity indexes*

Overall, 1267 associations to the stimulus "the environment" were collected, of which 239 were single terms and 122 were hapax legomena. The diversity index is 0.18 and the rarity index is 0.51, again supporting the existence of a common

meaning among respondents.

Calculated separately for each group studied, the respective values are:

- A diversity index of 0.25 and a rarity index of 0.50 for the project's opponents
- A diversity index of 0.38 and a rarity index of 0.58 for the project's supporters
- A diversity index of 0.34 and a rarity index of 0.61 for the undecided

Similar to the previous cases discussed, the vocabulary produced by opponents to the mine project is less varied than the vocabulary for the two other groups. Still, the combination of the two values obtained for all three groups leads us to consider the existence of a structured representation of the environment.

### 5.6.2.3.2  *Candidates for the central core*

For each group, the following table presents the lexical elements most likely to belong to the central core of the social representation of gold mining, as well as the statistical threshold used for their determination.

**Table 33. Candidates for the central core of the social representation of the environment**

| OPPONENTS group (frequency >19; mean rank < 2.5) | SUPPORTERS group (frequency >14; mean rank < 2.6) | UNDECIDED group (frequency > 10; Mean rank <2.5 |
|---|---|---|
| protection | *pollution* | *pollution* |
| *pollution* | protection | fresh air |
| green | forest | green |
| health | | nature |
| nature | | |
| fresh air | | |

The common element in all three lists is *pollution*. In addition, both the project's opponents and supporters share a prescriptive element linked to the environment: *protection*, whereas *fresh air*, *green* and *nature* are shared by the project's opponents and the undecided. However, no contrast could be identified between elements associated to the environment according to attitudes towards the mining project. Contrary to our expectations, the *environment* cannot be considered as the object of a polemic social representation. Lexical correspondence analysis will reveal which dimensions organize the semantic field resulting from the free associations to this inductor.

### 5.6.2.3.3  *Lexical correspondence analysis*

Figure 36 shows the results of a correspondence analysis carried out on the corpus of associations to the stimulus "environment".

Two factors were extracted from correspondence analysis. The first (horizontal) factor  explains 62.6% of data inertia. Information regarding defining words and active variable subgroups, as well as significant illustrative variables are presented in Table 34.

LEMMAS-VARIABLES: "ENVIRONMENT"
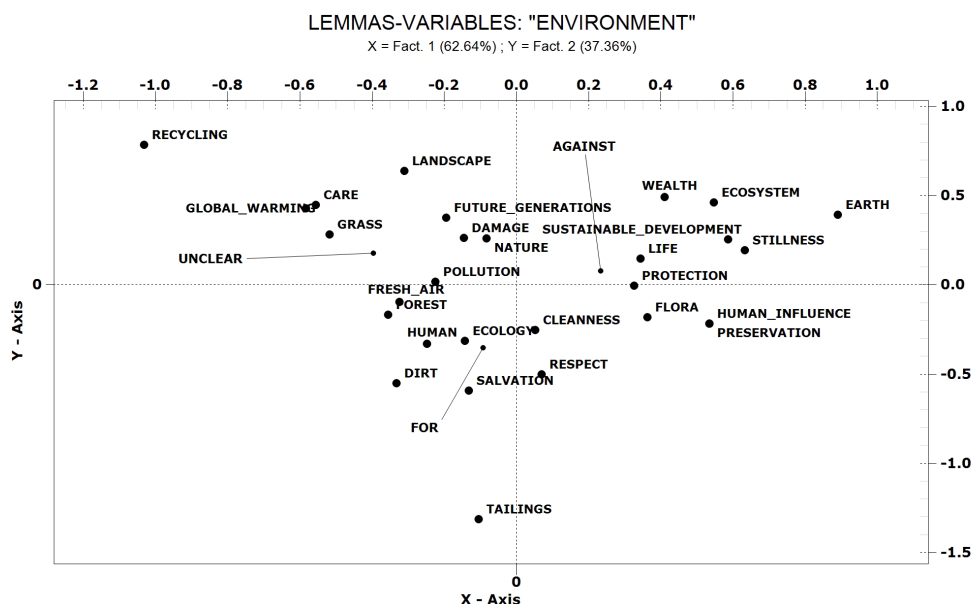X = Fact. 1 (62.64%) ; Y = Fact. 2 (37.36%)

**Figure 36. Graphic representation of the results from the correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by associations to the stimulus "environment"**

**Table 34. Defining active variables and significant illustrative variables of Factor 1, obtained from correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by the stimulus "environment"**

| POLE (-) | | ABS.CONTR. | POLE (+) | | ABS.CONTR. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Active variables** | | | | | |
| VAR | UNCLEAR | 56.25% | VAR | AGAINST | 40.72% |
| --- | ---------------- | --------- | --- | ---------------- | --------- |
| LEM | care | 7.23% | LEM | stillness | 8.91% |
| LEM | fresh_air | 6.77% | LEM | protection | 8.11% |
| LEM | recycling | 6.23% | LEM | earth | 5.57% |
| LEM | forest | 6.05% | LEM | life | 5.52% |
| LEM | pollution | 5.17% | LEM | sustainable_dev | 4.83% |
| LEM | global_warming | 3.58% | LEM | ecosystem | 2.45% |
| LEM | grass | 1.89% | LEM | preservation | 2.34% |
| LEM | | | LEM | human_influence | 2.34% |
| LEM | | | LEM | flora | 2.16% |
| **Illustrative variables** | | | | | |
| | Variable mode | Test value | | Variable mode | Test value |
| ILL | AGDISP_WEAK | -2.73 | ILL | AGE_41TO59 | 2.2 |
| ILL | AGE_OVER60 | -5.67 | ILL | COUNTY_BRASOV | 2.81 |
| ILL | ENVCONC_LOW | -2.53 | ILL | PERSINV_STRONG | 2.3 |
| ILL | PERSINV_WEAK | -3.02 | ILL | PLACEEXP_YES | 3.53 |
| ILL | PLACEEXP_NO | -2.29 | | | |

With regard to the first factor, subjects with no clear attitude towards the mine construction project and its opponents are positioned differently. However, after close inspection of the contents both lists of defining words, we cannot identify any noteworthy opposition in their views expressed about the environment.

The same is also true for the second extracted factor that explains 37.4 % of data inertia and opposes the project's supporters to all other respondents (relevant information about this second factor is presented in Table 35). Even if they used different words to signify the environment, all subjects have a unifying vision of the environment, its problems and how to resolve them.

**Table 35. Defining active variables and significant illustrative variables of Factor 2, obtained from correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by the stimulus "environment"**

| POLE (-) | ABS.CONTR. | | POLE (+) | ABS.CONTR. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Active variables** | | | | |
| VAR | FOR | 0.7288 | VAR | - | |
| --- | --------------- | -------- | --- | --------------- | -------- |
| LEM | tailings | 0.1690 | LEM | care | 0.0793 |
| LEM | dirt | 0.0475 | LEM | recycling | 0.0605 |
| LEM | cleanness | 0.0442 | LEM | landscape | 0.0480 |
| LEM | respect | 0.0441 | LEM | nature | 0.0479 |
| LEM | salvation | 0.0411 | LEM | global_warming | 0.0324 |
| LEM | human | 0.0318 | LEM | ecosystem | 0.0295 |
| LEM | ecology | 0.0251 | LEM | future_generations | 0.0277 |
| LEM | forest | 0.0226 | LEM | wealth | 0.0237 |
| LEM | | | LEM | damage | 0.0191 |
| | | | | | |
| **Illustrative variables** | | | | |
| | Variable mode | Test value | | Variable mode | Test value |
| | - | | ILL | AGE_26TO40 | 2.38 |
| | | | ILL | AGE_OVER60 | 3.1 |
| | | | ILL | COUNTY_BUCHAREST | 3.24 |
| | | | ILL | EDUC_PHD | 4.58 |
| | | | ILL | GENDER_MALE | 2.12 |
| | | | ILL | PERSINV_LOW | 2.51 |

### 5.6.2.3.4  Cluster analysis

The best criteria suggested by the software for cluster determination divided the lexical corpuses into three clusters. As shown in Figure 37, the first cluster includes 71.7% of all lexical elements, and is located very close to the intersection of the factorial axes. Statistical measures indicate that this dominant cluster is most significantly representative of respondents who support the mining project ($CHI^2$: 16.548) and who know little of Roşia Montană ($CHI^2$: 4.519). The second cluster contains words most significantly produced by undecided respondents

(CHI²: 26298), and with only 5 lexical elements, it only represents 9.4% of the whole corpus. The third cluster contains 18.8% of lexical elements, and is most significantly representative of opponents to the mining project (CHI²: 39.61) and subjects with extensive knowledge of Roşia Montană (CHI²: 7.517). The lexical elements contained in each cluster are presented in Table 36.



**CLUSTERS & VARIABLES: "ENVIRONMENT"**
X = Fact. 1 (62.64%) ; Y = Fact. 2 (37.36%)

**Figure 37. Graphic representation of the clusters containing lexical elements associated to the stimulus "environment" in the factorial space detected by correspondence analysis.**

**Table 36. Contents of the three clusters organizing the lexical elements associated to the stimulus "environment"**

| 1st CLUSTER | | | 2nd CLUSTER | 3rd CLUSTER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| pollution | human | river | care | protection |
| green | mountain | responsibility | global_warming | life |
| fresh_air | trees | respect | landscape | stillness |
| forest | damage | future | grass | sustainable_dev |
| water | flora | dirt | recycling | disaster |
| health | ecology | lake | | biodiversity |
| nature | resources | unprotected | | ecosystem |
| cleanness | deforestation | preservation | | purity |
| beauty | tourism | human_infl | | earth |
| disregard | waste | oxygen | | wealth |
| fauna | cyanide | salvation | | |
| destruction | future_gen | tailings | | |

Four different types of analysis led to corroborate our results, and all indicate the existence of a dominant social representation of the environment shared by those who participated in the study. This representation is structured around the central elements *pollution* and *protection*. The environment is essentially seen as

endangered and in need of protection because of pollution. Some elements of the representation describe the environment's positive features (*fresh air, green, forest, water, nature, mountain,* etc), whereas others suggest the negative influences of human activity on the environment (*pollution, destruction, disaster, dirt, damage, deforestation, waste, global warming*). The environment is also seen as a value (*health, life, purity, wealth, beauty*). The representation contains prescriptive elements regarding the Man-environment relationship  (*responsibility, respect, care, future generations*) and concrete solutions related to environmental protection (*recycling, sustainable development*). Some terms associated to the environment explicitly refer to the impact of constructing the mine in Roșia Montană (*cyanide, tailings*), thus giving shape to the threats implied by the mining project.

### 5.6.2.4   The social representations of foreign investor

#### 5.6.2.4.1  Diversity and rarity indexes

With a corpus of 1237 words containing 286 hapax legomena, the stimulus *foreign investor* obtained the smallest number of associations. The diversity and rarity indexes for the entire sample are respectively 0.23 and 0.54. Calculated separately for each group, the diversity and rarity indexes are respectively:
- 0.29 and 0.61 for the project's opponents
- 0.39 and 0.56 for the project's supporters
- 0.47 and 0.67 for the undecided

All three diversity indexes are higher than those in previously discussed cases, especially for the undecided subjects. This variety in the corpuses obtained for this inductor could suggest the presence of a less structured representation of *foreign investors*. The following analyses will decide whether this is indeed an issue to be considered.

#### 5.6.2.4.2  Candidates for the central core

Table 37 presents the lexical elements most likely to be central in the social representations of foreign investors for each group.

**Table 37. Candidates for the central core of the social representation of foreign investor**

| OPPONENTS group (frequency >12; mean rank < 2.5) | SUPPORTERS group (frequency >12; mean rank < 2.2) | UNDECIDED group (frequency > 10; Mean rank <2.5 |
|---|---|---|
| *money* profiteering business *opportunity* thief | jobs *money* *opportunity* | *money* interests *opportunity* |

In this case, the situation is almost identical to that of the inductor *gold mining*. Two common elements, *money* and *opportunity*, both refer to the economic

advantages of involving foreign investors. The project's supporters, for whom foreign investors also create *jobs,* outline these advantages further. On the contrary, the project's opponents seem to express contrasting views about the presence of foreign investors. For them, besides considering the presence of foreign investors as an *opportunity* to *earn money*, they are objectified as a negative character (*profiteering* and *thief)*. The same negative connotation is suggested by the term *interests* on the undecided subjects' list. The following analyses will allow further exploration of the semantic field of associations generated by the inductor *foreign investor*.

### 5.6.2.4.3  Lexical correspondence analysis

The results of this method of analysis are presented in Figure 38. As before, the words associated with the stimulus and the variable attitude regarding the mining project had an active role in the construction of the factors, two of which were extracted.

The first extracted factor alone explains 79% of data inertia. Relevant information regarding this factor is summarized in Table 38. This factor denotes a clear opposition between the mining project's supporters and opponents. Further evidence of this opposition is found through comparison of the lists with the defining words of each factor. The project's supporters are located on the negative pole of the factor. They share a positive representation of foreign investors, and emphasize both their benefits (*development, jobs, help, capital, investment*) and the positive traits of the person playing that role (*seriousness, know-how, honest*). This view is mainly expressed by adults from Alba County, aged between 41 and 59, and who
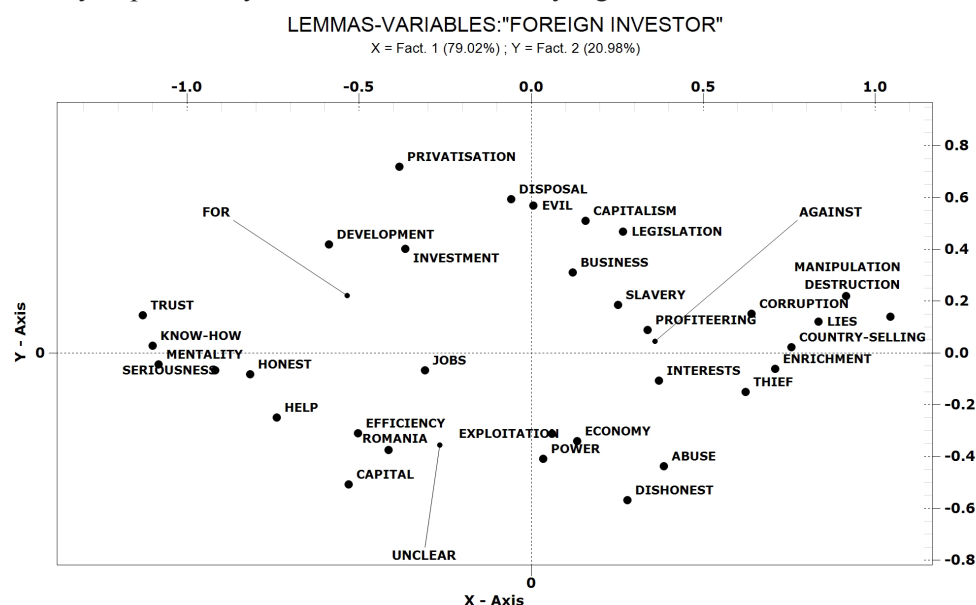


**Figure 38. Graphic representation of the results obtained from correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by associations to the stimulus "foreign investor"**

manifest a low level of environmental awareness, weak personal involvement and weak agentic disposition.

A contrasting view of foreign investors can be found on the positive pole of the factor, where opponents to the mine project are located. Only negative terms are used to describe the presence of an institutition and the personal traits of the foreign investor. The latter is considered a *profiteering thief*, who practices *corruption, manipulation, destruction* and *slavery* to pursue his *enrichment interests*. The presence of a foreign investor is equivalent to "selling the country", an expression that gained much success from the beginning of Romanian capitalism after 1989. This representation is most significantly expressed by young adults (between 18 and 25 years old), elderly subjects (over 60), by inhabitants of Cluj County, and who have a high level of environmental awareness, feel strongly involved with the Roşia Montană affair, and who also have a strong willingness to act to support their position regarding the mining project.

**Table 38. Defining active variables and significant illustrative variables of Factor 1, obtained from correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by the stimulus "foreign investor"**

| POLE (-) | | ABS.CONTR. | POLE (+) | | ABS.CONTR. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Active variables** | | | | | |
| **VAR** | FOR | 45.58% | **VAR** | AGAINST | 44.38% |
| **---** | --------------- | --------- | **---** | --------------- | --------- |
| **LEM** | development | 6.43% | **LEM** | lies | 7.64% |
| **LEM** | seriousness | 6 % | **LEM** | profiteering | 7.1% |
| **LEM** | know-how | 5.3 % | **LEM** | corruption | 5.26% |
| **LEM** | trust | 4.18% | **LEM** | thief | 5.13% |
| **LEM** | jobs | 3.89% | **LEM** | destruction | 4.12% |
| **LEM** | mentality | 3.21% | **LEM** | interests | 3.99% |
| **LEM** | honest | 2.92% | **LEM** | slavery | 3.46% |
| **LEM** | help | 2.09% | **LEM** | country-selling | 3.13% |
| **LEM** | capital | 1.97% | **LEM** | manipulation | 2.75% |
| **LEM** | investment | 1.83% | **LEM** | enrichment | 2.68% |
| | | | | | |
| **Illustrative variables** | | Test value | | | Test value |
| | **Variable mode** | | | **Variable mode** | |
| **ILL** | AGDISP_WEAK | -4.09 | **ILL** | AGDISP_STRONG | 3.78 |
| **ILL** | AGE_41TO59 | -5.06 | **ILL** | AGE_18TO25 | 2.49 |
| **ILL** | COUNTY_ALBA | -3.77 | **ILL** | AGE_OVER60 | 4.96 |
| **ILL** | ENVCONC_LOW | -8.24 | **ILL** | COUNTY_CLUJ | 5.11 |
| **ILL** | PERSINV_WEAK | -2.32 | **ILL** | ENVCONC_HIGH | 3.02 |
| | | | **ILL** | PERSINV_STRONG | 3.07 |

The second factor, less important than the first, explains 21% of data inertia. Relevant information about this factor is presented in Table 39. Only the undecided subjects contribute notably to the construction of this factor. The subjective psychological dimensions taken into account did not prove to be significantly

related to this factor. Inhabitants of Arad County have a statistically significant position on the negative semi-axis of this factor, while adults between 41 and 59 years old and inhabitants of Alba County are located on the positive semi-axis. The lists of defining words on both sides of the factorial axis contain both negative and positive terms related to the foreign investor, some being considered also definitive of the first factor. Compared to the first factor however, the accent here is less on particular traits (negative or positive) of the foreign investor represented as a person, and more on the consequences of foreign investment, represented as an economic practice.

**Table 39. Defining active variables and significant illustrative variables of Factor 2, obtained from correspondence analysis on the corpus generated by the stimulus "foreign investor"**

| POLE (-) | ABS.CONTR. | POLE (+) | ABS.CONTR. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Active variables** | | | |
| **VAR** UNCLEAR | 67.8% | **VAR** | |
| --- ---------------- | --------- | --- ---------------- | --------- |
| **LEM** capital | 9.14% | **LEM** development | 12.27% |
| **LEM** exploitation | 4.21% | **LEM** investment | 8.36% |
| **LEM** dishonest | 3.32% | **LEM** privatization | 7.46% |
| **LEM** power | 2.77% | **LEM** disposal | 5.09% |
| **LEM** efficiency | 2.37% | **LEM** business | 4.77% |
| **LEM** abuse | 2.36% | **LEM** evil | 3.34% |
| **LEM** economy | 2.14% | **LEM** capitalism | 3.23% |
| **LEM** Romania | 2.02% | **LEM** legislation | 3.18% |
| **LEM** | | **LEM** slavery | 2.12% |
| **Illustrative variables** Variable mode | Test value | Variable mode | Test value |
| **ILL** COUNTY_ARAD | -2.13 | **ILL** AGE_41TO59 | 3.48 |
| **ILL** | | **ILL** COUNTY_ALBA | 2.34 |

### 5.6.2.4.4 Cluster analysis

Finally, the objects in the semantic space obtained from the previous correspondence analysis were grouped into clusters. The best partition indicated by the software divided the lexical corpus into three clusters. The position of the clusters in the factorial space is shown in Figure 39, while the lexical elements that are contained in each cluster are listed in Table 40.

The first cluster mostly contains words associated with the stimulus *foreign investor* by subjects who are against the mining project (CHI²: 85.547), by subjects who have a high level of environmental awareness (CHI²: 16.529), strong agentic disposition (CHI²: 13.899) and who also think of themselves as being strongly involved with the Roşia Montană affair (CHI²: 6.921). They portray *foreign investor* in very negative terms, regardless of whether it is objectified as a person or as an economic practice. The person is a *dishonest profiteer, a thief,* and acts in pursuit of

CLUSTERS & VARIABLES:"FOREIGN INVESTOR"
X = Fact. 1 (79.02%) ; Y = Fact. 2 (20.98%)
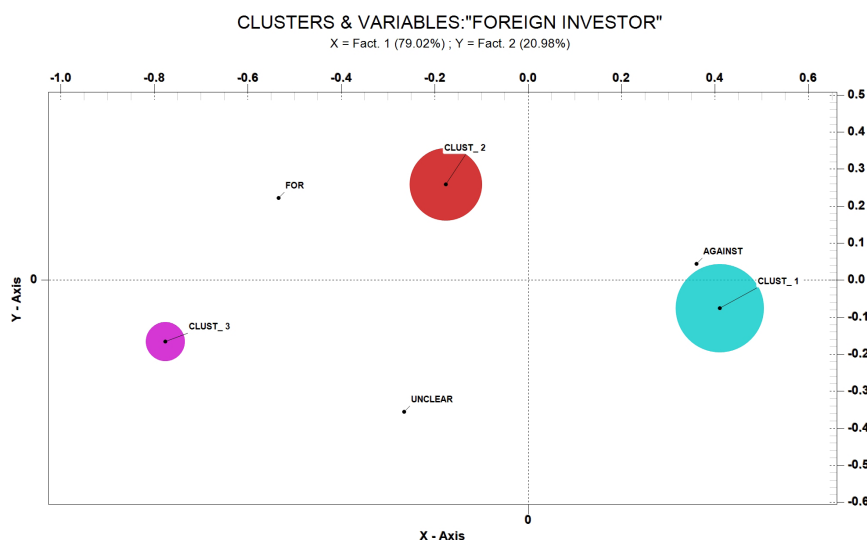


**Figure 39. Graphic representation of the clusters containing lexical elements associated with the stimulus "foreign investor" in the factorial space detected by correspondence analysis.**

his/her own interests (a term with rather negative connotations) in making a profit. The multinational that represents the foreign investor holds all the power, which is not used for the noblest of purposes (*manipulation, fraud, disregard, destruction*). The relationship between the employer (foreign investor) and the employee is also described in very negative terms (*exploitation, abuse*). Work is considered porrly paid (*cheap labor*) and even likened to slavery. Abuse is possible because of politicians' involvement (*politics, corruption, bribery*). Any benefits brought about by the presence of a foreign investor are *called into question*. A particular term, *country selling,* summarizes the slogan "we shall not sell our country", a leitmotiv for the beginning of Romanian capitalism is 1989 as a form of resistance to the pressures of the privatization of State economy.

The second cluster corresponds to supporters of the mining project (CHI²: 38.175), to subjects with low environmental awareness (CHI²: 5.986) and weak agentic disposition (CHI²: 4.407). The terms contained within this cluster form a completely different representation of foreign investors, mainly objictified as an economic practice. Positive outcomes for the State's economy, including the creation of *jobs,* earning *money,* gaining *wealth* and *technology,* being an *opportunity for development* and *economic growth* are outlined here. The presence of a foreign investor is seen as a *hope* and should be encouraged by appropriate *legislation* and *facilities.* The relationship between the foreign investor and the State is described in terms of *partnership.* Some terms in this cluster leave room for opposing interpretations, such as the terms *disrespect* or *evil.* The foreign investor may be the one showing *disrespect*, or, on the contrary, may be *disrespected*. However, the fact that this term can be found among those generally portraying a positive conception of the foreign investor leads us to validate to second version rather than the first. The foreign investor may very well be evil, but it could also be considered a *necessary* evil. The fact that the foreign

investor directly benefits from the activities in Romania means that Romanian wealth is being alienated (disposal), a less radical term than "selling the country"!

The third cluster is significantly associated with both supporters (CHI²: 17.977) and undecided subjects (CHI²: 20.299), and again with subjects with low environmental awareness (CHI²: 7.721) and low agentic disposition (7.937). The terms in this cluster form a positive image of the foreign investor, who is merely seen here as a person (seriousness, efficiency, know-how, honest, trust). The presence of the investor is beneficial as an aid for overcoming the difficult economic situation faced by Romania.

**Table 40. Contents of the three clusters containing lexical elements associated with the stimulus "foreign investor"**

| 1st CLUSTER | | 2nd CLUSTER | | 3rd CLUSTER |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| profit | power | money | disrespect | capital |
| interests | multinational | jobs | disposal | seriousness |
| profiteering | hazard | opportunity | capitalism | efficiency |
| thief | abuse | development | partnership | know-how |
| exploitation | manipulation | investment | facilities | honest |
| fraud | dishonest | business | evil | Romania |
| lies | employees | wealth | correctness | help |
| corruption | cheap labor | technology | | trust |
| disregard | country-selling | ec_growth | | poverty |
| bribery | enrichment | taxes | | mentality |
| slavery | destruction | hope | | |
| loss | economy | legislation | | |
| politics | uncertainty | privatisation | | |

Each method confirmed the existence of contrasting meanings attributed to the foreign investor by both opposing groups (supporters vs. opponents of the Roşia Montană mining project). Nevertheless, we were also able to identify some common meanings between groups; this plus the results obtained through hierarchical association, indicates a high probability that these common elements will also turn out to be central. As for the social representation of gold mining studied here, it would seem that there is one single social representation of the foreign investor organized around the terms *money* and *opportunity*. Alternatively, a more daring solution would be to consider that several representations (at least 2) of the foreign investor exist, and that analyzing their verbal content would lead to think of them as polemic.

### 5.6.3     Motives for opposing or supporting the project

The questionnaire also included a list of reasons for opposing or supporting the mining project that the corresponding group had to choose. First, we will present the main reasons for opposing the project and how they include latent variables.

Table 41 presents the 18 possible reasons for opposing the project. One of the main reasons is the threat of cyanide pollution and leftover exploitation. Around 83% of those

opposed to the project chose these reasons. Other important motives are linked to the destruction of archeological remains, the company's corrupt practices, or the destruction of the area's beauty. These reasons were very important for around 65% of those against the project. At the other extreme, some motives did not seem important to our respondents. For example, the impact on relationships with neighboring countries didn't seem at all important for around 21% of the project's opponents included in our sample. Moreover, maintaining the gold reserve was unimportant for around 16% of the sample.

Multiple factor analyses were carried out to determine if any latent variables could explain the reasons chosen by the respondents. Initial analysis showed that four factors adequately explain the data. An oblimin rotation led to a solution with a relatively clear distribution of the items with regard to the latent variables. The first dimension was named "Against 1" and is mainly comprised of reasons linked to the destruction of the mountains, the community, its archeological heritage, houses and natural beauty. This dimension also includes some additional reasons like the locals' refusal of the project and the violation of property rights. The second dimension, "Against 2", is mainly representative of the project's insufficient rewards, whether they are monetary or otherwise, with its negative impact on international relations and the involvement of a foreign company. This dimension also includes the idea that the gold should not be exploited yet. The third dimension, "Against 3", includes two main reasons. The first is cyanide pollution and the second is the effect of residues (tailings) of the mine's construction and their impact on the environment. The final dimension, "Against 4", contains reasons linked to the company (it is not serious or corrupt), and to the fact that the project does not respect the law. Cronbach's Alpha indicates moderate to high reliability. The first and third dimensions have the highest reliability (0.845), followed by the second dimension (0.745) and the fourth with the lowest score (0.684).

Table 42 represents the mean value of key groups for the four identified dimensions. Attitudes towards the project are not included in the table as only those against the project answered these questions. The first dimension reveals no remarkable differences in subjects' level of education. It would seem, however, that the place of residence has an impact. It appears that the area's destruction is the main reason for opposing the project, especially for those that live in Romania, but not in Transylvania or Bucharest (mean value of 8.5). At the other extreme are those who live abroad, with a mean value on this dimension of only 6.6. Different views regarding this dimension are also present when we compare the two sexes. The destruction of the mountain, houses or archeological sites is more important to the females than the male (7.9 in average as opposed to 7). The overall mean value obtained on this dimension places the included reasons in third place for opposing the mine.

The second dimension, which includes reasons like the project's insufficient rewards, keeping the gold, the deterioration of international relations or the fact that the company in charge of the project is foreign, is the most important, especially for the less educated subjects, referring here to those with high school diplomas (7.3, 1 point higher than PhD graduates). These reasons seem to be more important for those who reside in Transylvania or abroad, with a mean value of 7.1, as opposed to those who live in Bucharest with a mean value of 6.3, or in other parts of the country with a mean value of 6. This is

**Table 41. Reasons for opposing the project (only for subjects against the project)**

|  | Not at all | A little | A lot | Very much |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The project is destroying the mountains by opencast mining. | ,0% | 7,1% | 25,5% | **67,4%** |
| The use of cyanide in the process of gold extraction represents a major threat. | ,0% | 1,4% | 14,9% | **83,7%** |
| The residues left after the exploitation (Tailings, waste pond dam) represent a major threat. | ,0% | 3,5% | 14,9% | **81,6%** |
| The project is destroying the community of Roşia Montană by the resettlement of the population. | 2,8% | 12,8% | 32,6% | **51,8%** |
| The project implies the demolition of the houses and the churches (some of which have a historic value). | 2,8% | 7,8% | 27,7% | **61,7%** |
| The project implies the destruction of the archaeological remains from the area. | ,7% | 7,8% | 22,0% | **69,5%** |
| Romania's gold resources should remain unexploited for the time being. | 16,3% | 24,8% | 22,0% | **36,9%** |
| The project will contribute to the deterioration of the relations with our neighboring countries because of cross-border impact. | 20,6% | **37,6%** | 22,7% | 19,1% |
| The economic benefit from the project is too small for the Romanian state. | 10,6% | 10,6% | 17,0% | **61,7%** |
| Romanian gold-mining is being done by a foreign company. | 14,9% | 14,9% | 14,2% | **56,0%** |
| The project does not create enough jobs to solve the problem of poverty and unemployment in the area. | 14,2% | 23,4% | 22,0% | **40,4%** |
| The company that wants to extract the gold is not reliable. | 9,2% | 24,8% | 22,7% | **43,3%** |
| The company has resorted to corrupt practices in order to obtain permits and to attract politicians on its side. | 2,1% | 9,9% | 22,0% | **66,0%** |
| The proposed exploitation does not comply with European and international legislation. | 3,5% | 22,0% | 31,2% | **43,3%** |
| The project is blocking the alternatives of development of the area, such as tourism. | 2,1% | 15,6% | 20,6% | **61,7%** |
| The property rights of the people of Roşia Montană are being violated. | 3,5% | 13,5% | 21,3% | **61,7%** |
| The place has a special beauty and it would be a shame to destroy it. | 2,8% | 9,9% | 20,6% | **66,7%** |
| The people of Roşia Montană do not want the exploitation to begin. | 12,1% | 27,0% | **30,5%** | **30,5%** |

an important reason for the older respondents in our sample as well, as those over 60 obtained a mean value of 7.8. At the other extreme, the dimension is less important for those between the ages of 26 and 40, with a mean value of 6.5. Finally, gender does not seem to have an influence on the scores for this dimension, as both males and females have an average of 6.7. Overall, the mean value of this second dimension is the smallest of all (6.8), placing the reasons included here in last place for opposing the project.

The third dimension represents worries about pollution, and has high mean values for all groups. It is more important for those with a secondary school or undergraduate diploma than for PhD candidates, with respective mean scores of 9.2 and 8.5. This dimension also seems more important for those living abroad or in other parts of Romania, excluding Bucharest and Transylvania. This dimensions presents no age differences in terms of mean scores, with the exception of the over 60 with a mean score of 10. Finally, men and women are separated by a 0.5-point difference, respectively 8.7 and 9.3. The overall mean value (9.1) indicates that these reasons are of utmost importance for opposing the mine project.

The fourth dimension represents doubt about the company's seriousness, fear of corruption and the company's disobedience of the law. This seems to be most important for undergraduates, who obtained a mean value of 7.9 on this dimension. Furthermore, this dimension also seems important to those who live abroad, with a mean value of 8.3. There are no remarkable differences on this dimens ion in terms of age or gender. The overall mean value (7.6) places this last dimension in second place for opposing the project.

**Table 42. Mean scores on the dimensions measuring reasons for not supporting the project (only for those against the project), by socio-demographic variables**

|  |  | Against1 | Against2 | Against3 | Against4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | **Medium** | 7,6 | 7,3 | 9,2 | 7,4 |
|  | **High** | 7,6 | 6,5 | 9,3 | 7,9 |
|  | **PhD** | 7,5 | 6,3 | 8,5 | 7,2 |
| **Residence** | **Bucharest** | 7,4 | 6,3 | 9,1 | 7,9 |
|  | **Transylvania** | 7,7 | 7,1 | 9,1 | 7,3 |
|  | **Other** | 8,5 | 6,0 | 9,3 | 7,4 |
|  | **Abroad** | 6,8 | 7,1 | 9,4 | 8,3 |
| **Age** | **18 - 25  years old** | 7,5 | 7,1 | 9,0 | 7,8 |
|  | **26 - 40 years old** | 7,5 | 6,5 | 9,1 | 7,6 |
|  | **41 - 59 years old** | 8,2 | 7,0 | 9,1 | 7,7 |
|  | **Over 60 years old** | 6,6 | 7,8 | 10,0 | 7,8 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 7,0 | 6,7 | 8,7 | 7,6 |
|  | **Female** | 7,9 | 6,7 | 9,3 | 7,7 |
|  | **Total** | **7,5** | **6,8** | **9,1** | **7,6** |

Similarly, the project's supporters were asked to indicate their motives for backing the project. The results are presented in table 43.

**Table 43, Reasons for supporting the project (only for the project's supporters)**

| | Not at all | A little | A lot | Very much |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The technologies used for the extraction of gold are safe. | 1,4% | 34,8% | **44,9%** | 18,8% |
| The project will lead to the improvement of the environment which is already degraded because of historical pollution. | 7,2% | 23,2% | **43,5%** | 26,1% |
| The project does not represent a major environmental threat. | 14,5% | 30,4% | **37,7%** | 17,4% |
| The project will create new jobs in the region. | ,0% | 4,3% | 17,4% | **78,3%** |
| The project will bring about an improvement of the standard of living for the people living in that region. | ,0% | 4,3% | 24,6% | **71,0%** |
| The mine exploitation will lead to the improvement of the economy in the region. | ,0% | 1,4% | 29,0% | **69,6%** |
| The project is the only solution for the development of the region. | 1,4% | 13,0% | 31,9% | **53,6%** |
| The project will protect the values and the cultural heritage of the region. | 1,4% | 26,1% | **42,0%** | 30,4% |
| The project will bring important benefits to the Romanian state. | ,0% | 14,5% | 42,0% | **43,5%** |
| The project will contribute to the improvement of Romania's economy. | ,0% | 17,4% | 29,0% | **53,6%** |
| The project might have an important contribution to Romania's exit from economic crisis. | 4,3% | 29,0% | 26,1% | **40,6%** |
| The project will increase Romania's gold. | 5,8% | 29,0% | **37,7%** | 27,5% |
| The project meets the European environmental standards. | 2,9% | 11,6% | **44,9%** | 40,6% |
| The project complies with the laws of this country. | 2,9% | 11,6% | **53,6%** | 31,9% |
| The project will be conducted by a foreign investor, which guarantees seriousness in the execution of the project. | 2,9% | **34,8%** | 33,3% | 29,0% |
| Mining represents an important tradition in Roşia Montană and must be continued. | 2,9% | 11,6% | 34,8% | **50,7%** |
| The place is not beautiful, being already affected by the mining from the past. | 24,6% | **33,3%** | 29,0% | 13,0% |
| The people of Roşia Montană want the exploitation to begin. | ,0% | 11,6% | 34,8% | **53,6%** |

The three main reasons for supporting the project seem to be the creation of jobs, a better standard of living, and generally, the improvement of the region's economy. These reasons were important for around 70% of the project's supporters. Other important reasons identified for supporting the project are the fact that it is the only solution for the area's development, it will help the Romanian economy, and mining represents an important tradition in the area. On the contrary, the least appealing reasons for supporting the project seem to be the presence of a foreign company,

which is a sign of seriousness, and the fact that Roşia Montană's environment is already damaged.

The same steps were taken as before to analyse these motives further, that is to say exploratory factor analysis and reliability testing. Once again, four dimensions were exposed. The first dimension, named "Pro 1", refers to benefits for the State. As a result, it includes budgetary benefits, advantages for the Romanian economy, and the fact that it increases the chances of exiting the recession. The second dimension, "Pro 2", refers to local benefits. It contains reasons such as the creation of local jobs, a better standard of living, the improvement of the local economy and a general increase in the area's development. The third dimension, "Pro 3", contains arguments in favor of the technology's safety, and state that it contributes to protecting the surrounding environment, that it will improve the protection of local culture and values, that it respects the EU's environmental standards and national law. The final dimension, "Pro 4", is a diverse combination of reasons. It refers to the lack of ecological risk, to the fact that the company is serious (because it is foreign), to the fact that mining is a traditional occupation in the area or that the local population is favorable to the project.

Once again, the scale's reliability was tested and revealed moderate to good results. The first two dimensions have similar reliability scores around 0.825. The third dimension has a slightly lower score of 0.803, while the last dimension has the lowest score of 0.650. Drawing on these results, the following analyses will be based on summed scores.

Table 44 presents each group's score on the "Pro" dimensions. Once again, subjects' attitudes towards the mining project will not be compared, as only those supporting the project answered these questions. The first dimension, which represents economic benefits for the State, is equally important for subjects with medium and higher education, with a mean value of around 6.6. PhD graduates, on the other hand, have a significantly lower mean value of 4.7. It seems that this dimension is not an important reason in the eyes of PhD graduates. A similar result was obtained for those living in Bucharest, albeit with a larger score of 6 in average. Nevertheless, this is still smaller than the Transylvanian average of 6.5, that of those living abroad, 7, or those residing in other parts of the country, 7.5. Most age differences are negligible, with the exception of the over 60 for whom this dimension is apparently not important and who obtained an average of 5.3. A difference of 0.6 also appears between male and female respondents, the former having the larger mean score of 6.8. The mean score obtained overall places this dimension in the second place of importance.

The second dimension, which measures economic benefit for the local area/ population, produced somewhat higher mean scores than the other latent variables. Those with medium education and undergraduate studies have a mean value of 8.4. The PhD graduates seem to disregard these reasons, with an average score of 5.9. Those abroad seem to value local benefits the most, with a mean score of 9.1. They are followed by those living in other parts of the country, with a mean value of 8.9, and those from Transylvania, with an average value of 8.2. The lowest mean value

on this dimension can be found in the case of those residing in Bucharest. The 26-40 year old category seems to be the most concerned with local economic benefits, with an average mean score of 8.6 on the latent variable. They are followed by the younger 18-25 year-olds who obtained a mean score of 8.3, by the 41-59 year-olds, with an average score of 7.6, and, finally, by the over 60's, with an average score of 7.4. Important gender differences also appear. Females tend to value these reasons more than men, with a mean score of 8.7 compared to 7.6. The mean value obtained for this dimension is the highest of all (8). The reasons included here are of the utmost importance for supporting the mining project.

   Those who graduated university, with an average of 6.7, mostly value the third dimension, which takes into consideration the improvement of the environment and the respect of European and international laws. At the other extreme are the PhD graduates with a mean score of 4.5 on this dimension. The moderately educated respondents have an average score of 5.7. No important differences appear between different places of residence. Those residing abroad have the largest score, 6.8, while the other categories have around 6.2 on average. In terms of age categories, 26-40 year-olds seem to value this dimension the most, with a mean score of 7.1, while the other categories have an average of 5.5. Again, we find important differences between men and women. Women once again value this dimension more, 6.6 on average as opposed to 5.8. The overall mean value of 6 puts this dimension in second place in terms of importance.

**Table 44.Mean score on the dimensions measuring reasons for supporting the project (only for those favoring the project), arranged according to socio-demographic variables**

|  |  | Pro 1 | Pro 2 | Pro 3 | Pro 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education** | **Medium** | 6,7 | 8,4 | 5,7 | 5,0 |
| | **High** | 6,6 | 8,4 | 6,7 | 5,3 |
| | **PhD** | 4,7 | 5,9 | 4,5 | 3,8 |
| **Residence** | **Bucharest** | 6,0 | 7,5 | 6,1 | 4,5 |
| | **Transylvania** | 6,5 | 8,2 | 6,3 | 5,4 |
| | **Other** | 7,5 | 8,9 | 6,1 | 4,4 |
| | **Abroad** | 7,0 | 9,1 | 6,8 | 5,6 |
| **Age** | **18 - 25 years old** | 6,1 | 8,3 | 5,8 | 4,8 |
| | **26 - 40 years old** | 6,8 | 8,6 | 7,1 | 5,5 |
| | **41 - 59 years old** | 6,9 | 7,6 | 5,2 | 4,7 |
| | **Over 60 years old** | 5,3 | 7,4 | 5,3 | 5,0 |
| **Sex** | **Male** | 6,2 | 7,6 | 5,8 | 4,8 |
| | **Female** | 6,8 | 8,7 | 6,6 | 5,4 |
| | **Total** | **6,3** | **8** | **6** | **4,9** |

   The last dimension, which includes a series of heterogeneous reasons for supporting the project, has significantly lower mean scores than the other dimensions.

In terms of level of education, the lowest mean score is of 3.8 for the PhD graduates, and around 5.1 on average for the other categories. Those living in Transylvania or abroad have similar scores of around 5.5, while those living in Bucharest or in other parts of the country have a mean value of around 4.4. A similar pattern is obvious in the case of the age variable. Indeed, 26-40 year-olds and over 60's have a mean value of 5.3, while the equivalent value is 4.7 for under 25's and 41-59 year-olds. Gender seems to be important once again, as the female respondents have a mean score of 5.4 as opposed to 4.8 for the males.

Two supplementary questions about the reasons for opposing the project were put both to opponents and supporters of the project separately. In the case of the opponents, we were interested in whether they would compromise and which circumstances would change their minds about the Roşia Montană mining project. Thus, we intended to examine the central motives for opposing the mine in more depth. The results (Figure 40) are convergent with those obtained from the previous motivation scales. The strongest motive for opposing the project seems to be the use of cyanide in the gold extraction process; 55% of the opponents declared they would change their minds if this situation was reversed. The second important reason for opposing the project is the destruction of Roşia Montană because of opencast mining. Of lesser importance seem to be the economic arguments against the mine's construction, as slightly more than 40% of the project's opponents declared they would change their minds if there were bigger benefits for Romania, or if the gold was mined by a Romanian company. These results differs to those obtained through verbal association to the stimulus "Roşia Montană", which indicated the term "theft" may be central in the opponent's social representation. It appears that when spontaneously expressing their views about the Roşia Montană issue, opponents tend to emphasize the moral considerations in line with anti-capitalist convictions about the injustice of the distribution of wealth gained from the extraction of natural
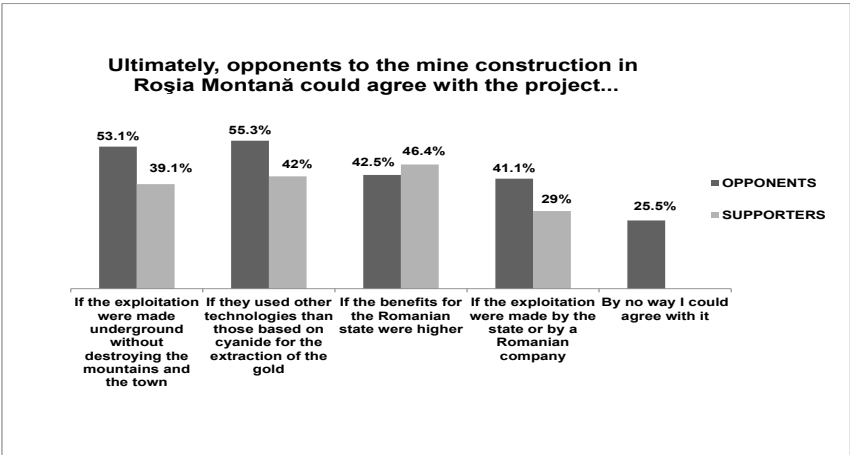


**Figure 40. Compromises and representations of the compromises to do with the Roşia Montană gold mine project**
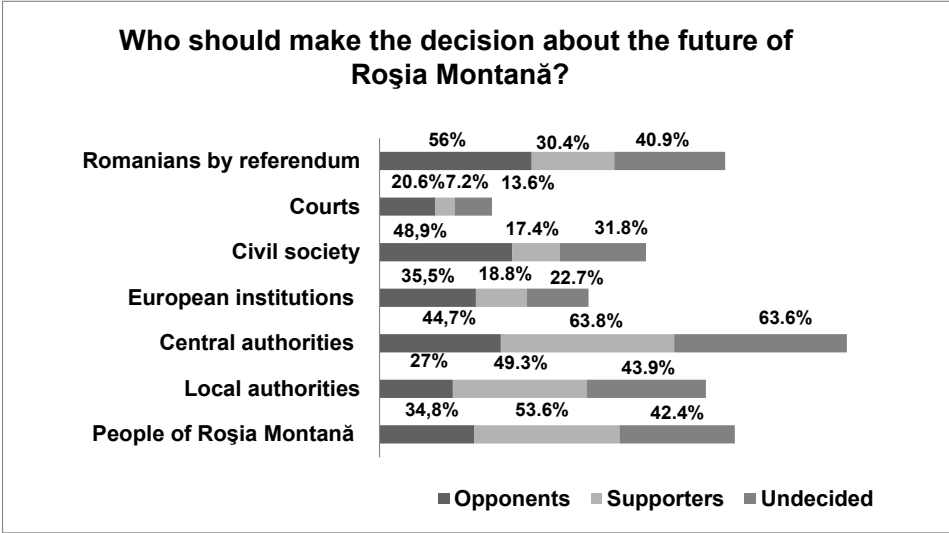
resources. Conversely, when asked to rationalize their position, the ecological argument for not building the mine prevailed. It is also worth mentioning that one quarter of the opponents declared they would not accept any compromise to do with the Roşia Montană mining project.

Respondents declaring to be in favor of the mining project were asked a similar question but for a different purpose. They were asked to describe the circumstances that would lead the project's opponents to change their minds about the project. Response variants were the same as in the previous case, except the last option that was eliminated. This question can provide two types of information: it implies meta-knowledge of the alternative representation (Elchroth et all: 2011); but it can also suggest the project's weaknesses to those who support it. As shown in Figure 40, the project's supporters assumed the opponents' most important argument was about the mine's insufficient benefits for the Romanian State; they were 46% to give this answer. The use of cyanide and the disappearance of Roşia Montană are reasons considered by the supporters respectively in second and third place for opposing the mining project. The least important reason in the supporters' eyes is that a foreign company and not the State or a Romanian company is to lead the project. Both groups converge on this last reason, and appear to agree that it is the least important for opposing the mining project.

Previous data showed that supporters of the mine project have lower levels of environmental awareness than other subjects. Also, they seem to especially agree with the project's economic benefits. It is interesting to note that the supporters also assume that the project's opponents consider the same type of argument as most important. Again, these responses could be interpreted as revealing the project's weaknesses in the eyes of its supporters. Paradoxically, although the project's supporters defend its economic benefits locally, they may also admit to insufficient benefits for the Romanian State overall.

### 5.6.4    Decision making and media sources of information

Respondents were asked who they think the decision maker in the Roşia Montană issue should be; figure 41 shows the results. The first proposed decision maker is Roşia Montană's local community. With 54% of agreement, the project's supporters are the most willing for the locals to decide. They are followed by the undecided with 42%, and lastly, by the project's opponents with 35% agreement. A similar pattern emerges when asking the same question about Rosia Montană's and Alba County's local authorities; 49% for the project's supporters and 27% for the opposition. When asked if the central authorities should be the decision makers, the undecided and the project's supporters agreed in similar proportions (64%), while the project's opponents agreed somewhat less (45%). A low level of agreement for all three groups was revealed when asking whether it would be appropriate for European authorities to decide; the project's supporters agreed with this the most at a rate of 36%. Civil society is considered more legitimate to make the decision, with 49% of opponents who believe it would be appropriate. The lowest level of agreement was discovered when asking if the courts

## Who should make the decision about the future of Roşia Montană?

**Romanians by referendum** — Opponents 56%, Supporters 30.4%, Undecided 40.9%

**Courts** — Opponents 20.6%, Supporters 7.2%, Undecided 13.6%

**Civil society** — Opponents 48,9%, Supporters 17.4%, Undecided 31.8%

**European institutions** — Opponents 35,5%, Supporters 18.8%, Undecided 22.7%

**Central authorities** — Opponents 44,7%, Supporters 63.8%, Undecided 63.6%

**Local authorities** — Opponents 27%, Supporters 49.3%, Undecided 43.9%

**People of Roşia Montană** — Opponents 34,8%, Supporters 53.6%, Undecided 42.4%

■ Opponents  ■ Supporters  ■ Undecided

**Figure 41. Decision making responsibility by attitude towards the mine project**

should be the decision makers. Only 21% of opponents and 7% of supporters agreed with this possible decision maker. Important support for a referendum was observed, especially in the opponent group (56%). The project's supporters also showed moderate agreement, with 30% of them accepting a referendum as an option for a decision.

Free association analysis revealed that subjects against the project were also very critical of the authorities, as corruption is an important aspect in their representation of the Roşia Montană case. The lack of trust in the authorities makes the project's opponents prefer a public decision, especially locally. On the contrary, the project's supporters prefer a decision that comes from the central authorities, the local authorities, or the inhabitants of Roşia Montană. This fact is understandable if we refer to their representation of Roşia Montană, in which the inhabitants socio-economic problems are emphasized.

The results obtained from asking which media sources respondents mostly use to get information about the Roşia Montană case are shown in Figure 42. In general, the Roşia Montană case reached the respondents of our questionnaire mostly through the internet and television. Overall, the Internet was indicated as a main source by 72% of subjects, while television was chosen by 65% of all respondents. Newspapers and radio seem less important channels for getting news about Roşia Montană, the former being indicated by 40% of respondents, the latter by only 23%. However, there are important differences between the three groups of subjects on this topic. Subjects who declare to be against the mine project seem to prefer the Internet as the main source of information (80%). On the contrary, three quarters of the project's supporters and also of undecided subjects designated television as the main source of information about Roşia Montană.

The period of data collection for this study coincided with that of an intense image campaign by the mining company to win support for its project in Roşia Montană,

a campaign that was launched through all media channels, including the Internet (see section 2.3. in Chapter 2.). The fact that the supporters indicated television as their main source of information might suggest that traditional media channels still prove their effectiveness in influence processes. On the other hand, the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign benefited from incomparably lower material resources and made full use of cyberspace, which was much cheaper than traditional media, in order to launch their messages of opposition to the project. Another explanation of the differences in terms of sources of information comes from the very nature of the two types of media. When it comes to the informative function of the media, the Internet is an involving medium for users, while television encourages the viewers' apathy and turns them into *homo videns* (Sartori, 1999/2005). As said previously, the project's opponents feel the most involved in the Rosia Montană affair. This is likely to drive them to seek information about the case themselves, which is

**Where do you generally get information about the Roşia Montană issue?**

| | OPPONENTS | SUPPORTERS | UNDECIDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| Internet | 80.1% | 65.2% | 63.6% |
| Radio | 24.8% | 20.2% | 21.2% |
| Television | 55.3% | 75.3% | 75.7% |
| Newspapers | 47.5% | 31.8% | 31.8% |
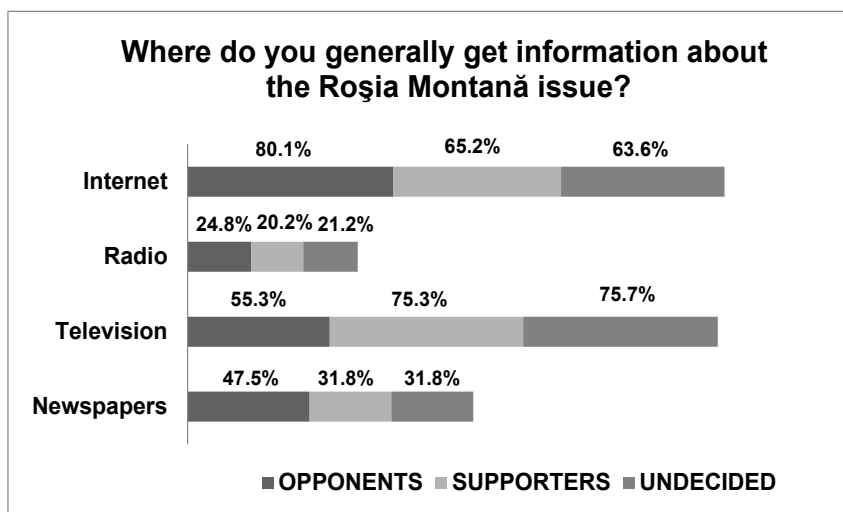
**Figure 42. Media sources of information about the Roşia Montană case by group of subjects**

possible in newspapers or when searching on the Internet, rather than on TV. This could explain why the Internet and newspapers are significantly more often indicated as sources of information by the opponents as compared to the supporters or the undecided.

### 5.6.5    Meta-knowledge and representations of the positions of others

In a recent account about the usefulness of social representation theory for the study of political phenomena (Elchroth, Doise & Reicher, 2011), social representations are seen as meta-knowledge that not only reveals what people think, but also what people think that other people think. Information about this kind of knowledge was obtained, for example, when we asked supporters to indicate possible compromises that could be made by opponents of the mining project.

Similarly, we asked respondents to describe their perception of other Romanians' attitudes towards to mining project, and to explain the opposing position.

Figure 43 presents the results obtained from asking subjects how they perceive other Romanians' attitudes towards the mining project. A considerable number of respondents (47%), especially supporters of the project, were not able to correctly identify the dominant position regarding the mining project in Romanian society. The project's opponents seem more conviced than its supporters that they represent a majority. However, both supporters and opponents tend to refute the possibility that the dominant position could be contrary to their own; answers by the undecided seem more balanced. Among them, around 42% were unable to appreciate what others think about the project. Other undecided subjects tend to consider opposition to the project as dominant, even though almost 23% think exactly the opposite.
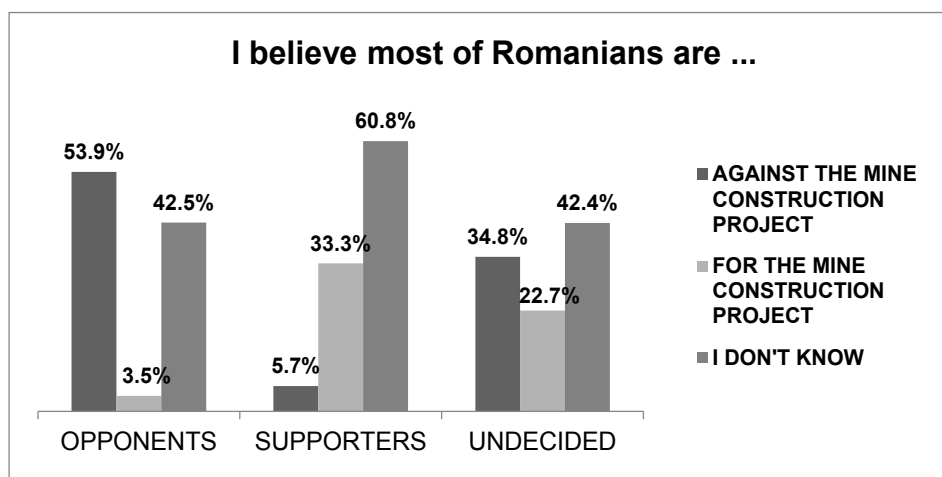


**Figure 43. Meta-knowledge about the dominant attitudes towards the mining project in Romanian society**

Only respondents with a clear attitude towards the mining project in Roşia Montană were then asked to explain attitudes opposite to their own. Figure 44 shows both opponents' and supporters' answers to this question. Four answers were possible, and somehow ranged from a positive account of how people on the opposite side "are generally well informed", to more negative views like they "were manipulated" or "have personal benefits". Somewhere in between these two extremes, others provided this answer "they are not informed enough, they don't know the reality of the place".

According to the results, the opponents tend to criticize the project's supporters, accusing them of being manipulated (61%) or of having a personal gain through the project (60%). On the contrary, the project's supporters appear less radical, and generally consider the project's opponents as not being sufficiently informed about the reality of Roşia Montană (60%). Others, however, accuse them of personal gain (35%) or of being manipulated (25%). The least chosen answer by both sides was the rather positive idea that the other side is well informed. However, it is important to
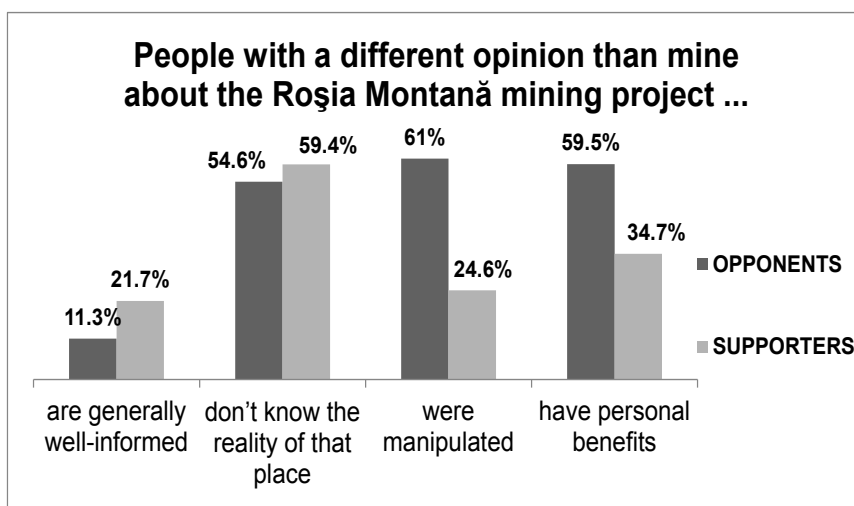
**Figure 44. Explanations of the opposite side by supporters and opponents**

specify that almost twice as many supporters provided this answer for the project's opponents than the other way around. Big differences also appear regarding the two more negative viewpoints about each opposing group, the project's opponents having provided these answers the most. In terms of percentage of supporters and opponents who believe their adversary lacks information about the reality of Roşia Montană, this difference does not appear as large. We assume that these responses provide explicit information about the causes for defending a specific position in a controversial issue, but also implicit information about the individual's personal position. Declaring that their adversary is insufficiently informed implies, on the contrary, that subjects consider themselves well informed and that they know Roşia Montană's *true* story. This is the very nature of polemic social representations, those who share them being convinced only they hold the truth.

### 5.6.6 Visual representations of the place Roşia Montană

In a previous study (see Chapter 3.), we analyzed pictorial representations of Roşia Montană that were constructed and transmitted by players directly involved in the conflict over the mining project through photographs transmitted on the Internet. We identified two divergent representations of the place Roşia Montană that were based on a contrast of beauty vs. ugliness. At this stage of research, we were interested in discovering whether ordinary subjects with different positions on this controversial issue activate a pictorial representation that corresponds to their specific perspective. We hypothesized that this will indeed be the case, that is to say the project's opponents will judge images from the "against mining" dossier (made by an NGO engaged in the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign) as more representative of Roşia Montană, and the project's supporters will judge photos from the "for mining" dossier (comprised of images used in a corporate communication strategy) as more representative of Roşia Montană. Given the instrument used for data
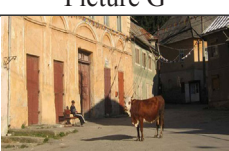
collection, we limited our photo dossiers to 5 images per category, 10 overall (see Appendix). Respondents were asked to rate each image in terms of representativity of Roşia Montană.

Table 45 contains the mean score of each image individually and in categories according to its author. Regardless of their specific attitude towards the mining project, subjects seem to generally consider the "against mining" dossier as more representative of Roşia Montană. They tend to reject the negative image of Roşia Montană as a contaminated and abandoned place that the mining company tried to impose. This difference in scoring the pictures is significant for all three groups; the "against mining" pictures produced superior results to the "for mining" dossier. These results clearly invalidate our initial hypothesis; subjects do not necessarily chose pictures according to their attitude towards the mining project.

**Table 45. Mean acceptance of pictures as representing Roşia Montană**

| Category | | Opponents | Supporters | Undecided |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Picture B | 8,3 | 7,0 | 7,1 |
| | Picture D | 8,6 | 7,6 | 7,4 |
| **"Against mining" pictures** | Picture E | 8,4 | 6,7 | 7,1 |
| | Picture H | 8,5 | 7,5 | 7,8 |
| | Picture J | 8,1 | 7,3 | 7,8 |
| | *ALL* | *8,4* | *7,2* | *7,4* |

| Category | | Opponents | Supporters | Undecided |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **"For mining" pictures** | Picture A | 6,4 | 6,4 | 7,1 |
| | Picture C | 6,3 | 6,6 | 6,7 |
| | Picture F | 7,1 | 7,5 | 7,7 |
| | Picture G | 6,5 | 6,1 | 5,9 |
| | Picture I | 7,7 | 6,5 | 6,3 |
| | *ALL* | *6,8* | *6,6* | *6,7* |

The project's opponents chose images D, H and E from the "against mining" dossier as most emblematic of Roșia Montană, and pictures C, A and G from the "for mining" dossier as least representative. Images D and H depict beautiful natural landscapes and image E an old mining house. Picture C depicts Roşia Montană's industrial history, and is mostly rejected by the project's opponents. Moreover, they refuse the representation of Roșia Montană as a contaminated (A) and abandoned place (G).

The project's supporters judged images D, H and J from the "against mining" dossier and image F from the "for mining" dossier as most representative of Roşia Montană. They chose pictures G, A and I (all from the "for mining" dossier) as the least representative of Roșia Montană. In other terms, the natural environment and traces of ancient mining seem to be considered most emblematic of Roşia Montană also for these respondents. Like the project's opponents, they also refused the image of a polluted and deserted Roşia Montană.

The undecided chose pictures H, J and D from the "against mining" dossier and image F from the "for mining" dossier as most representative of Roşia Montană. For them, the least representative are images G, I and C from the "for mining" dossier. These respondents seem to mainly accept images of mining landscapes that show influences of both traditional and industrial mining, of underground mining activities, and also images of Roşia Montană's natural beauty. They too reject the image of Roşia Montană as an abandoned and desolate place, as summarized in the "for mining" dossier.

Although there are overlaps between groups of the most chosen images, such as H, D and J, each group's overall score is quite different. Those against the project, for example, have the strongest views on the theme summarized in these photos, with significantly higher mean values than both other groups. The differences in means between groups are significant for the pictures from the"Against mining" dossier (t 4.690, df. 261, P 0.000) .

No significant differences were revealed in subjects' consideration of the "for mining" dossier, which was generally under-rated by all three groups. The only image in this category to have a higher score (thanks to the undecided and the project's supporters) is image F, which depicts a panorama of the Cetate open pit.

To put it simply, it would seem that contrary to expectations, subjects having participated in the study all share approximately the same pictorial representation of Roşia Montană, despite the contrasting images transmitted to influence people's decision regarding the mining project. Furthermore, the visual representation that puts into play Roşia Montană's beauty and historic value was most powerful, which indicated that the fight against the mining project is winning. Indeed, subjects strongly rejected images of an abandoned and desolate Roşia Montană.

### 5.6.7    Relations between dimensions

Pearson correlations, a measure of linear relations between two variables, has been used to analyse relations between the dimensions discussed in this study. This measure varies from -1 to 1, where 1 represents a perfect linear relation (as one variable increases, so does the other); -1 in this case represents a perfect linear relation where both variables evolve in opposite directions. A Pearson correlation close to 0 means that there is no relation between the two variables.

Table 46 shows correlations between the latent variables measured in this chapter. We will start the discussion with the four dimensions that measure the reasons for supporting the project. These four variables seem powerfully interconnected as they have big strong correlation scores of around 0.5. This implies that respondents who support the Roşia Montană project tend to highly value all the reasons and find something important in each one. A similar phenomenon appeared in the reasons for opposing the project. For example, correlations between *Against 1* and *Against 3* and *4* are strong, but weak between *Against 1* and *2*. In other terms, those who fear the destruction brought about by the project are also concerned about pollution and doubt the company's seriousness. Furthermore, those who believe that Romanian

**Table 46. Correlations between dimensions**

| | "Against min." vis. Repres. | Env. Concern | Personal Involvem. | Agentic disp. | Ag. 1 | Ag. 2 | Ag. 3 | Ag. 4 | Pro 1 | Pro 2 | Pro 3 | Pro 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "For min." vis. Repres. | .332** | .056 | .032 | -.017 | .029 | .016 | -.095 | .042 | -.056 | .076 | -.088 | .073 |
| "Against min." vis. Repres. | | .216** | .254** | .279** | .391** | .021 | .046 | .087 | .041 | .189 | .029 | .135 |
| Env. Concern | | | .305** | .288** | .262** | .044 | .253** | .180* | -.202 | -.007 | -.15 | -.186 |
| Personal Involvem. | | | | .492** | .346** | .017 | .188* | .269** | .406** | -.04 | .319** | .246* |
| Agentic disp. | | | | | .219** | -.041 | .355** | .088 | .408** | .246* | .338** | .237* |
| Ag. 1 | | | | | | .265 | .334 | .449 | + | + | + | + |
| Ag. 2 | | | | | | | .088 | .334 | + | + | + | + |
| Ag. 3 | | | | | | | | .254 | + | + | + | + |
| Ag. 4 | | | | | | | | | + | + | + | + |
| Pro 1 | | | | | | | | | | .436 | .579 | .500 |
| Pro 2 | | | | | | | | | | | .431 | .531 |
| Pro 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | .669** |

gold should be stored and that the State should reap more rewards from the company also tend to distrust the company, as indicated by the strong correlation between *Against 2* and *4*. A lack of correlation between all "lines of attack" suggests a lack of cohesion between members of the opposition.

Another interesting finding revealed a correlation between the "against mining" visual representation of Roşia Montană and *Against 1* (0.391). In other terms, people who associate Roşia Montană with natural or architectural beauty oppose the project in fear of the town's destruction.

Table 46 also highlights some expected relationships. For example, personal involvement and agentic disposition are strongly correlated; the more people feel involved with the issue, the more they are willing to act to support their position. Flament and Rouquette (2003) have already drawn attention to the fact that practices with regard to an object presuppose individual involvement since it is somehow proof of the possibility of action. Interestingly, personal involvement and agentic disposition are strongly related to *Pro 1* and *Pro 3*, that is to say, subjects in favor of the mining project who feel personally involved and who demonstrate high agentic disposition appreciate more than others the project's economic benefits (Pro 1) and the respect of Romanian and European law (Pro 3).

Agentic disposition and *Against* 3 present another interesting relationship. Apparently, those who oppose the project on the basis of environmental risks are also more inclined to do something about it (agentic disposition). They appear to highly value nature, and are sensitive to any harm that might fall upon it.

## 5.8    Conclusions

The main aim of the study presented in this chapter was to explore the representational system that underlies the Roşia Montană issue. We hypothesized that the polemic representations constructed by the main stakeholders involved in the conflict and transmitted via the media could be also found in common sense knowledge.

Three psychological dimensions were employed (environmental concern, personal involvement, agentic disposition) with the assumption that they could explain the contrasting attitudes and differences in the representational systems of people against or in favor of the Roşia Montană mining project. Overall, the results obtained confirmed our hypothesis. There were significant differences between supporters and opponents of the project regarding all three dimensions. Moreover, transversal analysis of the results revealed a coherent pattern systematically differentiating between opponents and supporters, with the exception of their social representation of the environment that is discussed below.

The project's opponents are generally located in the same representational field as subjects with strong environmental concern and involvement, and a high level of agentic disposition. For them, Roşia Montană is an extremely valuable place (for its history, nature and beauty) that is threatened by destruction due to gold mining,

which is essentially represented as a hazardous activity for the environment. They also paint a negative image of the foreign investor, anchored mainly in personal traits, but also in general criticism of the corrupt Romanian political arena.

Subjects in favor of the project are generally related to subjects with little environmental awareness, weak personal involvement and feeble agentic disposition. For them, Roşia Montană is essentially an industrial town threatened by socioeconomic problems for which gold mining is a viable solution. Their representation of the foreign investor is positive, and is anchored both in the economic benefits of the practice, and personal traits.

We focused on the content and structure of the social representations of Roşia Montană, gold mining, the environment and the foreign investor in order to determine whether each object generates different and/or polemic representational systems for the groups compared in this study (opponents, supporters and undecided). Through various complementary analyses of the corpora generated by free associations to each inducer (Roşia Montană, gold mining, the environment and the foreign investor), we reached the following conclusions:

The inducer "Roşia Montană" did indeed generate two polemic representations. With the exception of one, denotative element that was commonly identified as belonging to the central core of all three groups (gold), the meanings attributed primarily to Roşia Montană by subjects with opposing attitudes towards the mining project were strongly contrasted. The opponents' representation strongly values Roşia Montană in terms of its beauty, nature, historical heritage and traditions, as well as the distinctiveness of the Apuseni Mountains, a powerful symbol of Romanian national identity. The mining project is seen as a threat to the environment and community, and its success is equivalent to disaster and to the theft of national wealth. The complicity of the corrupt authorities represents another type of threat to Roşia Montană. Besides descriptive elements, this representation also contains prescriptive elements in reference to militant actions for saving Roşia Montană. The project's supporters represent Roşia Montană as an industrial town; its inhabitants, miners, are currently faced with serious economic problems for which the mining project is a ray of hope, as it will create jobs and bring prosperity back to the region. The current situation in Roşia Montană, represented in negative terms, is supposedly caused by the [authorities'] indifference and ineffectiveness in the management of economic problems. These representations summarize the contrasting views of both of the rival players directly involved in the conflict over Roşia Montană.

The representation of "gold mining" is organized around two common elements that are based on the economic benefits of this activity, i.e. "money" and "wealth". However, we noticed important variations in the representational fields between opponents and supporters. Additional meanings attributed to gold mining by the project's opponents reveal a highly negative view, with regard mainly to its environmental consequences, gold mining being considered as dangerous for the environment. The project's supporters, however, attribute positive features to gold mining, such as its economic benefits and the fact that gold mining is respected because of its difficulty. Somewhere in between are the undecided subjects who

combine both views. A transversal examination of the results obtained from these analyses led us to consider the presence of a single representation of gold mining shared by all subjects and organized around the aforementioned central elements, but that shows important peripheral inflections, linked especially to divergent representations of Roşia Montană.

This was also the case of the social representation of the foreign investor. Again, two potential central elements were shared by all groups, i.e. "money" and "opportunity". Moreover, the semantic fields reveal important differences between the project's supporters and its opponents. Those in favor of the project further emphasized positive qualities, both with regard to the economic benefits and the investor's personal traits. On the contrary, those against the project present a strong contrast between the shared central elements and other potential members of the central core that are generally negative and attributed both to the individual and the economic practice. In the absence of supplementary data that could be obtained through methods specially designed for testing the centrality of elements within a social representation (see for example Abric, 2003; Moliner, 1989), a cautious solution was to consider, as for the social representation of gold mining, the existence of one social representation of the foreign investor, with significant peripheral inflections that can be considered as being anchored in the divergent social representations of Roşia Montană previously identified.

On the contrary, a more daring interpretation would be to consider that there are indeed two polemic representations that differentiate between the groups of opponents and supporters. A totally different approach would be to consider that although there is a single representation of the foreign investor and of gold mining, this representation contains both hegemonic and polemic elements, such is the hypothesis advanced by Li Liu (2004) that we initially rejected. Given the various solutions that can be envisaged, we conclude that more research is needed. Furthermore, an experimental research design would enable us to determine whether the connections between the social representations of Roşia Montană, gold mining and of the foreign investor are still valid.

The social representation of "the environment" revealed a completely different situation. Each type of analysis indicates the existence of a dominant social representation of the environment that is shared by all subjects and can be considered hegemonic. The environment was essentially represented as endangered because of pollution and in need of protection, hence summarizing the main princeps of environmentalism as an ideology. Surprisingly, we found no indications of the environment as a resourcefor economic development. Furthermore, the content of this representation was not linked to the representations of Roşia Montană, nor did the semantic space obtained through correspondence analysis reveal significant differences in terms of attitudes towards the mining project. These results may suggest that the social representation of the environment stands apart from the other social representations investigated in this study, and does not belong to the same representational system as we initially thought.

When examining the reasons for opposing or supporting the gold mine

construction in Roşia Montană, the main findings were as follows:

Opponents of the mining project were first and foremost concerned about the hazardous nature of the project for the environment, especially with regard to the use of cyanide and its post-exploitation leftovers, of capital importance in their decision to oppose the project. In second place of importance were reasons about damage to the town, its community and historical heritage. Third in importance were reasons regarding the company's seriousness, fears of corruption and disobeying national and European laws by the company proposing the project. Of the smallest importance were reasons related to the project's insufficient rewards, whether they be monetary, for the State budget or in local jobs; to the presence of a foreign company; to the idea that gold shouldn't be extracted immediately; to the negative downfall on international relations. These results differ from our previous findings that indicated the centrality of the term "theft" in the opponents' representation. When spontaneously expressing their views about the Roşia Montană affair, those against the project appear to stress upon moral, anti-capitalist ideals to do with the unfair distribution of wealth gained from the extraction of national resources. That being said, when asked to rationalize their position, ecological arguments prevailed. The four dimensions used for interpreting the scale measuring motives for opposing the project were not strongly inter-correlated (see Table 53), hence indicating a lack of cohesion within the opposition's rationale.

On the contrary, the dimensions used for interpreting the reasons for supporting the project were strongly inter-correlated. However, the main reasons brought up in favor of the project focused on the economic benefits for the local area/population. These were followed by similar arguments regarding the State budget and Romanian economy. In third place of importance were arguments defended essentially within the corporate communication strategy, about technological safety, the restoration of an already damaged Roşia Montană, the protection of local culture and the fulfillment of national and European laws and regulations. For those in favor of the project, the least important reasons were the lack of ecological risks, the seriousness of the company (because it is foreign), the mining tradition in Roşia Montană and the fact that the locals favor the project; these arguments are mostly mentioned by the mining company. Another interesting finding arose from asking supporters about their perception of the opponents' motives. They applied a similar argument as to themselves, and answered that the main reason for opposing the mine is the lack of economic benefits for the Romanian State.

After further investigation of the differences between the project's supporters and opponents, we observed that they differ in their attribution of responsibility with regard to the decision about Roşia Montană's future: those in favor of the project generally agreed on central and local authorities, and those against believed that all Romanian citizens should decide. Another difference resides in each group's preferred source of information about Roşia Montană, that is to say Internet for the project's opponents, and television for its supporters.

Interesting results were obtained by analyzing meta-knowledge within each group's representational field (Elchroth *et al*., 2011). This was achieved by asking

subjects to indicate the dominant position in the Roşia Montană conflict; both sides of the conflict answered that most Romanians share their own view, while the undecided chose opposition as the dominant general opinion. Another question required each side of the conflict to interpret their adversary's positioning, to which opponents answered that supporters are manipulated or stand to gain personal benefits from the project's success, and supporters answered that opponents are unaware of the reality of Roşia Montană.

The visual representation of Roşia Montană, explored using projected visual stimuli, invalidated our hypothesis about differences in preference for a particular category of images between groups, according to attitudes towards the project. We determined that the visual representation composed of images obtained from the NGO leading the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign, which insists on Roşia Montană's natural beauty and heritage, was more powerful and considered more characteristic of the place by all subjects, regardless of their attitude towards the mining project. On the contrary, all subjects rejected the ugliness of Roşia Montană, represented as contaminated and abandoned in the mining company's communication strategy.

Overall, the results are very challenging. Our first consideration was whether our findings could invalidate the existence of polemic social representations of Roşia Montană. We would rather reject this interpretation, especially given the object's polymorphism. Indeed, our strongest argument was the success of visual stimuli to identify the dominant visual representation of Roşia Montană as a *place*. Furthermore, free associations led to the identification of the social representations of both Roşia Montană the *place* and the *case*. Hence, the results obtained from both methods are not necessarily inconsistent, and still may prove that both iconic and conceptual dimensions of a social representation might not always be strongly interrelated, thus requiring further investigation in the field. These results may also provide evidence of a paradoxical social representation (Moscovici, 1996) with regard to supporters of the Roşia Montană mining project.

A possible explanation for the lack of variation between opponents' and supporters' iconic representations of Roşia Montană resides in the limits of the method used to study them, which only required subjects to rate pictures without asking them any further information about why. A different approach using qualitative methods may have been more sutiable, and may have produced more profound results. We accept this as a limit to our research and a challenge for further study.

Another possible explanation is the inconsistency of the corporate message, particularly in descriptions of Roşia Montană as a place. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the mining company used several themes to defend its project over time. When faced with the alternative representation constructed and transmitted by the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign, the company attempted to impose its own "version of the Roşia Montană story", essentially by rejecting their opponents' views about the environmental risks, economic benefits for the Romanian State or the need to protect Roşia Montană's heritage. However, the company took a different stance when confronted with a strong argument raised by the opposition in favor of considering Roşia Montană as a tourist destination. The company initially rejected

tourism and agriculture as viable alternatives for Roşia Montană's development, but suddenly changed its rhetoric in the later stages of confrontation. Impending environmental doom was a theme strongly publicized in the first national media campaign sponsored by the mining company in 2005-2006, but then lost importance with the beginning of the second large scale media campaign in 2009, which focused more on the rejection of economic arguments. Furthermore, by publishing a tour guide ("Journey to the Land of Gold", 2011), by the use of new media techniques such as virtual journeys to Roşia Montană and by building the Mining Museum, the company transformed itself into a real promoter of Roşia Montană's local economy. Elements such as the red and polluted waters or the damaged buildings in Roşia Montană, although still present, were no longer emphasized as strongly. Instead, the initially rejected, alternative representation of Roşia Montană as a tourist destination was integrated into the representation of 'Roşia Montană as a mining town', which was necessarily reinforced by considering past and future mining activities in Roşia Montană as the town's main tourist attraction.

Nevertheless, this change in the company's communication strategy may simply have been due to its recognition of failure to portray Roşia Montană as polluted, damaged and unattractive. One could then suspect that previous studies by marketing experts in charge of the communication campaigns may have also revealed that the public, regardless of their attitude towards the mining project, generally rejects the negative image of Roşia Montană. Given that a positive definition of Roşia Montană that emphasizes its beauty and value appeared more successful, the mining company was forced to give up its fight in this particular area, and in consequence, adopted a strategy integrating, at least in part, the alternative representation.

We also analyzed two sets of photographs depicting Roşia Montană in different lights (Chapter 3), based on Moscovici's theory of context generativity of social representations. His idea was that the more a social representation is spread across a culture, the more it becomes the very context of communication in which its meaning is anchored (Moscovici, 1994). We suggested that the contrasted and stereotypical representations expressed through photographs could be regarded as the figurative texture that anchors Roşia Montană's meaning. Given the success of the visual representation of Roşia Montană created by those against the project, it would seem that only this representation could potentially transform into a context of communication, which becomed common, even for polemic social representations.

# 6 Final remarks

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Since the fall of the communist regime, Eastern European societies have become living laboratories for the social sciences. Moscovici, for example, considered Eastern Europe a fertile terrain for expanding socio-psychological research (quoted by Neculau, 2001).

Social representation theory, the basic approach of our research, and the Roşia Montană conflict, the object of our research, proved mutually advantageous. Thanks to its theoretical ability and its eclectic methodologies (Rouquette et al., 2005), social representation theory was instrumental in describing in detail a new and unique phenomenon that occurred in light of Romania's transition to democracy and capitalism. Ironically, the controversial Roşia Montană gold-mining project turned out to be a "gold mine" for social representation theory, and enabled us to further explore polemic social representations.

Throughout this research, the Roşia Montană conflict was apprehended through the social representations it not only generated, but was also shaped by. In order to discover their origins, characteristics and impact (Moscovici, 2000), these social representations were studied both in the media and in lay thinking (Farr, 1995), and by taking into account both verbal and iconic codes of expression (de Rosa & Farr, 2001).

First of all, we focused on those who initially created the representations (*idem,* p.27), namely the social players with direct stakes in the conflict: the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation – the company in charge of the mining project –, and the more dispersed members of the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign, committed to stopping the mining project (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). The ongoing conflict between each side was approached in terms of a confrontation between the social representations they continue to create, and that act as "symbolic weapons" in their pursuit of incompatible goals. As was recently put into light (Elchroth *et al.*, 2011), it could be observed that through their mobilizing behavior and talk, these players shaped representational systems in order to create social realities, or "collective fictitious entities" (Bentham quoted by Moscovici, 2001, p. 18) that serve their own

vision and interests and hence unite people in a particular interpretation of the Roşia Montană affair.

Roşia Montană's 'fictitious entities' are generally dual: over the last ten years of conflict, Roşia Montană has been portrayed as poor or rich, old-fashioned or modern, industrial or agricultural, "green" or "red" from pollution by communist industrialization, and as either historic enough to be included in UNESCO's world heritage or as a traditional mining town. While the corporate side attempted to create the image of a troubled and empty town in need of help, NGO's were producing the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign by portraying Roşia Montană as unspoilt and pristine, as a beautiful place and community, a place of sacred spirituality and national identity threatened by the corporate plans. The mining project was either presented as an economic and ecological solution for Roşia Montană's development and restoration, or as an unacceptable environmental risk that would eventually lead to Roşia Montană's doom while at the same time negatively affecting the entire area because of cyanide use. The involvement of foreign investors was either perceived as a mutually beneficial, natural course of action in Romania's transition to global capitalism, or as the detremental plunder of national resources. Furthermore, politicians were either accused of being ineffective in their decision about the Roşia Montană affair, or of having corrupt hidden interests.

Generally, these contrasting representations were also present in the newspaper articles analyzed in study 3 (cf. chapter 4). More specifically, polemic social representations were mainly present in articles whose authors openly declared their position with regard to the issue. Such was the case, for example, of the weekly magazine *Formula As,* whose journalists joined the 'Save Roşia Montană' campaign from day one, and thus significantly contributed to the movement. Similarly, articles published in the national newspaper *Ziua* from 2004 onwards insisted on environmental risks and gave voice to the project's opposition. On the other hand, both local newspapers *Unirea* and *Informaţia de Alba* generally published articles in favor of the project by covering topics initially mediatized by the mining company. Automatic text analysis led us to the conclusion that the articles in these four newspapers are mostly characterized by propaganda, whereas diffusion seems to best characterize *România Liberă.* Still, more research that takes into consideration both content and figurative/stylistic aspects in the written media is needed to verify this assumption. Automatic text analysis identified six dominant frames used to address the Roşia Montană issue in the written media. They refer to local aspects and the importance of Roşia Montană (cluster "Patrimony" and "Village"), to the authorization process and corresponding court battle (cluster "Legal Process"), to the players involved in the conflict, especially the mining company (Cluster "Company"), to the project's economic benefits or lack thereof, and, finally, to the environmental risks entailed by the construction of the mine (Cluster "Cyanide"). Interpreting these frames revealed an emphasis in each newspaper on political affairs. Indeed, political themes (determined using lemmas referring to national and international politicians and institutions) emerged in all dominant frames, which demonstrate their use as an anchor in media representations of the conflict, thus

making Roşia Montană a political issue.

To better understand the characteristics and impact of social representations generated by the Roşia Montană conflict, the second stage of our research focused on their incidence in people's minds (Farr, 1995). For our last study (cf. Chapter 5), data was obtained through an on-line questionnaire that was completed by 276 people, and three groups (supporters, opponents, undecided) were compared. We employed three psychological dimensions – general environmental awareness, personal involvement and agentic disposition – which proved to be useful in understanding the contrasting attitudes as well as in identifying significant differences in the semantic representational fields of three of the four representations that we initially considered as forming a representational system related to the Roşia Montană conflict. Opponents and supporters significantly differed with regard to all three dimensions studied. Moreover, transversal analysis showed a coherent pattern systematically diversifying the groups of opponents and supporters with regard to their representations of 'Roşia Montană', 'gold mining' and 'the foreign investor'.

The project's opponents were generally associated with a high level of environmental awareness, and strong personal involvement and agentic disposition. For them, Roşia Montană is a place of great value (in terms of history, nature and beauty) that is threatened by destruction because of gold mining, which is essentially represented as an environmentally hazardous activity. They also expressed a negative representation of the foreign investor, anchored mainly in personal traits and a general critique of the corrupt Romanian political arena.

Supporters of the project were usually associated with low levels of environmental awareness, and weak personal involvement and agentic disposition. To them, Roşia Montană is an industrial town that is threatened by socioeconomic problems for which the gold mining project is a viable solution. Their representation of the foreign investor is positive, and is anchored both in the project's economic benefits and the investor's personal traits.

The main reasons for supporting or opposing the project were also explored. Economic arguments prevailed in the project's supporters' discourse, which they also assumed were the opponents' main reasons for opposing the project (i.e. insufficient profit for the State). In reality, the project's opponents stated ecological arguments as the main reason for opposing the mine, and reasons in terms of economic loss for Romania and alleged illegality in the mine's construction were secondary. These findings reveal that even though the use of cyanide did not prevail in the six frames, the corresponding cluster being the least loaded (see section 4.3.1.2. in Chapter 4), it was still prominent for those against the mine. Moreover, the presence of the term "theft" (plunder) in the central core of the opponents' representation of Roşia Montană could indicate that they emphasize moral considerations in terms of unfair distribution of wealth when spontaneously expressing their views about the Roşia Montană affair. Conversely, when asked to rationalize their position, the ecological argument for not building the mine prevailed. These findings may reveal the anchoring of opponents' representations of Roşia Montană in the newly emerged ideological trend in post-socialist societies, described as eco-nationalism (Dawson, 1996).

Our findings also demonstrate that a clear opposition between ecological and economic development is not of much use for understanding the Roşia Montană conflict in its complexity, especially for explaining its social representations.

The phenomenon we chose to study contributes to social representation theory in that, we hope, it provides further knowledge about polemic social representations, especially regarding the following aspects:

First, by analyzing the dynamics of the Roşia Montană conflict, we were able to demonstrate that polemic social representations, created and transmitted by social players with incompatible goals, emerge and evolve in inter-dependent relationships. They are not only mutually exclusive, but also mutually *constitutive* in that they inform and transform each other throughout the controversy they themselves create. This reciprocal influence may lead to more dialogical exchanges than was previously assumed (Gillepsie, 2008).

Second, by analyzing the contents, structure and dimensions of the social representations related to the Roşia Montană affair as expressed by laymen, we were able to empirically test the validity of Moscovici's threefold classification of socio-representational types, considered elsewhere as necessary (Breakwell, 2001). Although our research methodology was not particulary novel in the field of social representations, by using them in a complentary and integrated way, we were able to show that at least the social representations of Roşia Montană are polemic. Furthermore, the polemic social representations of Roşia Montană function as an anchor for the social representations of gold mining and the foreign investor, hence determining important modulations in the semantic fields expressed by subjects according to their attitude *for* or *against* the mining project. This leads to the idea that the polemic social representations of one object can lead to polemic social representations of other objects. That being said, more research, inspired by the structural approach (Abric, 1994b), is needed to validate the centrality of their elements.

On the contrary, analyses revealed the existence of only one social representation of the environment that is organized around the hegemonic themes of "pollution" and "protection". This finding could prove that regardless of a person's specific position regarding the project, the Roşia Montană affair contributed to raising environmental awareness in Romania, a country with no tradition of environmentalism.

Third, by investigating both the iconic and conceptual dimensions in the representations of Roşia Montană expressed by laymen, no connection was found. In other terms, it would seem that while competing to create a social reality, the iconic dimension of one polemic representation was victorious in imposing itself and in shaping the context of communication (Moscovici, 1994).

Finally, throughout this research, we have emphasized the mobilizing role of polemic social representations, which are deliberately created to influence others and whose success is proved by their ability to impose themselves. For this research, however, their degree of success was not measured in terms of majority/ minority influences because they are almost impossible to determine for the Roşia Montană conflict; the least financially powerful are also the most numerous (i.e.

the "Save Roşia Montană campaign"), while the most financially powerful (i.e. the Corporation) were unable to increase support with the exception of a small number of players. Locally, the situation is quite different. The majority of the Roşia Montană population favored the mining company, whereas the local NGOs fighting against the project continually lost local support.

Several limits of this research should be listed, as it was certainly not exhaustive. For instance, the identity role of polemic social representations was not explicitly explored. Also, alternative options could have been chosen in the exploration of the Roşia Montană affair. Indeed, we could have chosen to investigate the social representations of the local community and surrounding areas to determine their interpretation of the mining project and whether or not they see it as dangerous or beneficial for the region. Furthermore, focusing on the community would have provided information as to how the local population makes sense of its own town, especially given the contrasting social representations of Roşia Montană created by the "outside world". Another alternative would have been to observe similarities between lay-thinking and scientific knowledge surrounding the Roşia Montană affair. Given that experts and scientists from various disciplines having published their research also clearly expressed their position regarding the suitability of building the mine (for example, see Cocean, 2012), this could be considered evidence of a direct influence of social representations on scientific knowledge (as suggested by Purkhardt, 1993). These alternatives point once again to the fruitfulness of the Roşia Montană affair. Moreover, the Roşia Montană controversy is far from being a closed case, and thus presents great potential for future research. To use the same metaphor, it seems that Roşia Montană has unlimited resources for social scientific research.

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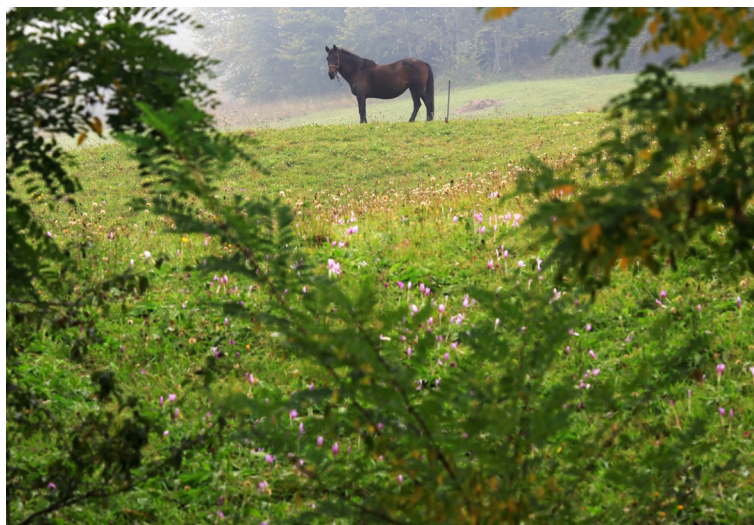
# Appendix

## Photographs of Roşia Montană used as stimuli in the study presented in Chapter 5

**Picture A**



**Picture B**

**Picture C**



**Picture D**



**Picture E**

**Picture F**



**Picture G**



**Picture H**

**Picture I**



**Picture J**

# ABSTRACT

The Romanian village Roşia Montană is said to be the site of Europe's largest gold and silver deposits. Plans to extract these precious metals were launched in the end of the nineties by the joint venture Roşia Montană Gold Corporation and were met with strong opposition from various social players who coalesced in the 'Save Roşia Montană' movement, thus generating a long-lasting controversy that exceeded local boundaries and making Roşia Montană, an ancient village situated in the Apuseni Mountains, internationally renowned. So far, neither the supporters nor the opponents have succeeded to impose their will and determine the start or the annulment of the mining project in Roşia Montană, making the future of Roşia Montană uncertain. What is now known as the 'Roşia Montană controversy' is, in many respects, a unique phenomenon that marks an important part of Romania's recent democratic history.

This book proposes a social psychological analysis of this phenomenon, by focusing on the study of social representations, their properties, their origins and their impact (Moscovici, 2000), bearing in mind that in analyzing social dynamics, "the conflict between groups" and the "conflict between social representations" are substitutable expressions (Rouquette, 1994b). At the same time, the research presented here aims contributing to social representation theory, by broadening knowledge about *polemic social representations*. Contrary to hegemonic and emancipated representations, polemic social representations are generated in the course of social conflict and are not shared by the whole society (Moscovici, 1988). For studying polemic social representations in a real setting, the Roşia Montană affair proved indeed to be a 'gold mine'.

For this work, we adopted an integrated Multi-dimensional and Multi-method research design (de Rosa, 1990; Moscovici and Buschini, eds. 2003) and focused on the comparative study of the representations emerged in Romanian society due to this conflict, both in the media and in people's minds (Farr, 1995).

The first part of our empirical analysis, dedicated to media analysis, consists of three studies. The first two strongly inter-related studies focused on the social representations constructed and transmitted by the main antagonisers involved in the conflict, whose goals related to the future of Roşia Montană are deeply incompatible. In our first study, using qualitative methods, we analyzed the symbolic competition in which the two conflicting sides were engaged, by making a 'biography' of the polemic social representations they fabricated and transmitted through the media with a view to influence the public and the decision makers to adopt a favorable position to the cause they are supporting. A closer look at the controversy in a historically chronological manner made us see that polemic social representations, albeit mutually exclusive, emerge and evolve in inter-dependent relationships. These polemic 'forms of truth' projected by both parties have been intertwined and have been mutually transforming each other since the corporation

announced its project sixteen years ago.

The second study presents the results of an exploratory comparative analysis of the definitions of Roşia Montană as a place. By focusing on the iconic code of expression of social representations, we were interested in observing the way in which the "reality" of Roşia Montană was objectified through visual images about this place by the two sides involved in the conflict: the mining company and the 'Save Roşia Montană campaign'. For this purpose, we chose to analyze two sets of photographs about Roşia Montană, which circulated on the Internet in 2007. The analysis revealed the emergence of two pictorial representations about Roşia Montană, which are highly contrasting and stereotypical. Ten of the photographs analyzed in this study were further used as stimuli in our last study.

The main purpose in the third study was to comparatively examine how the Roşia Montană affair was covered by the Romanian written media since the beginning of the controversy. A corpus built of 916 newspaper articles, published on the Roşia Montană issue in five newspapers (three national, two local) was examined using the various methodological tools offered by the software Tlab. Automatic text analysis allowed us to identify the dominant frames through which the Roşia Montană issue was addressed, as well as to examine the dynamics in the media representations of the Roşia Montană issue in each newspaper. Results also showed differences in the statistical relevance of each frame in the five newspapers included in the analysis.

The last study included in this book aimed investigating the representational system occurring in people's minds with regard to the Roşia Montană issue. Data for this study was obtained through an on-line questionnaire that combined both projective and verbal structured techniques. The focus on the content and structure of the social representations of 'Roşia Montană', 'Gold mining', 'Environment', and 'Foreign investors' aimed to identify whether these social objects generated different and polemic representational systems for the groups of subjects (N=276) compared in this study (Opponents, Supporters, Undecided). The corroborated results of the complementary analyses (hierarchical associations analysis, correspondence analysis, cluster analysis) carried out on the corpus of terms elicited from the free associations to the four stimulus words showed the existence of two different social representations of Roşia Montană that are highly polemic. Furthermore, the results showed important connections between the social representations of Roşia Montană and of gold mining and foreign investors, different across the three groups, depending mainly on the three psychological dimensions measured (environmental concern, personal involvement, agentic disposition). In contrast, no connection could be identified with the social representation of the environment, giving us an important clue that this representation might be considered hegemonic and that it does not belong to the same representational systems as the others. Through this study, we also identified the main reasons expressed by subjects for opposing or supporting the construction of a mine in Roşia Montană, the differences existing between the three groups with regard to the attribution of responsibility in decision making about the Roşia Montană issue, as well as information about their meta-knowledge (representation of other people's representations, Elchroth et al.,

2011). When using photographs from our second study as stimuli, we found that supporters and opponents did not significantly differ with regard to the preferred pictorial representation of the place Roşia Montană. All subjects judged as more representative the images that emphasized the natural beauty and the heritage values of the place. This result, which may seem to contradict our previous findings, was interpreted in terms of differences between social representations and the context, of figurative texture (Moscovici, 1994), in which they are anchored.

The Romanian village Roșia Montană is said to be the site of Europe's largest gold and silver deposits. Plans to extract these precious metals were launched in the late nineties by the Roșia Montană Gold Corporation, a joint venture between a Canadian-based mining company and the Romanian State. The Roșia Montană Project met with strong opposition from various social players who coalesced in the 'Save Roșia Montană' movement, thus generating a long-lasting controversy that exceeded local boundaries and making Roșia Montană internationally renowned. The ongoing conflict over Roșia Montană is, in many respects, a unique phenomenon that marks an important part of Romania's recent democratic history.

This book proposes a social psychological analysis of this phenomenon, by focusing on the social representations emerged in Romanian society due to this conflict. In analyzing social dynamics, the conflict between groups is interpreted in terms of a conflict between social representations. At the same time, the research presented here aims contributing to social representation theory, by broadening knowledge about polemic social representations. Contrary to hegemonic and emancipated representations, polemic social representations are generated in the course of social conflict and are not shared by the whole society. For studying polemic social representations in a real setting, the Roșia Montană affair proved indeed to be a 'gold mine'.