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## THE KING, THE COMMUNISTS AND THE ROMAN BLOOD: AN AUTOMATED ANALYSIS OF THE ROMANIAN NATIONAL ANTHEMS

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## КРАЛЯТ, КОМУНИСТИТЕ И РИМСКАТА КРЪВ: МАШИНЕН АНАЛИЗ НА РУМЪНСКИТЕ НАЦИОНАЛНИ ХИМНИ

Automated as well as manual analyses of the texts of national anthems across the world may allow quantification of the way the relative weight of the preferred topics as well as the literary style and the sentiment score (positive, neutral, or negative) differ across continents and cultures. Reported here is a detailed automated analysis of the Romanian national anthem, in comparison with previous anthems over the past ~100 years. Romania is an atypical case in Eastern Europe, having changed five anthems over the past ~100 years, distinctly more than other countries in the region. The sentiment scores change dramatically across time – with two changes from strongly positive to neutral and back. The dominant topics and the grammar also change, with an overall tendency to move away from collectivistic and authoritarian topics to more individualistic ones. These trends may reflect a balance between changes in political systems (and national aspirations) and a less variable contribution brought by language and culture.

**Keywords:** *national anthem; feeling; liberty; statistical analysis; language*

Автоматизирани както и ръчни анализи на текстовете на националните химни по света могат да позволят да бъде извършено количествено измерване на начина, по който се различава относителната тежест на предпочитаните теми, както и на литературния стил и оценката на настроението (положително, неутрално или отрицателно) в различни континенти и култури. Тук се представя подробен машинен анализ на румънския национален химн, сравняван с предишни химни от последните приблизително 100 години. Румъния е атипичен случай в Източна Европа, тъй като сменя пет химна през последните приблизително 100 години, значително повече от другите държави в региона. Оценките на настроението се променят драстично с течение на времето – от силно положително към неутрално и обратно. Доминиращите теми и граматиката също се променят, с обща тенденция да се отдалечават от колективистичните и авторитарните теми към по-индивидуалистични. Тези тенденции е възможно да отразяват баланса между промените в политическите системи (и националните стремежи) и по-малко променливия принос от страна на езика и културата.

**Ключови думи:** *национален химн; чувство; свобода; статистически анализ; език*

### Introduction

Qualitative and semi-quantitative analyses of national anthems have focused on nationalism, family, sexism, suicide rates and others (Abril 2012: 77; Barnes et al. 2016: 817; Boufoy-Bastick 2012; Gilboa et al. 2009: 459; Guerrini et al. 2009: 31; Kelen 2014; 2015: 45; Kyridis et al. 2009: 1; Lauenstein

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et al. 2015: 309; Lester et al. 2011: 137; Liao et al. 2012: 106; Oluga et al. 2016: 209; Rodríguez 2016: 335; Siska 2016: 275; Sondermann 2013: 128; Vörös et al. 2016: 82; Winstone et al. 2016: 263).

It has recently been asserted that Romanian culture is intrinsically pessimistic and generally inferior in quality compared to its neighbors (Patapievič 1998; Pop 2011). The national anthem as well as another representative piece of literature, the Ballad of the Little Ewe, or the fact that Romanians tend to kill their leaders more often than other nations, have been invoked in this respect – with counterarguments formulated with quantitative comparative data vs. other nations (Pop 2011; Silaghi-Dumitrescu 2016: 332; 2017a: 51; 2017b; 2018: 11).

Reported here is a comparative analysis of the five national anthems that Romania has had over the past ~100 years, with protocols previously applied in previous studies cited above, attempting to assess whether Romania indeed has a more pessimistic anthem than other countries, and also attempting to analyze the topics and structure of the text that would define the text – at the same time seeking to analyze whether these can correlate with other societal features of the country. We show that Romania is indeed an outlier in the region. The sentiment scores of the Romanian anthems vary significantly, from well in the positive region to the center of the neutral region. Despite apparent tone changes alongside drastic political regime changes, both the grammar structure and some of the most frequent notions remain constant.

## Materials and Methods

The English versions of the texts (with caveats pointed out e.g. in (Dodds et al. 2015: 2389; Oluga et al. 2016: 209) were employed as found publicly at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deșteaptă-te,\\_române!](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deșteaptă-te,_române!), [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trei\\_culori](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trei_culori), [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te\\_slăvim,\\_România](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te_slăvim,_România), [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zdrobite\\_cătușe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zdrobite_cătușe), and [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trăiască\\_Regele](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trăiască_Regele). Other anthems in the region were similarly taken from the same source (hence, due to cross-country analyses, the need for a single language of the texts). Anthems were analyzed using the Tropes software package (Mollette et al. 2014), retrieving indexed data about (1) the text style, (2) the most abundant notions/references and (3) most abundant word categories – all three as defined within the software package without altering the standard settings. The Tropes software was developed by Pierre Molette and Agnès Landré on the basis of the work of Rodolphe Ghiglione (<http://www.semantic-knowledge.com>, <https://www.tropes.fr/>). Sentiment scores were attributed for each anthem using the web interface of the Semantria software package (2019), which has been previously employed in various contexts for sentiment analysis (Ikram et al. 2018: 1922; Pathak et al. 2017: 16; Rita et al. 2023: 276; Rodrigues et al. 2016: 80; Rusydiana et al. 2019: 20; Steinbauer et al. 2016: 427), following a protocol described in detail for a complete set of current national anthems across the globe (Silaghi-Dumitrescu 2023: e19105). Briefly, the texts were analyzed without any further intervention or processing from the user, except for adding a space character at the end of each verse/line when pasting the text into the analysis window, in order to ensure word separation across lines. This automated analysis employs natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning techniques in order to identify sentiment-bearing phrases and/or components, and assign each of them a sentiment score ranging from ~ -1 to 1 for simple expressions. A total score is assigned for the analyzed document by totalling the values for each of the sentiment-related word/expression (e.g., “deadly” adds -0.600 to the total score, “enemies” adds -0.490, “great” adds +0.600, “pride” adds +1.800). Texts with total scores above 0.250 are automatically assigned by Semantria to have a positive overall sentiment; texts with total scores between 0.250 and -0.150 are assigned as neutral, while those below -0.150 are categorized as overall negative (2019). Further calculations were performed within a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with standard formulae.

## Results and Discussions

### *Historical context of the five Romanian anthems*

Over the past ~100 years, Romania has had five anthems. The first one, “Long Live the King”, was adopted in 1881, on the occasion where Romania was proclaimed a kingdom (Pop 2011). This remained in effect for as long as Romania remained a kingdom, until late 1947.

In 1948, immediately after Romania deposed its king following the end of the second world war and occupation by Soviet forces which resulted in a switch to a “communist” dictatorship (Tismaneanu 2009b), the anthem was replaced for three years by “Broken Shackles”. This latter text now had a general focus on communist lines and on the republican state, in general agreement with the new political regime focusing on Moscow-centered communism (Tismaneanu 2010). General overhaul of political systems in Eastern Europe was indeed bound to lead to changes in all aspects of social and cultural life, including changes of anthems – especially in cases such as here, where an anthem referring to a king would indeed not be compatible to a republic and would hence need to be replaced (Tismaneanu 2010) Nevertheless, in several other Eastern-European countries the anthems were kept in place or at least only adapted to the new political regime; examples are Poland and Czechoslovakia, or Hungary; in the latter case, the anthem words were not sung officially during the communist regime, on account of making reference to religion. Bulgaria was a more similar case to Romania, where the anthem was also replaced on political grounds in 1947, though in this case the previous anthem had not had any explicit reference to pre-communist political organization. Likewise, Albania and Yugoslavia replaced their anthems after replacing their kings during or after the Second World War.

Across the Eastern-European socialist block of countries, the death of the USSR long-time leader I. V. Stalin in 1953 brought about a change in political stances. This was particularly true for Romania, where a previous attitude of complete adherence to Soviet values and to international socialism was gradually replaced by a more nationalist and independent policy, that led to Soviet troops retreating from Romania and, eventually, Romania itself retreating from the Warsaw pact – the military association of USSR-allied socialist countries (Tismaneanu 2010). In this context, the Romanian anthem was replaced in 1953 by “We Glorify Thee, Romania” – a text that still made reference to Soviet values but had a higher focus on Romania; for instance, beyond the obvious mention of the country name in the title of the song, the word “our” was present only 3 times in “Broken Shackles” (in fact, only once, in the refrain that was repeated three times), vs. 8 times in “We Glorify Thee, Romania”.

In 1977, after the completion of the political reorientation of Romania (Tismaneanu 1999c: 155; 2009b; 2010) as well as a structural change that saw the leader, N. Ceausescu, establish a kingdom-like structure in socialist guise (it has hence been argued that in Eastern Europe “communism” was a mere recrudescence of feudalism after a period of capitalism in the first half of the XXth century (Silaghi-Dumitrescu 2018: 11)), the anthem was again changed, to “Three Colours” (a reference to the three colors on the national flag) – maintaining a socialist focus as well as a nationalistic one. This remained in place until the fall of the communist regime in 1989. Immediately thereafter, the anthem was replaced, at least because of its political charge if not for other equally justifiable reasons, by “Awaken Thee, Romanian!”. The latter text is more in line with many anthems across Europe, insofar as dating back to the age of national state definition and particularly the 1848 revolutions in XIXth century Europe.

The series of changes in national anthems in Romania after 1947 is at odds with most other countries in the communist bloc. Only Bulgaria featured a similar number of anthems over the same time frame – but even there the anthem has remained unchanged from 1964. By contrast, Hungary and Poland did not change their anthems at all in the past 100 years, while Czechia and Slovakia only split the Czechoslovak anthem into halves upon dissolution of their union after the fall of the communist regime, and Yugoslavia maintained theirs until dissolution into several states. The peculiar case of Romania from this point of view, with five anthems changed over the past ~70 years, can be traced back to political structure changes as discussed above. First, when considering the choice of changing the anthem immediately after transitioning to the Soviet bloc in 1947, one needs to consider that none of the other eastern-European countries had had such a strong national monarchy tradition as Romania - de facto as united independent Principality since 1859 although de jure only from 1881; prior to 1859, the Romanian Principalities of Moldova and Wallachia (united in 1859) had also been ruled effectively as kingdoms; by contrast, most other Eastern-European countries were set up after 1918, having previously been part of the Austro-Hungarian/Habsburg, Ottoman, or Russian empires for centuries. Bulgaria, noted above as a partial exception as well, was set up as standalone kingdom in the second half of the XIXth century (decades before Poland, Hungary etc.) – but had been a province of the Ottoman empire for



several century beforehand. Thus, Romania's choice to change the anthem in 1947 was part of a much larger effort to reshuffle the political structure of the country (Pop, 2011). Second, the repeated changes of anthems during the communist regime also mirror repeated changes of political stance/structure. For the first part after the war, Romania was de facto an occupied territory – and the national anthem does reflect this state as discussed partially above and as will be commented further below. Among the Eastern-European countries, Romania was the furthest away from the Western bloc – in fact, the only socialist/communist country in Eastern Europe not to have a common border with a non-socialist country, so that a stronger Soviet influence would have been expected including the change in national anthem. This extreme change of orientation was always likely to be met with a rebound, both because of the prior historical/social tradition discussed above (independent kingdom(s) throughout history) and because of the distinctly different cultural background (Latin in Romania vs. others, mostly Slavic, in the rest of the Eastern bloc) which were a driving force towards defining a distinct identity for Romania against the rest of the Soviet group. Indeed, as discussed above, this rebound occurred between 1953 and ~1970, when Romania left the communist military alliance and defined its own economic development strategies with support from Western Europe (Nita et al. 2018: 322; Tismaneanu 1999c: 155; 2009b; 2010); these changes were again inevitably linked to changes in national anthem – changes that would have had no such similar driving force in the rest of the Eastern bloc. Notably, these political changes involved several directions and stages, each mirrored in anthem changes: dissolution of joint Soviet-Romanian financial/industrial companies, retreat of Soviet armed forces from Romania, definition of an independent economic development strategy, replacement of a group leadership of the communist party with a completely authoritarian personal leadership akin to a kingdom complete with personality cult, replacement of international-socialist politics with a nationalistic one and, to some extent in later years, with a globalist one (with Romania involved as individual actor in peace talks in the Middle East and in international commerce across the world in developing countries). The extent of personal dictatorship in Romania vs. the rest of Eastern Europe was also mirrored in the violent nature of the regime change in 1989, as opposed to the peaceful ones in other communist countries of Eastern Europe (Tismaneanu 1999a: 231; 1999b: 57; 2009a: 354).

### *Style of anthems*

In a preliminary Tropes analysis (cf. methodology of (Mollette et al. 2014), see (Silaghi-Dumitrescu 2023: e19105) for further details) we find that most national anthems across the world feature descriptive styles and involve the narrator making statements about something/someone/an action – except for Eastern Europe where the setting of the discourse is “in the real”. Romania fits this latter pattern for all five of the anthems: all of its five anthems are “in the real”. A descriptive style of the anthem (cf. the same computational analysis) was in this preliminary analysis found common for Balkan anthems but not more generally for Slavic, Eastern-European or Latin European ones. Romania's current anthem as well as three of the other five feature descriptive styles, while the anthem adopted at the height of Soviet (hence Slavic) domination, in 1953, features a narrative style which is typical of Slavic anthems.

### *Relative frequency of word categories*

Table 1 shows the distributions of types of words in the five Romanian anthems versus the world average as well as versus the averages of European, Eastern-European, Latin European and Balkan anthems. Among the verbs, not only the current Romanian anthem but also the previous four ones are found to fit with the average of the groups (be they Balkan, Latin Europe, or Eastern Europe). Among the connectors, generally the same is true, with at most small differences of 0.1-0.2 points. Interestingly perhaps, condition and opposition connectors are slightly more present in the anthem adopted in 1953 – at a point where Romania was starting its move away from Soviet domination. Cause connectors are slightly more present in the post-communist anthem, with two more changes visible much more distinctly. First, a drop in the incidence of addition connectors from 1 (essentially only type of connector present) in the Soviet-occupation anthem to only 0.2 in the post-communist anthem (vs. averages of 0.7–0.8 for other

regions listed in Table 1, but also interestingly a small average, of 0.4, for the Balkan region). Second, an increase in disjunctions, from ~0 (similar to all other regions examined in Table 1) to 0.5. Among the modalities, the ones pertaining to time are essentially absent from the post-communist anthem, at odds with the previous for anthems as well as with the averages of the regions/groups, the addition ones are also distinctly less common. Among the adjectives, the early communist anthem stands out with lower incidence of objective ones, while the post-communist one stands out with an increased incidence of objective and a lower incidence of subjective adjectives. Among the pronouns, the pre-communist anthem stands out among the five anthems as well as against the averages of the region with a higher incidence of “he” and a lower incidence of “we” (in the context of persistent reference to the King), while the first two communist anthems show a higher incidence of “we” – in line with the official ideology of the time. For the latter observation, it is thus interesting that the last communist anthem and the post-communist anthem show similar incidences of “we”, distinct from the early-communist time. A higher incidence of “you” is found in the post-communist anthem; indeed, not only is the title of the anthem directly addressed at second person to fellow Romanians (“Awaken Thee, Romanian!”), but so is most of the text itself.

**Table 1.** Word categories in Romanian national anthems; values from other countries are from (Silaghi-Dumitrescu, 2023: e19105).

	1990	1977	1953	1947	1881	World-Total	Europe-Total	Europe-Balkans	Europe-Central	Europe-Eastern	Europe-Latin
<b>* Verbs :</b>											
Factive	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Stative	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3
Reflexive	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2
Performative	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>* Connectors :</b>											
Condition	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cause	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Goal	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Addition	0.2	0.5	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.8
Disjunction	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
Opposition	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Comparison	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0
Time	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0
Place	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>* Modalities :</b>											
Time	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.5
Place	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1
Manner	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Assertion	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Doubt	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Negation	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Intensity	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
<b>* Adjectives :</b>											
Objective	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6
Subjective	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
Numeral	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1



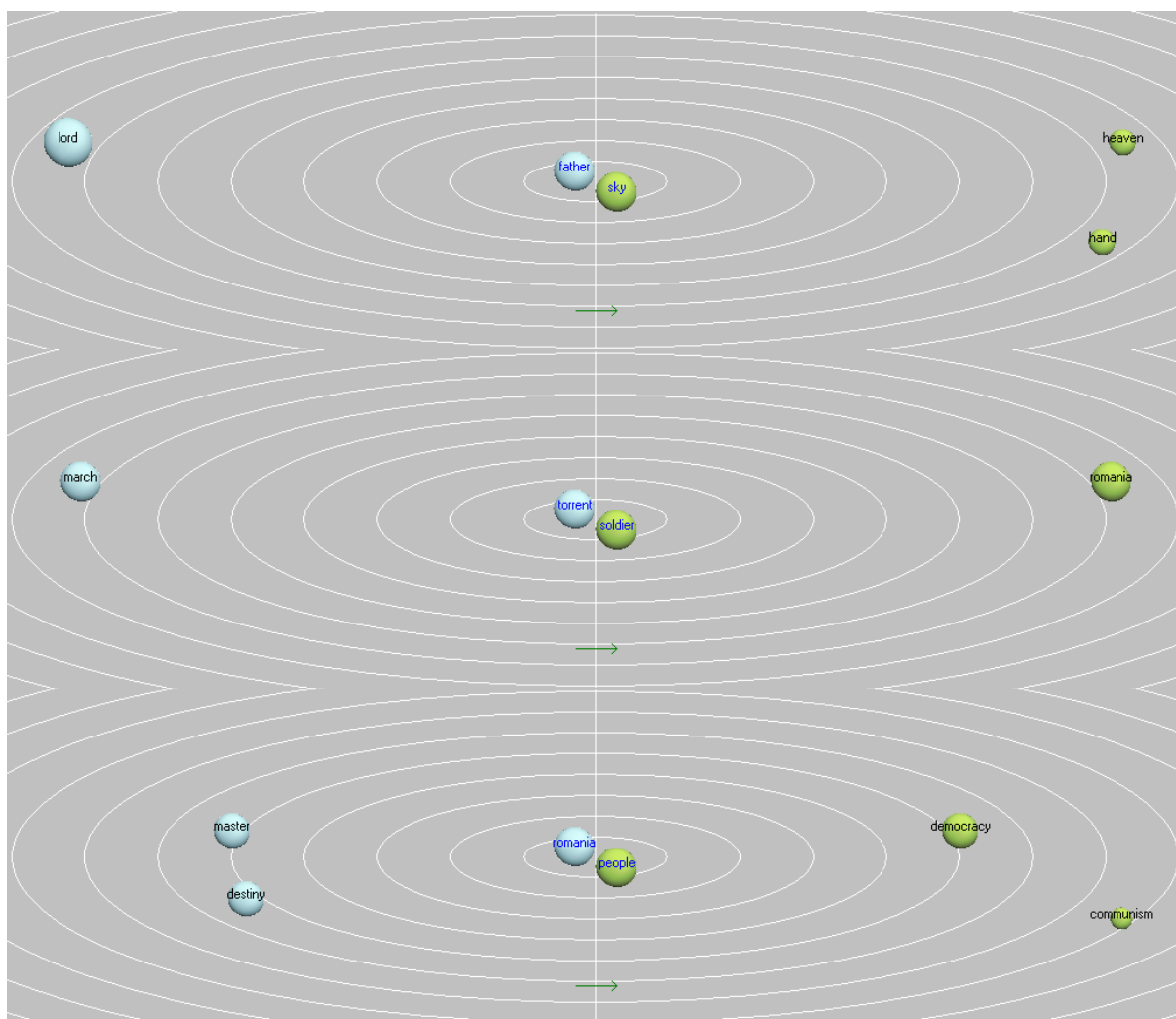
* Pronouns :											
I	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Thou	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
He	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
We	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4
You	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
They	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Somebody	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

### *Most common notions*

Given the relatively small size of the texts, a large number of common notions could not be identified by automated analysis across the analyzed anthems. Thus, for the pre-communist anthem only two sets of notions were identified – social organization (with a subgroup, aristocracy, stemming from the repeated reference to the King, normalized incidence of 1) and environment (normalized incidence 0.8, stemming from references to “sky”). A distinctly different structure is seen in the first communist anthem: the social system shows the highest incidence (1, due to references to communism), followed by work and time (0.6 each) and then by agriculture, fight and army (0.4 each). The second communist anthem again shows a shift in topics: social group (1), people (0.7), politics (0.6), life, land, destiny and important persons (0.3 each). For the third communist anthem, an even stronger change is seen: only two topics are identified by the automated analysis- fight and time, with equal incidence. Then, interestingly, a much smaller change when moving to the post-communist anthem: fight and body, again with equal incidence (in this case, “body” encompasses references to blood, chest and arms/hands in the context of defending the country). Thus, the history of the political and social changes in the country is reasonably mirrored in this series of topics: from an anthem centered on a unique leader (the King, associated with “the sky”) to one centered on the masses (see the higher incidence of “we”, noted above, but also the reference to communism and to notions pertaining to the masses at that time, such that agriculture and army), and then to a gradual movement away from the excesses of this initial communist anthem. Indeed, while in the 1947 anthem communism as a political system is the most pervasive topic (flowed by notions also common to communist propaganda, such as work), the 1953 anthem moves politics to the third place in terms of frequency, though still maintains social groups (of course, still defined in communist terms) in the first place; the second-most common topic is now “people” – still maintaining the mass-oriented approach but now distinctly less politicized. Importantly, this 1953 anthem, set at the beginning of Romania’s movement towards a more nationally oriented political system, also shows for the first time the notions of destiny and land, compared to the previous two anthems. The third communist anthem continues this trend: the political system notions are now no longer among the most common. The post-communist anthem continues this trend, maintaining “fight” as one of the only two notions identified as most common in the anthem. The changes from an authoritarian-centered anthem (“Long Live the King”) to a collectivistic one (“Broken Shackles) where the pronoun “we” shows an increased incidence and then to the current anthem where the second person singular pronoun predominates, are in agreement with a general tendency noted from psychological analyses by David and co-workers – who point out that Romania has recently shown an accelerated move from a strong collectivistic background to a more individualistic one (David 2015).

The relationships in which the above-discussed most common terms are with each other may also be analyzed, for the cases where more than two such common terms are identified. The most representative relationships thus identified are illustrated in Figure 1. In the 1881 anthem, the paternalistic figure of the king and its religious endorsement are obvious. The changes brought about by the 1947 anthem are also obvious: in place of the lord->father/sky->heaven/hand sequence of 1881, now the anthem invokes marches, torrents, and soldiers acting towards Romania. These warlike and very concrete trends (perhaps natural for an anthem adopted immediately after World War II) are completely replaced by a sequence

of more abstract relationships involving Romania and its people and their relationship with destiny and democracy.



**Figure 1.** Relationships between the key terms in three Romanian anthems (1881 – top, 1947 – middle, 1953 – bottom). The sizes of the spheres are proportional to the number of words/occurrences.

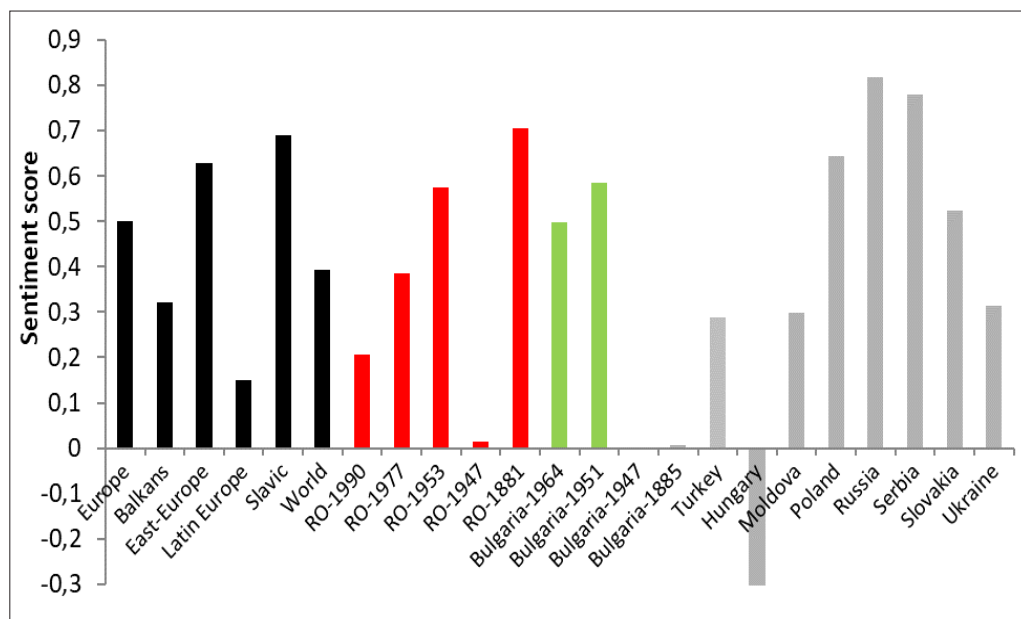
The distance between the central class and the other classes is proportional to the number of relations connecting them. The notions on the left of the central reference are its predecessors in the logic of the text, those on the right its successors.

### *Sentiment analysis*

Sentiment scores attributed to each anthem are listed in Figure 2, alongside average values for reference regions as well as for a few other countries in the region. The scale of the scores (as previously defined by others (2019)) is: positive sentiment above 0.250, neutral sentiment between 0.250 and -0.150, negative sentiment -0.150; individual anthems generally scored from  $\sim -1$  to  $\sim +1$ . The current Romanian anthem fits with the average of the Latin European ones, and is slightly below the average of the Balkan region; notably, these two regions display the lowest averages in the world. By comparison with countries in its vicinity, the sentiment score for the current Romanian anthem is distinctly higher than for Hungary, while slightly lower than Moldova, Ukraine and Turkey, and distinctly lower than all the other countries listed in Figure 2. Thus, while neutral rather than negative or positive, and close to values seen in its congeners (whether looking at the region or at other Latin European anthems), the Romanian anthem is among the less positive ones in the world. Interestingly, though, three of the previous four anthems of Romania display distinctly higher sentiment scores –especially the 1881 one,



which is at the higher end of the sentiment scale for anthems across the world. By contrast, the 1947 anthem falls to  $\sim 0$  sentiment score; this situation is not unique to Romania: the 1947 anthem of Bulgaria also features an essentially 0 sentiment score; in both countries, within a few years of 1945 a new anthem was adopted, with a sentiment score well inside the positive region of the scale. These large variations in sentiment scores across anthems adopted for the same countries within a few decades, from strongly positive to neutral (Romania 1881 vs. 1947) and then again to strongly positive (Romania 1947 vs. 1953 and 1977, and similarly for Bulgaria), and then again to neutral (Romania 1977 vs. 1990), may be interpreted to suggest two things. First, that the sentiment score does not directly reflect an immutable trait of the respective nation – or else it would not change so dramatically within a few years or decades. Alternatively, it may also be proposed that precisely the extreme social, political and judicial measures taken by the communist Soviet-backed regimes immediately after 1945 may have altered the fabric of the respective nations (and so would have done the trauma of the World War II). Second, particularly in the case of Romania, the distinct changes in sentiment scores also feature distinct changes in discourse commented upon in the previous section, all of which can be proposed to specifically mirror the attitude of the political ruling elite towards (mostly) external challenges. The connection of these attitudes with the majority of the nation can at most be indirect – insofar as ever since 1953 we see a gradual reconciliation of what the elite tries and what the people wish for (i.e., less dominance by neighboring countries/empires, more freedom, more individuality – all of which are features with which Romania stands out even today among other countries in the region cf. World Values Survey data (David 2015; Silaghi-Dumitrescu 2023: e19105; 2017b)). Last but not least, one may note that on average the sentiment scores of Romanian as well as of Bulgarian anthems tend to decrease in time.



**Figure 2.** Sentiment scores for groups of anthems analyzed in the present study.

For groups of countries, these averages involve normalization against the respective population sizes (further analysis in (Silaghi-Dumitrescu 2023: e19105))

As in the case of another notorious piece of poetry from Romanian culture (the “Ballad of the Little Ewe” (1972; Fochi 1964; Silaghi-Dumitrescu 2016: 332), a less positive (if not negative) attitude (fatalism in the case of the Little Ewe) sentiment may be apparent in the Romanian national anthem, but mainly as a manifestation of the elites responsible for generating or (in the case of the cited ballad) interpreting those texts. These variations may also serve to reiterate the caveat regarding the degree to which one may assume that a national anthem is representative of either a present state of things or an aspiration, and whether these relate to the nation itself or to a narrow and temporary elite. The 1947–1953 case for instance may be taken as evidence for the latter; however, even the current “post-communist”





anthem was adopted very shortly after a bloodshed-marred revolution, and by a ruling elite that was still very narrow and still led by former forefront figures of the communist regime (we reiterate in this context the very small change in pervasive topics between the late-communist and the post-communist anthems, though structural grammar differences are also observed, as discussed above); to this extent, one may still debate about the extent to which the substance of the current anthem is representative of Romanians.

## Conclusions

No other country in Eastern Europe (and most likely in other regions as well) has changed anthems as often as Romania over the past 100 years. This reflects historical and social changes that were more acute in Romania compared to other countries in the region, against a background of external pressure brought about by the Soviet occupation and a subsequent effort to reorient away from it, superimposed over a recrudescence of feudalism and autocracy in the guise of “communism” and “socialism”. The current anthem is in the lower half of the sentiment scores in the region, but in line with the averages for Latin European and with Balkan countries. Its sentiment score is in fact neutral, as opposed to a positive average in Europe or across the world. However, three of the other four anthems – two of which are from the communist era and one from before, feature strongly positive scores. This, together with the evolution of the terms across the five anthems in time, suggests that the five anthems reflect changes in the nature of the ruling elites of the country – mostly under the influence of external factors – rather than intrinsic psychological or cultural features of the nation.

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