

Introduction

Politics, Reproduction, and Duplicity

Freedom Triumphs and Romania Goes Pro-Choice: Romania's Pre-revolution Abortion Laws Should Serve as Warning to U.S.

J. ROWE, *Christian Science Monitor*, JANUARY 27, 1990

Shame about the Babies: Why Romania Has to Learn to Care.

C. SARLER, *London Sunday Times Magazine*, JANUARY 20, 1991

Irish Supreme Court Allows Teenager to Seek Abortion: Girl Who Had Been Raped Can Go to England for the Procedure

G. FRANKEL, *Washington Post*, FEBRUARY 27, 1992

U.S. Rights Group Asserts China Let Thousands of Orphans Die

P. TYLER, *New York Times*, JANUARY 6, 1996

Headlines such as these appear regularly on the front pages of prominent newspapers around the world. In 1996, six years after dramatic and disturbing pictures of Romania's orphans were publicly circulated, the neglected orphans of China replaced them as objects of the world's sympathy and outrage. The unwanted children in these countries are in part the tangible consequences of coercive pro- and antinatalist state policies as these collide with or collude against family interests and possibilities. In China, where the one-child policy was imposed in 1979 to control population growth, this limitation on family size has prompted a variety of popular resistance strategies, including female infanticide.¹ In Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania, where abortion was banned in 1966, the state demanded that each family produce four or five children as a way of forcing population growth. As a result, illegal abortion became the primary method of fertility regulation.²

Illegal abortion and what is known as "abortion tourism" are widely practiced elsewhere, notably in staunchly Catholic countries such as Brazil, Italy, Ireland, and Poland, where the moral authority of the Church permeates everyday life. It is estimated that some 4,000 Irish women travel each year to England for abortions.³ Abortion tourism became rampant in

Poland after the Catholic Church succeeded in its campaign to have abortion banned in postcommunist Poland.⁴ Brazilian women are believed to have one to three abortions during their fertile years; sterilization has become a preferred method of birth control.⁵ The Italian birthrate is the lowest in Europe, despite claims by approximately 84 percent of the population that they are practicing Catholics.⁶ In each instance, a clear disarticulation exists between what has been preached from the political podium or the pulpit and what has happened in response to the exigencies of real life.

But this book is not about Italy, Poland, Brazil, China, Ireland, or the United States. It is explicitly concerned with the Socialist Republic of Romania under the rule of the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. During twenty-three of the twenty-four years of Ceausescu's reign (1965–1989), the regime enforced one of the most repressive pronatalist policies known to the world. The legislative centerpiece of these policies was the strict anti-abortion law that was originally passed in 1966. These policies—which affected the lives of every adult man and woman regardless of marital or reproductive status—brought the state into intimate contact with the bodies of its citizens, and its citizens into the social organization of the state.⁷ In the end, these policies contributed to what may be characterized as a national tragedy.

This book presents both an ethnography of the state—Ceausescu's Romania—and an ethnography of the politics of reproduction. An analysis of what was highly politicized demographic policy offers a provocative means through which to explore the institutionalization of social practices, such as duplicity and complicity, and of identities that together constituted the Romanian socialist state and everyday life. This critical inquiry enables us to comprehend more fully both the lived processes of social atomization and dehumanization that are legacies of the Ceausescu era, and the means by which reproductive issues become embedded in social-political agendas, both national and international in scope.

A cautionary word is in order: Around the world, the politics of reproduction are burdened with duplicitous rhetoric and practices, as the opening epigraphs attest. When reproductive legislation and policies are formulated according to abstract ideological and religious tenets rather than in consideration of actual socioeconomic factors that affect the quality of human life, the lived consequences are often tragic, particularly for women and children. Romania offers a unique case study. The comparative implications are sobering.

AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE STATE

The interests of states (and nations) in social reproduction often conflict with those of women and families in the determination of biological or in-

dividual reproduction. Modern states and their citizens alike claim rights to the regulation of diverse reproductive concerns such as contraception, abortion, and adoption.⁸ Hence, reproduction serves as an ideal locus through which to illuminate the complexity of formal and informal relations between states and their citizens, or noncitizens, as the case may be.⁹ How are state policies institutionalized in official discourse and in bureaucratic procedures and practices? How are these policies implemented and enforced? How do such policies affect people in their daily lives—that is, how are macro-social issues of state policy and ideological control experienced in everyday life?

As the above questions suggest, the modern state is interventionist; historically, intervention has provoked diverse forms of resistance to varying kinds of constraints. The “arts of resistance” are many; often performed as mechanisms of survival, they represent characteristic reactions to institutional or individual relations of domination, hierarchy, and inequality.¹⁰ “Beating the system,” “defying authority,” “conning someone,” and “getting away with murder” are familiar phrases throughout the world, and likely always have been. These acts enrich people’s daily lives by seeming to give them a measure of control over oppressive environments and everyday routines.¹¹ With respect to fertility regulation, the banning of abortion has always encountered resistance, the consequences of which nonetheless remain historically and comparatively consistent across political and religious systems.

By an ethnography of the state, I refer to an analysis of the rhetorical and institutionalized practices of the state within the public sphere and their integration into daily life. How do the supposedly objective interests of the state acquire legitimacy or become taken for granted as a natural feature of the environment? Anthropologist Derek Sayer suggests that state formation and routinization necessarily entail tacit complicity between states and their citizens, regardless of the latter’s actual belief in the political legitimacy of any particular state.¹² To the extent that citizens are able to manage their daily lives in a reasonable fashion, the state will be able to function relatively unchallenged. What techniques of control are utilized to shape and discipline the body politic and public culture in the interests of the state? What are the effects of the state on the lives of its citizens? And how do people “use their local cultural logics and social relations to incorporate, revise, or resist the influence of seemingly distant political and economic forces”?¹³

Citizens are typically incorporated into states under the rubric “we, the people,” who together make up nations and populations. Such inclusive social abstractions linguistically homogenize social diversity by presuming certain shared features that identify peoples as Americans, Romanians, or whomever. These shared features may be political, social, or cultural and are treated differently in different political contexts. In the United States,

for example, the tolerance of diversity is a revered component of liberalism. At present, diversity is highly politicized: the homogenized rhetorical "we" has been challenged by the heterogeneous "we's," which constitute the whole. By contrast, in Ceausescu's Romania homogenization, or the eradication of social difference, was a formal political goal. Diversity was denied in the official discourse of the state, which celebrated what was termed "original democracy."

States are always given form through the actions of peoples. The objectification of the state as a legitimate entity unto itself masks what all too frequently is "the petty, the personal, the corrupt, the backstabbing, the wheeling and dealing."¹⁴ Yet objectification rhetorically transfers the locus of human subjectivity and agency from persons to the state.¹⁵ In the former socialist states and according to popular understanding, the state, the party, and the secret police were virtually synonymous with respect to their referent: "the power." These rhetorical devices distinguished "them" from "us," and in part legitimated acts of complicity with, and duplicity against, the state. As shall be discussed, duplicity and complicity—viewed as modes of communicative behavior—were crucial to both the endurance and the demise of the Ceausescu regime.

The embodiment of the state was accompanied by the formulation of its imaginary subjectivity. The state claimed needs and desires that had to be satisfied. As such, it represented itself as embodied, corporeal. The socialist state reconstituted itself as what Claude Lefort, the French social and political theorist, termed the "People-As-One."¹⁶ The people's body, so to speak, was the property of the state, to be molded and developed into the socialist body politic. The state as personified being spoke incessantly about itself and exercised power in its own interests, presented as those of its citizens.¹⁷ Through rhetorical, institutionalized, and disciplinary strategies, the state defined the parameters of the permissible, the limits of what could be tolerated.¹⁸ It also constituted a self-serving symbolic order to which interests other than its own were to be fully subjugated. Fertility control was a critical issue around which conflicts of interest between the state and its citizens, especially women, were likely to erupt. Socialist economies were dependent on the availability of labor, or human capital, and "reproduction of the labor force" became a virtual mantra of political rhetoric. To this end, reproduction was consciously politicized, especially in Romania. Political demography, which is addressed later in this introduction, was the strategy by which the state controlled both social and biological reproduction for the "building of socialism."

THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION

As feminist anthropologists Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp have reminded us, "reproduction" is a slippery concept, connoting parturition, Marxist

notions of household sustenance and constitution of a labor force, and ideologies that support the continuity of social systems."¹⁹ That reproduction has been politicized in all societies in one way or another is hardly surprising: reproduction provides the means by which individuals and collectivities ensure their continuity, a point to which I will return momentarily. First, it is pertinent to clarify what I mean by the politics of reproduction. I broadly refer to the complex relations among individual, local, national, and global interests that influence reproductive practices, public policy, and the exercise of power. Otherwise stated, the politics of reproduction center attention on the intersection between politics and the life cycle, whether in terms of abortion, new reproductive technologies, international family planning programs, eugenics, or welfare.²⁰

Reproduction is fundamentally associated with identity: that of "the nation" as the "imagined community" that the state serves and protects, and over which it exercises authority;²¹ or that of the family and the lineage—in most instances, a patrilineage—in the protection and perpetuation of itself and its name. As mentioned above, social reproduction and biological reproduction secure the continuity of peoples in social units—couples, families, ethnic groups, and nations. But discontinuity is also a possibility, and one that is frequently exploited for national(ist) purposes.²² The failure to reproduce is instrumentally claimed by political "entrepreneurs" to threaten the very existence of the family or the nation-state.

In view of the multiple interests and values attached to reproduction, it is understandable that reproduction is highly politicized, frequently at the expense of the concerns of individuals, especially women. It is equally understandable that individual, familial, and political interests in reproduction differ so dramatically. The state, as in Ceausescu's Romania, may demand that women bear children in fulfillment of their patriotic duties; or, as in Deng's China, the state may restrict the number of children per family in an effort to curtail population growth. International family planning organizations' fertility regulation efforts have been aimed especially at Third World countries to bring fertility rates in line with development and economic interests.²³ Indeed, economic issues are always linked to social and biological reproduction. Cost-benefit considerations necessarily enter into individual as well as political calculations, the results of which are often at odds. To underscore again, reproductive issues constitute a focus for contestation within societies as well as between them.²⁴

The intervention of states or governments into reproductive issues also blurs the distinctions between public and private prerogatives. In general, women are the most affected, although not exclusively so, by the transgression of embodied boundaries. As one Romanian woman poignantly commented, "When the state usurps the private [one's privacy], the body is undressed in public." That which is most intimate—sexuality—is exposed to public scrutiny, or, as some maintain, to voyeurism in the name of the

public good. The personal becomes political by virtue of the state's penetration into the body politic not as metaphor but as practice.

Questions about the sanctity of the body and what individuals do with their bodies point to issues of individual rights. Here, I wish to emphasize that this book is not about political struggles over reproductive rights, although I hardly mean to dismiss their significance. I strongly believe that states must protect women's right to safe abortions and that the protection of this right is fundamental. Children remain the primary responsibilities of women the world over; hence, women should have the ultimate say about the control of their reproductive lives.²⁵ To argue otherwise is to engage in rhetorical obfuscation. The "family values" so often invoked by anti-abortionists are an ideal to which many of the world's peoples adhere, including those who support the right to abortion. But the realization of family values is differently managed among different peoples and cultures and is complexly mediated by the variables of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and situation. Beliefs that represent social, moral, and ethical principles are frequently compromised by necessity, as illustrated by the author of a *New York Times* op-ed article who volunteered: "I'm a Republican who always believed that abortion is wrong. Then I had one."²⁶ By the same token, Catholic women have often resorted to abortion despite deep sentiments that abortion is wrong.

In Ceausescu's Romania, individual rights did not form part of public or private discourse.²⁷ The state legislated social equality and ideologically supported social rights (e.g., jobs, housing, access to medical care). The banning of abortion and the bearing of children were related to citizens' obligations to the paternalist state that "cared" for them. Individual rights were not at issue. During my extended research on abortion and Romania's pronatalist policies, neither women nor men ever expressed their thoughts or recounted their experiences in terms of rights. Conceptualization about the self is culturally contextualized and conditioned.

CEAUSESCU'S ROMANIA AND THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION

Ceausescu's Romania presents an extreme instance of state intrusion into the bodies and lives of its citizens. It also represents "the most striking failure of a coercive public policy designed to influence reproductive behavior."²⁸ Banning abortion has never eradicated the practice of abortion—neither in repressive, totalizing states such as Ceausescu's Romania or Stalin's Soviet Union, nor in countries where the Catholic Church reigns supreme, such as Brazil, Italy, Ireland, or Poland. Instead, banning abortion renders the practice of abortion invisible in the public sphere and women's lives vulnerable to the physical and psychological risks that accompany il-

legal abortion.²⁹ Theological and ideological arguments against abortion promulgate abstract moral imperatives on behalf of the soul or the good of society. Ironically, whether one is discussing the dictates of the Catholic Church or of Ceausescu's regime, the body is instrumentalized as a vehicle through which "greater" goals than those of the individual are intended to be realized.³⁰ Here, it is worth commenting on organizational parallels between the Catholic Church and the Communist Party, both being hierarchical, male-dominated institutions seeking growth in the number of their adherents, who are to be highly disciplined in comportment.³¹ Domination of the public sphere by church or state demands the selfless dedication—or sacrifice—of persons to it, rather than the self-interested practices of individuals in it as typically associated with capitalism.³² This fundamental contradiction captures the tensions that characterize the conflicts of interest between states, churches, and their populations that pertain to reproductive politics and practices. In each case, the fact of life itself supersedes consideration of its quality, especially with respect to the mother or the child.

An analysis of the politics of reproduction—and more specifically, the banning of abortion—in Ceausescu's Romania offers a dramatic illustration of a tragic reality that is historically and comparatively consistent. At the same time, it presents a detailed excursion into the everyday workings of a totalizing regime. A focus on Ceausescu's political demographic policies serves other purposes as well. The contradictions, traumas, and opportunities that emerge from the banning of abortion are highlighted or made more explicit in nondemocratic contexts, as are international responses to them. In a neo-Stalinist state, the legitimate spaces in which citizens could seek refuge or resist the penetrating gaze of state surveillance were greatly reduced. The state's presence was maximal. To illustrate, abortion tourism was hardly an option for ordinary citizens of Ceausescu's Romania since travel abroad was highly restricted. By contrast, in postcommunist Poland, where abortion has been criminalized, abortion tourism has provided possibilities for women with the means to travel elsewhere.³³ In this respect, the Catholic Church must contend with a political economy that may not support its totalizing view of the body, nature, and sexuality.

In Romania, strict pronatalism served Ceausescu's nationalism and megalomaniacal fantasies under the aegis of the political economy of socialism.³⁴ Recall that reproduction of the labor force was claimed to be essential to the building of socialism. Socioeconomic hardships were distributed across the majority of the population rather than differentiated by class. By the mid-1980s, daily life had become impoverished in almost all respects. Women's circumstances were especially dire because women also bore the greatest burden of the political demographic policies. Here, it is important to underline the basic invariance of the relationship between poverty, illegal abortion, and their consequences. In hard empirical terms, poor

women, regardless of race or geopolitical context, suffer the harshest effects of delegalized abortion. They are generally unable to afford safer illegal procedures performed by medical personnel or midwives, and they cannot afford to travel abroad. Hence, poor women are especially vulnerable to abortion-related complications and as a result are more likely to become maternal mortality statistics. As chapter 7 discusses, in Ceausescu's Romania, where poverty had become a general condition, the maternal mortality rate for 1989 was the highest ever recorded in Europe. Illegal abortion was the primary cause.

To be sure, analysis of Ceausescu's political demographic policies enables us to explore in detail the tragic consequences of banned abortion in Romania and also calls attention to other aspects of the politics of reproduction, notably how international interests come into play, often in unintentionally nefarious ways. In the 1970s, Ceausescu's pronatalist policies were regarded positively in the West. By the late 1980s those same policies were widely condemned.³⁵ In post-Ceausescu Romania, international adoption has become a highly politicized issue, which will be discussed in chapter 7. The rapid class differentiation accompanying the present postcommunist transition has affected reproductive practices in Romania at individual, local, national, and international levels. Women's reproductive lives are no longer subjected to the political demographic policies that turned women into human machines that reproduced future workers. However, many poor and single women have instead become vulnerable to market pressures to reproduce babies for foreigners. Transnational inequalities have thus emerged in the complex arena of international adoption.

Clearly, biological and social reproduction rarely prove to be as straightforward as political or religious ideals represent them. Life circumstances intervene, complicating the interrelations between what is said, what is believed, and what is done. Reconciling competing interests and pressures often draws individuals into multilayered acts of complicity and duplicity, which this ethnography of the Ceausescu regime's political demographic policies sadly affirms. Before turning to it, a cursory discussion of both demographic policy—referred to as political demography in this book—and the politics of duplicity is in order.

Political Demography and Population Control

The Political Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party appeals to the entire population, to urban and village workers, to understand that to ensure normal demographic growth it is a great honor and patriotic obligation for every family and for all of our people . . . to have enduring families with many children, raised with love, and by so doing, to guarantee the vitality, youth, and vigor of the entire nation. Today, more than ever, we have the utmost obli-

gation to assure our patrie of new generations that will contribute to the flourishing of our socialist nation, to the triumph of socialism and communism in Romania.

POLITICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY³⁶

In this climate of economic stability, we all celebrated the arrival of the child whose birth at the end of last year enabled our country's population to surpass the threshold of 23 million inhabitants. We are a free people and masters of our own destiny. We have a wonderful country, with a strongly developed economy, fully involved in the process of modernization.

NICOLAE CEAUSESCU³⁷

When social power is exercised through statistics, experience is no longer a moment of awareness but an experimental practice . . . a test of the precise degree to which a given social objective has succeeded.

T. ASAD, "ETHNOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION,
STATISTICS, AND MODERN POWER"

During the 1960s and 1970s, international debates about population policies tended to reflect two divergent, if rhetorically reconcilable, geopolitical perspectives: the promotion of family planning (in the interest of regulating what was presented as the population explosion), and the right of each state to determine the population policies most suited to its national interests. The former position was generally endorsed by the developed countries of the West; the latter by the developing countries, especially the Third World.³⁸ Debates along these geopolitical lines dominated the agenda at the 1974 World Population Conference, held in Bucharest. At this conference, the critical role of women in population policies was officially acknowledged.³⁹ Romania, acting in accord with the World Population *Plan of Action*, took the significance of women to heart; women and the family were placed on the population pedestal of socialist development.

In Romania, "politica demografica" or "demographic policy" was explicitly politicized for the purpose of building socialism. The control of demographic phenomena was generally considered vital to the success of development strategies in planned economies. The customary connotation of "demographic policy" as understood in the West does not adequately capture the extent to which demography was harnessed for ideological goals by the Ceausescu regime. "Politica demografica" was taken to be an "attribute of state sovereignty" (of all states in the interest of self-determination).⁴⁰ Hence, throughout this book, in most instances I refer to "political demography" or "political demographic policies" rather than "demographic policy" or "population policy."

Demography entails the study of factors related to the life cycle of a population: natality, mortality, longevity, morbidity, the structure of the population by age and sex, mobility (social, economic), and migration (internal and international). Political demography focuses on all demographic

factors and their interrelations. According to Romanian specialists, political demography referred to "the ensemble of measures and actions in the socioeconomic domain . . . related in one way or another to the population with respect to the conditions of life,"⁴¹ or "the integral aspect of socioeconomic development policies, such that demographic variables are incorporated into the general system of socioeconomic variables."⁴² Otherwise stated, the objectives of political demography were "to accord greater attention to strengthening the family—the basic nucleus of society—increasing natality and maintaining a corresponding age structure of the population, ensuring the vigor and youth of our population, caring for and educating children, the young generations who represent the future of our socialist nation."⁴³

Political demography legitimated the state's intervention in the "internal affairs" of its citizens' lives: birth, schooling, labor force participation, marriage, sexuality, reproduction, and death. To this end, "demographic investments" in Romania were to cover the "material and financial costs and the services that advance society and the family, and support a growing population."⁴⁴ The overall political demographic system consisted by and large of policies aimed at coordinating the economic and social aspects of demographic development.⁴⁵ These policies, in turn, were buttressed by all-encompassing legislation designed to facilitate their effective implementation.

Political demography was claimed by the state as its "right" to determine and control the interests of Romania's population. It also served as a mechanism with which the state was able to directly control the population itself. In keeping with the human capital needs of command economies, the state's primary interest was professed to be the creation and maintenance of the labor force to build socialism; steady population growth regulated through political demography was to be the principal means of achieving this end. As elsewhere, "the population" served as a strategic element to be disciplined and manipulated, ostensibly for purposes of maximizing development potential.⁴⁶

This was surely the case in Ceausescu's Romania. There, "family planning" acquired a meaning specific to the context in which it was applied. Crudely put, the state assumed responsibility for family planning on behalf of the population. Family planning was a prerequisite for achieving "the ideal number of children suited to the family and to society,"⁴⁷ both of which were to be socialist. As indicated above, in Romania, family planning was designed to maximize human reproduction, not decrease it. Population rights in Romania were ideologically grounded in the "profound humanism" of the Romanian Communist Party; economic incentives were deemed essential components of the state's pronatalist policy in the best interests of "the family." The rights of the population included those of "well-being, the improvement of the quality of life and the human condition

in general,"⁴⁸ among which figured social rights such as health and environmental protection, education, and work.

Political demography and the interests of the population were inextricably entwined, interrelating the macro-level policies of the state with the micro-level practices of the population. "Population," officially defined as an aggregate of individuals,⁴⁹ transformed individuals into collective abstractions. As classificatory terms, "the population" (*populatie*) was synonymous with "the masses" (*maselor*), "the people" (*poporul*), or "the nation" (*natie*). It is important to recognize that objectification works both ways. The facelessness of the masses (or the population) was reinscribed in the facelessness of "the state" (*statul*), of "they" (*ei*), or of "the power" (*puterea*). Dehumanization of the individuals who together constituted the collectivized referents of these terms (whether the state or the population) was discursively reproduced in official as well as everyday language.⁵⁰ These disembodied speech acts became standard features of communication and contributed to the rationalization of dissimulation as a social practice.

For the paternalist socialist state, attention to the needs of the population was represented, in Foucault's words, as "the ultimate end of government":

In contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, etc.; . . . it is the population itself on which government will act either directly or through large-scale campaigns, or indirectly through techniques that will make possible, without the full awareness of the people, the stimulation of birth rates, the directing of the flow of population into certain regions or activities, etc. . . . the population is the subject of needs, of aspirations, but it is also the object in the hands of the government.⁵¹

Population superseded the family in ideological prioritization among the government's concerns. Although the family no longer served as the principal model for governance, it nonetheless remained a primary social institution through which the paternalist regime governed. In this respect, the family was "both a subject and an object of government."⁵² As shall become clear, Ceausescu's appreciation of the family as ideological construct and political-cultural practice remained ambivalent throughout the long years of his rule.

Indeed, the family and women bore particular responsibilities in the interest of creating the "new socialist person" and communism's radiant future. As secretary general of the party, Nicolae Ceausescu constantly reminded the population: "We are building socialism with and for the people."⁵³ Control of reproduction—biological and social—was regarded as essential to the achievement of this goal. However, control of reproduction was also of fundamental significance to the interests and well-being of women and their families. As noted previously, childbearing generally

provokes consideration of economic possibilities. While cost-benefit analyses are not fully determinate of childbearing decisions, "rational choice" does play a role, and often an important one. As everyday hardships increased in Ceausescu's Romania, the interests of families and those of the state diverged all too frequently. Most women refused to bear the four or five children demanded of them by the state—in spite of the political demographic policies and incessant assertions such as: "All that occurs in our society has no other purpose than the country's development, the improvement of people's lives to a new level of civilization, the securing of conditions such that all members of society will fully enjoy the benefits of socialism."⁵⁴

To "convince" the population of the state's paternalist largesse, the government deployed an arsenal of techniques (in the Foucauldian sense), including the institutionalization of legislation designed to enforce the political demographic policies and to alter fertility behavior, the elaboration of a propaganda apparatus, the implementation of multilevel surveillance practices, and the instrumentalization of both scientific knowledge and human capital in the interests of the state.⁵⁵ Marxist-Leninist regimes embraced scientific rationality as a means of legitimizing their modernization strategies; especially in Romania, the body was the favored vehicle through which success would be achieved.

With respect to the focus of this study, statistics, demography, and medicine were of foremost concern to socialism's vanguard. Statistics, or their amassing, were vital to state control of "the population."⁵⁶ Indeed, statistics served as powerful weapons wielded on behalf of "the population" in the name of progress. Birthrates, mortality rates, and material production rates were statistically calculated. The relationship between the population and economic indicators was "measured in terms of production outputs, on the one hand, and, on the other, the living standards of the entire population."⁵⁷ As reflected in production-oriented data, the fetishization of statistics became a primary tool of disinformation. These dissimulatory processes are discussed at length in the following chapters.⁵⁸ As Asad has noted, "Statistics reconfigure peoples into 'commensurable' social arrangements which can be compared." At the same time, he emphasized that "statistical practices can afford to ignore the problem of 'commensurable' culture."⁵⁹ Human beings, however, cannot afford to ignore the contexts in which they live. Over time, the disjunction between statistical representations and everyday living conditions in Romania became too great. The credibility of the former was deeply tarnished.

The collection and analysis of statistics became more a political than a scientific practice. In general, the social sciences were also vulnerable to political manipulation and control. Demography, sociology, history, ethnography, and folklore were all, if somewhat differently, required to do the regime's bidding. Data analyses, regardless of the domain, were to yield in-

terpretations consistent with the party line. It was recognized early on that social scientific research could potentially produce results contradictory to those projected by ideological conviction. Hence, the "allegiance" of social scientists was always open to question and subject to surveillance.⁶⁰

Health professionals, crucial to the implementation of the pronatalist policies, were faced with a similar situation. It was doctors who ministered to the needs of the physical body; hence, doctors and their coworkers were held responsible for making certain that the political demographic goals were achieved. The mechanisms by which doctors manipulated laws, statistical categories, medical diagnoses, and patients themselves are examined throughout this ethnography of Ceausescu's state. However, both religion and medicine were practiced at the behest of the Communist Party. Those in power understood well the significance that both priests, and more important, doctors, held as mediating figures between the private lives and life cycles of citizens and the institutionalized interests of what may be viewed as the life cycle of state socialism.⁶¹ Medical professionals armed with scientific knowledge and the hope they offered those in need of their attention were regarded as the ideal masters and servants of political demography. They were the ones who primarily tended to the pre- and postnatal health of mother and child. It was also recognized that medical practitioners were susceptible to the temptations of pecuniary reward for performing safe but illegal abortions. Yet again, diverse laws and policing techniques were instituted to discourage deviation from the socialist norm and to make certain that society's healers were also obedient model citizens.

The "construction of the new socialist person" and of socialist society depended on the careful monitoring and disciplining of the population. Surveillance and control were among the institutionalized mechanisms used to facilitate public compliance with the regime's projects. Political demography provided the ideological framework through which vital population growth was to be monitored and guaranteed. The population, simultaneously the subject and object of social experimentation, was to be molded with or without its consent into the socialist body politic.

THE POLITICS OF DUPLICITY IN CEAUSESCU'S ROMANIA

Capul plecat sabia nu-l taie.

(The sword does not cut off a bowed head.)

ROMANIAN SAYING

Although not everyone who lies wants to conceal the truth, not everyone who conceals the truth lies. Generally, we conceal the truth not by lying but by keeping silent.

AUGUSTINE, *Treatises*⁶²

In Ceausescu's Romania, the penetration of the state's totalizing power became a "normal" feature of the sociopolitical ordering of life under socialism. The state's domination of the public sphere and usurpation of many

of the prerogatives of the private transformed its presence into a familiar aspect of the daily lives of every citizen.⁶³ Indeed, throughout most of his reign, Ceausescu did not rule by outright terror; Romania's secret police during his rule were not readily comparable to the death squads of El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras, or to the terror unleashed by Stalin. Rather, Ceausescu generally kept "his" population in check through the manipulation of diverse forms of symbolic violence, of which fear was a favored form.⁶⁴ Domination of the public sphere and penetration of the private were crucial to the successful wielding of symbolic violence and served as effective mechanisms for integrating individuals into the functioning of socialist society. When symbolic violence proved insufficient, physical violence was meted out to coerce compliance. It was not, however, the preferred method of disciplining the body politic. Nor was it necessary; a generalized internalization of the "socialist habitus"—to build upon Bourdieu's term—of the taken-for-granted ways of seeing and being meant that most citizens acted appropriately to fit the context. Self-censorship became a natural reflex; dissimulation, its communicative corollary.

However, the reflexive quality of these modes of acting and understanding simultaneously enabled and disabled the building of socialism. The social dynamics of everyday life were structured by the socialist system itself and contributed importantly to the longevity of the regime.⁶⁵ Duplicity and complicity were the hegemonic mechanisms through which social relations came to be organized and by which the organization of socialist society was perpetuated, yet ultimately destroyed. Duplicity is customarily defined as deceitful behavior, as "speaking or acting in two different ways concerning the same matter with the intent to deceive," "double-dealing." Duplicity involves willful, conscious behavior in which social actors are aware of their intentions. Herein enters complicity—often the social ally of duplicity—which refers to "being an accomplice; partnership in an evil action," of participating in the consequences of actions that give rise to certain results—in this case, to the endurance of Ceausescu's rule.⁶⁶ Complicity is more nuanced with respect to intentionality. Social actors may, out of fear, indifference, or alienation, actively or passively "aid and abet" that in which they do not believe or with which they do not concur.⁶⁷ Complicity, and notably degrees thereof, takes on special significance in a one-party police state in which the public expression of personal opinion is not countenanced. Ceausescu's Romania was such a state.⁶⁸

Nonetheless, it cannot easily be asserted that the relationship between complicity, conformity, and the meaning of one's actions is entirely innocent. A now classic portrayal of the complexity of this relationship is Václav Havel's greengrocer, who displayed a "Workers of the World, Unite" sign in his Prague shop window. Whether the greengrocer believed in the message of this slogan remains unknown and, with respect to this discus-

sion, virtually irrelevant. That he displayed this sign as a matter of everyday habit demonstrated his conformity with the system. Or, as Derek Sayer has noted: "The form of power to which this act testifies relies centrally on the *knowledge* of everybody involved that they are 'living a lie.' . . . Had he not displayed that sign, he would be challenging the everyday moral accommodations, grounded in an equally everyday fear, which everyone engages in and which make everyday life livable—even if at the cost of a corrosive derangement of 'private' and 'public' selves."⁶⁹

In Romania, domination of the public sphere functioned through widespread participation in the production of lies; Romania's socialist edifice was constructed on false reports, false statistics, deliberate disinformation, and false selves as well. The doctoring of statistics, which is discussed throughout this study, helped to maintain the fiction of ever greater socialist achievements. Ceausescu's personality cult was fed, in part, by the public display of loyalty in which virtually everyone played a role. Duplicity became a mode of communicative behavior; conscientious lying was customary practice. Each was a characteristic form of *dedublaré*, which all together spun the threads of complicity.

Dedublaré, Romania's version of *ketman*,⁷⁰ roughly means division in two, or dual or split personalities. In the context of Ceausescu's Romania, it generally referred to distinctive representations of the self: a public self that engaged in public displays of conformity in speech and behavior, and a private self that may have retreated to the innermost depths of the mind to preserve a kernel of individual thought.⁷¹ *Dedublaré* is a descriptively useful term; however, analytically, it masks the resulting psycho-social problem and drama of the double-self or the split between the "true" and "false" self.⁷² This distinction, when sharply delineated by analysts or social actors themselves, makes it more possible to skirt the complex issues associated with complicity and the differentiation between degrees of complicitous behavior. Clearly, some people were engaged more actively and avidly than others in "kissing the hand(s) they could not bite." Hence, to argue that *dedublaré* as a structurally determined survival mechanism was simply a reflexive rule of the game in which everyone actively participated relinquishes recognition of the self as a legitimate, responsible actor in favor of the self as victim of the arbitrary will of others (i.e., "fate," thereby paradoxically offering existential comfort).⁷³ People were manipulated by, but also manipulated, "the system." But when duplicity and complicity come to characterize society-wide relations, the system itself is fragile and structurally vulnerable to implosion.

The following chapters explore the dynamics of duplicity and complicity through an analysis of the politics of reproduction—social and biological—in Ceausescu's Romania. Chapters 1 through 5 set out the regime's official vision of socialist reality and the means by which it was to be

engineered into existence. Chapter 1 presents the context in which reproductive politics were shaped, situating them culturally, nationally, and internationally. A brief historical-demographic overview of Romania's population and of the political significance of human capital for socialist development serves as the backdrop against which socialist paternalism was constructed. Paternalism implies certain kinds of relations between the state and its citizens and bears critically on issues of gender equality. The state's attention to reproduction and the role of women and the family in the building of socialism rhetorically legitimated policies designed to incorporate women into the labor force and the political public sphere and to protect the future of the Romanian nation. However, it simultaneously undermined Ceausescu's ideological insistence on creating equality and "new socialist persons" through a strategy of homogenization. A cursory discussion of the dynamics of official rhetoric is juxtaposed against a parallel discussion of the social practices of everyday life, underscoring what has been characterized variously as the contradiction between theory and practice, or representation and reality.

As chapters 2, 3, and 4 make clear, domination over "the masses" or the population was organized through regulation of the public sphere. Laws, decrees, and policies objectified the political will of the regime and established a framework for the institutionalization of political interests and power relations. Institutionalization provided functional structures through which citizens participated in the actual workings of power and in the trapings of building socialism. It also provided the structures through which discipline and conformity could be monitored. Chapter 2 focuses on the elaboration of anti-abortion legislation throughout 23 years of the Ceausescu regime. The rationales allegedly motivating legislative actions are discussed in detail, as are the immediate practical effects of their implementation. Chapter 3 examines the related social welfare, pronatalist and pro-family policies that girdled the banning of abortion in political demography writ large: the anti-abortion legislation was the instrumental centerpiece of a comprehensive, multidimensional political program to transform reproductive relations in society. Chapter 4 explores the explicit institutionalization of political demography. The means by which medical practitioners—the principal mediators between the state and women—were institutionally constrained are contrasted with the means by which medical practitioners circumvented these constraints. The multiplicity of surveillance techniques employed by and against a complex web of institutional workers (from janitor to director) sheds light on the everyday work-related mechanisms that ensnared persons to greater or lesser degrees in carrying out the will of the regime.⁷⁴

The former socialist states of East Central Europe were self-congratulatory in their logorrhea. Each state "spoke" incessantly through its mouth-

piece, the propaganda apparatus. In chapter 5, Romania's pronatalist propaganda is analyzed in order to understand how rhetorical forms were used to mobilize the population around issues pertaining to the birthrate, population growth and decline, and the essential roles of women, children, and families in the building of socialism and the future of the nation. Disinformation saturated the public sphere. Ultimately, the gaping disjunction between what was represented as socialist heaven on earth by the propaganda apparatus and what was experienced as widespread impoverishment in all aspects of daily life contributed to the collapse of the regime.

Chapters 6 and 7 scrutinize the political demographic policies, especially the banning of abortion, from the vantage point of their lived consequences. Chapter 6 provides oral commentaries and histories obtained from doctors and women regarding the meaning of delegalized abortion in their professional and personal lives. Doctors and other specialists discuss various aspects of abortion-related practices and how they themselves circumvented the law in what they considered to be their own best interests—which often coincided with those of their female patients. The experiences of two physicians who had been arrested for performing abortions illuminate the Kafkaesque quality of their lives and the manner in which professional and private relations were manipulated. These accounts are followed by a series of personal narratives by and about women's encounters with abortion. Clearly, women's struggles with their bodies, their sexuality, and their reproductive functions reverberated throughout their familial, social, and professional relationships. In these accounts, the family emerges for many as a site of solidarity and resistance, but also of betrayal. Intimate opponents and unexpected allies are revealed to be constant protagonists in the sagas of reproductive politics, underscoring the vulnerability and lack of predictability that were characteristic of everyday life in Ceausescu's Romania.

Chapter 7 turns to the legacies of political demography, specifically those related to the criminalization of abortion, which will continue to haunt Romania's population long after the memories of daily life under the regime have faded. Demographic consequences manifested by disturbingly high maternal and infant mortality rates are reviewed, as is the infant AIDS epidemic, which captured international attention. The reclaiming—however partial—of the public sphere from the clutches of the regime brought to light other social effects that resulted in large part from the state's demand for increased numbers of children. The heart-wrenching circumstances of Romania's orphans and abandoned children contributed to the outpouring of humanitarian aid as well as to an influx of potential adoptive parents wanting to provide homes for these unfortunate children. Trafficking in babies and children flourished until the Romanian government intervened legislatively.

International adoption is but one component of the global politics of reproduction, and, as the Romanian case illustrates, there are both positive and negative sides to it. In the context of radical economic change from the penury of Romania's recent past to a market economy, contracting for the purchase and sale of unborn or newborn babies raises difficult questions about the institutionalization and shifting complexity of what has been labeled "stratified reproduction." Ginsburg and Rapp describe the latter in terms of "the power relations by which some categories of people are empowered to nurture and reproduce, while others are disempowered."⁷⁵

On December 25, 1989, Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu were executed. The second decree of the provisional government abrogated the anti-abortion laws; indeed, the liberalization of abortion was an essential feature of the liberation of Romania's population. The tragic consequences of the criminalization of abortion serve as a subject for reflection in the concluding chapter. Romania presents us with an explicit and extreme case study of what happens when abortion is banned and equal access to contraceptives and sexual education is not provided to all women. Ceausescu's political demographic policies affected the majority of Romania's population.

Elsewhere in the world, the conjoining of duplicity with the politics of reproduction too often results in policies whose effects are disproportionately experienced by poor women unable to "buy" a reasonably safe abortion, or to acquire the knowledge and means to regulate fertility effectively. Anyone who assumes that the majority of women who resort to abortion do so in their own selfish, immoral interests would be well advised to read on with an open heart and mind. The extended research upon which this book is based does not even minimally support such suppositions. I do not advocate abortion as a method of fertility regulation, but neither do I advocate the criminalization of abortion. The empirical consequences of the latter do not vary across cultures, religions, histories, or political systems. Abortion is a fact of everyday life. Its criminalization has never stopped its practice; instead, banning abortion has elevated duplicity and hypocrisy to the level of allegedly moral and political imperatives. Women, children, and families are not abstract public goods. Impassioned rhetoric about the sanctity of life as an abstraction divorced from the realities of everyday circumstances does not alter those everyday realities. To this, the following analysis of the politics of reproduction in Ceausescu's Romania stands as tragic witness.