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MĂNĂȘTUR IMAGE(S), MĂNĂȘTUR AWARENESS(ES)¹

THE MENTAL MAP OF A COMMUNIST DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF CLUJ,
ROMANIA

ABSTRACT

Using qualitative research methods, the author explores the ways the inhabitants of the largest district of Cluj – Mănăștur – relate to their own dwelling place, investigating the mental schemes along which they structure their living space.

INTRODUCTION

Urban space is never merely a physical space where individuals live and move around, but also a culturally constructed social space. People attribute different meanings to the same physical space, in other words they particularise it, and attach emotions, meanings to it. The same space, or physical environment can therefore generate an extremely varied mental and emotional palette, and system of relations. Living in (social) space redraws the physical features, boundaries, and the “real” image of the given place. Roads used every day “become shorter” and often “improve in appearance”, while the less used ones may seem “more remote” and “strange”. Every individual possesses a cognitive map, on which the spaces of his/her everyday activities are engraved; images that depending on their elaborateness can contain very detailed (familiar) and more obscure (grey, unfamiliar) places. All these provide a meaning to our environment and help us in everyday orientation.

The mental mapping of the environment is not only an individual, but also a social, cultural formation. Its symbolic significance sets the frame and defines individual behaving patterns as well. The inhabitants of a settlement, town or town district develop widely spread, common knowledge about the surrounding world. The common nature of this knowledge is often unequivocal as its certain elements give the background for everyday lives in the form of the meanings of places, or in people’s identities, make them able to find each other. This knowledge is part of local culture, it causes “the world around us to make sense”.

The “common” knowledge about space is made of symbols, by which people attribute meanings to the phenomena of everyday life. In fact this means that people do not only live in a town made of streets, buildings and parks. Lives of everyday people go on in a town formed of routes, addresses, safe, friendly, unfamiliar, dangerous etc.

places – or in other words, the world of everyday life is happening in a space full of meanings. This receipt knowledge is an important part of everyday life, this is what helps us find our way in the town.

The present paper describes the relationship, the opinions of the inhabitants of Mănăştur, one of the largest districts of the city of Cluj², to and about their dwelling place, as well as the ways of the mental mapping of different spatial structures. I chose the method of mental mapping during this inquiry, because I thought that the meanings people attribute to space can be more easily elucidated by that method. Its importance resides in the fact that the way people see the world and their environment defines their everyday behaviour and movement in space.

The empirical foundation of the research is constituted by the mental maps of 119 Mănăştur residents³ and the interviews⁴ done with them. Interviewing was conducted along two parallel approaches: they partly served for the interpretation and the explanation of mental map elements, and on the other hand they were meant to reveal the interviewees' relationship to their dwelling environment and city district, the patterns of their space usage, and the subjective evaluations connected to all these.

MĂNĂȘTUR – VILLAGE, SUBURB, CITY?

During the systematisation⁵ of Cluj, most of the suburbs⁶ located at the outskirts (edges) of the old town had been demolished, and vast numbers of blocks of flats were built to replace them.⁷ Residential districts were mostly built in parallel, not subsequently, therefore present-day districts were built in the same period, within a few years.⁸ Thus, as a result of socialist town development, Cluj became a city of blocks of flats, and most of its inhabitants became residents of blocks of flats⁹. As a result of the reconstructions, usually only a few houses or street fragments remained untouched¹⁰, and just one district (the Bulgaria district) “had a narrow squeak” in surviving the radical changes. Owners and tenants of the demolished houses – just like everywhere else in the country – were moved into the new blocks of flats.

Two important periods of socialist urbanisation can be distinguished in Cluj¹¹, with great influence primarily on the nature of town building. The first lasted from the beginning of the sixties until approximately 1972–1973, and the second from the mid 1970s until the change of the political system. The specific characteristic of the first period was some degree of observation of the principles of “modern” city planning from an urbanistic point of view (Troc, 2003:7), which also included the planning of playgrounds, green areas, parks, promenades and quick access to main roads and lines of communication. The urbanism of the second period neglected almost entirely any principle of rational planning, and solely relied on quantity, intensive land exploitation and improvisations. Mănăştur (as a residential district) was mostly erected in this second period, therefore the distance between two blocks of flats

is frequently less than fifteen meters. This kind of “ad hoc” building methodology resembles more to the construction of labyrinths than civic design (Troc, 2003:8). These labyrinths were often covered by wall-like structures (panels), to ensure a representative surface and at the same time to hide the disorder of the background.

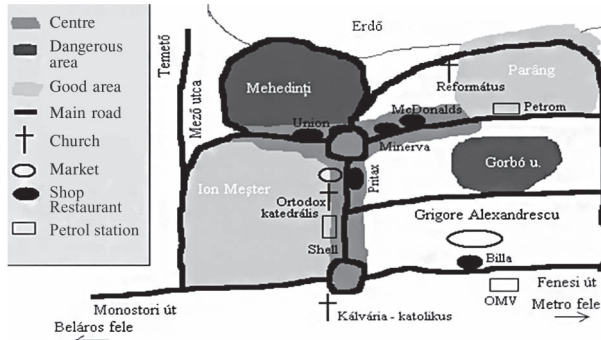
Mănăștur can thus be considered typical, as most of the towns of Romania were “enlarged” with similar suburbs during the almost half of a century of communism, to ensure lodging for the incoming industrial working class. It is a typical example of the urbanistic vision characteristic for the socialist system: irrespective of social, employment category, its primary aim was to ensure uniform lodging conditions, the planning and construction of standardised apartments. The urbanistic vision of Romanian socialism forced the different social categories into this urban form considered modern, where it tried to get rid of all existing differences. These panel districts constituted the most obvious solution for the “accomplishment of new social order” (Kligman, 1998). This also meant that urban space had to be subordinated to politics (Belkis – Coman – Sârbu – Troc, 2003:135), having in the first place to comply with the principles of transparency and controllability, and of unceasing supervision.

In spite of all that, Mănăștur is particular, just like the evolution, the physical and symbolic architecture of every city or suburb is particular. The suburb was born as a consequence of the “hatred of villages” characteristic for the communist ideology, becoming a part of the city as the village once known as Mănăștur was built into it. One source of its particularity resided in its ethnic nature, something the district inherited from the village (Troc, 2003:9). (As we will see later on, this state of affairs bears significant consequences also for the present).

The constructions of the blocks of flats, just like in the case of every Cluj suburb, did not begin from the direction of the city, but rather from the direction of the plough-lands located at the edge of the city (Pillich, 1985:56) and it approached the former city limits, the centre of the city¹². The building of the blocks of flats was started at the end of the sixties, and then, in a slackened speed it continued in parallel with the other districts until the end of the eighties, while the street of the old village closest to the city (Câmpului Street) remained undemolished. Thus the building of the district lasted almost three decades, therefore it is not at all uniform architecturally, its different parts bear the features of the architecture of the time when they were erected, creating several distinguishable blocks, which are more or less uniform (Planwerk, 2003). This manifests itself primarily in the character of the blocks of flats, as no principles of city planning can be observed¹³. We will get back later on to these differences, as they became structural elements of the mental maps. In the past almost three decades Mănăștur has grown to become the largest suburb of the city; nearly one third of its population living here.

THE PERCEPTION OF THE RESIDENTS OF MĂNĂȘTUR ABOUT THEIR DISTRICT

The relationship of the residents of Mănăștur to their dwelling place and the mental structures by which they are mapping space is particular, yet at the same time typical in many respects, just like the district itself. In connection with the drawings and the narrations of the subjects, the “average «representative geographical» mental structure” of the analysed district – more precisely its schematic diagram – looks like this:



Cemetery, Câmpului Street, Forest, Mehediniți Street, Parâng Street, Reformed Church, Union Shopping Mall, McDonalds, Petrom Petrol Station, Ion Meșter Street, Orthodox Cathedral, Pritax Taxi Station, Minerva Grocery Store, Gârbău Street, Shell Petrol Station, Grigore Alexandrescu Street, Billa Food Store, Mănăștur Road (Calea Mănăștur), Calvaria Roman Catholic Church OMV Petrol Station, Florești Road (Calea Florești), Downtown, Metro Cash & Carry Wholesale Department Store

The above image is the quasi-statistical processing of the drawings produced by the subjects: it contains the elements that appeared on more than half of the drawings of the interviewees. The map contains the following elements:

1. The mental units that form the district: Ion Meșter, Mehediniți, Parâng, Grigore Alexandrescu, Gârbău streets and the Centre.
2. The classifications of the different zones, i.e. which are the ones considered good (safe) or bad (dangerous).
3. The most frequently used routes. These are usually the main roads in the Centre, and the public transportation routes.
4. The most frequently mentioned reference points. Regarding their nature these are mostly commercial units (shops, market, restaurants, petrol stations) and churches.

Except for the mentioned elements, the representation has got a few particularities. It may be striking from the beginning that on the majority of representations (except for twelve) the directions of North and South are reversed. This is the consequence

of the fact that the district is depicted with relation to the Mănăștur Road – Florești Road axis (Calea Mănăștur – Calea Florești), which is at the same time the mental border of the district, leading to two important locations: the City (Downtown) and the Metro Cash & Carry wholesale department store. In addition, the district is located on a hillside, therefore mental “upward” is to the South.

Another common feature of these mental maps is that their outer boundaries differ from the administrative borders of the district; in other words the district has got parts that seem to be different in their nature from what the public perception considers being the Mănăștur, therefore these are not constituent part of the district’s mental map. These are mainly the parts closest to the centre¹⁴, as well as the parts on the other side of Calea Mănăștur – Calea Florești (Mănăștur Road – Florești Road). An interesting exception is the Billa food store, which is in fact on the other side of the road, yet because it is seen as part of the district (a highly frequented store), it was transferred on the opposite side of the road.

An important particularity of mental maps is a certain degree of segmentation and fragmentation. By these notions I wish to grasp the state of affairs, that due to the largeness and the confusing structure of the district the maps drawn by the subjects usually do not cover the entirety of the area, but rather only concentrate to a small part of it, including the places where they live, connecting that place to the different points of reference mainly located in the centre. Apart from their own dwelling environment and its vicinity, the inhabitants exclusively “use” the central part of the district, and only a few routes are leading elsewhere, if at all. This is an indication of the fact that the suburb is way too large for everyone to be entirely comprehended. Even the inhabitants themselves opine that Mănăștur is an independent unit, a small town by itself, rather than just a suburb of Cluj.

“A district full of people, crowds, noise, a lot of vehicles... you know, none of the other districts can really reach up to its standards. I would bet that a small town started to develop here..., it works as a second Cluj”

man, 32-year old, Romanian, taxi driver

“if we only look at what the people of Cluj think of Mănăștur, it is strange, because in fact Mănăștur is a small town now, many call it the United States of Mănăștur (Statele Unite ale Mănășturului in Romanian). In fact it had been a small village, but turned out to be quite big by now. The fact is that this part of the city was built in fifteen years, and it can partly be seen on its inhabitants, that they had been brought here, but by now it is beginning to take shape. Its peculiarity is that it is quite huge, compared to other districts. There are all sorts of people here, for sure. Its peculiarity, like I said, is that it is a small town in itself, I think it could really exist separately, as a separate small town, with so many things in it.”

35-year old man, teacher, Romanian

As I have previously mentioned, the mental differentiation of space occurs along architectural units. Denominations originate from the name of the most important street of the given area, in fact they project the name of the street on its vicinity. The place called Centre is the meeting point of the different lines of communication, this is where the largest number of commercial units, banks and branches of insurance companies, restaurants etc. are located in the district. Yet there are parts of the district that are not connected to either unit: for instance the area delimited by Parâng Street, Mehedinți Street respectively the Centre. At the same time, Gârbăului Street (and its surroundings) is in fact part of Grigore Alexandrescu, although it is mentally separated from it.

Attributes like *good* and *bad* are associated to the different zones of the district, which primarily refer to the status of the inhabitants living there. These differences are sustained by infrastructural factors like the quality of the streets, green areas, parks, street-lighting, although the quality of the flats or of the real estates is more or less the same. Thus bad parts are the ones inhabited by poorer people or by the Roma (e.g. Ion Meșter), and garbage and the lack of public safety are frequently mentioned as indicators. The good parts are the ones where the people “*like us*” are living, where “*there are no problems generally*”, close to the strategic places, with more green areas, perhaps close to the woods.

“I am saying that this is a good zone, where you can live in peace, there are no problems with the neighbours, no lags behind in paying public expenses. There are no Gypsies, either, as it is said sometimes that Mănăștur is a Gypsy district. Mănăștur is the most densely populated district of the city, still I do not consider it so suffocating. True that there are those ten storey blocks of flats here, packed all in a heap, but that’s it.”

man, 29-year old, worker, Romanian

Analysing the attitude towards the district one can distinguish three separate types: rejection, acceptance and total identification or pride. The notion of rejection hides in fact a double relationship, where the central element is the distinction made between the place called home (the apartment/flat) and the district, and the divergent attitude to these two. Rejection is pertaining to the district and the attached references, which is completed with the acceptance of or inurement to the flat and its direct environment as a place of dwelling. In this case the district only appears as a place of residence, all the other activities – work, leisure time – connect the rejecters to the city.

“I don’t like that there are no playgrounds... There are no places for the children to go to play. I mean there are only a few such places... I don’t like anything here in Mănăștur. I let my children grow up near the garages... I don’t like the people living here at all... They are weird.”

39-year old man, worker, Hungarian

This attitude is characteristic mostly for the Hungarians, and those with middle or higher education, originating from Cluj. I will discuss later the characteristics which define the relationship of the inhabitants to the district. If they could, they would move away from the district to another place that would present better opportunities both in terms of lodging and dwelling district, in other words, they are ready to move to any other place any time, except for the Mărăști Square.

Under *inurement* I mean an attitude characterised by a certain type of accommodation to a place that does not provide an aesthetical experience. In other words it could be said that *"I do not like it, but I got used to it"*. This is mostly characteristic for the inhabitants that moved here as adults, right after the district had been built, having lived in a house before – either in Cluj, or in a village.

"...anyhow, we got used to it. I don't even hear the trams going by anymore; I am sometimes asked how can I sleep in a place like this, but I am old now and wake up early anyway. Perhaps I could say that I like it here, because there are many people living here who are the same age as me and my wife. We call on the neighbours, we are not so alone here. You are only afraid of remaining alone, when you are old."

64-year old man, retired, Romanian

"I got used to it. I am still annoyed by the crowdedness of Mănăștur, but there is nothing to do about that. I like the place where I live, because it is at the edge of the town, near the woods, where there is fresh air, and not too much noise coming from the street. When I look out through the window, I can see the changing seasons. Unfortunately the district is packed with kids spending their childhoods in stair halls, or in front of them, they go nowhere, they grow up like that. Zorilor, Gheorgheni or Donath districts are "the districts of the upper class", while Mănăștur is pronouncedly a workers' district."

23-year old woman, student, Romanian

The most important feature of total acceptance is that being a resident of Mănăștur is enough reason in itself to be proud. In this case a total identification with the place can be observed, the attribute "Mănășturean" is an important component of the identity, which prevails over Cluj.

"I am mostly proud that I live in Mănăștur, which is a far more peaceful and cleaner district than the others. Mărăști Square for instance is highly polluted, with an industrial zone nearby, and densely populated. I could even say that this is like a small town. Those having lived in Mănăștur for long know that this is a good place. The population is good too, I could not say that they are only young people, or old, it is more mixed, just like in a real city. The old residents of Mănăștur feel a particular fondness of the district, we grew up here, saw how it evolved, a special place where I was born and where I wish to live. Many of us say that Mănăștur is not Cluj, because we are proud of it, a particular place that makes us proud."

31-year old man, tailor, Romanian

This kind of attitude is mostly typical for those Romanian youngsters that had been born here and socialised here, for whom the district is the theatre of their childhoods. They see the place as their homeland. The same kind of attitude is characteristic for a particular and not numerous group, the former inhabitants of the old village of Mănăştur (for more on this topic see Belkis – Coman – Sârbu – Troc, 2003). One of the main features of this attitude is that being a Mănăştorean is always defined as opposed to something else, most frequently to being a resident of Cluj as a city, or another district of it.

Mănăştur in this case has got a central significance, the almost exclusive scene of everyday life. The working place or perhaps the school might be connected to other parts of the town, albeit even these are often located within the district. Leisure time on the other hand is almost exclusively spent here: in the parks, sports grounds, places of amusement, the woods or the vicinities of the blocks of flats. These people would certainly remain in the district, even if they moved to another flat.

"I like it, I like it very much. I would never move to another district for anything in the world. I stay close to my workplace, close to the tram station, in an area with a lot of shops, the market is nearby, and the district itself is very nice. The woods are close... I am saying that this is a fine district. While Funar was the mayor (she laughs) oh, my God it was the district of the mayor, because he stayed here, but well, now he is not the mayor any more"

27-year old woman, nurse, Romanian

This acceptance is the result of the natural process during which the individuals domesticate their living environment, they perceive it as unique; attaching different feelings and interpretations to it. This is the space to which the different moments of private life are connected, filling the space with meaning. The difference only resides in the range to which the territory of the district they perceive as their own is extended, filled with meaning and where the limit from where it becomes unknown, neutral or hostile is.

"Should I be frank on why I liked it? Well, because of my husband. It was love at first sight... poor man... I was so much in love at that time. I liked everything he liked, I enjoyed listening to the music he was listening to, I liked the place where he lived... in other words everything, really everything. That's how it was at that time. So that is why I also loved Mănăştur, although I heard terrible things about it, really terrible things. Then I moved here because I wanted to relax a little bit, because my life had been hard with my parents. Then I started a family, and started to work. My husband helped me a lot. This is where we got a flat, my husband used to stay in Mănăştur before the blocks of flats were completed. I had visited here earlier and I liked it. My husband wanted to stay here, he loved Mănăştur, and I grew fond of it, too"

59-year old woman, retired, Romanian

Thus, the most important variables that structure the relations of the inhabitants of Mănăștur to their suburb are the following: *the period when they had moved here, age and national (ethnic) background*. What concerns the time of moving to the district, the appearance of the real estate market after the changes in 1989 is of a key importance. Whereas before 1989 the inhabitants had been assigned flats, therefore the opportunities to choose had been much more restricted, after the change of the political system the choice of the living place became the result of individual decisions that included subjective elements, too, alongside economic factors. Thus, in the case of those moving to Mănăștur before 1989, we can talk about different degrees of rejection or acceptance. On the other hand, in the case of those choosing to move in the district after the change of the political system, we meet a rationalised version of the acceptance, which underlines the favourable circumstances of the suburb.

"I like it here because the air is fresh... there is a lot of green places, the forest is near,... in contrast with Mărăști Square, for example"

41-year old woman, unemployed, Romanian

"Here in Mănăștur there is a huge demand for the flats, and good money is paid for them. If I wanted to, I could sell my studio in one day, because that high the demand is. This part is relatively quiet, and the air is clean because of the many trees... there are plenty of parks, the forest. In my opinion Mănăștur is distinguished from the other districts of Cluj, it is unique, unlike the rest of them. We have got everything here, if someone needs something, he does not have to travel downtown. Therefore it is different from the other districts! And this is good!"

38-year old woman, nurse, Romanian

At the same time, the images of Mănăștur also show ethnic differences. Mănăștur as a whole is defined as a Romanian area, often even perceived as a source of Romanian national consciousness in Cluj. This feature can be traced back to the period before socialism, when there had been a Romanian village here, right next to the Hungarian city of Cluj. This characteristic was exploited by the former mayor of the city, who supported this district emphasising its ethnic nature (Lazăr, 2003). The main street of the suburb was renamed after Ion Antonescu, and a statue of Antonescu was planned to be erected in the centre of the district (see Troc, 2003). His main electorate was also in fact comprised in the district.

The Hungarians living in this place endowed with a Romanian ethnic character try to elaborate strategies that would make it "inhabitable". These strategies can be perceived in the following processes: on the one hand we can observe the alternative Hungarian ethnicisation of the district, aiming at finding the points that could take on a Hungarian ethnic character, besides the rejection of Romanian character. Such a place is the Calvaria Church, which by that becomes a central element of the district.

"I grew up in a village, not far from here, in Baciú, maybe you know where it is,... among Hungarians. (She keeps silence) Then I was transferred here on a few square meters, among a lot of filthy Romanians, and I had to live here. They did not even know how to use a bathroom. We used to have a bathroom at home. They came from everywhere; they were collected from all godforsaken places everywhere... No, I did not like that. Then Funar hadn't done anything but inciting hatred among the Hungarians and the Romanians. But now I am fifty-seven years old, what am I left to do? All alone? I cannot move home any more, my parents have died. That's it... At home the elderly, the people of my age ... sit beside the fences on benches, call upon each other, there are things to do all day ... But here? I could probably sit out here, too, but it's just not the same. There are but ten meters between the blocks of flats, what could be done?"

This beautiful church here, this is the Calvaria Church. I like that very much, it is beautifully built, they gave it back, they did not even have their own church. Now they are building two. Just like they do everywhere else in the country. A real conquest. (she laughs) Isn't that right?"

57-year old woman, retired, Hungarian

Another element of the strategy is that the dwelling place, and generally the district (Mănăştur) are getting differentiated, too. They consider themselves the residents of Cluj in the first place, while Mănăştur is only seen as the district where their dwelling place is located, clearly distinguished from the other parts of the suburb that they reject. The ethnic nature of the rejection is filled with elements like slovenliness, dirt, disorder, lack of manners, Gypsies, lack of culture etc.

"But maybe another difference is the majority of those living here ... I mean the majority of the inhabitants do affect the image of the district. There are the many people moved in from Romanian villages, who had not been used to many things before, they destroyed a lot. Their manners, well, sometimes one could not call them very civilised. But there are such people everywhere, perhaps a little bit more of them her; uncle Funar loves them very much (he laughs) because he also lives here among them. While Funar was the mayor he even tried to some things for this district, his men were living here, one could say. (he laughs) We'll see if that will be continued, or what direction politics will take."

31-year old man, engineer, undertaker, Hungarian

Often, living in Mănăştur appears as a constraint that is explained by unfavourable financial or family situation.

"we did not stay in Mănăştur but up in Gheorgheni district. But then we had to sell our home there, because of some distress... and we had to move. It was a difficult time! We are glad that it is over. I only felt sorry for my little daughter... she was so

small at the time. So this is how we ended up here in Mănăștur, and we accept it now. But it is not like Gheorgheni...

But you know, I got used to Mănăștur. True, that there are still some problems sometimes, and the neighbours are noisy every now and then. I am a resident of Cluj in the first place, and only after that I am a Mănășturean. I don't think it is a good idea to separate it from the rest of the city! I do not like that! Also up in Gheorgheni people are very much against those from Mănăștur. They say that they are ugly and dirty and vagabonds, and this and that... I won't detail everything they are saying, because everyone knows that, it is common knowledge. The problem is with the people. Those from Mănăștur must somehow defend themselves against all those negative opinions. It's true that there are tramps here, too... but you could not say that all the people of Mănăștur are disorderly and Gypsy. This thing really makes me upset. Because there are decent folks here, too! That should not be forgotten!"

46-year old woman, worker, Hungarian

CONCLUSION

Examining the relationship of the inhabitants of Mănăștur to their district it can be seen that just like the district itself is not homogeneous, either architecturally or socially, the knowledge about the district cannot be considered homogeneous, either. In short, I could conclude that there is not just one Mănăștur, but several Mănăștur districts, each with their own particular suburb image and consciousness. The most important variables that structure the relationships of the inhabitants of Mănăștur to their suburb are their age, the period when they had moved to the district, their social status and national background. According to these variables three separate types of attitudes can be distinguished: rejection, acceptance and total identification.

Rejection is mostly characteristic for the Hungarians, and those with medium or high level of education. In this case the district only appears as a dwelling place, all the other activities – work, leisure time – connect these people to the city; rejection refers to the district and its attached meanings. This attitude is complemented on the other hand by the acceptance or the inurement of the dwelling place and its immediate environment. Inurement is primarily characteristic for the residents that moved here as adults immediately after the building of the district, having stayed in a house before – either in Cluj, or in a village. We see a certain type of accommodation to a place that does not provide an aesthetical experience, and which in other words could be described by the sentence “*I do not like it, but I got used to it*”.

Total acceptance is mostly typical for the Romanian youngsters that had been born here and socialised here, as well as for the former inhabitants of the old village of Mănăștur. In their case a total mental identification with the place can be observed, the attribute “Mănășturean” is an important component of the identity, which prevails over Cluj at any rate. In fact, being a Mănășturean is by itself a reason of pride.

At the same time, an important particularity of the mental maps is a certain degree of *segmentation* and *fragmentation*, which make the district incomprehensible up to a point. This is perhaps an indication of the fact that the suburb is way too large for everyone to be entirely comprehended. Even the inhabitants themselves opine that Mănăştur is more like a separate small town, rather than just a suburb of Cluj. Its fragmentation is at the same time also the result of its architectural character, which is often labyrinth-like: circular streets are frequent, and the distances between the blocks of flats are in many places merely a few meters. The different parts of the district do not resemble to each other in their structure, and apart from the central area, there are no points of reference to help in orientation.

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NOTES

1. This is the revised version of a paper published in 2004 entitled *Mănăștur Image(s), Mănăștur Awareness(es) The Mental Map of a District of the City of Cluj-Napoca*, which was grounded on a research carried out in the same year. Based on further investigations done in the field I consider that the conclusions of the analysis are still valid today. Many things have changed in the past years in Mănăștur: its infrastructure, green areas have become more orderly, many of its buildings have been renovated, multi-storey car parks have been built and new shops have opened. Still, the spatial orientation of its inhabitants, and their relationship to space remained unchanged.

2. From a sociological point of view the notion of suburb would probably be justified, although this suburb also forms an outstanding district from an administrative and city-planning perspective. At the same time Mănăștur is spreading on a larger territory than other average city districts and by no means can it be considered uniform or homogeneous. I use both terms in the study alternatively, with the same meaning, trying to point out that none of the notions truly covers the “positive reality” characteristic for Mănăștur.

3. We applied the method of the blank sheet, asking the subjects to draw a map of Mănăștur on a blank sheet of paper. In order to make the maps comparable to each other, we introduced a certain degree of standardisation by the questions of the person conducting the interview; in other words we told them as an instruction what we wanted to see drawn on the paper (see Letenyei, 2004:167)

4. I hereby wish to express my thanks to the first and second year students of Sociology and Anthropology who took part in the research during their summer internships and who, with their enthusiasm and interest, greatly contributed to the better and more accurate understanding of the issue.

5. This is the notion by which the socialist (communist) system described the efforts to modernise the social-economic structure of the country, within the framework of which an overall country plan had been elaborated, comprising all the localities of the country. This systematisation plan included on the one hand the modernisation or the demolition of the villages, and on the other hand the reconstruction of the cities and the restructuring of their existing ecological systems (i.e. the demolishing of certain town outskirts and the construction of districts with blocks of flats). For more information see the paper signed by Aluaș in this issue.

6. Such were the Donath Street, the Hóstáts, the Gheorgheni Street and its vicinity, the Calvaria, Sâncalja etc.

7. Such suburbs are the Iris, the Mărăști Square, Între Lacuri, Gheorgheni, Zorilor, Mănăștur and the Donath (Grigorescu) districts.

8. The constructions of the Donath and Gheorgheni districts started roughly at the same time in the early 1960s, and the building of the Gheorgheni district continued until the end of the 1980s. The building of the Mănăștur district had started in December 1970, and it was still uncompleted in December 1989. Meanwhile the Zorilor district is built up, and between 1980 and 1985 the Kül-Magyar and Kül-Közép Street Hóstáts are demolished, and suburbs

are erected on their locations (Mărăști Square), which are also found unfinished by the change of the political system (Gaál, 2001:425-429).

9. In 1999 19 percent of the residents of Cluj stayed in private houses, and 81 percent in blocks, in flats with an average surface area of 34.9 square meters, with an average dwelling surface of 12 square meters per person (PUG, 1999).

10. Untouchedness should be understood literally here, because if a given house, street or neighbourhood managed to escape the “demolition squad”, it fell into complete oblivion, with no further infrastructural or other type of investments. Total gas pipe coverage was achieved by the town only by the 1990s, but even today there are parts in the city with no water conduits and sewage, and some of the streets are still just cobbled.

11. These two periods can be well delimited in the case of Cluj, yet the change of trend can be observed with a difference of just a few years not only in Cluj, but also on the level of the whole country.

12. The primary logic of this construction process developing inwards from the outskirts was that it did not make necessary to demolish existing buildings in any part of the city in the beginning, to avoid making masses of people homeless (Pásztor, 2003).

13. After the construction of the blocks city planning was usually “undertaken” by the inhabitants moving in. This often meant that they created garages and vegetable gardens in the immediate vicinity of their homes. Although these constructions are not very popular today, their merit was that they occupied the mud pits among the blocks of flats, which once had made Mănăştur unmistakable.

14. Plopilor Street and Grădini Mănăştur (Mănăştur Gardens)

15. The Mărăști Square appears the most frequently as a comparison with Mănăştur. Interviews done with young people often include that these contrasts are not only mental ones, and the supremacy of one of the two districts is the stake of “gang fights” between the two.

16. According to the data of a 1999 questionnaire survey done by the Sociology Department of the Babeş-Bolyai University, 28 percent of the people wishing to move would choose to move within the district. This proportion is slightly higher in the case of Mănăştur residents, it exceed 30 percent. The number of the elements in the sample is N-984, representative for the adult population of Cluj with regard to age, education, lodging place and type of lodging, with an error margin of +/- 3%.

17. The church of the Benedictine abbey of Cluj-Mănăştur, found at the edge of Mănăştur. The first Benedictine abbey here was established during the time of King Saint Ladislaus I of Hungary, being destroyed during the Mongol invasion and re-established by Béla IV of Hungary. During the peasant revolt led by Antal Nagy de Buda in 1437, the noblemen reached an agreement here with rebels. In the 1920s the church was given for 25 years to the Romanian Eastern-rite Catholic Church; then it got under the authority of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and was received back by the Roman Catholic Church in 1990.