ICT Use, Cultural and Leisure Lifestyles and Social Structure of Romanian Youth, in Central and Eastern European Context

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Abstract: In this paper we analyse the cultural and leisure lifestyle and internet and computer technology (ICT) use of the Romanian young population according to their position in the social structure, focusing on frequent ICT users and so called "*screenagers"*. The empirical source are the EUROSTAT statistics between 2008 and 2016 and a random survey (ANSIT) for Romania, from 2008, out the 18-35 age group, with 998 cases. First we characterised the Romanian youth situation in EU and CEE context. We observed a serious social and digital gap between Romania and the most CEE EU member countries in 2008, which was improved partially until 2013-2016. Then, only for Romanian case, we have created four consumer groups by means of factor analysis representing ICT related cultural lifestyles. These groups are the following: '*screenagers*' who consume culture through computers and the internet, being informed from these sources, communicating with their help, 'clubbing and sport' lifestyle, 'high culture' and 'home literature readers'. We have also analysed the socio-demographic background of ICT frequent users: high educational level and a residence in a big city predict frequent ICT use for various purposes. *Screenager* lifestyle is strongly associated with the upper and upper-middle class status, but also other lifestyles are present among middle class youngsters in Romania, while the youth from lower class and deprived are under represented in all lifestyle groups.

Keywords: *ICT use; lifestyles; culture and leisure consume; youth; social structure.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *utilizatori de internet și computer; stiluri de viață; consum cultural și recreere; tineret; structură socială.*

Introduction

In this paper we analyse the cultural and leisure lifestyles of the 18-35 year-old population from Romania according to their place in the social structure, focusing on the information and computer technology (ICT) users and the lifestyle group that we call "screenagers", using quantitative methods.

The central questions of this paper: how does the social background influence the computer and internet based cultural and leisure activities among the Romanian youth? Is there a class specific phenomenon in Romania? Did the Romanian youth recuperated the social and economic gap and digital divide since joining the European Union?

Conceptualizing ICT use, culture consumption, lifestyles and social class in global youth context

Beside the standards of living and the forms of social dispositions, youth lifestyles follow global patterns, they have their own autonomous spaces. Due to the youth consumption of culture, to the dispersion of

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specific youth habits in a rapidly globalizing world, including ICT products use, many young people develop similar lifestyles that are different from those of young people from other part of the world, especially that from developed, so-called „centre" countries. When interpreting globalization, Ulrich Beck (1999) touches upon the concept of globality: the term is interpreted as a world society and the idea of closed spaces is only a fiction by now. No country or social group can exclude itself from the others. According to this approach "world society" represents the sum of social relationships which may not be integrated into nation state policies or they may not be defined by those.

M. Castells (1996) gives another network definition of globalization. In the information age, the structure of social space and time changes fundamentally, social space doubles. This doubling is connected to the formation of global networks. These networks link physical points, real locations, yet real space locations change into something else as a result of the structure of network locations do not have to get in touch for real as well; it is exactly geographical distance that characterizes them. The "black holes" so characteristic to information capitalism are to be found between network locations – even within cities. Information "black holes" constitute the so-called fourth world, the world of absolute losers: they are not even exploited, they are simply dysfunctional and they are not needed. (Castells, 1996) The ICT play a crucial role in the functioning of information society, that is why we consider that frequent ICT using became a lifestyle, and it can be related to people's place in the social structure. The ICT penetration can be a chance for youngsters to benefit from the globalised information society, in Castells' terms.

The term of "screenager" was borrowed from Douglas Rushkoff's (1997) book, he described a screenager as a teenager who spends a lot of time at a computer screen. Screenager activities are sending e-mail and instant messages, downloading music and movies, gaming and Web surfing.

We analyse the ICT use and the related lifestyles in social class and social background perspective, starting from the theory of social class and different forms of capital, as described by Bourdieu (1984, 1997). According to this, persons with the same positions in the social space are often subjected to the same objective circumstances of life, and therefore equipped with similar habituses, which is leading them to develop similar practices and practical sense. The social class scheme was based on an index using economic, cultural capital and certain lifestyle indicators.

The social class differences and the general socio-economic conditions determines the standard of living, lifestyles and social disposition of a country's youth.

Cultural capital represents one of the dimensions of measuring social status. As Bourdieu (1984) defined, cultural capital is the culmination of knowledge, skills, and symbolic and material endowments that give people status and power. In the case of young people, the highest level of education is not a good indicator for measuring the level of cultural capital, because in many cases is not a "final" state for the 16-35 year old young people, a part of them still are studying. Furthermore, those who are presently not studying may return to school as this phenomenon has also been observed even in Eastern Europe, too (Gábor, 2004). Therefore, we tried to grasp the embodied cultural capital, from the point of view of 'legitimate' cultural consumption forms and cultural habits (Bourdieu, 1965). However, cultural consumption among young people is a very diverse and multidimensional phenomenon, high culture (theatre, opera, classic music), pop music, internet based leisure activities and clubbing culture are also part of cultural habits, even if Bourdieu (1965) described them as hierarchical, according to

the value-system of dominant culture of society. Thornton (1995), using the Bourdieu's (1984) concepts on cultural capital and distinction, developed the concept of 'subcultural capital', in which subcultures were defined as 'taste cultures', meaning the level of inside knowledge about the specific music and dressing style, places/clubs, and subcultural behaviour within youth (sub)cultures.

Previous studies on youth subcultures (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) from Birmingham,) focused on the working-class (especially British male), using ethnographic methods and theories related to neo-marxism and structuralism (Cohen, 1972; Hall and Jefferson, 1975; McRobbie and Garber, 1975; Willis, 1977; McRobbie, 1978).

In Griffin's (2011, 246) view, the CCCS project on youth sub/cultures focused on working-class (mainly male and heterosexual) youth subcultures, and explored the cultural and political significance of youth culture, styles and music, politicising (working-class) youth style.

Older or recent studies (Clarke, 1981, 2009; Maffesoli, 1986; Griffin, 1993; Blackman, 2005) underline that lifestyles may not be simply and directly related to social class position, because many subcultural forms involve young people with different class situations and trajectory, with other types of diversity and contradictions (gender, ethnicity, emigrants, etc). Moreover, in many cases, subcultural forms were not characteristic to the majority of working-class young people.

For determining the basis of 'subcultural capital', Thornton used three overlapping cultural hierarchies of the British dance scene of the 1980s and early 1990s: the first distinction is between the much-revered 'authenticity' and 'fake'; the second between the 'hip' and the disparaged 'mainstream'; and the third between the 'underground' and 'the media' (Thornton, 1995).

Thornton introduced the notion of 'classlessness' because of the difficulty in determining the class background of clubbers, based on the conclusion that many young people involved in these dance/club scenes operated according to 'the politics of the youthful will to classlessness' (1995, 167). She observed that the upper-middle class youth presence in clubbing life exceeds that of working-class youth. Moreover, the upper middle-class youth adopts some elements characteristic to working-class habits. This is an evidence for her for an increasing influence of subcultural capital with reference to classlessness (p. 12). In his recent critical study, Griffin (2011) pointed out that Thornton 'did acknowledge the inherent contradiction between the *will to classlessness* and the vestigial interest in staying *a step ahead and a cloud above the rest*' (p. 250). In Griffin's view, 'Thornton missed a golden opportunity to explore the reconfiguration of class that was playing out in 1990s clubcultures' (2011, 251). He also stated that Thornton did not explore why subcultural capital might had taken this form in this context, and what was the political significance of this process (Griffin, 2011).

As a conclusion, we consider that within the Romanian society as well, cultural and leisure lifestyles cannot be related exclusively to a specific social class, as a consequence of the expansion of information society, the commercialisation and massification of youth culture, but the level of cultural capital generally determines the level of involvement in different cultural and leisure habits.

In Romania, cultural and leisure lifestyles and ICT penetration that is also characteristic to young people have been born due to globalization and to a country repositioning from periphery to centre, through the constrains and opportunities created by country's accession process to European Union, but also there are the result of historical heritage: the communist economic and social system and problems accompanying its transition after 1989.

Data and methodology

First we used official EUROSTAT database statistics from EU, for a comparative analysis of the member states for Central and Eastern Europe and the candidate countries too. The analysis have three dimensions: labour market and education, social situation and vulnerabilities and ICT use frequency and ICT skills in comparison, focusing on Romania. In this part we used mainly simple percentages, sometimes by sex, when it was available and relevant.

The second empirical source of this study was a national survey, based on random sample of 998 cases (persons), selected from the 16-35 age groups, from 2008, conducted by ANSIT, the Romanian Agency for Studying Youth, supervised by Romanian Ministry of Youth and Sport.

In order to measure the ICT frequency use in Romanian survey, an index was computed first, as the aggregated responses of daily users (if daily user = 1) to eight questions about the frequency and the purposes of using computer and internet. In the next step, we created another indicator, a nominal variable by grouping the respondents in three different categories, according to the number of situations when PC and internet is daily used for different purposes, as follows: we called the frequent ICT users when the index value was between 4 and 8, average ICT users between 1 and 3 values, and Non-ICT users, for the ones that never use on daily basis ICT products (0).

The socio-demographic determinants, the class specific features of the lifestyle factors and the ICT user status are studied using ANOVA, Chi-square testes and OLS Regression; the methodology is presented below.

Constructing lifestyles factors

By means of factor analysis, we have created four groups for measuring the cultural consumption of young people. During this procedure, on the whole, the retained factors of the rotated factor matrix explain 61.5% of the total variance (the value of KMO is 0,782).

These are the items used for cultural and leisure activities in the questionnaire: How often do you use the internet, the computer in general, the computer for music, movies, games, how often do you practice sports, read literature, see movies, go to the opera, to the theatre, to classical music concerts, to pop/rock music concerts, to clubs, discos, bars, restaurants, coffee shops. The measuring scale has 5 values, where 1 means never and 5 means daily. We omitted mobile phone use – as classical calling instrument – from the category of ICT products and services during factor analysis, because in the year 2008 it was owned by more than 90% of the young Romanian population, on the one hand, and because mobile phone use is not a specific ICT activity, on the other hand.

Constructing social class scheme

For operationalization of the social class structure of Romanian youth, we approached the class theory of Bourdieu (1984, 1997), based on the different volumes of economic and cultural capital, and the class scheme of Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992), especially for the classifying the occupations, but the way of class scheme computation is different from both approaches. The construction of social class structure had the following steps:

- as a first step we created a complex index by means of principal component analysis which contains the form and extent of material and cultural consumption, as well as working circumstances. As a second step we combine factor values indicating consumption with occupational status.

We have created this so-called status index from the following components:

1. The index of material goods consumption which has been created based on the following formula: (every asset owned was valued 1 and 0 if it was missing): 3* own apartment + 2* own car + mobile phone + PC + internet + car in use (some else's property).
2. The level of cultural capital, measured by the „high culture consumption factor" which is based on the frequency of consuming its legitimate forms in Bourdieu's (1997) sense (theatre, opera, concert, reading literature).
3. The nature and quality of the job and payment conditions: which has been created based on the cumulated value of measuring the existence or default of the five conditions about the salary, co-workers environment, promotion opportunities, influence and management position.

We standardized these variables into z-score and transformed them into a single component by means of main component analysis, naming it status index.

After that, we created the social class scheme, delimiting five class situations. During this grouping we took into consideration the division employed by Kolosi and Róbert (2004). However, when naming class situations and classifying occupational groups according to the deciles values of the status index we proceeded in a different way in many respects. Based on Bourdieu's (1984) class scheme, we grouped the population into upper, middle and lower classes. Yet, we broke down the middle class into upper and lower middle class, because there are big differences according to the volume of capital, and finally we delimited from the social class structure the group of deprived persons as split off stratum. The deprived category members are unemployed and/or subsist by performing occasional jobs and they are characterized by multiple deprivation and the culture of poverty (Domanski, 2001, 40-65). We called them *deprived*.

The class structure elaborated based on this classification is somewhat „artificial", because we could have provided a different classification of the status index decile values, therefore the boundaries between the following, rather „theoretical" classes may not be regarded inflexible or unequivocal.

During this classification into the class structure, the distribution of 18-35 years old young people from Romania is the following: 8.5% of young people belong to the *elite or upper* class, 15.4% may be grouped into the *upper middle* class, almost 45% are part of the *lower middle* class, 17.4% represent the *lower* class (or *working* class), while 17.4% may be included into the class of the deprived.

OLS Regression

We used ordinary least squares (OLS) regression as the data processing method for predicting the social and demographic determinants of the lifestyle factors and of the frequency of ICT use.

This method is most appropriate because all the dependent variables are interval level. Similar regression methods were applied by Hargittai and Hinnant (2008), but the outcome and the goals were different.

Independent Variables: We are interested in the predictive power of the following variables: gender, age, education (university degree = 1), ethnicity (if roma or not), type of locality (urban = 1), occupational status, with three variables: non manual occupations (if working with degree, clerks and other non manuals is services = 1), workers (manual and agricultural workers = 1), unemployed (unemployed, housewives = 1), and cumulated material situation (calculated 3* own apartment + own car + mobile phone + car in use, coded each one 1, if yes), and subjective evaluation about the income level (the resulting index variable ranges from 1 and 5, where 1 = Our incomes did not cover the basic needs, 5 = We can afford more ex-

pensive things without limitations). We use the completed degree for the level of education – having a college degree serves as the base in the models.

In the second step of the regression model, we introduced in model, as independent variables, if the respondents have home computers and internet access (if yes = 1).

We checked the correlations and other diagnostics among the independent variables, and none of them were prohibitively high, so they may be included in the regression model (see Appendix A2).

Dependent Variables: For explaining the social determinants of cultural and leisure lifestyles, as dependent variables, we used the factors: screenagers, clubbing and sport, high culture, and home reading.

The frequency in use of ICT are measured by aggregating the responses of daily users to eight questions about the purposes of using computer and internet, presented above (see Appendix A1). The interval level index shows the number of purposes when ICT products (computer and internet) are used daily (scale values from 0 to 8).

Analysis and results

The labour market position, social situation and ICT use

In this subsection we shall make a comparative analyses of the situation of 15(16)-29 years old young people from Romania during 2008-2016, based on official EU data, from three points of view. The first one is labour market position and educational level, the second one is social position and the third one is computer use frequency and skills, as well as the frequency of internet use and the incidence of associated skills among young people in EU member states and associated Central and Eastern European countries. We analysed these phenomena based on available data at the beginning and at the end of the 2008-2016 period, but certain data have been available only from 2011 or up to 2014. However, even thus it is possible to draw some conclusions regarding these two time references.

Analysing the labour market position of young people from Romania, we may assert that about 60% of 15-29 years old young people have been not employed. Between 2008 and 2016 their percentage has only decreased with 1%. The employment rate was worse or similarly low only in Bulgaria and Hungary. The highest rates may be observed in Estonia and Slovenia (49.8 and 54.9%). By 2016, the employment rate has significantly increased in most countries by a few percent, except Bulgaria and Croatia, where it has decreased a little, just like the EU average, which in 2016 is 48%, but it is still much higher than the Romanian value (41.5%). According to sexes, we may observe that the employment rate of men is approximately 8% higher (than that of women) in 2008, both at national and EU level. Yet, while in Romania the employment disadvantage of women has increased to 13% by 2016, in most countries it has decreased or stagnated (see Table 1).

Table 1: Employment rate in CEE countries by sex, 15-29 years (2008, 2016)

	Employment rate					
	Total		**Males**		**Females**	
Country	**2008**	**2016**	**2008**	**2016**	**2008**	**2016**
European Union (28 countries)	50.6	48.3	54.2	50.8	47.0	45.6
Bulgaria	40.8	38.4	45.6	43.2	35.6	33.2
Czech Republic	45.6	47.6	52.8	55.1	38.0	39.6
Estonia	49.8	53.9	56.7	59.0	42.4	48.5

	Employment rate					
	Total		Males		Females	
Country	2008	2016	2008	2016	2008	2016
Croatia	45.2	39.4	51.9	42.4	38.2	36.2
Latvia	50.1	51.7	56.0	53.7	43.9	49.5
Lithuania	40.9	47.6	44.3	50.5	37.4	44.5
Hungary	38.7	45.1	44.3	50.5	33.0	39.5
Poland	45.0	47.7	50.2	53.4	39.8	41.8
Romania	**40.4**	**41.5**	**44.5**	**47.8**	**36.1**	**34.9**
Slovenia	54.9	45.3	58.5	48.6	51.0	41.8
Slovakia	43.2	44.2	50.3	52.5	35.8	35.6
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the	:	28.7	:	33.9	:	23.2
Turkey	:	42.5	:	56.6	:	28.3

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/data/ (downloaded at 10.04.2017).

At the same time, in 2008 the employment rate of 15-29 years old young people is similar to the EU average, which is slightly increasing, to 13.1% by 2016. Except the FYR of Macedonia, outside the EU, where the rate is 48% in 2008, as well as Croatia and Turkey, where it is 15-16%, the unemployment rate is higher only in Slovakia (14%) than in Romania. In Hungary and Poland it is about 12%, while in other places it is lower, between 6% (Czech Republic) and 11% (Latvia). According to data from 2016, in most of the countries it has increased by 2-3%, except Macedonia, as well as Hungary and Poland (the decrease from Hungary is actually just virtual, because people employed in "community service", paid well below the minimum wage, are decreasing the previous number to 9%).

Table 2: Unemployment rate in CEE countries, 15-29 years

	Unemployment rate					
	Total		Males		Females	
Country	2008	2016	2008	2016	2008	2016
European Union (28 countries)	12.0	14.7	11.9	14.9	12.2	14.5
Bulgaria	9.4	12.2	10.1	13.3	8.3	10.8
Czech Republic	6.4	7.4	6.0	6.3	7.0	8.9
Estonia	8.6	10.0	7.9	11.1	9.5	8.6
Croatia	16.0	24.6	13.2	23.9	19.7	25.5
Latvia	11.2	13.3	11.1	14.7	11.3	11.6
Lithuania	9.5	10.4	10.0	11.5	8.8	9.0
Hungary	12.7	9.1	12.3	8.9	13.2	9.2
Poland	12.0	11.8	10.7	11.7	13.5	11.9
Romania	**11.8**	**13.1**	**13.0**	**13.5**	**10.3**	**12.6**
Slovenia	8.3	14.7	7.2	13.5	9.7	16.1
Slovakia	14.1	15.5	13.1	13.9	15.4	17.9
FYR of Macedonia	48.1	40.6	46.9	41.2	49.9	39.7

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/data/ (downloaded at 10.04.2017).

In order to measure the degree of involvement on the tertiary (higher) education of young people pursuing their studies we have analysed the 20 year-old age group,

because they have already finished high-school by then and if they are continuing their studies, they do it within the framework of tertiary education. Here, the available data are from 2013. In Romania, 36% of the 20 years-old age group are pursuing some form of higher education, which in most CEE EU member states is higher, reaching even 45%. Only Hungarian and Macedonian data are a few percent lower (see Table 3). Accordingly, we have analysed educational level among 24-34 year-olds, whose majority have already graduated their BA studies, and the proportion of tertiary education graduates is only 18% in Romania, which is similar to the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Croatia, being (significantly) lower only in Macedonia (15%), while in several countries it has almost reached or exceeded 30% (Estonia, Poland, Slovenia). But what is even more serious, by 2016, the proportion of 25-34 years old young people with tertiary educational level is only 24% in Romania, while in all other countries it is above 30%, exceeding even 40% in many places, such as in the Baltic states, Poland and Slovenia (see Table 4).

Table 3: Students enrolled in tertiary education - as % of 20 years old

	Enrolled in tertiary education (levels 5-8), %		
Countries	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Bulgaria	45.1	45.2	45.4
Czech Rep.	42.3	41.9	41.3
Estonia	39.6	37.0	35.9
Croatia	47.8	47.3	46.3
Latvia	43.7	44.5	44.6
Lithuania	53.2	53.1	54.2
Hungary	33.7	31.5	28.8
Poland	45.0	43.1	46.1
Romania	**36.4**	**35.1**	**33.7**
Slovenia	57.8	60.1	58.9
Slovakia	36.3	35.8	35.3
FYR of Macedonia	34.3	35.7	37.0
Serbia	46.1	46.1	47.1

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/data/ (downloaded at 10.04.2017).

Table 4: Population by educational attainment level, from 25 to 34

Country	**Tertiary education attained (levels 5-8) %**	
GEO/TIME	**2008**	**2016**
European Union (28 countries)	30.9	38.2
Bulgaria	26.0	32.8
Czech Republic	17.7	32.6
Estonia	35.8	41.2
Croatia	19.9	33.0
Latvia	28.8	42.1
Lithuania	41.5	54.9
Hungary	24.1	30.4
Poland	32.1	43.5
Romania	**18.8**	**24.8**
Slovenia	30.0	43.0
Slovakia	18.4	33.4
FYR of Macedonia	15.1	32.2

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/data/ (downloaded at 10.04.2017).

We have analysed the social position of young people by means of four indicators.

The first one, the value of the "Young people's at-risk-of-poverty or exclusion rate by sex and country of birth" indicator in Romania has increased from 42,4% to 44% between 2008 and 2013. This indicator is only this high in Bulgaria and the closest value is registered in Hungary (33%).

The second indicator: *Severe material deprivation* rate of 16-29 years old young people in Romania has been attenuated from 33% to 30% between 2008 and 2013, while in Bulgaria it has increased from 37% to 42% and in Hungary from 20% to 31%. In most CEE EU member states, however, this proportion is below 20% and there are also values below 10% in 2013 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovenia).

The value of "the housing cost overburden rate for young people" is 42% in the Czech Republic, being only 18% in Slovenia, in 2008. In Romania it has decreased from 39.6% to 34%, just like in Hungary, while in Baltic states and Slovenia it has increased from the previous 20% to mostly above 30%.

The value of the "Severe housing deprivation rate" has been 66% in Romania, the highest in the region, while by 2013 it is still one of the highest, but it has decreased to 53,7% (see Table 5).

Table 5: Young people's social situation and vulnerabilities, from 16 to 29

Country	**Young people's at-risk-of-poverty or exclusion rate by sex and country of birth**		**Severe material deprivation of young people by sex and age**		**Housing cost overburden rate for young people by sex, age and poverty status**		**Sever housing deprivation rate**	
	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013
EU 28 countries)	:	28.1	:	11.4	:	40.4	:	16.5
Bulgaria	42.2	46.1	37.1	42.1	31.3	29.3	59.3	53.3
Czech Republic	14.4	16.7	7.5	8.2	46.7	46.0	18.6	14.2
Estonia	18.8	22.3	3.9	7.6	20.8	37.1	20.1	9.8
Croatia	:	27.4	:	15	:	30.4	:	18.5
Latvia	31.4	33.2	16.5	21.7	20.9	34.6	47.3	38.4
Lithuania	27.4	28.4	12	14	23.8	29.4	40.1	23.4
Hungary	33.6	39.5	20.6	31.4	41.6	36.7	42.2	51.1
Poland	28.3	27.0	17.6	13.1	30.5	31.3	35.7	22.9
Romania	**42.4**	**44.2**	**33.1**	**30.7**	**39.6**	**34.0**	**66.2**	**53.7**
Slovenia	13.1	17.9	7.2	6.7	18.9	25.9	29.4	19.2
Slovakia	20.1	20.7	12.7	10.9	17.4	30.5	15.2	16.3
Serbia	:	:	:	27.4	:	70.9	:	30.7

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/data/ (downloaded at 10.04.2017).

The computer use frequency and the computer and internet skills of the youth is the focus of our study. The earliest European comparative data available are from 2011. In this time in Romania, only 49% of the 16-29 year old young people used computer daily, while the EU average value was 80%, the proportion of daily computer users in Bulgaria was 71%, and in most CEE countries was around 80% or even higher.

In the year 2015, the daily computer users in Romania reached 69%, in this conditions the "gap" to EU average became "only" around 10 percent, but still is the lowest in Central and Eastern European EU context, excepting Turkey. Analysing the sex/gender

divide, in some countries, the proportion of the female users are even higher (in Romania and Baltic countries), but in most of the CEE countries the sex/gender differences are not significant (see Table 6).

Table 6: Frequency of computer use: daily %

	Computer use: daily					
	Total		**Males**		**Females**	
Country	**2011**	**2015**	**2011**	**2015**	**2011**	**2015**
European Union (28 countries)	80	79	81	80	80	77
Bulgaria	71	78	71	78	70	77
Czech Republic	74	88	75	89	73	87
Estonia	88	90	87	89	90	92
Croatia	84	83	83	90	84	75
Latvia	86	88	85	87	87	90
Lithuania	84	86	82	85	86	87
Hungary	82	83	82	84	82	82
Poland	84	89	84	88	84	90
Romania	**49**	**69**	**48**	**69**	**51**	**68**
Slovenia	90	85	92	84	89	85
Slovakia	87	88	88	89	86	87
FYR of Macedonia	:	84	:	82	:	86
Serbia	:	89	:	91	:	87

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/data/ (downloaded at 10.04.2017).

As for internet use, we may observe that while until 2011 the proportion of 16-29 year-olds using the internet on a daily basis has been 47%, by 2016 this proportion has increased to 73%. Meanwhile, the EU average has increased from 79% to 91%. This proportion is higher in every CEE country than in Romania, although the lag has decreased by 2016. However, it is still 8% lower as compared to the internet use of young people from the next country in row, i.e. Bulgaria. From the next column of Table 6 it also becomes clear that the main reason for this lag is that while in Romania only 46% of young people have acquired IT skills within the framework of formal education, in other CEE EU member states this proportion exceeds even 80%. More than 60% have had IT classes even in Bulgaria and Croatia (see Table 7).

Table 7: Frequency ('percentage') of daily Internet use and the proportion of the IT skills

	Internet access: daily		**IT skills through formal education (school, university, etc.)**
Country	**2011**	**2016**	**2011**
E U (28)	79	91	67
Bulgaria	69	81	63
Czech Republic	71	91	82
Estonia	87	98	86
Croatia	82	94	60
Latvia	86	95	91
Lithuania	83	93	93
Hungary	80	92	82
Poland	81	89	84
Romania	**47**	**73**	**46**

	Internet access: daily		IT skills through formal education (school, university, etc.)
Country	**2011**	**2016**	**2011**
Slovenia	88	94	73
Slovakia	85	92	86
FYR of Macedonia	:	93	

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/data/ (downloaded at 10.04.2017).

In 2011, the lag is still bigger as far as the most important ICT skills are concerned, but in 2013 much of this lag has been recuperated by Romanian young people. For example, the proportion of individuals who can "search engine to find information" has increased from 66% to 71% in 3 years, which Romanian value in 2013 is above the proportion of Bulgarian young people with this skill, but it is behind most of the CEE countries with 15-20%. According to the aggregated index showing the proportion of individuals who have carried out three or four of the six internet related activities, we observe that in Romania this value is 40%, when in Lituania is only 23%, in Bulgaria 31%, in Slovenia, Croatia and Estonia is between 41 and 43%, in Hungary 47%, and only in few countries is the proportion of aggregated index significantly higher, over 50% (see Table 8).

Table 8: ICT skills of youth, from 16 to 29

	Search engine to find information		Messages to chat rooms, news-groups or an online discussion forum		Have used peer-to-peer file sharing for ex-changing movies, music, etc.		File sharing: movies, music, etc.		Who have carried out 3/4 of the 6 internet related activities	
Country	**2011**	**2013**	**2011**	**2013**	**2011**	**2013**	**2011**	**2013**	**2011**	**2013**
E U (28)	87	87	66	72	33	32	21	18	49	51
Bulgaria	68	69	48	54	34	44	10	12	37	31
Czech Republic	93	90	68	68	25	21	17	12	52	59
Estonia	96	91	77	74	52	50	28	29	45	42
Croatia	91	82	84	65	60	49	23	12	44	41
Latvia	95	90	96	71	73	55	24	16	25	43
Lithuania	93	92	82	94	70	74	22	24	27	23
Hungary	91	91	69	76	55	40	23	19	47	47
Poland	83	85	60	85	41	36	20	15	46	56
Romania	**66**	**71**	**47**	**52**	**19**	**14**	**15**	**9**	**34**	**40**
Slovenia	91	95	84	75	66	52	23	24	50	41
Slovakia	95	96	56	71	32	35	15	13	57	61
FYR of Macedonia	:	71	:	51	:	31	:	16	:	50

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/data/ (downloaded at 10.04.2017).

The general ICT situation of Romanian young people

The analysis of Romanian young people life conditions in 2008 is a reflection of the general situation of the Romanian society and economy in the second year following the accession of the country to the European Union in 2007, after a period of 8 years of economic increase, when the Romanian

GDP has increased more than three times even calculated in Euros (it has increased from 40 billion Euro in 2000 to 136 billion Euro in 2008[1]).

Regarding to ICT accession, on the national level, taking into consideration all generations, Romania has seen an increase from only 3,6% in internet penetration in 2000 to 23% in 2007, while this percentage has increased to 35% by 2010. However, Romania is still lagging behind most EU member states, where internet use has already exceeded 50% on average in 2008[2].

According to our survey data, internet provision is considerably higher (52%) among Romanian young people aged 16-35 than in total population. ICT provision of young people is relatively high, especially mobile phone provision, as mobile phones are available to 92% of young people and computer provision, as 68% have a PC. It has been demonstrated in several countries (Wilson, Wallin and Reisler, 2003; DiMaggio et al., 2001; Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008, 603) that there is a digital divide according to sex, urban - rural differences, education, and, in the USA, also race. Although these differences may have decreased or changed due to massification in internet penetration, digital divide may also be demonstrated among young people from Romania according to several variables. Facer and Furlong (2001) have a critical attitude; they indentified that, in England, the tendency to associate home ownership of computers with academic success should be faced as a matter of concern. They suggested that research programs should focus on the everyday experiences of young people across a wide range of experiences and attitudes, rather than on emergent trends of youth cultures.

Our data shows that digital divide in access to ICT, according to gender and age, especially among 16-35 years old people, diminished. As some researchers have suggested, access and ability are two separate issues, defined as the ‘first level’ and 'second-level digital divide' (DiMagio et al., 2004; Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008).

However, in Romania, some differences still persists regarding in home ICT access, like education level, student status, size and type of residence locality, ethnicity/race. The most advantaged categories in home PC and internet access are the people with university degree (89.5% and 78%), people from urban areas, especially the big cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants (85.9%) and students (86% and 70.9%).

The most disadvantaged categories are the rural population and Rroma minority. Only 54% have computer and 30% have internet access among the people from rural areas, and in case of Rroma/Gypsy ethnic/racial minority the ICT accession level is even lower, it is only 30% and 25%, respectively (see Table 9). This is why the housing conditions of a part of the Roma population are, much under majority population’s level (*Liegeois* and *Gheorghe, 1995*).

Table 9: The Romanian young ICT owners according to socio-economic variables, % (N = 991)

	Mobile phone	**Home computer**	**Internet access at home**
Total	92.0	68.3	52.0
Gender			
male	90.7	69.2	53.8
female	93.3	67.1	49.9
Age groups			
16-19 years age	88.2	71.8	50.9
20-24 years age	97.0	73.5	60.6
25-29 years age	91.8	65.1	50.0
30-35 years age	89.1	65.6	47.0

	Mobile phone	Home computer	Internet access at home
Study or not			
Student	95.8	86.1	70.9
Finished the studies	91.2	64.5	47.9
Educational level			
8 classes or less	78.9	36.1	16.5
Vocational school	86.6	41.1	24.1
High school	95.6	76.5	58.6
University	98.2	89.5	78.0
Ethnic belonging			
Romanian	92.5	69.1	52.2
Hungarian	90.2	67.2	52.5
Rroma/Gypsy	75.0	30.0	25.0
Other	92.9	78.6	71.4
Size of settlement			
over 200,000	98.8	85.9	81.6
100,000-200,000	94.2	77.4	63.8
30,000-100,000	90.5	79.8	69.0
Towns under 30,000	93.3	63.5	42.6
Rural	86.9	54.1	30.0
Total	92.0	68.3	52.0

With another set of questions we analyzed the frequency and the purpose of computer and internet use (see table 1). Here, we analyzed the percentage of those who use computers and the internet on a daily basis and we also analyzed differences according to gender, type of settlement and age groups.

Totally, 47% of 16-35 year-old young people from Romania use their computers daily, daily computer use among women (43%), people living in rural areas (30%) and 30-35 year-old people (36.4%) is below average, while daily computer use among men (50%), people living in urban areas (58,5%) and among these: people from big cities and the capital (Bucharest), as well 16-19 year-old and 20-24 year-old young people (57.8 and 60.7%) is above average.

Computers are used by 23.5% of young people for music, movies and games on a daily basis, while differences according to sex, type of locality and age signalled above are the same. 38.7% of young people, 43.5% of men, 33.6% of women, 51.1% of people living in urban areas and only 20% of the rural population, i.e. more than two times less than in urban areas use the internet daily. 31% use the internet for communication and information on a daily basis, and 9.4% for on-line games. Almost 20% of 16-19 year-old young people play on-line games daily. The penetration of ICT products among young people from big cities who are below 25, especially among boys is very high, defining their lifestyle. Therefore, we have assumed that it is worthwhile analyzing lifestyle types that can be differentiated by means of statistical methods if we proceed from participation in several types of cultural and spare-time activities.

The frequency of ICT use according to socio-demographic and social class variables

We are analysing the social background of Romanian youth according to the frequency of use of information and computer technology (ICT), based on the computed variable concerning the frequency of ICT

use for different purposes (see Appendix A1), with three nominal values, presented in Methodology chapter. Accordingly, the distributions of the analysed population at national level is the following: 32.8% of young Romanian people may be considered frequent ICT users, 16.7% are average users, while 50.5% are specifically non-ICT users and do not use computer and internet in their everyday life .

Table 10: The distribution of ICT user status in Romania, according to socio-demographic variables, (%) (N = 933)

	Frequent ICT users	**Average ICT users**	**Non-ICT users**	**Total**
Total sample	32.8	16.7	50.5	100
Age groups***				
16-19	41.3	19.3	39.4	100
20-24	45.5	17.4	37.1	100
25-29	28.8	17.1	54.1	100
30-35	23.5	14.8	61.7	100
Gender*				
man	36.6	16.0	47.4	100
women	28.9	17.5	53.7	100
Marital status***				
Married	19.5	17.0	63.5	100
Cohabitation	29.7	12.5	57.8	100
Single	45.0	16.7	38.3	100
Size/type of settlement***				
over 200,000	49.2	20.3	30.5	100
100,000-200,000	46.2	17.9	35.8	100
30,000-100,000	47.0	16.9	36.1	100
Town under 30,000	26.8	18.8	54.4	100
Rural	18.1	13.2	68.7	100
Educational level***				
8 classes or less	7.7	10.3	82.0	100
Vocational school	5.4	9.0	85.6	100
High school	39.9	17.0	43.1	100
University	50.4	24.1	25.5	100
Historical Region*				
Moldova	25.6	19.7	54.7	100
Muntenia	30.0	19.5	50.5	100
Dobrogea	29.1	9.1	61.8	100
Oltenia	13.2	4.7	82.1	100
Banat	23.1	25.6	51.3	100
Transylvania	41.0	14.6	44.3	100
Crisana-Maramures	28.8	17.5	53.8	100
Bucharest	63.1	21.4	15.5	100
Ethnic belonging**				
Romanian	33.2	17.3	49.6	100
Hungarian	32.8	9.8	57.4	100
Roma/Gypsy	5.0	15.0	80.0	100

Sig. of Chi square: *** p < 0,001; ** p < 0,01; * p < 0,05

Obviously, if we analyze the types of social demographic determining variables according to ICT use frequency, we found that frequent ICT users are highly overrepresented among university graduates (50.4), 20-24 and 16-19 year-old young people (45.5% and 41.3%), men (36.6%), singles (45.0%), people from big cities (49.2%), especially those from Bucharest (36.1%), slightly overrepresented among those with a high-school diploma (39.9%) and significantly underrepresented among those with a lower educational level, representing only 5-7%, as compared to the average 32.8%. Ethnic minorities, especially Roma are seriously underrepresented (5%) among ICT users (see Table 10).

According to class situation, the differences according to the frequency of ICT use are very high: the majority of frequent ICT users are primarily part of the upper middle class (66.4% of them), secondly – a lower percentage (37.2%), but above average – are part of the lower middle class, and 60.8% of upper class are frequent ICT users. We may observe that the smallest percentage of those from the lower class and the deprived are to be found among frequent ICT users, 6.7% and 7.2% respectively, while 84.9% from the lower class and 86.8% from deprived are non-ICT users (see Table 11).

Table 11: The distribution of young people according to screenager status and social class (%) (N = 871)

	ICT user status**			
	Frequent ICT users	**Average ICT users**	**Non-ICT users**	**Total Romania**
Upper class	60.8	14.9	24.3	100.0
Upper middle class	66.4	20.1	13.4	100.0
Lower middle class	37.2	24.4	38.5	100.0
Lower class	6.7	8.4	84.9	100.0
Deprived	7.2	5.9	86.8	100.0
Total	34.3	17.5	48.2	100.0

Sig. of Chi square: ** p < 0,001

If we analyse the internet use for different purposes according to class position, we can see the similar divide by social classes as the aggregated indicator for ICT uses frequency, showed above.

Anyway, other researches found (Attewell and Battle, 1999; Livingstone and Helsper, 2007) that even if access to home computers is equal, children belonging to higher social class or status-group (SES) have greater educational gains than children from lower SES backgrounds. Previous researches have found (Howard et al., 2001; Hargittai and Hinnant 2008) that education has a strong influence on the types of online activities a person does. For example sending e-mails, searching for financial, government or political information, e-banking are all associated with higher education.

In Romania, the 'first level' of digital divide, measured by home ICT access is so high that differences in 'second level', in purposes of use and skills reflect differences according to ICT access patterns.

The lifestyle's social background

The first factor, created by factor analysis presented above, is represented by screenagers who use frequently ICT products and consume culture by means of the internet, they get informed and communicate through the internet, explaining 22.9% of the total variance. They are followed by clubbing

culture consumers who represent 16.2% of the total variance, while the third group is represented by high culture consumers who make up for 13% of the total variance. These latter ones have indicated the theatre, the opera, concerts and the cinema, and modern music concerts have also been included here. Finally, the fourth factor is represented by home literature readers who are different from the previous ones, explaining 9% of the variance (see Table 12). Studies using similar methods (Van Wel et al., 2008; Wilska, 2002) identified different structure and different types of lifestyles in other countries.

Table 12: Rotated factor scores of cultural lifestyles in Romania (N = 965)

	Factors*			
Cultural/leisure activities	**1. Screeneger**	**2. Clubbing and sport**	**3. High culture**	**4. Home reading**
How often you use the internet	,810			
How often ... use computer in general?	,960			
How often ... computer for music, movies, games?	,702			
...make sport		,352		
...read literature/beletristics				,982
...see movies?			,776	
...go to opera, theather, classical concert?			,605	
...light music concert?		,489	,403	
...go to club, discotheca?		,867		
bar, restaurant, coffie shop?		,585		

* Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

OLS regression results: determinants of the lifestyles and the ICT use

Using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression as the method, we analysed the data in different regression models according to the lifestyle factors and ICT use frequency as dependent variables.

According to correlation coefficients among the independent variables, we stated that none of them were prohibitively high, so they may be included in the analyses simultaneously (see Appendix A2).

First, with OLS regression analysis we tried to explain the social and demographic differences in youth lifestyles and the frequency of ICT use, to understand how social conditions influence the lifestyles of Romanian youth. We present the results of initial models in Table 13. In the second step we added as independent variables if they have or not home computer and home internet access.

First, we look at the relationship of the social and demographic variables to lifestyle factor, without the inclusion of home PC and internet access variables in the model.

The strongest explaining value have the Screenager model (R2 = .398), followed by ICT use frequency model (R2 = .333), by Clubbing and sport (R2 = .272), by Home reading (R2 = .127) and by High culture (R2 = .121).

Table 13: Ordinary Least Squares Regression Predicting youth lifestyles and ICT frequency use, Model without PC and internet at home (standardized Beta Coefficients)

Independent variables:	Dependents				
	Screenager	Clubbing and sport	High culture	Home reading	ICT use frequency
	Standardized Beta Coefficients				
Age	−.097**	−.396**	−.032	−.041	−.139***
Gender (1 = Men)	.064*	.211**	−.046	−.142***	.094***
Roma	−.032	−.038	.006	−.054	−.007
Urban	.175***	−.027	.124***	−.142***	.112***
Student	.094*	.007	.099	.118*	.123**
High school	.263***	.082*	.068	.101*	.227***
University or college	.311***	.039	.221***	.325***	.295***
Material situation	.014	−.098**	−.064	.052	−.036
Non manual occupation	.112**	.005	.042	−.022	.085
Unemployed	−.114**	−.058	−.071	−.111*	−.094*
Workers	−.060	.012	−.007	−.009	−.093*
Income situation	.154***	.060	.042	−.073*	.138***
R^2	.398	.281	.121	.127	.333
Adjusted R^2	.390	.272	.109	.116	.324
N	918	918	918	918	945

*** p < 0,001; ** p < 0,01; * p < 0,05

The results, according to standardised Beta coefficients, in case of screenager odel suggest that education level have the strongest predictive value, especially those with university and college degree (.311) like the screenager lifestyle, followed by high school graduates (.263), people from the urban areas (.175), with better income situation than the average (.154), non-manual and intellectual occupation (.112), younger age (−.097) and man (.064) also tend to like the screenager lifestyle, but the predictive values are weak.

Clubbing and sport lifestyle model is explained, relatively strongly, by younger age (−.396) and gender, more like man (.211), with weaker material situation (−.98). High culture lifestyle model can be explained primarily by university or college degree (.221) and urban residence (.124), other variables are not significant. Home reading lifestyle are preferred also by people with degree e (.325), but for rural areas (−.142). Weak but significant association is with student status (.118), employed (−.111) high school graduates (.101), slightly worse income status like the average (−.073).

The results, according to ICT use frequency suggest that education have the strongest predictive value, especially with university degrees (.295), but also the high school graduates (.227), followed by income situation (.138), young age (−.139), student status (.123) and urban residence (.112). Higher aged youngsters and women (.094) are considerably more likely to report lower frequency in PC and Internet-related activities. We also find that respondents with less than a high school education, or a vocational school, or some post secondary education are statistically significantly less knowledgeable about the Internet than those with a university degree. Hargittai and Hinnant (2008) pointed out, on data collected from 16 and 24 years old youngsters form United States, that more highly educated people are more inclined to undertake capital enhancing activities on the internet (as visits to capital-enhancing sites).

Results after modifying the Regression models: one can observe some modification in the models, especially in the explaining power of the regression, after the variables: if they own a PC and if they have a home internet connection, are introduced in the OLS regression model. In the screenager's model, the R^2 value has been substantially increased to .605 (from .398), and the ICT use frequency to .454. However the differences in R^2 to the other lifestyle factors are not significant (see Table 14).

Table 14: Ordinary Least Squares Regression Predicting Youth lifestyles and ICT frequency use, Model with PC and internet at home (standardized Beta Coef., R^2)

	Dependents				
	Screenager	**Clubbing and sport**	**High culture**	**Home reading**	**ICT use frequency**
Independent variables:	**Standardized Beta Coefficients**				
Age	−.079**	−.396***	−.032	−.041	−.126***
Gender (1 = Men)	.050*	.208***	−.051	−.141***	.077**
Roma	−.014	−.041	.001	−.052	−.009
Urban	.121***	−.040	.103**	−.136***	.035
Student	.019	.004	.094	.119*	.063
High school	.122***	.079*	.060	.103	.126***
University or college	.146***	.031	.205***	.328***	.161***
Material situation	−.040	−.094**	−.060	.050	−.062
Non manual occupation	.053	.004	.040	−.022	.040
Unemployed	−.063*	−.057	−.069	−.111**	−.064
Workers	−.035	.012	−.007	−.009	−.084*
Income situation	.044	.054	.031	−.070	.048
PC at home	.497***	−.068	−.086	.032	.080*
Internet connection at home	.096***	.092*	.133**	−.042	.380***
R2	.605	.285	.129	.128	.454
Adjusted R2	.599	.274	.115	.115	.446
N	918	918	918	918	945

*** p < 0,001; ** p < 0,01; * p < 0,05

The purpose of the variables in the models has not change significant to screenagers, only the influence of the income situation become more significant. The new introduced variables have however decisive power of predicting: especially the PC home, with a standardised value Beta of .497 and the home internet connection with .096. At the ICT regression model the use frequency, the student status, and the urban residency are not any more significant, neither is the income situation.

A variable with stronger explicative power becomes home internet connection (.380) and PC at home has a lower importance (0.80) – internet connection implies the existence of a computer in the house.

This proves that is not the material situation or the level of income that counts in explaining the screenager lifestyle or the frequent use of ICT, but the existence of sufficient resources and will to have a computer and internet at home.

An interesting factor is that Internet connection at home has a significant predicting value to other lifestyles as well, such us clubbing and sport (0.092) and high culture (.133)

Conclusions

In Romania, the accession to the EU represents the last significant influence of globalization. As for labour market situation and educational level of young people from Romania, in comparison with the young people from other CEE countries, has been worse in 2008, but by 2016 this lag has been reduced, therefore Romania became part of a group made up of several countries, especially Bulgaria, Hungary and Croatia. As for social position and ICT use frequency and skills, while during 2008-2011 Romania has been in last place from the point of view of almost every indicator, by 2013-2016 a significant recuperation may be observed and as far as the cumulated analyses of several ICT skills is concerned, Romania has not been lagging behind most of the other CEE countries in 2013 already.

In Romania, the ICT penetration – as a tool of globalisation – was very fast between years 2002-2008, but still the gap to most CEE EU countries were important, and also there are significant social and class specific differences, and other socio-demographic determinants in ICT status. This digital disadvantages were created mainly because of the low level of digital education in formal school system, especially until 2008.

The elements of ICT related cultural and leisure lifestyles, can be indentified with global trends (Griffin 1993; Wilska 2002), but the structure of lifestyles are country-specific. The first significant lifestyle, according to factor analysis method, was the ICT activities based, called *screenagers*, clearly delimited from other lifestyle groups like *clubbing and sport*, *high culture* consumers or *home readers*. Romanian screenagers may be considered the „slaves" of computers: for the communication, information, cultural or leisure activities, to play, to get information, to listen to music, to watch movies and, to a lesser extent, to do business or buying, they use the internet daily.

We can identify a very important digital divide according the social class position, educational level, age groups and location. It may be ascertained that the social class position of frequent ICT users is relatively better than the average; they are over represented among the upper and lower middle classes and in upper class, especially among the labourers with non-manual occupations and the students.

The telecommunication services were available earlier in big cities, then in smaller cities and last they reached the village areas. The access to ICT services, and their use places in different zones of the Casstells' information society different geographical spaces and collectivities from social space: educated people, from cities and towns are in the nods of the "information flows", that offer more chances to promote themselves, to have more mobility – territorial and social – and the young people with less education from rural space, and the roma minorities are in the "black holes", where they have very few chances to rise up on social hierarchy, and they can not benefit of the advantages of information society.

The findings based on OLS regression showed us that level of education is the strongest predictive variable both for screenager status and ICT frequency use, their proportion is prominently high among people with higher education degree and, also above average among people with high school education. Habitants of big cities and the capital city are also more likely to have a screenager lifestyle and use ICT frequently. Material situation play a significant role in explaining the ICT frequency of use, but it's predictive role can be reduced on the existence of computer and internet access at home, other extents (house, car owners or not) are not significant. This can be related with the Wilson et al (2003, 140) conclusion, 'the degree that the digital divides were created by the expenses associated with being an early adopter of a new technology, the divides should close as those expenses decrease'.

Lifestyles cannot be related exclusively to a specific social class, but the level of cultural and economic resources, determined by social class position, generates different levels of involvement in cultural and leisure habits. We found that screenager lifestyles have become the constitutive elements of middle class habitus, in Bourdieu's (1984) sense, but more lifestyles may also be characteristic to the middle classes. As Griffin (2011) demonstrated in British context, we may conclude that in the case of the Romanian youth as well, clubbing and sport lifestyles are not dominant and no longer specific to lower (working) class, but more characteristic to upper and the lower middle classes.

Notes

[1] Own calculation, for sources see www.insse.ro/Comunicate_de presa, for exchange rates: www.bnr.ro/curs valutar.

[2] See: Internet User Statistics & Population, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats9.htm.

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