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PhD THESIS IN HISTORY

The conversion to Pentecostalism of the Filiași Rudar community in the context
of Romanian Postsocialism

SUMMARY OF THE PhD THESIS

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Key words: Rudars, conversion, Pentecostalism, conversion narratives, Rudar traditions vs. Pentecostal culture

Introduction

In the small town of Filiași, from the Romanian region of Oltenia, the Rudar Roma community, better known under the name of „Rudărie”, which resides at the outskirts of the settlement, is mostly comprised of members of the Pentecostal religious cult, while the majority of Romanian citizens belong to the Orthodox Church. The massive conversion to Pentecostalism took place especially after 1989, in the wake of changes brought about by the Romanian Revolution and the fall of the Communist totalitarian regime. This paper brings to focus the reasons for this conversion and the immediate effects it had on the Rudar community.

Besides the aspects regarding the statistic evolution of religious conversions (INS 1992, 2002, 2011), the reasons for conversion within the Roma and especially within the Rudar communities (Sorin Gog, Maria Roth, Dénes Kiss), the organization of the Pentecostal Church (Simion Pop), the emancipation of Roma identity through conversion (László Fosztó) and the problem of confessional education (Raluca Bianca Roman), the subjective experience of Pentecostalism and its integration with personal and communitarian life remains a subject not yet sufficiently studied. Those who have studied this theme in more detail are Sorin Gog, László Fosztó and Dénes Kiss. Furthermore, the studies that approach the correlation between local traditions and Pentecostalism within Romanian cultural space are relatively few in number. Among these is the study authored by the researcher Katalin Kovalcsik, which deals with the changes brought about by Pentecostalism in a Rudar community in Oltenia.

Globally, a couple of the most important authors that theorize local cultures' conversion to Pentecostalism are the anthropologists Joel Robbins, Birgit Meyer and André Droogers. Their analyses were useful in investigating the subject of integrating Pentecostalism into the social lives of the Rudars. Issues such as personal and moral transformation, the integration of the converted within the new, Pentecostal community, his relationship with the unconverted, the correlation between local and Pentecostal culture, the influence of Pentecostalism on the gender roles and the relationship between the two genders, the reinterpretation of corporality through the prism of Pentecostalism, as well as its influence on personal identity are just a few of the aspects

that play a role in the way Pentecostalism is adopted, both at an individual, as well as at a communitarian level.

The issue of religious conversions in Eastern Europe is one that presented a great deal of interest after the 1989 dissolution of Communist regimes. The revitalization of religious beliefs led to the success of specific confessions, especially among the neo-Protestant ones. A model for such a research represents the book coordinated by Mathijs Pelkmans, *Conversion after Socialism Disruptions Modernisms and Technologies of Faith in the Former Soviet Union*, which deals precisely with religious conversions within nations of the former Soviet Bloc. In this book, emphasis falls on ethnic minorities converting to neo-Protestant cults. A vast majority of the case studies presented focus on the transformations that local communities have gone through after the religious conversion. Once again regarding the Eastern-European cultural space, another research that serves as model for my paper is the book authored by Catherine Wanner, *Communities of the Converted*. She is one of the most relevant researchers that analyze the Evangelical confession in Ukraine. She also describes how the Evangelical movements evolved after the fall of the Soviet Union. Today, Ukraine is one of Europe's strongest Evangelical centers.

As the previously cited papers also conclude, religious conversion took place especially within minoritarian populations, which have found their place in a community that bears the role of offering them both individual, as well as collective protection. Among the Eastern-European minoritarian populations that have been systematically excluded and marginalized are also the Roma and Rudar communities. The conversion implies not only a network of reciprocal material and spiritual support, but also the chance of identity emancipation. The Pentecostal confession offers the converted the opportunity of escaping social exclusion. In this sense, László Fosztó describes how Pentecostalism bore the role of offering the Transylvanian Roma people a new identity in Postsocialist Romania, a process most commonly known as *being born again*. Sorin Gog also insists on the identity component of Pentecostalism (*new heavenly citizenship*, as this component is also called) once the Roma people were converted and on how the Pentecostal community attracted and integrated them within their ranks. In the current paper, that addresses the conversion of Rudars, the situation is slightly more complicated due to the fact that the Rudars categorically delimit themselves from the Roma people. The challenge Rudars encounter is that of incorporating the "old life" before conversion within the "new life" after their

conversion to Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism implies breaking off with the past, so that the interesting and original part of a research such as this one is to observe the way in which the Rudars reinterpret their past and present because of exterior factors such as the local traditions, or their association with the Roma people. The analyses undertaken by the aforementioned authors are useful in understanding how Pentecostalism mobilizes and helps create a religious community, but they do not sufficiently address the relationship between Pentecostalism and local culture. For this, I have followed the theoretical lines traced by Joel Robbins, Birgit Meyer and André Droogers. The concepts of rupture and continuity, spiritual battle or the transcendental, internal or external repertoires come to explain how Pentecostalism is experienced, as well as the correlation between local cultural context and Pentecostalism.

Regarding the personal dimension of conversion, sickness plays a key role in deciding to convert. It constitutes the intrigue and the breaking point of conversion for the majority of Rudars that have converted to Pentecostalism. Nonetheless, at community level, the conversion to the Pentecostal confession gave the converted the chance of being integrated into a community and of creating solidarity with other members, especially in light of the fact that the Rudars and Roma people are both stigmatized and segregated by and from the dominant population. Besides the religious affiliation and solidarity, the Pentecostal confession offered the converted a moral compass, a system of rules that systematized and organized the life of the religious community. The new religious conduct promoted by Pentecostalism is the more important as the socio-economic instability after the fall of the regime, especially characterized by rising unemployment rates, generated crises both at a familial level, as well as at the level of communities. Some of the effects of these crises were resorting to excessive consumption of alcohol, extra-marital relations or the use of physical or verbal violence. The typical Pentecostal conduct, which promotes attachment towards one's own family, a greater equity regarding the sharing of household tasks, the prohibition of smoking and alcohol, going to church and a control over the general conduct of the members of the community contributed to the reestablishment of a functioning family model led to the conversion of other people. An important component in the correction of 'deviant' behavior constituted the 'domestication' of Rudar toxic masculinity. If the ostentatious display of masculinity constituted the public performance of alcohol consumption, smoking or physical violence on the 'street arena', once the conversion took place, the people also converted to a 'household arena', where the performance of masculinity within Pentecostal ethical

paradigm means financially and spiritually protecting the family, offering help in household chores and public outings from the position of a missionary of the Lord.

The paper's objectives concentrate on how Pentecostalism is experienced by the Rudars at a personal and community level. At a personal level, the conversion to Pentecostalism implies the mutation undergone by the relationship of the converted to his own past, the challenges posed to the converted in regard to his relationship to the other, unconverted members of his family, the relation and integration in the new Pentecostal community, creating a relationship with God, characterized by signs given to him by the divine, the transformation undergone by morality and a different approach to one's own body and the body regarded as a ground for the manifestation of divine signs. At a community level, Pentecostalism implies the evolving relationship between the converted and unconverted, how Pentecostalism transformed the Rudar community under the aspect of culture and identity, the Pentecostal Rudar community as a *state within a state* within the greater Rudar community, the creation of new forms of solidarity through Pentecostalism and the moral transformation and domestication of Rudar machismo.

This research is relevant inasmuch as it brings to light the effects of converting to Pentecostalism in a marginal community, regardless of the sociologic theories that explain religious conversion from a pragmatic and utilitarian perspective (*rational choice theory*). One of the first objectives of this research was that of undertaking an ethnographical research a neighborhood from a small provincial town in Postsocialist Romania. The Rudar community of Filiași caught my attention due to the fact that the rate of conversion to Pentecostalism is seven times greater than in the rest of the settlement. The purpose of an ethnographical research is to most faithfully lay before the field observations and to provide as many contextual data (*thick description*) regarding the religious conversion of the Rudars. The paper attempts to expose how valid in this case religious revitalization (Rodney Stark, Laurence Iannaccone) is after 1989. Furthermore, the research wishes to bring to light the way in which a Rudar community from a Postsocialist industrial city reacts to structural changes such as industrial redevelopment, unemployment, the lack of social assistance or the liberty of religious cults.

The paper attempts to illustrate the tensions that occur between the Rudar culture's traditional traits and the modern views promoted by Pentecostalism. From the point of view of identity, the Rudars maintain strong bonds with the traditional elements of their culture, even if Pentecostalism, through its nature, claims a total break with the past. The question occurs

whether Pentecostalism played the role of emancipating force for the Rudars or whether the conversion led to a double segregation, both ethnical and religious?

In regard to the context of the Rudars' religious conversion to Pentecostalism after 1989, the research uses concepts such as societal secularization and individual secularization, concepts borrowed from Sorin Gog in attempting to further detail the theory of religious revitalization. In this sense, the theory best fitted to the current paper was that of contextualized secularization, taken from Gert Pickel. These theories will be further analyzed in the second chapter, in the section that refers to the debates around Romania's Postsocialist religiosity.

The paper's main objective was to maximally make use of conversion narratives. They had the role of conveying not only the conversion's personal dimension, but also its collective dimension. Through them, the history of the Rudar community from Filiași is indirectly portrayed. The narrations have the role of capitalizing on how the morality and identity of the Rudars has changed and of illustrating the break from a past in which they were socially marginalized. Presenting these conversion narratives have the role of emphasizing the biographic renewal of the Rudars, simultaneously also the way they position themselves in regard to the "old life" prior to their conversion, as well as to the "new life" after the conversion. The trajectory of each individual conversion is presented through several types of conversion, depending on the authors that have theorized this process: conversion as passage by Diane Austin-Broos, stage conversion or process (*stage model*) as seen by Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, or conversion as a process of individualization, regarded from a cultural perspective by André Droogers.

The conversion narratives give an overall idea on how Pentecostalism is adopted and adapted within the Rudar community from Filiași. The conversion narratives are organized by theme: personal, cultural and eschatological. These dimensions were taken from Joel Robbins in the context of adopting Pentecostalism by local communities, but within this paper, this minimal classification is further derived and enriched based on the analysis's requirements and the specificity of the field-work, namely the Rudar people themselves. However, the recurring theme of all of these dimensions represents sickness, that comes to play the role of a leitmotif in the conversion narratives.

The final objective of my thesis is to illustrate the originality of how Pentecostalism is adopted by the Rudars. The negotiation of conversion is one of the specific traits of the Rudar

Pentecostalism and occurs when the converting individual finds himself both in the world of the unconverted, as well as in the world of the converted. The Rudars' morality is reconfigured once Pentecostalism is adopted. The machismo tendencies subside, the Rudar Pentecostal Church claims its right to transnationally supervise the believer's conduct when he emigrates.

The importance of this research is further enriched by analyzing local Pentecostalism, that functions as a moral reference point and as a spiritual guide that "washes" the stigma and xenophobia from the community's past. One of the most important authors that analyze the global phenomenon of Pentecostalism and emphasizes the importance of studying the effects of Pentecostalism are Joel Robbins, André Droogers and Birgit Meyer. Robbins studies the contact between local cultures and Pentecostalism, alongside the theme of morality. Droogers analyzes, from a cultural perspective, the effects of Pentecostalism on local culture and the significations of Pentecostalism blending with local culture. Furthermore, Droogers proposes a research methodology for Pentecostalism valid at the level of local communities, through using three thematical spheres: the *transcendental*, the *internal* and the *external*. Meyer discusses especially the way the rupture between African local traditions and the new Pentecostal religious culture occur. Among the themes addressed by the latter are the concepts of *continuity* and that of *rupture* and the issue of demonizing local deities simultaneous with the religious conversion. The theoretical and methodological approaches of the aforementioned authors constituted models for the current research. The evolution of the concept of morality, theorized by Robbins, was useful in better observing the way in which the Rudars adopt the Pentecostal ethical norms. The methodological model proposed by Droogers for the study of a Pentecostal community contributed to the better organizing of the field-data (*transcendental, internal, external*) and the bonds that exist between them. The analyses and the theoretical models proposed by Meyers played a significant role in interpreting the contact between the Rudars' customs and traditions and the Pentecostal culture.

The structure by chapters

The first chapter presents the Rudars' history and identity, while simultaneously exposing their occupations, their religion and beliefs, their economic and social status. The turning point in the social history of the Rudars is the religious conversion to Pentecostalism after 1989. The Rudars' conversion, as the second chapter explains, occurs in a line of changes that happen within Rudar community both during the Communist regime, as well as in the Postsocialist period. The structural changes that occurred in post-1989 Romania had long lasting social and cultural consequences for the Rudar community from the outskirts of Filiași. The post-1989 changes also affected the Romanian communities; in the case of the Rudars, however, there are a few important elements that give them a special social and cultural status. One of the most sensible aspects for the Rudars is identity (their association with the Roma people and the way they come to be perceived by Romanians). Analyzing the Filiași Rudars' religious conversion after 1989, in the context of Romanian Postsocialism, aims to explain the changes undergone by a minority that finds itself at the converging point of post-communist transition and Pentecostal culture. In the same way that Robbins is interested in the way Pentecostalism is globally experienced¹, this paper aims to shed light on how the Rudar people experience Pentecostalism.

The third chapter concentrates on the two models of conversion: *conversion as stage model* and *conversion as passage*. The fourth chapter aims at reconstructing biographies in the manner of Henri Gooren, simultaneously taking into account the dual nature of conversion, as theorized by André Droogers, Birgit Meyer and Joel Robbins. The fifth chapter lays emphasis on the effects and negotiations of conversion on a personal and community level. The common thread of the five chapters is the succession of transformations undergone by the Filiași Rudar community both during the communist period and after the Romanian revolution of 1989 and the way in which they reinterpret their Rudar identity, regarded especially through the prism of the Pentecostal Rudars.

¹ Joel Robbins, „Anthropology of Religion” in Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, Cornelis van der Laan (coord.), *Studying Global Pentecostalism. Theories and Methods*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 2010, p. 163.

In this sense, the respective themes of the first chapters are completed through conversion models and narrations that recall the Rudars' biographical reconstruction and through a process of *reset* and catharsis both at the level of community, as well as at a personal level. The renewal of the Rudars' religious beliefs gives way for the analysis of corporality and of the moral positioning. These two dimensions are analyzed within the fifth chapter and show the way in which the Rudars, often being associated with uncleanness by Romanians, through conversion integrate into a community that provide them with a new position, free from stigma and from the threat of social exclusion. The five chapters go from a general to a particular level with the aim of offering both a historical insight into the community's transformation and an anthropological insight in the matter. The main focus is directed towards the qualitative dimension, due to the fact that it capitalizes on *pentelocalism* and the manner in which the Rudars use elements of their own culture in different contexts once they convert to Pentecostalism.

Methodological remarks

In order to reach the proposed objectives, the research's basis constitutes not only the qualitative approach, but also a thorough historical and statistical documentation. The qualitative approach implies the actual field research using the technical instruments the researcher disposes of (recorder and notebook) to record the conversations had with the Rudars and with other citizens of Filiași. The historical documentation was mainly undertaken through consulting of documents available at the Filiași Town Hall and at the State National Archives, Dolj branch. The statistical documentation was realized by consulting the data provided by the Filiași Town Hall and by consulting the data provided by the National Institute for Statistics. The macrostructural changes after 1989 will be analyzed in strict comparison to the level of day-to-day practices of the Filiași community following several methodological steps, through collecting of statistical and historical data at a national and local level and then through the use of qualitative research specific instruments: semi-structured interview, 'life-story' interview, focused interview, participative observation, formal and informal discussions with members of the community and key-citizens of Filiași. Furthermore, all names that occur within this research are fictional. I have chosen to do this as a measure for protecting the identity of the persons involved in the study and which have supplied me with information regarding this research's subject.

The first steps in investigating the Rudar people from Filiași implied collecting statistical data and organizing interviews on the field. The statistical data was obtained through documents available at the Town Hall and mainly referred to the Rudar community (properties, housing conditions, religion, professions and age distribution). Furthermore, the local and national census (INS 1992, 2002, 2011) proved very useful in my research. This data presents in detail the current situation of the Filiași Rudar community and represent key elements for reconstructing the Rudars' social history. The interviews represent the basis of the qualitative research; they are structured as an interview guide that initially had the role of a scheme that was later further restricted, so as to take on a more homogenous and stable shape as the research evolves. The field journal was a useful instrument in portraying the reflections regarding the research field, the observations in regard to the strong and weak points of the interviews or the ways in which the subjects were approached.

The field study took place in the Rudărie neighborhood of Filiași, where the local inhabitants were interviewed. Conversations with people outside the neighborhood also took place. The qualitative research took place in Filiași mainly due to the fact that in this way, the way in which Pentecostalism is locally experienced, as well as how it is individually experienced, could be observed and thus the intimate nature of the conversion could be explained.

From a statistical point of view, research has also been undertaken at the Filiași Town Hall archive and at the Dolj National Archive, in order to collect historical data about the Rudar settlement, information referring to the lands they possess, their professions and so forth. The objective of this investigation was presenting the settlement's history and the history of the Rudar minority, the settlement's religion and rates of religious conversion. The conversion rates among Rudars are important inasmuch as the most Pentecostal believers reside in the Rudărie neighborhood, thus making it the most dynamic in terms of converting to Pentecostalism.

At the cadastral service hosted by the Filiași Town Hall, I have organized a survey over those who currently reside in the Rudărie neighborhood, while also simultaneously quantifying the current number of households in the neighborhood. This survey was realized by way of counting family members found in the Agricultural Register (*Registrul Agricol*), starting from 2014 up until now. I have personally calculated this statistic over the number of Rudar

individuals and households in order to have a demographically up-to-date situation in this neighborhood.

Furthermore, following the discussion I had with professor Dinică Ciobotea, the author of a monography of Filiași, I came upon important details about the Rudar settlement around the Motru and Jiu Valleys. This discussion was ultimately very useful because professor Ciobotea, being a specialist in history, could clarify some of the aspects regarding the Rudars' situation around the Motru and Jiu Valleys, especially referring to their professions, their migrations and their juridical status. Many of the explanations provided by the professor were not to be found in the settlement's monography, so that I was offered a more complex perspective on the Rudars' situation in modern-day Oltenia.

In regard to the study of religious practices and the reception of Pentecostalism in the Rudărie neighborhood, I have also participated in the Pentecostal ceremonies and initiated interviews with members of the Pentecostal church. I have conducted several interviews with the head of the Filiași Pentecostal community, presbyter Daniel. Participating in these Pentecostal ceremonies was useful inasmuch as it illustrates the actual experience of Pentecostalism, the spiritual manifestation differentiated between men and women and the messages that the presbyter addresses the community. Not only this, but participating in these sermons offered me the possibility of coming into contact with Pentecostal members who would recall their lives, their conversion to Pentecostalism or they would agree to be interviewed in a future meeting.

In the analysis resulted from the field study, one of the main conclusions was existence of an immediate link between Rudar traditions and Pentecostalism. This correlation manifests itself mostly in the conversion narratives, when the Rudars recall the healing miracles that determined them to convert to Pentecostalism. For example, before the conversion, the Gurban ritual represented the dominant healing practice within the community, but presently, Pentecostalism overtook that function. In some cases, a negotiation took place when converting to Pentecostalism, the Rudars thus trying to avoid a total rupture from 'worldly' customs and values in order to convert to a Pentecostal ethical code.

The originality of the current paper resides in illustrating the functioning mechanisms of the old Rudar culture, represented here by the ritual of Gurban, and the way the new, Pentecostal culture is adopted by the community. The correlation between the Gurban and Pentecostalism implies both similarities, as well as differences, yet they both facilitate the understanding of how

the ritual is interpreted by the Rudars. Another original element represents the way in which Pentecostalism's influences are negotiated in the life of the not-yet-converted (*preconversion*), as well as in the life of the converted. In both cases, elements from the old culture ("viața veche"/*the old life*), associated with the Gurban, as well as elements from the new culture ("viața nouă"/*the new life*) are selected. Identity is most important for the Rudars, since they regard themselves as exponents of the Rudar cultural identity. Their frequent association with the Roma population exerts an even greater pressure for them to distance themselves with help of their Rudar traits. Pentecostal culture does nothing but exacerbate this issue, but it also poses a challenge. Why is that? Because, once they convert to Pentecostalism, the Rudars find themselves forced to break off with the "old life" and with the local traditions. On the one hand, what will be extensively discussed within this paper is how the Rudars become bricoleurs of their own culture, using both elements from their traditional culture, as well as from the new, Pentecostal culture. On the other hand, Pentecostalism and the Rudar identity are closely linked. Besides being a Rudar, the converted becomes a "brother" or a "sister" in a new community. Pentecostalism transforms the Rudar community. Thus, a *state within a state* takes shape, the Rudar Pentecostal community residing in the majority Rudar community. The paper analyzes the way in which the converted community interacts with the unconverted group, the way in which the Rudar Pentecostal community defines itself in opposition to the Orthodox Rudars or the way in which the new set of moral rules and conduct transforms the Pentecostal community and influences how they regard the unconverted.

Conclusions

Postsocialism brought about a series of deep and varied changes in the town of Filiași. Among the most important changes dwells with the restructuring of the local industry and the disappearance of state-owned agricultural undertakings. This generated unemployment among the Filiași population. The Filiași Rudars deeply felt the effects of the socio-economic instability. One of the responses to this perceived crisis was turning to the Pentecostal community from the "Rudărie" neighborhood.

For the Rudars, access to the technical knowledge or to the institutional gateways for opening a business was generally lacking, since they had been systematically excluded from

public life, without receiving any key-positions in local administrative structures. Once the factories are closed, the Rudars turn to local entrepreneurs. This relationship is similar to a feudal one, in which the nobleman offering protection to his servants is replaced during Communism by the Head of the IAS (*State Agriculture Enterprise*), and then, after the revolution, by the local entrepreneur. This hierarchical organization is the more pronounced as the state and its affiliated institutions providing social assistance significantly reduce their activity in local communities, as it is the case also in Filiași. Relationships based on informal exchanges, prevalent in the communist period, continue to this day. During the communist period, the head of the IAS referred to the Rudars as “my Rudars”, while after 1989, this central position is occupied by the local “boss”, the transition-era entrepreneur that slowly becomes a solution for the Rudars’ struggles with unemployment. On the one hand, their frequent employment as mere workers spreads the general idea that they perform the hard work the likes of which Romanians or Roma would refuse to do. On the other hand, the power dynamics prevalent in the work environment during Communism is perpetuated by the entrepreneur, so that the dominant position of Romanians in regard to the Rudars continues. In opposition to the Rudars, the local entrepreneur possessed the necessary know-how for opening a business and enjoyed the institutional support in order to make such an undertaking.

We thus come closer to the key moment in the Rudars’ recent history, namely the conversion to Pentecostalism. This meant their integration in a new community. In this new community, the ethnical differences and their local exclusion greatly diminished. Besides material support, the Pentecostal community offers spiritual and moral support, creating a strong bond of solidarity between its members, its “brothers” and “sisters”, thus playing the role of an institution that provides safety and cohesion in the Postsocialist period of massive instability. Even if, once integrated into the Pentecostal community, the Rudars reconfigure their identity, at a local level they are still regarded by Romanians in terms both of ethnical “otherness” as well as of religious “otherness”. Pentecostalism creates new lines of division, so that a paradoxical relationship occurs between ethnic emancipation and religious segregation.

The Rudars’ conversion to Pentecostalism created the opportunity of communication between local traditional culture and Pentecostal culture. This bond created a particular form of Pentecostalism which I have referred to as *Pentelocalism*. The key elements for the evolution of this bond were the conversion narratives, that all deal with the issue of sickness. Sickness plays

an important role in the Rudars' beliefs, since their most important ritual, the ritual of Gurban, is widely celebrated for its results in curing diseases. The Rudars' movement towards Pentecostal spirituality meant their movement towards a general preoccupation with sickness. The conversion narratives are the intermediate links between local traditions and Pentecostalism. These brought to light the common threads between the traditional Rudar spirituality and the Pentecostal spirituality. Among these threads is the signification of the dream, interpretation of sickness and localizing sickness within the body, praying as a healing process or persons specialized in healing.

Besides the role they play in the relationship between local traditions and Pentecostalism, the conversion narratives bring the history of the Rudar community to light. The converted Rudars recall their "past lives" before conversion. On the one hand, the converted discuss about the spiritual happenings that contributed to their conversion. These happenings refer to sickness, life in the hospital, pleading to thaumaturges (the orthodox priest or those who perform ritualic witchcraft), sickness regarded as a sign from God that it is time to convert, conversations held in their dreams with God and God as a universal, supreme doctor. On the other hand, during their interviews, the converted Rudars also approach other subjects of conversation, such as the Rudar specific occupations, their professional training, the neighborhood's industrialization, the massive exodus of the work-force to the West, working at CAP and IAS, unemployment and social insecurity during the first years following the 1989 Revolution and the factories' rebuilding. The converted recalling his "old life" implies a rupture from the past. Many of the Rudars demonize their past, while others attempt to reconcile their "old life" with their "new life" as a Pentecostal. For example, in some instances in the community's history, the Gurban ritual is accepted. This occurs most frequently when the Rudars are associated with the Roma ethnicity. Thus, specific Rudar cultural elements such as the Gurban ritual are reactivated and refilled with meaning by the Pentecostal Rudars in order for them to distance themselves from the Roma.

These changes refer especially to the converted Rudar community. One of the main consequences of Pentecostalism in the Rudărie neighborhood also influence the gender issues prevalent in the community. Changes in how gender is perceived is most visible among the converted Rudar men. Their "wild" machismo undergoes a process of "domestication" through Pentecostalism.

In this sense, a special model has taken shape regarding the transformation of the Rudar machismo. If before conversion, the so-called ‘street arena’ was the place where toxic masculinity was legitimized, after the conversion, masculinity finds an expression within domestic space (Joel Robbins). If before conversion, masculinity was demonstrated through the excessive consumption of alcohol, smoking, physical and verbal violence, spending one’s entire salary with one’s “drinking buddies”, once converted, the Rudars adopt a totally different lifestyle, marked by a deeper implication in the household and by offering one’s wife a helping hand, a better financial management and a deeper implication in the education of one’s children. Pentecostalism succeeds in creating a new masculine climate, where Rudar men can love God without feeling emasculated (*how to love God and not be a sissy*) (Henri Gooren). The values of the Pentecostal church emphasize the idea of responsible masculinity, that leads the family towards redemption and that becomes a moral voucher and a pillar of family spirituality. This link between Pentecostalism and family values help the Rudar men better make the leap towards their new masculinity and simultaneously helps them justify their transformation for the unconverted, as it is regarded and understood by their old “drinking buddies”, yet without irony or malice.

To the same extent, the effects of Pentecostalism are also felt at the level of behavior and morality. Pentecostalism offers a moral guide that is both valid in the laic world and at the level of personal self-awareness. Going to church together with the family, spiritual and material solidarity within the group of the “brothers” and “sisters”, common meals and praying sessions, the prohibition of smoking and drinking, the categorical disapproval of extramarital sexual relations are values that have established a model of functional community for a part of the Rudars in the wake of the socio-economic changes that occurred after 1989. In regard to perception of self, some of the Pentecostal Rudars show a tendency to demonize the events of their past, which are regarded as factors that have set back the conversion or have made the converted “blind” to the real sense of meaning in life.

The bodily dimension is omnipresent in the Rudars’ recounting about sickness, both before conversion as well as after it. A genuine evolution and an entire history of the perception on the body in passing from local traditions to Pentecostalism also exists. The Rudar body is “bound”, “unbound”, “charms” are being “performed” on it, it is influenced with mercury („e pus argintul viu”, *live silver*, as it is traditionally called in Romanian), “the birth is being knifed”

(„cuțitu la naștere”), so that the body is bound in a spiritual realm where sickness is localized and metaphysically interpreted. Through this, it is diagnosed and sometimes even finds its healing.

The Gurban ritual, specific to the Rudar tradition, also has an important role in the triad sickness-body-healing, since its main trait is the thaumaturgical function it plays. During the Gurban, the plead to the “Saints” as spiritual entities capable of healing give an extensive insight into the spiritual forces that govern sickness and the body. It all becomes more complex once the Rudars convert to Pentecostalism, when things like exorcizing, speaking in tongues, prophecy, talking to God in one’s dream or receiving divine signs create the conceptual preconditions for a type of *spiritual warfare*, which makes the communication between local spiritual traditions and Pentecostal traditions possible.

One of the transformations brought about by Pentecostalism in the Rudar community also refers to the Church as an instance of control. Besides its attributions as an authority in questions of morality, besides its internal rules and besides the fact that it represents a mother-church for other churches in its proximity, the Pentecostal church extends its attributions beyond the country’s borders, so that the Rudărie Pentecostal church creates new methods of social control through diasporic churches and a transnational supervision, whose agent is the community of origin.

Regarding aspects that deserve a further analysis, I have identified three themes that could evolve into researches similar to mine. The first one refers to the relationship between the Rudărie community and the rest of Filiași. The second follows the ethnical division of Pentecostal communities in Filiași. The third and last refers to the considerations behind choosing Rudărie neighborhood as a settling ground for the Rudar people.

