In post-World War II Romania, the translation of scientific productions on living standards was not only a matter of making knowledge accessible but also expressed the authorities' political choices. As such, the growing number of translations of Western scientific literature into Romanian, which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, questions the transnational circulation of concepts and the way such productions may act as vectors of negotiation of knowledge within the socialist state. This interval coincides with deep structural changes in the professional discourse; the language employed by both social scientists and architects gradually abandoned the traditional linguistic categories - articulated ideologically around the Marxist-Leninist reading of “class” - and increasingly used the term “social group.” The research conducted in the 1960s and 1970s in the youth communities of some Romanian industrial cities, such as, have employed several studies carried out either in North American universities or in Western laboratories to tie the quality of industrial work to the degree of fulfillment of social expectations. They claimed that youth’s social requirements should be conceptualized in terms of supply and demand. This idea was often reiterated in the coming years, which opened the way for more sophisticated approaches to youth’s “needs and requirements,” particularly in terms of living quarters or time budgets.

This presentation proposes an analysis of the scientific literature on urban youth’ living standards translated into Romanian in the 1960s and 1970s. It aims to highlight how foreign knowledge produced effects locally as a result of adaptations, re-articulations or rejections of a scientific literature already adjusted under a myriad of ideological and economic factors. Paying a particular attention to social science literature - the main professional national journals, foreign books translated into Romanian and reviews of Western publications – the presentation will highlight how these translations have mediated the relationship between social scientists and political power, but also will seek to outline the web of transnational communities emerged from such transfers. In this way, the paper will contribute to the recent literature on the professional value and ideological meanings of such translations within the context of the socialist state.

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