



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# The Vietnam War. Social and Political Issues of an Anti-Communist War

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### Abstract:

**Objectives.** This article presents an issue of the War of Vietnam (1955-1975), an anti-communist war. A crisis of veterans' social misconduct and rise in drug use in and after the War had started and was speculated by Soviets, using the movies about this war. The Vietnam War was not a typical one. It was a war of attrition, in which guerrilla fighting with line fighting and fighting in very difficult conditions (jungle) were combined.

**Material and methods.** The films investigated were "Taxi Driver" (1976), "Homecoming" (1978), "The Deer Hunter" (1979), "Platoon" (1986) "Born on the Fourth of July" (1989), "Casualties of War" (1989), "Dead Presidents" (1995), "We Were Soldiers" (2001).

**Results.** There was a connection between the post-traumatic shock, drugs use, war violence and veterans' social reinsertion after the war. The analyzed movies about veterans had strong psychological charge and they have translated on the screen their psychological and social drama of reinsertion, the tragedy of this war, considered to be one of weariness, even psychological.

**Conclusions.** The Vietnam syndrome was considered a complex of factors that made it difficult for Vietnam fighters to integrate into American society. The wounds were multiple, the danger imminent and the nervous overload of the fighters was permanent. All these issues were present on the American cinema movies.

This Vietnam syndrome was also called post-traumatic shock. Drug abuse was used to relieve the pain of dealing with nightmares, insomnia, physical, and mental pain. Also, drugs were used to relieve the stress of unemployment. It was an unsuccessful use that created a lot of drama and loosed destinies.

**Keywords:** *Vietnam, drugs, American Cinema, soldiers, veterans, anticommunist war*

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### **Introduction**

The use of narcotics on the battlefield initially had a strictly military purpose. A derivative of the opioid class, morphine was used by the military physicians to anesthetize amputation operations, but also to relieve pain in soldiers (Stanton: 1976, 557) who had shrapnel from the projectiles that could not be extracted or had impaired psycho-somatic status. It was not until 1905, when procaine or novocaine, an unaddictive anaesthetic, was synthesized in Germany that opioid-based anaesthetics were used in military and civilian surgery.

The first recorded use of drugs was in the Arab world. There was a sect of "assassins", that is, those who committed criminal acts in the name of the Islamic faith after having previously consumed hashish.

The Vietnam War was not a typical war. It was a war of attrition, in which guerrilla warfare with line combat and fighting in very harsh conditions (jungle) combined.

The wounds were multiple, the danger imminent, and the nervous overstrain of the fighters was permanent.

Usually, on the battlefield, in the wars of the modern era, and even in the two world wars, soldiers received rum or vodka, and also cigarettes or money for tobacco.

### *Objectives*

It was started from the premise that in Vietnam, ancient Indochina, not far from the opium and derivatives trade routes, the consumption of opium and derivatives was widespread among the locals.

In September 1971, a contingent of 13,760 Vietnam veterans (Robins, Davis, & Nurco: 1974, 38) was demobilized. The analyzes from the debriefing period, that set of investigations and therapies, analyzes after returning from the operating theater showed that 1400 of them, that is 10%, presented in the biological analyzes the proof of the fact that they had used drugs (Robins:1973, 61).

But why did the soldiers, especially the young ones, choose heroin? Paradoxically, in those years, in the US, restrictions were greater for young people between 19 and 21 years old when buying alcohol, and the illicit traffic in alcohol was much better controlled than, for example, heroin (Hunt & Odoroff: 1962, 43). And heroin was relatively cheap in the early 1970s (O'Donnell: 1969, 15). Admittedly, heroin's effects on young people were much more harmful in the long term, but in the short term, users believed it had stronger anti-stress effects than alcohol (Robins & Slobodyan: 2002, 1055).

Studies conducted on the social integration of veterans showed that they were addicted to narcotics and had the effects of post-traumatic shock. More than 30% of Vietnam veterans who had a girlfriend, a wife, or even a wife and children at home showed a colder, harsher behavior towards the family, especially towards the children (Stephens & Cottrell: 1972, 48). The veterans, taught with order, with hierarchy, could not bear to be contradicted.

Furthermore, even in the case of veterans who did not develop drug addiction but had post-traumatic shock, any problems their children or other family members may have had (third-party violence), they were found to become aggressive out of an exaggerated spirit of protection towards their children (Collection: 1976, 15). Especially veterans who noticed their children having problems with drugs or alcohol, sought to

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deal with them harshly, to catch them and teach them a lesson to the drug dealers (Wish:2010, 215-217).

### **Material and methods**

The study operates with several categories of materials. First, in the study, the technical documents of the Vietnam War were used. These were the documents of the Department of Defense (Pentagon), the official classifications of the categories of veterans. Analyzes of the evolution of the number of military personnel followed. There followed documents of a medical nature in which the main types of injuries, physical and mental, were attested, as well as the way in which the narcotics began to be used.

In the second case, articles and studies directly connected to the PTSD definition set were used. After this post-traumatic shock was defined, the study and analysis focused on two complementary aspects. The first is that of opinions on the access to drugs of soldiers in Vietnam. The second was how drugs affected the physical, mental and physiological condition of soldiers engaged in the Vietnam conflict.

In the third case, the study analyzed the Hollywood movies perspective on the Vietnam War from two points of view. The first was related to active duty soldiers, the other was related to veterans. Obviously, all the films made about the Vietnam War were made in a system of introspection. The story begins in the modern day when the veteran is caught in the vortex of memories and he tries to find explanations for the states he goes through starting from the terrible days of the Vietnam War.

The analyzed films start from the idea that the Vietnam War was a deep, complex, attrition war, for which the American military system was not prepared. The American military system came after the successes in Europe, especially the D-Day landings in Normandy on June 6, 1944 and after the rejection in the winter of 1944-1945 of the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes Plateau.

The structural and basic difference between the two wars, the Second World War and the Vietnam War was related to several factors: first of all, the terrain, European towns in the case of the World War, the jungle in the case of the Vietnam War. In the case of the world war, the enemy was weakened, did not have enough material and human resources, in particular, fuel and ammunition. In the case of the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese were much better supplied and knew the terrain they were fighting on.

The US, although allied with South Vietnam, also faced an aspect that the history of social structures has studied very well. The North Vietnamese, though communist, held to an ancestral set of rules, where the wisdom of the elders came first, where direct order replaced American decision-making analysis. Either the South Vietnamese, who wanted to maintain democracy and the democratic system, found that the American propaganda was not compatible with the way of thinking of the ordinary Vietnamese, whether they were from the North or the South, which in war diminishes the ability to gain empathy towards by the foreign army allied to the South, enemy to the North.

So, from the studies analyzed, from the articles studied and the films watched, because the study focuses on watching dozens of hours of art films and documentaries about the Vietnam War, the idea emerges that the Vietnam War was also a war of mentalities, of the mental health status, not only a war of men and techniques, of strategies and combat actions.

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Another observation needed in this study was that of the circumstances that made the Vietnam War a resounding failure for the Americans. The first part of the discussion starts from the fundamental mistake of military strategists and politicians in Washington. They believed that the World War II supremacy of the American Army was a type of invincible armor capable of bringing success anywhere because North Vietnam was supported by the Soviets and China, states with a political doctrine and political system opposed to American, therefore, theoretically enemy states.

The Vietnam War was, during the Cold War, to test the ability of the American Army to directly confront the Red Army at some point.

A second fundamental mistake of American strategists at all levels of design and decision-making was that American society approved ab initio everything thought in the White House or the Pentagon and decided on Capitol Hill by the vote of senators and congressmen. That had happened in the Second World War, only the world had changed in the meantime. Soviet propaganda promoted positive human rights (work, housing, paid leave, care and education of children) in which the state had to be involved and in the 60s-70s of the 20th century, unemployment in the USA was increasing because the period of growth had ended and recovery after the world war. The Marshall Plan of 1947 had brought everything that could be brought economically from Western Europe.

In addition, American youth were no longer being educated according to the principles of their World War II veteran parents and World War I veteran grandparents. America was still accused in 1964-1965 (Vaillant: 1966, 727), a century after the American Civil War (1861-1865), of maintaining racial segregation. In World War II, it took artistic and televised propaganda for African Americans to be considered capable soldiers as the white soldiers. Or, now that racial problems persisted, both African-Americans and whites had to be on the front in Vietnam, there was born a solidarity that US civil society had to accept. The great demonstrations of the "hippie" and "flower-power" generations showed that America was socially vulnerable, and President Richard Nixon chose to cooperate with the People's Republic of China against the USSR, so the Vietnam War had to be a controlled failure.

So, from a media success heavily promoted on official channels, the Vietnam War became a resounding failure, promoted by American cinema with all its dramas.

It comes down to the main discussion, which is that drugs are the way many veterans tried to get out of the social and psychological carousel in which they had been caught. They had gone to war convinced that they would impose far away their democratic civilization, of European origin, and they returned home disappointed, sick physically and spiritually, the disappointment growing even more when society rejected them both as people and as a special category, that of war veterans.

This is another point of discussion. Already in vulnerable health, already affected by addictions, war veterans also received a social stigma from where they did not expect. That is, they came home from a devastating war and found themselves in a much tougher one, because it was carried with psychological weapons, much more effective and that hurt consciences.

So, wounding the conscience of a military man basically leads to his cancellation as a social being, as part of a social structure.

The Vietnam War found film, politics and society in different positions, not common as had been the case in the previous war. After the Vietnam War, directors criticized politics and did not make films that justified the war but, on the contrary, condemned it.

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Only the American success in Iraq in the 90s-2000s, so at the end of the 20th century, could fade a little of the drama of Vietnam.

The great American political scientist and state adviser Henry Kissinger reproached the decision-makers in Washington (he had been the architect of the rapprochement between the US and Communist China and the end of the Vietnam War) in April 2021, when they decided to withdraw the US Army from Kabul-Afghanistan that they they had made the mistake of confusing the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe with the collapse of Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa and the Middle East. Above all, he reproached them for forgetting the "painful lesson of Vietnam."

### **Results**

The films about the Vietnam War are hard films, films that have a strong psychological charge and that translate on the screen the psychological and social drama of the veterans of this war, considered to be one of weariness, even psychological.

The 11 films analyzed in this study were commented according to some criteria such as: the direct connection between the director and the war, as was the case of Oliver Stone, himself a veteran of this war, the soldier-soldier relationship, the soldier-superior relationship directly, the veteran-society relationship, the veteran-family relationship. It also captures, especially in Oliver Stone's film, the faithful reconstruction of reality, based on the testimonies of veterans.

There were cases in some films where the actors had to consume some substances considered prohibited in order for the effect on the small screen to be as close as possible to the sensations described by the veterans who entered rehab programs. Professional film criticism has shown that the military establishment has disapproved of Vietnam films. So, the situation did not happen in the Second World War, when the Pentagon gave its contest to the making of films. For example, director Oliver Stone had trouble getting uniforms that resembled the uniforms used in Vietnam by the US military.

An official U.S. statistic (What We Do:2000, 1) on the number of war veterans who entered in federal prisons shows: "*In 1998, an estimated 56,500 Vietnam War-era veterans and 18,500, Persian Gulf War-era veterans were held in State and Federal prisons*" (Mumola: 2000, 1).

The fact that Vietnam War veterans could not integrate into well-paying jobs that required theoretical knowledge and education meant that they had to turn to the social security system and fill out forms for employment. The jobs entailed physical labor, but on top of that (their military training and fitness was an ally), their bosses treated them with contempt. Those veterans who developed drug addictions and who had post-traumatic shock often rebelled and assaulted their employers. They were leaving their jobs and having problems at home. The big problem with all modern wars, but especially with contemporary ones, is the fact that when a large number of soldiers are needed, society and the economy lose in terms of productivity. After the conflict came to an end, military veterans can no longer find their previous jobs or are not considered by employers. They became a dangerous mass of potential but unresponsive labor force.

That's why they end up being easy targets for traffickers, those who practice robberies, robberies. The situations in which many of them became assassins paid by influential people against their enemies are eloquent. They were influential people from politics, the underworld.

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Some veterans developed an aversion to their former bosses who, they felt, had sent them on risky missions, then gone into political office and forgotten about them.

There was another problem. The Vietnam War was a war lost by the United States of America. It was a war that civil society condemned, and the defeat caused an anathema cast upon it for causing too much damage and not bringing the intended benefits.

Even if the major criticism was directed at the political side, military veterans also unwittingly became the target of criticism from civil society, especially anti-war activists.

Obviously, a military man who came home from the conflict, defeated, but knowing that he did his duty, that he lost there dear friends, comrades, people he did not know before the war but to whom he had become very attached more inclined to antisocial behavior.

A special aspect could be presented here. Many mothers, many wives, many orphaned children looked at the surviving soldier with a kind of sadness, anger because he had had the chance that their son, husband or father had not, dying on the front.

That was why, in addition to the loss of a comrade, the soldier was regarded with hostility in the environment from which he returned.

Some have practically tried to rebuild their lives with the girlfriends or widows of the disappeared and from here, other traumas have arisen because a man could not bear to be compared to his predecessor, no matter how good a friend he was.

### Discussions

If in the Second World War, the cinema was put at the service of the war, being revealed exclusively the heroic side of the war, the Vietnam War found the Pentagon-US Ministry of Defense and the Hollywood, the Californian fortress of the world film, on antagonistic positions.

The television that had "exploded" in the 60s (Hentea: 2014, 2), would contribute greatly to the transmission of the plight of the veterans. They could not integrate into a system of regular work, they could not fit into a discipline imposed by civilians who had not experienced their own dramas, and those of their friends and troop colleagues seriously wounded, taken prisoner, missing or dead in the war.

The films (Nichols: 2014, 9-12) that hold the attention of the study are "Taxi Driver" - 1976, with Jane Fonda and Robert de Niro, "Coming Home" from 1978, by Hal Ashby, with Jane Fonda and John Voigt, "The Deer Hunter" from 1979, by Michael Cimino, with Robert de Niro and Christopher Walken, "Platoon" from 1986, by Oliver Stone, with Tom Berenger, William Dafoe and Charlie Sheen, "Hamburger Hill"-1987, "Born on the Fourth of July" from 1989, by Oliver Stone, with Tom Cruise, "Casualties of War"-1989, "Jacob's Ladder", 1990, "Dead Presidents"-1995, "We Were Soldiers", made in 2001, with Mel Gibson, "American Gangster" (drug trafficking in the coffins of the dead in Vietnam), 2007.

"The Deer Hunter" (Nichols:2014, 145) is an extraordinary film about Vietnam. The second film by Michael Cimino, originally a talented Hollywood screenwriter, has been declared by some a cinematic masterpiece and by others a hateful film that grossly distorts historical reality. Somewhere, between these two extremes, "The Deer Hunter" also became a major commercial success, despite talking about the loss of the innocence, experienced by the United States of America in the Vietnam War.

In a small industrial town in Pennsylvania, three workers, Michael (Robert De Niro), Steven (John Savage) and Nick (Christopher Walken), were called into the

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military to go to war. Before leaving his friends, Steven got married, and the marriage and wedding also became a farewell party for the new recruits.

The film then switched to the conflict in Vietnam (Hentea: 2014, 1). The three friends became prisoner and eventually manage to escape, but with tragic consequences. Steven remained paraplegic, Nick retreated somewhere in Southeast Asia, emotionally crippled, and Michael came back home, overcome with remorse for letting his friends fail. His fate was further complicated when, trying to resume his civilian life, Michael involved emotionally with Linda (Meryl Streep), once Nick's fiancée and had plans to marry her.

"The Deer Hunter" offers some remarkable acting performances and a series of scenes of overwhelming intensity, from the wedding party to the much-discussed sequence of the war prisoners playing Russian roulette.

The movie "Apocalypse Now" (Arvunescu: 2015, 1) shows how during the Vietnam War, Captain Willard (Martin Sheen) was ordered to find and "liquidate without any scruples" a Special Forces commander, Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando), who had said to have sided with the enemy. Willard's journey was ostensibly an adventure story, but equally obvious it was an allegory of the dementia of the war and the self-discovery. Finally, when Brando appears, the film becomes a philosophical interrogation of the insoluble mysteries of madness and evil in humans. "Apocalypse Now" also featured one of the scariest lunatics on the big screen, Colonel Kilgore (Robert Duvall), who likes "the smell of napalm in the morning", is a demented, charismatic, surfing guy who wears a Stetson hat (Arvunescu:2015, 2).

The 1987 film Hamburger Hill (Arvunescu: 2015, 3) has an equally exciting subject. While the world wondered why the Vietnam War was happening, a troop of soldiers fought and died in the fiercest battle of America's bloodiest conflict. The drama directed by John Irvin follows the dramatic story of a division of American soldiers who, on May 10, 1969, participate in the battle to take over the Dong Ap Bia area, in the A Shau valley. This area was nicknamed Hamburger Hill because of the carnage that turned the combatants of one of the toughest battles of this war into a bloody mass (Nichols:2014, 245).

The comedy "Good Morning Vietnam" from 1987 starring Robbie Williams shows a new DJ, Adrian Cronauer (Robin Williams), coming to the radio station of an American camp in Vietnam. It would transform and revolutionize the way radio worked until then, and would soon become a real phenomenon in the American camp in Vietnam (Arvunescu: 2015,3). The film is by far Williams' best acting performance on the screen. Although he spoke non-stop into the microphone, director Barry Levinson managed to keep the character from saying anything about himself personally -they did not know where he came from, what he did before the war, if he has a family, what dreams he has. His world was reduced to the material he makes for radio programs. The film received an Oscar nomination and a Golden Globe Award. Obviously, references to drugs and their use appear in the film (Hentea:2014, 1).

"Casualties of War" is an exceptional film by Brian de Palma. It is based on the true story of a platoon of soldiers trapped in the inferno of the war-torn Vietnam. Witnessing the murder of a civilian, private Eriksson (Michael J. Fox) was forced to confront his comrades and the commanding officer, Sergeant Meserve (Sean Penn), a powerful and charismatic man who has crossed the border of brutality, driven by the terror of war (Arvunescu:2015, 1).

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Director Brian de Palma made a devastating and hard-to-forget story about one man's struggle for health and justice in the midst of the chaos of the war.

"Born on the Fourth of July" (Arvunescu: 2015, 2) is a landmark film among the dramas about the Vietnam War. Born on the Fourth of July is based on the best-selling autobiographical novel by Ron Kovic, who co-wrote the screenplay with the film's director, Oliver Stone, both veterans of the war.

The story begins on July 4, as Ron Kovic celebrates his birthday. Becoming a true hero of his hometown, young Kovic had shocked everyone he knows by enlisting in the Navy so he can fight against the communists in Vietnam. Unfortunately, he soon had learned that there it was a big difference between the ideal fighter and the experience of war, that the moral lines that had been induced by his parents and in which he had believed so strongly were actually nonexistent in the harsh reality of war. Kovic was first confused, then deeply disillusioned, discovering that many of his comrades are no superior to his enemies (Nichols: 2014, 78).

He got into a terrible mess when he accidentally had shot a colleague. He leaved the front on a stretcher, after a bullet in his spine paralyzed him from the waist down. Recovery was slow and hampered, especially by the inhumane conditions in the veterans hospital, most of which have no chance of social reintegration. Sent home to his hometown, Kovic could not reconcile with his family or civilian life, tormented everyone around him, became an alcoholic and had compassion for himself, got alienated himself more and more. Nearly dead at a special camp in Baja, California, Kovic finds hope and a reason to live when he becomes an anti-war activist.

"We Were Soldiers", made in 2001 (Arvunescu: 2015, 1), starring Mel Gibson, has the following subject. In 1965, the first battle between U.S. and Viet Cong soldiers took place. About 400 U.S. troops entered North Vietnamese territory and were surrounded by 2,000 enemies. Facing this predicament for a month were Harold Moore (played by Mel Gibson), commander of the 1st Battalion of the Cavalry, and Associated Press reporter Joseph Galloway (Hentea:2014, 2).

Mel Gibson's character has the following line:

"We will fight a strong and determined enemy. I cannot promise to bring you all home alive. But I swear to you that I will be the first to set foot on the battlefield and the last to leave. And I'm not going to leave anyone behind... alive or dead. We will all return home together" (Hentea:2014, 2).

Analysing all these films, historian Călin Hentea (Hentea:2014, 1) concludes: "*Scenes of extreme physical and psychological violence, a generally bleak image of the American army consumed by drugs and sadism, the absurdity of war and the inability of veterans returned home to heal their traumas and resume a normal life were the main images and messages of these films, some multi-Oscarized.*"

Radu Vraști (Vraști:2018, 1-2) believes that the suffering of soldiers in Vietnam should be understood as follows:

"Under the pressure of the pathology, increasingly common in soldiers returning home from the Vietnam War, a new clinical entity is taking hold, post-Vietnam syndrome, proving that post-traumatic consequences can occur even much later. The scientific world and the general public had to accept that those people in whom the traumas of war led to particular mental disorders were neither cowards or simulants, nor pension hunters, but sufferers in the true sense of the word and post-traumatic disorder or syndrome really existed as a nosological psychiatric entity".

The author completed the definition of the post-traumatic shock:



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"This reasoning has been extended to other traumatic situations and to other categories of individuals, especially children abused by parents, or sexually abused women. The problem of the post-traumatic disorder was one of the few situations, when social and political considerations imposed a nosological psychiatric category. It remains a politically sensitive psychiatric disorder today, although its acceptance is quasi-universal, with the reservation of endless discussion, (Vrasti:2018, p.3)

As the U.S. soldiers cooperated with the South Vietnamese soldiers against Viet Cong communists, they came into contact with narcotics trafficking networks. Even some of South Vietnam's political and military leaders were caught or had connections to those who exploited these networks.

Thus, American soldiers (Kamienski: 2015, p. 1) were able to come into contact with such trafficking networks, and became, some of them consumers, a habit that would continue when they became veterans.

In 2004, there were over 8.2 million Americans who were considered veterans of the "Vietnam era."

The veteran, according to the 1974 American classification (Vietnam Veteran Act:1974, 1), was:

*"The man who served on active duty anywhere in the world for a period of 180+ days, any part of which occurred between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975, and was discharged or released with anything other than a dishonourable discharge or was discharged or released from active duty for a service-connected disability if any part of such active duty was performed between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975"* (Vietnam Veteran Act:1974, 1).

Official statistics show that more than 100,000 Americans died or were jailed, after returning home, for crimes (the proportion is 50% to 50% approximately).

It is known that the worsening situation in Vietnam, due to the involvement of the Soviets, Chinese and some socialist states on the side of North Vietnam, led to an aggravation of the social crisis, especially since young people had to go to the front. Many came on leave or during periods of convalescence with the habit of consuming narcotics (cannabis, marijuana - the most widespread, but also heroin).

Cocaine from South America was also a drug, but it was intended for those who could afford to buy this cocaine, considered to be a "luxury commodity".

Young people stormed the amphitheatres where Mircea Eliade, who had had initiatory experiences in the ashrams of yogis in the Himalayan Mountains and who had consumed narcotics, taught. Young people wanted to reach states of exaltation, psychedelic music was on the rise, and, in addition to the marijuana consumed by Jamaicans, the synthetic drug called LSD appeared on a large scale (Hentea:2014, 2).

Obviously, these hippie communities that promoted nature, drug use, uninhibited love were supported by forces hostile to the U.S. as well, eager for the Vietnam War to end.

The slogan of those years was "Come Back Home America!"

In the end, the U.S. President, Richard Nixon, made the decision to withdraw the U.S. troops from South Vietnam (Hentea:2014, 2).

There is one problem that specialists have studied. The American failure in Vietnam.

Regarding the use of drugs by soldiers, Gabriela Alexandru (Alexandru:2020, 1) concludes:

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*"The American soldiers in Vietnam began using drugs while off duty, to cope with all their wartime fighting. The Department of Defence reported in 1971 that, by then, 51 percent of soldiers had smoked marijuana, 28 percent had used heroin or cocaine, and 31 percent had used psychedelics such as LSD or mushrooms. In addition to illicit drug use, many soldiers became heavily addicted to amphetamines and sedatives. The Special House Crime Committee reported that approximately 225 million stimulant tablets were consumed by the armed forces between 1966 and 1969" (Alexandru:2020, 1).*

In her turn, Andreea Cuzub (Cuzub:2018, 1) believes that, amid the "flower power" and "hippie" periods, some soldiers were already consuming narcotics before reaching the front, but that they did not remove stress but only temporarily disconnected the user, which then created an increasing addiction:

*"In addition, those who went on longer expeditions, also received injections of steroids. Research showed that 3.2 percent of soldiers arriving in Vietnam were already amphetamine users, but just one year into the war, the rate rose to 5.2 percent.*

*Psychoactive substances were administered not only to stimulate soldiers, but also to reduce the impact of the war on the psyche. To prevent these effects, the Department of Defense provided sedatives and neuroleptics. The use of all these medications explains the low rate of wartime trauma" (Cuzub:2018, 1).*

The author emphasized that the effect of drug use were on short-term and created an addict attitude. 15,2% of Vietnam veterans had suffered by post-traumatic shock:

*"However, the results were on short term. The drugs administered do not eliminate the causes of stress, but only relieve the symptoms, and a few years later, the problems can explode with much greater force than they would have done the first time.*

*The exact number of soldiers in Vietnam, who suffered from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) remains unknown, but according to the National Veterans Recovery Survey, published in 1990, about 15.2 percent of the soldiers involved suffered" (Cuzub:2018, 1).*

The American literature (Kamienski:2015, 2) concluded:

*"The U.S. armed forces readily distributed large amounts of "speed" (stimulants), in the form of Dexedrine (dextroamphetamine), an amphetamine twice as strong as Benzedrine, to American servicemen. Soldiers embarking on long-range reconnaissance missions or ambushes, according to standard military instruction, were supposed to be given 20 milligrams of dextroamphetamine for 48 hours of combat readiness". (Kamienski:2015, 2)*

The author used the information gave by members of the most difficult missions entrusted by US Army during the Vietnam War:

*"According to a member of a long-range reconnaissance platoon, the drugs "gave you a sense of bravado as well as keeping you awake. Every sight and sound was heightened. You were wired into it all and at times you felt really invulnerable." Servicemen who participated in infiltrating Laos, a secret intervention by the United States in the Laotian Civil War, on four-day missions received 12 tablets of an opioid (Darvon), 24 tablets of codeine (an opioid analgesic), and 6 pills of dextroamphetamine. Also, those serving in special units departing for a tough, long mission were injected with steroids" (Kamienski:2015, 2).*

The author presented also the liaison between drugs and the veterans life after the war:

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*"However, pumping the soldiers with speed and heavy anti-psychotics like Thorazine (Chlorpromazine) came with a price that veterans paid later. By alleviating the symptoms, the anti-psychotics and narcotics offered temporary relief. However, these serious drugs administered in the absence of professional psychiatric supervision and proper psychotherapy merely suppressed the problems and symptoms, but veterans years later often experienced those problems untreated and amplified. This is a large part of the reason why very few servicemen, compared to previous wars, required medical evacuation due to combat-stress breakdowns, but PTSD levels among veterans after the war are at unprecedented levels compared to previous wars"*(Kamienski, 2015, p.2).

Bogdan Mînjînă (Mînjînă: 2020, 345), psychology specialist at the Ministry of Internal Affairs defines post-traumatic stress disorder as following:

*"It can be diagnosed, according to DSM-5, if, following the direct or indirect exposure of a person to a potentially psychotraumatic critical incident, specific combinations of symptoms from four categories (i.e., intrusive, avoidance, psychophysiological and reactive activation, negative changes in cognition and affective mood) with significant negative effects (i.e., distress and significant problems in social, occupational and family functioning)".*

The author presented that in 1980, post-Vietnam syndrome (five years after the war) was recognised as a mental disorder:

*"It was officially recognized as a mental disorder in 1980, in the DSM-III, five years after the end of the Vietnam War, because the post-Vietnam syndrome, "characterized by intrusive, combat-related thoughts, nightmares, numb sensitivity, and some specific symptoms such as drug addiction, depression, anxiety, and anger"* (Mînjînă:2020, 345).

About 1 million U.S. troops served permanently on the Vietnam front.

The Vietnam syndrome was considered the complex of factors that made it very difficult for the Vietnamese fighters to integrate into the American society, after years of frontline and extreme experiences. This Vietnam syndrome (American Psychiatric Association [APA]:2016, 10) was also been called post-traumatic shock. Drugs have always been a means of relieving the pains, of coping with nightmares, insomnia, physical and mental pain, where tobacco and alcohol abuse no longer gave the expected dose of comfort (Stanton: 1976, 558).

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a major type psychotrauma that needs to be prevented and, if it could not be prevented, to be managed through psychological support activities, dedicated to the personnel performing missions and operative activities.

### Conclusions

Anthropologically speaking, the Vietnam War had a negative social projection also because of cinematography. The veterans began to come into contact with the tabloid press, which for a few extra dollars, for various benefits, hunted their statements about people who had become uncomfortable on the political or economic scene and a possible unprincipled attitude held in Vietnam (especially among officers who became politicians). It would have ruined their image and helped their rivals.

In this paper, was built a correspondence scheme between the character of the Vietnam conflict, a destructive one on the lives of combatants and the civilian

population, and the post-traumatic effects and to see to what extent drug use contributed to this link between Vietnam and the post-traumatic shock of veterans.

American cinema has tried, as much as possible to show, despite the exaggerations specific to the seventh art, the most real situation of the drama of the Vietnamese veterans.

The study was able to demonstrate that post-traumatic shock was amplified by drug use, which accentuated deviant behaviour, isolation and vulnerability of veterans in the post-war period.

Another characteristic element of the situation, in which some of the veterans found themselves, was the fact that some of them ended up committing serious crimes that brought them sentences to heavy sentences. 56,000 American veterans in Vietnam ended up in federal prisons, and more than 15 percent of them had post-traumatic shock.

In 2004, federal censuses showed that as many as 8.2 million Americans were considered "Vietnam veterans". Nearly 3 million of them had served inside, USA.

Engaged in missions, there were at least 1 million American soldiers at all times.

In Vietnam, almost 60,000 American soldiers died (figure including the missing and the prisoners, seriously wounded, etc.). If we add the more than 50,000 veterans who arrived in prisons, it turns out that of the soldiers permanently active in Vietnam, about 250,000 of them were cumulated as dead, wounded, missing, affected by post-traumatic shock, imprisoned. That is almost 25% of all soldiers who fought exclusively on the Vietnam Front, between 1964 and 1975.

The main scientific gain of the period after the Vietnam War was that the American scientific world theorized the "post-traumatic syndrome" and, thus, research was able to find solutions for the future, because the US had other participations in heavy wars, after 1975, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan, after 1989.

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