

## ON THE "RITUALIZATION OF OPTIMISM " THROUGH "SHORT REASONING" . THE TALK-SHOWS AND METATELEVISION

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The present essay attempts to introduce in the field of objects of cognitive sciences several controversial issues - theoretical and ideological - regarding the "TV gambling games", the talk-shows and of course, the publicity-like opinion polls. I will claim that individuals are not only actors in this phenomenon, but that they also become part of a (naive) audience, by being involved into a continuum of interpretative networks. In the beginning I will refer to a generic version of this cognitive mechanism and afterwards I will touch upon some of the reasons which cause a bizarre poverty of the research methods of these social phenomena.

How are the actors-spectators persuaded that they are placed in the "media proximity" of the location of the collective decision? The answer of the cognitive<sup>1</sup> sciences claims that the accreditation of these connections is created by the circulation of some "decisional abbreviations". These abbreviations are some sort of basic and synthetic decision operators which appear in the shape of statements summarizing an information-selection criterion warning that a collective decision-making is to follow (in which the 'abbreviations' are argumenting statements) whose success or failure is connected with the capacity to convince the other of its justice value. This is the model of limited rationality - the citizens accepting to become interested by a public debate if and only if: the time is limited and the cognitive effort minimal. The individual decides in sequences and stops at the first solution which crosses a the minimum level of satisfaction. This is what makes the decision-making procedure rational and not the decision as such. (H.A. Simon<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> For the beginning I will start from the model offered by D. Sperber and D. Wilson in "*La Pertinence. Communication et cognition*", Minit, Paris, 1989. I have exposed a more detailed presentation of the possibilities of using the cognitive sciences model in sociology in the chapter "Distance cognitive mobilization" in "*Construcția simbolică a câmpului electoral*", Institutul european, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Simon, *Models of bounded Rationality*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1983  
*Romanian Journal of Sociology*, X, 1-2, 1999.