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I. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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Felix-Angel POPESCU, Laurențiu PETRILA ⇔ *The Effects of BREXIT on the UK's Economic, Social and Legal System*

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WHY INFLUENCE SHOULD NOT BE EQUATED WITH IMPERIALISM. REFLECTIONS ON SAID'S CONCEPT OF ORIENTALISM

Adrian POPA*
Ioana LEUCEA**

Abstract. *The concept of Orientalism correlated with the name of Edward Said is a fundamental landmark for the field of International Relations. Orientalism draws the attention to the constructivist approach of world order depicted as a Western product. Yet the main critique of the notion is related to the idea that Orientalism is in fact an Occidental product that it does not address the reality, but the imagined Orient by the Western culture. This article revises the debate over the Western perspective in interpreting the Oriental space, highlighting the lack of an objective approach as the concept of Orientalism is included in the sphere of competitive cultural identities and ideologies.*

Keywords: *identity–alterity; power–knowledge relation; Orientalism*

Introduction

The concept of *Orientalism* correlated with the name of Edward Said informs us about the Western perspective in interpreting the Oriental space. The notion of *orientalism*, primarily depicted as a valuable concept of International Relations by the cultural critic Edward Said in his homonym book appeared for the first time in 1978, resized and meanwhile revitalised the Oriental Studies and subsequently, the postmodernist thoughts in this field of study. Indeed, “few books have at the same time stimulated so much controversy or influenced so many studies” (MacKenzie 1995: 4).

The persistent critique of the concept *Orientalism* is that of a fake-reality, the representations of the Orient being an artificial product of the West, an Occidental product, which in fact does not address the reality, but the imagined Orient by the Western culture. Although the term *Orientalism* is polysemantic, the main contested meaning is the one correlated to imperialistic policies.

The main aim of this article is to uphold the idea that in the realm of symbolic geographies there can be no *objective approach* envisaged by the critics to the importance of Said's concept of Orientalism. By briefly defining its features and offering an outlook over its background, this article presents the value of Said's aforementioned concept for the field of International Relations, while outlining its main criticism.

1. Orientalism as a landmark of the Occident

According to Bryan Turner, Orientalism can be defined in three main ways: “firstly, orientalism can be regarded as a mode of thought based upon a particular epistemology and ontology which establishes a profound division between Orient and Occident. Secondly,

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orientalism may be regarded as an academic title to describe a set of institutions, disciplines and activities usually confined to Western universities which have been concerned with the study of oriental societies and cultures. Finally, it may be considered as a corporate institution primarily concerned with the Orient” (1994: 96).

The subject approached within the framework of identity formation highlights the temporal and contextual identity construction. Edward Said reveals the very idea of identity configuration by actors. The constructivist scholars assume that identities are contestable by definition. The nature of identities depend on contexts and on representations.

However, Edward Said approaches Orientalism in terms of imperialism, depicting it as a landmark of the Occident that has envisaged the concept as part of the *alter ego*. Indeed, the author regards his thesis as a “discourse by which European culture was able to manage - even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (Said 1978: 3).

Hans Morgenthau when writing about the theme related to imperialism in his book entitled *Politics among Nations* (1948), devotes a special chapter to the subject of what is not imperialism. The author argues that a fundamental common mistake the political elite makes is to confuse a *status quo* politics with an imperialistic one (Morgenthau 2007: 111).

The Western cultural framework may have a *natural* cultural identity, an inclination to perceive the world using specific lenses without having the correlate meaning that the lenses are instruments of colonial power production. The distinctions between the two civilizational spaces can be perceived as two variants of social orders, without necessarily being contraposed. Actually, when nowadays there are discussions related to cognitive warfare, the cultivation of specific cultural identity represents an inner architecture of the Self.

Highlighting the same idea, John MacKenzie argues that the comparative analysis leads to the polarisation of distinctions between the two cultures (1995: 9) while Edward Said claims the creation of so-called *binary vision* (1978: 46). Orientalism as discourse of power was assigned only to Britain and France which primarily exercised such power from the late eighteenth century to 1914, the concept being essentially the product of these two western cultures (Said 1978: 18).

The constructivist approach of IR places in centre of the debates the identity concept that encompasses the *Orientalism*, emphasizing its emancipated and sophisticated meaning revealed and developed mainly in the post-Cold War period. Indeed, the identity theory highlighted the complexity and the multiple dimensions of the *Orientalism*.

According to John Mackenzie, a central point of Said’s argument is that Orientalism is not just a historical phenomenon, but a ‘continuing political actuality’ which no less conditions the West’s approach to the East in the late twentieth century as in the nineteenth century. The only difference is that the prime actor has become the United States rather than Britain or France (1995: 10).

The continuing political actuality may be correlated naturally with cultural identity traits, a manifestation of the Western Self, acting upon and modifying the cultural architecture of the East. The idea of the constructed character of the Orient by the intervention of the West has no other mirror than the constructed character of the West by the lenses of the East.

Niall Ferguson (2011) has written one of his books having the subtitle *the West and the Rest*, suggesting that the rest occupies an inferior position. Yet the inferiority positioning relies as well on the attitude the other adopts. The Westernization has success not because it is imposed, but because of its *soft power*, the power of attraction.

2. Resizing the concept of Orientalism

Edward Said plays an important role in the theory of Oriental studies, as a subdomain of International Relations, by resizing the concept, an added value confirmed by MacKenzie as well: "it transformed 'orientalism', in which the Orient is appropriated by the Occident by being turned into a structure of myth prefabricated for western use, into one of the most ideologically charged words in modern scholarship" (1995: 4).

Edward Said is a rational researcher whose obedience to the ancestors occupied in the past by empire turned out to be a veritable research on the way the imperialism is still keeping its dominant structure in the post-colonialism period. Yet the process of Westernization should not be perceived as being driven by power interests and invested with maleficent objectives.

For instance, the Orientalism seen as a scientific discourse modifies the accent on power interests: the analysis of knowledge - power relation as a discourse of difference in which the apparently neutral Occident/Orient contrast is an expression of power relationships.

The scientifically dimension of the paradigm of Orientalism represents an outpost of post-colonial scholarship. MacKenzie identifies Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci as the underpinning sources of Said's re-evaluation of Orientalism: "He took Michael Foucault's concept of the discourse, the linguistic apparatus through which the articulation of knowledge becomes an expression of power and linked it to Antonio Gramsci notion of cultural hegemony through which elite control is maintained over the masses" (1995: 3-4).

The concept of power and knowledge or will to knowledge is designed by Foucault as it "relies on institutional support (...) it is probably even more profoundly accompanied by the manner in which knowledge is employed in a society, the way in which it is exploited, divided, and in some way, attributed" (1971: 11). Said generalises this aspect by offering the perspective of the dominated as the mirror of conquerors' will, an eternal competitor ready to show its defects.

The Gramscian concept of hegemony involving power-knowledge relation (Gramsci 1935) is taken by Said from its socialist context and updated with another range of features. As MacKenzie remarks "where Gramsci dealt with class in a European context, Said transferred his hegemonic principles to racial representation and control in imperial frame" (1995: 4).

Based on his assumption that knowledge is to subordinate, Turner considers that "the task of orientalism was to reduce the endless complexity of the East into a definite order of types, characters and constitutions" (1994: 21). Practically, the Occident has tried to judge the Orient through its own western system of values and exactly this tendency has intrigued Said.

3. Said and his apologists' response to critics

Said's revolutionary approach to the study of Orient leads to several criticisms, aspect confirmed by MacKenzie who proves himself as good connoisseur of the phenomenon produced by Said's book: "like most books that acquire 'epochal' status, 'Orientalism' has been seen both as merely enshrining a great truth and constituting a major polemic (1995:4).

Many critics such as Homi Bhabha largely embraced the idea of other's perception in the term of power through knowledge as a key for understanding the situation of Orient "despite the *play* in the colonial system which is crucial to its exercise of power, colonial

discourse produces the colonised as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (1994: 101).

There were many critics that attacked Said's notions of Western superiority, imperial revisionism and male superiority, claiming his lack of theoretical consistency and his tendency to oscillate between ideology and facts.

For instance, Andrew Rotter suspects Said's lack of historical basis in his research that alters the epistemological relationship between cause and effect. For these reasons, the author reveals a potential trend in the theory of International Relation: *the Saidism without Said* (2000:1208). Practically, Andrew Rotter claims that the concept of Orientalism was used as a good practice in understanding the relation US-Middle East but rarely was mentioned any reference related to the author, Edward Said.

For Homi Bhabha it is clear the importance of Said's concept, but however he remarks the slippages: "it is a static system of *synchronic essentialism*, knowledge of *signifiers of stability* such as the lexicographic and encyclopaedic. However, this site is continually under threat from diachronic forms of history and narrative, signs of instability (1994: 102).

However, Edward Said tried to explain and moreover answered to his critics in different articles such as 'Orientalism reconsidered' in the journal *Cultural Critique*, appeared in 1995. In this article, the author emphasizes the idea of orientalism by revealing its interconnected notion, orientalist and orientals "there could not be orientalism without on the one hand the orientalist and on the other hand orientals" (1985: 90).

In addition, the author repeats the problem of stereotypes so frequently used by Occident when referring to Orient "so saturated with meanings, so over determined by history, religion and politics are labels like *Arab* or *Muslim* as subdivisions of *The Orient* that no one today can use them without some attention to the formidable polemical mediations that screen the objects, if they exist at all, that the labels designate" (1985: 93).

Indeed, Edward Said bases his research on the ideology of the *alter ego* that contaminates the Occident. The author accuses the Western world of its incapacity to erase the colonial perception of Orient – a redundant competitor whose weakness is revealed and nothing can be done to recover and advance its civilisation – that remains predominant even in the post-colonial period.

Therefore, Edward Said labels Orientalism as "a science of incorporation and inclusion by virtue of which the Orient was constituted and then introduced into Europe (...) The Orient was, therefore, not Europe's interlocutor, but its silent Other" (1985: 93-94).

Moreover, the author proves to be very analytic with his critics, revealing his enjoyment over the battle on the land of ideas. Indeed, Edward Said categorised his critics by the aim of their critique: "some attack Orientalism as a prelude to assertions about the virtues of one or another native culture: these are the nativists. Others criticise Orientalism as a defence against attacks on one or another political creed: these are the nationalists. Still others criticise Orientalism for falsifying the nature of Islam: these are *grosso modo*, the believers" (1984: 94-95).

Not ultimately, Edward Said attacks his critics on their presumed incapacity to self-represent the Islam. In this case, the author claims the idea of a European superiority through western civilisation and is more than confident that Islam can represent itself as long as this is permitted and not straightaway labelled.

Indeed, Edward Said brilliantly remarked this epistemological paradox in the Western world: "here, of course, the most familiar of Orientalism's themes is that they

cannot represent themselves, they must therefore be represented by others who know more about Islam than Islam knows about itself" (Said 1985: 87).

Conclusions

The concept of *Orientalism* as it was depicted by Edward Said has constituted a major revolution in the understanding of the relation empire-colonies in the context of post-colonialism. It is not only about the Orient as the concept transcends the relation Western-Middle East. It can be applied to all the zones of the Globe where the imperialism shaped the social consciousness of the colonies.

Inspired by the cultural hegemony of Gramsci and by the relation knowledge-power of Foucault, Edward Said offered a personal view over the imperialism whose success not late to appear, is proved as well by the big amount of articles written in favour or against his concept.

MacKenzie highlights that some of Said's critics tried to replace his Orientalist system-building with eclectic and fragmented structures of knowledge (1995: 7). However, their attempt to uniform other parts of globe through their own lenses was limited by their unilateral perception of values.

Indeed, Said succeeds in offering a possible theory for the way imperialism is still governing the social conscience of the dominated state. Concepts as cultural hegemony or power through knowledge were basic elements that were discovered or taken by Said and that were given some external and universal senses.

Nowadays discrepancy and stereotypes should be understood in the context of post-colonialism or moreover as a way a Western country is reporting to it. Due to his valuable contribution to the theory of international relations, Edward Said can be regarded as one of the most prominent IR author of the late twentieth century and as a possible guide in understanding the relation of the Occident with the Orient in the current century.

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THE EFFECTS OF BREXIT ON THE UK'S ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND LEGAL SYSTEM

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Abstract. *BREXIT is the term used to refer to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. The effects of Brexit on the UK economy have been felt since the referendum on June 23rd, 2016, when the majority of the UK's population voted to leave the European Union. In the years since the referendum and after the official withdrawal from the EU (as of 31st January 2020 and during the transition period which ended on 31st December 2020), the UK economy has experienced a variety of both positive and negative effects, all affecting the British economic, social and legal system. Some critics say that in the end, it resulted a very particular idea of sovereignty over economic good sense. Others say that the UK's decision to leave the European Union is an act of economic self-harm. The truth is inevitably somewhere in between.*

Keywords: *BREXIT, economic, social, legal, effects, UK, European Union*

Introduction

BREXIT is a story of divergence...the United Kingdom and the European Union are going their separate ways. However, 47 years of integration (Menon et al., 2016) and a vastly changed international legal environment means that the separation is not simple, nor will it be clean.

The European Union is a union of 27 member nations, located in Europe, which was formed to cater the political, economic, military factors affecting the member countries. The union is governed by a specific set of laws known as the European Community Law, which later became known as the European Union Law.

The EU law can be simply described as a set of judgments and laws that act together along with the legal system of the member states of the Union (Popescu, 2017). These laws are highly respected by the member nations. In case of political, economic or military conflicts, the EU laws are given more importance than the National laws.

Usually, the European Union Laws have the authority to provide legal decisions regarding freedom, social justice fundamental rights, criminal laws and competition laws within the member states. The freedom may include freedom of movement of products and goods or movement of persons, capital or services.

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There was always a spectrum of economic impact versus ability to make our own choices around things like regulation, in all Member States. The European Union is not a superpower in the way that the United States is a superpower, but it is a regulatory and trading superpower. Collectively, it's the world's largest market and it harmonised all of its rules to allow everybody to trade more freely (Ameur et al., 2022). And it forced other countries and trading blocks to follow EU rules in many ways. We can no longer blame European rule makers for decisions and policies that we don't like or outcomes that we don't like in our own economy.

I. The BREXIT effects on the British economics

One of the most immediate and visible effects of Brexit on the UK economy was an immediate drop in the value of the pound sterling, which dropped to its lowest level since 1985 against the US dollar (Sampson, 2017). This devaluation of the pound has led to higher prices of imported goods and services, leading to higher costs for the average consumer. This has been compounded by increased tariffs on goods imported from the EU, which have raised the cost of living in the UK. The devaluation of the pound has also had a negative effect on the UK's exports, as the prices of goods and services exported to Europe have become more expensive. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of UK exports and a decrease in the amount of money that businesses are investing in the UK. The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union has had an immense impact on the UK economy. The UK's exit from the EU has had both short-term and long-term economic implications. Overall, Brexit has had a significant impact on the UK economy. In the short-term, the UK has experienced a decrease in economic growth, an increase in inflation, and a weakening of the pound. In the long-term, Brexit could lead to slower economic growth, higher unemployment, and reduced access to European markets.

We're starting to see a very interesting pattern emerging, comparing Britain with the performance of other advanced economies. After the pandemic, there was a trade recovery by all the other G7 countries and Britain's trade recovery has been more or less flat (Born et al., 2019).

So, the UK fell behind in its trade intensity. One of the other things that can be measured is the drop off in the number of trade relationships between smaller companies in the UK and their foreign counterparts (Vandenbussche et al., 2022) - and that's important because it tells something about trade patterns, but also tells something about the way that smaller companies in the UK used to grow by gradually expanding their business, selling products into the European single market, fact that is simply not happening anymore.

The London School of Economics has calculated that the number of relationships between the UK and the EU fell by about a third in the first six months after the Trade and Cooperation Agreement came into force. The Resolution Foundation has calculated that the long run hit to wages will be 470 pounds per person. Brexit has increased bureaucracy. Since 2016, business investment has been growing in all other G7 countries, but not in the UK. For a very long time, business investment was an upward curve in the UK, but since 2016 in particular and the Brexit vote, the upward curve became flat (Green et al., 2022).

This fact is really worrying for the future of UK economy because in the end, investment drives the capital and the ability for economies to grow into the future. There might be a small effect that the UK is a more service sector driven economy than others. But France is just as much of a service sector economy as the UK. Germany is also a big manufacturing economy as the UK. But there has been much more business investment in France and Germany since 2016. Inevitably business investment doesn't grow as strongly, fact that can

be seen in all areas, in prices, in terms of investment, and in terms of trade. The UK is pretty close to the bottom of the league table in terms of the forecast for economic growth, particularly in 2023. So, the UK essentially sees no growth at all. And the only country that was worse than the UK was Russia, because of its economic sanctions.

Released from EU trading and "free movement" rules, the UK has been introducing its own policies on trade and immigration — as the EU can now do regarding British nationals (Burrell et al., 2019). Other changes affect people, travel and business. EU nationals already living in the UK and Britons resident on the continent have the right to remain — but the registration process and questions over documentation have caused uncertainty for some.

The UK's departure from the EU's Single Market and Customs Union has brought significant disruption to trade, particularly to UK exports to the EU, due to new border rules and red tape (McGrattan et al., 2020). In the UK, an exodus of European workers and tighter immigration rules have contributed to a shortage of people to fill jobs (Zontini et al., 2022).

However, the impact of Brexit on shortages has at times been difficult to distinguish from that of the coronavirus pandemic. As of January 2022, the UK has begun introducing some import controls on EU goods, having repeatedly delayed imposing border checks, citing supply chain issues.

The Brexiteer notion of a Brexit dividend is often based around the idea that the UK can have a more apprehensive economy, because of the fact it can deregulate, creating a separate regulatory system (Brakman et al., 2018). What is the negative part in this aspect? For example, the chemical industry of UK spent 500mn pounds over the last decade registering their chemicals in the European Union, which gave them access to the British market and 27 other countries. They're now having to re-register all of those chemicals for a separate UK register at a cost now estimated by the government at 2bn pounds (Breinlich et al., 2022). So, the industries have to spend billions of pounds duplicating a regime that already existed in the EU, with extra costs, bureaucracy and consistent work.

After the Brexit, the UK has faced a recruitment crisis. Areas like construction, hospitality, social care, agriculture. Some people would argue that it was better to cut off the supply of cheap European Union labour force that was able to come across to work in the UK under free movement. The idea eventually is that companies will invest more in machinery and other ways to enhance productivity to compensate (Zontini et al., 2022). But it's certainly caused some disruption in the short-term. And the idea that the British government was putting forward in 2021 that this was all part of the plan to develop a high-skilled, high-wage economy was problematic at the time and is problematic today.

So, the end of free movement means that the economy is reshaped. For some industries, like hospitality and construction, or soft fruit growing, that creates a painful period of adjustment because those industries were predicated on the idea that there would be free movement.

There have been some trade deals, but they've mainly been with countries that UK already had a trade deal with through the European Union. Australia really is the only one exception to that. Signing a free trade agreement with New Zealand or Australia has ups and downs on the UK economy, and is probably very, very marginally positive. But it's nothing like losing a free trade agreement and losing the frictionless trade with the EU, which is the biggest trading partner and geographically, the closest. According to the UK Government's estimates, UK loses 4% of GDP because of Brexit, and gains 0.08% of GDP because of the trade deal with Australia (Wachowiak, et al., 2022).

All the attempts to lay out exactly what Brexit advantages of disadvantages mean have thus far been totally ambiguous, both on the economic regulatory front, or the deregulatory front.

II. The BREXIT effects on the British legal system

The most immediate impact of Brexit on the UK legal system has been the repeal of the European Communities Act 1972, which was the primary legal basis for the UK's membership of the European Union. This repeal has resulted in the UK no longer being bound by EU laws, which could have major implications for the UK legal system.

The UK government has introduced the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2020 to ensure a smooth transition away from the EU and to protect existing EU law. This Act provides for the 'grandfathering' (Poderati, 2021) of existing EU law into UK law, meaning that all existing EU law will remain in place until such time as the UK government decides to repeal or amend it.

However, there are some areas where the UK government has decided to take a different approach, such as the introduction of the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020, which seeks to replace existing EU law on free movement with a new UK immigration system.

The impact of Brexit on businesses and individuals will depend on the particular laws that are affected. For example, businesses that have relied on freedom of movement to employ EU citizens may face new restrictions and costs, while individuals may have to apply for visas or residence permits to remain in the UK. In addition, businesses and individuals may have to adjust to changes in the UK legal system that result from the repeal of the European Communities Act 1972 (Hix et al., 2022). These changes could include new regulations, new standards of compliance and new methods for dispute resolution (Coutts, 2018).

The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (EU) has had a significant effect on employment and immigration in the UK. The UK's withdrawal from the EU, commonly known as 'Brexit', has had complex implications on the UK's labor market, particularly in regards to immigration. The UK's departure from the EU has also caused many employers to rethink their recruitment strategies in order to remain compliant with the UK's new immigration laws.

The most immediate effect of Brexit on the UK's labor market was a decrease in the number of EU nationals working in the UK. Since the Brexit referendum in 2016, the number of EU nationals working in the UK has decreased by around 500,000 (Lloyd, 2019). The decrease in EU nationals has had a direct effect on certain sectors, such as hospitality and construction, which have traditionally relied heavily on EU nationals. This decrease in employment has also caused a decrease in economic productivity in the UK, as employers have had to spend more time and money recruiting and training new workers.

In addition to the decrease in EU nationals working in the UK, Brexit has also had a significant effect on the UK's immigration laws. The UK's new immigration system, which came into effect in 2021, requires employers to apply for a sponsor license in order to recruit non-EU nationals (Zontini et al., 2022). This has made it more difficult and expensive for employers to recruit workers from outside the EU, leading to increased competition for jobs. Furthermore, the UK government has introduced a minimum salary threshold for skilled non-EU workers, which has further restricted the number of non-EU workers that employers can recruit.

Overall, the effects of Brexit on the UK's employment and immigration are complex and far-reaching. By leaving the EU, the UK has lost access to its largest source of migrant labor and has had to introduce new immigration laws which have made it more difficult and expensive for employers to recruit from outside the EU. This has had a significant effect on the UK's labor market, leading to decreased economic productivity and increased competition for jobs. As the UK continues to adjust to life outside the EU, it remains to be seen how the effects of Brexit on the UK's employment and immigration will continue to shape the UK's labor market.

Also, Brexit has created a direct impact on the UK's laws. The UK is no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, which previously had the power to overrule domestic UK laws. As a result, the UK Supreme Court is now the highest court in the land, and legal disputes will be resolved according to UK law only. This has led to a significant increase in legal uncertainty, as the UK no longer has access to the expertise and guidance of the European Court of Justice (Gee, 2016).

In addition, the UK's withdrawal from the EU has had an indirect effect on UK law. For example, the UK is no longer bound by the EU's regulations, which means that UK businesses may be subject to different rules and regulations than those in other EU countries. This could have a significant impact on the UK's economy, as businesses may need to adjust their operations in order to comply with new laws.

Finally, Brexit has had an impact on the UK's trade laws. As the UK is no longer part of the EU's single market, businesses may now face increased tariffs and other trade barriers when trading with EU countries. This could have a negative effect on the UK's economy, as businesses may be forced to pay more for goods and services imported from the EU.

III. The BREXIT effects on the British social and geo-political system

The most immediate impact of Brexit on the UK's international relations was its strained relationship with the EU. While the UK had been an integral part of the EU for over four decades, leaving the union meant the UK had to renegotiate its relationship with the other 27 member countries in order to secure a trade deal. This process has been complicated and drawn out, and has led to increased tensions between the UK and the EU.

Brexit has also had a significant effect on the UK's relationship with other countries around the world. As the UK is no longer part of the EU, it has had to negotiate its own trade deals with other countries. This has been especially difficult for the UK, as it has had to compete with the larger, more powerful EU in order to secure favorable terms. As a result, the UK has had to make some difficult decisions and compromise on certain issues in order to secure deals with other countries.

The UK's international relations have also been affected by Brexit in terms of security and defense. As the UK is no longer part of the EU, it has had to look for alternative ways to ensure its security and defense (Pettifor, 2017). This has resulted in the UK strengthening its ties with other countries, such as the United States and NATO, and has also led to increased cooperation with non-EU countries, such as Turkey and Japan (Sweeney et al., 2022).

Finally, Brexit has had a major impact on the UK's international standing. The UK's decision to leave the EU has been met with criticism from other countries and international organizations, and has led to some questioning the UK's commitment to international cooperation (Chen et al., 2018). This has tarnished the UK's reputation as a reliable and responsible partner, and has led to a decrease in its influence and status on the world stage.

III.1. Thoughts and opinions from EU officials and EU Member States

EU officials have expressed a range of opinions on Brexit, from regret to disappointment to optimism. Some have suggested that the UK's exit from the EU is a tragedy, while others have lauded the decision as a sign of the strength of democracy.

In the immediate aftermath of the referendum, European Council President Donald Tusk said that the EU "will remain determined and united" in the face of the Brexit vote. He called for the UK to remain a "close partner" of the EU, and for the other 27 member states to remain as "close friends" (Chan et al., 2020). Many EU leaders have also expressed regret at the result of the referendum. French President Francois Hollande said that the vote was "a sad day" for the EU; German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that the result was "a sad day for Europe" and urged the remaining EU member states to "stay together" (Chan et al., 2020). At the same time, some EU officials have expressed optimism about the Brexit vote. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that the EU should use the Brexit vote as an opportunity to "re-energize" the EU project, and urged the remaining member states to "start a new chapter" in the history of the union.

Socially, the effects of Brexit have been mixed. On the one hand, some have argued that Brexit has created a sense of national unity in the UK, with people from different backgrounds coming together to make their voices heard. On the other hand, Brexit has also created divisions, with some feeling that they have been 'left behind' or 'ignored' by the government. In addition, the UK's withdrawal from the EU has raised questions about the rights of EU citizens living in the UK, and the status of the Irish border.

Politically, Brexit has had a profound effect on the UK. The UK's decision to leave the EU has caused tensions between the UK's four nations. In England and Wales, Brexit has been a divisive issue, with the majority of people voting to leave the EU in 2016. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the majority of people voted to remain in the EU. This has led to a deep political divide (Jurado et al. 2022) between the four nations, with the Scottish and Northern Irish governments expressing their opposition to Brexit.

The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (EU) has created a great deal of uncertainty and debate across the continent (Ahmad et al., 2020). The opinions of other EU member states on Brexit vary significantly, depending on each country's particular interests and political leanings. Generally speaking, the opinions of EU member states can be divided into three main categories: those that are largely supportive of the UK's decision to leave, those that are largely opposed, and those that are neutral or ambivalent.

At the time of the Brexit referendum in 2016, many EU member states were largely supportive of the UK's decision to leave, viewing it as an opportunity to reform the union and make it more effective and efficient. For example, some eastern European countries such as Poland and Hungary saw Brexit as a chance to reduce the influence of western European countries such as France and Germany. Similarly, the Netherlands and Denmark welcomed the UK's departure, believing that it would create a more level playing field in terms of economic competition within the EU.

On the other hand, many EU member states were strongly opposed to the UK leaving the union. France and Germany were particularly vocal in their criticism of Brexit, arguing that it would have a damaging effect on the EU's economy, security and global standing. Other countries such as Spain, Italy and Belgium also expressed their opposition to the UK's departure, with some even warning of the potential for economic and political chaos in the wake of Brexit.

Finally, there are a number of EU member states that have remained largely neutral or ambivalent in their opinions of Brexit. These countries, including Sweden, Finland and

Austria, have avoided making any significant statements on the issue and have instead taken a wait-and-see approach. Similarly, some countries such as Ireland and Lithuania have acknowledged the potential risks of Brexit, but have also expressed cautious optimism that the UK and the EU can still reach an agreement that is mutually beneficial.

III.2. Thoughts and opinions from UK Government and British people

The UK government and Parliament are in a state of flux regarding Brexit and its implications. Since the 2016 referendum, there has been a range of opinions from government and parliamentary officials on the subject.

For some, Brexit is seen as an opportunity to take back control of the UK's relationship with the European Union (EU). This includes control over the laws and regulations it must abide by, and a chance to craft a new trade agreement that works in the UK's favor. These officials see Brexit as a chance to make the UK a more independent and prosperous country.

Others are more cautious and are wary of the potential economic and political consequences of leaving the EU. They fear that the UK will lose access to the single market, which could hurt its ability to trade with other EU countries and increase the cost of goods. They also worry that Brexit could lead to a disruption in the UK's relationship with its European neighbors, as well as a weakening of the UK's influence in the world (de Ville et al., 2019).

Still, other officials are more pragmatic and see Brexit as an opportunity to negotiate a better deal for the UK. They see it as a chance to negotiate a trade agreement that works in the UK's favor, as well as one that is in line with the UK's values and interests. These officials also recognize that the UK must remain part of the EU to ensure its economic and political stability, and are open to finding a solution that works for both sides.

As the debate over Brexit continues, it is clear that the UK government and Parliament are divided on the issue. Some see Brexit as an opportunity to take back control and craft a better deal for the UK, while others are more cautious and fearful of the potential consequences. However, despite their differences, it is clear that all government and parliamentary officials agree that the UK must remain part of the EU in order to ensure its economic and political stability.

The Brexit vote has been a major source of concern for EU officials. The result of the referendum has left the European Union in a period of uncertainty, and many are unsure of what the future holds.

The British people are divided when it comes to their opinions about Brexit: on one side, there are those who believe that the UK should remain a part of the European Union, citing the economic benefits that come with being a member state, such as access to the single market and the ability to travel freely throughout Europe; on the other side, there are those who believe that Brexit is the best course of action for the UK, as it will allow the country to take back control of its own laws, borders, and economy (Jolley et al., 2022).

The Brexit referendum in 2016 resulted in a slim majority of the British people voting to leave the European Union. Since then, opinions have become more divided as the negotiations between the UK and the EU have become more complex and drawn out. Those who are in favour of Brexit argue that the UK should take back its sovereignty and control of its borders, and that the economic benefits of the single market are outweighed by the burden of EU regulations (Crafts, 2022). They also claim that leaving the EU would allow the UK to negotiate better trade deals with other countries around the world.

On the other side, those who are against Brexit argue that the UK is stronger and more prosperous as an EU member. They cite the fact that the UK has access to the single market and the fact that the UK would be worse off economically if it left the EU, as it would no longer benefit from the free trade agreements it currently has with other EU member states (Freeman et al., 2022). They also point out the potential for disruption to the UK's economy, with the risk of job losses, a drop in the value of the pound, and a decrease in foreign investment in the UK (Douch et al., 2022).

Ultimately, the future of Brexit is still uncertain. The British people remain divided on the issue, and it is likely that the debate will continue well into the future. It is clear, however, that Brexit is one of the most divisive issues in British politics today, and it is unlikely that the debate will be settled any time soon.

Conclusions

Brexit, the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU), has had far-reaching consequences on England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The economic, social, and political effects of Brexit have been felt across the UK, and the implications of the UK's decision to leave the EU are still being felt (Baldini et al., 2023).

Economically, Brexit has had a significant impact on the UK. The UK economy has experienced a decline in growth since the referendum in 2016, with growth slowing in both 2017 and 2018. Inflation has risen, and the value of the pound has fallen. This has led to an increase in prices for imports and a decrease in purchasing power for UK consumers. Furthermore, the uncertainty surrounding Brexit has caused businesses to delay investments, resulting in lower business confidence and reduced job creation (Tarek et al., 2020).

Overall, Brexit has had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on the UK's legal system. The UK's withdrawal from the EU has created a significant amount of legal uncertainty, as the UK is no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice. In addition, the UK's withdrawal from the EU has created new rules and regulations which businesses must now comply with. Finally, Brexit has had an impact on the UK's trade laws, as businesses may now be subject to increased tariffs and other trade barriers (Miller, 2016). All of these effects of Brexit on the UK's legal system have the potential to have a significant impact on the UK economy in the future.

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ROMANIAN-HUNGARIAN CROSS BORDER COOPERATION AND THE IMPACT ON TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTION BUILDING AND EU FUND ABSORPTION

*POLGÁR István**

Abstract. *The border region is the collision point of cultures, religions, languages, administrations, legislations and economic influences. All these factors have substantial contribution to the development of the phenomenon called cross-border cooperation.*

The issue of cross-border cooperation in general goes beyond geographical, economic and legal approaches. If we intend to treat the phenomenon from a specific point of view, we will find ambiguities and uncertainties regarding the role and functioning of some institutions in the process of cross-border cooperation and partnerships. In the process of EU-integration the Hungarian-Romanian state border is becoming even more permeable.

The growing permeability of the European borders contributes to the unification of the economic potentials of the neighbouring areas supplying benefits on regional and local level. The efficiency of cross-border cooperation depends on the coordination of all actors involved in this process, but also on the cooperation implemented at all levels, doubled by the existence of an adequate legal framework.

The study aims to realize an inventory of the cooperation activities with had an impact on transnational institution building amongst the local governance apparatus in Bihor County in the process of cross-border cooperation in the development period 2014-2020.

Keywords: *cross border, region, cooperation, governance, European*

Several times during the last century in Europe, state borders became real insurmountable barriers not only for enemies, but also for their own citizens. This character of the borders created rather the role of elements that prevented the emergence of common activities and values. Although from a strategic point of view, strictly from the perspective of border regions, they were directly interested in developing a strategy based on cooperation with neighboring regions. Nevertheless, the specificity of Europe is given not only by the diversity of cultural and historical realities, but also by the existence of numerous borders between states (Ricq, 2000: 8-15).

The Romanian-Hungarian border, drawn at the end of the peace process that followed the First World War, constituted from the beginning, and continues to this day, a controversial subject in the historical research of the two neighboring countries.

The frontier has gone through allot of changes in terms of understanding the space of a culture, race, religion, city or nation. Growing from physical walls, intense militarized areas to a formal understanding of regions with no physical boundaries or restrictions of any kind, the frontier or the border, has been an area of the utmost importance to the

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different branches of science. The border region is the collision point of cultures, religions, languages, administrations, legislations and economic influences. All these factors have substantial contribution to the development of the phenomenon called cross-border cooperation. The hard frontier, which in the view of the European institutions would ensure the protection of its citizens, has thus become primarily the responsibility of the new members of the European Union (Bărbulescu, Brie, Toderas, 2016: 22-26). Nowadays almost a third of EU citizens live and work in Europe's border regions. The management and perception of these borders have both a direct and an indirect impact on their lives. People living in border regions often face specific challenges, either in finding a job or having access to healthcare and other public services, or in terms of daily commuting and overcoming administrative problems (European Committee of the Regions, 2021: 3/11).

Cooperation processes from border regions nowadays are considered as a separate transnational policy field. It is because its constitutive characteristics and functionalities in addition to its property as a sub-system of national and regional governance are more and more also determined by the European level. If we check the European integration process implemented in the past 20 years, we can observe that cross border cooperation and cross border governance became an important objective of European Policies (Beck 2011:2).

In the process of EU-integration the Hungarian-Romanian state border is becoming even more permeable as well. Despite the fact, that Romania is not member of the Schengen Agreement, crossing the borderline between the two neighbouring countries is much easier than a few years earlier. The growing permeability of the European borders contributes to the unification of the economic potentials of the neighbouring areas supplying benefits on regional and local level.

Even if Hungary joined the European Union on 1 May 2004 and Romania on 1 January 2007, by the common European destiny of the two states, they are obliged to achieve a strengthened partnership focused on increasing their welfare and harmonious economic development (Popoviciu, 2013:25-27).

The border between Romania and Hungary has a total length of 448 km, of which 415.9 km land and 32.1 km river, the Mures, Cris, Someş rivers (National Institute of Statistics, 2011;11). On the Romanian side there are four counties, Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiş, and on the Hungarian side there are Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád. All the 8 counties are classified as NUTS III and are integrated in 4 regions of level NUTS II¹. The Romanian Hungarian Border covers the South-Eastern and Eastern part of Hungary and the North-Western and Western part of Romania. The eight counties have a total surface of 50,454 km², of which 43.7% Hungarian and 56.3% Romanian area. The Hungarian territory is 23.7% of the total surface of Hungary, and the Romanian part is 11.9% of Romania. The total population in 2004 was more than 4 million, of which slightly less than half lives in Hungary, and slightly more than half lives in Romania (HURO-CBC Programme, 2022).

¹ The counties Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar belong to Észak-Alföld Region; the counties Békés and Csongrád are part of Dél-Alföld Region; counties Arad and Timiş belong to West Region; counties Satu Mare and Bihor are part of the North-West Region. For further details it can be seen Eurostat, Regions in the European Union, Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics, NUTS 2006 /EU-27, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-07-020/EN/KS-RA-07-020-EN.PDF, accessed in December 19, 2022



Map no. 1: The eligible area of the Romanian-Hungarian Cross Border Cooperation Programme

Source: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/en/eligible-area/>

Cross-border cooperation. Conceptual and legal background

European cross-border cooperation aims to approach challenges, which are jointly identified and solved in border regions. Also, it proposes to exploit untapped growth potential of border areas, through the cooperation process, for a harmonious development of the whole European Union.

Cross-border cooperation agreements and partnerships have recently become increasingly important in the context of the European Union's cooperation policies for Member States or for the European Neighborhood Policy.

Cross-border cooperation can be defined in relation with direct collaboration between neighboring regions, found along a border, regardless of the level at which this partnership is achieved.

Cooperation can be achieved in all areas, between all national, regional and local authorities, involving all actors. Moreover, in the European Treaties the need to ensure a harmonious development, reducing the development gap between different European regions or states it is described as a priority.

Regional and cross-border cooperation operates with the principle of subsidiarity, of "reallocation of authority" from the state level to the administrative-territorial units situated in the border areas having the main goal to balance regional imbalances. Thus, cross-border cooperation agreements are a way to promote good neighborliness, stimulate balanced economic development and social stability by capitalizing on local and regional resources in joint projects (Dicharry, Hamm, 2019:3-5).

The efficiency, reliability, authenticity and legitimacy of the European construction process and of the European integration process is also linked to the success of cross-border cooperation.

The basic principle of cross-border cooperation is the creation of a contractual space in border areas in order to find common solutions to similar problems. It is important that state entities must not ignore the needs of their peripheral communities, the particularity and specificity of the neighborhood problems (Ricq, 2000: 19-23).

Cross-border cooperation is like a classic type of mutual cooperation between two neighboring border regions. It involves states, regions, administrative units at different levels and social groups, covering all areas of daily life and participating in the development of common programs, priorities and actions. Usually cross-border cooperation is favored by the cultural, ethno-linguistic and the historical heritage of the area, and by the presence of the national minorities. For example, we can mention the Hungarian community from Romania, the common ethno-linguistic heritage of the population, are favorable elements in the process of cross-border cooperation.

It should also be noted that cross-border cooperation between administrative-territorial units from Romania's border areas depended and depends on the degree of openness allowed by the political regime, the standard of living and the cultural, historical and ethnic affinities of the neighboring countries.

Over the time, cooperation at the European borders passed through a process of change from the perspective of the European policies. For the internal borders of the EU the Cohesion Policy was developed and for the external borders, the European Neighborhood Policy was responsible (Bărbulescu, 2015:305-310). The Cohesion Policy was meant to reduce the gaps between the more developed and less developed regions from the Member States. While the European Neighborhood Policy it is supposed to bring a new approach to the relations between the European Union and its neighbors. These relations should be better and superior to the traditional relations, based on simple cooperation (Bărbulescu, 2015:311-320).

Cross-border cooperation in Europe is getting more and more important. The disappearance of most of the internal borders and the creation of the European internal market pushed the European border regions to a central role in the European integration process (Wassenber/Beck, 2011:7-8).

The efficiency of cross-border cooperation depends on the coordination of all actors involved in this process, but also on the cooperation implemented at all levels, doubled by the existence of an adequate legal framework. Malfunction at one of the levels can lead to the failure of the whole process.

Analyzing the specialty literature, we can find several descriptions and explanations about the functional task-focus, practical cross-border cooperation approaches in Europe. We choose the explanation of Prof. Beck, who explains that these are covering a wide range of material fields of action. Depending on the respective territorial context, these cover classical fields of regional development, such as spatial - and urban development planning, economic development, research and development, transport etc., specific approaches of cooperation in sectoral policy areas health, social security, education and training, science and research, environment, conservation and tourism, etc. or areas of public services of general interest (Beck, 2017:3-4)

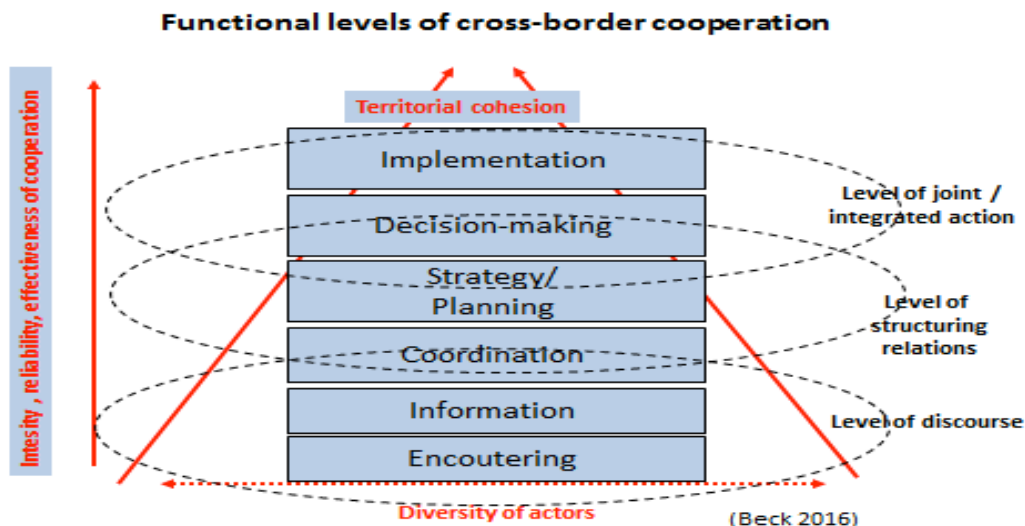


Figure 1. *Functional levels of cross-border cooperation*

Source: Joachim Beck, Cross-border cooperation and the challenge of transnational institution-building – the example of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, in RECERC no.1 Spécial, 2017, p. 3, available at <http://recerc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/R9beck.pdf>

Therefore, cross-border cooperation is no longer the strict prerogative of the member states as international actors. An important role in this process is attributed to the local and regional administrative structures from the border areas. These structures can create development associations or transnational corporations which are able to answer the specific challenges and these can promote a proper economic and political environment (Săraaru, 2011:88).

To realize a successful cross-border partnership, it is necessary to find the right partner on the other side of the border and to cooperate with it on an equal basis. Also, it is important that cooperation must respect the interests of each party involved. The European Union encourages and stimulates the development of partnerships for cross-border cooperation (Polgár, 2021: 393-395).

In Europe the reality shows that the cross-border cooperation process is dominated by public actors, private actors or societal actors are so present. This can be understandable since cross border cooperation is considered as a public affair which is managed by state and local actors.

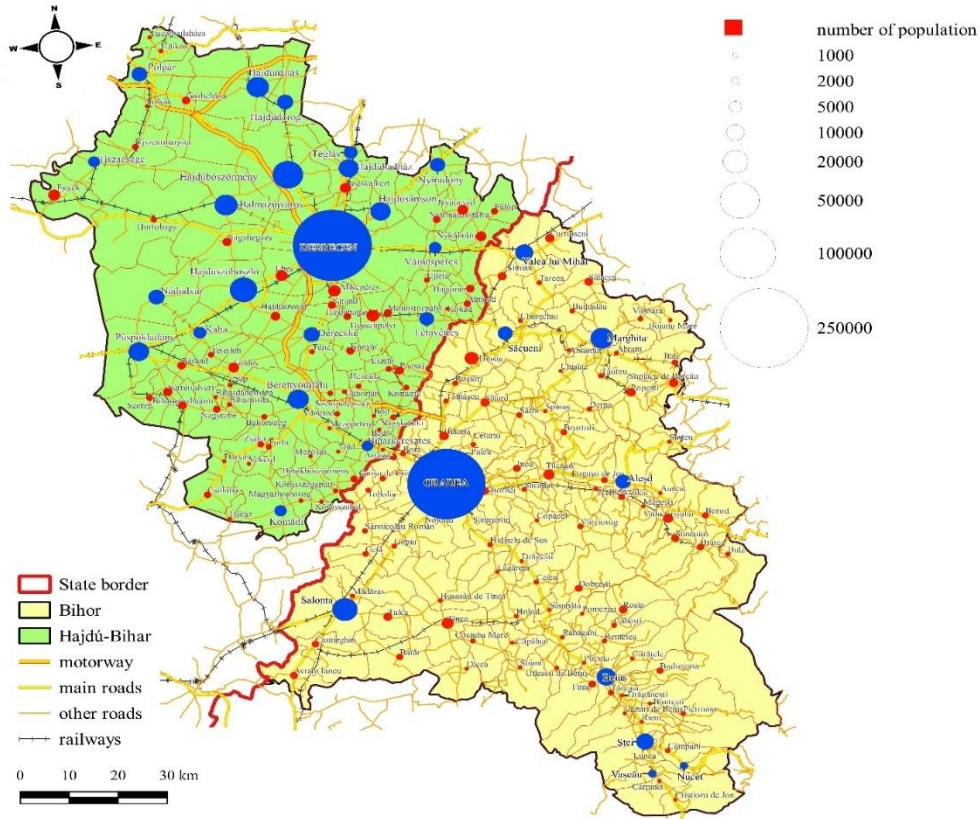
On the other hand, cross-border cooperation classically is focusing on policy-areas which are typically allocated to the core competence of public tasks in the participating countries: For the development of cross border approaches in policy-fields such as spatial planning, environmental protection, public transport, education, research and innovation, or the public safety and order, first of all public, and to a large extent even only State actors are responsible. In addition, cross border projects often require substantial financial investments in the form of national and regional financing (Beck, 2017:3-4).

At present, cross-border cooperation has proven to be the most effective tool for overcoming the barrier effect and the role of border separation and for strengthening the territorial cohesion of border regions.

Particularities and areas of cross-border cooperation in the field of territorial governance structures

Governance is today one of the central concepts being discussed in the practical and theoretical field of cross border cooperation too. However, the definition of the term governance is quite often not clear in its use. If we would like to define governance, first we should focus on a more generic definition. In this context governance refers simply to the different mechanisms which generate order within a given population of actors in a specific policy field (Mayntz 2009: 9). This definition is valid if it is focusing on a unilateral adaption, like a market, command and obedience which create the hierarchy, negotiation and functional interaction, what will create the networks or through a common orientation of behavior based on generalized practices of a society, which include the so-called norms and values (Beck, 2017:6-7).

The fall of communism brings into broad day light, for the first time in decades, the concept of diversifying the one 's offer and possibilities in obtaining the usual necessities. In the case of Bihor county (north-western part of Romania) and its neighbouring Hungarian county Hajdú-Bihar, the frontiers begin to lose their attribute as impenetrable and dangerous physical barriers towards a somewhat better living and a more liberal society (Brie, 2010:265-280).



Map no. 2. The border area and the Bihor - Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion

Source: Mircea Brie, Mirela Marcu, Polgar Istvan, *Ghid pentru Dezvoltarea Cooperarilor Internationale al Judetului Bihor*, Oradea, 2022, p. 31

In the 2014-2020 programming period, the INTERREG program made step forward from the status of a “mainstream program”, held in the previous programming period, in the

framework of the European structural policy. In this period, the program is characterized by a stronger thematic focus in programming as well as a more intensive impact orientation when choosing and implementing new cross-border projects (Beck, 2011:121-148).

If we analyze the objectives of the program from the functional task-focus point of view, we can observe that the practical cross-border cooperation approaches in Europe are focusing on a wide range of domains and fields of action. Depending on the respective territorial context, these cover classical fields of regional development, specific approaches of cooperation in sectorial policy areas or areas of public services of general interest (Beck, 2017: 8-9).

In the last 15 years, in Central and Eastern Europe there has been a significant development regarding the management of problem solving, which appear and target the cross-border cooperation areas.

Although there is an institutional framework at Community level, which is present in the Member States through different implemented EU policies and programs, the level and the forms of cooperation between territorial governance structures differ from state to state (D. Badulescu, A. Badulescu, Bucur, 2015: p. 559 – 578).

There are Member States that built and developed relations for a stable cross-border cooperation at institutional level. On the other side, there are states, which are still guided by a general skepticism regarding cross-border cooperation between territorial governance structures. Another factor, which makes cooperation difficult, is the lack of communication between the actors (Polgár, 2021: 398-400).

The cross-border cooperation process will generate significant and effective results only if the actors involved set common goals and allocate the necessary resources.

In the following, we propose a synthesis of all contracted projects by public institutions from Romania, Bihor County, from the eligibility area of the Romania-Hungary cross-border cooperation program, in the period 2014-2020. The source of the presented data is the web archive of the INTERREG, Romania-Hungary Cross border cooperation program and a research article published by the author in the Journal of Romanian Literary Studies nr. 25/2021.

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
1.	ROHU68	Creating a joint tourist destination in the crossborder area of Lugașu de Jos and Komádi, through cross-border protection of natural heritage values along the Crișul Repede Valley	PRO-CRV	Comuna Lugașu de Jos	Komádi Városi Önkormányzat	904,905.47	769,169.64
					Asociația "Pro Valea Crișului Repede – Pro Sebes Koros Volgy"		
2.	ROHU126	Nature preservation, protection and promotion on both sides of the Romainian-	PRONATURE	Consiliul Județean Bihor	Primaria Vadu Crișului	2,500,000.00	2,125,000.00
					Asociația Centrul pentru arii protejate și dezvoltare durabilă Bihor		

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
		Hungarian border			Kőrösszegapáti Nagyközségi Önkormányzat		
3.	ROHU48	Development of an integrated response capacity to cross-border emergency situations	DIRCCES	Town of Alesd	Sinteu Comune Szarvas Town Self Government	485,400.00	399,532.74
4.	ROHU14	Conservation, protection and promotion of the natural values from the Salonta-Békéscsaba crossborder area	The nature corner	Municipiul Salonta	Körösök Völgye Natúrpark Egyesület Asociația Milvus Transilvania Vest Békés Város Önkormányzata	2,997,387.86	2,547,779.68
5.	ROHU53	Conservation and protection of the cross border natural heritage of Bihor - Hajdú-Bihar counties	Na-Tu-Re	Comuna Sinmartin	Asociația Pescarilor Sportivi Aqua Crisius Fundatia pentru cultura si educatie ecologista Ecotop Zold Kor -a Fold Baratai Magyarország Tagja	2,835,216.60	2,409,934.10
6.	ROHU115	From One Bridge to another - De la un pod la altul – Hídtől hídig	FOBTA	Comuna Sălacea	Hortobágy Község Önkormányzata	1,611,547.26	1,369,815.16

Chart no. 1: List of contracted projects by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County as Lead Partner, First Open Call - December 2019

Source: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Contracted-projects-12.12.2019.pdf>

Based on the information obtained from the Interreg RO-HU date base, after the first open call in December 2019 a total number of 21 projects were contracted. From the 21 contracted projects, there are 6 projects contracted as Lead Partner, by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County.

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
1.	ROHU179	Administrative bridge between towns in the Romania - Hungary cross border region	ABBTROHU	Orasul Alesd	Comuna Sinteu Orasul Marghita Szarvas Varos Onkormanyzata Szarvas Town Self-Government Berettyoujfalu Varos Onkormanyzata/Berettyoujfalu Town Self-Government	362,500.00	308,125.00

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
2.	ROHU183	SAFE BORDER, SAFER LIFE SAFE BOR	SAFE BOR	Institutia Prefectului-judetul Bihor	Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Rendőrfőkapitányság/Hajdú-Bihar County police	287,904.85	244,719.12
					Inspectoratul Teritorial al Politiei de Frontiera Oradea		
					Inspectoratul de Politie Judetean Bihor		
3.	ROHU200	Crossborder events for crossborder citizens	CCC	Toboliu Commune	Körösnagyharsány Local Self Government	77,000.00	65,450.00
					Girisu de Cris Commune		
					Nojorid Commune		
4.	ROHU265	Let's Celebrate our Traditions Together	TOGETHER	COMUNA CETARIU	KABA Város Önkormányzat - KABA City Local Government	70,400.00	59,840.00
5.	ROHU271	The Minority Question in the ROHU crossborder area: Slovak Culture, Tradition and History without Borders	SCTH	Comuna Sinteu	Csabai Szlovákok Szervezete/Organization of Slovaks from Csaba	71,500.00	60,775.00
6.	ROHU280	Cultural Cooperation among Citizens from the Salonta-Gyula Cross-border Area Co-cultured	Co-cultured	The Municipality of Salonta	Gyula town	80,000.00	68,000.00
7.	ROHU283	Sustainable cross-border cooperation for citizens between Marghita and Berettyóújfalu municipalities	CCC_MB	Municipiul Marghita	Berettyó Cultural Center	80,000.00	68,000.00
8.	ROHU289	Connecting the traditions of the Crisul Repede Valley	CCRV	Comuna Vadu Crişului	Körösszegapáti Nagyközségi Önkormányzat - Körösszegapáti Local Government	79,999.00	67,999.15
9.	ROHU198	Open Doors for Culture and Tradition in Europe	ODCTEU	Town of Alesd	Kaba Town Self-Government	74,055.00	62,946.75
10.	ROHU319	Joint program for cross - border cooperation between young people	4 YOUTH	Paleu Commune	Hosszúpályi Commune	200,600.00	170,510.00
					Cetaiu Commune Kaba town		

Chart no. 2: List of contracted projects by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County as Lead Partner, Second Open Call – March 2021

Source: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Signed-contracts-2nd-open-call-website-19.03.2021.pdf>

In the second open call a total of 37 projects were contracted. There was a number of 10 projects contracted as Lead Partner, by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County.

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
1.	ROHU425	Joint Development of Human Resources in CrossBorder AreaJoint Development of Human Resources in Cross-Border Area	HRArea UAT	UAT Comuna Paleu	Derecske Város Önkormányzata	1,337,577.8	1,136,941.13
					Asociatia Pro Cariere		
					Asociatia de Dezvoltare Intercomunitara Zona Metropolitana Oradea		
2.	ROHU-421	Improve employment in Bihor County, Oradea and Hajduboszormeny through the development of the local potential infrastructures	CBC-EMPLOYMENT	Municipality of Oradea	Development Agency of Bihor County	7,507,873.22	2,549,531.04
					Local Government of Hajduboszormeny City		
					County Agency for Employment Bihor		
3.	ROHU-426	Support to the local economy by encouraging alternative use of agricultural products	ALTERAGRI	Directia pentru Agricultura Judeteana Bihor	Asociatia „TRANSILVANIA TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER”	1,679,320.00	1,427,422.00
					Oficiul de Studii Pedologice si Agrochimice Bihor		
					Science for Environment Public Foundation		
4.	ROHU-359	Promoting an integrated approach regarding the improving of the employment rate and business environment at the level of Marghita and Beretyoujfalu microregions	CROSSLOCALDEV	Marghita Municipality	Municipality of Berettyóújfalu	2,615,165.66	2,222,890.81

Chart no. 3: List of contracted projects by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County as Lead Partner, Third Open Call – June 2021

Source: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Signed-contracts-Open-call-3-23.06.2021.pdf>

In the third open call a total of 31 projects were contracted. There was a number of 4 projects contracted as Lead Partner, by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County.

Based on the data presented in the three charts, we can affirm that even though the number of territorial government structures present in the list of beneficiary/lead partners is

fluctuating, still these are playing a very important role in the implementation of the cross-border programs.

Conclusions

The border region is the collision point of cultures, religions, languages, administrations, legislations and economic influences. All these factors have substantial contribution to the development of the phenomenon called cross-border cooperation.

The issue of cross-border cooperation in general goes beyond geographical, economic and legal approaches. If we intend to treat the phenomenon from a specific point of view, we will find ambiguities and uncertainties regarding the role and functioning of some institutions in the process of cross-border cooperation and partnerships.

Therefore, the full analysis of the cross-border cooperation process cannot be done only if we also evaluate the effects produced by the institutions in the local governance sector and their political dimension.

At present, cross-border cooperation has proven to be the most effective tool for overcoming the barrier effect and the role of border separation and for strengthening the territorial cohesion of border regions.

Cross-border cooperation can be defined in relation with direct collaboration between neighboring regions, found along a border, regardless of the level at which this partnership is achieved. Cooperation can be achieved in all areas, between all national, regional and local authorities, involving all actors.

Cross-border cooperation is no longer the strict prerogative of the member states as international actors. An important role in this process is attributed to the local and regional administrative structures from the border areas. These structures can create development associations or transnational corporations which are able to answer the specific challenges and these can promote a proper economic and political environment.

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II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE

Cristina EJOVA ⇔ *The Activity of the Anti-Terrorism Center of the Republic of Moldova in the Field of Combating and Preventing Terrorism*

Adrian Ionuț BOGDAN ⇔ *The Black Sea: A Geopolitical Space of Russian Thalassocratic Ambitions*

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THE ACTIVITY OF THE ANTI-TERRORISM CENTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA IN THE FIELD OF COMBATING AND PREVENTING TERRORISM

*Cristina EJOVA**

Abstract. *An important issue in the field of combating terrorism is the formation of an appropriate regulatory framework and the existence of an effective system of counteraction at the national and international levels. Many states have adopted special laws regarding the fight against terrorism; most countries long ago came to the conclusion that the fight against terrorism must be the prerogative of special organizations. The article will highlight the activity, the political and legal framework of the Anti-terrorism Center of the Republic of Moldova in the field of combating and preventing terrorism.*

Keywords: *International terrorism, international cooperation in fight against terrorism, prevention of terrorism, the Anti-terrorism Center of the Republic of Moldova, The Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova*

1. Introduction

At the end of 20th – the beginning of 21st century, the understanding of international security issues has changed in a key way. Threats of a global nature, including international terrorism, have acquired paramount importance. International terrorism in the entire history of its existence has undergone many transformations, turning at the end of the 20th century into a global threat. Terrorism is transforming from a local phenomenon into a transnational phenomenon in which religious and ideological components are clearly expressed.

At the beginning of the 21st century, a distinctive feature of international terrorism as a socially dangerous socio-political phenomenon is the presence of a pronounced ideological base, represented by armed radical Islamism. At the same time, the subjects of terrorist activity in the person of international terrorist organizations of the Islamist persuasion, despite the activity of the international community in countering them, claim to become a full-fledged actor in international relations. The main goal of international terrorism today is the reorganization of the world, the implementation of an alternative global project of political development. It is impossible not to note that never before in the history of mankind have terrorist organizations set themselves such global tasks.

For the past two decades, the fight against terrorism has been at the forefront of the global geopolitical order. The scale of terrorism that increased at the beginning of the 21st century objectively demanded closer interaction between special services, security agencies and law enforcement agencies of the entire world community. There are two main approaches to understanding the methods of combating international terrorism at the current stage. The first approach is to strengthen the powers of law enforcement agencies in the

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field of public security, limiting civil liberties and democracy in the name of the stable development of human civilization. It is argued that only a strong state and the effective activity of special services can serve as a guarantee of a successful fight against terrorism. However, it must be recognized that all attempts to fight terrorists only through force and military methods have not ensured the limitation or reduction of terrorist activity. An approach to the problem of combating international terrorism based entirely on military measures may lead to a weakening of the potential for collective action against terrorism. A significant reduction in the rights and freedoms of people and citizens will lead, if not to the decline, then to the stagnation of modern democratic states, the dissatisfaction of the general population, and thus will contribute to the achievement of the goals of terrorists. The essence of the second approach is the recognition of non-coercive methods of combating international terrorism as the main ones, which does not deny the importance and necessity of conducting precise anti-terrorist military operations.

At the current stage, the awareness of the need to move to a well-thought-out and intentional system of the widest range of measures, primarily political, at the international level, is beginning. Military means and other means of force in the field of combating the international terrorist threat should be considered complementary to political methods of struggle.

An important issue in the field of combating terrorism is the formation of an appropriate regulatory framework and the existence of an effective system of counteraction at the national and international levels. Many states have adopted special laws regarding the fight against terrorism; most countries long ago came to the conclusion that the fight against terrorism must be the prerogative of special organizations.

2. Institutional capabilities to counter terrorist risks and threats of of the Anti-terrorism Center of the Republic of Moldova

The Anti-Terrorism Center attached to the Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova started operating on November 17, 2006. The formation of the Counter-Terrorism Center was one of the objectives included in the National Program for the implementation of the Republic of Moldova – European Union Action Plan, as well as Republic of Moldova – NATO Individual Action and Partnership Plan. The objectives of this center relate to the technical coordination of measures to prevent and fight terrorism; assessment of risk factors and territorial threats to the national security of the Republic of Moldova; the storage and analysis of information regarding the state, dynamics and trends of the spread of the phenomenon of terrorism and other extreme manifestations; the development and implementation of the national information system in the event of a terrorist threat; carrying out the exchange of information with foreign and international structures dealing with the activity of preventing and combating terrorism etc. (Hotărâre a Parlamentului Republicii Moldova nr.1295 din 13 noiembrie 2006)

In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Moldova on the prevention and combating of terrorism (2017), the SIS Anti-Terrorism Center prevents and combats terrorism by: drafting and implementing legislative and normative acts, policy documents in order to prevent and combat terrorism in accordance with the international norms and commitments; strengthening the cooperation and coordination of the activity of preventing and combating terrorism carried out by the competent authorities of the central public administration and the development of cooperative relations with similar institutions of other states; actions to detect and eliminate terrorist activities, including international ones, carrying out anti-terrorist operations; ensuring, together with other authorities, the security

of the institutions of the Republic of Moldova located on the territory of other states, of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova employed in these institutions and their family members; execution, through the special purpose unit, of the counter-terrorist intervention, independently or in cooperation with other forces, on the entire territory of the country or on a part of it, on the objectives attacked or occupied by terrorists for the purpose of their capture or annihilation, the release of hostages and the restoration of legal order; the collection, analysis and exploitation of information about potential risks and threats to counterterrorism security, obtained as a result of the information and counter-informative activity; collecting data on international terrorist organizations; undertaking other specific measures to prevent and combat terrorism assigned by law within its competence (Legea privind prevenirea și combaterea terorismului 20.10.2017).

The organizational structure of the Anti-Terrorism Security Intelligence Center includes: the Center's Management Directorate, the Monitoring and Analysis Section, the Coordination, Planning and Forecasting Section, the Legal Evaluation Section and the Information Resources Section. It should also be mentioned the special destination forces of the ALFA Special Destination Detachment of the SIS and the FULGER Special Destination Battalion of the Ministry of Defense which are directly responsible for the anti-terrorism activity in the Republic of Moldova. The Special Destination Detachment "Alfa" is a specialized subunit, with tasks in the fight against terrorism on the territory of the country, as well as in locating and ending acts of terrorism against citizens of the Republic of Moldova abroad, annihilating the criminal activity of organized crime groups, releasing hostages and apprehension of wanted criminals. In May 2022, the Law "On the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism" was amended. The special force unit "Pantera", subordinate to the Penitentiary System, was involved in counter-terrorism operations, according to the amendments to the Law on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism.

According to the amendments, the "Pantera" unit will ensure the safety of personnel and the protection of weapons, ammunition, explosives and subordinate installations, ensuring the defense capability; it will participate in counter-terrorism operations at the request of the Anti-Terrorism Operational Command; will provide the necessary logistical and operational support and special means and equipment at the request of the Anti-Terrorism Operational Command; will ensure the protection, supervision and/or escort of detainees who present a particular danger to the security of the state.

In accordance with the legislative provisions, the Anti-Terrorism Center issues mandatory instructions and recommendations to government agencies, as well as natural persons and legal entities. These instructions concern measures to prevent and combat terrorism.

The center also carries out the so-called "anti-terrorist tests", "testing" persons, objects, devices, premises, procedures, etc., if any of the above are of interest to terrorists or an anti-terrorist operation.

The Anti-Terrorism Center, together with the state structures responsible for the fight against terrorism, creates a database of terrorists and terrorist organizations, which also includes those who are suspected of supporting terrorism. The database can include both Moldovan and foreign citizens. There are several reasons why a person or organization can be included in the database: a decision by a court in the Republic of Moldova or a court in another state to recognize an organization/person involved in terrorist activities, a judicial decision to suspend of an organization's activities for the same reasons.

Legal entities and natural persons are required by law to assist the employees of the Anti-Terrorism Center, if necessary. They, among other things, will have to immediately

provide SIS with their movable and immovable property, documents and information about persons and events of interest to the counter-terrorism center. Refusal to cooperate with the anti-terrorism center attracts liability: disciplinary, administrative, civil or even criminal.

The Anti-Terrorist Center also has the right to request that government agencies, businesses and organizations provide people, transport and IT systems for the conduct of an anti-terrorist operation.

It should be noted that the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe published its findings in October 2018 in relation to the Law of the Republic of Moldova no. 120 on the prevention and combating of terrorism of September 21, 2017. The Venice Commission is convinced that it is necessary to review the list of measures that the Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova, including the Anti-Terrorism Center, can undertake in order to prevent terrorism. In this sense, it is necessary to clearly delimit the areas of application of special measures, and the law should provide for an external authorization (court order, prosecutor's office resolution, etc.), detailed measures and respective procedures (The Venice Commission insists on the revision of the anti-terrorism law, 2018).

Also, the report emphasizes that the President of the Parliament should not have the right to coordinate the anti-terrorist activity; this should be the prerogative of the executive. Instead, the parliamentary control mechanism should be strengthened with the participation of the Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova or a mixed committee of experts, but with the broad participation of the opposition in both structures. In addition to examining general reports, these bodies should have access to concrete cases. An adequate record keeping system should be implemented within the Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova.

Experts from Venice believe that anti-terrorist operations should have a limited period and cover a limited geographical area; any expansion of the geographical area or duration of the operation should be accompanied by increased parliamentary scrutiny. In addition, the Law should provide for criminal and disciplinary liability for security service personnel in the event of grossly disproportionate actions and in the event of improper planning and conduct of anti-terrorist operations. The commission emphasizes that the state should bear civil and legal liability for the injuries caused by these disproportionate actions. The unplanned use of weapons, other than the situation, should be prohibited by law, and the actions of security personnel that lead to death or serious bodily injury should be the subject of an independent investigation.

Likewise, the Venice Commission finds that the "blacklists" of terrorists that are drawn up in the country should not be blindly based on the decisions of foreign courts and governments.

The Anti-Terrorism Center of the SIS of the Republic of Moldova actively collaborates, at the national level, with the competent public authorities in order to implement practical counter-terrorism policy measures. Thus, in 2018, Regulation no. 277-284 on the anti-terrorist protection of critical infrastructure by the SIS was elaborated, and aims to streamline the process of identification, designation and anti-terrorist protection of critical infrastructure objectives and to optimize the procedures for identifying and including critical infrastructure objectives in the National Nomenclature of Critical Infrastructure, as well as to strengthen national mechanisms in the segment of terrorism prevention, identification and elimination of possible risks to critical infrastructure.

The objectives of the existing critical infrastructure in the Republic of Moldova correspond to those present in most economically developed countries, with certain

exceptions. The regulation identifies 11 sectors that target critical infrastructure, from water supply to places of mass agglomeration, as well as 27 sub-sectors, from maritime transport to healthcare. The objectives of major importance are the natural resources, among which the 3,500 artificial aquatic objectives, including the Stânca-Costești and Dubăsari hydroelectric dams. Targets of high vulnerability are those in the information and communication technology sector. Even if this sector benefits from increased attractiveness, with the sales volume constituting 7% of the national GDP in 2019, the critical ICT infrastructure benefits from limited protection. However, the objectives exposed to the most substantial risks are located in the administrative-territorial units to the left of the Nistru. In the Transnistrian region, on the one hand, the critical infrastructure objectives have the greatest vulnerability, and, on the other hand, the control of the protection procedures is not held by the constitutional authorities of the Republic of Moldova (Țurcanu, Valeriu, Rusu Iulian, 2021).

Currently, the protection of critical infrastructure in the Republic of Moldova is ensured by several public institutions, depending on the nature of potential threats. The Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Service (CPESS) is responsible for the management of man-made, natural and biological-social emergency situations. Also, from a sectoral perspective, the Anti-Terrorism Center (ATC) is responsible for the management of terrorism situations, and the Information Technologies and Combating Cyber Crimes Section (ITCCS) is responsible for the management of computer crime situations. At the national level, critical infrastructure objectives are protected by the application of both existing laws and action protocols, security plans, management mechanisms and other operational documents. At the international level, the protection of these objectives is ensured by the application of at least 18 multilateral and bilateral international agreements concluded by the Republic of Moldova.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova approved on October 26, 2022, the National Program for the consolidation and realization of anti-terrorist protection measures of critical infrastructure objectives for the years 2022-2026 and the Action Plan regarding its implementation. The need to realize and implement the National Program for the consolidation and implementation of anti-terrorist protection measures of the critical infrastructure objectives for the years 2022-2026 is imposed in order to implement the provisions of Resolution 2341 of the United Nations Security Council of 13.02.2017, Law no. 120/2017 regarding the prevention and combating of terrorism, as well as the National Defense Strategy and the Action Plan regarding the implementation of the National Defense Strategy for the years 2018-2022, approved by Parliament Decision no. 134/2018, and based on the provisions of art. 6 of Law no. 120/2017 regarding the prevention and combating of terrorism (Nota informativă la proiectul hotărârii Guvernului „Cu privire la aprobarea Programului Național de consolidare și realizare a măsurilor de protecție antiteroristă a obiectivelor infrastructurii critice pentru anii 2022-2026”).

The new measures are imposed as a result of regional developments and the increase in threats to national security. The document includes information on the impact of the program, the parties involved in its implementation, the current situation and the objectives set for the anti-terrorist protection of critical infrastructure.

Currently, even if the Republic of Moldova does not face major terrorist risks and is not a direct target for terrorist entities, the indicators detected in the last period denote an amplification of the situation in the anti-terrorist security segment. This fact imposes the need to strengthen the national potential in the fight against terrorist manifestations. Analyzing the tactics applied by terrorist entities and the statistics of attacks in the EU and

CIS space in the last period of time, we can see that in most cases the targets of the attacks become the objectives of the critical infrastructure (the transport system, the energy sector, objectives of mass gathering, etc.). Under these conditions, countries implement mechanisms and procedures in order to ensure the security of citizens and the protection of critical infrastructure objectives (Nota informativă la proiectul hotărârii Guvernului „Cu privire la aprobarea Programului Național de consolidare și realizare a măsurilor de protecție antiteroristă a obiectivelor infrastructurii critice pentru anii 2022-2026”).

The plan also mentions that the disruption or destruction of critical infrastructure objectives may cause a negative impact for the safety, security, social and economic well-being of the state, loss of essential services, danger to human life and health and negative effects on the environment. As a result, it is necessary to develop and implement nationally a set of continuous legal, organizational, economic-financial, engineering, operative, informative, counter-informative measures undertaken by central and local public authorities, critical infrastructure operators as well as persons specially authorized in this regard, which aim to ensure the functionality, continuity and integrity of the critical infrastructure in order to deter, reduce and neutralize a threat, a risk or a vulnerable point.

According to the National Program for the consolidation and realization of anti-terrorist protection measures of critical infrastructure objectives for the years 2022-2026, the actions to be carried out are: 1) strengthening the interaction mechanisms with critical infrastructure operators; 2) streamlining risk management for critical infrastructure objectives; 3) strengthening and streamlining mechanisms and measures to protect critical infrastructure objectives; 4) control and verification of the effectiveness of the anti-terrorist protection measures of the critical infrastructure; 5) optimization of the national legal framework in the field of organization and provision of physical protection of critical infrastructure; 6) development of national and international cooperation in the field of anti-terrorist protection of critical infrastructure (Hotărâre a Guvernului Republicii Moldova cu privire la aprobarea Programul Național de consolidare și realizare a măsurilor de protecție antiteroristă a obiectivelor infrastructurii critice pentru anii 2022-2026 și a Planului de acțiuni pentru realizarea acestuia, 2022).

The implementation of the Program will be ensured by the Anti-Terrorist Center of the Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova and by the operators – ministries, other authorities or public institutions and legal entities, which have under their management objectives included in the National Nomenclature of Critical Infrastructure (Programul Național de consolidare și realizare a măsurilor de protecție antiteroristă a obiectivelor infrastructurii critice pentru anii 2022-2026, aprobat de Guvern, 2022).

The Anti-Terrorism Center has created a situational response level system to terrorist threats that adopts world practice. Within this system, it is possible to set three levels of terrorist threat: increased – “blue”, high – “yellow”, critical – “red”. The introduction of terrorist threat levels does not restrict the rights and freedoms of citizens, but foresees the need for additional measures from the authorities to prevent a possible terrorist act.

The national terror alert system of the Republic of Moldova (NTAS) entered into force on October 26, 2018. This system represents a unique platform for coordinating measures in the event of terrorist threats. The territorial units empowered to fight against terrorism will be assigned to the Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova. Their duties will include the exchange of data and the investigation of cases that present a threat.

NTAS consists of 4 levels, distinguished by 4 codes (expressed in colors), which reflect the degree of risk depending on the intensity of the manifestation of the terrorist danger: low level (blue color); moderate level (yellow color); high level (orange color) and critical level (red color). It should be noted that, at each established alert level, the competent public authorities will undertake specific measures to ensure national security.

On March 25, 2019, the Security and Intelligence Service (SIS) announced, for an indefinite period, the low level (blue code) of terrorist alert throughout the territory of the Republic of Moldova. The establishment of the blue code provides for a series of mandatory measures for the relevant institutions, as well as recommendations for the population (*Cod albastru de alertă teroristă în R. Moldova. Ce prevede acest lucru*, 2019). However, in the context of the regional security situation created on February 24, 2022, the Security and Intelligence Service introduced the moderate level (yellow code) of terrorist alert.

In the event of the establishment of a moderate level of terrorist alert (yellow code), the authorities with competences in the field of preventing and combating terrorism, within the limits of their powers, undertake the actions intended for the low level, additionally carrying out the following measures:

- 1) concentrating efforts in order to deter, detect and prevent situations that may cause a terrorist danger;
- 2) enhancing control measures and ensuring public order at state border crossing points, airports, railway and bus stations, places of mass gathering;
- 3) checking the state and level of physical protection and increasing security measures at critical infrastructure targets under management, in order to detect and prevent potential terrorist crisis situations;
- 4) the intensification of measures to verify and ensure public order in places of mass gathering during mass demonstrations, cultural and sporting events, in order to detect possible indicators and risk situations (explosive devices, people with suspicious or violent behavior, etc.);
- 5) conducting additional training for employees who are involved in taking measures to protect the rules of law and for the personnel within the objectives that may become targets for terrorist attacks;
- 6) checking the level of training of the forces and the means that can be used in the reaction procedures in terrorist crisis situations and liquidating their consequences (În Republica Moldova a fost instituit nivelul moderat (cod galben) de alertă teroristă, 2022).

In 2020, by the decision of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the Regulation of the Anti-Terrorist Operational Command (AOC) was approved, which is established in the event of a terrorist crisis. The need for such a Regulation is imposed in order to execute the provisions of art. 25 para. (7) from Law no. 120/2017 on preventing and combating terrorism. Thus, based on the provisions of art. 6 of the stated Law, the Government is the main authority responsible for organizing the activity of preventing and combating terrorism, as well as ensuring it with the necessary forces, means and resources. The Anti-Terrorist Operational Command has the right to use, in the manner established by the Government, the forces and means of the public administration authorities. These authorities make available to the Command human forces, buildings, weaponry, special means, means of electronic communications, information systems, means of transport, other technical and material resources necessary for carrying out the anti-terrorist operation.

For directing and conducting the anti-terrorist operation, the AOC, within the limits established by law, has the following duties: 1) accumulates, generalizes and evaluates information regarding the created situation, determines the risks, character and extent of the

terrorist crisis; 2) prepares the calculation of forces and means necessary for the anti-terrorist operation; 3) elaborates the plan for carrying out the anti-terrorist operation; 4) issues combat orders, other documents that establish the order of preparation and conduct of the anti-terrorist operation, as well as its legal regime; 5) organizes the interaction between the forces involved in the anti-terrorist operation; 6) coordinates the evacuation of the population from the anti-terrorist operation area, as well as organizes the emergency medical assistance process; 7) organizes, in accordance with the legal provisions, the process of negotiations with terrorists; 8) elaborates scenarios regarding the evolution of the crisis situation and the counter-terrorist intervention plan; 9) plans and coordinates, under the conditions provided by the legislation, the counter-terrorist intervention; 10) coordinates the activity of informing the population regarding the terrorist crisis situation; 11) take other measures aimed at removing the terrorist threat and ameliorating the consequences of the terrorist crisis (Hotărîre a Guvernului Republicii Moldova cu privire la aprobarea Regulamentului Comandamentului Operațional Antiterorist, 2020).

Starting from 2007 on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, ATC organizes anti-terrorist exercises (United Forces – 2007 and 2008, Special Forces – 2010, Special Forces – 2011, Meteor– 2012, ENA – 2013, Rădăuți – 2016, Strong Border – 2017, Bucovina – 2018, EST – 2020). The purpose of these practical measures consisted in checking the reaction and response capacities of the competent authorities, evaluating the level of coordination and interaction between the law enforcement agencies and detecting gaps in the national anti-terrorist policy.

In 2008, the official website of the Anti-Terrorism Center of the SIS www.antiterror.sis.md was launched, which reflects the subunit's daily activity, international collaboration with relevant international structures and organizations, full information on the legislative basis and national policy in the field of countering the terrorist phenomenon, etc.

The Anti-Terrorism Center also undertakes measures aimed at boosting the mechanisms of interaction with society and promoting the security culture. In this sense, intelligence and security officers had meetings with representatives of local public authorities and civil society in all districts of the country. Among the main topics addressed are the national security policy, the legislation in the field and the measures implemented at the country level. In the same way, aspects of the cooperation of the Security and Intelligence Service with the authorities carrying out the activity of preventing and combating terrorism were presented. In particular, the provisions of the new Law regarding the prevention and combating of terrorism, the role and place of local public authorities and society in the prevention of terrorism and violent manifestations of extremism were discussed.

One of the Center's activities is related to scientific research in the field of combating and preventing terrorism. Thus, during 2019, an analytical study on the "The Evolution of terrorist attacks in 2019" was developed, and in the summer of 2022 – the analytical study "The Perspective of the United Nations Organization and other international bodies regarding the prevention and combating of violent extremist or terrorist acts" (Buletin informativ - semestrul I – 2020).

The Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova ensures, through its specialized subunits, active measures to develop and strengthen the partnership in the field of aeronautical security. Thus, the trainers from the Anti-Terrorism Center and the National Institute of Intelligence and Security "Bogdan, the Founder of Moldova" at the beginning of 2022 conducted a theoretical-practical training course for the employees of the

flight crew of the HiSky airline (Angajați din cadrul personalului navigant al companiei aeriene HiSky, instruiți de ofițerii Centrului Antiterorist al SIS al Republicii Moldova).

The process of preventing and combating terrorism is unachievable without international cooperation. In this context, the Anti-Terrorism Center of the SIS of the Republic of Moldova conducts a relevant exchange of information and good practices with partners abroad, collaborating with specialized structures from Bulgaria, Germany, the USA, France, Romania, the CIS and other states or regional and international organizations (Cooperarea la nivel național și internațional a Serviciului de Informații și de Securitate a Republicii Moldova, 2018).

As mentioned above, the Center is also responsible for the development of a national system designed to prevent possible terrorist attacks, with the emphasis being placed on prevention actions, the improvement of anti-terrorist intervention mechanisms and the adjustment of national legislation to international and European norms. Among these measures, special attention is paid to the ban on the entry into the country of persons suspected of belonging to extremist-terrorist groups or their sympathizers. In order to achieve this objective, the Anti-Terrorism Center of the SIS periodically renews the lists of persons, entities and groups involved in terrorist activities. The respective lists are drawn up based on the consolidated lists established by UN Resolution 1267, 1988, 1989 and Common Position 2001/931/CFSP of the Council of the European Union (Centrul antiterorist al SIS a împlinit 5 ani, 2011).

The Republic of Moldova has experienced the consequences of terrorist activity as a transit zone and shelter for existing or potential terrorists. The Security and Intelligence Service of the Republic of Moldova destroyed a transit network of elements related to international terrorism. The service thwarted the attempt of a group of foreign citizens, originally from the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, to cross the country's territory, possibly having Syria as their final destination. At the same time, the SIS, jointly with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, undertook a complex of special anti-terrorist measures, as a result of which it was possible to identify and annihilate a cell with terrorist elements, made up of foreign citizens suspected of being members of ISIS and who intended to move to Syria (CAT al SIS: combaterea terorismului – problema mondială primordială, 2015).

According to the statement of the former head of the SIS, Mihai Balan, the main purpose of the intruders who arrive in the Republic of Moldova is to leave for the EU, which borders our country (Спецслужбы возьмут «под колпак» всех авиапассажиров, 2017).

Also, according to the opinion of a number of experts, militants who participated in some operations abroad or the wounded who came for treatment may be hiding on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Likewise, they can hide from the justice of other states.

3. Conclusions

Today it becomes obvious that it is impossible to fight against such threats as terrorism alone. It is necessary to consolidate all the efforts of the international community in the fight against these threats. It should also be noted that, despite all the achievements in countering terrorism at the national and interstate regional levels, the most problematic issues include the development of preventive measures against the potential of terrorists and a prompt response to terrorist challenges, caused by the growth of global instability, the crisis of the neoliberal model of the world economy and institutions of global governance, as well as processes of socio-political destabilization in the region. Namely, these directions must be prioritized for the activity of the Anti-Terrorism Center of the Republic of Moldova.

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THE BLACK SEA: A GEOPOLITICAL SPACE OF RUSSIAN THALASSOCRATIC AMBITIONS

*Adrian Ionuț BOGDAN**

Abstract. *Rarely has a maritime space played such an important role in geopolitics and the regional and international balance of power. The last twenty years have brought dramatic changes to the international system and demonstrated that the end of history predicted by Fukuyama in the 1990s has not come true. Although separated by almost 8000 km, the Seas around China and the Black Sea have reached a symmetrical position in the new confrontation between the Euro-Atlantic allies and the new Sino-Russian axis. Just as the seas in the east and south of China represent a front in the struggle to change the international system between Communist China and the US together with its Asian allies (Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea), so the Black Sea has become a geopolitical space of confrontation between Russia on one side and Europe and the US on the other. The research "The Black Sea: A Geopolitical Space of Russian Thalassocratic Ambitions" wants to analytically present how Moscow tried to achieve thalassocratic ambitions through its expansionist policy in the case of the Invasion of Georgia in 2008, the Annexation of Crimea in 2014, and with the Attack on Ukraine this year. In the center of these expansionist policies there have always been reasons such as the expansion of the Russian sphere of influence, and the blocking of the Euro-Atlantic enlargement, but to all this was also added, in a complementary way, a historical thalassocratic ambition of the Russian Federation.*

Key words: *Coastline control, Georgia, Crimea, Ukraine, The balance of power, The symmetry between the Black Sea and the South and East China Seas*

Introduction

The Black Sea has always been crucial in the geopolitics of Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East. It is a connecting bridge between them, a huge source of oil and gas, and a commercial hub. The history of the geopolitics of this sea is as spectacular as the history of the countries that have access to it. If after 1991, the security of the Black Sea seemed to be a settled matter, the war in Georgia, the annexation of Crimea, and the invasion of Ukraine would prove otherwise. Today, thanks to the aggressive and expansionist actions of the Russian Federation, the Black Sea is once again a tense geopolitical space, armed and prepared for a conflict of supremacy. Over the course of 14 years, the Black Sea, like the South and East China Seas, became a real battlefield between Western democracies (USA, NATO, EU, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan) and authoritarian regimes (Russia, China, North Korea, Iran), a theater of operations from which large-scale changes can occur and capable of affecting the system of international relations.

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This article consists of four sections, with fundamental aspects of the recent evolution of the regional (in the Black Sea area) and partly global power balance, highlighting the maritime ambitions that Russia had on the occasion of the attack on Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Also, Russia's global condition has concretely shaped the Russian objectives regarding the Black Sea, and these things are dealt with globally in a dedicated section.

1. First of all, Georgia, 2008

After declaring independence in 1991, Georgia tries to establish good relations with the Russian Federation, but tensions arise over some Georgian regions: Abkhazia and South Ossetia, both of which were strongly supported by Russia in a large separatist movement. Even so, the real problem between the Russian Federation and Georgia was not the two breakaway provinces themselves, but Georgia's refusal at the time to join Russia in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), Boris Yeltsin's project to create a sphere of Russian influence (economically, politically and military) in the ex-Soviet space. The loss of Georgia from this project could not be allowed, as the Russians did not initially recognize Georgia's independence, *and Boris Yeltsin conditioned this gesture on the reconciliation between the two sides through Georgia's accession to the CIS* (d'Encausse, 2010: 176). Shortly after Georgia declares independence, the two separatist regions will try to become independent as well, but Georgia will prevent this with a dynamic intervention against the rebel forces.

A long period of diplomatic war begins between Moscow and Tbilisi over Russia's support for Ossetia and Abkhazia. In the desire to capture the support of the West, break away from Russia definitively, and possibly be invited within NATO, the leadership of Georgia decides on very bold measures, all because *Saakashvili wants to prove to everyone that he is not afraid of Moscow* (d'Encausse, 2010: 197). In the following period, Georgia strengthens its administration, increases the defense budget considerably, and manages to defeat the last secessionist cells in the territory of Ossetia and Abkhazia supported by Russia, establishing leadership within the two regions. Also, many Russian diplomats in the capital Tbilisi will be accused of espionage and forced to leave the country, but the most unexpected thing was that *Georgia, a member of the WTO (World Trade Organization), is using its veto power to block the negotiations for the preparation of Russia's entry into this world organization* (d'Encausse, 2010: 197) something that hit both Russia's international prestige and the economic interests of the Russian state. All these measures taken by Georgia seem bold at first glance, but they were caused by *a real anti-Russian resentment of the Georgians, which had its origins in the history of relations between the two peoples* (d'Encausse, 2010: 197).

The climax of the Russian-Georgian diplomatic confrontation was when *at the NATO Summit in Bucharest, which took place from 2-4 April 2008, the allies engaged in a heated and dramatic debate over the right to grant Georgia and Ukraine access to the Alliance Accession Action Plan, a program designed to help aspirant countries better prepare for eventual accession* (Asmus, 2010: 111). In his last months in office, George W. Bush would have liked both Georgia and Ukraine to receive this acceding country status, but opposition from Germany and other Western European states blocked this. Without inclusion in the accession plan, *Saakashvili had few illusions about the West coming to Georgia's military assistance if it fights the Russians* (Asmus, 2010: 43), realizing the extremely dangerous situation in which he had engaged the country. The only thing the alliance leaders agreed to do, mostly under pressure from President Bush, was to say: *We agree that Georgia and*

Ukraine will eventually become NATO members (d'Encausse, 2010: 201), but this was only a mere political statement without substance.

In August 2008, Ossetian and Abkhaz rebels start new clashes with Georgian law enforcement, and Georgia decides to attack the Ossetian separatist capital of Tskhinvali, but the operation to stop the rebels leads to a large-scale Russian intervention, and initial Georgian victories are followed by an extremely strong Russian counter-offensive in both Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russian convoys of ammunition, armored vehicles, tanks, and military supplies for the offensive in Ossetia and Abkhazia arrive in Georgia through the Roki Tunnel. The war begins on August 7 and ends five days later on August 12 with the tactical defeat of the Georgians, and the Russian government officially recognizes the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia a month later. Georgia definitively loses control of the two regions, but with the diplomatic intervention of Nicolas Sarkozy, Tbilisi is no longer conquered, and Georgia remains independent, even with massive territorial losses. The saving initiative for the Georgian state consisted of a *six-point ceasefire plan* (d'Encausse, 2010: 199) made by Sarkozy during the French presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The end of the Russian-Georgian confrontation destroys any chance of Georgia joining NATO, leaves the country without a significant percentage of the population, without almost half of the exit from the Black Sea coast, and leads to a real economic decline, amplifying and more the Georgians' dependence on Russia. From a rational perspective, Russia's actions have brought it far more benefits than costs. Russia not only blocked a possible expansion of the North Atlantic organization but gained geostrategic military bases on the territory of Abkhazia and Ossetia, having the possibility to easily control the future of Georgia and the Caucasus. Although about Georgia we can appreciate a very visible maximization of power, about the expansion of NATO and the American sphere of influence we are discussing a double maximization that Russia is achieving. On the one hand, by preventing the situation of having a NATO state on its southern border, Russia has considerably maximized its security, but at the same time, by taking de facto control of Abkhazia and Ossetia, Russia it also maximized its power vis-à-vis NATO in the South Caucasus region. The occupation of Abkhazia and thereby half of the Georgian coastline increased Russian influence in the Black Sea considerably but also paved the way for an increasingly expansionist foreign policy. The attack on Georgia in 2008 and the occupation of key Georgian territories would outline and prepare Russia's new target: Crimea.

2. Fear of the West and Thalassocratic Ambitions: Crimea

What Russia wanted to achieve from the war in Georgia was not only the conquest of strategically crucial areas for the South Caucasus, this short war was also meant to act as a *signal and warning* (Bogdan, 2021: 393) for Kyiv, but things were not like that, and following large demonstrations, collectively called EuroMaidan, the leadership of Ukraine made the historic decision to orient itself in the direction of a possible European and North Atlantic integration.

For the Russian Federation, the mere prospect of a rapprochement of Ukraine with the West was seen as ungrateful, but a possible Euro-Atlantic integration was considered a direct danger to Moscow. Even before the events of 2014 in Ukraine, the propagandist of territorial expansion policies and theoretician of contemporary Russian geopolitics, Aleksandr Dughin, stated that *the absolute imperative of Russian geopolitics in the Black Sea is Moscow's total and unhindered control over the entire northern shore, from Ukrainian territories up to the Abkhazian ones* (Dughin, 2011: 231). In the opinion of the

Russian propagandist from Moscow, *Ukraine should remain only a cordon sanitaire* (Dughin, 2014: 194) to serve Russia's interests in the Black Sea, but also in the West.

What Dughin stated in his more or less scientific works at the end of the last two decades would materialize with the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the support of pro-Russian rebels in the frozen conflicts in eastern Ukraine, in Donbas. What drove Russia to take such a risky, illegal, yet expansionist action was a real fear of the prospect of a West reaching Russia's western borders.

Geopolitically, Russia benefits from a complex set of advantages that transforms it into a continental power of unprecedented proportions: *to the north protected, but also blocked by the ice of the Arctic Ocean, to the south by the impressive desert cold expanses of Central Asia, in the Caucasus by a mountain range that protects it from the storms of the Middle East* (Kaplan, 2020: 287) but the West remains the weakness due to the vast plain and proportions that will always need a buffer zone, and this buffer can only be provided by the Baltic states, Belarus and Ukraine. Given the rapid integration of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia into Euro-Atlantic structures and Belarus's traditional affinity for Russia, the only card in this geopolitical game remains Ukraine. However, it was not only the survival instinct that shaped the actions that Russia would undertake, but rather a categorically re-emerging desire to put Russia back in the power play of major decisions within international relations, to which, in addition, obviously, the tsarist ambitions of Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

No one could ever say with certainty, before the reference year 2014, that an episode similar to the one of Georgia in 2008 would happen again. The results of the West's underestimation of Russia were seen in this defiance of international law, an abrupt shift from "force of law" to "law of force" that would continue to mark the international system for decades to come. The annexation of Crimea had obvious effects on the evolution of the balance of power at the international level and reopened the way for aggressive international policies, and this only reconfirms the realist's perspective on international relations. The prospect of occupying the Crimean peninsula and other Ukrainian territories was animated by Russia's *fierce desire to reassert* (Weiner, 2020: 9-11), *the necessity to create a buffer zone* (Naumescu, Fati, et al, 2018: 105) between West and East, *exploiting Ukraine's moment of weakness, the rich resources in the eastern area* (Grigas, 2016: 176-177), the special agricultural capabilities due to the very fertile soil, the much more temperate climate, but also the major geopolitical role of the Crimean peninsula at the level of the Black Sea geostrategy and the satisfaction of the thalassocratic ambitions of the Russian continental power.

In February 2014, Russian troops specially trained for the annexation of the peninsula had the mission of capturing the main administrative buildings, in the days that followed, the Russian military presence became stronger and stronger, so that later, against its background, Crimea would illegitimately proclaim its independence and eventually become part of the Russian Federation as a federal subject following a March 2014 referendum contested by the entire world with few exceptions from states allied to Moscow or states not recognized among them (Transnistria, Ossetia, Abkhazia). The shock of this campaign *destroyed any hope of the partnership between Russia and the West, NATO stopped any political and military collaboration with Moscow, and the G8 decided to exclude Russia* (Blake, 2020: 328).

By occupying Crimea and carrying out frozen conflicts on the territory of Ukraine, in the eastern Donbas region, Moscow managed to strengthen its control over the Black Sea, but also to prevent any Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the future presidential administrations

from Kyiv. By annexing Crimea, Russia obtained a geostrategic territory, a base for launching any naval operations off the Black Sea, and an operational command center that allowed the achievement of thalassocratic ambitions that were indispensable for a continental power in its desire to reaffirm and change the balance of power at the international level. Russia also gained a population of approximately 2.4 million inhabitants, of which more than two-thirds were ethnic Russians, but also access to the commercial hub represented by the city and southern port of Sevastopol, which represented an interest in China's project to restore the trade route very well known as the New Silk Road.

The tragic historical context means that only 8 years after these events, in the same fateful month of February, now in 2022, Ukraine will once again be in the sights of Russian expansionist policies, this time with even more aggressive intentions, on an unprecedented scale.

1. Russia, 30 Years after the Fall of the Soviet Union

The annexation of Crimea gave Russia a whole new set of assets from the perspective of Eastern European geopolitics, allowed the expansion of Russian maritime space at the expense of Ukraine, *and paved the way for increasingly aggressive policies from Moscow* (Grigas, 2016: 219), in relations with other global actors.

But what Moscow was less aware of following the occupation of Crimea was the *devastating effect* (Rosefielde, 2020: 434) of the combined US and European Union economic sanctions have had on the Russian economy. In the figure on the left we can see a decrease of almost 40% of the GDP from about 2060 billion dollars in 2014 to 1267 billion in 2016. This huge impact on the Russian economy almost instantly cancels the prestige

due to the geopolitical changes achieved, because the downgrade from the eighth position in the global economic ranking to the eleventh represented a major degradation of economic prestige, a devaluation of the ruble, and a loss of investor confidence, an economic suicide in the medium and the long term.

Aware of the economic disaster, President Putin decides to sign an agreement brokered by France and Germany in Minsk almost a year later. Simultaneously, on January 1, 2015, another important event in the recent history of Russia takes place, the Eurasian Economic Union enters into force and is officially created, an economic and political union that brought together states such as Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, a fact which demonstrated the special interest Moscow had in the political and economic destiny of the ex-Soviet space, a quarter of a century after the disappearance of the Soviet Union. The recovery of the Russian economy after the annexation of Crimea has been extremely difficult, without the expected effect, and an extremely slow one.

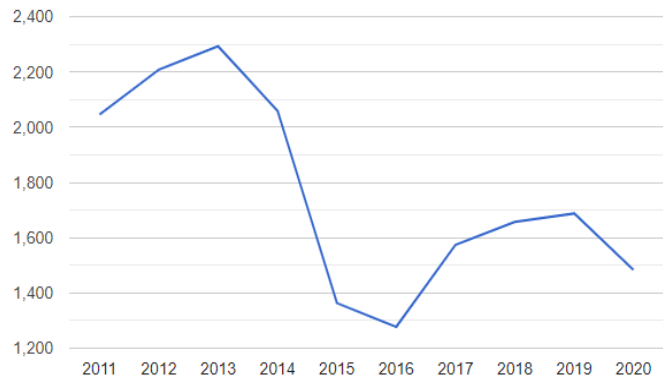


Fig.1. The Russian Economic Evolution between 2011 - 2020
(TheGlobalEconomy.com, 2022)

The historical evolution and balance of power relations from 2008-2014 once again allowed for increasingly *striking antagonism* (Weiner, 2020: 15) between Russia and the West, restoring the traditional state of rivalry between Russia and the United States, restoring mutual suspicions and waging political war, but more importantly, the escalation of growing tensions between the two blocs.

In the international disorder, which constitutes by its very matter a form of order, Russia has an increasingly unclear role. In this political-economic-military dispute between Washington and Beijing, which we observe every day is becoming more and more pronounced, Moscow has very few options left, among them: *the consolidation of Sino-Russian relations, the formation of the third pole of power, or adopting neutrality in this conflict* (Naumescu, 2022: 139-144). Certainly, with the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the option of Russian collaboration with the West was partially out of the question, but now, after the tragic events that began with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022, such a scenario is categorically becoming impossible.

Certainly, any rational and analytical mechanism of thinking in international relations tends to offer a rapprochement with China and the formation of a Sino-Russian pole at the international level as a response, but, as in any newly created alliance, *it must be based on the establishment of some rules regarding hierarchy* (Naumescu, 2022: 139), and the prestige assumed by Putin's re-emerging Russia cannot be satisfied with a secondary role, in the "shadow and back of Beijing", precisely from here arises the insecurity and fragility of such an alliance. We also cannot ignore fundamental differences culturally, politically, ideologically, and even about what a new world order should mean for both superpowers. The historical context, the old Sino-Russian rift, but also Beijing's clandestine policy of populating Eastern Siberia with ethnic Chinese pose serious problems to this alliance.

The formation of a third pole of power at the international level is not possible, Russia cannot engage a considerable number of states that *are capable of competing economically or militarily with the United States or the People's Republic of China* (Naumescu, 2022: 141). Moreover, the idea of neutrality in the Sino-American competition cannot be seen as an option for a superpower that wants to stand out at the global level. The only option that remains within Moscow's reach, therefore, is rapprochement with China, but in terms that do not harm Russian interests and prestige.

NATO and Russia are currently in a state of tension not seen since the Cold War. Against the background of accelerating tensions and the War in Ukraine, the negotiating bridge between Russia and the West seems to be disappearing. The alarm signal that the analyst in international relations, Agnia Grigas, brings in this context is the highlighting of a weakness that the alliance has in the Baltic countries, and more precisely, the considerable Russian minority, but which could be used by Moscow in organizing some rebellions, *which would lead to a pressing dilemma for NATO* (Grigas, 2016: 217): direct intervention and the possibility of a war with the Russian Federation or non-involvement and permanent discrediting of the North Atlantic Alliance.

On December 26, 2021, the Russian Federation completed three decades since its formation, commemorating otherwise the same period since the disappearance of the former Soviet Union, but what is interesting is the subsequent evolution of the balance of power, which in the course of 30 years, brought Russia back to the antagonistic position from which it started at the end of 1991, this being a circularity and symmetry that we can rarely see in history, high rarely in the field of international relations.

2. The War in Ukraine (february 24, 2022)

February 24, 2022, unfortunately, remains a fateful and sad day in the history of Ukraine and Europe. The legacy of lasting and long peace in Europe, from the end of the Second World War until now, has been shaken by a cruel, criminal and illegitimate decision. The Putin regime in Moscow shocked the whole world by invading Ukraine and placing Europe and the whole world in an *unprecedented tension in the international system* (Smith, 2022: 298). The dice of war were cast by Moscow, but the West has a historical mission to contribute to the fall of these dice in favor of Ukraine.

Although initially, the war in Donbas was identified entirely under the guise of an *ethnically motivated secessionist war* (Marples, 2022: 144-156), due to the Russian majority in eastern Ukraine, the massive intervention and the Russian invasion of Ukraine proved that this was not the case. Russia has always intended to keep Ukraine away from the chance of Euro-Atlantic integration, and when the Putin regime realized that this was no longer possible peacefully, it resorted to this latest method. Russia's intention and objectives are clear: the occupation of the country, the annexation of considerable territories of the Ukrainian state, and the installation of a pro-Russian puppet regime in Kyiv, which would allow the transformation of Ukraine into a buffer zone, an observation developed earlier in the previous chapter. As of this writing, none of these objectives have been fully accomplished, so the fate of the war remains to be decided in the coming months.

Even *without achieving the mentioned objectives* (Pascal, 2022: 299), a major problem for the geopolitical security of the Black Sea is the colossal illegitimate expansion of the Russian coastline. From 2008 to the present, Russia has gone from a Black Sea coastline of about 800 km to a total coastline of about 3,500 km, an incredible and extremely dangerous fact. More than 2,500 km of the Ukrainian coast came under Russian control, and half of the Georgian coastline, 150 km, is also under the control of the Russian Federation. In the adjacent image (Fig. 2: Russian control of the Black Sea), the important difference between Russia's rightful coastline (in blue) and the coastline illegally annexed and occupied by Russia (in red) can be easily seen. What must be understood from all this exposition is that Russian thalassocratic ambitions figured prominently as a complementary objective in Moscow's plans for the ex-Soviet space. Any military move by Russia also meant a continuation of expansionist ideals regarding the Black Sea.

One thing is certain, *no one can predict, at least not yet* (Pascal, 2022: 313), the outcome of the war in Eastern Europe. A Ukrainian victory against Russia could have a particularly important impact on the

Putin regime and would lead to a loss of Russian control of the northern Black Sea. On the other hand, an unwanted Russian victory in Ukraine would pave the way for a Russian Federation to have full control of the Sea of Azov and majority control in the Black Sea, with more than half of the coastline. This latter scenario would represent a catastrophe for the other NATO member states with access to the Black Sea. States such as Romania,



Fig. 2. Russian control of the Black Sea

Bulgaria, and Turkey would become obliged to increase their maritime security by purchasing new warships and improving the capabilities of the fleets they possess. At the same time, the fate of the war in Ukraine will play a particularly important role in the evolution of the international system. A Russian victory may pave the way for a military move by China against Taiwan and provide an incentive for the world's authoritarian states to resolve their differences militarily, which would return the international system to a new era of early realism.

Conclusions

Throughout the history of Eastern Europe, Russia has always represented an actor difficult to ignore, and after the fall of the Soviet Union and the installation of Putin in power, Moscow became interested in the destiny of the ex-Soviet space again. The system of international relations is in a strong dynamic, and in the three decades since the end of the Cold War until now, the global balance of power has undergone far-reaching changes. Russia has gone from a pro-Western foreign policy in the 1990s to a true state of Cold War tension following its invasion of Ukraine this year. All these things also led to an increasingly aggressive foreign policy regarding the Black Sea and paved the way for the annexations or gaining control of the largest parts of the littorals of Ukraine and Georgia. Currently, Russia controls more than half of the Black Sea coast, and this affects militarily and economically NATO countries in the area, forced to increase their maritime capabilities.

There are many other elements worth mentioning in the discussion of Russia and its thalassocratic ambitions such as the role that Russia will play in the new Beijing-Moscow axis, the country's economic evolution, and the continuity of the Putin regime. All these things can weigh a lot in the future of the Black Sea. The global situation often tends to translate almost identically to areas or regions, with important interconnectivity between the regional and global balance of power.

The Russian Federation has always realized that it is a continental power, and throughout history, it has always faced the desire to gain access to warm seas, the northern seas not offering it the necessary strategic and economic advantages. Russia has always continued to pursue an expansionist policy in the Black Sea, even if it meant violating the sovereignty of states and international law. It is also a certainty that the attack on Georgia in August 2008, the annexation of Crimea in February 2014, and the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 were motivated by a whole series of factors such as the blocking of NATO and EU expansion, the expansion of Russia's sphere of influence, however, the thalassocratic objective regarding the Black Sea was also added in a complementary way to Russian goals in changing the international system.

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ANALYSIS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION IN LIGHT OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP INDEX

*Mircea BRIE**

Abstract. *In June 2022 the Republic of Moldova received the status of candidate country for membership of the European Union. In spite of the euphoria generated by this historic step, European integration seems to be a difficult and lengthy process. The result is nevertheless of considerable importance, but it raises the question: what has determined this development? Was it Republica Moldova's proactive progress, or the geopolitical climate introduced after Russian aggression against Ukraine?*

Methodologically, we aim to analyze some of the indicators quantified in the Eastern Partnership Index during the period 2011-2021. We intend to identify the integrator level in three relevant measurable areas (and a couple of subareas): Management, Approximation and Linkage.

From a methodological perspective, we propose the following levels of analysis: a. A contextualization of the RM's involvement in the EaP; b. An analysis of the EaP Index and the identification of integrator levels; and c. Generating an inductive response regarding the European path of the RM.

Keywords: *Republic of Moldova, European Union, Eastern Partnership (EaP), Eastern Partnership Index.*

1. Introduction & methodology

Despite the fact that the Eastern Partnership (EaP) project is often viewed as having an integrative role in light of its proximity to the European Union, its evolution has been sinuous, mired by shifting geopolitical contexts and divergent national aspirations consistent with the assumed objectives. In terms of evolution and geopolitical context, the EaP has seen numerous reformatory changes, as well as adaptations that took into account the level of individual aspirations of the states. (Brie, 2022: 316).

The **purpose** of this research is to analyze the EaP Index in order to evaluate the positive course of the Republic of Moldova within the EaP, by developing relations with the EU and deepening European integration. The effect of the geopolitical context on the evolution of the relationship between Moldova and the EU is also being pursued.

Methodologically, we aim to analyze some of the indicators quantified in the Eastern Partnership Index during the period 2011-2021. We intend to identify the integrator level in three relevant measurable areas (and a couple of subareas): Management, Approximation and Linkage.

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We propose the following *levels of analysis* from a methodological standpoint: a. Contextualizing the RM's involvement in the EaP; b. Analyzing the EaP Index and identifying integrator levels; and c. Generating an inductive response regarding the RM's European path.

The main *research questions* raised are: 1. Was the Republic's acquisition of the status of candidate state for the European Union determined by the progress and development of relations with the European Union or was it the result of the geopolitical context after the beginning of the Russian aggression in Ukraine in February 2022? 2. Does the analysis of the EaP Index highlight the development of the Republic of Moldova's integrative process in the European structures?

In order to identify and analyze the progress made by the Republic of Moldova in areas such as economy, security, rule of law, interconnectivity, mobility, etc., the EaP Index was used.

The Index was launched two years after the launch of the Partnership and contains aggregate statistics on the level of integration of the six above-mentioned countries. European integration for the EaP states is understood as a sum of the elements that comprise the political, economic, civil and security dimension. It is measured by: the level of convergence with European norms, the level of economic exchanges and the increase of these exchanges, the development and deepening of cross-border networks and people contact (EaP-CSF, 2022a).

The present analysis includes aggregated data from 2011 to 2021. It should be noted that from 2011 to 2014 the index was officially called the European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership states. The name was changed in 2015 to the Eastern Partnership Index. The change was not accidental, as we will see in the subsequent analysis. If in the case of the former, the emphasis was on integration based on the premise that all six partner states want a deep relationship with the EU, if not accession, in the case of the latter the tone is more nuanced/adapted, taking into account the interests of partner countries.

The Index uses a multi-layered methodology¹. "It involved over 50 experts from all EaP states at each and every stage, namely in the basic research design, data gathering, quantitative and qualitative analysis and verification. As a first step, national experts completed a questionnaire by giving scores for their countries against a detailed set of indicators, which formed the basis of subsequent national reports, drafted by the experts. These reports were then analysed by sectoral experts, also from the EaP region, who synthesised national-level findings into a wider regional perspective. Fourteen focus groups based on the sectoral reports were then held and provided an opportunity for all experts and the Index editorial team to collectively probe, discuss and validate the findings, whilst also identifying salient case studies. Through its methodological approach, the Index strikes an effective balance between richness and rigour and yields evidence, lessons learned and examples of best practice of use for EaP and EU stakeholders. The Index's method also means that progress and change can be gleaned on a comparative cross-regional basis, meaning that instances of progress, backsliding and inertia and where relevant, frontrunners, can be identified" (EaP-CSF, 2022a).

¹ Most survey questions ask for a "Yes" or "No" response to induce experts to take a clear position and to minimise misclassification errors. As a rule, all questions to be answered with yes or no by the country experts are coded 1 = yes or positive with regard, for example, to EU integration and convergence, and 0 = negative with regard to integration and convergence (labelled "1-0"). If the expert comments and consultations with experts suggest intermediate scores, such assessments are coded as 0.5 (EaP-CSF, 2022b).

For a clear methodological overview of our analysis, we make the following clarifications (see details in EaP-CSF, 2022a):

- The analysis of the management dimension gives us an image of only four time intervals (2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014), which is then analyzed as part of the other two dimensions of the PAE Index.

- Linkage dimension, was last measured and published for the interval 2018-2019 (in this case we have data available for seven time intervals: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015-2016, 2017 and 2018-2019).

- Approximation dimension has been quantified for seven time intervals: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015-2016, 2017 and 2020-2021

2. EaP context

Despite some obvious progress since its launch in 2009, the EaP has reached its limits. The current format, despite regular reform attempts, does not provide a framework for development or clear perspectives on their relations with the EU. The multilateral framework has been replaced by a bilateral one. The EU has sought to stimulate the EaP countries to engage in an integrative process, benefiting from a deep level of ambition in achieving the integration targets. The more-for-more principle has led to increased European support (including through consistent additional financial allocations) for countries that have chosen to approach the EU. However, these countries were limited by the lack of a strong EU commitment to setting an accession timetable. Faced with geopolitical challenges, faced with Russian pressures and threats, the EaP states have often had to nuance their views, putting the specific national interests in the foreground.

Given the complex realities and numerous conflicts in its neighborhood, ranging from North Africa to the Near East to Ukraine, the EU is forced to reinvent itself at the level of neighborhood-specific policies. The goal of creating a good neighborhood space appears not to be reached, serving as a smoke screen in front of potential competition from other actors. The EaP format is no different. It is critical to redefine logic, purpose, and tools. Brussels must demonstrate firmness as well as a clear political and geopolitical vision.

A general and easily identifiable conclusion (perhaps superficial!) From many perspectives, it is that the EaP as an initiative of the European Union is a failure. Belarus has withdrawn from the partnership. Ukraine must prepare for a Russian invasion. Armenia and Azerbaijan continue the tense episodes of their sinuous path of conflicting bilateral relations caused by the failure to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh problems. Georgia and the Republic of Moldova are directly threatened by the Russian-Ukrainian war and must pay much closer attention to Russia-backed separatist republics on their territory. (Brie, 2022: 326).

The diachronic analysis must take into account the fact that the European Union's perspective on its relations with neighboring states is based on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This policy, which was initiated in 2003 and officially launched in May 2004 (ENP, 2004), was designed to "avoid the emergence of new lines of separation" between the EU and its neighbors (Pop, Pascariu, Anglițoiu and Purcăruș, 2005: 8). The ENP and EaP were components of a strategy that the European Union attempted to implement in order to achieve balance and understanding along its eastern borders. Over the last few decades, not only the European Union, but also its neighbors, have worked to establish mutually beneficial cooperation relationships. "These have taken the shape of asymmetrical alliances based on partnerships and cooperative agreements. Later, Eastern countries developed deeper relations, progressing from these agreements to a new level of

partnership, eventually leading to their accession to the EU.” (Bărbulescu, Brie and Toderaş: 2016: 75). The ENP and EaP appeared to be part of a broader, integrative policy. Even the three states that signed the Association agreements and unequivocally declared their support for European integration did not receive clear perspectives on a potential member state status prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. At the beginning of March 2022, amid the precipitous events generated by the Russian aggression, the European institutions started the process for examining the applications for EU membership made by the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia.

The European Council granted Moldova and Ukraine the designation of candidate nations on June 23, 2022. The European Council also said on the same day that it was ready to grant Georgia candidate status as soon as the priorities indicated in the European Commission's opinion on Georgia's accession application were addressed (issued on 17 June 2022) (European Council, 2022).

Despite these prompt actions, which are crucial from a political and image standpoint, the European Union is compelled to quickly modify its policies in the Eastern Neighbourhood. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict's trajectory and, more importantly, how it is resolved (in time and form!) will determine the extent of the expansion to the east. However, the EU cannot afford to forsake its allies, to whom it can only provide a few limited solutions in the geopolitical environment of 2022.

Through an analysis of policies, context and results, we identify the current EaP boundaries in three main directions, without excluding other perspectives (see for more details Brie, 2022):

- The limits of the EU's low commitment to the integration of EaP states
- The general geopolitical context and the Russian opposition in particular
- Specific national interests of the EaP countries

A. *The EU's limited commitment to the European integration of the EaP states* has been visible since the beginning of this partnership project. The EU has always avoided offering a clear prospect of membership to the six EaP countries. Despite numerous political declarations of support from European leaders, neither of the six partners has received any firm guarantees or commitments with specific deadlines.

Since 2011, the parameters of EU involvement have been established. Despite the progress made, particularly by the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine, the EU gave the impression of having political and geopolitical boundaries during the Warsaw Summit. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a politician who will mark the next period of European policy, said: “We know that Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine had higher expectations from this summit: They wanted a clear prospect of joining the Union. However, there aren't enough circumstances to offer a distinct viewpoint. We wait until every requirement is satisfied before proceeding” (EaP Summit, 2011).

In the new post-2014 context, it is clear that the mere reform of states, accompanied by the implementation of EU policies and *acquis*, is no longer sufficient to achieve European enlargement. The ENP, as it was thought, no longer corresponds to geopolitical realities. It is enough to recall that the ENP has long been seen as a kind of “antechamber” for the enlargement of the European Union. Forced to consider a complex set of factors, the EU does not want to risk, and cannot afford, promising accession to the EaP states. This reality is determined by the EU's external and internal contexts, including its geopolitical environment. The latter is also connected to the decline in enlargement momentum following the waves of accession in 2004, 2007, and 2013.

Many countries have become reluctant to further expand. The financial and economic crisis has undoubtedly contributed to this state, which has shifted the focus to domestic problems. The need for institutional reform but also the increasingly complicated geopolitical context (the conflict in Ukraine; the situation in the Middle East and North Africa; the refugee and migrant crisis; trade tensions; and paradigm shifts in U.S. foreign and security policy that marked Donald Trump's presidency) are able to further complicate this picture.

Last but not least, another vulnerability of the EU's common neighborhood policies, visible in the period after the Riga Summit, is given by the security dimension in the ENP approach. This proves to be insufficiently clear and unrelated to the current geopolitical situation, the security thus proving to be a "weak point" (Gogolashvili, 2015: 18), on the agenda of the European neighborhood (Bărbulescu, Brie and Toderaş; 2016: 110-111). The beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 served as confirmation of the EaP's shortcomings and bottlenecks as well as the limitations of the guarantees that the EU could have provided to the EaP states. (Brie, 2017: 63-66).

B. *The general geopolitical context, and particularly Russian opposition*, have shaped EaP member states' policies. The brutal Russian interventions in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (after 2014 with the annexation of Crimea, with the support of the separatists in the east, and primarily with the military invasion started on February 24, 2022) were associated with the total enslavement of Aleksandr Lukashenko's regime to Putin, but also the maintenance of a constantly tense atmosphere in Transnistria and especially in Nagorno-Karabakh. A simple analysis leads to the conclusion that states that did not accept the Russian Federation's political and geopolitical orientation were forced to confront internal and external challenges, often of a military nature, supported by the Russians. The invasion and war in Ukraine exemplify the Russian Federation's reaction to Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic orientation.

Russian aggression at all levels put pressure on the fragile European integration initiatives that had begun to emerge in the EaP states. The EU was unable to respond effectively using the mechanisms at its disposal.

C. *The EaP states' specific national interests*, which frequently diverge from European integration, have also contributed to the failure to achieve the original EaP objectives. The level of ambition for European integration varied across the six countries. Furthermore, some states have never even expressed an interest in this direction, with the EaP seen as a tool for pragmatic facilitation of economic gains without incorporating political implications.

The EaP countries' national interests were not only divergent in relation to the goals of European integration, but also in many cases divergent in relation to the partnership's neighboring partners.

The analysis of specific interests highlights the EaP countries' limited levels of ambition. Furthermore, by shifting the focus of the EaP from the multilateral to the bilateral dimension and on the more-for-more principle, the reform of the EaP highlights the flexibility of EU policies regarding the EaP in direct agreement with the constraints imposed by these national interests correlated to the specific geopolitical context.

The EaP Index 2020-2021 analysis performed on approximation dimension highlights the premises from which we started. Three EaP countries have made progress

toward their high ambition level (Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia), while the other three have shown limited interest in achieving integrative goals.

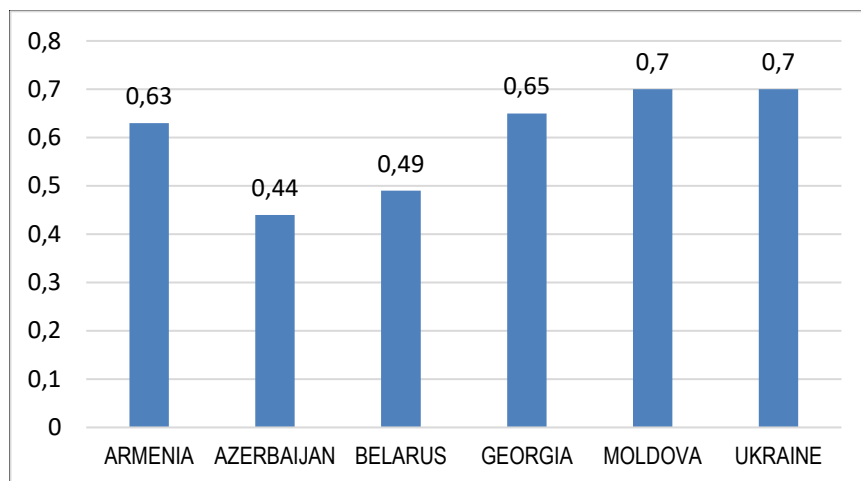


Figure 1. Approximation Dimension. The Eastern Partnership Index 2020-2021

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the report EaP Index 2020-2021, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

The overall results are also visible in the three sub-domains: Democracy and good Governance; Policy Convergence with the European Union; Sustainable Development.

The 2021 Index found Ukraine and Moldova to be the joint frontrunners, with Georgia in third position. The results mean that the Associated Trio hold the top three places based on aggregate scoring. Armenia scored well on indicators to do with democracy and good governance, but was less impressive with regards to policy convergence, thus it takes fourth place. Fifth and sixth places are taken by Belarus and Azerbaijan (EaP-CSF, 2022a).

The Republic of Moldova received an average of 0.70 points in the proximity dimension, with differences between the three subdomains: democracy and good governance (0.71 points); policy convergence with the European Union (0.80 points); and Sustainable Development (0.59 points). The Republic of Moldova received a maximum score of 1.00 in the following categories: transparent budget, judicial competences, institutional framework, border management, energy efficiency, and climate change. The category of judicial appointment, promotion, and dismissal received the most points (0.33 points) (EaP-CSF, 2022c; See more Appendix no. 1).

Ukraine achieved an average score of 0.70 points in the size of the approximation, with differences between the three subdomains: Democracy and Good Governance (0.69 points); Policy Convergence with the European Union (0.77 points); Sustainable Development (0.64 points). Ukraine achieved a maximum score of 1.00 points in the following categories: Legal Framework and its compliance with international standards; Access to Information; Irregular immigration, including readmission; Institutional framework; Energy Security. The least points were scored in the category: Corruption incidence and the capacity to criminalize and prosecute corruption (0.38 points); Appointment, promotion and dismissal of judges (0.17 points) and Employment and remuneration (0 points). (EaP-CSF, 2022c; See more Appendix no. 1).

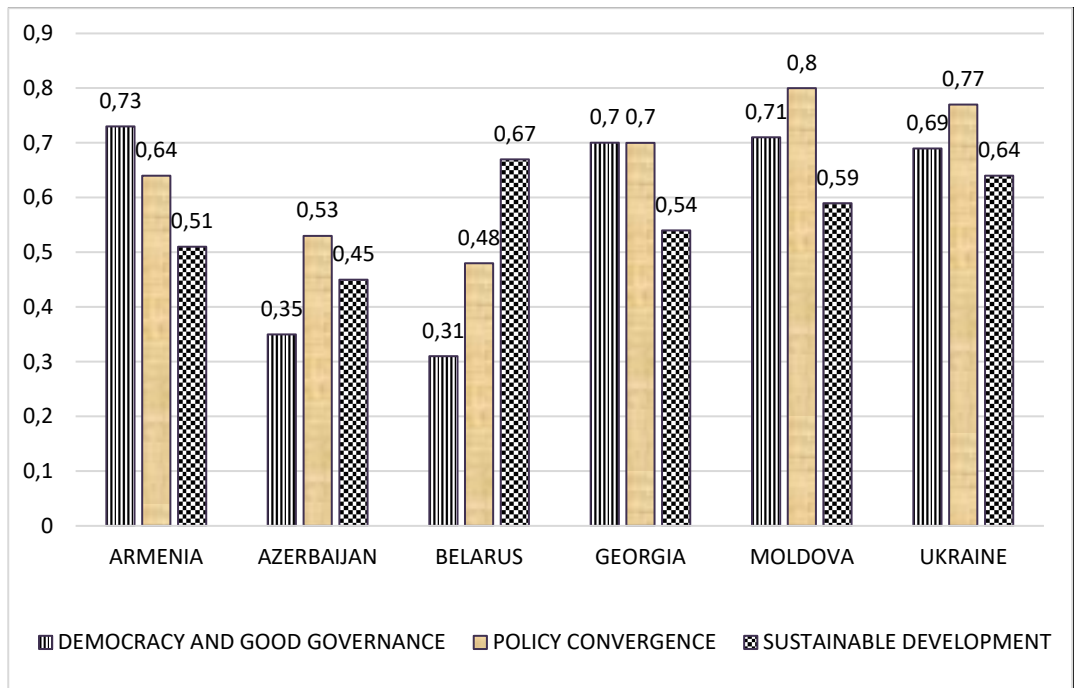


Figure 2. Approximation Dimension (Categories). The Eastern Partnership Index 2020-2021

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the report EaP Index 2020-2021, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

Georgia achieved an average score of 0.65 points in the size of the approximation, with differences between the three subdomains: Democracy and Good Governance (0,70 points); Policy Convergence with the European Union (0,70 points); Sustainable Development (0,54 points). Georgia scored a maximum score of 1.00 points in the following categories: Legislature's institutional capacity; Parliamentary oversight; Institutional framework; Irregular immigration, including readmission; Energy Security. The least points were scored in the category Appointment, promotion and dismissal of judges (0,33 points) (EaP-CSF, 2022c; See more Appendix no. 1).

Armenia achieved an average score of 0.63 points in the size of the approximation, with differences between the three subdomains: Democracy and Good Governance (0,73 points); Policy Convergence with the European Union (0,64 points); Sustainable Development (0,51 points). Armenia achieved a maximum score of 1.00 points in the following categories: Transparent budgeting; Internal and external auditing; Irregular immigration, including readmission; Energy Security. The lowest points were obtained in the category: Management of public service quality (0,20 points); Employment and remuneration (0,00 points) (EaP-CSF, 2022c; See more Appendix no. 1).

Belarus achieved an average score of 0.49 points in the size of the approximation, with differences between the three subdomains: Democracy and Good Governance (0,31 points); Policy Convergence with the European Union (0,48 points); Sustainable Development (0,67 points). Belarus achieved a maximum score of 1.00 points in the following categories: Energy efficiency; Employment and remuneration; Energy Security. The lowest points were obtained in the category: The Right to Freedom of Assembly (0,06 points); The Right to Freedom of

Association (0,05 points); Conditions for opposition (0 points); Electoral Competitiveness (0,00 points (EaP-CSF, 2022c; See more Appendix no. 1).

Azerbaijan achieved an average score of 0.44 points in the size of the approximation, with differences between the three subdomains: Democracy and Good Governance (0,35 points); Policy Convergence with the European Union (0,53 points); Sustainable Development (0,45 points). Azerbaijan scored a maximum score of 1.00 points in the following categories: Institutional framework; Energy Security. The fewest points were obtained in the category: Independent Media (0,04 points); Legal Framework and its compliance with international standards (0 points); Electoral Competitiveness (0,00 points; Employment and remuneration (0,00 points (EaP-CSF, 2022c; See more Appendix no. 1).

3. The results of the Republic of Moldova: the EaP Index

Linkage Dimension. It includes elements like political dialogue, trade and economic integration, transportation and energy, freedom, security, and justice, as well as education, people-to-people exchanges, and humanitarian aid. We can see that the Republic of Moldova experienced a regression in 2014 before resuming their upward trend in 2015-2016. The increase was followed by a minor decrease.

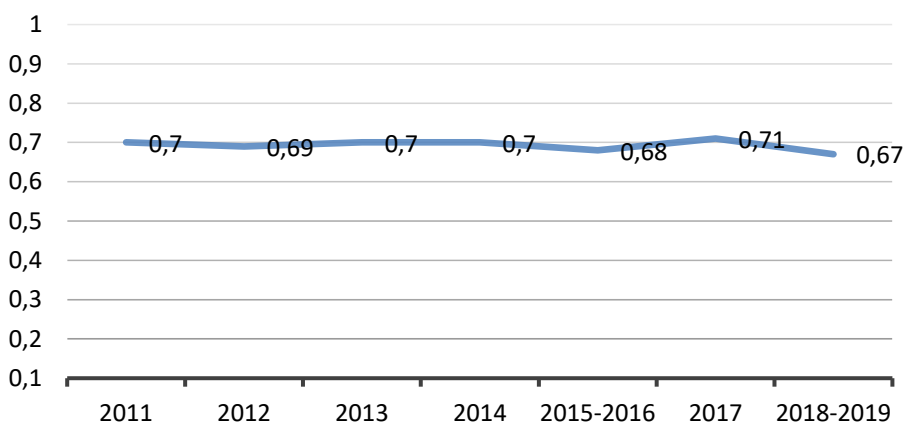


Figure 3. Linkage Dimension– Republic of Moldova

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

One defining category for the dimension of the link is political dialogue with the EU, which refers primarily to bilateral institutions, multilateral institutions, and the Eastern Partnership, as well as cooperation in foreign and security policy. It should be noted that, starting with 2015, the category of political dialog was merged with that of international security, political dialog, and cooperation, which had a negative impact on the RM's score. The decline in trend, which was also observed in the other EaP states, was influenced by regional security concerns that emerged in the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Last but not least, this can be interpreted as a consequence of the fact that in November 2016, Igor Dodon, the pro-Russian candidate in the presidential elections in the Republic of Moldova, won the elections in front of the pro-European candidate, Maia Sandu (Całus, 2016).

Without having data to quantify the EaP Index, we can state unequivocally that the political dialogue improved toward 2020, particularly after Maia Sandu was elected president and a clear pro-European policy that is supportive of EU integration was developed.

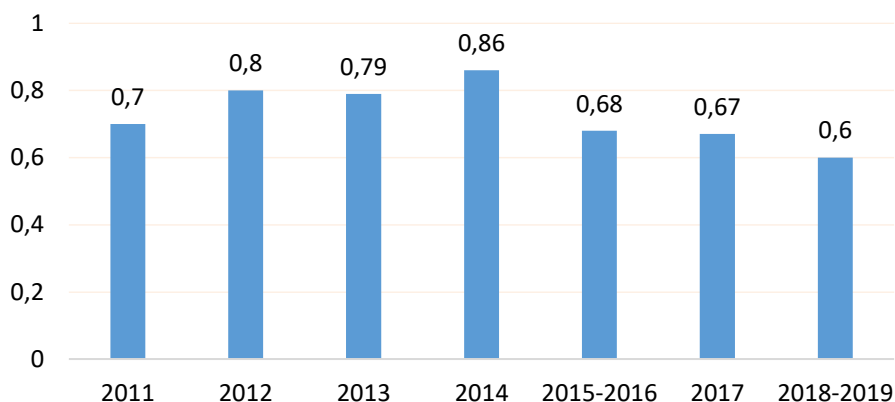


Figure 4. Political Dialogue with EU – Linkage Dimension

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

The second category in the Linkage Dimension is that of *Trade and economic integration*, which since 2015 has been included in *Sectoral cooperation and trade flows*. This category examines the extent to which trade and investment in EaP countries are integrated into the EU. At the same time, the integration of energy sources/markets and the density of transport links is assessed separately, as these two sectors constitute crucial infrastructures for economic integration (EaP-CSF, 2022a).

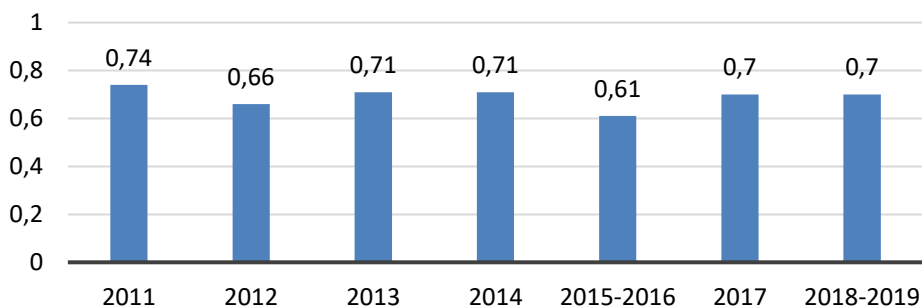


Figure 5. Trade and economic integration (2011-2014) / Sectoral cooperation and trade flows (2015-2019) – Linkage Dimension

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

The results obtained in this category show the efforts made towards improving trade flows, removing barriers to trade in goods and boosting foreign direct investment. This

category includes the following subcategories – Trade with EU: Commodities; Investments and Loans from EU; Trade with EU: Services; Trade Defence Instruments; Energy Interdependence; Transport: Integration with Trans-European Networks; Environment. Performing the analysis of the results of the Republic of Moldova in the category of trade and economic integration in 2011-2019, we observe the following evolution – decrease (2012) – increase (2013) – stagnation (2014) – decrease (2015-2016) – increase (2017) – stagnation (2018-2019). In the period 2011-2016, Moldova occupied the 2nd place in this category, ceding to Ukraine, but in 2017 the situation changed and Moldova was on the 1st place. Even if Moldova occupied the first position in 2017 with the score – 0.70, this result was not a good one, considering that in 2011 the country had the score - 0.74 (Goreainov, 2020: 96).

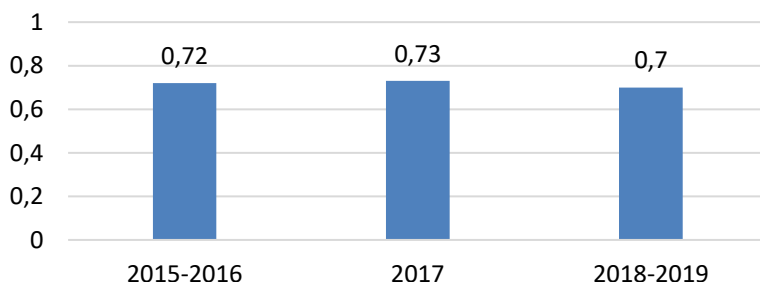


Figure 6. Citizens in Europe – Linkage Dimension

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2018-2019, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

An important subcategory of indicators is grouped at the level of Linkage dimension after 2015 in *Citizens in Europe*. This includes the following indicators: Cultural Exchange and Co-operation; Affinity with European Union; Cooperation in science and education; Mobility, including academic and student mobility; Digital and Information Society. Some of these indicators were discovered in approximate forms between 2011 and 2014 (some of them in the Management Dimension). (EaP-CSF, 2022a).

Comparatively speaking, the Republic of Moldova's score is the highest of the EaP states in 2017 and comes in second place to Georgia in 2015-2016 and 2018-2019 (EaP-CSF, 2022a). The Republic of Moldova received the highest score in Mobility, including academic and student mobility (1.00 points), in 2017. The indicator of affinity with the European Union (0.93 points) was also improved. Surprisingly, this score was surpassed by Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, all of which had a maximum score of 1.00. The category of Cultural Exchange and Cooperation received the lowest rating (0.44 points) (EaP-CSF, 2022a).

Management Dimension. It includes variables such as: the coordination mechanism; the legislative harmonization mechanism; the civil society participation and EU assistance management. An extremely important element in this analysis is that the management dimension has been integrated into the other dimensions since 2015, when the official name of the index was changed (EaP-CSF, 2022a). This change of vision was also confirmed at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga where the emphasis was on differentiating partner states according to their interests (EU Council 2015), thus changing the vertically generalized view of the top-down type (e.g. from the EU to the EaP) towards

a horizontally adaptable one between partners. It represents the evolution of management structures and policies in the Eastern Partnership countries, which aim at European integration in the EU.

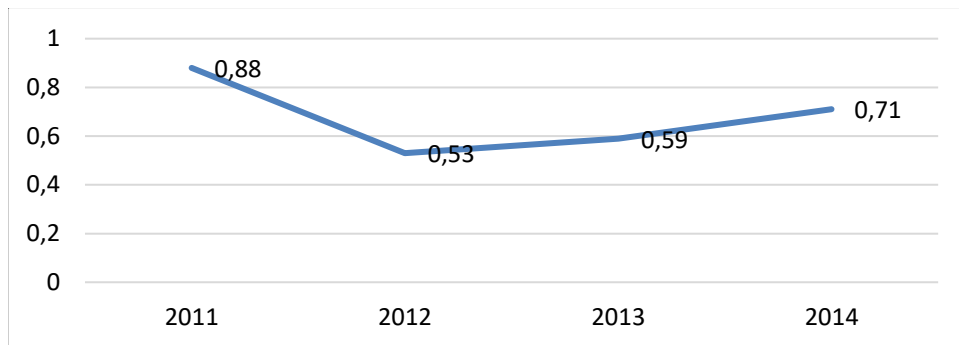


Figure 7. Management Dimension – Republic of Moldova

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

”Initially in terms of Management, the Republic of Moldova had a good result, but in 2012 the situation suddenly changed to decrease, and in 2013-2014 the score began to increase, but it still did not reach the same indicator as in 2011. If in 2011 Moldova was placed second in this ranking, after Georgia, in 2012-2013, the country improved the score, placing first, but in 2014 Moldova lost to Georgia again” (Goreainov, 2020: 104).

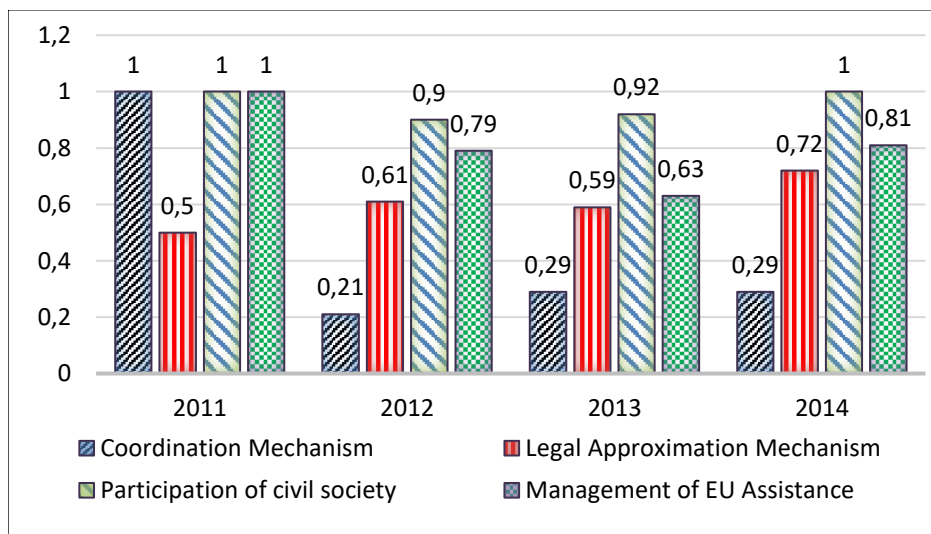


Figure 8. Management Dimension (Categories)

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

In comparison to the six EaP states, it is interesting to note that this dimension initially maintains the same separation of a leading group in terms of mechanisms of coordination, legislative harmonization, civil society participation, and management of EU

assistance (Republic of Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine), but it records a detachment of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova from the rest of the partners for the last two analyzed time periods (EaP-CSF, 2022a). The reason for this detachment is mainly related to two of the defining categories for this dimension of the EaP Index: the coordination mechanism and the participation of civil society.

At the level of the examined subdomains, an asymmetric evolution distinct from the four major categories can be seen.

Approximation Dimension

In more detail, the 2011 pilot edition describes this dimension of harmonization using eight categories for which partner countries receive scores: Democracy; Rule of Law; Governance Quality; Market Economy; Freedom, security and justice; Energy and transport; Environment; Education and People to People. Since 2012, these categories have been reduced to 3, such as: Deep and Sustainable Democracy; Market Economy and DCFTA; Sectoral Approximation. At the same time, since 2015 the names of these categories have changed – Deep and Sustainable Democracy; EU Integration and Convergence; Sustainable Development.

By looking at the chronological chart for this dimension (period 2011-2021), we can see a demarcation point at the level of 2015, until the Republic of Moldova registered an upward trend. This trend came to an end in 2015, when the Republic of Moldova experienced a noticeable decline until 2017. We won't see a return to the upward trend until after the 2020 presidential election.

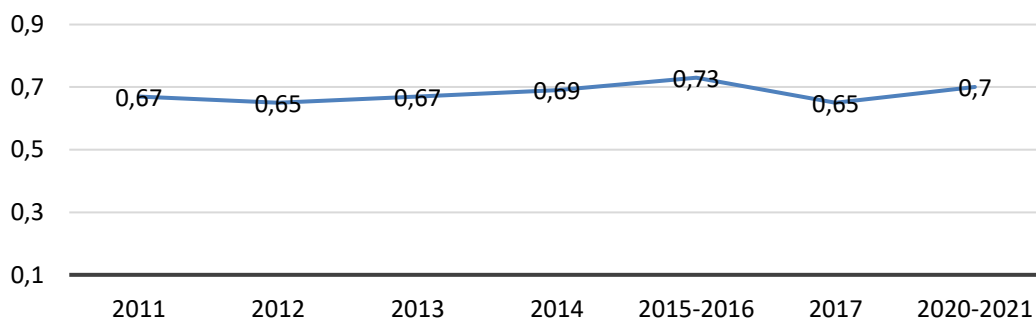


Figure 9. Approximation Dimension - Republic of Moldova

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2020-2021, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

In the period 2020-2021, the Republic of Moldova achieved an average score of 0.7 points. There are some elements of the specific under analytical relation at the level of the three main categories of subdomains (EaP-CSF, 2022c; See more Appendix no. 1):

- Democracy and Good Governance, with an average score of 0.71 points, it includes subcategories such as:
 - Democratic Rights and Elections, including Political Pluralism (0.71 points on average)
 - Human rights and Protection against Torture (0.86 points on average)

- State Accountability (0,73 points on average)
- Independent Media (0,55 points on average)
- Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Assembly and Association (0,83 points on average)
- Independent Judiciary (0,66 points on average)
- Equal opportunities and non-discrimination (0,76 points on average)
- Fight against corruption (0,65 points on average)
- Public administration (0,68 points on average)
- Policy Convergence with the European Union, with an average score of 0.80 points, it includes subcategories such as:
 - Market Economy and DCFTA (0,66 points on average)
 - Freedom, Security and Justice (0,95 points on average)
 - Energy: Legislation Convergence and Energy Policy (0,83 points on average)
 - Environment and climate policy (0,94 points on average)
 - Transport: Regulatory Policy (0,61 points on average)
- Sustainable Development, with an average score of 0.80 points, it includes subcategories such as:
 - People (0,61 points on average)
 - Planet (0,64 points on average)
 - Prosperity (0,60 points on average)
 - Peace and Partnership (0,61 points on average)

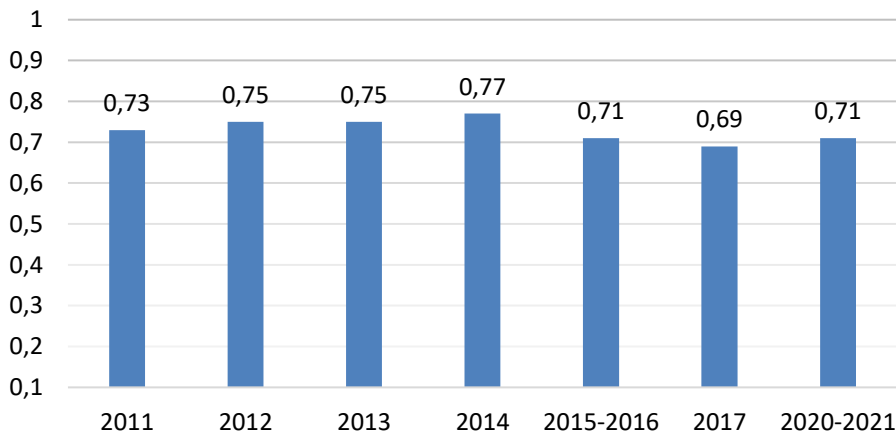


Figure 10. Deep and Sustainable Democracy (2011-2017) / Democracy and Good Governance (2020-2021) – Approximation Dimension

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2020-2021, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

The indicators quantified at the level of the first category of subdomains reflect the macrotrend: After 2014 (the year of Crimea's annexation), there has been a trend toward worsening democracy and good governance, as evidenced by the election of Igor Dodon as president in 2016.

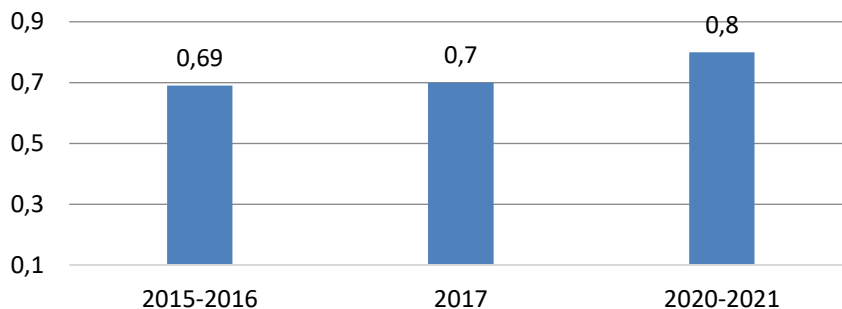


Figure 11. EU Integration and Convergence – Approximation Dimension

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2020-2021, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

Given the three-fold change in the name of the subdomains (including the categories of indicators in composition), we have conducted, as we can see, an analysis of *EU Integration and Convergence / Policy Convergence* only for the period 2015-2021 when the same main structure was maintained. The main indicators that quantified the European integration and convergence in the case of the Republic of Moldova recorded a progressive evolution, deepening and expanding at the integrative level.

We offer for example two of the five categories of indicators within the subdomain *EU Integration and Convergence*: Freedom, Security and Justice; Market Economy and DCFTA.

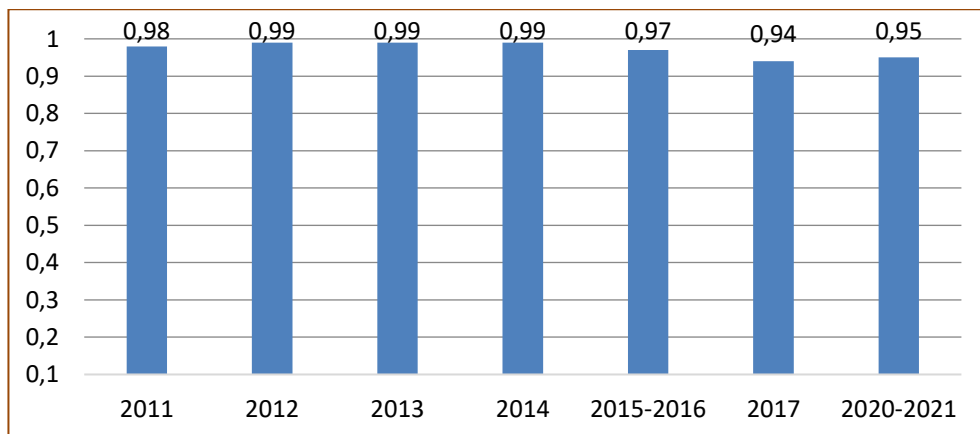


Figure 12. Freedom, Security and Justice – subcategory EU Integration and Convergence / Approximation Dimension

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2020-2021, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

Freedom, Security and Justice, it is one of five indicator categories within the *EU Integration and Convergence* subdomain, and is a component of the approximation

dimension. The Republic of Moldova has demonstrated a high level of convergence by maintaining a relatively high score throughout the period..

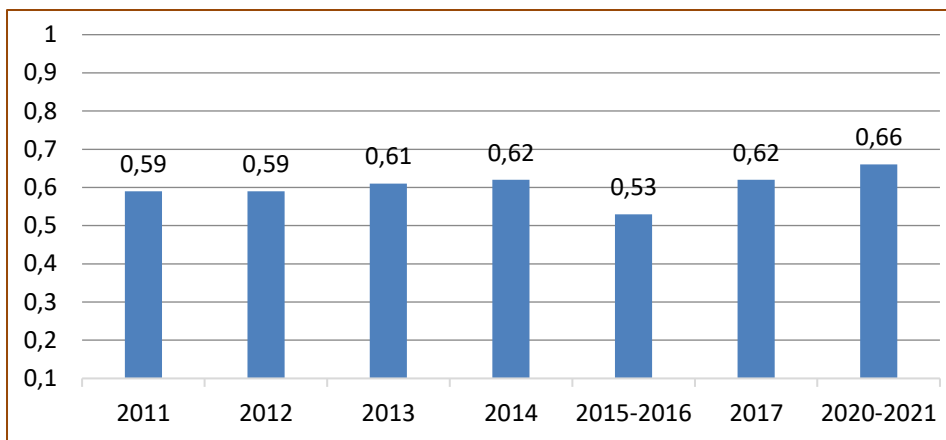


Figure 13. Market Economy and DCFTA – subcategorie EU Integration and Convergence / Approximation Dimension

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2020-2021, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

Economic integration and the development of a market economy have seen clear progress in recent years. The best score on this sub-category of indicators was recorded in 2020-2021 (see more Appendix no. 1).

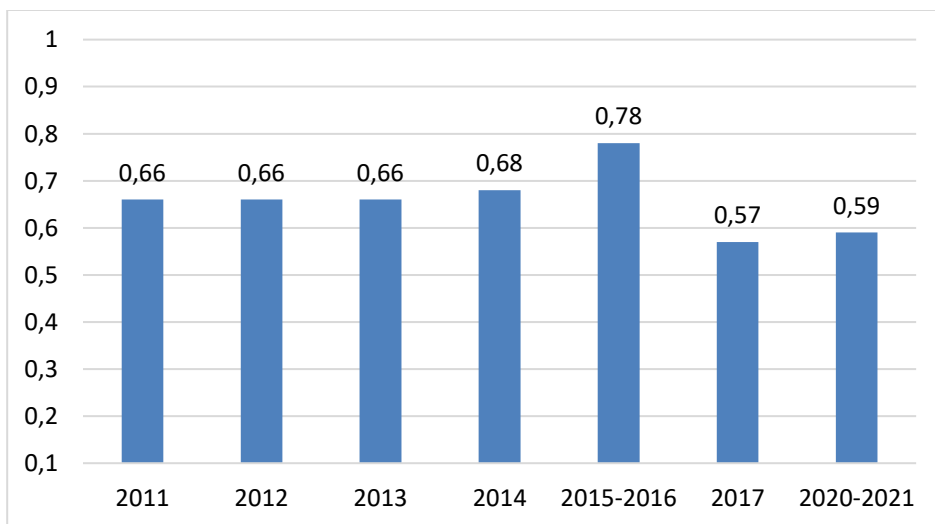


Figure 14. Environment and Sustainable Development (2011-2014) / Sustainable Development (2015-2021)– Approximation Dimension– Republic of Moldova

Source: author's own preparations based on data collected from the reports European Integration Index for EaP Countries 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and EaP Index 2015-2016, 2017, 2020-2021, available online <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>, accessed 14.12.2022

In recent years, one of the EU's stated priorities has been environmental protection and policies, specifically sustainable development. These indicator categories could not be

used to evaluate the progress of the EaP states. After a relatively stable and positive evolution, with a peak in 2015-2016 (0.78 points), there was a drop to 0.57 points (2017) and 0.59 points in 2020-2021. "In the period 2011-2014, Moldova was placed on the first place in this ranking, in 2015-2016 on the second place, and in 2017 Moldova obtained a very low score, placing on the last place together with Georgia" (Goreainov, 2020: 103).

Conclusions

Despite the Republic of Moldova's pendulatory and oscillating political evolution, as captured by the EaP Index analysis, we see a clear positive trend in the integrative process. Without being an irreversible process, democratization, convergence, and integration have begun to produce tangible benefits at the societal level. The political class is also becoming more aware of this reality. The EAP Index encapsulates the mechanisms of change brought on by closer ties to the EU and the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law. The development of a strong civil society and an independent media must still be anticipated. Although it is worn out, the process has started and is already producing some results.

The Republic of Moldova's society has become vulnerable as a result of the complicated geopolitical context created by the war in Ukraine. The prospect of military intervention in Transnistria jeopardizes the European integration process. Opportunities have also been created in this context. The European Union demonstrated its solidarity, including during Moldova's current energy crisis (at the end of 2022, Romania, but also other European states, responded promptly and consistently by providing electricity, gas, and financial assistance).

The resolution of the Ukrainian crisis will have an expected impact on the Republic of Moldova's European future. This process, however, depends to a greater extent on the resilience to the deep and yet unfinished crises that Moldovan society must prove.

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Appendix no. 1. Approximation Dimension. The Eastern Partnership Index 2020-2021

		Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
	TOTAL APPROXIMATION	0.63	0.44	0.49	0.65	0.70	0.70
1	DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE	0.73	0.35	0.31	0.70	0.71	0.69
1.1	Democratic Rights and Elections, including Political Pluralism	0.84	0.20	0.16	0.77	0.71	0.78
1.1.1	Legal Framework and its compliance with international standards	0.92	0.00	0.23	0.54	0.62	1.00
1.1.2	Organisation of elections	0.83	0.50	0.22	0.89	0.78	0.78
1.1.3	Electoral campaigning	0.71	0.29	0.18	0.71	0.53	0.41
1.1.4	Electoral Competitiveness	0.89	0.00	0.00	0.96	0.92	0.95
1.2	Human rights and Protection against Torture	0.82	0.49	0.15	0.69	0.84	0.91
1.2.1	International Protection of Human Rights	0.83	0.72	0.17	0.75	0.86	0.94
1.2.2	National Protection of Civil and Political Rights	0.81	0.25	0.13	0.63	0.81	0.88
1.3	State Accountability	0.75	0.41	0.47	0.88	0.73	0.86
1.3.1	Executive accountability to legislature	0.76	0.34	0.29	0.80	0.77	0.70
1.3.1.1	Legislature's influence over executive	0.82	0.53	0.27	0.85	0.78	0.83
1.3.1.2	Legislature's institutional autonomy	0.90	0.50	0.35	0.85	0.75	0.75
1.3.1.3	Legislature's specific powers	0.60	0.40	0.50	0.80	0.70	0.70
1.3.1.4	Legislature's institutional capacity	0.83	0.17	0.33	1.00	0.83	0.83
1.3.1.5	Conditions for opposition	0.63	0.11	0.00	0.48	0.77	0.36
1.3.2	Access to Information	0.57	0.14	0.71	0.93	0.57	1.00
1.3.3	Transparent budgeting	1.00	0.75	0.60	0.98	1.00	0.99
1.3.4	Democratic control over security and law enforcement institutions	0.66	0.40	0.26	0.83	0.59	0.76
1.3.4.1	Internal control	0.56	0.36	0.50	0.81	0.47	0.75
1.3.4.2	Parliamentary oversight	0.61	0.39	0.19	1.00	0.82	0.86
1.3.4.3	Transparency	0.74	0.50	0.23	0.85	0.52	0.83
1.3.4.4	Civil society oversight	0.71	0.35	0.14	0.67	0.53	0.61
1.4	Independent Media	0.67	0.04	0.20	0.59	0.55	0.54
1.5	Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Assembly and Association	0.84	0.29	0.09	0.64	0.83	0.66
1.5.1	Freedom of opinion and expression	0.83	0.25	0.17	0.58	0.75	0.50
1.5.2	The Right to Freedom of Assembly	0.83	0.33	0.06	0.44	0.89	0.67
1.5.3	The Right to Freedom of Association	0.86	0.29	0.05	0.88	0.86	0.81
1.6	Independent Judiciary	0.71	0.43	0.50	0.57	0.66	0.56
1.6.1	Appointment, promotion and dismissal of judges	0.50	0.17	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.17
1.6.2	Institutional independence	0.71	0.29	0.43	0.57	0.57	0.57
1.6.3	Judicial powers	0.75	0.50	0.63	0.88	1.00	0.75
1.6.4	Accountability and transparency	0.88	0.75	0.63	0.50	0.75	0.75
1.7	Equal opportunities and non-discrimination	0.47	0.29	0.21	0.67	0.76	0.67

		Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
1.7.1	International and regional HR legal documents	0.54	0.33	0.21	0.58	0.71	0.71
1.7.2	Anti-discrimination legislation and policy	0.39	0.25	0.21	0.77	0.81	0.63
1.8	Fight against corruption	0.88	0.52	0.49	0.79	0.65	0.51
1.8.1	Corruption incidence and the capacity to criminalize and prosecute corruption	0.73	0.16	0.38	0.51	0.51	0.38
1.8.2	Internal and external auditing	1.00	0.60	0.40	0.90	0.65	0.40
1.8.3	Public procurement	0.90	0.80	0.70	0.95	0.80	0.75
1.9	Public administration	0.59	0.52	0.52	0.72	0.68	0.72
1.9.1	Policy formulation and co-ordination	0.64	0.31	0.54	0.69	0.62	0.67
1.9.2	Local government	0.75	0.64	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.79
1.9.3	Impartial and professional civil service	0.38	0.61	0.53	0.72	0.67	0.69
1.9.3.1	Legal framework of civil service management	0.82	0.77	0.64	0.86	0.91	0.91
1.9.3.2	Institutional framework	0.33	1.00	0.33	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.9.3.3	Employment and remuneration	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.50	0.50	0.00
1.9.3.4	Recruitment, promotion, and disciplinary procedures	0.56	0.50	0.26	0.82	0.56	0.76
1.9.3.5	Management of public service quality	0.20	0.80	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.80
2	POLICY CONVERGENCE	0.64	0.53	0.48	0.70	0.80	0.77
2.1	Market Economy and DCFTA	0.65	0.46	0.45	0.77	0.66	0.78
2.1.1	Market Economy	0.83	0.60	0.47	0.85	0.71	0.71
2.1.1.1	Market entry and exit	0.87	0.54	0.68	0.81	0.47	0.64
2.1.1.2	Competition policy and state aid	0.86	0.39	0.12	0.82	0.67	0.85
2.1.1.3	Private property	0.68	0.76	0.51	0.92	0.79	0.64
2.1.1.4	Intellectual property rights (IPRs)	0.90	0.71	0.56	0.85	0.90	0.72
2.1.2	Trade policy convergence	0.47	0.32	0.44	0.69	0.62	0.84
2.1.2.1	Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)	0.36	0.18	0.41	0.60	0.74	0.88
2.1.2.2	Sanitary and phytosanitary measures	0.42	0.23	0.40	0.65	0.48	0.85
2.1.2.3	Customs and trade facilitation	0.62	0.56	0.50	0.81	0.64	0.79
2.1.3	Sectoral cooperation	0.50	0.41	0.30	0.66	0.79	0.74
2.1.3.1	Financial services and movement of capital	0.55	0.41	0.43	0.62	0.81	0.79
2.1.3.2	Digital Services	0.44	0.39	0.17	0.69	0.78	0.69
2.2	Freedom, Security and Justice	0.73	0.60	0.50	0.94	0.95	0.90
2.2.1	Visa dialogue	0.75	0.50	0.17	0.92	0.92	0.92
2.2.2	Irregular immigration, including readmission	1.00	0.71	0.57	1.00	0.93	1.00
2.2.3	Border management	0.20	0.40	0.69	0.83	1.00	0.80
2.2.4	Security and combatting organised crime	0.95	0.78	0.58	1.00	0.95	0.90
2.3	Energy: Legislation Convergence and Energy Policy	0.59	0.51	0.58	0.44	0.83	0.74
2.3.1	Institutional framework of energy market	0.26	0.36	0.17	0.46	0.65	0.65
2.3.2	Energy efficiency	0.75	0.67	1.00	0.42	1.00	0.83
2.3.3	Renewable Energy	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.83	0.83	0.67

		Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
2.3.4	Energy Security	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2.4	Environment and climate policy	0.60	0.61	0.40	0.71	0.94	0.74
2.4.1	Environmental policy	0.54	0.82	0.60	0.69	0.88	0.67
2.4.2	Climate Change	0.65	0.40	0.20	0.73	1.00	0.80
2.5	Transport: Regulatory Policy	0.63	0.46	0.48	0.63	0.61	0.71
3	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	0.51	0.45	0.67	0.54	0.59	0.64
3.1	People	0.50	0.42	0.80	0.50	0.61	0.63
3.2	Planet	0.62	0.58	0.70	0.66	0.64	0.73
3.3	Prosperity	0.59	0.46	0.73	0.57	0.60	0.70
3.4	Peace and Partnership	0.33	0.33	0.46	0.43	0.51	0.51

PROPAGANDA AND POSTHEROISM IN RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE. A MEDITATION AROUND CONFLICT AS AN IMAGINED COMMUNITY

*Silviu PETRE**

Abstract. *The post Cold War euphoria pervaded also strategic studies with the belief that future wars will be waged in a postheroic manner, to take Edward Luttwak's famous catchphrase- technological intensive and almost cost free in human lives, they hailed the promise of delivering swift victories for industrialized nations. Our article issues a critique based on the sociology of Émile Durkheim and Georg Simmel and embeds postheroism in a wider notion called "war as an imagined community" arguing that postheroic operations work to the extent they are limited and cover in a solid narrative, both for the international community as well as for the impatient home public. The case studied here is the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war started in February 2022.*

Keywords: *Russia, Ukraine, postheroic warfare, imagined community*

Most reflections on warfare look at it as a dramatic deviation from peace which is considered to be de facto default condition of humankind; an anti-social endeavor which destroys the collective fabric and not an alternative way of socialization. Given the statement above, if we are to take it as premises, conflicts not only tear people apart, but they also bring them together albeit in a counterintuitive manner. Such result would not be possible in the first place absent mass organisation. Whereas the hobbesian state of nature arrests people in a forever brownian status, warfare means well-organised enterprises pitted together against others similar. It does not matter whether we speak about tribes, kingdoms, modern nation-states, or transcontinental empires, warfare ambivalently captures human action bouncing between solidarity and adversity.

Borrowing and paraphrasing Benedict Anderson's now classical dictum according to which nations are imagined communities, present article will use a similar argument to describe the nature of warfare with a focus on contemporary landscape.

A corollary to the aforementioned statement is that, just like the nationbuilding process requires myth making, propaganda, and public communication, so war as imagined community combines actual fighting with projecting and maintaining an aura of legitimacy and invincibility, so that each actor might mobilise its own camp and at the same time attract allies by vilifying the enemy. An interesting consequence is that, given the contemporary public reluctance to support the heavy costs of military operations, armed forces need quick victories with as little casualties as possible. Technology fosters the illusion that unequivocal results are thus possible without boots on the ground or long term logistics. In clausewitzian terms, operations executed in a digital age tend to be absolute but

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not total. In order to remain popular, governments tend to keep efforts at a minimum absent massive mobilisation.

Methodologically speaking, the notion of warfare as imagined community has two aims:

1. To bring closer in a more intimate dialogue strategic studies with social sciences through protagonists like Carl von Clausewitz, Émile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, Marshall McLuhan, and Benedict Anderson.
2. To issue a critique towards Edward Luttwak's postheroic warfare and argue that this is dangerous premises to be employed as mental framework by contemporary armed forces.

The case study chosen is the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation and the manner in which on ground fighting is doubled by a game of propaganda and counterpropaganda.

The structure of this essay is triple. The first chapter grapples with the capacity of recent technologies to provide a filtered, selective, frequently doctored image of reality based on the sociology of Émile Durkheim and Georg Simmel. The second dwells upon the role of myth making in human conflicts whereas the third orbits around the ongoing Russian invasion against Ukraine and the symbols employed by each side to spin the interpretation of the events in one's favor.

I. Progress and the capability to select personal reality

The progress of humankind, to the extent one can validly talk about it, can be interpreted as the growing capability to modify reality, both one's private reality, but as well reality as a collective, political project. To the extent that our technological means along with economic resources have grown, reality is less and less viewed as a noun, a given or a question of fatality and more and more as a verb, as in the ability <to realise> something.

Ironic as it is, Enlightenment pushed forward progress as a new form of fatality, an imperative to constantly change things in order to go to a presumable better state. "One cannot go against progress" reveals this obligation to frequently adapt and update. Within this logic modernity becomes a question of modality, a state or improvisation beset to change whenever something more appropriate appears on the horizon.

Philosophical systems written by William Paley, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, Goethe or Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx enshrined progress as a constant explained in either theological or materialistic terms.

In an effort to explain the evolution of modernity Émile Durkheim identified division of labor as the main theme. His argument goes that the red thread of human history is the ever deepening specialization. At first, the tribal stage was marked but what he called *mechanic solidarity*. That age was beset by the lack of specialisation, each member having the same skills and performing almost the same tasks as anyone else. Later on, narrowing specialty created what Durkheim called *organic solidarity* when each member of a given group is embedded in interdependence. He or she depends on the craft of the others and is depended upon living in intercourse of reciprocity. At the psychological level, division of labor correlates with enhanced intelligence and a stronger self consciousness- individuals step up to mature as persons. Even though Durkheim's later work dwells upon other matters, putting together *On suicide* (1897) and *the Origins of religious forms* (1912) help us to understand the Durkheimian notion of *anomie*- the condition of instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values or from a lack of purpose or ideals (Britannica).

Published at the very end of the XIX century, *On suicide* compiles the statistics available at that time and goes beyond them in order to explain the social causes of self harm. Durkheimian account finds *anomie* the main culprit for suicide- a stasis of estrangement due to the lack of rules or the breaking of collective bonds. Absent those and individuals end up in malevolence. Pieced together with the conclusion in *Division du travail*, one can notice a contradiction within the Durkheimian oeuvre- either division of labor strengthens the social fabric, either it fosters anomie! A reasonable conclusion should state that the aforementioned division of labor does not foster a win-win situation but a social environment where some are integrated and benefit, whereas others are tossed aside to experience anomie along with a string of shortcomings. Putting Georg Simmel in dialogue with Durkheim (Bentley, 1926: 250-256) we reach a more realistic portrait of industrialised modern world made up not of a single body, but of many smaller groups (Simmel, 1910: 372-391). Simmel's account completes Durkheim's by stressing how individuals try to preserve their mental sanity in an ever more urbanized setting where money dissolve traditions (Holt, Searls, 1994: 65-69; Dodd, 2012: 146-176; Coeckelbergh, 2015: 258-280) and the bustling rhythm of life overwhelms the senses (Simmel, 1903). Both of them anticipate Benedict Anderson's description of nation as an *imagined community* (Anderson, 2016). If we hold this image to be true, then the feeling of belonging does not come naturally, is not a given, but something that must be created and maintained by an authority. National literature, the system of public education, periodic holidays, banks issuing currencies, tribunals and habeas corpus broadcast the feeling of the "political We" with all the derivative rights and obligations.

Call this set of measures mass culturalisation, indoctrination or whichever you like, one witnesses here the process of politically reenchanting the world. In reverse to what Max Weber, contemporary with both Durkheim and Simmel called "disenchantment of the world", industrial humanity, who never really and entirely abandoned religion, repaints old gods or erects on the pedestal new ones dressed in the garb of science (like the State, free market, infinite progress, racial purity, proletarian revolution or nation itself and carbon-zero footprint in recent times). Back to Durkheim and to his last major book, "Original forms of religious life" (Durkheim, 1912; 1995) we can meditate about the universality and scale of totemisation brought forth by technological means. Trying to figure out his three major books in a system, we can ask whether anomie is the greatest single ontological issue of modernity (Glazer, 1947; Bulmahn, 2000) and which all ambitious political project of the XX (liberalism, corporatism, communism and fascism or the economy of communion stemmed from the Catholic Church) tried to solve it one way or another!

The consequence of totemisation of the abovementioned referentials (state, free market, nations and so forth) was the rising expectations at all levels. Governments promise to erase poverty and create a: middle class affluent society (as in the case of Western advanced democracies), classless society riddled of backwardness heaving the pretence of a terrestrial paradise (as in the case of communism), Aryan dominated world purged of racial rivals (Nazi fantasy) was mirrored by the public growing demand for higher salaries, longer spare time, more consumerist choices on the market all embedded in costless security and environmental friendly development.

Whereas in the first half of the XX century hubris-like quest for perfection sported a top-down hierarchical society as individuals were embedded in massive national projects, today mass enterprises have a more down-top of peer-to-peer character→ We, contemporary people no longer believe in political utopias, therefore we retreat in personal bubbles and customise the surroundings to a beautiful, if not flawless canvass. Embellished

resumes bedecked with grossly exaggerated or even absent merits (Hauptman, 2011: 171-173), social-media photoshopped lives and bodies (MacCallum, Widdows, 2018: 235-245), PR campaigns and country brands or esthetic surgery spell the high standards of a Weltanschauung that no longer accepts failure, powerlessness, old age and even death itself. Pushing forth Durkheimian conclusions about the division of work, one can witness a differentiation not only between different daily tasks performed by individuals or different material products or services they labor, but between our different postures (citizens or workers). We witness today in complex capitalist societies (Western or non-Western, authoritarian or democratic) a certain autonomy between the political dimension of public life and the economic one. Whereas on the economic realm people are pushed to have a job and perform well there in order to secure their finance and maintain daily lifestyles, as citizens they enjoy a selective relationship with the political (they can be active as social militants, become members of NGOs, attend strikes, vote or they may very well remain passive to all the above focusing on their private sphere). We would call this flexible public engagement as *solipdarity* (a combination of solidarity and solipsism). Here we have a noun describing the manner of being both together and also solitary, on our own. We perform different tasks together so as to assure the daily bread, but we tend to live our dreams alone in autarchic intimacy. In the echo-chambers of one's making, many contemporary humans customise their perfect microuniverses or surround themselves so as to repeatedly confirm their biases. President's Obama farewell speech where he warned against living in one's own bubble¹ or Neil De Grasse Tyson statement that Internet is the greatest confirmation machine (Tyson, 09 Feb 2020; Tyson, 21 April 2020)² are evocative in this sense.

1.1. Grappling with postheroic warfare as notion and reality

The aftermath of the Second World War was marked by two ideological opposing blocks, decolonisation and the advent of nuclear era which marked a certain division of labor with regard to waging battles. At the top tier of the international system great powers of the day (with US and USSR in the front row and Great Britain, France, and China in the second one) acknowledged the existential perils of a nuclear clash and developed sophisticated procedures to avoid doomsday one ticket scenarios relegating real conflicts to small powers. Leaving aside high pressure moments like the Cuban missile crisis or the Sino-Soviet border tension on the Ussuri river, Cold War became hot in places like Korean Peninsula, Vietnam, Angola, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan across the 1980s and so forth. Mutual Assured Destruction remained the paramount strategic notion modulating the compromise between combat eagerness and prudence. With the advent of electronic era, a

1 See the original text: "And that's not easy to do. For too many of us, it's become safer to retreat into our own bubbles, whether in our neighborhoods or on college campuses, or places of worship, or especially our social media feeds, surrounded by people who look like us and share the same political outlook and never challenge our assumptions. The rise of naked partisanship, and increasing economic and regional stratification, the splintering of our media into a channel for every taste — all this makes this great sorting seem natural, even inevitable. And increasingly, we become so secure in our bubbles that we start accepting only information, whether it's true or not, that fits our opinions, instead of basing our opinions on the evidence that is out there." (Obama, January 10, 2017)

2 Neil de Grasse Tyson, Twitter, 09 Feb 2020,

<https://twitter.com/neiltyson/status/1226279257049051141> (last accessed September 29, 2022)

Neil deGrasse Tyson, Search Engines and Conformation Bias, Youtube, 21 April 2020,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1_RX8rWaRg (last accessed September 29, 2022;

new generation of martial instruments became available with the promise to: 1) make MAD obsolete, and 2) wage remote conflicts with little to no casualties for one's part. US famous SDI- Strategic Defense Initiative popularly known as Star Wars was projected to make US and NATO homelands invulnerable to any potential Soviet ballistic threat. Even though SDI proved an expensive multibillion extravaganza with approximate results in bringing the Soviet War to the end and pressuring USSR to finally implode, its underpinning philosophy spilled over the next phase called RMA- Revolution in Military Affairs. Whereas SDI remained a top-down approach, RMA's promise was to apply information capabilities to expand the terrain awareness, cut the waste implied in search and destroy missions and finally make the war a surgical laparoscopic enterprise, at least for US and other Western affluent countries. RMA was successfully applied during the First Gulf War against Saddam Hussein and afterwards embedded in different small scale military interventions during the 1990s but at the same time wedded to a reluctance to intervene with troops on the grounds and tolerate casualties. Such was the advent of the postheroic warfare how Edward Luttwak baptised it (Luttwak, May/June 1995; Luttwak, 1999: 127-139). Made up of high technological means and casualty avoidance, the notion and its reality seemed appropriate for a decade dominated by the CNN effect (Gilboa, 2005: 27-44). In the globalising world of the 1990s where atrocities were brought forth very quickly for a Western public with higher moral standards but at the same time unwilling to spend too much on security or engaging in crusades beyond the defensive national interest. In his interpretation, Luttwak explains UN or NATO slow and modest effort to stop the disintegration of Yugoslavia and Somalia by the fact that Cold War tradition created large bureaucratic military organisation with mostly theoretical capabilities and arsenals but with poor combat experience (Luttwak, 1999: 127-139). When MAD was no longer usable in the post 1990s world witnessing civil conflicts, remote air intervention became the solution satisfying both UN requirements and CNN global public.

2. The role and the risks of propaganda in conflicts

It is a truism that since the most ancient times, signaling was part of human conflicts and remained so, improved with each technological update. In a simpler fashion of putting it, signaling means basically two things: camouflage and propaganda. The former aims deterring the distinction between you and your surroundings. Using the parlance of communication science, camouflage cloaks one's presence in the noise. The latter, propaganda performs a dual mission: strengthening the moral of your own side and your allies and at the same time lowering the one of your opponents.

Employing once again the Durkheimian prose, *propaganda should totemise or de-totemise certain symbols in order to increase the solidarity within your own ranks and in the opposite direction, to increase the anomie of the adversarial side.*

The evolution of propaganda varied and was correlated to the conception of warfare. Thus, in Middle Ages, both within Christianity and Islam conflicts were justified in religious terms, whereas at the onset of modernity the same phenomenon adopted the language of state reason/ *raison d'état* and gave its loyalty towards nation as referential (even though religion was never really erased). In the same line, at the beginning of the XX century, with the success of social Darwinism, mass mobilisation was hailed as a form of hygiene, potential slaughter was spun as the supreme trial meant to separate weed from chaff in terms of gens and help breath a superior humankind. The litany of warfare hailed its advent as a medicine against laziness, idleness and materialistic hedonism. However, even though nationalism and imperialism still rung the bell for marches, after the carnage of First World

War, people entered a deep soul-searching about what went so terribly wrong. In this regard, initiatives like Briand-Kellog Pact (1928), the Society of Nations and its successor, UN translated the liberal optimism that war can if not silenced forever than limited by international norms and arbitrage checked by arbitration. No longer a desirable outcome or an extreme sport for the nations, warfare was deemed an anomaly as can be noticed even at semantic level. The fact the war ministries morphed into defense ministries or that 'security' emerged as a buzzword different from power and endowed with milder connotations. Present day propaganda learned those lessons and refashioned messages so as to embed moralistic claims and defensive rationale (Leucea, Popescu, 2019: 88-105). No one starts a fight any longer by invoking his nude power play or the will of God.

At the same time, seen as a division of labor, warfare varied across millennia. There have been periods when all members of a community attended hunting or martial activities followed by other when warfare was restricted to a limited number.

Middle Ages, Renaissance and present times fall within the first type, whereas XIX-XX centuries featuring mass enrollment (*levée en masse*) fall within the second. The relative delegitimation of armed violence was correlated to technological breakthrough in producing the postheroic phenomenon – a way of combat not by sacrificing your own troops but by consuming the latest technical paraphernalia (drones, intelligence rockets, nanobots) able to strike only armed enemies and avoid civilians and other unnecessary casualties or damages (Luttwak, May/June 1995; Luttwak, 1999: 127-139; Castillo, 2017). Adding to all of the above the control of information and the hygienisation of language, battlefield seems something virtual, ethereal, feeling that prompted Jean Baudrillard to say the Gulf War never really took place (Baudrillard, 1991) or others to speak about virtual (Ignatieff, 2001) or virtuous warfare (Der Derian, 2000: 771-788). Such hygienisation of carnage remains of course an illusion, but we should see it as a part of the quest of perfection that stems from our *Weltanschauung*. If the logic we have just charted is plausible, then we might conceive conflict as an imagined community where the immediacy of armed struggle is covered and thus mediated by an informational sphere which restricts what is shown and what is hidden according to the interests, proclivity or ideological bias of the public (or people within the public). Summing up, we therefore define *war as an institution which remakes social intercourse according to the enmity of the actors involved using lethal means*.³

Less pursued as a research subject is the question of autopropaganda- action through which an actor (political, military or social) comes to believe the very messages he/she sent to fool the adversary. Thus, the aforementioned actor become the victim of his/her own narrative out of the need to maintain public support. I.e. Individual or group psychology are the more important in authoritarian regimes the more objective bureaucracy or unbiased counselling are dismissed and the regime evolves into a gigantic machine of confirming its premises. Pace Karl Popper, we are dealing here with an effort to fortify yourself against any falsification- a must if one desires science and knowledge to progress, according to the Austrian-born philosopher.

By using the instruments of evolutionist biology, authors Shankar Vedantam and Bill Mesler explain the functioning of the human brain in the fashion below:

"Our eyes and brain are not in the truth business; they are in the functionality business, and it turns out that discarding nine hundred and ninety-nine million, nine hundred

³ By institution we have in mind the sociological meaning of a stable and durable set of rules. Common parlance confuses institutions and organisations, frequently submitting the former to the later.

and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and sixty bits of data out of every billion is extremely functional.

What happens with visual information also happens in nearly every part of our mental lives. We think we are seeing, hearing and processing the truth, but we often are not. As with our eyes, it turns out there are excellent reasons to prioritize functionality over reality in every domain. Yes, this means you miss the truth, but it gets you to the real goal: Your brain has been designed to help you survive, to forage for opportunities, to get along with mates and friends, to raise offspring to adulthood, and to avoid feelings of existential despair. From the perspective of evolution, objective truth is not only not the goal, it is not even the only path to the goal.” (Vedantam, Mesler, 2020: 13)

When we are dealing with a ruler or a narcissistic elite, then the appetite for conspiratorial thinking is more at home and there are greater chances to underpin major actions. History teaches many instances when the intense belief in conspiracies weakened different political regimes or even drove them to destruction (Kay, 2021: 104-128). Professor G.R. Berridge lists Third Reich and Nasser's Egypt among examples due to their obsession towards antisemitism and anti-Judaism (Berridge, 2013: 145).

Summing up we move to define ***war as imagined community*** as a mostly lethal confrontation in which the hostile protagonists aim to rewind the social and political boundaries of an imagined community so as to gather moral support and material resource and deprive the enemy of them.

In a simpler fashion, ***war as imagined community*** signifies a conflict in which military victory is heavily dependent on success of the imagination⁴→ you win to the extent you sell your narrative and silence the one broadcasted by your rivals.

3. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the making of a global moral community

Russia's postheroic invasion of Ukraine has been building up for years at both factual and narrative levels, although it gained momentum in the last year prior to happening.

At the rhetorical level the *casus belli* should be seen as the latest comer of an older tune which gained more and more weight since Vladimir Putin's earlier years when the revision of history unfolded along with his consolidation of the power vertical. Operating on the premises that the Fall of the USSR was the greatest 'geopolitical catastrophe of the XX century', the Russian president embarked on a quest to rewire the then state of historiography which he considered too defeatist and in need of a triumphalist revamping. Adding an ideological twist to his and his KGB colleagues grip on power, Russian president together with Sergey Nariskin, Serghey Shoigu surrounded by a plethora of friendly historians and like-minded journalists aimed to exalt Russian Orthodox slavophile identity and catapult it against the West depicted as geopolitical hegemonic and morally corrupt.

Justifying Kremlin pretence towards her neighbors, writers such as Aleksandr Dughin (Dughin, 27 martie 2016) and Serghei Karaganov (Karaganov, 2018:85-93) articulated a geopolitical perspective based on civilization and not anymore on the Westphalian nation-state protected by the legality of sovereignty (Suslov, 2012: 575-595). Dughinian lecture envisioned Russia as the core of Slavic civilization and thus with the right to dominate and protect satellite neighbor state especially those with Russian minorities. Even though Dughin mystique is grossly exaggerated in the Western media and his influence over the Russian elites more of a hype (Laruelle: 16 March 2022), Putin two

4 Imagination which must be fed with certain selected images.

speeches prior to the invasion are largely consonant to Dughinian vision. Next we shall set our attention towards them. The one from 22 February talks about the importance of Ukraine for Russian national interest while the other broadcast in the very eve of the invasion on 24 February explains the perils of NATO expansion. Both of them an hour long, they can be considered the subject and the predicative of the matter- the first goes to the essence and describes the state of fact, whereas latter tells the audition what action should be taken.

Starting with the statement that "the situation in Donbas has reached a critical, acute stage" Putin moves *ex abruptum* to the core of the matter which is the importance of Ukraine: "I would like to emphasise again that Ukraine is not just a neighbouring country for us. It is an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space. These are our comrades, those dearest to us – not only colleagues, friends and people who once served together, but also relatives, people bound by blood, by family ties.

Since time immemorial, the people living in the south-west of what has historically been Russian land have called themselves Russians and Orthodox Christians. This was the case before the 17th century, when a portion of this territory rejoined the Russian state, and after.

"From then on, the televised historical schooling about the ethnical and cultural intimation between Russians and Ukrainians and how in the very aftermath of the Russian Revolution Lenin created Ukrainian statehood by giving away Russian traditional land:

"So, I will start with the fact that modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia or, to be more precise, by the Bolshevik, Communist Russia. This process started practically right after the 1917 revolution, and Lenin and his associates did it in a way that was extremely harsh on Russia – by separating, severing what is historically Russian land. Nobody asked the millions of people living there what they thought."

Russian friendship towards Kiev extended even after the Soviet demise, Moscow, even though weary from defeat shouldered alone the debts of former USSR and provided assistance to her neighbors:

"Despite all these injustices, lies and outright pillage of Russia, it was our people who accepted the new geopolitical reality that took shape after the dissolution of the USSR, and recognized the new independent states. Not only did Russia recognise these countries, but helped its CIS partners, even though it faced a very dire situation itself. This included our Ukrainian colleagues, who turned to us for financial support many times from the very moment they declared independence. Our country provided this assistance while respecting Ukraine's dignity and sovereignty." (President of Russia: February 21, 2022)

Ungrateful of Moscow's extra mile generosity, Ukraine is snubbed as "it was striking how the Ukrainian authorities always preferred dealing with Russia in a way that ensured that they enjoy all the rights and privileges while remaining free from any obligation. The officials in Kiev replaced partnership with a parasitic attitude acting at times in an extremely brash manner. Suffice it to recall the continuous blackmail on energy transits and the fact that they literally stole gas." (President of Russia: February 21, 2022)

Careful to draw a wedge between people, the average Ukrainian and "the Ukrainian authorities – I would like to emphasize this – began by building their statehood on the negation of everything that united us, trying to distort the mentality and historical memory of millions of people, of entire generations living in Ukraine. It is not surprising that Ukrainian society was faced with the rise of far-right nationalism, which rapidly

developed into aggressive Russophobia and neo-Nazism.” (President of Russia: February 21, 2022)

Forasmuch as the 21 February speech focused on the bilateral relations between two Slavic countries, the one on 24 February described Russia's place within the global hierarchy of power. Using the situation in Donbas as pretext, Russian president went further on to describing and simultaneously decrying a world of Realpolitik where international rights do not possess any validity unless sustained by might:

“Anything that does not suit the dominant state, the powers that be, is denounced as archaic, obsolete and useless. At the same time, everything it regards as useful is presented as the ultimate truth and forced on others regardless of the cost, abusively and by any means available. Those who refuse to comply are subjected to strong-arm tactics.

Taking advantage of USSR weakening in the late 1980s, the North Atlantic alliance continued to expand despite Russian protests and concerns”.

To back this logic, several examples are given starting with the 1999 bombing campaign against Serbia and continuing with Iraq, Libya and Syria. Instead of a better world order, America's footprint created havoc and **never(m)ending anarchy**:

“As a result we see a tremendous loss in human life, damage, destruction, and a colossal upsurge of terrorism.

Overall, it appears that nearly everywhere, in many regions of the world where the United States brought its law and order, this created bloody, non-healing wounds and the curse of international terrorism and extremism. I have only mentioned the most glaring but far from only examples of disregard for international law.” (President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts>)

Western incessant bullying is contrasted with Russian patience and bonafide:

“To reiterate: they have deceived us, or, to put it simply, they have played us. Sure, one often hears that politics is a dirty business. It could be, but it shouldn't be as dirty as it is now, not to such an extent. This type of con-artist behaviour is contrary not only to the principles of international relations but also and above all to the generally accepted norms of morality and ethics. Where is justice and truth here? Just lies and hypocrisy all around.” (President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts>)

Going back and forth between global and regional levels of analysis, Vladimir Putin turns his indictment against contemporary Ukraine, deemed an “anti-Russia” ruled by pro-Western crony oligarch and neo-Nazi paramilitary groups nonrepresentative for the majority of enslaved Ukrainians. While he conjures the iconography of fascism and recounts 1941 as pivotal moment of Hitlerite Germany attacking USSR and the beginning of the Great Patriot War, the listener is compelled to see the analogy between past times and contemporary perils.

So as to mitigate the repetition of doom, Russian president announces it had just authorised a “special operation” to protect the separatist republics of Lugansk and Donbas and at the same time denazify Ukraine.

By placing Russia as the victim of US and NATO's eastward expansion and at the same time announcing a <special operation> and not a full scale war that would engage the effort of every citizen, the regime tried to fortify its moral position and at the same time assure the public that it has everything under control (a special operation is more like a police job and employ a modest array of means, both in humans and materials). The belief that ambitious external goals can be achieved with little resource in a small amount of time proved to be a mistake made by several great powers during the course of history. Germany

in 1914, the same country under another regime in 1939, USSR in Afghanistan in 1979 as well as US in Vietnam and later in the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, at least in the first phase.

After the unfolding of the attacks, a massive rally staged in Moscow March 19 2022 provided the opportunity for another speech in which Vladimir Putin repeated the claim that military intervention was meant "to get people out of their misery, out of this genocide, that is the main reason, the motive and purpose of the military operation that we began in Donbas and Ukraine". Adorning his argument with a Biblical paraphrase – "There is no greater love than if someone gives his soul for his friends" – he exalted national unity (Dyxon: March 18, 2022).

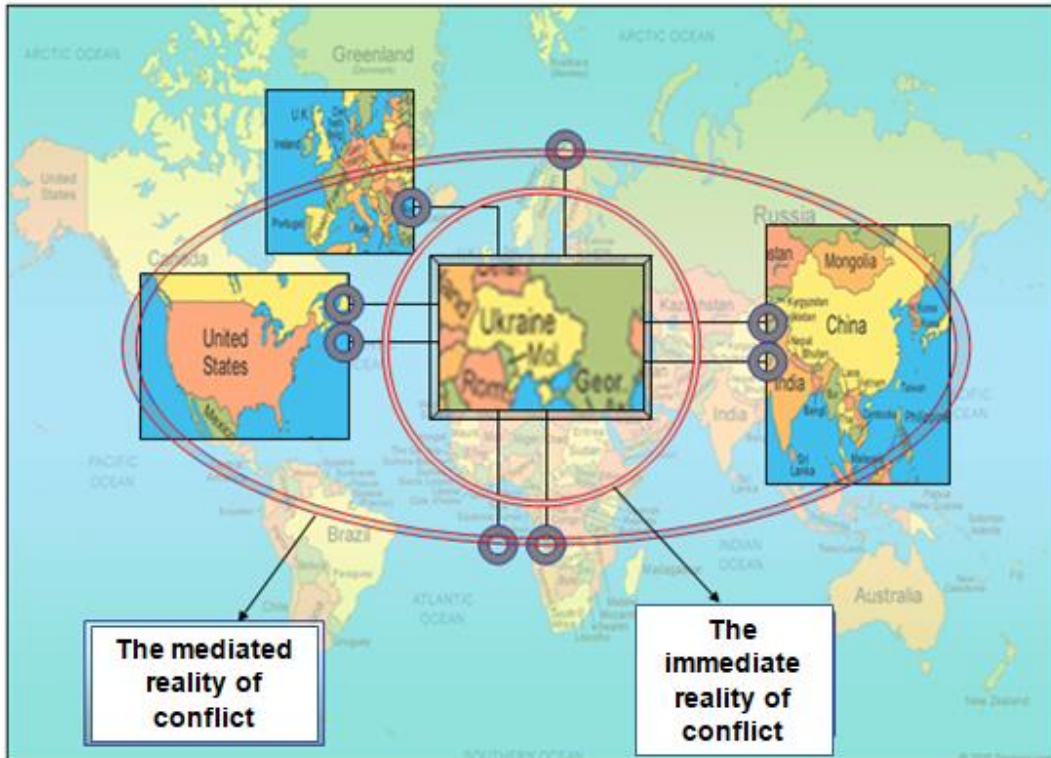


Figure 1. Multicentric interpretative model of warfare

Source: Author's editing using the site: Geology.com, <https://geology.com/world/world-map.shtml>

Russia's invasion of Ukraine represents the latent evolution of the 2014 ongoing conflict between the two countries, and which is set, according to some as the foreground of a New Cold War.

The way it was justified by Vladimir Putin correlates with the preparedness of Russian troops and their allies providing a case to reflect on the unfolding of the postheroic warfare.

3.1. Ukraine propagandistic spin

Provincial if compared to Russia but dwarfing even large European countries, Ukraine is one of the main heirs of the former USSR. Since 1992 onwards, Ukraine experienced many tribulations similar to Russian Federation, its painful soulsearching

rendered postcommunist transition a question of transaction between East and West. Occupying the faultline between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Ukraine displayed many of the shortcomings of other East European nations: weak government, inchoate rule of law, high degree of corruption correlated with social polarisation and rampant inequalities. As Ukrainian pro Western elites made inroads towards NATO and the EU, Kremlin felt its neighbour was steadily becoming an 'anti-Russia' to quote Vladimir Putin's remark. In 2014 Crimea's annexation after a façade referendum, the flight of the pro-Russian former president Viktor Yanukovych and the break out of Euromaidan brought instability in Eastern Europe and inched Kremlin and the West closer to another Cold War. In geopolitical lexicon, Ukraine represents the *Mittelpunkt* or cradle of Eastern Slavs and Ukraine "the Mother of all cities" to repeat an emotional charged dictum (Trenin: 21.03.2018; Shlapentokh: 08 September 2021; Trenin: 10.09.2021).

Blessed with an array of qualities that make her desired both by the West as well as the East (surface, heavy industry, strategic position, a large diaspora scattered several countries), and after having lost Crimea, Ukraine did not find hard to sell her case as an embattled victim. Even though outnumbered and outgunned, Ukrainian armed forces are fighting to defend their homeland with a morale and level of preparedness significantly superior to the situation back in 2014, thus presenting themselves not only with a just cause, but also with reasonably winning chances. Ukraine's propagandistic struggle displays at least two levels which we consider here: the effort of the elites entered around the president; the grass root level which have as protagonists the armed forces or ordinary citizens.

3.1.1. The presidential gambit. Backed by the factors above, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky embarked on a serial discourses spree to win the international public. Speech after speech, delivered online and dressed in the same combat fatigue and passionate demeneavour, Zelensky's stubbornness transformed him from a political lightweight to a respected wartime figure. From refusing John Biden's offer to escape the country to his mobile Phone delivered live where he assured Ukrainians of his determination or Western European leaders about his probable assassination to posing with his wife for *Vogue Magazine*, we have here the ingredients of a succesful charm offensive (Breuer: 07.06.2022; Donadio: 26 July, 2022; Ward: 15 September 2022).

In order to jolt out of neutrality different countries, Zelensky made his habit of delivering speeches on the weekly basis, each of them no more than half an hour and with short sentences and Churchillian enumeration so as to arouse emotional reactions (PA Media: 8 March 2022; Federal News Service: March 16, 2022; Zelenskyy: 04 April 2022).

3.1.2. The armed forces gambit. By covering its <special operation> with a halo of legitimising arguments for both the internal as well as the international public, the Russian elites hoped to attain a hygienic relatively costless victory of Kiev, one that could later be exploited in parades and history books. It would be long until the cruel reality of warfare would penetrate the bubble so as to show how armed forces were actually waging a full scale enterprise mirrored in stalemate due to several factors such as: 1) Ukrainian heavy resistance backed by the West; 2) the failure of Russian intelligence which seemingly provided false hopes (Foy and Rathborne: March 1 2022; Standish: 08, May, 2022); 3) poor logistics caused by the same faith in a swift victory; 4) demoralised Russian soldiers who cried their bewilderment and despair in emails of phone conversations sent back home (Euronews: 31/03/2022; Siobhán O'Grady and Galouchka: September 15, 2022).

Ukrainians quickly seized the opportunity to exploit such facts in order to: a) show the world the cruel behavior of Russian forces (namely massacres in Bucha, Irpin, Mariupol

and others) (Wright: 13 April 2022; Ksariuk: April 28, 2022; Niland: 24 May 2022; Khara: 16 August 2022).

After a few months of fighting rearguard battles, Ukrainians unfolded two offensives, one begun in late July 2022 in the southern territories, and the second in north-eastern part of the country took by storm Russian opponents and pushed them back in disarray, thus breaking not only the front but the initial pretense that Ukraine and her political leadership could have been taken out with only a postheroic effort (Foy, Joiner, Nevitt: September 28, 2022; Terajima: October 7, 2022)

Using the Durkheimian terminology we can say that the efforts made by the Ukrainians, at presidential level and otherwise aim towards totemisation of Ukraine's cause so as to rally worldwide support and boycott the enemy.

3.1.3. Worldwide reaction. Postheroism and moral attitude

In a digital-flath-earth each major event acquire a global status. Instant communications, the existence of international organisations, NGOs and the moral awakening of public opinion assure that nothing of scale remains a forgotten island. Such is also the case for humanitarian crisis or regional wars. Even though most of them happen under the atomic threshold, each side engages in media campaigns to minimise enemy threat and attract funds or sympathy. The higher the stakes involved like religion or nationalism the wider is the engagement to the extent that contemporary wars become imagined communities to paraphrase a notion employed by Benedict Anderson to depict de reality of nation.

For that fact, the site Bellingcat created a Russia-Ukraine Monitor Map which is a crowdsourcer map compiling intelligence about troops mobilisation, drone attacks, civilian casualties and so on:

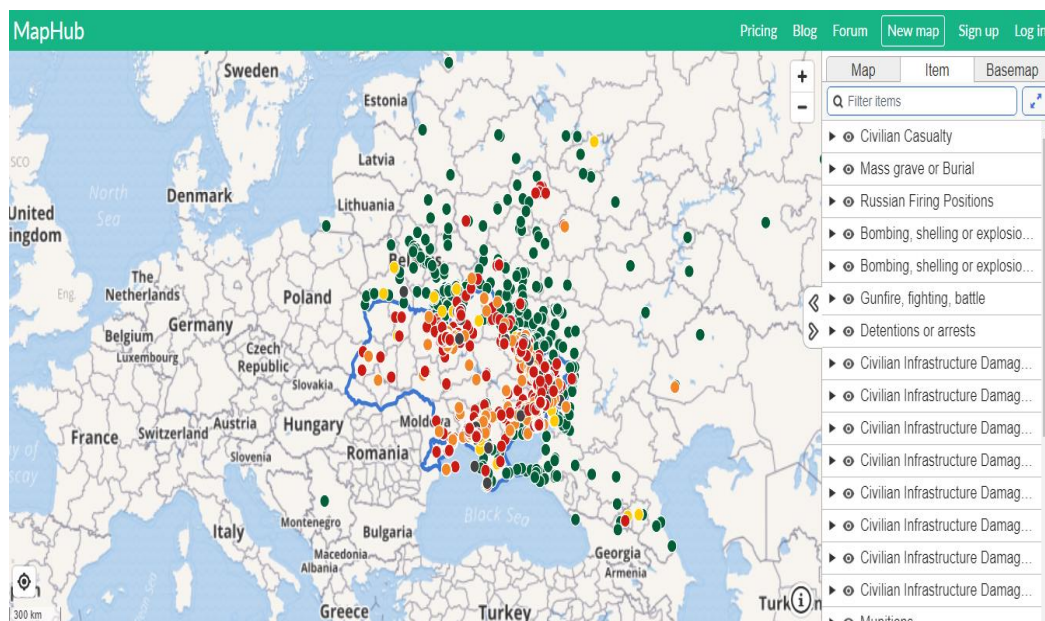


Figure 2 Bellingscat's crowdsourced depiction of Russian-Ukraine fightings

Source: Bellingscat, <https://maphub.net/Cen4infoRes/russian-ukraine-monitor> (last accessed October 11, 2022)

The planetary radius of the conflict as imaginary community impacts the plant on at least three levels: a) political and military; b) economic and food security; c) morally and esthetically.

A world divided

Government responses to the war in Ukraine

March 2022

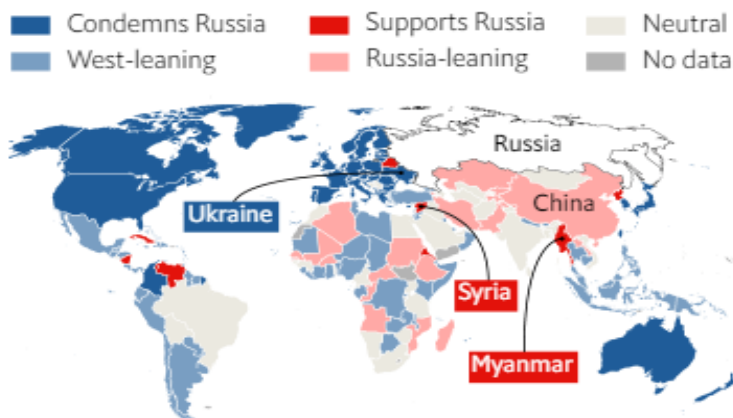


Figure 3. Divided loyalties in Russia-Ukraine armed conflict

Source: The Economist, Who are Russia's supporters? 04 April 2022

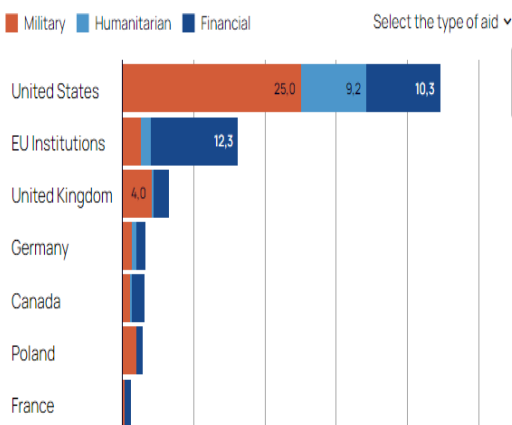
A. The effect of Russia's attack in Ukraine is felt and interpreted differently according to the sympathy the rest of the world bestows on each side. Thus, according to Economist Intelligence Unit, Western and Anglo-Saxon countries lean towards the Ukrainian cause, whereas poorer and developing or authoritarian countries tend to be pro-Russian:

Therefore the war divides the world on two axes: East-West, North-South with a third one pitting democracies against dictatorships. The hostilities are largely waged between Russia and the Western backed Ukraine using two instruments correspondent to the postheroic warfare, namely: economic sanctions and delivery of military equipment along with ammunition. International sanctions imposed by US, UE and other countries targeted an array of items like high-profile individuals, financial assets and imports of different goods. More so, several Russian banks have been cut off from the international SWIFT system. According to a compilation of different data, sanctions are credited to have produced Russia's economy an inflation growth of 17.1%, a car sales reduction of more than 83% and a 30% GDP fall as of May 2022 (BBC: 30 September 2022) ((BBC, 30 September 2022).

Along with anti-Russian came along the aid for Ukraine:

Government support to Ukraine: Type of assistance, € billion

Commitments Jan. 24 to Aug. 3, 2022. Data on 41 donors ; scroll to see more donors



Government support to Ukraine: By donor country GDP, incl. and excl. EU share

Commitments Jan. 24 to Aug. 3, 2022. Data on 40 donor countries; scroll to see more countries

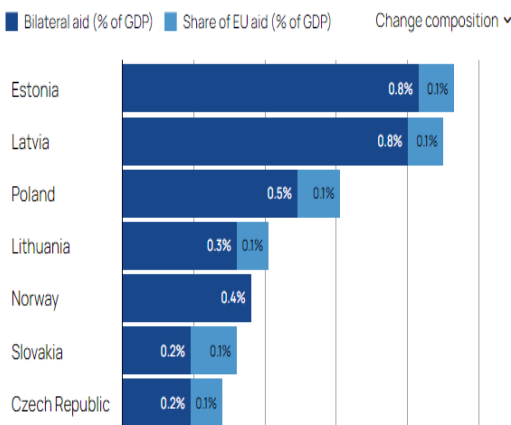


Figure 4. European financial commitment towards Ukraine

Source: Ukraine Support Tracker. Kiel Institute for World Economy, <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/?cookieLevel=not-set> (last accessed October 16, 2022)

In Durkheimian sense, we are witnessing here a concerted effort to cement the solidarity of the international society so as to back Ukraine and push Russia towards greater anomie!

B. In terms of economy and food security, the war between Ukraine and the Russian Federation is a disruptive event as both enemies are massive producer of wheat, barley, sunflower-seed and other agricultural products:

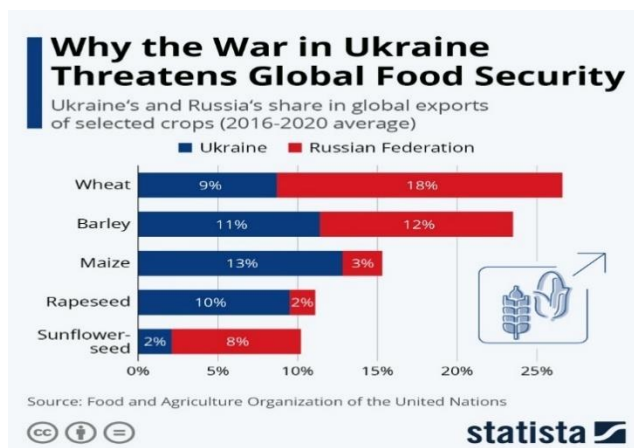


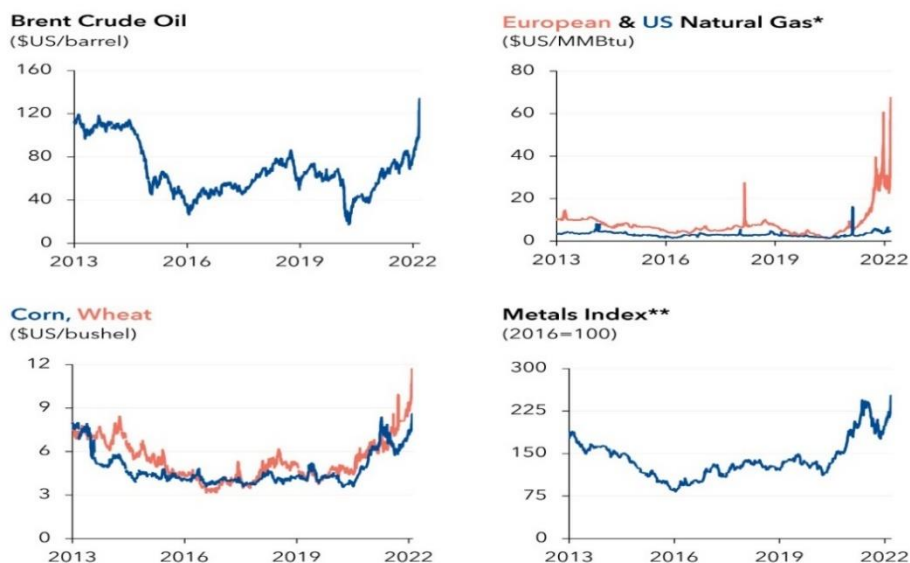
Figure 5 Impact of war in Ukraine on global food security

Source: Felix Richter, Why the War in Ukraine Threatens Global Food Security, *Statista*, April 11, 2022

Or sends ripples that cause the increase price for other items such as crude oil and metals:

Growing pressures

Prices for energy, grains, and metals soared since the invasion of Ukraine, signaling that inflation rates are poised to accelerate.



Source: Bloomberg, USDA, Datastream, and IMF staff calculations.
Note: *European & US natural gas prices use the Dutch TTF and Henry Hub as proxies, respectively. **Base Metals Price Index includes aluminum, cobalt, copper, iron ore, lead, molybdenum, nickel, tin, uranium, and zinc.

IMF

Figure 6. Financial ripples of Russian-Ukraine armed conflict

Source: IMF, <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/03/15/blog-how-war-in-ukraine-is-reverberating-across-worlds-regions-031522>

C. Russian attack against Ukraine started in late February 2022 caused a massive moral outcry across the world and brought millions to the intimacy of a global village. Even

though polarised as we could see in the chart compiled above by the EIU, proUkrainian supporters pushed for what we call here an ontological boycott of Russia. Since the first weeks of the conflict, not only governments but also tech giants and corporate sector supplemented by cultural organisations came in symphony to show their solidarity and ban Russia not only at the government level, but also on cultural terms. For example Facebook, Bolt, Uber, KFC and other came with different initiative for that matter:

Symbols of solidarity towards Ukraine



Figure 7. Restaurant commercial garnering funds for Ukraine in a Bucharest mall

Source: Author's archive. AFI Cotroceni Mall, Bucharest, 14.06.2022



Figure 8. Bolt logo with political connotations

Source: Blog Bolt.eu, <https://blog.bolt.eu/en/bolt-stands-against-invasion-in-ukraine-donates-over-e5m/>



Figure 9. Public transportation display in Malta with support message for Ukraine
Source: Graphic nearby Msida, Malta, May 2022. Author's archive

At the grassroots level ordinary people felt the need to display their stand.



Figure 10. Flag of Ukraine with coat of arms on a wall in Venice
Source: Venice, August 2022. Auhtor's archive⁵

What amazes is the depth of sanctions, as they did not limit themselves to political, military and economic elites in Kremlin, but also target cultural and sport figures were

⁵ It has to be noted that this picture was one of the very few displays of solidarity to Ukraine in Venice. According to a Romanian Phd student who talked to the author while working as presenter for the Ukraine exposition at the Biennale, she considered Venetians to be self-absorbed by domestic matters with few energy towards political events outside their area. Apart from this subjective point of view, the scarcity of displays of solidarity with Ukraine is also correlated with Italy being dependent of Russian gas. (Montanari, May 30, 2022). However, despite the reluctance of Italian industry to cut the ties with Russian supply, Rome made efforts to become independent from Kremlin. (Brambilla, Albanese, September 27, 2022)

banned from attending events. Propaganda worked in the double sense of estheticising politics and politicising the esthetics universe. Valery Gergiev, Anna Netrebko and others faced the consequences of what we just baptised an 'ontological boycott'. Several artists faced the public opprobrium over ties with the Russian president and where threatened with banishment from the international artistic industry if they fail to condemn Kremlin's aggression (Khomami, 1 mar 2022; The Violin Channel, 10 March 2022; Saberi, April 21, 2022; Schwartz, May 27, 2022).

Apart from sanction, the current warfare expanded its scene as imagined community with the contribution of many artists who found the pretext for inspiration. Joan Baez's portrait of Ukrainian acting president Zelensky was sold for 500\$ and the money donated for International Medical Corps (Arnone, Mar 31, 2022). Another example is Dribbble a freelancing platform which hosts among others art condemning the invasion on behalf of the Ukranian cause (Dribble.com).

Concluding remarks

Conflict with its most violent form- warfare is far more than a struggle between two parties. It engages many more actors on a stage no longer confined to the battlefield but extending virtually to the whole world. After 1945 the creation of UN, the codification of an international legislation limiting what is morally permissible and globalisation assure that no violent clash remains a parochial matter but draws worldwide attention. Therefore present article argued that military conflicts should be seen as creating communities made out of people, governments, NGOs, media giants which take part of them out of political, economic or humanitarian reasons. Against this background combatants divide their focus between kinetic actions, filtering the news leaked towards domestic public and projecting a justifying image of their behaviour. Maintaining your reputation and at the same time demonising the opponent go hand in hand, as being cast in a positive light both within and beyond your borders provide a steady flow of allies and aid (in the form of money, weapons, ammunition, or safe heavens for your citizens fleeing from peril). Otherwise, a negative light means domestic public no longer support the military effort and international community cuts you off from the aforementioned allies and aid. Aware of the perils correlated with present day conditions, advanced industrial nations tried to wage what has been called since late 1990s a "postheroic war"- a intensive technological style which promised to deliver swift victories and low casualties within one own ranks. However such capability creates another risk, that of rushing towards a blitzkrieg without long term plans, logistic or reserves. The invasion of Russian Federation in Ukraine which started late February 2022 is taken as case study. Coined "special operation" by president Vladimir Putin, the invasion is currently mired in a quagmire which revealed a plethora of shortcomings plaguing Russian armed forces and in the background the political regime: hubris, false intelligence, and widespread corruption. A demoralised army and a reluctant population no longer media isolated is confronted by the Ukrainian defence forces backed by NATO and able to project a triumphant pro domo narrative. At the moment of this writing, Kremlin combines the postheroic offensive with a partial and unpopular draft. Heavy rockets attacks against Kiev and other cities all backed by nuclear threats exhibit a regime no longer trusting that its soldiers can deliver the victory and now concentrates on revenge with the hope that a scorched Ukraine will negotiate if not peace than an indefinite stalemate.

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MOLDO-EUROPEAN RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

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Abstract. *The events in the region, which resulted in the military aggression of the Russian Federation on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, accelerated the dynamics of relations between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union. Currently, the Moldovan-European relations are conditioned by the events in Ukraine, which have oriented the vector of the foreign policy of the Republic of Moldova versus the EU. The Republic of Moldova's submission of the application for EU membership and the obtaining of the status of candidate country for EU integration and tells us about the state's desire to align with the processes in the European integrationist space.*

This article aims to highlight the conditions under which the Republic of Moldova has obtained the status of EU candidate country, as well as the conditions imposed by the EU on the resilience of the Republic of Moldova to European standards.

Keywords: *European Union, Republic of Moldova, status, candidate state, European integration.*

Introduction

The military aggression of the Russian Federation on Ukraine on February 24, 2022 has a direct impact on the relations between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union (EU). Although the relations between the Republic of Moldova and the EU were dynamic, the “special operation” carried out by the Russian Federation in Ukraine conditioned the acceleration of the Moldovan-European political dialog. Today, the Moldovan-European relations are conditioned especially by the events in Ukraine, which have oriented the vector of the foreign policy of the Republic of Moldova versus the EU and show the state's desire to align with the integrationist processes in the European space.

Also, lately, we are witnessing the acceleration of the foreign policy vision of the states of the Eastern Partnership associated Trio versus the EU, an acceleration obviously influenced by the military aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine. Any war, especially of this intensity, which we are witnessing in Ukraine, is usually an element of political, economic change, which also conditions changes on the dimension of security. Therefore, the war in Ukraine is an element of change for the entire relationship of the states

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of the Eastern Partnership associated Trio with the European Union. In this context, we should recognize that the strategy adopted by the countries of the Eastern Partnership associated Trio and by the European Union in general, in the context of the war, has changed the foreign policy approach of states such as Ukraine, Georgia, including the Republic of Moldova.

Moldovan - European relations in the context of the war in Ukraine

For a better understanding of the Moldovan-European relations, influenced by the war in Ukraine, there is the need to highlight the main events present in the Republic of Moldova-EU dialog. Of course, given the magnitude of the subject, we do not pretend to cover the multitude of aspects involved, but we will point out the most important moments.

Thus, on February 28, Ukraine applied for EU membership, and the next day, on March 1, 2022, MEPs approved by a majority of 637 votes the resolution that gives Ukraine a European perspective. For the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, which together with Ukraine are part of the associated trio of the Eastern Partnership countries group, this moment serves as the European perspective and the objective of becoming full members of the EU. In the circumstances of the war in Ukraine, two days away from Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova submitted applications for membership of the Union. For these countries, candidate status serves as a political shield of protection from Russia, which has never agreed to the proximity of the Eastern Partnership associated Trio States to the EU (*Analiză. Integrarea Ucrainei, Georgiei și a Republicii Moldova...*).

The step that brought the Republic of Moldova closer to the EU was the signing on the March 3, by President Maia Sandu of the application for the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union. The request was also signed by Parliament President Igor Grosu and Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilă, and forwarded to French President Emmanuel Macron, leader of the country holding the rotating presidency of the European Union (*Ursu and Popescu*).

In this context, it is worth mentioning the speech of the head of state according to which “the citizens of the Republic of Moldova demonstrate to the world that they are a mature people” and that they do not allow “tyranny to settle in the country, ... that we will live according to the rules when we defended democracy in elections”. In the conditions of the war in Ukraine, when the cannons are heard on the border of the Republic of Moldova, the citizens remain mature and offer help to refugees from the neighboring country. ” We also maintain our neutrality, but remain solidary, calm, generous and responsible. Some decisions take time to ponder. It took us 30 years to grow up, during which failures and errors were committed. Currently, in the conditions of the war in Ukraine, according to the statement of President Sandu, we are ready to take responsibility for the future of the country. We want to live peacefully, in democracy as part of the free world.” According to the statement of President Sandu, “some decisions need time, others must be made promptly and decisively, using the opportunities offered by the changing landscape of the world. We must act immediately when circumstances require it and we see clearly the opportunity to ensure future generations a safer, better life. Achieving this goal is our duty to the citizens. The Republic of Moldova must have a clear European path. We are ready to do everything to achieve this fundamental national goal. Citizens have chosen this option. We know what steps we need to take and we are ready for this process. Step by step, resolutely, we will go through all the stages, in order to build the prosperous and peaceful future of the Republic of Moldova”, said Maia Sandu (*Maia Sandu a semnat cererea...*).

According to the statements made by the Foreign Minister, Nicu Popescu, “this procedure is a historical one and a step of major importance for our country and society, it is a step in the direction of peace. The European Union is an institution, a family of countries that knew how to ensure peace on the European continent. For the Republic of Moldova accession to the European Union is a way of ensuring the peace, stability and freedom of our country” (*Ursu and Popescu*).

Thus, March 3, 2022 for the Republic of Moldova is a historical date, it is the date when the application for accession to the European Union was officially submitted. This step marks a significant change in relations between the Republic of Moldova and the EU, as the Republic of Moldova has officially started the EU accession process. This development of relations will have a significant effect on the EU’s requirements for the Republic of Moldova and on Moldova’s approach to the European Union. Even if the existing Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the EU is very demanding, the application for accession of the Republic of Moldova will raise the requirements to a higher level. The application was submitted pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), which provides that “*any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and undertakes to promote them may apply to become a member of the Union*”. Also, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, on the one hand, and the Republic of Moldova, on the other hand, and which recognize the European aspirations and the European choice of the Republic of Moldova.

1. Having regard to the common values and close links between the Parties, established in the past by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part, and which develops within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership, and recognizing the common desire of the Parties to develop, strengthen and further expand their relations. Furthermore, in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement, the common values on which the EU is founded, namely democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, also constitute the very essence of political association and economic integration provided for in this Agreement. The agreement will open the way for future progressive developments in EU-Moldova relations. Recognizing that the Republic of Moldova, as a European country, has a common history and shares common values with the Member States and is committed to implementing and promoting these values, which are a source of inspiration for the European choice of the country. Also, recognizing the importance of the Action Plan for the implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, it contributes to the gradual economic integration and deepening of the political association. Committed to strengthening respect for fundamental freedoms, human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, democratic principles, the rule of law, and good governance, efforts are being made on behalf of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova to develop a democratic and European country, integral and free (*Cererea de aderare a Republicii Moldova la Uniunea Europeană...*).

Using Article 2 of the Treaty of Accession to the European Union (TEU), we can mention that the values on which the EU focuses are: “Respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, as well as respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society where pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.” Any potential future EU Member State will be assessed

against these values. The country's ability to demonstrate its readiness to act in accordance with these values will be essential for EU membership. As the EU is at its core the largest European peace project of all time, sharing and promoting these common values becomes particularly important in the light of the war in Ukraine and other threats to European peace (*ibidem*).

In the strengthening Moldovan-European relations in the context of the war in Ukraine was the submission of the European Commission questionnaire on the application for EU membership of the Republic of Moldova, no less important moment (*Şanse semnificative...*). After receiving Moldova's request, the Council invited the European Commission to present its opinion on Moldova's application as the EU's first step in the accession process. In order to draw up such an opinion, the Commission submitted a detailed questionnaire to the Republic of Moldova. On the basis of the questionnaire replies, which were developed and submitted by the Republic of Moldova, the Commission delivered its opinion with the following recommendations:

1. To recommend the granting of candidate status for Moldova and the possibility of Moldova to start accession negotiations,
2. To recommend the granting of candidate status, but only after the fulfillment of specific conditions by Moldova.

The EU Member States have taken the decision on Moldova's application for EU membership, acting unanimously on the basis of the Commission's opinion. Once the Republic of Moldova has been granted candidate status, the date of the opening of EU accession negotiations has been set (most likely after the Republic of Moldova will meet additional conditions). Accession negotiations will be conducted until the country meets all EU accession requirements, in particular the requirements for political criteria, as the EU's fundamental values as defined in Article 2 TEU are assessed within the political criteria. Once the conditions for accession of the Republic of Moldova are agreed, the Accession Treaty is negotiated, approved and signed by Moldova and all EU Member States and the date of accession is set. Also, in order to legitimize this step, the Republic of Moldova will organize a referendum in which its citizens will decide on the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union. The Accession Treaty must also be approved by the European Parliament and ratified by the Republic of Moldova, as well as by the national parliament of each EU Member State before its entry into force.

The Commission's questionnaire is the first crucial step in the EU accession process, which will demonstrate Moldova's readiness to react with prompt and precise responses. The questionnaire, according to the position of the European officials, should be perceived as an image of the Republic of Moldova at the specific time of sending the answer, no more, no less. The last questionnaires developed for the Western Balkan countries contained 2500-3000 questions each. They were a snapshot of how each country worked and how close each country was to meeting EU membership requirements when they submitted their questionnaire replies. For the Republic of Moldova, the number of questions is higher, to suit the specific circumstances of the country. The questions are multilayered and required the involvement of the entire state administration and numerous consultations between various state institutions. Further follow-up questions will then be sent to clarify the responses of the Republic of Moldova. The answers provided the European Commission with a clear picture of Moldova's readiness to conduct accession negotiations and the capacities of the Moldovan administration. Failure to answer a question or too long time to submit questionnaire replies will also be an indication of the lack of capacity of the Republic of Moldova. The questionnaire has also been structured in such a way as to comply with the

format of the accession negotiations, which are organized in such a way as to include the Copenhagen accession criteria of 1993:

1) political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;

2) economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the ability to cope with competition and market forces; and

3) the ability to assume the obligations arising from EU membership, including the administrative and institutional capacity to effectively implement the entire EU acquis (organized in more than 30 negotiating chapters).

Thus, on April 11, 2022, in Luxembourg, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi handed over to Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Nicu Popescu the questionnaire of the European Commission on the application for EU membership of the Republic of Moldova. The answers to the questions in this questionnaire will be a radiography of the current situation in our country, showing the level of preparation for accession to the European Union and, at the same time, will highlight the areas where further efforts are needed. *“Our country is accelerating its European path. We reiterated that we are part of Europe not only geographically, but also through the identity we bear, the values we share, through the Romanian language, the official language of the EU we speak and through the common history we have.”* Deputy Prime Minister Nicu Popescu said.

According to the position of the head of diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova, from the moment of receipt of the questionnaire there follows an intense period of work, mentioning that the state institutions are ready to provide the necessary information in the shortest time. At the same time, the Moldovan official communicated about the involvement in the process of completing the questionnaire not only of the authorities, but also of the civil society, given that the accession to the European Union is a country project aimed at the future of each citizen. *“Once again, we want to demonstrate that we are a country where democracy works, reforms are possible, processes of transformation are working and our European future is irreversible.”* – added Minister Nicu Popescu (*Ministrul Nicu Popescu...*).

The questions received were divided between the institutions of the newly established working groups (which will then be converted into negotiating groups) so that all competent bodies/actors could contribute to each question individually. The answer to a single question required the work of several institutions which, by common agreement, provided a common and uniform answer to that question. All responses within a chapter should be synchronized and a common response for the whole chapter should be defined. All chapters should be synchronized by the institution that runs the whole process. The final answers should be adopted by the Government and then sent to the European Commission from Brussels. Answers to all questions can amount to about 8,000-10,000 pages.

Also, all answers (which will be prepared first in Romanian) must be translated by the Republic of Moldova into high quality English. If the translation is not made properly, the quality of the responses of the Republic of Moldova will suffer and/or be inaccurate. In addition, all legislation of the Republic of Moldova (primarily laws and some regulations) that underlie the answers must also be translated into English and attached to the answers. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Moldova should set up a translation service/unit to coordinate and ensure quality translation of questionnaire replies and relevant legislation and subsequently for all documents related to accession negotiations. The application for EU membership and the resulting questionnaire did not represent a challenge

for the Republic of Moldova, as this represented the beginning of a completely different and broader level of relations with the European Union. This step is unknown and new. However, the past experiences of many countries (including all new EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as most Western Balkan countries) that responded to the questionnaire provide a source for many lessons learned.

Since 2014, the Republic of Moldova implements the Association Agreement with the European Union. Whether there will be the necessary political support (recognizing that the answer to the future questionnaire is a strategic priority for the Republic of Moldova) and whether all the necessary administrative preparations will be carried out in the coming months (including the establishment of working groups and the organization of the translation process), then there is no reason to doubt that the Republic of Moldova can achieve this stage with as much success as many of the previous countries. The EU-funded technical assistance project “support for structured political dialog, coordination of the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and improvement of the legal approximation process in the Republic of Moldova” provides the necessary support, based on the experience gained from the answers to the last questionnaire, as well as on the basis of internal reorganization in different Western Balkan countries (*Cererea de aderare...*). A no less important step in Moldovan-European relations was the working visit of the Head of State to Brussels and Paris on 17-18 May, during which Maia Sandu had meetings with the President of France, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium and the President of the EU Legislature (*Baciu A*).

The speech of Maia Sandu, President of the Republic of Moldova, delivered on May 18, at the European Parliament in Brussels, represents the European desideratum and aspirations of the Republic of Moldova: “I condemned the Russian war against Ukraine. We support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as we have always done. Crimea is Ukraine, Donbas is Ukraine, Kiev is Ukraine.” Also, Maia Sandu left no doubt about an essential request on which depends the movement of her country toward the free world: “Moldova is, according to the Constitution, a neutral state – a provision that is supported by the majority of citizens. However, in order to be truly neutral, we call for the withdrawal of Russian troops from our territory, because their presence in the Transnistrian region fundamentally violates our neutrality and independence.” The Russian troops in the separatist enclave, the existence of this conflict “lit” and “frozen” by the Russians, according to the mafia principle: I create the problem for you, so that you come to me to clear it and give me something in return, if you do not want me to amplify it more (See also the “Minsk 1” and “Minsk 2” agreement simulacres around Donbas) – this conflict was and remains the millstone that has so far submerged Romanian and proeuropeans aspirations of Basarabians.

Maia Sandu also spoke about the economic crisis, about the inflation that reached a record 27% due to the pandemic and the war, asked the Western democracies to help Moldova return the money stolen by the oligarchs fleeing to the West and also to the country to give the criminals to the prosecutors. It is one of the basic electoral commitments of the current power: The recovery of stolen billions would ease the burden of expensive for Moldovans (*Ibidem*). In Brussels, Maia Sandu discussed with the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, the agenda for Moldova’s European integration. NN speech in the European Parliament, the Moldovan president insisted on offering the status of candidate country for Moldova - a signal of encouragement and support for the program of reforming the country according to the European model. Moldovans need this clear prospect of

accession to coagulate around this goal. Without a tangible national idea that unites them, they will oscillate indefinitely, from an electoral point of view, between West and East.

The status of candidate country would also mobilize the authorities to identify real solutions to two big problems that Moldova has in view of accession: the transnistrian problem and cleanliness in the justice field. "The completion of the integration will be possible only when the Transnistrian problem is solved, but this should not prevent us from working on the other files," said MEP Siegfried Mureșan. And Chisinau is linking its hopes for the settlement of the Transnistrian dispute with a possible victory of Ukraine in the war launched by Russia against it – a victory that would radically change the optic of the pro-Russian separatist regime on the left bank of the Dniester River.

Also, according to the statements of President Sandu on the eve of the visit to Brussels, Chisinau does not expect to be spared in the process of Eurointegration and is ready to take full responsibility for this path. According to the President of the Republic of Moldova, there is no competition between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the process of obtaining the status of candidate for accession, and Kiev deserves to be privileged in this respect. "We believe in meritocracy and every country will be judged by merit. It is also better for Ukraine to be part of the EU, but for us it is better for Ukraine to join," explained President Maia Sandu (*Statutul de candidat...*).

In the context of the Republic of Moldova obtaining the status of candidate for EU accession, Romanian Prime Minister Nicolae Ciucă had on May 31 a discussion with the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen and with the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola. During this discussion, the importance of the European Commission issuing a positive opinion on Moldova's EU accession application was underlined. The Romanian official asked the Brussels executive to recognize the prospect of Chisinau's European integration and to recommend the status of candidate for EU membership. Another topic of discussion was the importance of the European Union's active support of the European path of the Republic of Moldova, as well as of the reforms initiated by the President of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu" (*Bolotnicov C.*).

Against the background of the war in Ukraine, Chisinau was visited by several European officials, including EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell and European Enlargement Commissioner Oliver Varhelyi. The visit is important as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called for his country to be admitted to the European Union through an emergency procedure, signing a formal request for Ukraine's EU membership.

The date of May 19, 2022 for the Republic of Moldova is an important one. It is the date when the European Parliament adopted the annual report on the implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, with 512 votes in favor, 43 votes against and 39 abstentions. The report includes a call on the European Union to provide more strategic support to Moldova after the application for membership of the bloc is submitted. In the context of a deteriorating security environment, the text acknowledges that the war in Ukraine has disproportionately affected the Republic of Moldova. Its economy has been affected by the loss of import and export opportunities and the rapid increase in energy prices, and Moldova has also received the highest number of Ukrainian refugees relative to the population than any other country, putting pressure on public services.

Motivated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Moldova's official application for EU membership on March 3 was welcomed by MEPs, as it confirms the country's European path. They call on the EU institutions to grant Moldova the status of candidate country, together with Ukraine and Georgia, in accordance with Article 49 TEU and "on the basis of

merit". Meanwhile, MEPs believe that the European Union and the Republic of Moldova should continue to work on the country's integration into the EU's single market.

The resolution calls on the European Commission to help Moldova prepare a credible strategy for the pre-accession period. MEPs also draw attention to the need for more strategic assistance for Moldova, in particular by setting up a Commission support group for this country, similar to the one existing for Ukraine. The report also stresses that the accession applications of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia open a new chapter in their European integration, which should be characterized by enhanced efforts to implement Association agreements and trade liberalization components. Last but not least, MEPs express their concern about a number of recent security incidents in the separatist region of Transnistria and condemn them as dangerous acts of provocation committed in a highly volatile security situation. They reiterate their support for a peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. "The EU must urgently grant Moldova and Ukraine the status of candidate countries," said Romanian rapporteur Dragos Tudorache, from renew Europe group. "This is a message to the world that the EU supports and with which we share the same values in a concrete, tangible and committed way. It is a message to Putin and all the dictators of the world that we will remain United in the face of any aggression and such actions will only strengthen us (*Chirtoc I.*).

The text of the resolution states that the Republic of Moldova was disproportionately affected by the Russian war in Ukraine. This is mainly due to the arrival of more than 450,000 Ukrainian refugees since the beginning of the invasion – of which almost 800,000 remained in the Republic of Moldova – but also due to the decrease in trade and the increase in energy and transport prices. To this end, MEPs call on the EU to provide more support to the country, namely through new macro-financial assistance, additional measures to liberalize transport and trade, and continued support for refugee management and humanitarian purposes.

In the context of Russia's war against Ukraine, the Parliament welcomes Moldova's official application for EU membership lodged on 3 March 2022 and states that the EU should grant it candidate status, in accordance with Article 49 TEU and "on the basis of merit". In the meantime, the European Union and the Republic of Moldova should continue their efforts to integrate the country into the EU single market and to strengthen sectoral cooperation. MEPs also call on the European Commission to swiftly complete the assessment of the application and to provide Moldova with full assistance during this process. They say that, without anticipating the content of the Commission's opinion, the Moldovan authorities are undoubtedly on the right path through the adoption of key reforms, in particular as regards democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

The resolution also expresses its deep concern about developments in the territory of the Transnistrian region, which recorded a series of "security incidents" in April, 2022 considered by MEPs as dangerous provocative acts in a highly volatile security situation. They also reiterate Parliament's support for a "comprehensive, peaceful and sustainable political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict", namely based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders, as well as the withdrawal of Russian forces stationed there.

Parliament stresses that it is unacceptable for Russia to use gas supplies as a weapon to exert political pressure on Moldova, to influence the country's political trajectory and geopolitical orientation, especially after the recent establishment of the country's pro-Western government. MEPs call on the Commission and EU countries to support Moldova

in ensuring its energy independence, connectivity, diversification and energy efficiency, as well as in accelerating the development of renewable energy sources (*PE: UE trebuie să acorde Republicii Moldova ...*).

Through the “historic” decision taken unanimously by EU leaders, Ukraine and Moldova have been granted the status of candidate countries for EU membership. By granting candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova, the paradigm of EU enlargement has changed, and the enlargement policy has received a new impetus, calling the decision of EU leaders a “big step” and a historical step.

During a press conference, held following the decision of the European Commission, the President of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu, came with a message to the citizens. “*With yesterday’s decision, the EU member states confirmed their desire to support Republic of Moldova in the process of preparing to join the EU family. We are grateful for this opening. (...) this event does not change things overnight in our country, but it gives us greater support on the path of the EU. (...) the status of candidate country gives us a clear direction of development, support on this path and, more importantly, hope,*” says Maia Sandu.

Also, according to the statements of the President of Romania, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have received a new impetus to implement the reforms and projects that are still necessary to take the next step in the historical achievement. Giving the European perspective to the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia are important steps forward. This decision brings hope and confidence to the European future for the people of these countries and represents a great responsibility for their leaders. Romania is ready to continue supporting Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia on their European path.” In this context, the statements of Prime Minister Nicolae Ciucă who welcomed the “historic decision” and promised that Romania will remain firm in supporting the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia on their European path. EU leaders stressed that these countries will have many “themes to do” and that, having started the most ambitious enlargement since Eastern European countries joined after the Cold War, they will have a lot of “themes to do”. The EU may need to change its mode of operation to deal with it. According to the statement of Ukraine’s EU Ambassador, Cenčov Vsevolod, “the green light received by these two states is a signal to Russia that Ukraine, but also other countries of the former Soviet Union, are not obliged to remain within the Russian sphere of influence” (*Moment istoric*).

Although the Republic of Moldova received on 23 June 2022 the status of candidate country for accession to the European Union (EU), this status does not offer the status of EU member state, as Moldova needs to meet a number of accession conditions, as well as apply European legislation in all areas. Experts in the field of international relations and European integration mention that the European path of the Republic of Moldova is difficult and that, in the context of the challenges faced by the EU, but also the countries with the status of candidate for accession, it can last for an unpredicted period of time. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called the 23 June event “a defining moment and a very good day for Europe”. The President of the European Commission reiterates that “there can be no better sign of hope for the citizens of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in these troubled times.” As for the reforms to be undertaken in the accession process, President von der Leyen notes that they are beneficial for the new candidate countries and their democracy, as they strengthen competitiveness and ultimately benefit their citizens. Ursula von der Leyen also said that this decision will “further strengthen” the EU, in the context of threats from the Russian Federation. “The decision taken ... strengthens Ukraine,

Moldova and Georgia in the face of Russian aggression. And it strengthens the European Union, because it once again shows the world that the European Union is United and strong in the face of external threats.” In the context of the statements made by the European leaders regarding the obtaining of Republic of Moldova the status of candidate country for EU accession, the statements of the Romanian Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova deserve attention. Thus, according to Sorin Ionita, in the process of EU accession, Moldova must solve two major problems in order not to stagnate in this process: *“The first basic problem is maintaining the popular consensus for the Western/EU direction, because public opinion is important and can derail the process, such as the (unofficially expressed) doubts that everyone in Europe has about the popular support of the EU agenda in Serbia, which has created political bottlenecks. The second is Transnistria.”* With the accession of the EU candidate country, the tasks of the governors are multiple, but inevitably or unknowingly some major responsibilities can be omitted or simply considered non-essential, which would be an major error. Here we will not refer to other escapes that seem, apparently, insignificant because they are not expressly exposed in the firm commitments that the Republic of Moldova assumes in this context. Thus, the country risks remaining captive to the status of candidate for integration for more than 30-50 years. The EU has granted this status for 2 reasons: the existence of a pro-Euro-PAS governance and the presence in the region of the war in Ukraine as a political antidote against Russian aggression in the neighboring state (*Conțu M.*). Also, Sorin Ionita claims that the accession path of Romania and the Republic of Moldova are different (*Meica O. R. Moldova – țară candidată*). The Republic of Moldova’s relationship with the European Union brings a security support to Romania even in the context of the war in Ukraine (*Expert: Chestionarul e o treaptă...*) of 150 million euros for Moldova’s support. The assistance is made up of non-reimbursable funds of EUR 30 million and loans on advantageous terms of EUR 120 million. The Republic of Moldova is a European country, which has received the largest number of refugees from Ukraine in proportion to its population. More than 370000 refugees crossed the border of the Republic of Moldova (*Republica Moldova va primi*). Thus, the Plenum of the European Parliament by a large majority, 558 votes "in favor" and 10 abstentions and 20 "against" decided to grant macroeconomic assistance to the Republic of Moldova (*Ibidem*).

In the context of the war in Ukraine, Oliver Varhelej, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement mentioned that the EU increased the budget support provided to the Republic of Moldova. The EUR 6 million support provided in December 2021 for the management of the energy crisis is supported by another EUR 75 million. The money was offered to overcome the challenges posed by Russian military aggression in Ukraine. In addition to managing the crisis, the EU continues to support the long-term resilience of the Republic of Moldova, in particular through the Eastern Partnership Investment Plan, which involves providing 34 billion euros for public and private investment in the public and private investment in several key areas: support for SMEs, trade facilitation, energy efficiency (*UE își extinde sprijinul...*).

Conclusions

The war in Ukraine and increased attention to this region opened an opportunity for associated states in the Eastern Neighbourhood, including the Republic of Moldova, by unanimous decision from EU member states to obtain EU membership. Although this status does not imply EU membership, it is still a possibility, but also a hope of Moldova’s accession to the EU.

After obtaining the status of candidate country for EU accession, Republic of Moldova will benefit from a number of advantages, such as: a concrete prospect of accession to the European Union, fair justice, resilient public institutions, access to an extensive international market for Moldovan producers, sustainable development, economic and energy independence, etc. The Republic of Moldova's obtaining the status of candidate country for EU accession is a remarkable result of the efforts to be put by the country and the government, and the EU will continue to support the reforms necessary to bring Moldova closer to the European community.

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III. CULTURE, COMMUNICATION AND VALUES IN EUROPE

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CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN ROMANIA. A WAY TO PROMOTE ROMANIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

*Gianina JOLDESCU-STAN**

Abstract. *Launched by the Council of Europe in 1987, the programme of cultural routes is meant to prove that the European cultural heritage (regardless of the time and space) has the ability to create a commune ground between all countries within Europe. They represent everything that Europe stands for: from cultural democracy and diversity, cultural enrichment, to human right protection. The cultural routes represent a model of cultural management promoted by the Council of Europe, but they can also be perceived as a model of touristic management, as they have the potential to contribute the economic development of a country, as a landmark. After the covid-19 pandemic it is interesting for us to see the way in which we can foster these routes including sites in Romania, to use them as way of promoting Romanian cultural heritage.*

Keywords: *cultural heritage, cultural routes, romanian tourism, economic development*

Introduction

The great cultural value of European heritage can be somewhat overwhelming for tourist looking to uncover the beauty of history, art, and beauty within Europe. As a way to ease and facilitate access to cultural heritage, the Directorate General of Democracy (DGII) launched the Cultural Routes programme supporting the Council of Europe, in 1987. Over the centuries, cultural routes have helped with the travel and mobility patterns, becoming a valuable resource for promoting cultural heritage in tourism and travel.¹ As of 2022, we have a total of forty-eight² Cultural Routes, created by the Council of Europe, all having different themes, and being spread throughout different countries within Europe. They are easily-accessibly by country or by theme, using the official website of the Council of Europe.³

In Romania, there are seven out of the forty-eight Routes: European Route of Jewish Heritage (2004), TRANSROMANICA (2007), Iter Vitis Route (2009), European Cemeteries Route (2010), ATRIUM (2013), Réseau Art Nouveau Network (2014) and Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (2015).

1. Why Cultural Routes

Cultural routes are a new concept in international heritage protection that appeared in the last ten years in scientific papers (Li Mei, 2014). They have recently been used especially in tourism, to promote cultural destinations. Yet, the theoretical tools to help cope

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1 https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/57321_en, accessed July 18th, 2022.

2 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/by-theme>, accessed August 1st, 2022

3 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/about>, accessed August 1st, 2022

with this new concept in the field are still at a beginner's level and are mainly focused on tourism management issues (Severo, 2019). Research shows that in recent years an increasing number of people have opted for guided routes when deciding to explore, travel, see or experience something new and scientist have even created metadata support for routed algorithms targeted towards cultural heritage exploration (Baker&Verstockt, 2017). This goes to show that they are becoming more and more of interest for the scientific community and for beneficiaries alike.

For the Council of Europe, cultural heritage is one of the main priorities, as seen in The European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century, which helps better consolidate and reiterate the previous Resolutions and engagements of the Council with regards to culture and cultural heritage.⁴ In line with the strategy, and following the same pattern for promoting and conserving cultural heritage, the routes created by the Council are a tool that acts like a driving force for developing a new approach towards physical and intangible heritage and are considered as key element in building a local identity at an European level (Beltrano, 2015).

2. Cultural Routes in Romania

Romania is a member state participating in the cultural routes since 2013 and it is crossed by eight out of the 38 Cultural Routes: European Route of Jewish Heritage, TRANSROMANICA – The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage, Iter Vitis Route, European Cemeteries Route, ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory, Réseau Art Nouveau Network, European Emperors and Danube Wine Route and Iron Curtain Trail.

As of 2020, the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment has created a voluntary system for the recognition of Cultural Routes. It was developed together with the local public authorities and the touristic organisations in Romania. This was also the occasion for the first cultural routes of Romania to launch: the Route of the Wooden Churches, in Bihor County.⁵

In the next paragraphs we will discuss the role and involvement of Romania in each of the eight Cultural Routes, starting with the European Route of Jewish Heritage. Historically speaking, Romania has been one of the most important Jewish centres in Eastern Europe. According to the History Museum of the Romanian Jews, the first traces of Jews heritage in Romania date 2nd c. C.E in the Roman province of Dacia. Later, after the second half of the 12th century (CE) Jews start appearing more and more in historical writings all throughout Romanian territory. The first Great Synagogue is built in Romania in 1846 (Bucharest) and two years later there is evidence that Jewish craftsmen and intellectuals join the Revolution (bankers Davicion Bally and Hillel Manoah, painters C.D. Rosenthal and Barbu Iscovescu et. al.)⁶. After that moment, Jewish cultural representation

4 Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 22 February 2017 at the 1278th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, <https://rm.coe.int/16806f6a03>, accessed September 8th, 2022

5 More information with regards to the subject: Romania: the first Cultural Route certified by the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/-/romania-the-first-cultural-route-certified-by-the-ministry-of-economy-energy-and-business-environment>, accessed September 8th, 2022.

6 For more information about Jews history in Romania: The Museum of the History of the Romanian Jews, <https://www.museum.jewishfed.ro/index.php>, accessed September 8th, 2022.

among some of the other countries within the Route, when it comes to Romania, it is not promoted at all.

Another route that would have the potential to promote Romanian culture and heritage is the Route of European Cemeteries. The Merry Cemetery (Săpânța), Bellu Cemetery (Bucharest), The Central Cemetery (Cluj-Napoca) are some of the names of the most recognizable graveyards in Romania, but still, they are not visible when it comes to the cultural patrimony that is being promoted. The only one that is named and promoted via the Route of European Cemeteries is Bellu Cemetery, the place where famous cultural and historical personalities are buried.⁹

ATRIUM is Route designed to honour the architecture of totalitarian regimes in the 20th Century. In Romania, we have two cities that are part of this route: Stei (starting 2019) and Iași (2013). Used as a propaganda system, the Communist architecture was mainly focused on demolishing and rebuilding central areas in urban regions. This is best observed in Iași, a city that stood a cultural model in the communist era in Romania. Stei, on the other hand, joined the ATRIUM Route as the first city that was made from scratch by the Communist Party. It was designed in Moscow and build under Soviet supervision.¹⁰ These two cities are of great importance for the cultural heritage left by the Communist era in Romania, one of the few if we could say that.

Yet again, the city of Oradea in the focus point when it comes to the European Cultural Routes, as it is the only one included in the Réseau Art Nouveau Network. Together with cities such as Vienna, Paris, Palermo, Barcelona or Brussel, Oradea is the focus of a Route created to celebrate the Art Nouveau style and architecture. In Romania, we can also find Art Nouveau buildings in cities such as Bucharest, Constanța, Târgu Mureș and Iași.

Lastly, Romania integrated the Historic Cafes Route in 2022 with two cafes which date hundreds of years back. The first Café, housed at Brukenthal Castle in Avrig, Romania, has a history dating back to 1788, while the second one, *Festival '39*, in Brașov, date back to 1939 but has many cultural and design elements of the early 1900s, such as old typewriters, decorations and cash registers.¹¹

3. The Impact of Cultural Routes

The eight European Cultural Routes, that Romania is being a part of, can be considered a starting point for the touristic cultural development of our country. As assessed by Steliana Cojocariu, a National representative of the Authority for Tourism in Romania, the development of cultural routes is an important tool that contributes to social cohesion through intercultural exchanges and participatory activities (Cojocariu, 2015). Being part of the network of European Cultural Routes has allowed Romania to develop its own Cultural Routes: The cultural Route of the Fortified Wooden Churches in Romania, the route of open-air ethnographic museums in Romania, „Following Hercules” Route, Memorial

9 The entire article can be read at: <https://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-only-cemetery-on-the-european-cemeteries-route-in-the-spotlight-in-2015>, accessed September 13th, 2022.

10 More on the subject: <https://www.romania-insider.com/stei-romania-atrium-cultural-route>, accessed September 13th, 2022.

11 Romania is the 14th country participating in the “Historic Cafes Route” and has Historic Cafes – members in EHICA – 2 Historic Cafes the new members of EHICA, <https://historiccafesroute.com/romania-is-the-14th-country-participating-in-the-historic-cafes-route-and-has-historic-cafes-members-in-ehica-2-historic-cafes-the-new-members-of-ehica/>, accessed September 13th, 2022.

Houses Route, and others¹². The main objectives set by the Romanian Government when it comes to these cultural routes are¹³:

- The promotion of cultural, artistic, and historical heritage sites.
- The development of tourism and stimulation of socio-economic development.
- The creation of a cooperation framework between the counties of Romania.
- Sustainable development among the locations across the routes.
- The increasing in the number of tourists in Romania.
- Promoting the tangible and intangible heritage of Romania in the EU and internationally.
- Promoting cultural destinations by organizing events including elements specific to the routes.

Cultural routes have impacted the way in which cultural heritage is seen. We can now observe the many layers of culture, by understanding the connection between different cultural sites from different region of the same country. We create a virtual map that allows us to travel through time and space, discovering the underneath of ancient life and connecting with our past and ancestors.

Conclusions

Analysing the impact of cultural routes for tourism and for cultural heritage, when it comes to Romania, there are some conclusions we can draw and suggestions we can make. First, as seen throughout this paper, the cultural routes of the Council of Europe are not well-known within the borders of Romania. A limited number of people know about their existence, and that is because they are not too visible on social media, they don't have a platform and are not being promoted by stakeholders in the field (entrepreneurs, cultural heritage owners, nor the state). Even though they have the potential of a great impact with regards to the development of cultural tourism (as seen in European countries such as Serbia¹⁴), cultural routes are not exploited and or benefited from as they should. Second, cultural routes represent for Romania a model of good practice, being a first step towards a more embedded system of promoting cultural heritage, of creating cultural networks that connect different counties or regions that have similar cultural backgrounds. As part of the Enlarged Partial Agreement of Cultural Routes, Romania has been the beneficiary of a network that connects tens of cultural objectives over the continent, offering tourist the possibility to experience a trail of cultural heritage, and not just one touristic objective at a time.

Lastly, the value of Cultural Routes in Romania is given by the possibility of new tourist to discover the beautiful heritage that lies within the borders of the country. For example, if enthusiasts and fans of the Roman empire and Roman architecture are interested in new places to discover Roman heritage, they can easily find information with regards to TRANSROMANICA Route, and by doing that, they discover Romania as a possible destination that satisfies their need for culture. Going on from that, those specific tourists

12 See the extensive list here: <http://turism.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/NATIONALE-30.06.pdf>, accessed September 13th, 2022.

13 As presented by the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Tourism, <http://turism.gov.ro/web/rute-cultural-turistice/>, accessed September 13th, 2022.

14 As proved by a study conducted by Sanja Bozic and Nemanja Tomic, *Developing the Cultural Route Evaluation Model (CREM) and its application on the Trail of Roman Emperors, Serbia*, for Tourism Management Perspectives, vol. 17, 2016, pg. 26-35.

may find other enjoyable things about Romania, and it creates a circular system that help promoting and cultivating Romanian tourism and cultural diversity.

There are things that Romania has the potential to improve when it comes to cultural routes. Based on the information provided in this paper, there are few to be recommended. Starting with creating an interactive online platform to promote and offer detail on every cultural route that the country has, that will allow tourist (national and international) to easily establish a trail that they want to visit and create a vacation based on the cultural sites that they are interested in. The platform can also include recommendations with regards to housing, local food, activities, becoming a point of interest for beneficiaries and entrepreneurs/ business owners alike. Another recommendation would be towards the Romanian Government (The Ministry of Culture), and that is to offer the possibility of an official system that connects and creates different types of cultural routes depending on statistical data regarding tourist's feedback and needs. This system can prove the state's interest towards understanding the changing needs of the society and the transformations that occur in the cultural touristic market (more digitalised cultural objectives, a better focus on cultural events, immersive cultural experiences et. al.).

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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE WORKFORCE AFTER 2020

Ana-Maria COATU *

Abstract. *This article analyzes the general impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workforce with a special focus on Romania after 2020. Our hypothesis is that the COVID-19 has generated a speed-up change in how people work and their attitude towards work. As regards to the employers, COVID-19 made them adapt to the new sanitary conditions by allowing the employees to work from home, which has also led to an increasing trust in the work ethics of the employee and forced the managers to better allocate the tasks in order to continue to perform as a company. Also, this pandemic has led other employers and entrepreneurs to change and to reinvent their businesses. As pertaining to the employee, this pandemic made him more adaptable to change and to prefer work-from-home conditions or a hybrid system.*

Keywords: *COVID-19, work from home, workforce, work ethics, adaptability to change*

The COVID-19 pandemic represents one of the biggest crises in our recent history along with the 1929 Great Depression and the 2008 Financial Crisis because it forced the workforce conditions to change. Many companies, institutions and organizations set up a mandatory work-from-home system and many of them continue to work remotely even in 2022 and beyond. The impact of this crisis on the workforce is in the following areas:

- The physical and mental health of the workers;
 - The living conditions when working remotely;
 - The work-life balance;
 - The unemployment and job loss of millions of people;
 - The rise of new businesses and the self-re-invention of other businesses which were physical location dependent;
 - The demand for new labour skills, such as digital skills and the ability to adapt to change.
- The future of work is challenged. Currently, the world of work is undergoing several changes as a result of shifting labour markets brought on by population changes, globalization, climate change, and technological development. Geopolitical tensions, natural disasters, and military conflicts have all been made worse by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuing to work from the company's location would have endangered the employees to getting infected with the COVID-19 virus, at the same time work-from-home was increasing anxiety and stress levels regarding their job because of.

The lack of connection with other colleagues and the fear of an uncertain post-pandemic future. A longitudinal study conducted in the US on 682 young adults revealed that at the beginning of the pandemic and from March to July 2020, the average steps per day decreased from 10.000 to 4.600, the time spent in real social connection activities decreased to less than 30 minutes per day, the screen time is doubling every 5 minutes. A

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positive outcome was that the average sleep time increased with 25-30 minutes per night. The study shows that the proportion of the ones with risk of clinical depression has increased between 46%-61%. (Giuntella et al. 2021).

The distinction between working and resting during the day has been blurred by the emergence of the telework system. Working from home has intensified and lengthened working hours.

While employment shortfalls maintained in comparison to pre-crisis levels in the majority of middle-income nations with data available in the first half of 2022, employment-to-population ratios had either returned to or exceeded pre-crisis levels in the majority of advanced economies. When compared to low- and medium-skilled occupations, such as service and sales workers, which are still below the level of the same quarter in 2019, data available shows that high-skilled occupations (managers, professionals, technicians, and associate professionals) had experienced a stronger recovery by 2022 Q2 (ILO 2022).

Due to the present COVID-19 pandemic and the economic slowdown brought on by sanitary measures, the number of workers who missed work or worked fewer hours surged at an unprecedented rate, and the number of jobs lost increased as well. Losses from employment income are broken down into three categories: (1) job loss or non-renewal of contract; (2) temporary layoffs while still employed; and (3) working a smaller percentage of regular hours while still employed (Eurostat 2022a). The total employment income in the EU falls by -4.8%, with absences and less hours worked accounting for the biggest drops. Eurostat estimates that during the lockdown in April, the number of people who were missing or worked fewer hours varied among countries from 1% to 50% in the worst affected countries. In addition, the percentage of persons who work 80% or fewer hours is above 20% in almost half of the nations (12), while it is between 11% and 20% in the remaining 11 countries. Because of the absences and working fewer hours, this equates into a 4.2% loss in employment income at the EU level (Eurostat 2022b).

Pozitive impact, negative impact or both?

A study conducted on German and Swiss population shows that about 30% of employees consider that their work and private life had worsened as a consequence of measures to stop COVID-19, whereas about 10% reveal improvements in work life and 13% in private life. Some of them consider that work-from-home has a perceived positive impact on work life, because they get to spend more time with their families (Tušl et al. 2021). As well, participants who lived alone were more likely to report a decline in their private life and less likely to claim an improvement compared to those who lived with a family, or even in shared housing. The COVID-19 lockdown severely curtailed opportunities for social interactions outside of one's own home, especially for persons who live alone.

As a result of the pandemic, existing trends in remote work, e-commerce, and automation have accelerated, and up to 25% more people than previously thought may need to change careers, concludes a McKinsey report (McKinsey Global Institute 2021).

Overview of the COVID-19 impact on the workforce

In 2022, there is visible progress. According to Eurostat, 10.966 million people in the Euro Area and 12.921 million men and women overall were unemployed in the EU as of August 2022. In July 2022, there were 52 000 fewer unemployed people in the EU and 30 000 fewer in the Euro Area. In the EU and the Euro Area, unemployment dropped by 1.682 million and 1.358 million, respectively, compared to August 2021. In August 2022, the unemployment rate in the EU was 6.0%, which was also constant compared to July 2022

and decreased from 6.8% in August 2021. 2.614 million young people (under 25) were unemployed in the EU in August 2022, 2.136 million of whom lived in the Euro Area. In August 2022, in the EU the youth unemployment rate was 13.8%, stable compared to July 2022 and in the Euro Area was down from 14.0% to 13.9%. Compared with the same month (August) of the last year (2021) the youth unemployment decreased. There were 293.000 in the EU and 234.000 in the Euro Area fewer youth without jobs (Eurostat 2022b).

As for the youth, they were more negatively impacted than the rest of the adult working population. Young people (those under 30) still have a difficult time finding jobs or positions that are a good fit for their qualifications and experience. While it fell in 2021, especially toward the end of the year, youth unemployment remained 1 percentage point (pp) higher than it was prior to the crisis (in 2019) (European Commission 2022).

Future employment prospects for young people are influenced by their capacity to compete in the labour market now as well as their ability to adapt their abilities to face the changing demands. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced businesses to further accelerate their efforts in digital transformation, because of the constant increase in the use of digital skills at work in the EU. Although there are significant variations between Member States, young people appear to be somewhat ready for the growing demand for digital skills. In Estonia in 2019, young workers attained 120% of the average EU level of digital intensity, compared to less than 90% in Romania, Greece, and Cyprus. This translates to an average occupation in Greece requiring only 3.5% of digital skills, compared to 5.5% in Estonia. While Nordic countries often have the greatest levels of overall digital intensity, this is mostly because workers over 30 have the highest levels of digital intensity. The geographic variance in work's digital intensity mirrors greater disparities in the EU's member states' digitalization development (European Commission 2022).

Young males tend to have jobs that require more digital proficiency than young women do, and the degree of digital proficiency strongly increases with educational attainment. The highly skilled nature of the work and the predominance of men in several particularly digitally demanding STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) occupations are key contributors to this gender and educational disparity. The green shift could result in job growth for young people, especially in industries like waste management, water supply, sewage, and waste management, sustainable transportation, and renewable energy. The discrepancy in the employment rates of men and women aged 20 to 64 decreased in 2021, reaching 10.8 pp (-0.3 pp from 2020). Women's employment increased to 67.7%, while men's employment increased to 78.5%. Romania (20.1 %), Greece (19.8 %), and Italy (19.2 %) had the biggest gender employment gaps, while Lithuania (1.4 %), Finland (2.0 %), and Estonia had the smallest gender employment gaps (3.7 pp) (European Commission 2022).

Young individuals are generally more prone to experience difficult social and financial circumstances. Young adults struggled to pay their regular bills and rent, and 61% of them expressed concern about obtaining or keeping suitable accommodation over the next ten years. The difficulties that young people encounter are influenced by their socioeconomic status and level of education. Teenagers with a secondary education are 19 percentage points less likely than those with a lower education level to find themselves unemployed and not enrolled in school or training. This risk is 28 percentage points lower for individuals with tertiary education (Commission 2022a).

The research on the "scarring impact," or what it means to be young and unemployed, demonstrates that there are permanent effects. Gianni De Fraja and Sara Lemos (De Fraja et al. 2019), for instance, discovered that "an additional month of

unemployment between ages 18 and 20 permanently lowers earnings by around 1.2% per year.” According to Schwandt (Schwandt et al. 2020), those who enter the workforce during a recession make less money, work more hours and are given less assistance from the government. Moreover, they are more likely to divorce, and they experience higher rates of childlessness. Furthermore, Strandh et al. (Strandh et al. 2014) found that youth unemployment is significantly connected with poorer mental health. It is important to underline that periods of unemployment later in life do not appear to have the same long-term negative effects. Burgess (Burgess et al. 2003) found that unemployment early in an individual’s career increases the probability of subsequent unemployment.

Society considers digital transformation as a major positive disruption. But, a study conducted on digital transformation (Andreas et al. 2022) underlines that they could not find any solid proof of business model modification. The companies have not updated their digitalization plans. Businesses are still operating in an exception mode and are hesitant to make long-term choices after nearly a full year of operations during a pandemic and now a year after.

COVID-19 and its impact in Romania

With the primary goals of maintaining employment and assuring the social protection of workers whose activity has been interrupted as a consequence of the measures of limiting the spread of COVID-19, the Romanian government has launched efforts to lessen the impact of the coronavirus on the labour market. A total of 1.5 billion EUR were paid for around 1.4 million recipients for certain measures to counteract the effects of the lockdown:

- paying an indemnity for technical unemployment to those whose employment contracts have been suspended due to COVID-19's impacts.

The Romanian Labour Code states that employment contracts may be suspended temporarily (technical unemployment) if an activity is temporarily reduced or stopped, provided that the employer pays a compensation equal to at least 75% of the basic salary for the position held up to a maximum of 75% of the medium gross salary specified by Law No. 6/2020 (i.e. 75% of 5,429 lei) throughout the period of emergency declared by Decree of the Romanian President on March 16, 2020.

- allowance for self-employed and non-standard workers (day workers, self-employed), whose activity was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic but whose social rights are not covered by any social protection mechanism;
- technical unemployment benefit in case of epidemiological investigation.

Another set of policies addressed working conditions, changing work schedules, workplace safety, encouraging people to participate in the labour market, and encouraging employers to use alternative forms of employment. Therefore, it was also during this time that the possibility of reducing working hours, staggered work schedules, flexible working hours, job rotation formula, and paid leave for parents and caregivers for childcare purposes during "severe conditions" were established (Eurofund 2021).

Certain initiatives to stimulate the labour market were put into place during the second phase of the pandemic response to counter the lockdown measures. The measures attempted to support employers and employees to ensure continuing activity in all economic areas, for employment and business consolidation, once the detrimental consequences of the economic activity blockade have been evaluated. There was set up a Recovery Plan developed at EU level, tailored for each Member State.

A study developed by the European Parliament on the impact of teleworking on Romania (Vasilescu 2021) shows that:

Work-life balance: While telework, in some situations, provided the flexibility of work schedules, it also led to longer work hours that put the work-life balance at risk. Increases in work schedules, according to Wisemetry and Impact Hub Bucharest (Wisemetry and Impact Hub Bucharest 2020), were caused by unanticipated problems that needed to be resolved, a desire to demonstrate that people can work more productively and effectively from home or to avoid interrupting the work/concentration rhythm, interruptions from family members, and household responsibilities. According to the study, 78% of women and 22% of men who reported halting their employment to take care of household and family responsibilities.

Increasing personal expenses like those for internet and energy are sometimes not covered by employers.

Issues with workplace safety and data security: Stakeholders' opinions on how well these processes are followed varied. While some said that many businesses (particularly in outsourcing) developed stringent policies and trusted workers to follow them, others emphasized how difficult it is for businesses to regulate the degree to which employees adhere to work and home data safety procedures.

The stakeholders questioned stated that telework resulted in a lost bonus for hazardous and harmful working conditions for public sector employees, totalling to 15%.

Also, during the lockdown, school from home overlapped with work-from-home, and this has conducted in more stress for parents and longer hours to work because they had to offer support to their children, or just to care for them if they were in kindergarten.

The positive effects on the employees are (Vasilescu 2021):

- 1) the ability to continue their operations during a lockdown;
- 2) a decrease in COVID-19-related absenteeism;
- 3) a decrease in the cost of utilities, cleaning services, and some employee benefits, including rent;
- 4) more of the businesses are being digitalized;
- 5) an increase in staff productivity, with 29% of those polled by PWC (2020) reporting an increase and 44% reporting a stable level of productivity.

The following negative impacts were identified (Vasilescu 2021):

- 1) costs associated with the widespread adoption of telework: providing IT equipment, adopting new cloud platforms;
- 2) assuring the successful collaboration of new teams through entirely virtual collaboration;
- 3) managing teams due to managers' limited/ lack of soft skills;
- 4) assuring professional development of staff, with 50% of planned training being delayed or suspended.

Telework has doubled since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, while still being at low levels, and it appears that it will continue long after the health crisis is over. And it will impact the way we see work: the way we design workspaces, the way we design our homes, the productivity, the work performances and the tasks that can be outsourced to the Artificial Intelligence.

A study conducted in 2020 by professors at Bucharest University of Economic Studies revealed that the advantages of engaging in a professional activity as it follows: saving time resources otherwise allocated to commuting between home and work, elimination of stress caused by congestion in traffic or public transport, a greater level of flexibility in organizing

one's own program, more time spent with family and a higher level of promptness in organizing business meetings due to the use of technology. 548 people completed the questionnaire, and the confidence interval is 4.19%. There were 18 questions in total, 5 of which were socio-professional. The main objectives were: determining the current status and professional field; figuring out the primary method of carrying out the professional activity during the COVID pandemic; figuring out the major challenges, as well as the advantages; selecting the best option for the program to carry out professional activities in the future from the respondent's perspective. (Rădulescu et al. 2021)

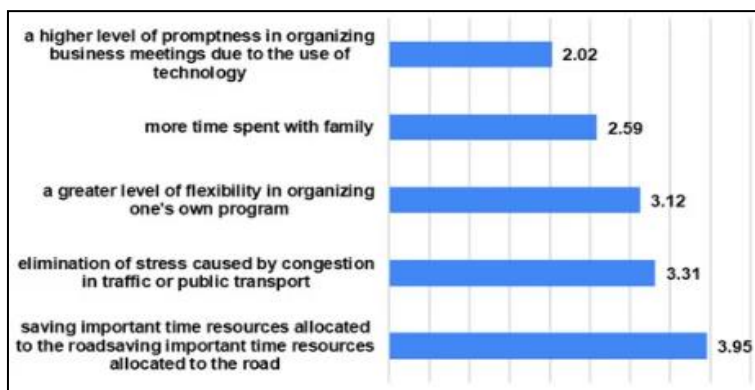


Figure 1. The advantages of engaging in a professional activity

Source: Rădulescu et al. 2021

According to the results of the questionnaire's analysis, over 70% of the respondents worked in a telework regime during the lockdown; at one point, 46% of them did so exclusively, and 25% did so in a mixed regime.

Retrospective analysis revealed that about 70% of respondents said they produced better outcomes under these circumstances, 37% said they put in more labour, and 32% said they produced better results with less hours. The primary challenge for respondents was having access to current technology (devices, internet connection, etc.), but they recognized the advantages of using technology to schedule business meetings more easily and to spend more time with their families. More than half of the respondents claim that in the near future they would prefer to work in a hybrid word environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled the Romanian Government to regulate telework faster is regulated in both commercial and public organizations and to accelerate digitalization in all economic sectors. Romania had one of the least "digitalized" employment rates, the lowest percentage of flexible work schedules, and the lowest percentage of remote workers compared to other nations, according to an Eurofund working paper (Vasile et al. 2021).

Post 2020, according to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, the resident population of Romania on January 1, 2021 was 19.2 million people (National Institute of Statistics 2022). The civilian employed population was 8.4 million people, of which 5.4 million were employees. Most employees worked in the service sector (3.4 million people) and 1.8 million people were employed in industry and construction. 0.1 million people were employed in agriculture, forestry and fish farming. In 2021, the labour force employment rate was 69.1%, with higher values for men (72.2%) compared to 65.6% for women.

In Romania, the occupancy rate has significantly dropped out in 2021 as compared with the previous years, from 69,1% to 62,3%. We only can speculate that this is due to the fact that during the 2020 many businesses were closed down and maybe because some of the other businesses downsized their employees.

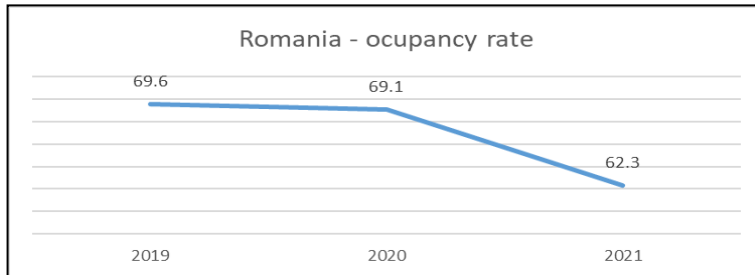


Figure 2. Romania - occupancy rate

Source: <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ROU/romania/unemployment-rate>

Unemployment refers to the share of the labour force that is without work but available for and seeking employment. Romania unemployment rate for 2021 was 5.17%, a 0.14% increase from 2020.

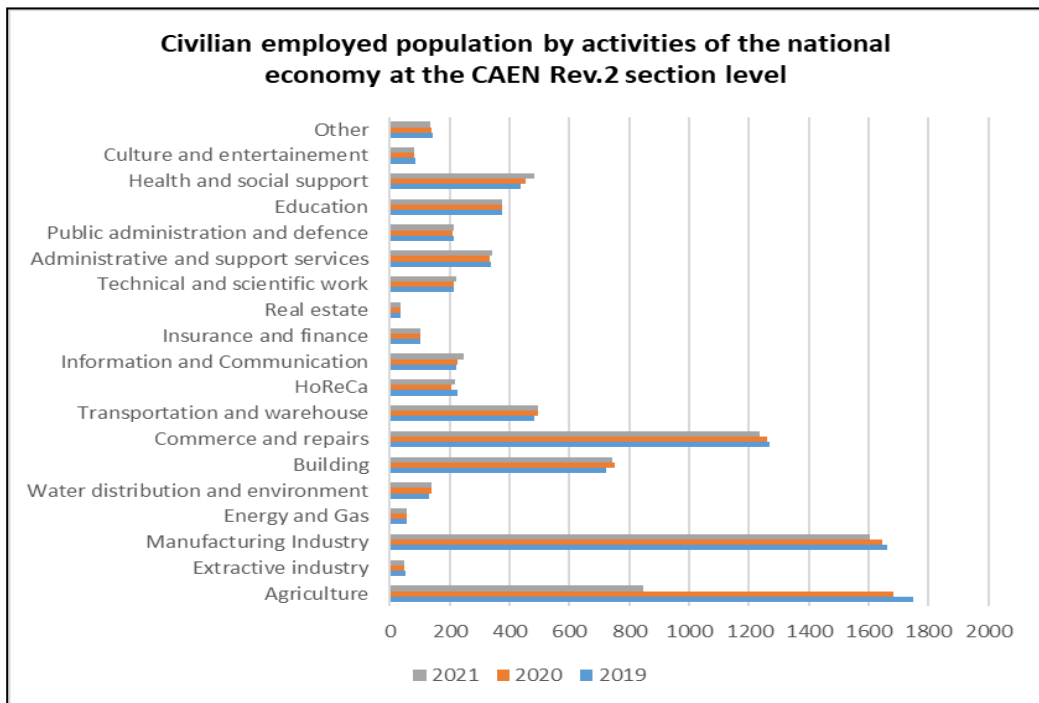


Figure 3. Civilian employed population by activities of the national economy at the CAEN Rev.2section level

Source: National Institute of Statistics

As one can observe from the table above, the most affected industries by the COVID-19 in 2020 are: Commerce and repairs, Manufacturing industry, and surprisingly the Agriculture. The HoReCa industry has recovered in 2021 pretty well.

Conclusions

In the EU, the COVID-19 pandemic made 1.8 million people lose their jobs. The estimates for US are that 4 million people lost their jobs. But, the recovery of the European economy and labour market had progressed in the third quarter of 2021. The majority of nations advanced and kept reducing the social isolationist measures brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic's health problem. Other special measures, such financial aid to enterprises in various EU Member States, that had been adopted to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis' consequences on employment and businesses gradually came to an end. This third quarter of 2021 confirmed the economy's recovery, which was amply demonstrated by the development of employment relative to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic (Eurostat 2022a). At the same time, the people's freedom of movement restrictions and the abrupt cessation of economic activity to stop the spread of the COVID-19 have resulted in a reduction in production systems and a loss of revenues, putting the survival of millions of businesses, especially micro and SMEs, and jobs in the majority of countries at risk. Productivity growth should be one area of emphasis in order to combat COVID-19's effects because it improves financial performance. The International Labour Organization shows in their report, *Driving Up Productivity. A Guide for Employer and Business Membership organizations*, that:

Businesses have increased productivity as a result of better management techniques and have seen exponential development.

Without necessarily raising taxes or public spending, an economy can stimulate economic growth by using its resources more effectively as a result of increasing productivity.

The economy becomes more resistant to outside shocks when the business environment fosters productivity growth.

The performance of an organization can be improved through increased productivity without the requirement for significant investments (ILO 2020).

There are three phenomena affecting jobs and employment that could continue in diverse degrees after the pandemic. First, hybrid and remote work it is very likely to continue even after 2023. A McKinsey report shows that between 20 and 25 percent of employees in advanced nations and roughly 10 percent of those in emerging economies could work from home three to five days per week, primarily in the field of outsourcing work (computer-based office work: IT, financial work, digital marketing): "In the computer-based office work arena, 70 percent of time could be spent working remotely without losing effectiveness, compared to most other arenas, where as little as 5 to ten percent of work could be done remotely.", underlines the McKinsey report (McKinsey Global Institute 2021). Rather than the occupations, the tasks and activities determine the likelihood of working remotely. There are jobs that depend more on the location of the company and the customer, and there are jobs that can be done anywhere from the planet. Secondly, the expansion of the "delivery economy" and e-commerce is also anticipated to continue. Finally, businesses have turned to automation and AI to deal with COVID-19 disruptions, and they may speed up adoption in the years to come by installing more robots in warehouses and manufacturing facilities as well as self-service customer points and service robots in areas where customers interact with businesses. (McKinsey Global Institute 2021).

The McKinsey report was developed based on US companies, but we think the results translate to the EU economy as well because there are similarities in regards to what measures the EU and US have conducted so far to counteract the COVID-19 effects.

The possibility for remote work differs amongst nations, depending on their industry, occupations, and balance of activities. The United Kingdom among the following eight nations has the biggest potential for remote work, largely because commercial and financial services in the realm of computer-based office work account for a sizable portion of its economy. According to the McKinsey model, 26% of the UK workforce could work remotely three to five days a week without losing productivity, and just under 50% could do so one to five days a week. Work-from-home is less likely to be used in emerging economies where employment is centred on jobs requiring physical and manual labour because they are low technologically developed (agriculture, manufacture, warehousing, maintenance and repair). For instance, in India, only 5% of the workforce could effectively work remotely three to five days a week with the existing mix of occupations, and an additional 15% could do so one to two days a week without losing output. Because Romania is almost always bellow the line, at the end of any performance top from any EU country, we could predict that maybe 10% from the employee population could continue to work remotely in the following years. The Employment and Social Developments in Europe Towards a strong social Europe in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis: Reducing disparities and addressing distributional impacts (European Commission 2021) draws similar conclusions to the ones from the McKinsey report.

Jobs that require little social interaction can be done from home, and are vital to society saw an increase in employment. For example, this was true for the insurance, computer programming, and telecommunications industries. Employment fell for jobs that couldn't be done from home. This was highest in the industries most severely impacted by the lockdown measures, including lodging, dining, and transportation. Doctors, nurses, personal care aides, and childcare providers are examples of occupations in the front lines with high levels of social interaction where the decline was less pronounced (European Commission 2021).

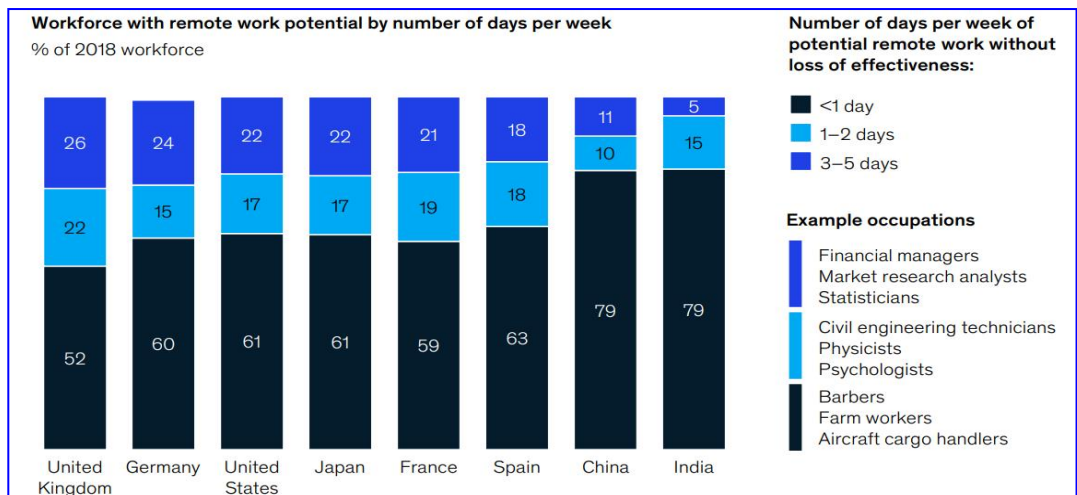


Figure 4. Workforce with remote work potential by number of days per week

Source: McKinsey Global Institute 2021

For many jobs, a hybrid model (online and offline work) is likely to persist in the future. Also, the AI impact on the economy will be higher and higher and it will cause another disruption, greater than the COVID-19 and it will force businesses and employees to reinvent themselves and innovate.

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COVID-19: HOW THE PRESIDENT OF ROMANIA USED FACEBOOK TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE POPULATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY FROM 2020

*Radu TURCESCU**

Abstract. *The present article aimed to analyse the way in which a political leader used the Facebook social network to communicate with the population at the beginning of the state of emergency from 2020. Thus, in order to achieve this objective, I have chosen to analyse the Facebook page of the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, starting from indicators such as: the total number of posts, the total number of posts about Covid-19 out of the total number of posts, but also the type of communicated messages. We are going to observe the manner in which all the communication was directed towards restrictions and preventive measures, the strategy aiming to influence the population in these directions.*

Keywords: *Social Media, Political communication, communication strategy, pandemic*

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic created a lot of instability at the level of the public opinion, especially in the first months after the outbreak, moments when uncertainty was still high. Little was known about the typology of the virus, there was still no vaccine, while the authorities were mainly focused on restrictions.

As in any other situation with too few answers and far too many questions, people turn to the one whom they consider, more or less directly, the leader of the society. In our case, it was the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis.

The role of the leader in society goes back to the time of the nomadic tribes, when one of their roles was to provide the group with security (Gherghina, Țap 2020).

Thus, the President of Romania found himself in the situation of managing not only a medical crisis, but also a social one, the risk of instability increasing as the Covid-19 pandemic advanced. Also, we must not forget the fact that the first real measure of the president was to establish a state of emergency, an unprecedented aspect for a large part of the population.

Romania started the "adventure" of the pandemic with a single confirmed case, so that less than a week later we witnessed a galloping increase of the cases. Coincidence or not, the televisions only discussed about this thing, by daily reporting the new number of the infected people and by presenting images that were at least frightening.

The rumors did not take long to appear, on the sources circulating all kinds of documents about restrictions or states of emergency. Initially, the authorities denied such a decision, so that later the president would decide in this regard.

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As I explained above, this new situation represented a premiere /a first for the vast majority of the population. With the legislative cover "in the pocket", the authorities have made decision after decision, imposed restrictions and some would even say that they limited or restricted certain rights.

The students were forced to learn from home, and people to work from home. The access of the Romanians to different locations was restricted, the famous statement being introduced. The police and the army swarmed/littered the streets, and trips abroad were also restricted.

The closing of the markets, the suspension of jobs (in a society like the one in Romania, I think this was the decision that led to the loss of the elections by the PNL) and also the interruption of the activities of certain entrepreneurial companies, from different fields of activity, represented other decisions that were difficult to accept for a large part of the population.

As was to be expected, people's fear for the financial situation began to grow. People quickly understood that, beyond the epidemiological danger, all the financial measures such as postponing or delaying installments will "claim their rights".

We are thus looking at a difficult context, new for the vast majority of people, dominated by uncertainty and fear. We are looking at a context where the role of the leader becomes, as we saw above, more and more important. It is even crucial, if we look at it from the perspective of the communication objectives. Explaining the situation, calming the population and providing guarantees or explaining and convincing people to accept the restrictions were just some of Klaus Iohannis' communication targets at the beginning of the pandemic.

To an equal extent, the communication channels play an extremely important role in a crisis situation. Of course, we have the traditional mass media, but in order to ensure that the message reaches the population correctly and quickly, we must also use Social Media.

In this article I am going to analyse the manner in which a political leader utilized Social Media during the time of an unprecedented crisis. Consequently, we analysed the page of the President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, by starting from indicators such as the total number of posts since the beginning of the pandemic compared to the total number of posts from the months preceding the pandemic, the total number of posts about Covid-19 from the total number of posts and the communicated messages.

2. The Importance of Groups and Leaders

The leaders have always played an extremely important role for any society, regardless of the time interval that we are analysing or the socio-political context. One of the most developed human instincts is the gregarious instinct or, in simple terms, the herd effect (Bernays, 1923). In other words, it is in our essence to surround ourselves with people who think the same as we do or share the same opinion, with the same principles or values, and to form groups that help us progress, evolve or solve all kinds of problems.

Whether we like it or not, ever since we are born, we live in all kinds of groups, such as family, communities, cities, neighbourhoods or even countries (Stewart, 2005: 186). There are countless reasons for which people prefer to gather in groups, but starting from the idea of this article, one of them deserves to be mentioned in this chapter, namely the positive way in which they feel referring to the group in question. For example, to a political party or to a group of supporters of a certain political leader: "well-being is often related to the performance of their party or political tendency at the polls" (Steward, 2005: 188).

This need of people to belong to groups with similar opinions has been and is often exploited by the political leaders, whose main objective is to gain enough support in order to influence perceptions or win elections: "In politics, group identities and divisions are often emphasised by political leaders ('ethnic entrepreneurs') to gain support" (Stewart, 20015: 187).

Equally, many political leaders "faced" a complex situation, because any benefit - the possibility of influencing the masses - comes with a series of other obligations. For example, a leader can have an enormous impact in the 21st century, when the influence upon the masses is much easier via Social Media: "Leadership has a large impact whether via social media, which is an important outreach tool in the current millennium" (Antonakis, 2020: 211).

This means that whatever they do and say will influence the perception of the public opinion, people's behaviour or even their decisions. Thus, looking at the positive perspective of things, leaders can even "manipulate" the actions of the individuals or even solve problems of public interest issues (Antonakis, 2020: 211).

3. The importance of leaders during crisis situations

At the same time, beyond the moments of peace, a leader can face all kinds of sensitive or delicate situations, from minor incidents to serious crises, special contexts, rarely encountered or involving the saving of human lives. Unfortunately, most of the time, when we think about the rare events that can turn into a serious crisis, we think about a lot of ambiguity, but also about the need for an urgent reaction (Alkharabesheh, Ahmad, Kharabsheh, 2014: 283).

Obviously, in order to understand how a crisis can be successfully managed, we must first of all understand what the role of a leader is in such a sensitive moment. Being pressed by the serious expectations of the groups that they represent, during a crisis a leader can provide stability, trust and control (Alkharabesheh, Ahmad, Kharabsheh, 2014: 282).

But in order for this to be successfully accomplished, people must have full confidence in the leader who will lead them out of the crisis. The expectations can be high, the trust in the political leaders is not always at the highest levels, so one of the main objectives of the 21st century leader is to gain the trust of the groups (Alkharabesheh, Ahmad, Kharabsheh, 2014: 283). Only by relying on the unconditional trust of the people he follows, a leader will be able to take decisions with very little information (Alkharabesheh, Ahmad, Kharabsheh, 2014: 283).

To an equal extent, everything starts from the mentality of the leaders and from the manner in which they view or take into account the crisis they are facing. Some leaders will interpret the situation as a challenge, while others as an opportunity (Rameshan, 2021: 3). This aspect, the way in which the leaders relate to the crisis they are facing, is particularly important, especially if we think that a serious response can influence or even change the community from different points of view, such as social, economic or by building a solid foundation or background (Dirani, Abadi, Alizadeh, Barhate, Garza, Gunasekara, Ibrahim, Majzun 2020: 2).

4. Leaders and their communication during the covid-19 crisis

Starting from the discussion about the need of the leaders to gain the trust of the groups that they represent, discussion mentioned in the above –mentioned section, a correct communication strategy must be based on transparency and specific sources (Nur, Al-Mandhari, El Rabbat, Hafeez, Abubakar, Obaid Al Saidi 2020: 2).

During a crisis, it is important for an assumed leader to communicate clearly and frequently (Fernandez, Shaw 2020: 43), using at the same time all available communication channels (Stoller 2020: 2).

The Covid-19 pandemic has represented a great crisis for the vast majority of the leaders from this world, in particular because of the uniqueness of the situation: a pandemic with a virus that nothing was known about. Panic had become the order of the day, "delayed action could lead to worse outcomes" (Nur, Al-Mandhari, El Rabbat, Hafeez, Abubakar, Obaid Al Saidi 2020: 1).

Obviously, since we were facing something new and different, each leader chose to approach crisis management in his own way, both from a medical perspective as well as from a leadership and communication perspective. It did not take long until these methods were classified, thus appearing all kinds of leadership typologies. The most relevant includes the following typologies (Rameshan 2021: 9):

- Missionaries are those with a single-minded pursuit - in this case, public health and life.
- Strategists are those leaders who tried to reconcile among the three motives and had partial success on each.
- Politicians are those who, indeed, wanted results on public health and life, but were embroiled in their political priorities (political constituency or legitimacy).
- Gamers are the leaders who had difficulty in leaving their political priorities and who focused largely on their political constituency or legitimacy.

Leader	A. Public Health & Life Motive	B. Political Constituency / Legitimacy Motive	C. Global Opinion/ Image Motive	Action Style*
Donald Trump	–	Yes	–	Gamer
Pedro Sanchez	Yes	Yes	–	Politician
Giuseppe Conte	Yes	Yes	–	Politician
Boris Johnson	–	Yes	–	Gamer
Vladimir Putin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strategist
Emmanuel Macron	Yes	Yes	–	Politician
Angela Merkel	Yes	–	–	Missionary
Jair Bolsonaro	–	Yes	–	Gamer
Recep T Erdogan	–	Yes	–	Gamer
Hassan Rouhani	–	Yes	–	Gamer
Xi Jinping	–	Yes	–	Gamer
Narendra Modi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strategist
Lee Hsien Loong	Yes	–	–	Missionary
Benjamin Netanyahu	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strategist
Shinzo Abe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strategist
Moon Jae-in	Yes	–	–	Missionary
Cyril Ramaphosa	Yes	–	–	Missionary
Scott Morrison	Yes	–	–	Missionary
Jacinda Ardern	Yes	–	–	Missionary
Tsai Ing-wen	Yes	–	–	Missionary

Figure 1. Leaders and their communication

Rameshan, 2021:9

Another classification, made as a result of a study accomplished by Bogusky-Halper, involves 6 different approaches "leaders need to communicate with honesty and transparency; staying calm and leading by example; helping employees stay safe and healthy; being factual; checking in and caring; and being clear and direct." (Dirani, Abadi, Alizadeh, Barhate, Garza, Gunasekara, Ibrahim, Majzun 2020: 5).

Moving on to much more specific examples, the leadership model of the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, was characterized as strong and balanced (Dirani, Abadi, Alizadeh, Barhate, Garza, Gunasekara, Ibrahim, Majzun 2020: 7): "The element of sanity comes through in her communication style. It is her ability to communicate purpose to the people of her country in a clear and frequent manner".

Briefly, people perceived this approach as being a correct one, especially due to the fact that the lack of information was permanently covered by the presence of the prime minister (Dirani, Abadi, Alizadeh, Barhate, Garza, Gunasekara, Ibrahim, Majzun 2020: 7).

At the opposite pole, Donald Trump tried to wage a war with an "invisible enemy" coming from China, and the attention on the economic war with China created the perception that he is almost totally neglecting the protection of Americans from the danger of Covid-19 (Johnson, Williams 2020: 944). Obviously, Joe Biden, using both metaphors of war as well as of compassion, managed to counter and even defeat Donald Trump in the (Johnson, Williams 2020: 944).

5. The Communication of the President of Romania

In order to analyse the way in which the President of Romania communicated on Social Media during the state of emergency, we analysed his Facebook page from the following perspectives:

- The total number of posts from January, February, March and April 2020
- The number of posts about Covid-19 from the total number of posts, from the months of January, February, March and April 2020
- The type of messages communicated on Social Media during the state of emergency

Total number of posts

In January 2020, the total number of posts on the Facebook page of President Klaus Iohannis was 5. In February 2020, the President of Romania posted 8 times on Facebook, the first post about Covid taking place on February 27th, 2020. As we will notice later, the number of posts increased as the health crisis also broke out in Romania.

Thus, in the month of March Klaus Iohannis posted 18 times, and in April 17 times.

The number of posts about Covid-19, from the total of posts made in the months of January, February, March and April 2020

The month of January did not include any posts about Covid-19, the reason being obvious: the pandemic had not yet broken out. The month of February also represented the debut month in the president's communication about Covid-19, the first post being made on February 27th. In other words, out of a total of 8 posts, only one was about the pandemic.

In March, out of a total of 18 posts, 15 were about the pandemic, and in April, out of a total of 17 posts, 14 were about Covid-19.

The type of communication messages on Social Media in the months of March and April 2020

In addition to the traditional appearances in the mass media, as we are already used to, President Klaus Iohannis chose to use the social networks - Facebook in particular – in order to convince the population of the existence of the virus, of the measures that are or are going to be taken, but also the importance of the imposed restrictions.

The month of March was dominated by messages that aimed at respecting the restrictions, 10 of the total posts being about encouraging the Romanians to respect the rules imposed by the institutions of the state. The month of March also represented the announcement of the state of emergency, together with the necessary measures to stabilize the economy or support the population. Last but not least, although we also had a change of government - announced by the president - the attention of the communication turned towards restrictions.

In April, the President of Romania continued the communication about the restrictions, 12 of the posts being, again, about encouraging people to comply with the imposed measures. The month of April was mainly about Covid, the 3 posts that did not touch this topic being about the two Easter holidays and only one about the political fight in the Parliament.

Conclusions

Like the other state leaders, the President of Romania focused his communication on the pandemic context, the social networks representing one of his main communication channels. There, in addition to the classic use of the text, he used photographs and video materials.

The importance of the leader

Furthermore, in any crisis, regardless of its form, people look towards the leader expecting answers and solutions. As it was expected, although Mr. President had not excelled in public appearances, Klaus Iohannis took a step forward, the pandemic time interval representing one of the most active time intervals from a media point of view. As we noticed at the beginning of this article, leaders play an essential role in the life of the groups. Equally, any crisis amplifies this context, so a well-constructed communication is necessary.

Clear objective

The Romanian President's communication was based almost exclusively on the pandemic context, which means that one of the objectives of his leadership was to draw the attention of the public opinion to the dangers that we face. Obviously, in such a situation it is very important that people understand perfectly everything that is happening.

By moving from the general to the particular, Klaus Iohannis insisted on respecting the restrictions, this representing the main objective of his communication during the pandemic time.

Repetitiveness

In order to ensure that people will obey the restrictions, Klaus Iohannis opted for repeating the messages, this being one of the best known methods of changing the perceptions. The large number of posts about restrictions, out of the total number of posts about Covid-19, is as clear as proof as possible.

Additional details and the avoidance of ambiguities

As we have already discussed throughout this article, an effective communication involves providing information so that the subject is covered as clearly as possible, without too many gaps or ambiguities. In addition to the posts about restrictions, the president also spoke about the manner in which the resources will be directed, about the economic measures or about supporting the population during the state of emergency.

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THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE, A EUROPEAN LANGUAGE – BETWEEN MODERNISM AND EUROPEANIZATION

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Abstract. *The language spoken by a community of people is a complex system of linguistic signs formed during the historic coexistence. The emergence of a language is a large process and it can't be determined exactly the beginning, even if the specialists establish always a starting moment. The Romanian language passed during the history through several stages of evolution and maturity. In the last Century, the Romanian language entered in its Modern Age, characterized by stability. However, there are important changes, influenced by the French and Italian languages at the begging of the XX Century and English language at the end of the XX Century. The aim of our paper is to describe and analyse the different stages of the Romanian language in the last 100 years and how it was influenced by the major events that Romania went through.*

Keywords: *Romanian language, modernism, Europeanization, XX Century, European language*

Since 2007 the Romanian language is part of the big family of official languages of the European Union, together with other 23 languages. It has been a long way to this recognition, an entire process of growing and changing, very natural for any language. During the history, the Romanian language passed through several stages of evolution and maturity and even if was born relatively late comparative with other European languages, the Romanian language is now stable, steady and with its own personality and character. In this paper, we will stress the most important steps that took the Romanian language in the becoming of what is today. In other words we will stress the path to Europeanization of the Romanian language, passing through its shaping during the History and continuing with the most important influences that we had. A short review of the Romanian language in actual times will be done as a closure of this paper work.

The subject that we have chosen is important for the sphere of International Relations because it's about identity, communication, socialization at all levels. In European Union a language has its own unity and identity, is about culture and incorporates both respect and knowledge. Also, a language brings the people together and unites the nation.

1. Important points in the shaping of Romanian language

The majority of researchers define the Romanian language as the popular Latin language spoken continuously for two thousand years in the north and south of the Danube. This definition coincide with the definition that Alexandru Rosettti, one of the most important linguists and historians of Romanian language, gives in his book, "The History of Romanian language, from origins to the beginning of the XVII century". He says that

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"The Romanian language is the Latin language spoken continuously in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, including the Romanized Danube provinces (Dacia, Southern Pannonia, Dardania, Lower and Upper Moesia) from the moment of the entrance of the Latin language in these provinces until today." (Rosetti, 1986:75). In other words, the Romanian language is a complex system formed during the time and during the historical coexistence. In order to put in evidence the development of the Romanian language, we will touch here the most important moments in the evolution of the language, from the beginnings until nowadays.

The Romanian people are the descendants of the Geto-Dacians. Due to the historical circumstances, the Geto-Dacians had to mix, starting with 106, with Roman colonists, brought to Dacia after the second war with the Roman Empire. The Roman army occupied much of Dacia, which was converted into a province of the Empire. The Roman settlers brought to the conquered province their way of life, their civilization and their culture. Among the factors that contributed to the Romanization process it can be mentioned the military service, which became compulsory for the young Dacians, the marriages between Roman soldiers and Dacian women and the Christianity spread in Latin. The province of Dacia was ruled over by Romans for 165 years. As a consequence, the Dacian language disappeared and the Latin language was established. (Rosetti, 1986:77-78). This was called in the history of the Romanian language the Romanization process. This process was very similar to that of the Iberians and Gauls. Everywhere it lasted about 100-150 years and happened gradually. The first people learning Latin were those that had to do with the Roman administration, then the Army and the merchants and then the rest of the population. For a while two languages were used, Geto-Dacian and Latin. But, since in the Administration and in the School was used the Latin language, it was natural that Geto-Dacian words enter into Latin and not vice-versa.

After the year 271 AD, the Romans left Dacia because the Emperor Aurelian considered better to defend the Empire on the southern part of the Danube. Despite that, the process of irreversible Romanization did not stop; on the contrary, it was intensified by the penetration of the Latin language into the large popular masses. Thus, the Latin language was gradually generalized among all Dacians after the year 300. (Rosetti, 1986:80)

The Romanian language is the continuation of the popular Latin language, also called Vulgar Latin, without being defined by literature or school, but being relatively unitary and preserving archaic elements. The process of formation of the Romanian language ends in the eighth century. The invasion of the migrating people influenced the language, but without changing the main lexical background and the grammatical structure of Latin origin. The Romanian is a Unitary Language, meaning that is spoken on the same way all over the territory of Romania. It has only some regional variations, not significant, and the spoken Romanian is close to the Romanian Literary language. (Maiden, M and all, 2021:18)

Around seventh century four dialects can be differentiated in the Romanian language: Daco-Romanian, to which standard Romanian belongs, and the three dialects called trans-Danubian, spoken in south of the Danube, namely Aromanian (or Macedo-Romanian), Megleno-Romanian, and Istro-Romanian. (Maiden, M and all, 2021:18) The existence of these dialects is due to the fact that the Slavs entered in Dacia and south of the Danube, at the beginning of the seventh century and that produced great changes in south-eastern Europe. They formed their own states and dispensed considerable political, cultural, and religious influence over the surrounding peoples. Later on, in Transylvania entered, in the ninth century, the Hungarians. They subdued the Romanian voivodships and extended, until the twelfth century, their dominion over the entire Transylvania. But, neither the Slavic

nor the Hungarian influence changed, however, the Latin character of the Romanian language. (Moldovanu, 2010:19).

In the course of the time, several languages influence Romanian Language: Hungarian, Slavic, Turkish or Greek and until a certain time the Alphabet used was the Cyrillic. The very first books that entered in the Romanian voivodships were written in the old Slavic language used in churches, also called Slavonic. The priests had to read them and, for that, they had to know the Cyrillic alphabet. The first known document written in Romanian is a short letter from 1521 called “Neacsu’s letter from Câmpulung” addressed to the mayor of Braşov. After 1540 we have also the first printed books, the majority in Braşov. In these books can be noticed influences from Turkish and Greek. (Rosetti, 1986:92-99)

The Modern literary Romanian language takes shape in the second half of the eighteenth century through a vertiginous and very complicated process of "relativization", which was possible due to the Romanian social homogenization and the unity of the common language. In the nineteenth century, the economic, social, political and cultural relations between the Romanian Principalities intensified and the first schools in the Romanian language and the first Romanian newspapers were established. As examples of newspapers in Romanian we can mention "The Romanian Courier" by Ion Heliade Rădulescu in Wallachia, “Alăuta¹ românească”² by Gheorghe Asachi in Moldova or "Gazeta de Transilvania"³ by George Bariţiu in Transylvania. (Rosetti, 1986:102)

During this period, the norms of the literary Romanian language are established, the functional styles of the Romanian language are created and the outdated words of Turkish, Greek and Slavonic origin disappear, consolidating a modern and expressive language. The cultural society "Junimea"⁴ is born, which had an essential role in this process. (Rosetti, 1986:105) In the middle of nineteenth Century is adopted officially the Latin alphabet, but there is a dispute regarding the writing between the phonetic writing (we write as we pronounce) and the etymologic writing (we write in function of an original word, as in actual French). Now, in this period, the Romanian language suffers the influence of the French language, taking from it a large number of words like: “advantage”, “banknote”, “fruit”, “genius”, “pencil”, “style” and others. But it will last just for a while, because the beginning of the twenty-first century brings a massive influence of the English language, especially in science and technology.

This part of our work presented the most relevant ideas in the constitution of the Romanian language as a unitary language and as the language that we speak today. It is obvious that a language, as it is a living process changed and will change a lot. If we take into consideration the last 100 years, maybe the most important influences in the Romanian were the influences from the western part of Europe. We consider that the French influence and the English influence are the most relevant to develop for the subject of our paper, Romanian language between Modernism and Europeanization.

2. The French influence in the Romanian language - the Modernism

The French influence was the most significant in the Romanian language and brought the most important changes. It influenced the thinking of people, the Romanian

¹ Regional name for violin

² The Romanian violin (translation made by the author)

³ The Journal of Transylvania (translation made by the author)

⁴ The Youngest (translation made by the author)

sensibility and can be observed in politics, in legislation, in administration but also in the social life.

We can speak about the influence of the French language on the Romanian language starting with the end of the eighteenth century, when in the Romanian Principalities appeared the first signs of the French civilization. Due to the historical and cultural circumstances from sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Romania, the Romanian literary language suffered from foreign influences, as we saw in the previous part of this paper. The influences from Slavonic, Turkish, Hungarian or Greek languages disadvantaged it and prevented the Romanian language from having a favourable evolution similar to the other European languages of culture. The first obstacle faced by the translators of the sixteenth century, as well as all the scholars of the next century, was the poverty of the vocabulary, the limited number of synonyms and abstract terms, as well as the lack of some terms appropriate to the name of many new notions and ideas. (Mitrofan; Fuior, 2012:69)

The idea of the necessity of enriching the Romanian language with borrowings from other languages, especially from Latin and Romance languages, was born early on the seventeenth century, when, preoccupied with arguing the origin of the Romanian people, chroniclers naturally come to the demonstration of the Latin origin of the Romanian language and ask themselves the question of enriching the vocabulary with new terms from the most famous languages of culture, Greek and Latin, but also from Romance languages. (Tărăță, 2012: 216-217)

Starting with the second decade of the eighteenth century, with the establishment of the Phanariot reigns in Moldavia and Wallachia and of the Austrian domination in Transylvania and Banat, the pace and the rhythm of cultivation of the old literary language imposed by the chroniclers was interrupted, thus marking the beginning of a period of decline for the Romanian culture. (Mitrofan; Fuior, 2012:70) But, in this context, a very welcomed moment for the Romanian culture seems to have been the beginning of the French influence, manifested first, directly, through the native speakers of French language coming to Romania and, later, through translations and through writing in general. The Phanariot rulers from that time were great admirers of French culture and they contributed to the penetration of the French element in the Romanian language and, with it, to the introduction of an image of what the Western civilization represented. As they were coming to the Romanian Principalities, the Phanariots brought with them secretaries and educators charged with the education of the ruler's children. Through them, the French language was introduced at the royal court and among the boyars. Also, the Phanariot rulers are due to the introduction of the first French books in the Romanian Principalities. The classics Corneille, Racine, Molière were not missing from the libraries of the Romanian boyars. (Mitrofan, 2014)

Towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the next century, French textbooks of history, philosophy, mathematics, chemistry, but also the works of well-known French authors are translated into Greek: Florian, Marmotel, Voltaire, Fénelon, Fontenelle, Montesquieu, Chateaubriant, Rousseau and others. Also during this period appear the first grammars and dictionaries of the French language. Nicolae Caragea writes in Greek a Grammar of the French language printed in 1806, and Alexandru Mavrocordatos made the first French-Greek and Greek-French Dictionary. The first French-Romanian and Romanian-French Dictionary was written by Jean-Alexandre Vaillant in 1839, followed by a second one, of larger proportions, belonging to P. Poenaru, Fl. Aaron and G. Hill. (Mitrofan; Fuior, 2012:70)

Another way of entrance of the French language and culture in Romanian culture was manifested in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as a consequence of

the political events that took place in France and, first of all, of the Revolution of 1789. After the fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the old regime, many French nobles emigrated to the Romanian Principalities. Some of these emigrants are employed as teachers in the boyar houses, thus making known the French language and culture, as well as the political and philosophical ideas that had prepared the French Revolution (fraternity, equality, freedom) and which were embraced by the boyars of the Principalities. The French influence begun in the eighteenth century remains strong throughout the next century. From the political point of view, the breakup of the feudal regime and the development of capitalist relations opened new perspectives to the Romanian Countries in the effort of political and cultural emancipation. (Mitrofan; Fuior, 2012:71) The press also played an important role in the propagation of elements of French culture. Many Romanian boyars were aware of the news from the political and cultural level, reading French newspapers such as: "Le Spectateur du Nord"⁵, "Le Journal encyclopédique"⁶, "Le journal littéraire"⁷, "L'Almanach des Dames"⁸, but also Francophone publications published in the Romanian cultural landscape. (Mitrofan, 2014)

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the French influence becomes more and more obvious also due to the intellectuals who studied in France, where they acquire the French language at source and from the source and take direct knowledge of the literature and innovative ideas of this country. Back in the country, these "bonjurists"⁹ or "French learners", as they were ridiculed by the conservative nobility, become exponents of French influence in our culture and language. Thus, the French language becomes the fashionable language of the boyar, instead of the Greek one, being used more and more often in the current conversation or in the correspondence. Related with this aspect, at that time we can speak about a "Franco-Romanian bilingualism" (Mitrofan, 2014) that characterized, in the nineteenth century, certain social environments in the Romanian Principalities. However, this linguistic effervescence also generated the abusive use of loans written, pronounced and misunderstood by people who wanted to keep up with the fashion of the time. Therefore, these Gallicisms or wrong words spread in familiar language proved in time their uselessness and disappeared, being criticized and ridiculed by the writers of the time, including Mihail Kogălniceanu, Ion Luca Caragiale or Vasile Alecsandri. (Mitrofan; Fuior, 2012:72)

In the twentieth century the rhythm of borrowed words from French was maintained for some sectors of activity like social life, clothing, economy, gastronomy, science, technique, toponymy, administration, sport, but especially for the humanities fields. Even more, the process was also encouraged for cultural borrowing in order to synchronize the Romanian culture with the spirit of the European age. The excess of neologisms from French led to the creation of a vocabulary standardized, with cosmopolitan words and cliché-expressions. It is interesting to note that most of the neologisms of French origin have been preserved and integrated perfectly into the vocabulary of the Romanian language today. Some examples that we would like to mention are: *anvergură* (wingspan), *a epata* (to amaze, to impress), *eșantion* (sample), *festin* (feast), *mignon* (mignon), *recul* (recoil), *șoc* (shock), *tandru* (tenderness), and others. (Mitrofan; Fuior, 2012:73)

In recent years, the French language has lost ground to the English language, which overshadows any other source of lexical borrowings, semantic and phraseological heels.

⁵ The Spectator of the North (translation made by the author)

⁶ The Encyclopedic Journal (translation made by the author)

⁷ The literary journal (translation made by the author)

⁸ The Ladies' Almanac (translation made by the author)

⁹ Person who speak French called in an ironic mode

This is the reason why we will present in the next part of this paper work some important ideas referring to the English influence in the Romanian language.

3. The English influence in the Romanian language

Nowadays, we speak more and more about a contemporary international influence of English language. This influence can be related with a linguistic globalization, generated by the alert rhythms of the economic, politic and social sphere of the twenty one century. (Jenkins, 2007: 191) So, the influence of English on the lexicon of some languages comes to meet a need for effective and rapid communication in the context of hasty social and economic transformations.

The influence of English on the Romanian language represents one of the most relevant and intense phenomena of the current Romanian language. The case of the Romanian language is not singular, as we already mentioned. It is part of a more general phenomenon, with an international character, in which the English language, currently having the status of *lingua franca* (Jenkins, 2007), exerts a massive influence on many languages. The linguistic phenomenon in this case is related to globalization, a process of emergence and international integration, with multiple dimensions, with political, economic, technological, social, cultural character, etc.

It appeals to borrow terms from English not only the languages spoken in south-eastern Europe, where the modernization of socio-political life has been greatly delayed by the political conjuncture, but also languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, German as a result of political and economic contacts, bilingual speakers and the audio-visual and written press. (Radu, 2007: 17-18) The influence of English on the Romance languages is not recent, it appears during the conquest of England by the Normans, at which time it manifested itself over several centuries as a result of the presence of French as a language of culture in England, the two languages, English and French, coming into contact. So the two languages influenced each other, words from the vocabulary of both languages making a circuit from English to French and vice versa. Many of those terms have returned to French in an Anglicized form. After the thirteenth century, the English influence was exerted on all the Romance languages, the twentieth century representing the peak of this influence. Terms were borrowed from all fields of activity: transport, finance, economy, politics, fashion, science and technology. (Radu, 2007: 19)

The influence of English on the Romanian language began in an older era, this occurring as early as the nineteenth century, in a first instance indirectly, that is, through other languages, especially through French, and with a reduced intensity compared to the present phenomenon. In addition, in history, the Romanian language has known other linguistic influences, produced by the Slavic, (neo)Greek, Turkish, French languages, etc., which is why the influence of English on the Romanian language must be analysed from a complex and more extensive perspective, that of an inevitable and continuous process, the result of the permanent contact between languages and cultures. The influence of the English language on the Romanian language was exercised, as in the other cases of linguistic contacts and influences, on the lexicon of the language in particular, by borrowing the lexical elements called Anglicism. As regards English in particular, it can be found that Anglicisms entered the Romanian language in the first instance through specialized languages, such as sports language, press language, economic language, computer language, etc., and less in other varieties of language. (Obrocea, 2018: 119) The term Anglicism, defined in DEX as "an expression specific to the English language", a word of English origin borrowed by another language, not yet integrated into it, "designates recent borrowings

from British and American English, incomplete or not at all adapted" (DEX online) As such, they are written and spoken in Romanian in a way very close to or identical to that of the original language.

The English influence on the current Romanian language is compared by the Romanian linguists with the French one from the nineteenth century. Borrowings from English, especially American English, to the current Romanian language were made between 1990 and 2000, representing the same tendency of all Romance languages to submit to the so-called linguistic globalization. Although in the present era the influence of the English language is exercised especially in the direction of its American version, there is no particular distinction between Americanisms and Anglicisms, being in fact the borrowings from the English language. (Radu, 2007:20)

The Anglicisms in the current Romanian language are evident in the economic, technical and publishing field, the press contributing to the linguistic education of the public and to the internationalization of the lexicon of the literary language. And in the Romanian language, in parallel with the appearance of the necessity to name new realities, there is a linguistic fashion that can be inscribed in a kind of linguistic mimicry present in the other Romance languages.

Depending on the socio-cultural norm, the Anglicisms in contemporary Romanian have been framed and studied by some linguists according to two categories of loans: the necessary ones and the luxury ones. This division of English loans indicates the apprehension towards the massive borrowing of English terms, in the idea of protecting the Romanian language from a possible risky of saxonization. (Radu, 2007:21)

Anglicisms are a reality, and the attitude of speakers and specialists must be one rational in this regard, weighing both advantages and disadvantages. The latter are not numerous, but there are. Among them we mention: insecurity of adaptation, creation of bizarre forms or hyper corrected forms and the risk of pleonasm. On the other hand, however, we can also speak of many advantages. Anglicisms did not cause an alteration of the Romanian language, but, on the contrary, contributed to its permanent renewal and reconstruction. The influence of English does not have to be considered a negative phenomenon, leaving nothing more dangerous than other foreign influences that have been manifest over time in our language, as long as their use is not exaggerated. The adoption in speech of these terms corresponds to both cultural and social needs of expression (the emergence of new realities, determined by facts related to the progress of humanity), as well as functional (the necessity of the existence in the language of terms that designate these new realities of people's lives). (Rus, 2005: 271-272)

The essence of language is to renew itself permanently. Borrowing from other languages is an aspect of linguistic creativity through which the language changes, enriching itself incessantly to correspond to new realities at all times.

4. Romanian language today – Europeanization

The general tendency of the current literary language is to keep the borrowings from other languages in a form as close as possible to that in the source language. It is obvious that we speak about the English language, as dominant language, lingua franca in Europe and not only. (Jenkins, 2007) This is mainly due to the linguistic consciousness of the English speaker and his pride in pronouncing and writing as in the language of origin. However, there are also situations in which it is necessary to preserve the original form, such as in the case of specialists who use these terms to communicate with other

professionals of different nationalities (e.g. hardware, software, designer, media, broker, dealer, etc.)

There are two types of borrowed English words, the „stylistic words”, words that name very good a reality and the „luxury loans”, words that are not necessary in a society, but a certain category of people use it in order to exaggerate.

The Anglicisms in the category of "stylistic" loans keep their appearance from the original language due to their force of suggestion, which means that they better name the reality (e.g. job, staff, master, trend, deal, clip, banner, speech, high-life). Otherwise, "luxury" Anglicisms are useless borrowings, related to the subjective tendency of some social categories to linguistically individualize themselves in this way. Such terms only duplicate Romanian words, without bringing additional information. The only reason why they are kept unsuitable and used in the language is represented by the prestige and sonority of the English word (eg advertising, training, casting, fashion, etc.) (Voinea Postolache, 2015: 106-107)

In certain areas, Anglicisms began to replace the vocabulary of the Romanian language. An example is the use of English titles for some jobs, in particular for managerial positions. For example, it is common to say "Human Resource Manager" instead of Director of Human Resources. A strong tendency to exaggerate the use of Anglicisms can be seen in advertisements. Banks in Romania use promotional slogans like: *Who do you do banking with?* or *Contactless payment*, although *banking* or *contactless* are Anglicisms that have not entered the common vocabulary and with which most Romanians are not used. These examples demonstrate the importance of a wake-up call, because these are developments that exclude from the information society a large part of the population, which is not familiar with the English language. (Trandabăţ et al, 2012: 14)

The English language is also known as “the language of globalization”. Sometimes is referred to as “global English” (Andronache, 2017:241) and could be defined and perceived as part of the globalization. It is part of the cause, the process and the product of globalization that we are living in all Europe and all over the world. It has become the language of the century mainly due to its acquisition as a second language on an international level and in a very short period of time, if we were to compare it to other languages, such as Latin or French. Today’s phenomenon of globalization strengthens the status of English worldwide, making it especially important. English language, or better said, the spread of English at an international level is perceived as both a good and deleterious thing to people and humanity in general. For those who see it as a positive or beneficial thing, English has now become a symbol of modernity and technology, of good education and welfare. It is seen as a solution in most cases, being the key for international understanding and world regulation. It is a fundamental request in communication, being in daily use online and offline (in the real world). People resort to English (or their knowledge of English) at work, when interacting with a foreigner (irrespective of his/her origin), when seeing a movie, when reading a book or a magazine, when sitting in front of the computer etc. Willingly or not, English is slowly but firmly becoming part of everyone’s life. (Andronache, 2017: 239-240)

In linguistics, the idea of globalization appeared as a direct consequence of the situation in the economy, so it illustrates a certain facet of the relationship between the dynamics of society and the needs of communication. Consequently, in our opinion, the concept of linguistic globalization must be understood as a deliberate acceptance of a common and unique means of communication in international relations. This means of communication necessary in the process of globalization of the contemporary economy has

a series of characteristics imposed by the special type of communication in which it is used. (Mureșan, 2015: 459) The language, an abstract and complex structure, evolves gradually, being influenced by a multitude of factors. The incessant transformations that the Romanian language undergoes as part of the phenomenon of language dynamics maintain the curiosity of the linguists and lead to their approach to analyse it lexically, grammatically and phonetically.

In her book *Aspects of English influence in current Romanian*, Adriana Stoichițoiu-Ichim uses the term *Romglish*, a word that, beyond its pejorative-ironic connotations, is recently appeared, by the imitation of the well-known *Frenglish*. The latter was imposed to designate the hybrid idiom resulting from the "appeasement" of the French language with Anglo-American terms, phrases and grammatical constructions. Returning to the term *Romglish*, the same author translates it through the concern of some Romanian intellectual circles towards the invasion of Anglicisms and Americanisms that endanger the identity of the national language and, implicitly, of the culture it expresses. (Mureșan, 2015: 461)

The attitude of the people of culture in Romania towards the avalanche of Anglicisms in all the stylistic registers of the language (specialized languages, standard literary language, colloquial/familiar language, the slang of teenagers or the so-called "teen-speak") oscillates between the indignation produced by the manifestations of Anglomania (writers and people from the press) and the relative tolerance expressed by prestigious linguists (Mioara Avram, Th. Hristea, Rodica Zafiu), preoccupied mainly with the norming of the use and less with the sociolinguistic and sociocultural aspects of the *Romglish*. (Mureșan, 2015: 462) A possible explanation of this attitude of most linguists is offered by Mioara Avram who, referring to a possible loss of language identity through Anglicization, said: "English influence is an international phenomenon that has nothing negative in itself and is no more dangerous for the language Romanian than other influences of the past and today (it is only known that the great hospitality of our language is doubled by an equally large capacity for assimilation and selection over time); in this regard there is more the question of correct use and balance, which implies the wise resolution of the conflict between the generations in the attitude towards Anglicisms" (Avram 1997, p. 9). We would say, in other words, that this process represents for the Romanian language its way to Europeanization.

5. Conclusions

The influence of some languages on others – at the lexical, morphological and phonetic level – has as a starting point the lexical component of the language, the most and more direct interferences manifesting themselves at the level of the vocabulary. In its historical evolution, the Romanian language came into contact with various languages from which it assimilated with great ease many words necessary for the communicative requirements of the time. The integration of foreign words in the communication process has posed, on the one hand, the problem of their adaptation to the influenced linguistic structure, and, on the other hand, the problem of the changes they entail in the lexical organization of the Romanian language, depending on the phonetic and grammatical structure, each foreign influence manifesting itself specifically. Depending on the conditions of contact between two languages, the influence affects differently the different functional and stylistic aspects of the receiving language. (Voinea Postolache, 2015: 107)

Anglicisms are a reality, a living proof of the evolution of the language. The attitude of the speakers and specialists against the avalanche of Anglicisms must be a rational one, since it is necessary to measure both the advantages and the disadvantages. The Anglicisms

did not cause an alteration of the Romanian language, but, on the contrary, they contributed to its permanent renewal and reconstruction, to its semantic and stylistic nuance, to modernization of the lexicon. The influence of the English language should not be considered a negative phenomenon, not being more dangerous than other foreign influences that have manifested themselves over time in our language, as long as their use is not exaggerated.

Regardless of the motivations for the use of Anglicisms, since terms have been imposed to denote the resulting linguistic product of the combination of any Romance languages and the English language (such as: *Romglish*, *Frenglish* and *Spanglish*), the English influence is and will remain the most powerful foreign influence, for a long time, an influence kept under control, although at present. The English language does not constitute a threat to alter the Romanesque character of the Romanian, French, Spanish or any other Romance language. (Radu, 2007:34)

The adoption in speech of new terms corresponds to both needs of expression cultural and social (the emergence of new extra linguistic realities, determined by facts related to the progress of humanity), as well as functional (the necessity of the existence in the language of terms that designate these new realities of people's lives). The essence of language is to renew itself permanently. Borrowing from other languages is an aspect of linguistic creativity through which the language changes, enriching itself incessantly to corresponds to ever-new realities.

Probably the most comprehensive definition of the changes that a language goes through is the one given by Eugen Coseriu, one of the greatest Romanian linguists of the twentieth century, brilliant exponent of the Romanian culture. He said "*Limba se face prin schimbare și „moare” atunci când încetează să se schimbe*", meaning "Language is made by change and "dies" when it ceases to change". We will use this definition for the closure of our paper as it totally comprise our perception too regarding the borrowing from other languages and the modifications of the Romanian Language during the time.

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CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A POTENTIAL CATALYST OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

*Bianca Maria SFERLE**

Abstract. *This paper is a first step in the elaboration of a PhD thesis on the same topic and aims at analysing the role of cultural heritage in international relations, mainly at the level of the European Union and the EU Member States. From the analysis of existing scientific works in this field, from the observation of the policies and programmes of the European Union, as well as the initiatives of the Member States, a close link has been observed between this vast concept "heritage" and the development of international relations with other communities, states and other international actors.*

Keywords: *cultural heritage, culture, international relations, european programs*

1. Introduction

Cultural heritage is an extremely broad concept, with applications and uses in various fields. In trying to define cultural heritage from my own perspective, I consider it to be the universal heritage of humanity that defines the identity of a people, proves the existence of inter-racial cultural links, and ensures a dialogue between peoples. UNESCO has captured the essence of heritage in a nutshell by claiming that: "Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration." The 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage exemplifies and categorizes as cultural heritage the following: "monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view" (UNESCO, 1972).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization makes it clear that cultural heritage is not limited to monuments and collections of objects but rather is "comprised of living expressions inherited from our ancestors, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social manners, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices related to nature and the universe, and knowledge and techniques linked to traditional crafts" (UNESCO, *Cultural Heritage*), cultural heritage is therefore also composed of those elements that we include in the category of intangible cultural heritage, defined in Romania

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by Law no. 26 of 29th February 2008 on the protection of intangible cultural heritage (*Romanian Parliament, Law no.26 of 29.02.2008*).

In the paper "Museums, Heritage and International Development", Paul Basu and Wayne Modest define heritage as "a legacy that has the power to shape the current predispositions of individuals and societies and their visions of the future, for better or worse" (*Basu and Modest, 2015, 2*) and mention that it could be seen as a tool for "fabricating the past" (*Basu and Modest, 2015, 6*). The same authors state that "Heritage is a notoriously malleable concept.", and Peter Johnson and Barry Thomas being even harsher in their phrasing argue that heritage refers to "virtually anything by which some sort of link, however tenuous or false, can be created with the past" (*Basu and Modest, 2015, 7*).

The European Commission has encompassed the essence of such a broad concept of cultural heritage in the wording: "Europe's cultural heritage is a rich and diverse mosaic of cultural and creative expressions, an inheritance from previous generations of Europeans and a legacy for those to come. It includes natural, built and archaeological sites, museums, monuments, artworks, historic cities, literary, musical and audiovisual works, and the knowledge, practices and traditions of European citizens" (*European Commission, Cultural heritage*).

The importance of cultural heritage for international relations is attributed to economic and social aspects. At European level, this integrating element is an essential resource for Member States to ensure a sense of belonging for social cohesion and the creation of a cultural dialogue. Bearing in mind the principle of unity in diversity and considering the principles of UNESCO, the main aim of organisations at international and European level is a common one: the creation of a dialogue between cultures (*Matsuura, 2006, 5*).

Samuel Huntington, drew attention to the elements of cultural heritage as a main source of conflict after the end of the Cold War and insisted on the attention that the discipline of International Relations should give to this aspect (*Huntington, 2002, 49*). Noting its divisive force which can easily lead to intolerance and conflict (*Bevan, 2006, 13*), the European Union has begun to give increased importance to cultural heritage in its internal policies, but also in its external policies when used as a soft power.

2. Conceptualising cultural heritage

Cultural heritage and culture in general are not considered important elements in international relations theories, which is why they have not been given much attention. However, the intangible elements of culture and cultural heritage have started to be increasingly repeated in the discourses of political leaders at European level, especially in the context of Europeanisation and the identification of a common European identity. In this context, I consider essential a theorization and conceptualization of cultural heritage through the prism of the main theories of international relations, in particular by analyzing the ideas of some of the leading figures and the fathers of these theories.

Realism is based on ancient traditional thought and considers that political action, institutions, social organizations, and moral beliefs are all arranged in cultural frameworks, they represent the substance, the empirical and material embodiments of culture as a system of signification (*Beate, 2000, p.7*).

According to Samuel Huntington, the realist approach is able to explain the importance of states, but it does not take into account the fact that states define their interests not only in terms of power but also that "values, cultures and institutions pervasively influence how states define their interests" (*Huntington, 2002, 34*). Moreover, Huntington

believes that states should be conceived as civilizations, and can be defined as "a collection of cultural characteristics and phenomena", "the broadest cultural entity", or "the highest cultural grouping of people" (*Huntington, 2002, 43*). In addition, in the same famous work "The Clash of Civilizations", Samuel Huntington has a vision of a cultural restructuring of global politics, where culture takes precedence over power and where enemies and allies of a state are defined by their cultural identity, even if they are still guided by self-interest (*Huntington, 2002, 126*).

According to Morgenthau's ideas, societal and cultural developments are not useful in international relations because they are temporally and spatially relative, changing over time and differing from one society to another (*Morgenthau, 1993, 220*). In addition, Morgenthau sees the modern development of societies based on national cultures as a dangerous threat to peace and order in the world, because each state has the belief that their cultural values are superior to other cultures and there is a risk of imposing these values on other nations (*Morgenthau, 1993, 245*). Therefore, culture is not just a contingent concept because it changes over time and from place to place; it is also a dangerous one because political practice based on these cultural beliefs has become a major threat to peace (*Beate, 2000, p.15*).

In contrast to Realism, the Liberalist theory argues that the intermingling of different cultural values is not necessarily a cause of inter-state conflicts; on the contrary, Hoffman argues that the main problem of the international sphere is the absence of a common culture, but this does not mean that all conflicts between states have cultural causes (*Beate, 2000, p.15*). Liberalism facilitates the promotion of culture and accepts it as an important element in international relations, simply because it recognises international actors other than states, such as NGOs, as actors that can facilitate international cultural dialogue. This theory focuses on cultural heritage only as a resource for capital accumulation, while at the same time representing a new political language for attracting new investment (*Coombe and Lindsay, 2015, 55*).

However, for both political theories, realism and liberalism, culture is not an important enough element in International Relations to be given due attention. The constructivist theory, however, comes with a new vision of culture and its role in International Relations.

Constructivism identifies culture as a key element in international relations, considering that all human behaviour, whether motivated by self-interest or the desire for cooperation, is influenced and determined by the cultural orientation of the individual. This idea of constructivist theorists, which seeks to clarify problems on the international scene not only through the political, security or economic prism, but also through the cultural prism, has divided constructivists into two camps: one side which believes that cultural elements can create tensions between states, and the other side which considers culture as a channel for communication, interaction and integration in international relations (*Idoko, 2021, 119*).

Marxist theory is the only one that has no opinion about the concept of culture or cultural heritage, being ignored or at best reduced to the meaning of ideology (*Worsley, 1981, 117*). Heritage has been fundamental in addressing the problem of change and continuity with the traditions and identities of the previous society and in the process of transforming citizens into "new people" through cultural revolution and the inculcation of ideology through museums and monuments (*Gonzalez, 2015, 3*).

3. European Union measures to create international relations through cultural heritage

In recent decades mankind has witnessed an accelerated change in concepts and policy priorities, with the benefits to society of cultural heritage increasingly recognised at both European and international level. Studies show that interest in economic issues predominates, while interest in culture has increased since the 1990s (*CHCfE Consortium, 2015, 14*).

The European Union noticed the rise of interest in culture and understood the importance of this element at social and economic level, but especially saw the unifying potential for European peoples and for the creation of international relations on the external level. As a result, the European institutions began to pay special attention to the cultural field and cultural heritage, by organising events and developing programmes aimed at protecting cultural heritage, raising awareness of European cultural heritage, identifying a common cultural heritage, strengthening the motto "Unity in Diversity" and encouraging cultural exchanges both between Member States and between EU members and external actors.

a) Creative Europe

The main funding programme developed by the European Union in the cultural direction is entitled "Creative Europe", with the aim of supporting the cultural and creative sectors. The Culture sub-programme is divided into four components: cooperation at European level with the aim of strengthening the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors to operate in an internationally competitive way and promote transnational circulation and mobility; European networks to support the activities of networks operating in the cultural sectors; European platforms to promote the development of new talent, cross-border collaboration to identify new audiences and literary translation projects to support the promotion of European literary works through translation and facilitating access to their content. The Culture strand of the Creative Europe programme supports a wide range of cultural sectors including architecture, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts (*European Commission, Creative Europe*).

The success of this programme is evidenced by the budget allocated for the period 2021- 2027 (€2.44 billion), which is higher than the budget allocated for the period 2014-2020 (€1.47 billion), (*European Commission, Creative Europe Programme*). At the beginning of 2022, the European Commission allocated an annual budget of €385.6 million, almost €100 million more than the budget allocated for 2021 under the same programme, when it approved the annual work programme of the Creative Europe Programme (*European Commission, Creative Europe: Increased budget in 2022*).

The projects funded under this programme have contributed to the creation of European cultural networks, as well as to the development of international relations, involving actors from several countries. Among these projects we recall the following: European Industrial Heritage 2020 and beyond - Fit for the Future which focused on the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH) 2018, through the European Dance Event "Work-it-Out", in which more than 3,500 children and young people danced on the same day in 32 locations in 10 different countries (*European Commission, Culture and Creativity-Creative Europe Projects*) ; HERITART - a project which aimed to promote European cultural heritage by conveying a new vision of sites The European collaboration project "CEMEC" (Connecting Early Medieval European Collections) - aimed at building a sustainable collaboration between museums and technical and creative companies, with the main theme of cultural exchanges in Europe in the Early Middle Ages and involved seven

museums from Belgium, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain (*European Commission, Culture and Creativity- Creative Europe Projects*). The projects listed are just a few of the countless projects implemented, but it was considered necessary to mention them in order to highlight that the Creative Europe programme was a success in the direction of creating international relations through culture.

b) Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the EU programme intended for young people, supporting active citizenship, the development of social and intercultural skills, critical thinking, mobility between countries, promoting cooperation and increasing awareness of the common values of the European Union. Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Courses are also funded under this programme and are designed and carried out through an international partnership between higher education institutions from different countries around the world, thus extending the area of mobility of young people to non-EU countries (*European Commission, Erasmus+*).

c) INTERREG

This programme is one of the European Union's key instruments supporting cooperation to facilitate international relations between countries and to find common solutions to challenges in the fields of health, environment, research, education, culture and more. The particularity of this project is its division into three strands: Cross-border cooperation (60 programmes), Transnational cooperation (15 programmes) and Interregional cooperation (4 programmes), (*INTERREG, About Interreg*).

In the framework of this programme, the ForHeritage project was implemented, which promoted integrated heritage management through the involvement of communities in countries such as Croatia, Poland, Italy, Slovenia, and the development of capacities for more effective protection and management of cultural heritage in Central Europe (*Interreg Central Europe, ForHeritage project*). With the help of the same programme, nine partners from six Central European countries (Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovenia) joined forces to recover and preserve their intangible cultural heritage, thus facilitating cross-border cooperation and generating new international relations and cultural networks.

d) Europe for citizens

Europe for Citizens was another successful EU programme in 2014-2020, with the main aim of helping citizens to understand the history of the European territory, the common values and cultural diversity of the EU, as well as encouraging them to participate in democratic activities and to be active citizens in society. Under this programme, 2588 projects have been implemented across the European Union (*European Commission, Europe for citizens Programme*), of which around 10% have aimed to enhance Europe's rich and diverse cultural heritage and have followed the role that culture and cultural heritage play in creating a sustainable society. Component 1 of the Europe for Citizens programme played an important role in promoting the role of Europe's cultural heritage as an essential element of cultural diversity and in fostering international relations based on cultural links or linked to a common European memory (*European Commission, Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the Europe for Citizens programme*).

e) European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy has been facilitating relations between the European Union and 16 of its southern and eastern neighbours since 2004, with the objective of prosperous cohabitation and preservation of multiculturalism (*European Commission, European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations*). Through this programme, not only bilateral cooperation is promoted, but also regional cooperation

(especially in the South and East), which consists in the development of specific regional strategies such as the Eastern Partnership or the New Agenda for the Mediterranean. (*European Commission, European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations*). Moreover, the European Union supports through the European Neighbourhood Policy and through cross-border cooperation between EU and neighbouring countries, the establishment of new international relations. Neighbourhood, understood as an expression of differentiated identity, is thus intended to ensure European unity, a principle underlined by the principles of the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the promotion of cultural diversity, culture in the EU's international relations and mobility.

4. EU actions for cultural heritage

As seen in the previous chapter, European funding programmes have been and still are the main channels for instilling and promoting the principles of the European Union, as well as for strengthening state cooperation relations within the EU and generating new international relations beyond Europe's borders. However, these funding programmes have in turn generated new actions, events, practices which we will go through in this chapter and which in turn have a major impact in terms of promoting culture, cooperation through cultural heritage, strengthening cultural relations or creating new international relations.

a) European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH)

The year 2018 has been designated as the European Year of Cultural Heritage, being the first thematic year organised within the Juncker Commission and aimed at raising awareness of the importance of cultural heritage and celebrating the richness of European cultural heritage. The European Commission argues that "Cultural heritage brings people together and contributes to more inclusive societies. It is a unique catalyst for exchanges between people of all ages, different social backgrounds, cultures and countries" (*European Commission, European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018*).

This initiative of the European Commission was particularly targeted at young people and included activities to provide them with opportunities to help preserve and restore cultural heritage. The European Year of Cultural Heritage has been adopted by all EU Member States and has succeeded in strengthening the sense of belonging by bringing communities closer to the cultural heritage that makes Europe unique. This year dedicated to cultural heritage is also unique because it has succeeded in producing a special Eurobarometer survey on cultural heritage, the only one of its kind in this field, which has brought to light the views of EU citizens on cultural heritage (*Europeana Pro, Mission*).

In addition to results such as promoting the role of Europe's cultural heritage as an essential element of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, increasing interest in European values and heritage, the European Year of Cultural Heritage has also demonstrated that these actions with cultural themes are important tools in relations between the European Union and other countries, cultural heritage being once again a potential generator of international relations.

b) Europeana

The European Platform was launched in 2008, with the support of the European Commission, with the aim of facilitating public access to Europe's cultural heritage, thus encompassing Europe's digital cultural collection.³⁹ Europeana provides teachers, researchers and cultural heritage enthusiasts with digital access to millions of European cultural heritage articles and materials collected from over 4000 institutions across Europe. By supporting this platform the Commission aims in the long term to build a competitive

tourism ecosystem in the EU, taking into account the strong interdependence between cultural heritage and tourism (*European Commission, The Europeana Platform*).

c) European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards

The European Heritage Awards were launched by the European Commission in 2002 and since then have been run by Europa Nostra, Europe's leading cultural heritage organisation. These awards bring outstanding cultural heritage initiatives and projects to the public's attention. The European Union offers these awards through the Creative Europe programme and has made a great contribution to encouraging good practice in the cultural heritage sector (*European Commission, Europa Nostra Awards*). Bringing together project proposals from across the European Union, the Europa Nostra Awards are an opportunity to promote European cultural diversity and strengthen relations between countries (*Europa Nostra, Our work- Awards*), and by rewarding the most successful projects, European cultural heritage is promoted internationally.

d) European Capitals of Culture

The European Capital of Culture programme was established in 1985 by the European Parliament as a valuable opportunity to regenerate cities, to make them more visible internationally, thus stimulating tourism and international cultural relations (*Directorate General for Internal Policies*). This programme is yet another opportunity to show the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe, to strengthen the sense of belonging to a common European cultural space, to highlight the importance of culture in generating new international relationships, and at local level, the chosen cities benefit from a regeneration of the cultural infrastructure and a better image in the eyes of both residents and tourists (*Ubrancikova, European Capitals of Culture*).

e) European Heritage Days

The European Heritage Days started in 1999, following a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, and since then they have been Europe's most important cultural events, with more than 70,000 events organised every year (*Council of Europe, European Heritage Days*). This initiative contributes to the creation of a climate in which European cultural diversity can be appreciated, to increasing tolerance at European level, beyond national borders, as well as to developing the capacity to promote and protect cultural heritage and to encouraging intercultural dialogue (*European Heritage Days*). During the European Heritage Days, citizens from the pan-European area, from the 50 signatory states of the European Cultural Convention, are brought together, facilitating free access to countless historical sites, heritage monuments and creating an opportunity to develop international and inter-community relations.

f) European Heritage Label

The European Union's interest in cultural heritage reached a new level in 2013 with the launch of the European Heritage Label at the initiative of several countries with the aim of promoting awareness of shared European history and the importance of cultural heritage conservation. The European Commission decided to get involved and sponsor this initiative due to the lack of a European identity, tending towards a sense of belonging to a united Europe and the stimulation of international relations and intercultural dialogue (*Lahdesmaki, Viktorija, Ceginskas, Krogerus, Mkinen and Turunen, 2020, 9-11*).

Since 2013, the number of locations awarded the European Heritage Label (EHL) has increased from 4 to 48 and the number of eligible Member States has increased from 5 to 25 in seven years, during which time a solid network of EHL sites has been created and Heritage Mark Days are organised annually (*European Commission, European Heritage Label Panel Report on Monitoring*).

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to identify a relationship between cultural heritage and international relations and to expose the European Union's intentions to use cultural heritage as a tool in creating new international relations and strengthening existing ones.

I believe that the analysis of the European funding programmes, as well as the actions resulting from their implementation demonstrate or at least indicate the importance of this vast and controversial element - cultural heritage in the relations between EU Member States, as well as in the cohabitation with other peoples outside the European space.

Of course, this paper is only a starting point in demonstrating the main hypothesis: cultural heritage generates and facilitates International Relations, and this idea will be further developed and analysed in a PhD paper. In order to really understand this obvious link and to prove the above-mentioned hypothesis, a more complex study is needed, involving the analysis of several actions, programmes, events generated and implemented by and with the help of the European Union, as well as the analysis of the European Summits on Cultural Heritage and the identification of the initiatives of the EU Member States to relate through cultural heritage.

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IV. PUBLIC POLICIES AND ISSUES OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

Shary Charlotte Henriette PATTIPEILHY ⇔ *Makan Patita: Commensality and Intercultural Dialogue in Post-Conflict Situation in Indonesia*

Kudzai Cathrine BINGISAI ⇔ *Dialectics of Ethnicity and Youth Political Participation in Zimbabwe. Case of Gukurahundi Incident (1982-1987)*

Imad Abu REESH ⇔ *Mediation Proceedings within the Druze Community: Tradition V. Modernity*

Liviu-Vasile ȘERBAN ⇔ *Roma Community. Legislative Elements and Actions by Which the Romanian State Supports their Integration and Non-Discrimination*

MAKAN PATITA: COMMENSALITY AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN POST-CONFLICT SITUATION IN INDONESIA

*Shary Charlotte Henriette PATTIPEILHY**

Abstract. *The post-conflict situation is a phase that occurs after the signing of the peace agreement. However, it cannot be assumed as the end of the conflict and the beginning of a peaceful situation because post-conflict is very fragile. The war may have ended, but small conflicts in large numbers, are still possible, and if not dealt with immediately, the situation can relapse into war. This is where the importance of intercultural dialogue is to ensure durable peace. One of the instruments of intercultural dialogue is commensality. This article then examines a form of commensality in the city of Ambon, Indonesia, as an instrument for building peace after the violent conflict of 1999-2002. The results of this study indicate that the commensality of makan patita traditions has supported the creation of space and place for intercultural dialogue. Space is a material form. The commensality tradition in Ambon which is carried out in cities or public spaces, allowing participants to gather and dialogue, while Place is more of values and meanings provided by the implementation of this tradition, such as the meaning of togetherness, and peace. and unity.*

Keywords: *commensality, intercultural dialogue, Ambon, Indonesia, makan patita*

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a Republic country in Southeast Asia. Since its independence in 1945, this country has been known as multicultural. According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2010, Indonesia has 633 tribes, which are then divided into 31 major ethnic groups. Each ethnic group in Indonesia has its regional language, which is very different from one another. For example, someone with Javanese ethnicity and Javanese speaking, will not understand the Minang people speak Minang, if he does not learn it first. Although highly diverse, the Javanese is the largest ethnic group with a total of 95.2 million people (40.2% of Indonesia's population) (BPS 2010: 14).

In fact, in one of the most populous islands in Indonesia, Java island, there are three different provinces: West Java; Central Java; and East Java. West Java, which is dominated by the Sundanese ethnicity, has a very different language and customs from Central Java and East Java, even though all three are on the same island. These cultural differences make Indonesia a very rich country in language, customs, and culture.

Likewise with religion. Indonesia has 7 recognized religions, including local religions (religions in each region), and Islam is the majority religion, with 87.18% of the population, Christian 6.96%, Catholic 2.91%, Hindu 1.69%, Buddhism 0.72%, Confucianism (0.05%), and local religions 0.13% (BPS 2010: 19).

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One of the advantages of multiculturalism in Indonesia is the variety of culinary delights throughout Indonesia. Culinary in each of these regions is not only a means of fulfilling the biological needs of society but also a cultural identity of a community (Utami 2018: 37). Dusselier (2009: 335-337) even mentions that food is a storehouse of memories and a historical residence of a community. In addition, Indonesian societies have a penchant for enjoying various culinary delights in a tradition of feasting commensality or sharing meals (Weichart 2008). This tradition is almost the same as the tradition of dinner on Thanksgiving in the United States, or the tradition of parties on birthdays, weddings, and other celebrations around the world. The difference is, Indonesian people, not only invite their nuclear and extended family, but also people who are not bound by family ties, such as school friends, office mates, neighbors, and even new acquaintances.

Unfortunately, these extreme differences between tribes, ethnicities, and cultures in Indonesia have also caused conflict problems in almost all parts of Indonesia. Several conflicts have even entered into prolonged violent conflicts, which have started to surface since Indonesia entered the reform era in the 2000s. The inter-ethnic conflict that had developed during the authoritarian rule of President Soeharto for 32 years, was always suppressed and seemed to be hidden by the government. Consequently, when the authoritarian government was overthrown in 1998, a whole host of violent conflicts and divisions exploded to the surface (Bertrand 2003: 28-44). Violent conflicts between the Dayak and Madurese tribes on the island of Borneo, for example, this horrific bloody conflict that occurred in 2001 has caused deep trauma between the two tribes, especially as a result of the beheading of 100 Madurese by a Dayak ethnic group (Bertrand 2003: 57). Apart from that, at almost the same time, large-scale violent conflicts also occurred in several areas, such as Ambon, Poso and Papua (Bertrand 2003: 114-129; 135-144). Even today, the impact of the conflict in the form of grudges between these tribes has not disappeared.

This research will then discuss a conflict that occurred in 1999-2002 in Ambon, as well as conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts in the region. Ambon is the capital of Maluku island, located in eastern Indonesia (see Map 1). Ambon City is a multicultural city because it has residents from various ethnic groups, religions, and races. The majority ethnic group in this city is the Ambonese, a tribe that inhabits Ambon Island and the surrounding islands that are descended from the Alifuru tribe. Besides the Ambonese tribe, the city is also inhabited by other ethnicities, such as Arabs, Butonese, and Chinese who initially came to Ambon for trade purposes. In addition, there are also Minahasa, Javanese, and Minang ethnic groups who have come to Ambon since ages.



Map 1 Indonesia, Maluku Island, and Ambon City (Capital City of Maluku)

In December 1998, there were fighting and arson attacks between Christian and Muslim villages in several areas of Ambon city. A small dispute between a Christian youth from the Mardika area of Ambon and a Muslim youth from Batumerah, a village near Mardika caused the violent conflict in Ambon. However, rumours that spread in the community exacerbated the conflict between Christian and Muslim communities. At first, the fighting only took place between Christian Ambonese and Muslim immigrants from South Sulawesi (Bugis, Buton, and Makassar), and both sides launched attacks on each other (Indrawan and Putri 2022: 16). After that, the social conflict continued until it became a religious issue, and was also carried out on religious symbols, such as churches and mosques. As a result, the Ambonese people are divided into two communities, the Christian and the Muslim communities. Both communities are actively involved in social conflicts by using tools from toothed wheels, spears, arrows, stones, and self-made weapons. The social conflict in Ambon City subsided temporarily in May 1999, during the 1999 election campaign, then in July 1999, the social conflict in Ambon City re-occurred with religious issues. The people of the two communities (Christians and Muslims) mutually defended their same-religious community and attacked anyone of a different religion, then, in 2001, the Maluku Sovereignty Forum (Forum Kedaulatan Maluku/FKM) was formed and considered that the government of the Republic of Indonesia did not have the capacity or ability to resolve social conflicts in Maluku, especially in Ambon City. As a form of its manifestation, FKM brought up the issue of the RMS which had been independent since 1950, then, at the end of 2001, when the people were tired of fighting and a number of special operations were carried out, Ambon City developed to become more stable (Dandirwalu 2014: 34).

The cause of the Ambon conflict is very controversial. Some said Christians blamed radical Islam in Ambon, while others blamed Christians for intimidating Muslims in the 1999 parliamentary elections (Bertrand 2003: 117; Rabasa and Haseman 2002b: 91-97). Some think that the conflict in Ambon was deliberately created by the Soeharto regime to shake up the emerging democratic political order (Rabasa and Haseman 2002: 2). This conflict has left at least 10,000 people killed, and 700,000 people displaced (Spyer 2002: 23). The Indonesian government then gathered representatives of Christianity and Islam in Ambon, who signed a peace agreement on 20 December 2002, which was named the Malino II Agreement.

Although the conflict has been deemed over by the signing of the peace agreement, the impact of the Ambon conflict has not disappeared, and the most difficult task, namely rebuilding peace that was destroyed by the conflict, has just begun. After the Ambon conflict, segregation of people based on ethno-religiousness began to occur (Wisudo 2010: 5). Refugees and conflict victims choose to live in areas that share the same religious identity. They are reluctant to return to their places of origin even after the conflict is over. As a consequence, areas that were previously heterogeneous become homogeneous (Wisudo 2010: 25). In addition, in post-conflict areas, land disputes have become very complicated. For example, a house that originally belonged to one family and was destroyed by fire during the conflict was actually taken over by another family in a post-conflict situation. Small conflicts, both violent and non-violent, still frequently arise in Ambon.

Elements of Indonesian society want a safer and more peaceful condition in Ambon. The local government, community social institutions, and traditional and religious leaders in Ambon are striving to return Ambon to a pre-conflict situation. Fortunately, multicultural Indonesia also provides a variety of local wisdom, traditions, and culture, most of which can be used for conflict resolution and reconciliation:

These include *baku bae* ("be good to each other"), *gandong* ("uterus," meaning treating others like our siblings), *famili* ("family," meaning taking care of others like a family), *masohi* (working together in the spirit of communalism and solidarity), *makan patita* ("communal feasting" aiming at reconciling the warring parties and strengthening social bonds), *larvul ngabal* (a customary law containing mechanisms to govern social relations in Southeast Maluku), and *pela* (a pact of the relationship between two villages in central Maluku) (Qurtuby 2012)



Figure 2 Makan Patita in Ambon, Indonesia

Source: Souisa 2017: 97

Makan patita, is part of the culture of the people in the Maluku islands, inviting a large number of people to enjoy the food (see Figure 1). This culture of commensality exists in almost all tribes in Indonesia, as an instrument of social interaction whether for birthday celebrations, farewell parties, graduations, birthday celebrations, and so on. This is a way for Indonesian societies to build connections, strengthen bonds, and maintain kinship bonds amidst various cultures. The difference is that the *makan patita* tradition is carried out through several traditional processions which make it very sacred. This sacredness of commensality makes this culture appreciated by all people who live in Ambon, regardless of differences in ethnicity and religion. This tradition has often been carried out and is a sign of the end of violent conflict. Everyone gathered, differences in age, religion, ethnicity, language, and thought, were removed by a moment of eating together. Through this commensality, all people gathered will get rid of all differences in age, religion, ethnicity, language, and thought.

This phenomenon of commensality in Ambon then becomes very interesting to study, especially to answer how a simple tradition like eating together is able to establish peace between communities that have just killed each other. In addition, all parties invited to the *Makan Patita* tradition have different cultures, so how does intercultural dialogue occur in this tradition? How do they get rid of cultural and religious differences that are the cause of violent conflict?

Therefore, this article aims to explain the relationship between peace in post-conflict situations and the tradition of commensality by the Ambonese people, and how intercultural dialogue takes place in the *makan patita* culture. So that the results of this article can add to academic and practical treasures. In the academic realm, this article is expected to broaden concepts related to conflict resolution and intercultural dialogue. In the practical realm, this article can be used as a reference for building peace policies and instruments in post-conflict areas that have a tradition of commensality.

2. The Post-conflict Situation, Peacebuilding, and Intercultural Dialogue

In general, a post-conflict situation is defined as a situation after the conflict has ended with a peace agreement. Nonetheless, there is confusion about this definition. Conflicts do not necessarily end after a peace agreement is signed. Even though a large-scale violent conflict has been successfully ended, small scales of violent and non-violent conflicts are still able to emerge. If these small-scale conflicts are left unmanaged immediately, they will relapse into another war (Frère and Wilen 2015: 2). The post-conflict situation is a fragile situation that requires advanced programs and policies to form a durable peace. Therefore, instead of creating a dichotomy between conflict situations (before the peace agreement) versus peace situations (after the peace agreement), the post-conflict situation is better defined as a post-peace agreement process, to build sustainable peace (Frère and Wilen 2015: 2; Brown, Langer, and Stewart 2011: 2-4). This is where the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding as an instrument for building durable peace after the peace agreement begins.

The concept of post-conflict peacebuilding has become an international agenda since 1992, through the report of the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-namely An Agenda for Peace which defines post-conflict peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali 1992: 11). Later in 2010, the UN report of inclusive dialogue and reconciliation became one of the priorities in the peace-building program (Peacebuilding Support Office 2010). Reconciliation is "a process of accommodation that presupposes the acceptance of moral conditions" (Thompson 2002, p.52).

Culture then plays an important role in the process of reconciliation in post-conflict peacebuilding. Culture is a key value considered central and worth fighting for by a group (Ross 1993: 15-16), so culture may be used as one of the reasons for violent conflict. This led Huntington to state that continuous intercultural dialogue is very important to build relationships between conflicting groups (Mollov and Schwartz 2010: 208-209; Saunders 1999). According to UNESCO, intercultural dialogue is related to an effort to establish mutual understanding between people who have different cultures and civilizations:

"Intercultural dialogue is the equitable exchange and dialogue among civilizations, cultures, and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect. The equal dignity of all cultures is the essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations." (UNESCO 2020: 415)

Meanwhile, the Council of Europe states that intercultural dialogue is "an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's global perception" (CoE n.d.). The dialogue structure referred to is not only in the form of inter-group conversations, but can also be introduced as intercultural contacts, intercultural communication, intercultural ties, and intercultural relations (Yevtukh 2012: 119), so that the reach of the concept of intercultural dialogue becomes wider.

3. The Commensality on *Makan Patita* as Space and Place of Intercultural Dialogue

Commensality simply means eating at the same table (*mensa*) or eating with others (Fischler 2011: 528; Sobal and Nelson 2003: 182). Etymologically, the word "*makan*" means eating, and "*patita*" means together, therefore *makan patita* is defined as eating together or sharing meals. From these two definitions, it can be concluded that the tradition of *makan patita* is a form of commensality. This tradition plays a crucial part related to

certain sacred events in the history of the Maluku people, including the inauguration of the king, the ritual of awarding a surname to a child, marriage ceremonies, bonding ceremonies between one region and another, preparation and celebration of the harvest time, even inauguration of community public facilities (Souisa 2017: 93-95). The implementation of *makan patita* is carried out with a long process. First, the raw materials for cooking dishes at this ceremony are prepared by the men by hunting or fishing, to be cooked by the women.

The menu of this dish is very diverse, ranging from authentic Maluku cuisine to adaptations of dishes from other cultures, such as *papeda*¹, bananas, sweet potatoes, fried and grilled fish, stir-fried papaya leaf, and processed beef or chicken cooked inside bamboo (Souisa 2017: 101). Furthermore, after the food is ready, the invited participants must stand or sit around where the food is served. The elders or religious leaders will then give remarks and lead the prayer together. After praying, all participants may eat the food. Although there are differences between regions and villages in eating food in the *makan patita* ritual, there are also some rules that participants generally need to understand (Souisa 2017: 104-105):

1. Participants should not take food to take home before all participants have finished eating
2. The staple food of Maluku, namely Papeda, must be eaten up
3. Leftover food that has become a certain family ration must be brought home
4. The dining table is made of coconut leaves, which are placed on the ground and the table should not be made of wood
5. Participants may not use plates and spoons (they must use fingers instead of spoons and banana leaves as a plate)
6. It is not permissible to take food then sit far from the *patita* dining table
7. There are no differences between the honorable and the mediocre participant; everyone is equal

As an instrument of intercultural dialogue, commensality processions such as *makan patita* are essential to support post-conflict peacebuilding because they provide space and place for **intercultural dialogue**. From an anthropological perspective, place and space have a major effect on the formation of culture (Low 2009: 7). Therefore, the formation of intercultural dialogue also requires adequate space and place. Space is a material aspect that can be physically measured and seen or a geographical location where cultural interaction is carried out. At the same time, the place is an immaterial aspect, the content of cultural interaction, which contains feelings, identities, and meanings:

“I consider space to be the more general and abstract construct retaining its social production and materialist origins. Space, in my rendering, is preeminently social, produced by bodies and groups of people, as well as historical and political forces. The place is used in the sense of a space that is inhabited and appropriated through the attribution of personal and group meanings, feelings, sensory perceptions and understandings” (Low 2017, p.32).

Very interesting research regarding space in intercultural dialogue comes from Aragón (2020: 7-16). According to him, the city is the most ideal place to carry out intercultural dialogue. The city is a symbol of regional segregation, where private property rights and individual freedom are the main reasons. High walls and fences bound each house to provide comfort for the residents. Urban communities become very individual and find it difficult to communicate. In addition, ethnic ties are lost in urban areas. Urbanism causes people from various tribes, religions, and races to come together, they seek to blend in and

¹ *Papeda* is a congee made from sago starch that is a staple food of the indigenous people in eastern Indonesia, namely parts of Sulawesi, Maluku Islands and Papua.

have freedom by breaking the attachment to their ethnic origin. But on the other hand, the diversity brought by the villagers to this city makes the city the right place to carry out intercultural dialogue, to avoid violent conflicts in the future (Aragón 2020: 7-16).

Space in intercultural dialogue is also defined as “a field with contacts communication, connections, relations both between the carriers of different cultures and the cultures themselves or their elements” (Yevtukh 2012: 120). Therefore, intercultural dialogue also requires space for all important actors in post-conflict peacebuilding to gather. These actors can be divided into three levels: top-level, mid-level, and community (Tappel 2016: 93-95; Lederach 1997: 38-40). At the first level is the Top Leadership of political or military leaders at the national level, who act as mediators in horizontal conflicts such as in Ambon. At the second level, there is Middle-Range Leadership, that is leaders who are respected at the regional level such as religious/ethnic leaders, academics, and Humanitarian Leaders (NGOs) who function as parties who provide conflict resolution training. Lastly is Grassroot Leadership, namely local leaders and ordinary people (Tappel 2016: 93-95; Lederach 1997: 38-40).

First, commensalism on *makan patita* creates a space for gathering all important actors in intercultural dialogue at the top, middle, and community levels. On the top level, it will invite regional and even national leaders to participate in this banquet. They gave remarks and even provided peace socialization regarding the Malino II Agreement to all participants who attended. On the mid-level, *makan patita* provides an opportunity for traditional elders and religious leaders to gather, and put aside existing religious and cultural differences. Meanwhile, ordinary people (especially conflict-affected parties) are invited and enjoy togetherness at the community level. In fact, in Ambonese culture, all participants, both at the top level and the lowest level, gather in the same room, eating the same food and the same way. The interaction in the commensality of *makan patita* becomes a horizontal interaction between all participants:

“There is a sense of togetherness, such as *makan patita* (eating together) where everyone sits in a meeting to eat together, and there are also other social activities, for example helping the underprivileged people of Maluku in treatment.” interview with Prof. Dr. Paul Tahalele (Sukemi 2009)

Second, commensality in *makan patita* plays as a meeting space of inclusivity and representation. In this tradition, the chosen space should always be able to provide a comfortable and safe meeting space for all participants. First, as a meeting space for intercultural dialogue, it needs to use public places that can accommodate participants from various backgrounds in large numbers. This is done so that this procession can invite many participants, where all parties will feel involved, and minimize the resentment from people who feel that they are not included in this tradition. The chosen place has also often been used as a place for religious and social events.

Third, this tradition is held in the city of Ambon which is rich in cultural differences. Cities have long been known for their functions on segregation and separation between regions and residents (Aragón 2020: 7). In the city of Ambon, this segregation occurs in two forms religion and ethnicity in different areas. The Ambonese, who are predominantly Christian, live in the center of Ambon city, while the immigrant ethnic groups such as Bugis, who are predominantly Muslim, choose to live in the suburb of Ambon (Hamid 2020: 220). The tradition of commensality has eliminated this segregation, by placing all parties with different religions, ethnicities, and regions, in one public place in a sacred moment. Resignifying places in urban areas as a symbol of diversity can produce a bridge of intercultural dialogue that represents a symbol of togetherness and peace (Aragón 2020: 17).

Fourth, as a communication space, the commensality ritual provides a sense of security (safe space) (Tappel 2016: 4), and allows people who have never met before, or have met but in the wrong situation (situation of violent conflict), to interact in a new, better and safer situation. Safe space is important to create change and difference. Safe space is important to create change and difference (Mitchell and Kelly 2011). During the procession of sharing food and eating together, the participants can talk about other things that are less painful than conflict (Tappel 2016: 94). Communication of actors with diverse identities in this tradition encourages a willingness to consider different perspectives, and is understood to be more effective in building beneficial engagement and long-term peace (UNESCO 2020).

Intercultural dialogue also requires a **place** that provides opportunities for humans to engage in intercultural communication. Intercultural dialogue is a concept that is increasingly developing so that the places where dialogue is carried out are increasingly diverse, namely through “verbal or non-verbal, in-person or virtual, between two or more people, or between groups” (UNESCO 2020). This article then views the tradition of commensality as a place for intercultural dialogue, due to the importance of food in culture and religion.

Food is more than just a means of survival. Food has a multidimensional element in conveying meaning, “food is considered to be multidimensional, as something that shapes us, our identities, and our cultures and in the end, our society. Just as different clothes signify different things, for example the white coat of a doctor, the uniform of a police officer or army personnel, food also transmits a meaning.” (Sibal 2018: 4). The ability of food to transmit meanings, makes it able to build kinship between people. This is especially the case in Southeast Asia, where food constructs kinship in Indonesia in two ways : through food distribution and food provision for everyone who participates (Janowski 2007: 4-5). This commensality can be structured or unstructured food. Unstructured banquets are banquets that are enjoyed without using certain rituals such as informal coffee banquets which tend to be more relaxed, while structured banquets are banquets with certain rituals that are more formal (Tappel 2016: 103-104). On the one hand, *makan patita* is actually included in a structured banquet, where the process of organizing it is carried out with a certain bureaucracy, starting from the process of requesting permission from the government, inviting participants, to the division of tasks in providing and preparing food. However, after the whole food preparation process was completed, a non-structured place started, where all participants could enjoy a free meal and have fun. They also do not need to wear formal clothes, by wearing polite and clean clothes, the participants can participate in this event comfortably.

First, as a place of intercultural dialogue, *makan patita* gives abundance meaning through the food provided due to the role of food in Southeast Asia as an important basis for building kinship. Kinship in several areas in Southeast Asia and eastern Indonesia, such as the city of Ambon, is not only determined from birth, but also related to giving certain foods (Janowski 2007: 3-5). For example, the kinship between two different tribes is solved by giving the Ambonese surname through the *Pela Gandong*² ceremony, which of course is followed by a commensality (Masringor and Sugiswati 2017: 69).

Commensality is a non-logocentric way of communication, because in practice it does not require words, but can send messages, either intentionally or unintentionally. Commensality generates bonds. It seems that in all cultures, eating the same food was

² *Pela* means a bond, while *Gandong* means brothers and sisters. *Pela Gandong* is then defined as a bond of unity and regard one another as brothers and sisters (Masringor and Sugiswati 2017: 1)

equated with producing the same flesh and blood, thus making the commensals more similar and bringing them closer together. It is said that, while absorbing the food, the subject simultaneously absorbs its salient features (Fischler 2011: 533). Menu and seating arrangements, for example, could communicate hidden meanings (Tappel 2016: 96). In the processional stage of preparing a big meal of *makan patita*, there are symbols included such as *tempat sirih* (a betel plate) as a family bonding symbol and a bottle of *sopi* (traditional liquor) as a symbol of encouragement (Reid 1988, p.49-51). In general, *makan patita* is also a symbol of a society that is trying to build its relationship with God, ancestors, others, and nature/environment (Patty 2015). In addition, this tradition has a symbol of horizontal relations between all participants, in which all participants, whether rich or poor, officials or ordinary people, women or men, all unite as one by sitting on the floor and eating food from the same plate (Reid 1988, p.49-51).

Second, commensality held in cities, such as the city of Ambon, gives the meaning of a place of diversity and peace. Multicultural Ambon City requires intercultural dialogue to communicate differences between ethnicities, religions, and races so that all parties understand each other, and conflicts in the future can be avoided. However, cultural and language differences also make it difficult for brands to interpret peace and togetherness. Therefore, a culture of sharing meals, such as *makan patita*, is full of symbolic meanings: “Through narratives and actions in the ritual of eating together, people are able to construct their life experiences from the realities of life so that they differentiate it from other acts of eating together” (Patty 2015).

4. Conclusion

Makan patita is a form of commensality culture practiced by the Ambonese in the Maluku Islands, Eastern Indonesia. After experiencing violent conflict in 1999-2002, Ambon is in a post-conflict situation prone to minor violent conflicts.

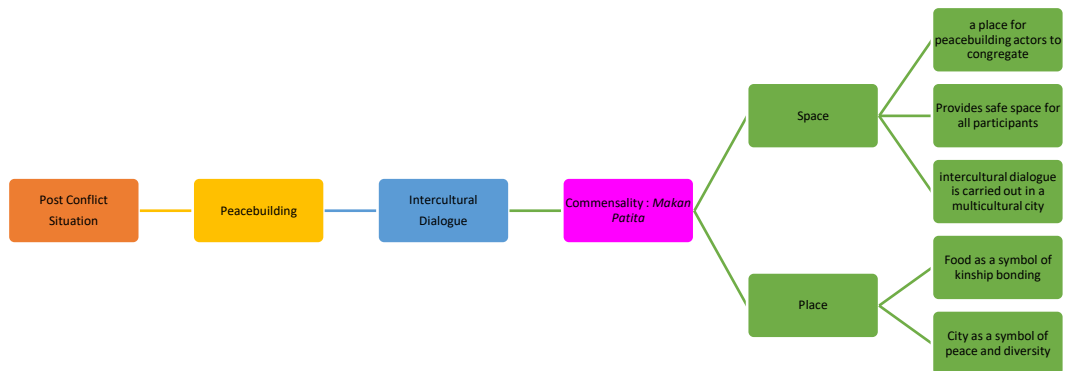


Figure 3. Research Conclusion

Therefore, a reconciliation mechanism is needed to minimize the remaining resentment and hatred due to violent conflict, and in this sense, culture provides the perfect solution. Commensality as a culture provides a deep meaning for the occurrence of intercultural dialogue. *Makan patita* for example, this culture provides a place and space for intercultural dialogue. First, as a space, commensality becomes a safe space for all peacebuilding actors, from the top, middle, to the community level, to gather and have a dialogue together. In addition, commensalities are often held in urban areas, making it easier

for participants to participate in this tradition. Second, as a space for intercultural dialogue, commensality in *makan patita* has symbols that bind kinship between conflicting parties. The city of Ambon, which is a symbol of cultural, ethnic, and religious differences, also creates a symbol of peace. Furthermore, the results of this study can be described as follows:

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DIALECTICS OF ETHNICITY AND YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ZIMBABWE. CASE OF GUKURAHUNDI INCIDENT (1982-1987)

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Abstract. *This study sought to analyse how ethnicity contributes towards youth political participation in Zimbabwe. This study examines how Gukurahundi incident between the Ndebele and Shona ethnic groups affect youth political participation in Matabeleland region. The researcher made use of constructivist theory that contends ethnic conflict is the product of a social construct built on one group's experiences, understanding, and attitudes as they perceive another. The study employed semi-structured interviews and secondary sources to collect data. Qualitative data was analysed using textual analysis. The research findings presented that forgiveness is the last resort to make peace regarding the Gukurahundi incident. The social relations between the Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups is largely hostile as the young people are angry as they carry Gukurahundi stories from which their parents or elders are traumatised. The research findings also indicated that financial constraints in the country limit reconciliation as the relatives of the victims of the Gukurahundi demand for compensation. The study revealed that the Shona and Ndebele ethnic conflict can threaten Zimbabwe internal peace stability as long as perpetrators of Gukurahundi incident fail to apologies and offer compensation to the relatives of the victims.*

Keywords: *ethnicity, youth, political participation, elections, Gukurahundi*

1. Introduction and Background of the study

Zimbabwe is ethnically diverse with sixteen official languages which are spoken by different ethnic groups. Zimbabwe has a diverse mix of ethnic groups that include Kalanga, Ndebele and Tonga. Section 6 of the Zimbabwe Constitution (2013) provides ChiNambya, ChiKalanga, ChiVhenda (XiVhenda), ChiShangani (Tsonga), Sign Language, ChiTonga, ChiChewa, ChiBarwe, English, Sotho, Koisan/ Tshawo, Tswana, Xhosa, ChiNdau, Shona and Ndebele as the official languages. Shona and Ndebele are the main languages spoken in the country which divided the country linguistic lines. The country has ten provinces from which the population of Matabeleland North, South, and Bulawayo region constitutes approximately 15% and 20% of Zimbabwe's total population, and the region is considered to be culturally dominated by the Ndebele speaking people. While, the remaining approximately 80% of Zimbabwe population is Shona speaking group.

The liberation war which ended in 1979 led to the country independence in 1980 over white minority rule. According to Mlambo (2014:160) the Second Chimurenga war

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1965–1979 was fought by the black majority in an attempt to stop illegal white minority rule. The Lancaster House Constitution signed in 1979 ended the devastating war and allowed elections between Rhodesian Front (RF) Party, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the United African National Council (UNAC) (Chitiyo and Rupiya 2005:337).

According to Mlambo (2014:147), the black population in Zimbabwe was not united in pre-colonialism period because of ethnic, personality, and socioeconomic inequalities within the liberation movement. After 1980, political affiliation was mostly defined by ethnicity, since then President Robert Mugabe's ZANU PF advocated first for the interests of the Shona ethnic group. While the now-defunct ZAPU party represented the largest minority community, the Ndebele came second on priority given. According to Alexander (2021), Ndebele people were suspected of planning to remove Mugabe on rule. Responding to these allegations, an episode called Gukurahundi was released from which Mugabe hired 5th brigade, a North Korean trained brigade was sent to instill violence in Matebeleland and Midland regions where the Ndebele people reside. Eppel (2004:59) states that Gukurahundi is a Shona word meaning the first rain of summer that washes away the chaff left from the previous season. The Gukurahundi phase sought to silence oppositions against the ZANU-PF party and in particular targeted the Ndebele people in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces.

Alexander (2021:5) noted that thousands of innocent citizens from the Matebeleland region were killed. Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (1997) concurs with Alexander and states that more than 20 000 civilians were killed by the Gukurahundi violence. Mugabe said that the Brigade was a form of punishing the Ndebele for supporting the white minority during the Liberation war. However, on 22 December 1987, ZANU PF and ZAPU signed Unity Accord as a way of bringing unity among the Ndebele and the Shona ethnic group regardless of the perpetrators of Gukurahundi incident not being punished. Although the Unity Accord tried to bring the political parties together political tensions and ethnicity are still vibrant. Efforts of reconciliation have been made by the church with the gospel of forgiveness, but Chitando and Taringa (2021) research titled; *The Churches, Gukurahundi, and Forgiveness in Zimbabwe* and Moyo (2021) research titled, *Anger resides decades after 1980s genocide in Zimbabwe* shows that efforts made by the political leaders to unite and observe peace in the country were of vain. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003) also stated that the perpetrators of Gukurahundi were not punished neither the victims' relatives were compensated. This explained that Unity Accord failed to deal with issues of compensations of the victims, from which to date, the political environment is still haunted by the 1983-1987 Gukurahundi incident.

Rwafa (2012) stated that Mugabe acknowledged Gukurahundi incident as moment of madness and the Ndebele people accuse the Shona people for ethnic cleansing through violence. Despite this statement, Mugabe did not ask for forgiveness from what he called as moment of madness to the Ndebele people. Ndebele ethnic group still carry anger and struggle to forgive without compensation despite that President Mnangagwa who outcasted Mugabe from power over a military coup tried to preach New Dispensation and National Peace and Reconciliation Commission Act. This study therefore sought to analyse the impact of Gukurahundi incident on youth political participation in Matabeleland regions.

2. Ethnicity in Zimbabwe

In Africa, the position of ethnic identities in managing the state is rooted in colonial politics. Mamdani (2002) argues that the ethnicization of politics started with the construction of ethnicity as a divide and rule device used for political control. Ethnic minorities and youth populations in particular are less likely to vote and participate in political activities than other sectors of society (Hayward, 2006). This research sought to focus on young people as they are capable of carrying the anger and hatred of what happened to their elders during the Gukurahundi incident. Youth are regarded as an identity group susceptible to perceptions and influences of their adults (Galtung, 2006). The study therefore sought to investigate how the youth in Matabeleland region politically participate in relation to the Gukurahundi incident.

Rising pressure groups in the Matabeleland shows seeking of justice and independence of the Ndebele Kingdom due to unresolved Gukurahundi. Alexander (2021) states that the Mthwakazi Republic Party (MRP) and Ibeshu Likazulu is composed of youths who have learnt Gukurahundi through a painful and emotive process. Due to unresolved legacies of massacres in Matabeleland region, Rwafa (2012:323) considered the country as a wounded country filled with frustrated citizens over unresolved Gukurahundi incident.

Gusha (2019) carried out a research on “Memories of Gukurahundi Massacre and the Challenge of Reconciliation” from which researcher expressed that there has not been true reconciliation among the Ndebele and Shona ethnic groups over the Gukurahundi massacre. The post-colonial government further consolidated ethno-political structure by maintaining provinces and constituencies with ethnic boundaries, which has paved way of Zimbabwean complex politics. Gusha (2019) further states that the memories of tribalism are kept alive from the Government maintenance of provincial names such as Mashonaland, Midlands and Matabeleland. It is questionable, how political active is youth engagement within a country that has historical unresolved issues of ethnic conflict dated back in 1987 lacking transparency and accountability. Several studies have been conducted on Gukurahundi incident, however, few researches have focused on the effects of Gukurahundi on youth political participation in the Matabeleland region. This study sought to analyse whether being a Ndebele affects the political mindset, attitudes and political participation in Zimbabwe.

3. Youth political participation

According to the Zimbabwe Youth Council (2013), youth are citizens aged 15 to 35. This age range is specified in Section 20 of the 2013 Constitution, which stipulates that youths are classified as those between the ages of 15 and 35. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), on the other hand, states that the legal voting age in Zimbabwe is 18 years old. There is a 3 year age difference from the starting age of being a youth and legal age of starting to vote.

This study sought to investigate youth political participation in Matabeleland region despite the Gukurahundi incident. A concern of many democratic nations is the lack of participation by young people as voters in elections (Edwards, 2007). For the purposes of this study, political participation refers to in political activities such as campaigns and exercising the right to vote. Chisholm and Kovacheva (2002) states that youth engagement is based on involvement in institutional politics (elections, campaigns, and membership), protest activities (demonstrations and new social movements), and civic engagement (associative life, community participation and voluntary work). Dezellan (2015) states that

there has been a decline in voter turnout, membership of political parties, interest in politics and trust in political institutions amongst young people in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has historically had poor youth voter turnout (Musarurwa, 2018) and participation in other decision-making processes. According to the Research and Advocacy Unit's (2013) examination of Zimbabwe's June 2013 Voters' Roll, only 8% of those below 30 years registered voters. Statistics from Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) (2017) states that only youths from the marginalized provinces of Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and South were less enthusiastic about voting in the upcoming 2018 elections. Whilst, Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (2018) indicated that in 2018, only 44% constitute youth between the ages of 18-34. It is through these statistics that the researcher sought to analyse how the ethnic conflicts between the Shona and Ndebele contributes towards youth political participation.

Musarurwa (2018) noted that most young people have felt reluctant to participate in electoral processes because of fear of victimization. The 2008 elections noticed a vast number of youth terrified and terrorized, in some instances to death, for political participation. Youth should take heed of their demographical advantage and their right to active public decision making to influence power. According to Hodzi (2014), the most of Zimbabwean young people are loosely attached to group benefits and seek individual benefits. In particular there have been a number of initiatives, both legislative and academic, aimed at encouraging young people in Zimbabwe towards political participation. Campaigns on register to vote such as “#RegisterToVoteZW” have been flooded on social media platforms encouraging young people to register and vote in 2023 elections. Effective youth participation strengthens the legitimacy of democracy. In any case youth engagement is low, this leaves state control in the hands of the elderly demographic group thus national development will grow at a stunted pace as there will be little collaboration from all age groups. This study therefore sought to understand how young people handle the Gukurahundi incident in relation to political participation.

4. Constructivist theory

The study made use of constructivist theory in order to analyse the Gukurahundi conflict between the Shona and Ndebele people in relation to youth political participation. Jackson (2004) states that constructivist theory focus on human awareness or consciousness and actions in a conflict situation. Ethnicity, according to constructivism, is a fluid identity that can be produced through conquest, immigration, or colonization (William, 2015:149). Ethnic conflicts are the result of historical processes that alter the relationships of various ethnic groups. As such country politics is also determined by the ethnic conflicts. The critics of this theory claim that it fails to explain why people split themselves in such explicit ways or why societies have such cleavage structures (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). It can be argued that struggle for political power by the political leaders is the main motivation behind ethnic conflict and such was a suspected case in relation to Mugabe on Ndebele people as threat to his rise to power. Tensions between the Shona and Ndebele speaking people go back to the colonial era and became vibrant due to Gukurahundi incident. Gukurahundi incident between the Ndebele and Shona people can be explained through constructivist point of view basing on Mugabe desire for power, as such this study made use of constructivism theory in order to analyse the conflict between Shona and Ndebele people on youth political participation.

5. Methodology and scope

This study made use of qualitative research methods in order to analyse how ethnicity affect youth political participation in Matabeleland region. The researcher made use of qualitative research methods and adopted interviews to collect data from the participants. Qualitative research methods are particularly beneficial in investigations when little information is known regarding the intended research area (Davidson and Tollich, 2003). The researcher made use of interviews to collect primary data from the participants from Matabeleland region. Data was collected from youth from Matabeleland provinces whose ages ranged between 18-35 years in order to understand political attitudes and political engagement of youth. A total of 9 interviews were held within participants that fall in the 18-35 years age group. The researcher sought to start at age 18 and not 15 since the age of 18 is the legal age that one is allowed to vote in elections. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. That is, selecting participants who have fall in the required criteria and who are able to assist the researcher in understanding the research motive.

Ethical considerations were also observed in this study. Participants were told that there was no harm in participating in the research and were also told that they were allowed to exit from participating in the study whenever they wish to do so. The researcher referred the participants with numbers so as to adhere to anonymity and ethical conducts.

6. Discussions of findings

Demographic of the participants

The researcher sought to conduct 12 interviews with the participants, however managed to successfully conduct 9 interviews with participants aged from 18-35 years. Participants were from different religious backgrounds such as Catholic, Apostolic Faith Mission and none. The study found that religion that does not necessarily play a role regarding ethnic conflict between Ndebele and Shona people. The participants expressed that role of church is seen as a mediator preaching forgiveness to those who have been hurt, yet the ones who have hurt are not asking for forgiveness. The researcher managed to conduct 3 interviews with females whilst five of the respondents were males. The researcher sought to balance gender of the participants to avoid getting biased responses in order to get an understanding of the impact of Gukurahundi incident on young people political participation. The researcher noted that there were more males than females who participated in the study which shows that there is low level of women political involvement in political activities. Women should be motivated to politically participate from the youth level as this affect political representation on national level.

Youth participation in politics

The researcher sought to understand how young people in Matabeleland region engage in politics and get an understanding of their attitudes and perceptions regarding Gukurahundi case. Participants were asked if they had voted in the elections or if they have participated in any non-electoral political activities. Five participants expressed that they had experience in participating in elections including the 2008, 2013 and 2018 elections, whilst 2 participants expressed that they had never participated in political activities and only one participant expressed that she had registered to vote for the 2018 elections but did not manage to go and cast her vote. The researcher found that the youth political engagement in Matabeleland region was low especially on demonstrations or non-electoral activities. The participants expressed that they feel that political power lies in the hands of the Shona people.

All the participants who had been politically engaged expressed that they had never thought of running for an office in their Constituencies. Respondent 2 expressed that, he does not have time to get in political races. The participant further acknowledged efforts made by young people to motivate youth the vote. The participant said hashtag Register to Vote 2023 elections have been promoted on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Further acknowledgements were also given on Civic organisations that are advocating for “EkhayaVote2023” seeking to mobilise and encourage first time voters to register to vote in elections.

The research findings presented that youth political participation is generally low and the situation is even worse in Matabeleland region where Gukurahundi massacres occurred in 1987. The research findings concur with literature and reports from ZEC that youth from Matabeleland region have not yet registered for the 2023 elections. Respondent 6 expressed that there are several issues that contribute towards negative youth political engagement such as lack of voter education, lack of interest and past events.

Ethnicity and active political participation

During the interview discussions, the participants were asked the motivation behind participation or non-participation in political events. Respondent 1 expressed that he always participate in political activities so that his vote counts, the problem is that he has no trust in ruling government since it has failed to account for the burning issue of Gukurahundi incident. The participant further expressed that my grandmother died of bitterness due to the massacre of Ndebele people by the soldiers hired by the former president Mugabe. The researcher noted that trust issues determine youth political engagement. This shows that young people's attitudes to politics are sensitive to historical activities which negatively impact their energy to be engaged in political activities. The research findings concur to Chitando and Taringa (2021) who found that the young people are so hurt with the stories behind the Gukurahundi incident.

During the interview discussions, respondent 3 expressed that, it might look as if there is no political grudges between the Shona and Ndebele people but there is an ethnic tensions which were caused by the Gukurahundi incident where there was human rights violations and loss of lives. The participant further expressed that he was sure that the youth are told stories of Gukurahundi incident by their parents and grandparents and this brings emotions and justification was not given to the perpetrators of violence. The researcher found that young people carry generational bitterness and are disenfranchised politically through Gukurahundi incident.

Respondent 8 concurred with respondent 3 and said that Gukurahundi stories from parents and guardians, are considered contribute largely to towards withdraw political engagement of young people. The participant further indicated that stories carry great impact and political awareness on young people. Respondent 2 said that parents and elders of today's youths are still traumatized by the Genocide which stirs anger in young people. The research findings presented that young people carry intergenerational traumas and hatred regarding incidents that happen during the Gukurahundi incident. The elders or parents share their painful stories on young generation as such it is difficult to make a peaceful negotiation when the other party is furious. The ruling government will always owe an apology and compensation to the descendants of the victims of the Gukurahundi incident.

Respondent 3 and 7 said that they discuss political issues and the possibilities that can happen in the upcoming 2023 elections with their family and friends. Both the participants expressed that Zimbabwe has always been having contested election results and

this is likely to happen unless the current president Mnangangwa ensure transparency and credibility in elections. The research findings however, concur with literature as Resnick and Casale (2014) states that young people who discuss politics are more likely to be active participants in elections. The research findings imply that youth are inclined to get involved in politics when they perceive credibility and fair procedures in the electoral processes. The research findings concur with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) who indicated young people who are rising in Matabeleland pressure groups are seeking Gukurahundi redress and political balance. The research findings imply that mass killings that occurred on ethnic Ndebele citizens can never be erased from history of Zimbabwe unless justice is observed.

During the interview discussions all the participants expressed that those who were young during the 1980s when Gukurahundi occurred carry more bitterness than those who were told the stories by their parents. Respondent 1 expressed that if it had not been of the power greed of the late president Mugabe who ordered the Gukurahundi Genocide against Ndebele people, today the Shona and Ndebele would have been living peaceful. The participant further expressed that Mugabe feared political threat from Nkomo and cautiously decided to do an attack against rise of power against him. Sithole and Makumbe (1997) acknowledged that Mugabe had always wanted one rule and political opposition was never accepted.

Whilst, respondent 5 expressed that there has not been transparent and credible elections in the country since 1980. Currently, the country is facing socio-economic challenges which needs undivided unity from all the state provinces. However, the Ndebele people are in continuous grief of the Gukurahundi incident which limits total cooperation on country sustainable development. The participant further explained that 2023 elections are soon yet, the concerns and grievances of Ndebele people regarding Gukurahundi are still pending. Respondent 7 said that most of the Ndebele youths are leaving the Matabeleland regions for neighboring countries especially South Africa and Botswana in search of greener pastures and employment opportunities. The participant further expressed that most of the remaining youth engage in political violence due to anger they hold against the government.

The researcher found that in as much as the Ndebele youth would want to participate in elections, they already have ethnic tensions regarding presidency and not accepting to compensate families who lost their relatives and loved ones due to state instilled Gukurahundi incident. Respondent 3 expressed that even before the colonial period, there has always been ethnic clashes and hostile among the Shona and the Ndebele ethnic groups. The research findings concur with Ndlovu and Dube (2014) when they argue that politics and ethnicity were conflated in Gukurahundi. All the participants acknowledged that government ought to accept its mistake on human rights violations upon the Ndebele people during the Gukurahundi era. In the midst of all what happened during the Gukurahundi, young people in Matabeleland carry story from their families and see hope for unity once the government accept its activities. Interview discussions with the participants' shows that peace is achievable and there is light at the end of the tunnel, though it might not be soon. It is difficult to socio-economically and politically build a country with youths who are heavy hearted from what happened to their fore-fathers or from elderly who lost their children during the Gukurahundi incident.

Respondent 6 expressed that it is sad to note that during Gukurahundi incident there was mass graves and up to now, the graves have not been exhumed. The researcher further expressed that it is considered a taboo for mass graves and without getting any proper burial. The research findings concur with Eppel (2006: 263) who states that during the Gukurahundi massacres many of the people that died were buried in mass graves. Most of

the respondents showed emotions upon indicating that their elders and relatives graves are not unknown and they expressed that African culture owners and respect the dead. Participant 6 expressed that continued reports of activist arrested by the police and being charged with intent of instilling violence on remembering Gukurahundi massacres shows that despite Unity Day celebrations only happens on theory but on reality, the Ndebele people are angry.

The research findings also indicated that most youths have been advocating for independent Ndebele Kingdom. Respondent 8 expressed that there has been rise of pressure groups such as Mthwakazi People's Congress (MPC) and Matabeleland Liberation Front (MLF) against ruling government. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009a) states that these pressure group are rising against unequal economic development of Matabeleland regions. The researcher found that the pressure groups advocating for independent Ndebele state have hatred due to the Gukurahundi incident.

The research findings also revealed a conflict between the Shona and Ndebele peoples for resource availability. Respondent 2 stated National University of Science and Technology and Lupane State University in Matabeleland recruits more students from other parts of the country than from the Matabeleland region. Dube (2014) states that Ndebele speakers in Matabeleland have expressed worry about the deployment of Shona teachers who cannot speak Ndebele in their region, forcing their children to learn in a different language. The researcher noted that despite that the Government of Zimbabwe has established universities in this region, the universities seem to be dominated by the Shona from other state provinces. The research findings imply that people who speak one language or at least similar languages regard themselves as one group. As such, Anyidoho and Dakubu (2008) states that there is a positive relationship between, language, place and politics. The research findings presented that ethnicity and identity is very highly politically charged, although there might not be a conflict on reality. During the interview discussions, respondent 5 said that Mthwakazi Republic Party has been at fighting and advocating for institutional tribalism in Zimbabwe. The researcher noted that Matabeleland people are not happy of the distortion and marginalization of their languages by the Shona people.

During the interview discussions, respondent 6 expressed that young people ought to set aside emotions of historical events and be brave in political engagements. The participant expressed that, it is very sad that relatives of the victims carry fresh wounds unto this day. Participant 6 expressed that there has been truth story telling groups and the church groups where citizens discuss what happened during Gukurahundi period. Chitando and Taringa (2021) argues that young people feel that the government is using the church to preach the gospel of forgiveness on wounded Ndebele people. The discussions shows that even though the Ndebele people encourage themselves to unite alongside the gospel of forgiveness, it can be noted that the hatred and blame of Gukurahundi incident on Shona people is passed on generations.

The research findings presented that despite the Gospel of forgiveness and signing of Unity Accord of 1987 does not bring their loved ones from the dead. Respondent 2 expressed that most of the victims need compensations of all the suffering and torture they experienced during the Gukurahundi phase. The participant further said that what is more hurting is that the Shona people, government or soldiers are not accepting their crimes or admitting to be perpetrator of incident. Respondent 3 concurs with Respondent 2 and said that the Unity Accord was actually a strategy of Mugabe Government to hide from human right violations investigations and causes of the Gukurahundi incident during that period. Murambadoro (2015) agrees with the research findings, stating that reconciliation in

Matabeleland can only be true when the government acknowledges the past actions and redress the injustices that have occurred to the relatives of the victims. The government under the rule of Mnagwanwa tried to preach New Dispensation but this does not heal the grieving Ndebele people on their relatives without compensation and accepting that the government had indeed violated human rights. According to Harris (2022), stakeholders worry over low voter registration in Matabeleland region for the 2023 elections. Harris (2022) further states that Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) released statistics on the voter population as of June 10, 2022, which showed that a total of 5 804 975 people had registered. Out of that number, Bulawayo had the lowest number of registered people at 270 914. This implies that most people within this region have not yet registered to be voters, an issue which needs urgent attention before the 2023 elections.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The study has contributed on understanding impact of Gukurahundi on youth political participation in Zimbabwe. The study sought to explore Gukurahundi incident and to present contemporary understanding of young people's political participation. The use of interviews allowed the researcher in understanding ethnicity and youth political participation with regard to Gukurahundi incident. The study has revealed experiences and attitudes of young people in Matebeleland region regarding Gukurahundi incident and youth political participation. The study also concludes that young people are faced with socio-economic challenges which is resulting in most of youths in the Matebeleland region going to neighbouring countries such as South Africa to search for better life conditions. Even though, the country is hit by economic challenges and inflations, the young people are mostly affected the worst due to high unemployment levels.

The study has presented unforgiveness from the relatives of the victims of Gukurahundi massacre. This is shown by the rise of pressure groups who advocating for independent Ndebele Kingdom. The researcher concludes that rise of pressure groups is another way of youth expressing themselves. The research findings presents that youths like their elders or parents need compensation from perpetrators of violence. The research findings shows that if compensation is provided positive peace and unity can be achieved between the Shona and Ndebele people. The research findings also presented that despite preaching of forgiveness by the church, youth political participation is low in the Matebeleland region and Gukurahundi incident being one of the reasons limiting political motivation to participate.

The researcher found Ndebele people despite age increasingly carry hurting and mind disturbing stories of Gukurahundi and hold on to crimes and activities done by Shona people against the Ndebele people in 1987. Hence, the study concluded that there is low level of political involvement of youth from Matabeleland region. As such there is demand for greater political engagement within youth from this region. Nevertheless, the researcher concludes that reconciliation remains unattainable since it is impossible to erase painful memories of massacres and compensation cannot change what has happened in history.

7.2. Recommendations

The research findings have presented that youth in Matebeleland carry the burdens and story of their elders regarding the Gukurahundi incident. The study recommends the Government to acknowledge the mistakes or activities that were done during the

Gukurahundi incident. Without acknowledgement, apologizing and compensation the pressure groups advocating for an Independent Ndebele Kingdom cannot be silenced. As such there is no positive interests towards observing the Unity Accord. The youth are capable of sustainable peace and development as long as justice is given. Failure to ensure peace and unity among different ethnic group is a plan to political instability.

The researcher found that most of the youths have trust issues with the government as aligned to Shona ethnic group. As such, the government should make socio-economic and political structures and frameworks transparent, inclusive and of ethnicity balanced. The Government should promote the right of political participation and support equal development on Matabeleland regions to ensure the political participation of Ndebele youth at all levels. The Government should ensure equal input of youth from all districts across the country. The Ndebele youth have felt not belonging by state universities enrolling more Shona than students from the region. The researcher recommends the state universities across the country to enroll equally despite region background.

The Government should economically support young people equally across all the provinces in the country. Lack of government equal support in all provinces brings tensions of ethnic favoritism and conflicts especially between the Shona and Ndebele. Despite the country facing economic challenges, entrepreneurship projects should be supported to show efforts of unity, peace and development. Equal participation on gender should be equally promoted. Women should also actively participate in the socio-economic and political affairs of the country.

The researcher noted that addressing the issue of Gukurahundi and its impact on youth political participation is equally complex and difficulty the same way it is to the Government to admit its actions and punish the perpetrators of the incident. Families are still haunted by the Gukurahundi incident and loss of their relatives. However, true unity and sustainable peace is possible and achievable only that the government cannot preach gospel of reconciliation when it has not admitted its crimes and violations against the Ndebele people. The major question lies on what compensation should the government offer to the families of the victims in order to heal or compensate loss of family members before the 2023 elections. Compensation could it be land, youth empowerment opportunities or regional development and if it is either, is everyone going to be satisfied and lead to acceptance of forgiveness, realization of true peace and unity between the Shona and the Ndebele people?

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MEDIATION PROCEEDINGS WITHIN THE DRUZE COMMUNITY: TRADITION V. MODERNITY

*Imad Abu REESH**

Abstract. *Mediation is an alternative conflict-resolution method, in the framework of which the parties to the dispute engage in negotiations in order to resolve their disagreements. Druze Religious Courts are part of the court system in the State of Israel. The Druze Religious Courts Law, 5723-1962 was enacted in 1962, leading to the establishment of those courts. Since that time, members of the congregation have litigated before Druze religious courts, and Druze Qadis entered their judgments according to the rules of marriage law that are taken from Druze religious law and Druze custom. The Druze religion has also acknowledged the concept of mediation, and especially with respect to disputes that involve spouses.*

In the context of mediation, it should be remembered that the privilege and necessity of understanding, assessing and being creative belongs to the parties. Therefore, the [facilitation] of agreements and the “closure of files” are not the true standard by which the success of mediation proceedings is measured in terms of their social-educational aspects. The true standard consists of the degree of transformation experienced by the parties in all matters that pertain to their belief in their ability to manage their relationship and their disputes in the future.

Keywords: *Druze Community, mediation, Israel, tradition, modernity, Druze Religious Courts*

Introduction

Mediation is an alternative conflict-resolution method, in the framework of which the parties to the dispute engage in negotiations in order to resolve their disagreements. The process is conducted by a mediator, who serves as a professional and neutral third party (Gabrieli, Zimmerman and Alberstein, 2019). The mediator helps the parties to engage in dialogue, but they lack the authority to decide on the dispute. The mediation proceeding and the solution achieved by it are strictly subject to the parties' consent. Each party may decide to discontinue the proceeding at any time and stage. The mediation proceeding gives the parties an opportunity to communicate with each other in a setting that enables them to proceed towards a solution and to cooperate. The parties can determine their preferred outcome by means of a mediator, in full cooperation, and without there being any external authority, and in lieu of placing their fate in the hands of a judge (Silura and Sharon, 2018).

Druze Religious Courts are part of the court system in the State of Israel. The Druze Religious Courts Law, 5723-1962 was enacted in 1962, leading to the establishment of those courts. Since that time, members of the congregation have litigated before Druze religious courts, and Druze Qadis entered their judgments according to the rules of marriage law that are taken from Druze religious law and Druze custom. The Druze religion has also

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acknowledged the concept of mediation, and especially with respect to disputes that involve spouses. Because of the sanctity attributed to marriage under [Druze] religious law, the Druze religion obligates religious officials, spouses and their parents to make an effort to reconcile spouses and/or reach an amicable solution, *inter alia* by means of mediators and/or arbitrators, a fact that is reflected in the Druze Marital Status Law (Section 47 of the Marital Status of the Druze in Israel Law, 5762-1962), which forms the basis of rulings by Qadis at Druze courts, and, to the extent possible, [is used to prevent] the occurrence of divorce. Under the Druze religion, a man may never remarry the woman he divorced.

Is the application of mediation and/or conflict-resolution proceedings justified within the Druze religious court system? If so, what are the grounds that justify them?

1. The Druze

The Druze are a heterodoxy congregation. The Druze religion was founded in the eleventh century in Fatimid Egypt (in the times of the sixth Fatimid Caliph, Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, who ruled over Egypt between 996-1021. Near the end of his reign, the Druze sect began to form with him as a central figure. Druze doctrine was substantially influenced by the Ismaili doctrine. A year after the religion was founded (1018), Hamza ibn Ali, one of the spreaders of the faith at that time, began to publicly disseminate the new doctrine. The appearance of the Druze religion was met with objection on the part of Muslims, and, in 1021, after the disappearance of the Fatimid Caliph who founded the religion, a purge against the Druze began, (the Druze [were seen as] heretics). The Druze were forced to hide their new faith and express loyalty to the predominant religious doctrine, and they began to apply the “Al Taqiya” principle, which enables members of the congregation to ostensibly express their allegiance to another religion, provided that they keep their true faith in their hearts (Hassan, 2011). Thus, even though the religion was created in Egypt, the Druze doctrine was not very successful in Egypt, but it spread to the mountainous regions of Lebanon and Northern Israel due to persecution. The Druze who were left in Egypt were forced to abandon [or hide] their faith, and [proselytizing] new believers was [banned] in 1043. Thus, the Druze, who were originally an active religious-political movement, became a closed sect (Amarani, 2010; Hassan, 2011).

More than a thousand years after the Druze religion came into existence, the Druze now live in four main Middle Eastern countries: Syria (approximately 700,000), Lebanon (approximately 215,000), Jordan (approximately 30,000) and Israel (approximately 145,000 residents as of the end of 2019). There are also small congregations in other countries, particularly Western countries in North America, South America, Australia and South Africa. As of the end of 2019, the Druze congregation in Israel consisted of approximately 147,000 people, which is 1.5% of Israel’s population, and 8.1% of the Arab population in that country (temporary data). 98% of the Druze residents in Israel live in 19 settlements. 17 of those are located in Northern Israel, and two of them are found in Haifa District. The percentage of Druze residents in those settlements is considerable, and, in 13 of them, the percentage of Druze residents is 94% or more, and, in seven of them (Beit Jann, Majdal Shams, Buq’ata, Julis, Yanuh-Jat, Sajur and Mas’ada), the Druze population constitutes 100% of the entire settlement (CBS, 2022).

The State of Israel recognizes the separate status of Druze as an independent religious community, and its men serve in the IDF on a compulsory basis. The settlement of the Druze in isolated regions resulted in a socially-cohesive, rural, and conservative community that is characterized by a traditional lifestyle and a patriarchal structure (Amarani, 2010). This society has always adhered to religious and traditional values, with

independence and their connection to the land always being observed as the key values of the congregation's life. Over the centuries, Druze society has been shaped by religion, with the social-traditional framework and mountainous setting compensating for the limitations of that religion, and they determined the connection of each individual to their congregation. To this day, Israeli Druze society is an isolated, conservative and more traditional society, albeit not necessarily an agrarian one (Amarani, 2010).

2. Divorce under Druze marriage law

The aforementioned law consists of 19 chapters and 171 sections, and is entitled "Marital Status – Druze Congregation Law." The law discusses every aspect of marital status within the Druze congregation, including marriage and divorce. The original law was enacted in Lebanon on February 24, 1948. The law was amended on July 2, 1959, and was later adopted in 1961 by the Spiritual Leadership of the Israeli Druze community. It was later officially recognized as the "Religious Council" of the Druze community, as defined in the Regulations. The chapter of the Marital Status Law that deals with divorce is Chapter 7, entitled "Dissolution of Marital Ties" (Sections 37-49). Marriage law under this law describes several ways to dissolve a marriage [among members of the Druze community]:

The first method consists of unilateral divorce (*Talaq*). Under Section 37 of the Israeli Druze law (this section has been amended), *Talaq* Divorce takes place in the presence of reliable witnesses, at which point the marriage immediately comes to an end (see Section 37 of the Druze Marriage law). Under the previous version of that section, marital ties are not dissolved by *Talaq* [divorce] proceedings before a *Madhhab-Qadi* enters a ruling.

Section 38 of the Israeli Druze Law also states that anyone who divorces his wife by way of *Talaq* Divorce may not remarry that woman at any time in the future. Section 11 of the Israeli Druze Law also states that a man may not change his mind about the divorce and bring his divorced [former wife] back to him. It is important to note that Section 37 does not state which spouse is the contributor to and/or cause of the *Talaq* divorce. Under Druze law, under a principle dates back to the greatest enactor of Druze Law since the [Druze religion's inception] – Al Amir Al Sayed – and that [applied] even before the enactment of the marriage laws that are based on the teachings of Al Amir Al Sayed, [equal rights were conferred upon both sexes] under Druze Law in the context of divorce, in view of the principle whereby "Spouses may not be coerced into continuing the marriage." This is a very important [principle] of Druze Law, and it also affects the status of a child who was born in a forced marriage. The content of Sections 37 and 38 below was amended by the Druze Religious Council on February 16, 1979. The previous [version] of this section only allowed divorce that is decreed by a *Qadi*, so as to prevent divorce in every way possible.

The amendment was enacted in view of the large number of cases in which men divorced their wives, with the court facing the problem of finalized divorces whose annulment it could not certify under religious law if the divorce took place in the presence of two reliable witnesses, if the two witnesses made the entry into force of the divorce public after they tried to reconcile the two spouses and failed. At that point, the spouses would never be allowed to remarry [each other] (Layish, 1978). **The second option** set forth in the Israeli Druze Law consists of the wife's ability to annul the marriage (*Tafriq*) Dismantling the family, subject to the application of one of the grounds set forth in Sections 39-41 and 43-45 of the Marital Status Law, which include: severe illness, lack of physical ("manly") strength, insanity, adultery, protracted incarceration or protracted absence of the husband. Pursuant to those grounds, the wife may petition the court to annul the marriage by way of

a judgment. Moreover, the husband may petition the court for a “Tafriq” on the same grounds.

The **third** annulment option, which is described in Section 42 of the Marital Status Law, consists of annulment pursuant to the consent of both spouses (*Tafriq Batarachdhi*). Annulment in such cases enters into force upon its announcement in the presence of witnesses and the *Madhhab Qadi*, who certifies it by way of a judgment.

Section 42: “Spouses may annul their marriage by way of mutual consent (*Tharadhi*).” The annulment enters into force upon its announcement (*A’alan*), in the presence of witnesses, and in the presence of the Qadi-madhhab, who certifies it by way of a judgment.

The fourth option applies under Sections 47 and 48 (*Naza’a* and *Shikak* claims) Family conflict, [in the form of] or “dispute and strife” claims, or “domestic peace” claims.

Section 47: “If strife (*Naza’a*) or a dispute (*shikak*) arises between the parties, and one of them petitioned the Qadi-Madhhab, the Qadi will appoint an arbitrator (*Khakam*) who is a member of the husband’s family and an arbitrator who is a member of the wife’s family. If those family members lack the skills needed by an arbitrator, the Qadi will choose an arbitrator who is not a member of those families.

Section 48: The two arbitrators will familiarize themselves with the causes for the dispute between the spouses and will make an effort to reconcile them (*Itzlakh Dhat Albain*). If the reconciliation efforts fail due to lack of cooperation and obstinacy on the part of the husband, the Qadi-Madhhab will annul the marriage and order the payment of the “Deferred Bride Price”, in whole or in part. In both cases, the Qadi may decree that the spouse responsible for the annulment must pay damages (*Utal Vadharar*) to the other spouse. Indeed, divorce can be caused by strife or a dispute between the spouses, and not necessarily in cases where one of the spouses directly petitions the court and informs it of their wish to divorce, and requests a divorce judgment from the Qadi. However, claims that are based on those sections are not claims for divorce. Rather, [the purpose of these claims] is to seek the assistance of the court in resolving the strife or dispute that arose between the spouses, after the Qadi explains the significance of annulment to the parties and the rights and obligations that arise therefrom, as well as the meaning of divorce. Only if he fails to reconcile them and bring them back to the family unit will he appoint two arbitrators, one relative of the husband and another of the wife, who will attempt to reconcile the two and resolve the dispute. If no suitable arbitrator can be found among the members of the family, the Qadi will appoint arbitrators who are not their relatives, and who will act on behalf of the court. In such cases, the arbitrator serves as a type of reconciliatory mediator, and not as an arbitrator as defined in the Arbitration Law (Arbitration Law, 5728-1968).

The results of the mediators’ efforts will determine the future adjudication and handling of the issue by the courts. Under Section 48 of the Marital Status Law, if the arbitrators or mediators failed to reconcile the two spouses, they will then examine who – in their view or according to their conclusions – among the spouses is the ultimate cause of the divorce. If the husband causes the divorce, he will pay the deferred bride price, in whole or in part, to the wife. If the wife is the cause of the divorce, the Qadi will decree that her right to the deferred bride price (in whole or in part) is invalid. In both cases, the Qadi may rule that the spouse responsible for the annulment must pay damages (*Utal Vadharar*) (Section 48 of the Marital Status Law). As stated, the Druze congregation strictly protects the rights of each wife, maintains equal rights for both men and women, and enables women to act separately and independently, and to not be tied to the husband in all matters pertaining to the divorce. Druze legislators were aware of the possibility of husbands who

[might] divorce their wives without any justified cause and without any contributory culpability on the part of the wife. Section 49 of the Marital Status Law addresses such situations, grants protection to women, and states that if the Qadi finds that there is no legal justification for divorcing the wife, the Qadi will award damages to the wife in addition to the deferred bride price that is payable to her.

It therefore follows that husbands and wives may divorce their spouses in the presence of witnesses. In such cases, the announcement by the court that the divorce has taken place is declarative, and each of the two reliable witnesses [must be] an official who serves as a *Sayes* or *Imam*. They will make every effort to reconcile the two and prevent the divorce from taking place before it is announced. In such cases, the court is precluded from bringing spouses back together, including by way of mediation, after it finds that the divorce has been finalized, as that is prohibited under religious law.

The courts may also seek a divorce in case of a dispute. Under religious law and the provisions of the Marital Status Law, the court will then appoint arbitrators or mediators, even without the parties' consent, in an attempt to resolve the dispute before the Qadi decrees the marriage's annulment. In such cases, the court's decision to annul the marriage is constitutive.

Marriages can be annulled in case the husband or wife suffers from a terminal illness after two years have passed, or if the husband has been absent for three years and it is not possible to collect spousal support from him, or five years in any event even if it is possible to collect spousal support from him, or in case the husband or wife commits adultery, and this includes consensual divorce. In such cases, the Qadi's decision to annul the marriage is constitutive. In some cases, the court can force the parties to engage in mediation under the provisions of marriage law, which shall be overseen by two religious officials, in an attempt to prevent the marriage's annulment (Kabalan 2016).

3. Mediation

3.1. Mediation – Background

Mediation is increasingly becoming a more central and important feature of conflict resolution outside of and in parallel to the court system, both in Israel and around the world, including in the context of international disputes, business disputes, business relations and family law. In the United States, the 510 largest corporations have signed a treaty that requires them to seek mediation proceedings before they institute legal proceedings. In a survey conducted in the United States in 1989 by the Center for Public Resources (Alroi, 1992), it was found that 76% of all disputes in which those companies were involved were concluded by way of negotiations and mediation.

Mediators intervene in a variety of contexts: diplomacy and international relations, workplace matters, [disputes] between members of management and unions or workers committees, departments within an organization, disputes between managers, and disputes between managers and subordinates. Mediators are also involved in interpersonal matters such as divorce, sexual harassment, disputes between homeowners and tenants, and disputes at schools. Mediation is a negotiation management model that is based on interests (in contrast to the common method of conducting negotiations, which is based on "positions"), which was developed by Roger Fisher William Ury from Harvard University. In addition, mediation is a legal proceeding that is established in Section 79c of the Courts Law, 5744-1984, the Courts Regulations (Settlement), 5753-1993, and the Courts Regulations (Appointment of Mediators) (Amendment) 5759-1999.

Mediation proceedings are defined as follows: "Proceedings in which a neutral third party intervenes in the disagreement in question. [That third party] assists the adversaries in reaching a voluntary resolution of their differences so as to resolve their dispute" (Alroi, 1992). A similar definition is proposed by Wall & Lynn (1993), who note that [mediation] is an instance of intervention by a third party that controls the interaction between the parties, but has little control over the outcome. Other scholars (Amzaleg-Bahar and HaCohen-Wolf, 2009) defined mediation as a communicative process in which the parties solve practical and emotional issues, with the purpose of each of them being to resolve the dispute while obtaining the greatest benefit possible that would meet their present and future needs. In essence, the mediator performs his role by way of convincing [the parties], although it is possible to exert various types of pressure on the parties in order to force them to take measures to resolve their dispute (Amzaleg-Bahar and HaCohen-Wolf, 2009).

The role of mediators focuses on the present: providing assistance with reconciling the parties concerned from a certain point onward. In other words, [mediators] help [the parties] to reach an agreement by way of communicating with each other, thereby putting an end to the dispute and beginning a new chapter. In the framework of that proceeding, the [dispute evolves from a conflict that is based on competition to a dispute that is characterized by partnership and sharing]. The agreement that is [eventually reached] constitutes a binding contract in case proceedings are [later] instituted in courts, or that puts an end to the judicial proceeding, usually by way of judgments in case the proceedings are conducted in court. The number of meetings determined for the purpose of the mediation process depends on the mediation model, the framework in which it takes place, the complexity of the topics that are in dispute and the personality of the parties. Mediators distinguish between various stages of this proceeding, and it is commonly held that every participant in such proceedings undergoes each and every one of those stages, although in different orders. The mediation proceeding is a means of negotiations between parties to a dispute that is intended to reach a settlement. It is a voluntary proceeding that takes place out of court, in which a neutral third party – the mediator – assists the parties to a conflict in engaging in direct negotiations, and creates a satisfactory and consensual solution to the dispute in question, without having the power to enforce any solution on them. The entire proceeding takes place in strict adherence to [the principle of] confidentiality, which is one of the foundations of its existence. Nothing stated in the framework of the mediation proceeding can serve as evidence in court – on the part of the mediator or the parties – in case they withdraw from the mediation process. The parties, including the mediator and others who play a part in the proceeding, sign a confidentiality clause that forms part of the Mediation Agreement. The parties' consent is the essence and cornerstone of the mediation process. The need for consent applies at every stage of the process, including every hearing and the [final solution] that is agreed upon by the parties (Amzaleg-Bahar and HaCohen-Wolf, 2009). From a social standpoint, mediation is more than another tool that facilitates negotiations between parties to a conflict. Mediation is a life philosophy whereby [all humans are to support each other] (Chief Justice Aharon Barak). According to this philosophy, it is within the nature of society to witness the emergence of solvable disputes. Mediation reflects such values as communication, attentiveness, acceptance and openness, and it instills educational values and shapes a better and more tolerant society. The success of dialogue and mediation breeds hope for the resolution of conflicts at the state level (Mironi, 2012).

Tools were also developed in earlier times and within different cultures, and attempts were made to resolve disputes by way of communication and negotiations. In many

cases, these approaches were a form of tradition and the cultural basis for the development of today's mediation proceedings. Jewish Law, for example, encourages settlement as a basis for the resolution of disputes under a model that combines both [acts of] grace and [adherence to the] law, both justice and peace. Biblical law emphasizes compensation for victims more than punishment and retribution, with the purpose being the establishment of peace, which is a fundamental principle of Judaism and reflects a will to reconcile and establish good relations among the people, or, in the words of Rabbinical Sages: "Disputes should be resolved in the heart and not only in the mind." A [notable] feature of Arab culture is the *Sulkha*, which is supported by the authorities, which know that the arrangement that this proceeding entails, rather than punishment in the form of criminal proceedings, is the best and perhaps only tool that can stop the bloodshed. The Mauri in New Zealand habitually held conferences, a process that was eventually enacted into law as a means of handling delinquency among adolescents (Court Legacy Museum, 2007).

Alternative conflict resolution methods have been in existence for a long time, and constitute an element of many religions. In Judaism, Moses, the "Father of all religious judges," [decreed]: **"Let the law cut through the mountain,"** On the other hand, Aharon the Priest argued for **"the love and pursuit of peace, and the establishment of peace among men."** Aharon, who, due to his personal traits, refrained from being a judge, sought instead to resolve disputes as a private mediator, and would try to convince parties to reach a settlement (Ottolenghi, 1994). Christianity also clearly decrees as follows: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." The Quran contains a similar [passage]: "If you fear that a dispute has arisen between the two, send an arbitrator from each family and, if they wish to resolve the dispute, God will assist them in that endeavor."

Mediation is currently perceived as an alternative dispute resolution method (ADR). ADRs consist of dispute resolution proceedings and techniques that do not necessarily use the court system. In fact, these methods have also been recognized by the general public, the legal community and the law. Many judges have considered these methods as a conventional way to reduce the court system's workload, and is a fair way to resolve disputes (which also happens to be cheaper for the litigants themselves) (Kabalan 2016).

Mediation is one of the alternative methods of conflict resolution, in the framework of which the parties to the dispute engage in negotiations in order to resolve their disagreements. The process is conducted by a mediator, who serves as a professional and neutral third party (Gabrieli, Zimmerman and Alberstein, 2019). The mediator helps the parties to engage in dialogue, but they lack the authority to decide on the dispute. The mediation proceeding and the solution achieved by it are strictly subject to the parties' consent. Each party may decide to discontinue the proceeding at any time and stage. The mediation proceeding gives the parties an opportunity to communicate with each other in a setting that enables them to proceed towards a solution and to cooperate. The parties can determine their preferred outcome by means of a mediator, in full cooperation, and without there being any external authority, and in lieu of placing their fate in the hands of a judge (Silura and Sharon, 2018).

Mediation can be viewed as a tool that is suitable for resolving many types of disputes: familial disputes, divorce, workplace disputes and even international disputes. The end result is a mediation arrangement that consists of joint and individual decisions that are made by the parties, which can be filed with the court and be given the force of a judgment. Each of the parties will believe that they benefited [from the process], and mediation agreements tend to be honored. However, if the dispute is not resolved by the proceeding, the parties will still maintain the right to petition the courts. On the other hand, it should be

understood that legal proceedings can end in a decision whose result is a “zero-sum game,” which leaves both parties feeling like they lost, or dissatisfied with the court’s judgment. This is in contrast to the mediation proceeding, which leaves the control over and the solution to the dispute in the parties’ hands, and this enables the parties to experience a certain measure of relief and liberty in making their own choices, and they thereby facilitate their own negotiations among themselves or between them and the other parties, thus [enabling them to reach] an agreement (Finkelstein, 2007).

Mediation proceedings are widely recognized in Israel and around the world and they have evolved from a voluntary proceeding to a compulsory and binding proceeding, whose purpose, *inter alia*, is to examine an alternative way to conduct the dispute out of court. It appears that most parties, including other actors such as social workers and attorneys, have been satisfied with the outcomes of this proceeding (Bayer-Topilsky and Sorek, 2019), even though the authority of binding law looms above it, and it is possible for an arbitration proceeding to commence involuntarily in some courts, such as the Family Court, and in religious courts pursuant to the Information, Assessment and Coordination Meetings (*Mahut*) Law. Throughout the process, the parties may decide whether to continue or not, and this therefore does not actually violate the autonomy of any party or their free will, and particularly their right to terminate the proceeding should it fail to meet their expectations at any time (Ben Nun and Gabrieli, 2004).

The Druze Religious Courts are part of the Israeli justice system. In 1957, the then Minister of Religion, Chaim Shapira, recognized the separate status of the congregation as an independent religious congregation by virtue of his [ministerial] authority (Religious Congregations (Organization) Ordinance, 1926). The Druze Religious Courts Law was enacted in 1962, and, since its enactment, these religious courts have been established and members of the congregation have litigated before Druze Religious Courts, and Druze Qadis rule in them in accordance with the rules of marriage law, which are taken from the Druze congregation’s religious law and its customs.

The Druze religion has also recognized the concept of mediation, and particularly in disputes between spouses, because of the substantial value that religious law attributes to marriage. Druze religious law requires religious officials, spouses and their parents to attempt to reconcile the spouses and/or reach an amicable resolution [of their dispute] by means of mediators and/or arbitrators (Kabalan, 2016), as reflected in the Druze Marriage law, pursuant to which Qadis rule at Druze courts so as to prevent cases of divorce. Under Druze religious law, when a man divorces his wife, he is then precluded from ever remarrying her. The IACM Law can also be an efficient and safe method of resolving disputes between spouses, and for identifying other alternatives that will facilitate an agreement between them, [and this is one of the fundamental purposes of that law]. The mediation proceedings [that are conducted through the assistance of Support Units] are mandatory under the aforementioned law, and they take place either at family courts or at religious courts. To this day, no pertinent minister has issued an order that addresses the matter of Druze religious courts.

3.2. The Information, Assessment and Coordination Meetings (IACMs/*Mahut* Meetings) Law, and the application of mandatory mediation proceedings

The Litigation of Family Disputes Law, 5775-2014, or the IACM Law, entered into force in July 2016 as the temporary provision (whose duration was three years). At the end of that period, the Knesset will decide whether and how to permanently apply the law. This law constitutes a revolution in the way that family disputes are conducted in Israel. It means

that, for the first time, the filing of a legal action in family matters in Israel will be conditional on a preliminary proceeding at the Support Units of the Family Court and the religious courts, such that the law requires disputing family members to participate in Information, Assessment and Coordination Meetings with a social worker at the Support Unit (Section 3 of the Information, Assessment and Coordination Meetings (Mahut) Law).

The purpose of the law is to help spouses, parents and their children to amicably resolve familial disputes, and to reduce the need for litigation, while taking into consideration every aspect of the dispute and the benefit of every child (Section 3 of the Information, Assessment and Coordination Meetings (Mahut) Law). The law states that, in familial disputes, instead of filing an action with a court, a “Motion to Resolve a Dispute” is first filed without specifying the subject matter of the dispute or the claims against the other party. The court summons the parties to a first meeting at the relevant Support Unit. The Support Unit holds additional meetings with the parties in order to provide them with relevant information that would facilitate the resolution of the dispute, completes the family’s “intake” process, and provides the parties with suitable recommendations with respect to the conduct of the dispute, and seeks to coordinate the continued management of that family’s dispute. After the meetings at the Support Unit, the parties can decide whether to file an action with the court, or resolve the dispute consensually using tools that are not legal-adversarial.

In practice, under this new law, the parties are offered a mediation proceeding that consists of four meetings, at which the parties will meet with a mediator, who serves as a neutral third party. The important information that is provided to them [includes], *inter alia*, the implications of the divorce for the parties and their family members in view of its legal ramifications and its emotional, financial and social effects. Moreover, the parties will receive an explanation about the nature and principles of the proceeding, an explanation about the role of mediators in identifying the dispute as well as possible alternative solutions to the dispute. It will include separate meetings with each party [that are designed] to identify their genuine needs, and to enable the parties to engage in negotiations until they reach a satisfactory agreement. Moreover, only the two parties can determine the outcome of the proceeding. The information provided by the mediator to the parties will be freely presented in colloquial language rather than “legalese,” [in an attempt to] create a direct, personal and open involvement and a discussion with all parties about every single matter that is in dispute. Throughout the negotiations, the parties will be able to control the [way decisions are made with regard to the dispute], in view of the pace and individual schedule of each [party]. Another advantage of this proceeding is its relatively low cost compared to legal proceedings. In addition, the parties have the right of to decide [on the manner in which the dispute is resolved by themselves] – a significant right that reinforces the parties’ sense of safety and their reliance on the [ability to maintain] their autonomy as individuals (Gabrieli, Zimmerman and Alberstein, 2019).

Extensive powers were entrusted to the Support Units upon the entry into force of the IACM Law, which effectively turned them into a “gateway” to family courts. The Support Units of the family courts are comprised of professional therapists whose role is to provide the courts with a variety of services that are based on their expertise, including diagnoses, consultation, treatment and mediation. Thus, professional therapists sit next to the judges, and work together with them under a single institutional roof. In this fashion, the work of the Support Units with the courts becomes a fascinating platform on which these two professional fields interact – the legal and the therapeutic (Meller-Shalev, 2016).

In his essay, *The Law and Settlement* [Hebrew], Judge Y. Tirkel describes the advantages of settlement. In his view, the settlement [approach] has systematic importance, and it extinguishes the fire of conflict and leaves no embers that could be reignited. It also has educational and social significance in the form of fostering the habit of resolving disputes by way of settlement and avoiding argumentativeness, clashes and litigation. Settlements not only fairly resolve disputes from a legal standpoint, but they also entail mutual compromises in the face of factual or legal uncertainty, and they enable the parties to restore the [daily] routines of their lives. They can also enable the parties to save the costs entailed in protracted litigation. In his view, the large-scale adoption of the settlement [approach] also confers benefits upon society as a whole (Tirkel, 2002). The mediation proceeding gives the parties a chance to acquire new tools that enabled them to deal with disputes, both when they choose to [dissolve their familial ties], and in the future (the Draft Litigation of Family Disputes Law, 5775-2014).

3.3. Mediation in cases of divorce

Over the years, mediation has become a tool that can be used in almost every legal context in both Israel and other countries, including disputes between countries and the signing of peace treaties, mediation in criminal proceedings, mediation at the workplace between employees and employers, and familial disputes and divorce proceedings. In Israel and in other places in the world, mediation is perceived as a particularly suitable substitute for adversarial proceedings, and particularly in divorce cases that entail far-reaching implications for the litigants-spouses and their children (Bogush, Halperin, Kadri and Ronen, 2002; Kobo, 2017).

Under the IACM Law, the parties are referred to a dispute-resolution proceeding, in which they are provided with information about the advantages of the proceeding. In fact, it also entails tremendous social value and an overarching purpose, in the form of reaching an amicable and peaceful agreement, while improving the efficiency of the proceedings in a way that benefits the family from both a financial and emotional perspective. On the other hand, it can be deduced that – because the mediation proceeding is compulsory – it could be interpreted as a violation of autonomy. On the other hand, the application of compulsory mediation proceedings on the parties stems from the justice system's need to provide the parties with **significant information** about alternative proceedings of whose advantages they were not aware. Moreover, after they are presented with the advantages of this proceeding, the [litigants are then able] to make a [positive] and informed decision as to whether [they should] use an alternative dispute-resolution proceeding.

The IACM Law also indicates that the legislature wanted to encourage negotiations between litigants such that the responsibility for the proceeding and its outcomes rests with the litigants. This proceeding does not violate the autonomy of the parties, and serves more as an opportunity for the litigants to choose their individual solution independently and freely, and to resolve the dispute amicably (Deutsch, 1998).

In her book, *Settlement – The Giant Awakens* [Hebrew], Dr. Orna Deutsch (1998) describes the mediation proceeding as follows: “The mediation proceeding consists of... strengthening the social safety of the participants: the belief that they have the power to control their own fate, to overcome difficulties by themselves, without an external authority.” This approach reinforces the view that shifting responsibilities to the parties in the context of dispute-resolution will encourage them to negotiate freely until they fully resolve their disputes.

It should be noted that, in every mediation proceeding, the parties maintain the right to have their day in court. This instills a sense of safety among litigants in [the sense that they may] continue the mediation process without having concerns about [their being unable to petition the courts]. If the mediation attempt fails, that will not be the end of the matter, and the parties can petition the court at all times and freely, or, in the alternative, they may choose a different way to resolve the dispute. On the other hand, if the mediation proceeding succeeds, the [wishes of everyone involved] are quickly met and at relatively low cost. In any event, the significant reduction of costs [consists of removing] the mental distress and pressure that are entailed in litigation (Alroi, 1992).

3.4. Arguments in favor of incorporating mediation proceedings in court

In Israel and other world countries, mediation is perceived as a suitable substitute for adversarial proceedings, particularly in divorce cases that aggressively affect both spouses and their children. Therefore, many arguments have been made that justify the application of compulsory mediation proceedings in courts and religious tribunals, including the following:

A. Adversarial proceedings naturally intensify the conflict, exacerbate the dispute, are replete with tensions, and their sole purpose is to optimally meet the client's material demands, e.g., a divorce agreement that benefits the husband. On the other hand, mediation proceedings emphasize the need to continue the relationship between the parties after the divorce (Bogush, Halperin, Kadri and Ronen, 2002).

B. In mediation proceedings, the promise entailed in a mutual agreement between the parties to resolve the dispute in a reconciliatory fashion is based on mutual agreement and not on competition, and this enables the continuation of good relations between the parties after the end of the proceeding, such that the outcome of the mediation proceeding consists of more than the [drafting] of a divorce agreement, but it also includes the parties' sense of control and emotional stability, and the creation of a greater commitment on their part to adhering to the agreements that they reached on their own through the assistance of the mediator (Bogush, Halperin, Kadri 2007).

C. [Arguments in favor of] the application of compulsory mediation proceedings within the court system [state that it] will enable a high percentage of claims that end in settlement (Silura and Sharon, 2018).

D. The purpose of the mediator is to reach a fair and just arrangement between the parties, and not to reach a decision that is enforced on the parties (Regulation 1 of the Courts Regulations (Mediation), 5753-1993).

E. Although the mediator can be viewed as having a considerable effect on the parties, because the parties turn to the mediator consensually, this could facilitate the purposes of the mediation proceeding (Deshe, 2019).

F. Unlike the litigation of parties in court, in which their hostilities could escalate because of various legal tactics that they need in order to gain a judicial advantage, and whose purpose is to achieve a legal victory that is in line with the wishes of each party, by turning to a mediation proceedings, the parties prepare themselves for a suitable environment in which the dispute would be resolved, and which reduces the extent of hostilities and increases the chances of amicably resolving the dispute (Alroi, 1992).

G. In adversarial proceedings, the parties stand before a judge, and the case is directed at the attorneys by the court system, without the parties having any right to determine the identity of the judge, as is the case in mediation proceedings (Zamir, 2002).

H. In legal actions – including divorce cases – statements of claim are filed by the parties that state the causes for the divorce, and they usually contain serious and mutual accusations. The parties must be examined and cross-examined, witnesses and evidence must be brought, and the parties are occasionally examined in a way that leads them to highly emotional litigation processes (Bogush, Halperin, Kadri and Ronen, 2002).

I. The involvement of courts in familial disputes in general and in disputes between spouses in particular, which also entails emotional involvement, will disrupt and block the relationship between the spouses, and will lead to hostility and arguments that preclude mutual discussions, and this will make it difficult to resolve the dispute and conclude the legal proceeding, it entails costs that are incurred by both parties and place a burden on the court system. In cases where the spouses still live under the same roof, the legal proceeding often has negative effects on the emotional state of the children who live with their disputing parents. However, mediation proceedings, unlike legal proceedings, are free of the burden of time and money that affects parties to a legal proceeding, which increases the tension that serves as a barrier to the resolution of the dispute (Bogush, Halperin, Kadri and Ronen, 2002).

3.5. Arguments against the incorporation of mediation proceedings in courts or tribunals

Notwithstanding all the advantages that are conferred by mediation proceedings, many scholars have warned against the disadvantages of mediation and the problematic nature of this proceeding, and particularly when it is forced on the parties, e.g.:

A. Some are of the opinion that compulsory IACMs are contrary to the purpose of mediation proceedings as a natural and free process that is designed to reach agreements about the dispute. Even though – in practice – its purpose is to provide information about mediation proceedings and to examine the parties' suitability for the proceedings, considerable concerns still exist that mandatory IACMs could turn into *de facto* mandatory mediation proceedings (Finkelstein, 2007).

B. The pressure of reaching agreements by way of mediation, and particularly when the parties are forced to institute mediation proceedings by law, will often undermine the most important element of mediation, i.e., the freedom and control of the parties, while nullifying the defenses they have in ordinary adversarial proceedings, such as the disclosure of information and faithful representation, and without finding an alternative to them. Moreover, mandatory mediation puts battered women at risk (Bogush, Halperin, Kadri, 2007, page 336).

However, far from resolving the problem, this proposed solution has created another and far more serious threat. Mandatory mediation puts battered women at risk.

C. Some have argued that, notwithstanding the generally accepted opinion, not only are mediation proceedings not truly controlled by the parties, but the concealed effect of the mediator is also nothing more than a substitute for the judges' decision (Connelly, 2019). At times, the sacrifice [that the mediation proceeding entails] as a result of the parties' bargaining originates only in one of the parties, and that is certainly not fair:

To the degree that a continuing relationship is needed following divorce, values of trust and empathy are probably necessary ingredients. Sometimes former spouses must make sacrifices that assist the family. The problem is that if the wife is willing to make concessions to benefit the divorcing family, while the husband is not, bargaining becomes inherently unfair." (Brinig, 1995. p 29).

D. Mandatory mediation proceedings are contrary to the essence of mediation, which is based on strengthening the autonomy of private will and the parties' ability to make

decisions [independently]. In that framework, some have raised concerns that compulsory mediation proceedings could lead to coercion in mediation proceedings and the formulation of their outcome. This matter is of particular importance in cases of power gaps between the litigants. There are concerns that mandatory mediation could [reinforce] and even increase the power gaps, and, in the framework of divorce-related negotiations, women are usually still weaker than men (Finkelstein, 2009).

An informal process that places the low powered spouse, usually the wife, fully at the mercy of her more powerful husband.

E. Moreover, in mandatory mediation proceedings, the focus will be on the positions of the parties, while pressure is exerted such that the consent and free will of the parties to such proceedings will be deficient (Deshe, 2019).

F. Another argument against mandatory mediation originates in the concern that parties in a mediation proceeding that was forced on them will refrain from cooperating, and, in any event, their degree of openness will be smaller, and this would result in suboptimal arrangements (Finkelstein, 2007; Deshe, 2019).

G. The failure of mediation proceedings could increase tensions and the lack of trust among the parties, the costs of the parties' litigation and the court system's workload. Moreover, there are concerns about flooding the courts with litigation cases that deal with the refusal of one of the parties to participate in mediation proceedings, and there are many studies that confirm this (Finkelstein, 2007).

H. It has also been argued that mandatory mediation makes it difficult to access the court, and this adversely affects the right to petition the courts (Finkelstein, 2007).

I. The court system is a source of precedents, it interprets and applies laws and case law, serves the litigating public, and determines binding norms for the public interest. The incorporation of mandatory mediation proceedings in the court system will invalidate the role of adjudication.

3.6. Mediation in Druze religious courts:

The Druze religion has also recognized the concept of mediation, and particularly in disputes between spouses because of the substantial value that religious law attributes to marriage. Druze religious law requires religious officials, spouses and their parents to attempt to reconcile the spouses and/or reach an amicable solution [to their dispute] by means of mediators and/or arbitrators (Kozlov, 2017) & .(, 2016), as reflected in the Druze Marriage law (Section 47 of the Marital Status of the Druze Law, 5762-1962), which forms the basis of rulings by Qadis at Druze courts, and, to the extent possible, [it is used to prevent] harm to the proper continuation of marriage life and/or the occurrence of divorce. Under the Druze religion, a man may never remarry the woman he divorced, regardless of the circumstances of the divorce (Sections 11, 38 of the Druze Marriage law).

3.7. The application of the IACM Law in Druze religious courts

Following are key facts about the present situation:

A. The purpose of the aforementioned law is to encourage family members to resolve their familial disputes in alternative ways rather than adversarial litigation by determining mandatory participation in an alternative and preliminary proceeding, i.e., forcing the litigants to receive information and assess the state of the family before legal proceedings are instituted. A mandatory preliminary proceeding that takes place before an action is filed makes it possible to force the parties to participate in IACM meetings at the

Support Units of the court (the Family Court and religious courts) at a relatively early stage of the familial dispute, without exceedingly harming the fundamental right to access the courts, to the exclusion of situations that necessitate a judicial decision, e.g., cases of domestic violence (Explanatory Notes to the Draft Litigation of Family Disputes Law (Early Resolution of Disputes), 5775-2014).

B. The IACM Law, as previously demonstrated, can also serve as an efficient and safe tool for resolving disputes between spouses. However, under that Law, IACM meetings at the Support Units are mandatory for the parties, both at family courts and religious courts, and the IACM Law (Definitions) also includes the Druze religious courts, and, to this day, no pertinent order has been issued by the Minister of Justice.¹ the Druze religious courts do not force Druze litigants to attend IACM meetings at the Support Unit, which has already been established at the Druze court (and is now [operational]). We therefore ask the question of whether it is nevertheless possible to apply mandatory mediation proceedings and/or force litigants to file a Motion to Resolve a Dispute with the Support Unit of the Druze court – and prior to the institution of ordinary legal proceedings? Is that justified and does it benefit the divorce proceeding?

C. The aforementioned review of divorce laws under the Druze Marital Status Law indicates that there are cases in which spouses arrive in court with a finalized divorce, as defined in Section 37 of the Marital Status Law. Therefore, in view of the [aforementioned] and absolute religious prohibition, the possibility of attempting to reconcile the two spouses in such cases, and, *inter alia*, [of attempting to] restore their [family unit], is completely out of the question. It therefore follows that there is no point in forcing the parties to attend IACM meetings for that purpose, and that the provisions of Section 3 of the IACM Law – which stipulates the filing of a Motion to Resolve a Dispute in divorce claims – [cannot be applied] from a religious perspective, and so it is not possible to apply divorce hearings outside of the Druze religious court even if the Motion does not include any facts or claims that pertain to the dispute, including claims that pertain to jurisdiction.

D. In addition, the above also indicates that religious law also includes “familial disputes” (Section 47 of the Marital Status Law, 5723-1962), which are referred to in the Marital Status Law as *Naza’a* and *Shikak* (نزاع وشقاق), a purely religious proceeding that forms part of the Druze religion, its application entails religious conditions, and its resolution and management are also governed by religious law and religious conditions. There is no doubt that the “familial dispute” proceeding between Druze spouses falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of Druze religious courts because it forms part of “marriage and divorce” affairs under Druze religious law (Section 4 of the Druze Religious Courts Law). Therefore, such disputes between Druze individuals could not be brought before a family court, even if the Motion to Resolve a Dispute under the IACM Law (Section 3 of the IACM Law, 5775-2014) does not include claims or facts that pertain to the dispute, including such that pertain to jurisdiction because – under religious law and as stated above, any claim that is filed with the court that pertains to divorce, whether it is a *Naza’a* and *Shikak* claim, a family dispute claim, a divorce claim or otherwise – the court will be the one that decides whether to refer the parties to an Arbitrators Committee, mediators, the Support Unit, to

¹ Section 7 of the IACM Law states as follows: “This law will enter into force on 11 Tammuz, 5776 (July 17, 2016) (in this law, the “Application Date”). With regard to religious courts for which a support unit was not established before the publication of this law, the provisions of this law will apply on the date determined by the Minister of Justice, by way of issuing an order, in consultation with the pertinent head of the religious court, after a support unit has been established for it, or if the provisions of Section 8(c) of the Support Units Law apply to it.

consultants or to any other advanced proceeding at its discretion and in the framework of Druze religious law.

E. Therefore, unless the referral to the Support Unit is presented by the religious Qadi and not by any other external party, the provisions of the IACM Law nullify the court's exclusive jurisdiction in the framework of the religious prerogative it has under the Law (Section 47 of the Marital Status Law, 5723-1962) of hearing marriage and divorce cases because, from a religious law perspective, not every proceeding is suitable for the Support Unit, and only the court is authorized to determine the cases that can be referred to the Support Unit.

F. Needless to say, one of the purposes of the IACM Law is to [resolve the] "Race of Jurisdictions" problem – which exacerbates family disputes that are adjudicated in courts – by preferring the prevention of escalating family disputes, in a genuine attempt to resolve the dispute in alternative ways that replace legal litigation, instead of other mechanisms of acquiring jurisdiction (The Explanatory Notes to the Draft Litigation of Family Disputes Law (Early Resolution of Disputes), 5775-2014). The Druze religious court has exclusive jurisdiction in marriage and divorce cases (Section 4 of the Druze Courts Law, 5723-1962), and its jurisdiction to hear other marital status-related cases, e.g., cases that involve spousal support, the division of property, custody, seeing arrangements, etc., is acquired with the consent of the parties (Section 4 of the Druze Courts Law, 5723-1962), i.e., there is no "race of jurisdictions" with respect to the aforementioned tribunal, and, in this context, the IACM Law will therefore contribute nothing to the Druze religious courts, but will only take away from its authority and create a proceeding that runs in parallel to the purely religious proceeding and that takes place before the Family Court, and will even create a race of jurisdictions that has not existed before.

4. Mediation among minorities in Europe

Mediation and arbitration are different types of alternatives to litigation that are permitted by law, and they are known as "alternative dispute resolution" mechanisms (ADR). Mediation is one of the most common forms of ADR, and it offers an alternative to adjudication and arbitration. The most basic difference between these mechanisms consists of notices, in contrast to adjudication and arbitration, in which an authority or an authorized third party (judges) execute a legally binding judgment after a violation of a judicial decision or an existing norm. Mediation can be used at every stage of the dispute. Mediators are not authorized to hand down decisions, and the parties themselves are the ones that defer [sic] the arrangement. Moreover, unlike binding judicial decisions, mediated agreements do not serve as precedent, and they do not establish an authoritative rule or pattern. Instead, each agreement is unique to the dispute in question and could be completely different in two similar cases (Küss, 2010).

Mediation in Hungary is currently at its earliest stages. Although it is governed by parliamentary laws and is employed in a variety of civil cases, there is a small number of nongovernmental organizations that seek to provide this service with respect to disputes that involve minority rights (European Judicial Network in Civil and Commercial Matters, 2008). Moreover, there is no single national and governmental entity that provides mediation services in the context of minority rights violations, apart from international offices such as the HCNM of the OSCE. The two most important government institutions in connection to the protection of minority rights in Hungary – with some potentially capable of providing this service – are the Equality Authority and the parliamentary

commissioner (in other words, the ombudsman) for the rights of national and ethnic minorities.

At present, there are Islamic websites in Europe that provide normative content for European-Muslim minorities. These websites present analyses of their fatwas, i.e., legal and religious recommendations that were provided in the context of family-related matters. This technological and online accessibility enables the creation of new public spaces in which various and at times contradictory terms are negotiated (with regard to coexistence between Islam and the state). This enables the incorporation of terminology that is taken from fatwas into existing legal frameworks through the institutions of arbitration and marriage contracts. At the same time, these websites strengthen the role of the individual and facilitate the voluntary observance of Islamic law. Undoubtedly, these websites [make it technologically possible] to redefine the politics of religious authority (Šisler, 2009).

The expansion of Muslim communities in Europe and their increased strength in countries whose cultures are largely non-Muslim: such circumstances breed confrontations that stem from the concurrent existence of state legislation and sharia norms in a [certain] territory. “Muslim Sharia Courts” [can be] found in secular and non-Muslim countries, which offer various divorce-related mediation proceedings and thus enable the resolution of issues that are derived from conflicts between the laws of Islam and the laws of the country in which the community resides (Mukhametzaripov & Kozlov, 2017).

Liberal countries now have non-state legal arrangements [for] minorities such as Jews and Muslims as a parallel legal system. Some view these institutions as a threat to the political and liberal order. In practice, the presence of “quasi-legal” institutions that constitute a feature of some minority communities is best described as a “legal order of a minority.” However, reality shows that the legal orders of minorities have always coexisted with the laws of the state. A liberal democracy does not need to eliminate or criminalize the legal orders of minorities in order to pursue a “single law for all” vision. Instead, more pluralistic methods and approaches have now been adopted, which are suitable for minorities in increasingly more diverse communities. One of them consists of mediation in marriage law cases, which facilitates the alignment of interests while maintaining the framework of normal conduct that confers benefits on all parties involved (Maleiha, 2014).

In this essay, I will analyze the process of mediation among minorities in democratic and liberal countries. I will present how balances are struck between the marriage laws of minorities and the laws of the state.

5. Conclusion

[In this chapter I will attempt to provide an] informed answer to the question, “is it still justified to apply mandatory IACMs and/or mediation proceedings at the Druze Court?”

It has already been demonstrated that Druze marriage law requires litigating spouses and the Qadi to make every possible effort – including by way of mediation through religious officials or as deemed appropriate by the Qadi – to prevent the occurrence of the divorce. Moreover, the Druze religion ascribes great significance to marriage, and it permits divorce only in necessary cases, and, if the divorce indeed takes place, [that process is irreversible], as reflected in the Druze Marital Status Law (Sections 11, 38 and 47 of the Marital Status Law, 5723-1962) – which justifies [cases in which] litigants file divorce claims with the Druze Court, e.g., *Tafriq Batarachdhi* (consensual divorce), *Naza’a* and *Shikak* (familial dispute), etc., and after it is proven to the court that no finalized divorce is in place in accordance with religious law, by way of a motion that is filed with the Support

Unit by the Qadi, and even by way of mandatory decision,² as a possible way of resolving the dispute and delaying a potential divorce, which. The therapists that work together with the court can contribute to the continued and strong existence of the family unit and facilitate the [welfare of the family's children], and can serve as a middle ground between the duty to participate in mediation proceedings as prescribed in Section 47 of the Marital Status Law, 5723-1962 and leaving that as a completely voluntary option of the parties, who choose a professional and external mediator through the assistance of the Support Unit. I believe that this entails many advantages, including a proper transition from the voluntary mediation model to a model under which the proceeding also becomes mandatory under marriage laws, such that the social worker at the Support Unit could provide professional assistance [in] removing the barriers and hostilities between the parties, assuage their strong emotions, and facilitate their mutual communication before they agree to the mediation proceeding. It will thus become possible to ensure a productive and proper mediation proceeding that [culminates in] a durable and sound agreement.

The IACM meeting exposes litigants to controlled mediation proceedings in an attempt to resolve the dispute, and leaves them with the option of returning to the court. Moreover, the IACM entails an important social message, according to which, in many cases of conflict, such as those that involve custody and visitation arrangements, and financial disputes in the context of divorce, attempts should be made to reach solutions by way of mutual discussion and agreement, without the need for a judicial decision.

Moreover, it is difficult and even impossible from a religious and legal perspective to generally apply the IACM Law to litigants in the Druze Religious Court through an external authority. However, and given the religious and constitutional barriers, we noted the justifications and how, in certain cases, the Qadi can exercise his authority under civil and religious law, and refer the parties to the Support Unit.

We therefore conclude – notwithstanding the fact that the IACM Law does not apply in its present form to Druze Religious Courts – that the Support Unit of the Druze Religious Court should be used – such that, if the Qadi finds – after conducting an examination on the basis of religious law and the specific cases before him – that it is justified and proper to do so, he may refer litigants who presented him with a divorce claim to the Support Unit. The Support Unit can serve as a possible way of resolving the dispute and delaying the occurrence of divorce. This therapeutic profession can assist in protecting the continued and sound existence of the family unit and the [enduring welfare of children among their families], and this [could serve] as a middle ground between imposing the duty to participate in mandatory mediation proceedings under marriage law, and leaving it as a voluntary option of parties who choose a professional and external mediator through the Support Unit. I believe that this entails many advantages, including a proper transition from the voluntary mediation model to a model under which the proceeding also becomes mandatory under marriage laws, such that the social worker at the Support Unit could provide professional assistance [in] removing the barriers and hostilities between the parties, assuage their strong emotions, and facilitate their mutual communication before they agree to the mediation proceeding. It will thus become possible to ensure a productive and proper mediation proceeding that [culminates in] a durable and sound agreement. Moreover, the IACM entails an important social message, according to which, in many

² The Druze court is a judicial tribunal, and a violation of an order or decision of this tribunal constitutes an offense and/or a violation of Section 6 of the Contempt of Court Ordinance and Section 7a of the Religious Courts (Enforcement of Compliance and Adjudication Methods) Law, 5716-1956.

cases of conflict, such as those that involve custody and visitation arrangements, and financial disputes in the context of divorce, attempts should be made to reach solutions by way of mutual discussion and agreement, without the need for a judicial decision.

In the context of mediation, it should be remembered that the privilege and necessity of understanding, assessing and being creative belongs to the parties. Therefore, the [facilitation] of agreements and the “closure of files” are not the true standard by which the success of mediation proceedings is measured in terms of their social-educational aspects. The true standard consists of the degree of transformation experienced by the parties in all matters that pertain to their belief in their ability to manage their relationship and their disputes in the future. This personal empowerment of the parties should strengthen the community as a whole and reinforce its social [ties]. If this proceeding fails, the parties [may still avail themselves of the court], and they will have the right to pursue the adversarial path.

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ROMA COMMUNITY. LEGISLATIVE ELEMENTS AND ACTIONS BY WHICH THE ROMANIAN STATE SUPPORTS THEIR INTEGRATION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

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Abstract. *Through this study, we set out to make a foray into the actions by which the Romanian state supports the integration and non-discrimination of Roma at the national level, after the post-December period, when the social, economic, and political realities of Romania were redefined. The method used is qualitative, based on the analysis of various documents, with data obtained from both primary and secondary sources.*

The post-December legislative and visionary technique tends towards a multicultural approach in relation to the Roma community. Thus, the current legislative and institutional adaptations were accompanied by a special dynamism, following a structural logic. The persistent cleavage between the majority and ethnic Roma, despite the measures taken, seems to be maintained. The complexity of the difficulties they face requires proactive state intervention. Thus, affirmative action is a remedial and necessary instrument which needs to be used more actively to reduce the gaps in various social areas.

The conclusions are clear, from our point of view: even if the actions are complex and judiciously crafted, the actions are poorly executed for several reasons. Although there is a growing ethnic mobilization, the state is inadequately addressing the situation. In its latest approaches, the state tends to emphasize the cultural side of the Roma and to improve the actions, at least on a theoretical and discursive level.

Keywords: *Roma community, minorities, state actions, strategies, integration, non-discrimination, affirmative actions.*

1. Introduction

The central position occupied, at least today, by the national minorities in the sphere of the Romanian society is due to several factors, among which: the ratification of some international documents, the Europeanization process and the one of the strategic reorientations of post-December Romania, discursive presentations and cordial attitudes of policy makers who advocate for unity, cohesion, respect among citizens and in their relations with ethnic minorities and, without limiting ourselves to these factors, the proactive involvement of non-state actors.

The Romanian ethnic diversity is impressive. The prosperous cultural and linguistic baggage, but also the various defining elements of each community are treasures that highlight the multiethnicity of our society, which I like to believe that it wants to be modern and completely inclusive. However, there are differences between ethnic groups. Some communities are better represented, and others are not, and the consequences are reflected in unequal treatment. The Roma represents the most discriminated ethnic group at the

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societal level in our country and, certainly, at the European level. Although government policies on the community have had some effect in the sense that there are some improvements, the expected result has not been achieved. In addition to the fact that, despite the measures, a deep-seated stream of discrimination still lingers in the mindsets of citizens, social inclusion measures are having effects, but limited.

The obligation of the state has a dual nature, legal and, at the same time, moral, to take all the necessary measures aiming to treat them equally and non-discriminatory and to integrate them in the Romanian society.

Certainly, the issue of the Roma minority has been studied by specialists in several fields, but this study aims to analyse the various legislative elements and actions by which the Romanian state supports non-discrimination and integration of the Roma community.

The study aims to answer the following research question: *how sufficient are the actions by which the Romanian state supports non-discrimination and integration of the Roma community?*

The methodology used is qualitative, based on the analysis of various documents. The data used in this study are primary and secondary. Primary data reflects the various press statements of officials, surveys, studies and documents, reports issued by national, European, and international institutions and various non-governmental organizations working for the inclusion of the Roma community, and the secondary ones reflect the specialized literature. Primary and secondary data were identified using existing search engines on the internet. Moreover, we specify that works written in Romanian or English have been selected.

2. General Aspects

„Where is the essence of humanity when every single day Roma people are excluded from society and others are held back simply because of the colour of their skin or their religious belief? ”, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, rightly wondered in her first State of the Union speech.

In the foreground is the Roma community. One for which, despite the oppressive reactions they have faced in recent centuries, the present time is doing definitely too little. Enslaved for more than half a millennium (Dumitrescu, 2008: 63), treated inhumanely by the legionaries through a series of barbaric actions involving the effective deportation and extermination of some of them (Băican, 2014: 18) and subsequently silenced by a policy of widespread practical assimilation by the Communists, The Roma have shown, in accordance with the literature, an impressive ability to adapt and preserve their distinct identities (Fraser, 2017). In an interview, the current president of the National Agency for Roma considered that the identity and the culture are the fundamental elements of the Roma people (Paraschiv, 2021). Although we are all raised by values that have been instilled in us individually and, later, collectively, there is a crucial characteristic, identified in the literature (Prisacariu, 2010: 16), between the people and the minority: the character of a group animated by spirituality and solidarity.

Although they face difficulties that have implications in most aspects of life, they are plagued by both a racist and discriminatory current aimed at widening the existing gap between them and the majority, and a perception that associates them as strangers and intruders (Kostadinova, 2011: 165).

Despite the dissensions regarding the demographic dimension of the Roma community, one aspect is certain: on the Romanian territory there is a large community, the official data communicating the presence of several hundred thousand citizens who declared

themselves of this ethnicity¹. Other estimates by international bodies show a presence about three times higher than that reported through the national census² and contrasts with the perspectives of some authors, who believe that more than one and a half million of ethnic Roma is simply unlikely (Achim, 1998: 171-172). Currently, there are bodies at the national level³ that are conducting online information campaign to increase the level of awareness through a public assumption of ethnicity, within the current national census of Romania, marking the need for cohesion among the community. This aspect is to be welcomed, given the reluctance with which citizens publicly assume their ethnicity in our country.

In addition to identity and culture, another defining element that animates Roma ethnics, *in genere*, is diversity. It brings together, within it, a deep variety of groups, each with its own cultural, linguistic, professional, and even religious particularities (Achim, 1998: 171-172), the differentiation not being limited, however, only to the elements listed. In the same volume, Achim highlights a totally important aspect, emblematic for the perpetuation of cultural and social aspects: the birth of their ethnic consciousness. This is due, in his opinion, to the democratization process of society and the increasing involvement of the Roma in the issues that concern us all and will succeed, in time, to coagulate the divisions they face within the community and to shape deeper unity between them. If, in its depth, it can build bridges between groups and between them and the majority, then the future policies and actions of the state will know other paradigms and other orientations.

The researched studies reveal the desolate picture and the deep need for maturation among the Romanian society. The public perception of ethnic Roma is simply fragmented, with an extremely low degree of tolerance (Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy, 2020: 6) and an extremely high degree of distrust (National Council for Combating Discrimination & The Institute for Public Policy Bucharest, 2018: Resume, para. 4). There are, moreover, recent studies that invite us to step into the harsh reality of a cleavage that seems to be deliberately maintained by opinion formers through value judgments aimed at stigmatizing and universalizing (Hosszu & Duminică, 2020: 12) issues that, over time, will decouple from the possibilities of the Roma to effectively integrate.

Regrettably, the data, correlated with entire perspective and the whole picture, do not communicate a real paradigm shift in the future. The ideal of an inclusive society seems, at least for the moment, unfulfilled. The reports also showed the persistence of an institutionalized anti-Gypsyism current creating social inequalities and barriers, an aspect that shows the extent and proportion of this phenomenon (Muižnieks, 2014: 4). Public opinion is also marked by the impure and dishonest speeches of opinion makers or policy makers. These issues are constantly building a disgraceful image pattern that will ultimately inspire stereotypes. In addition to the fact that hate speech is constantly fuelled, studies indicate that it tends to be even normalized (Marincea, 2019: 55-77).

¹ According to the latest census, the number of those who declared themselves Roma at the national level was: 621,573 people. For more details, including the population by ethnicity in the censuses from 1930-2011, both at county and national level, the data can be consulted online at the following address: <https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rpl-2011/results-2011>.

² The Council of Europe estimates in official reports the presence of approximately 1,850,000 Roma in Romania, data available online at the following addresses: www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma and [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/access-to-justice-for-roma-women/romania#%2242239812%22:\[0\]](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/access-to-justice-for-roma-women/romania#%2242239812%22:[0]).

³ The Roma Party „Pro-Europa” is an organization of Roma in Romania, established in 1990.

3. Some Aspects of the Post-December Legislative Approach and Dynamism

Minorities give balance to the nation, a poetic balance of diversity that conduct society, towards the pattern of a multicultural community, guided by values that become representative for the whole society.

After the collapse of the communist regime, a broad and active process of identity construction began to be seen at the national level (Stoica, 2015: 159). Seen as an ideology of diversity by the previously cited author, the multiculturalist approach can redefine the legislative path to increase the identity assertion of ethnic minorities. Thus, although late, the status of national minority was granted to the Roma only in the post-December period, when the strategic trajectory of our country was oriented towards Euro-Atlantic integration, a path that involved, *ab initio*, a reorientation of state policies to be in concordance with the new political and social realities. Prior to this period, the state had shown resistance to granting minority status to Roma ethnic groups and, unfortunately, in some areas of society, state involvement, with at least equivalent measures taken in relation to other minorities, was lacking (Fraser, 2017: 298).

The new social and economic realities that have emerged have shaped the medium and long-term perspectives of our country. The transition and, inherently, the adaptation to them, required a revision of the legislative framework in several areas in order to be in line with the social and legal environment of the juncture. Thus, the new framework had to be designed to meet several needs, including those of the Roma ethnic group.

Structurally, the new regulations attest to several rights and freedoms designed to highlight the ethnic and cultural specificity of minorities in general, which will lead, *per se*, to a process of coagulation and transformation of the Roma community into a modern national minority, as some authors claim (Nicoară, 2005: 63).

The legislative technique of the new social reality tends towards a multiculturalist approach, compatible with the principles of the contemporary political regime and differs, indisputably, from the paradigm of the former oppressive regime, in which the integrationist vision was focused on assimilation policies (Nicoară, 2005: 61-63). Given that this breath of democratization is maintained at the national level, policymakers today are more convinced that segregation and assimilation have no place in the policies and strategies that the state adopts, and the trend is relatively uniform among them. The pluralist position and vision are also reiterated in the light of the speeches of the various policy makers, who still maintain their position on the perpetuation of the rights of national minorities (Aurescu, 2015). This positivist trend, with its integrative approach, is maintained in the vision of the current President, who, in the light of the speeches of recent years, has recognized the decisive imprint of ethnic diversity on the overall development of society. The concept, basically, has gone beyond the sociological and political framework, being today a true political philosophy (Burtea, 2019: 127) deeply rooted in the democratic perspectives of today's world.

With a winding path in terms of integration into the structure of the European Union, Romania will finally be able to cover society's deficiencies by adopting the relevant *acquis Communautaire* – a *sine qua non* obligation for countries aspiring to the title of EU member state. The supranational structures called for a redefinition of the approach and emphasized, among other things, the need to protect the inherent human rights of minorities, as well as the need to change the paradigm for the inclusion of ethnic minorities. Essentially, together with the accession negotiations, the European institutions addressed the Roma issue in the broad framework of European integration (Anghel, 2019: 96).

As we have already reiterated on the well-known reasons regarding the consolidation of the legal framework, it should be noted that its continuous adaptation, but also its policies, are required for several reasons, including: *the dynamics of changing social and economic realities; the various recommendations of national, supranational and international experts; the need for the legal framework to be in line with European and, in some cases, international law; as a result of impact studies* etc.

With a special vivacity, the legislative framework is finally experiencing a surprising diversification. This current of legislative and, why not, institutional adaptations follow a structural logic: it starts at the constitutional level and continues with the rest of the legal acts in a symbiotic relationship. For additional safeguards, the state has committed itself to signing and ratifying international documents of particular value in the protection of the rights and freedoms of national minorities⁴, and has strengthened its legislation in the light of a number of recommendations and resolutions of international bodies. In this regard, we emphasize the importance of the following key international documents: the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1950, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949, the Charter of the United Nations of 1945.

From the vast array of international treaties and conventions, the document that will initially shape the course and scope of regulations at the national level is the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1 February 1995 (Ratified by Law no. 33 of April 29, 1995, published in the Official Gazette no. 82 of 4th of May, 1995). Adopted at the regional level, it represents a solid legal benchmark, with a high level of generality, which outlines the guidelines in terms of culture, religion, tradition, different rights, and freedoms that states are obliged to respect and develop them through appropriate government policies.

The legislative trajectory, following the ratification of the Framework Convention, tends to be tangled. The implementation monitoring reports (Council of Europe, 2017: para. 2) suggest the existence of a loose, fragmented, legislation, full of grey zones, that opens the way to contradictory interpretations. Through it, the experts evoked a set of recommendations, some of which *(i) for immediate action*: the adoption of a coherent and strengthened legal framework for the protection of national minorities, the need for measures to eliminate all forms of segregation of Roma children and other forms of discrimination in schools, specific actions to prevent, investigate and prosecute crimes committed on racial or xenophobic grounds and others relating to free and fair competition in the electoral process, and others of *(ii) necessity but not urgency*: the requirement for the involvement of Roma ethnics in the implementation process, the evaluation and constant review of Inclusion Strategies and much more.

In order to implement the series of regulations and, for effective coordination in this matter, multiple structures with well-defined attributions and objectives and distinct particularities have been created: the National Council for Combating Discrimination, the Institution of the People's Advocate, the Council of National Minorities, the Department for Interethnic Relations, and the National Agency for Roma. The latter body aids assistance regarding public policies on Roma citizens, as well as respect for their rights.

⁴ The list of multilateral treaties to which Romania is a party can be consulted online at: www.mae.ro.

4. Support for Non-Discrimination, Affirmative Action and Effective Integration

The analysis will debut, *ab initio*, with the identification of the elements through which the Romanian state supports the non-discrimination of Roma at national level, following which we will indicate the main directions drawn, in order to integrate, through the diversity of strategic plans, without exhausting them all, given their dispersion in various documents and general-purpose strategies and typing constraints. The study will culminate with the exposition of some affirmative measures that the Romanian state has adopted to blur the cleavage between the Roma and the majority community.

4.1. Non-discrimination

There have always been social groups that have faced discriminatory acts that are, in essence, difficult to combat. At the level of our society, and not only, the Roma represent the most discriminated ethnic group. Their removal, through discriminatory acts, from the spheres of social life made their integration into the life of the community even more difficult. Reporting incidents of discrimination in small numbers highlights, among other things, a lack of trust in the authorities and a high level of passivity (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2018: 13, 44).

Prohibition of discrimination is crucial in a functional democracy in which equal opportunities and treatment prevail. The fight against discrimination and social exclusion is reflected in the content of European policies. National regulations have been designed to meet the requirements of international and European law. Thus, major approaches have emerged in the supranational institutions (Kostadinova, 2006: 1, 2): *(i) a legal approach that reflects the EU anti-discrimination acquis* and, finally, *(ii) a policy approach that stems from strategies for inclusion and employment*. Subsequent evolutions have shaped, considerably, the perspectives of the European institutions, moving dynamically towards the development of more consolidated and comprehensive strategies for ethnic Roma. In our equation, discrimination against the Roma, and not only, is prohibited by law; either based on ethnicity, or belonging to a disadvantaged group, or by general provisions (Marin & Csonta, 2012: 10).

Respect for the intrinsic values of human nature, equality between citizens and opportunities are already the defining criteria of the society in which we live. The pedantic and dynamic process of our country's accession to the mega-structure of the European Union involved, *inter alia*, the harmonization of the entire anti-discrimination legislative framework, based on a series of directives, framework decisions, recommendations etc. Under these regulations, member states had to broaden their prospects to combat discrimination and hostility towards Roma in this case, but also to develop mechanism for social inclusion.

In an optimistic note, we can state that non-discrimination has been raised to the rank of principle, being, in fact, one on which the whole societal construction and the entire legislative approach are grafted. The creation and consolidation of the legislative and institutional framework in this matter places us among the civilized states in which minorities can enjoy fundamental guarantees.

Although notorious, acts of discrimination are punished by Government Ordinance no. 137 of 2000 (published in the Official Gazette. no. 166 of March 7, 2015). As a benchmark in legislation, it meets the requirements of Community Directives⁵ aimed at

⁵ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000, Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000.

harmonizing the entire legislative framework. Not being an instrument of *ut singuli* applicability, it will be completed with other indispensable provisions: the Romanian Constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights and, at regional level, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The regulation of the prohibition of discrimination until the year 2000 was achieved, dispersed, through various legislative acts, but later a more diversified framework was adopted (Chiriță & Săndescu, 2008: 62). According to Chiriță and Săndescu, non-discrimination has a universal value, being found, for example, in the field of constitutional, criminal, civil and administrative matters and is complemented and supplemented by many other relevant provisions in the field of national education, health, employment and others.

Essentially, the notion of discrimination involves a multitude of definitions, of meanings, some of them more complex than the others. In a simplistic view, it implies a distinction made between two or more things, or a lack of rights of a social group compared to the rest of the population (Comșulea, 2008: 249) and includes, moreover, a dimension marked by a multitude of situations in which it can intervene: from everyday life to relations with public authorities, employment, and others. The purpose of the regulation is clear and indisputable: it is reflected in the state's intention to create a level playing field (equal conditions) for all citizens, addressing vulnerable groups, especially Roma. At least at the attitudinal level, members of society tend to reject discriminatory acts, but reactions to them will lead to significant differences. Discrimination involves concrete and tangible facts, subject to trial and sanction (Burtea, 2014: 83) and involves a special typology: positive and negative discrimination, open and individual, undeclared and institutional, subjective and objective one, social and others (Chelcea, 2016). Indeed, there are several factors that lead to discrimination, but two of them seem relevant: lack of education and lack of direct contact with discriminated persons (National Council for Combating Discrimination, 2021). Although we fully understand its complexity, and Eurostat data confirm that, of all types, ethnicity is the most widespread, there are many who firmly stated that ethnic discrimination does not exist at national level (Chelcea & Abraham, 2009: 20).

As all the data confirm, in fact, that the Roma are the most discriminated, an operative and active approach of the authorities is required to slow down, at least, the perpetuation of these acts among the society. In this regard, a call for specific measures to prevent or combat disadvantages related to discrimination has been crystallized at European level and is reflected in the need to address affirmative action, which we will focus on. In the same vein, the negative educational and social consequences of school segregation have prompted the authorities to ban school segregation a few years ago and to continue to prevent and eliminate such actions (See Order no. 1540 of July 19, 2007, on the prohibition of school segregation of Roma children and the Methodology for the prevention and elimination of school segregation of Roma children); subsequently, the new Order no. 6134 of 2016 which prohibits segregation, brings, in essence, some substantial and necessary changes, including the establishment of the National Commission for Desegregation and Educational Inclusion.

Currently, regarding the non-discrimination, the National Strategy for preventing and combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech, related to the period 2021-2023, approved by Decision no. 539 of May 13, 2021, is a novelty; the strategy includes a number of necessary and key actions for Roma ethnic groups, such as: *(i) the development of a unitary methodology for identifying and reporting, at the level of the National Agency for Roma, on incidents associated with xenophobia, anti-Roma racism, radicalization and incitement; (ii) the elaboration and implementation of the pilot project*

“Holocaust against Roma - Samudaripen”; (iii) the realization of a feasibility study regarding the establishment of a Museum of Roma History and Culture. Thus, we appreciate that the actions with educational and cultural factor are opportune and welcomed. Moreover, our conviction is that through efficient mechanisms for identifying and reporting incidents, there will be a visible tendency to discourage the perpetuation of these acts.

To conclude, we point out that despite the legislative and institutional evolution, the perspective of the members of the society remains slightly uneven. The lack of community intervention and response to these acts indirectly contributes to their proliferation in day-to-day relationships. Faced with these intolerable and barbarian acts, the Roma have suffered considerable social injustice. The persistence of this inequitable current will have special implications for Roma lives, but also for the chances of accessing the various opportunities available at a given time in society. Despite efforts from either the state or non-state actors, discrimination, inequality and even segregation persist, without knowing the real dimensions of segregation (Save the Children Organization, 2021: para.1) and the effects, at least at the educational level, are devastating and are reflected in poor performance, strong demotivation, revolt and even isolation (Răducanu, 2017: 50). *Ultima ratio*, there is a need for the state to intervene through concrete and diverse measures, even through the further implementation of affirmative action policies.

4.2. Affirmative actions

Through this study, we aim, among other things, to point out some aspects of the ways in which the state, in its absoluteness, tries to compensate for the disadvantages faced by Roma ethnics and to ensure a certain balance between needs and opportunities. Considering existing cleavages, relevant recommendations and reports that highlight all the shortcomings, policy makers have focused on taking affirmative action in some areas of social life.

Conceptually, there is no rigorous definition of affirmative action. In a concise approach, these measures are policies aimed at overcoming or remedying discrimination or achieving diversity (Appiah, 2011: 268). Although it seems a purely theoretical construction, it represents, in fact, a concrete mechanism, practiced at the societal level, one through which the elimination of forms of discrimination is achieved, in the sense of the special provisions of art. 2, para. 10, letter a), from the Government Ordinance no. 137/2000. Obviously, this „correction mechanism” does not represent an express innovation of the Romanian legislator and, in any case, one not particularly used by us, as such measures have been taken at the level of other states as well.

A terminological clarification is required, noting a series of inconsistencies between the terms used in the literature. The concept of affirmative action will be found, not infrequently, in the literature under the notion of positive discrimination, both used interchangeably (Broderick, 2022) and will not be confused, however, with that of positive action, which generically reflects the policies pursued, temporarily, to encourage and support under-represented groups in the workplace (Noon, 2010: 729).

Affirmative policies are designed to meet the social needs of ethnic Roma in our case and to be effective in bridging the gap between majority and minority. In the equation of their elaboration, in addition to the line ministries, the National Council for Combating Discrimination has an edifying role, because it proposes the establishment of such measures when there is a report of inequality and, at the same time, elaborates and establishes such policies in order to prevent discrimination, in accordance with art. 9 letters a), f) of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Council for Combating

Discrimination. In fact, we also mention the contributions that international bodies and non-state actors have in promoting these measures.

At national level, the measures are spread across several sectors of social life and are financed either from the national and local budgets, or from various financial mechanisms or even European funds. Ensuring special places in pre-university: high school, vocational or post-high school education, and in university education; the allocation of separate places for admission to the initial vocational training institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; special legislative provisions on the representation of minorities in Parliament; programs for Roma health mediators and community nurses; various incentives in employment; social housing for Roma communities are, without limiting itself only to their existence, affirmative measures adopted by the state. We specify that the adoption of these special measures does not constitute discrimination, within the limits provided by law, and the measures come to equalize the relations and, with the risk of repeating myself, to respond to the fundamental needs of the Roma citizens.

The framework of educational policies is based on a set of clearly expressed principles, and a defining one is that education is free from discrimination, ensuring equal opportunities for all (Open Society Institute, 2007: 124). These chances, in practice, are jeopardized by the high degree of institutional discrimination in particular, so that affirmative action is a minimal effort to ensure a kind of compensation and balance to those who, as some authors claim, present a high degree of educational risk (Răducanu, 2017: 50). Therefore, policies play a dual role: on the one hand, they unquestionably contribute to the emancipation of this community, and, on the other hand, they contribute to their effective integration (Giurca et al., 2012: 12). It is essential to note that during this school year, the places for Roma candidates, both at the bachelor's level and at the master's and doctoral studies, have been supplemented by state.

According to the updated data of the Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma community (2015-2020), the situation is as follows: regarding the distinct places in the vocational training institutions of the M.A.I (Ministry of Internal Affairs), the indicators reveal a minimum of 2% of the total places allocated to candidates Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority; with regard to Roma health mediators and community nurses, the reports consider that they have been recruited and employed, in a priority and constant manner, at the level of Roma communities; in the labour sector, the measures aimed at organizing vocational training courses, incentives such as mobility, or providing subsidies to employers for the Roma on the labour market, the beneficiaries being few compared to the growing needs of the community; with regard to housing, housing units were granted annually to Roma citizens, the beneficiaries being, however, few (several hundred).

Without being exhaustive in approach, the course of affirmative action policies in all spheres tends to be relatively consistent and with more significant results in 2020 than in previous years. There is, however, a diversification of these measures and an increasing level of beneficiaries, but the process of compensating for disadvantages and gaps seems to be slow.

The usefulness and necessity of affirmative actions are today topics of debate on the agenda of specialists. The advantages and disadvantages are each driven by deliberate arguments. Without going into the complexity of the discussion, some authors point out that liberal democracies allow all groups to decide their own destinies, without the need for such measures, while others (Stephen & Loury, 1993) find them useful to counteract the diametric aspects of liberalism, attributing racial inequality to persistent effects of past and

present prejudices. We also agree with the latter opinion, which we consider appropriate in the context of the Romanian social reality.

Regarding the perception of the population towards these measures, it is reasonable to deduce that there is a high degree of polarization. Analysing some opinions expressed in the media on the establishment of affirmative action measures, diametrically opposed positions are revealed in relation to them. Some opinions, negative, tend to be dehumanizing and apocalyptic in relation to the Roma minority, the measures being portrayed as "minority dictatorships" (Golub, 2011: para. 1-4); while others, with a high degree of positivism and acceptance, reveal a need for measures and, at the same time, an urge on the need to know the social and historical context that crystallizes the need for these affirmative actions (Toma, 2016: para. 1-6).

Clearly, the impact of these measures has been measured, studied, and included in various reports of some entities. Specifically, its quantification is not easy at all, requiring several aspects to be considered. In a first analysis and in terms of the allocation of special places for Roma in education, Romania is a positive example, but with a limited impact of these measures (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010); The new draft of the Roma Inclusion Strategy (2021-2027) states that, in terms of educational attainment, the gap between Roma and the majority is maintained, and the program of affirmative action measures in the field of education is insufficiently supported by associated facilities. In its reports, the Commission recommends, *inter alia*, the introduction of these actions in the public sector as well, for employment, including interventions to support employment (European Commission, 2019a: 196). In the same vein, affirmative action plans in the field of education, in the absence of consistent implementations and actions to reduce inequalities, can lead to the risk of (self) exclusion (Vincze & Harabula, 2011: 148).

4.3. Integration

Social inclusion is, briefly, a whole process, with a high degree of complexity and comprehensive measures. The precarious and visionless context requires concrete and effective action. At the regional level, we have a whole framework of actions aimed at increasing the inclusion of Roma citizens. The new EU strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation (2020-2030) provides for a comprehensive approach in three pillars: *equality, inclusion and participation in political, social, economic, and cultural life* and it is, in fact, more elaborate than previous frameworks. Improving their situation is - from the perspective of the European Commission - a social and economic imperative (European Commission, 2011: section I).

The situation of Roma integration has been analysed from several perspectives. From the point of view of activists, the conclusions are clear (Moisă, 2011: 217): the rate of rejection by the majority in various aspects of everyday life, the level of marginalization, the risk of social exclusion and poverty remain, overall, very high. The corroboration offers the desolate image of a community that seems to be simply forgotten. However, there is a link between ethnicity and poverty, according to some opinions, in the sense that most Roma have reached this status due to their perception by the majority as inferior (Necula, 2020: title 5), which denotes the restrictive and closed ethnocentrism of a significant part of population, confirmed, moreover, by data from recent studies (National Council for Combating Discrimination & Institute for Public Policy Bucharest, 2018: 3rd slide).

Given the extent of the difficulties, various in form, content and manifestation, actions to combat the negative effects are reflected in the need to take concrete social, political and economic measures to ensure a decent standard of living and a certain type of

balance and coherence in terms of the opportunities we have as citizens. An obligation of constitutional origin, it imposes, at a structural level, a series of constraints on the decisive factor. The precarious situation of the Roma also requires a greater degree of diligence in policymaking, to produce palpable, substantial effects. At present, Roma policymaking is carried out in accordance with the requirements of supranational bodies and is based on a proactive perspective on their social inclusion.

Knowing the diversity, formalism and breadth of policies, the literature (Ionescu & Cace, 2006: 75) orders them according to their intrinsic desideratum: (i) *improving the situation of the Roma*, (ii) *reducing poverty and social exclusion*, (iii) *sustainably promoting a cohesive and inclusive society*, and (iv) *promoting active Roma social inclusion policies*.

The fundamental sceptre for ensuring Roma integration is represented through integration policies. These are reflected in the various sets of concrete and well-defined measures. Some of them are end-result, strategic and high-level tools such as *Roma Inclusion Strategies*; these are obviously accompanied by concrete action plans. Although its adoption is a simple statement of intent (Center for Policy Studies of the Central European University, 2018: 7, 8) which requires a series of separate actions, such as the development of mechanisms or legislative changes, it is the wise guide to improving their lives. Although rationally guided in policy building, national and international partners have often highlighted the deficiencies and shortcomings of the implementation of these strategies.

The first strategy to improve the situation of the Roma adopted by the Romanian Government dates to 2001 (Strategy of April 25, 2001, of the Romanian Government for improving the situation of the Roma, published in the Official Gazette. no. 252 of May 16, 2001, adopted by Decision no. 430 of April 25, 2001) and has been adopted for a period of ten years, with related action plans, and covers several sectoral areas, each with its own directions of action: administration, housing, social security, health, economics, justice and public order, child protection, education, culture and worship, communication, and civic participation. It was subsequently amended successively⁶. After a couple of years, the first data appeared on the effects of the application of the above-mentioned strategy (Preoteasa, Cace & Duminičă, 2009: 55-57), among which we mention both the positive ones, without the study being limited only to these: the creation of Roma elites employed in different positions; the existence, both at local and county level, of actors and implementation mechanisms; real knowledge of community priorities; facilitating access to funds; as well as the negative ones: the strategy tends to be general; lack of estimated budget for implementation, lack of involvement of social actors, poor representation in the territory. Among the policies aimed mainly at social measures, the following initiatives with impact should be mentioned: the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015); National Plan Against Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion (PNAinc, 2002-2012); Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion (JIM, 2005-2010); Romania's national development plans; Government program for the period 2009-2012; National Reform Program 2011-2013.

After 2011, all policies had to be built around the European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020. For these reasons, the Romanian Government's Strategy for Inclusion of Romanian Citizens Belonging to the Roma Minority for 2012-2020 was developed⁷. Finally, it was repealed in order to follow the Romanian Government's Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma

⁶ Decision no. 522 of April 19, 2006, for the amendment and completion of Decision no. 430/2001 regarding the approval of the Romanian Government's Strategy for improving the situation of the Roma.

⁷ Approved by Government Decision no. 1221 of 2011, published in Official Gazette no. 6 of January 4, 2012.

minority for the period 2015-2020⁸, which contained, in essence, a substantial revision and included, compared to the previous act, directions of concrete actions, but also a mechanism for implementation and monitoring. Grafted on the European Commission's policy diversification recommendations, the strategy produced some effects, but not as expected. The overall impact tends to be relatively weak and the progress very slow (European Commission, 2019b: 32-35). The social scoreboard of our country, viewed in general, is extremely discouraging in several key areas, being more critical situations and poor performances, than average or above performances. The synoptic table also outlines the limited progress. Criticism from civil society and experts reveals, among other things, a poor approach to this strategy, ignoring mainly the cultural and identity factors of the Roma (Moisă et al., 2019: 8); In addition, in the Council of Europe's view, the lack of a monitoring and evaluation methodology, despite the existence of the inter-ministerial committee and the various joint working groups at prefecture level, jeopardizes the effectiveness of the strategy itself.

In the sphere of public policies for Roma, we note the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (2015-2020)⁹, which includes strategic actions in areas such as: income, employment, education, health, housing, participation. Its place is to be taken by the National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for the period 2021-2027, not adopted at the time of writing this study. This is a stage in the action plan by which our country aims to combat poverty, inequality, and social injustice. Overall, it contains measures and actions that contribute to consolidating the steps taken in the period 2015-2020 and proposes an idealistic framework for equalizing opportunities and maximizing potential in three specifically targeted areas: harmonious personal development, stable labour market integration and active aging, but also social inclusion. Likewise, it addresses several strategic objectives from daily living, social investment, and social protection, to improving the administrative capacity of the state. In her speech, the World Bank country director Elisabetta Capannelli, welcomed the package of measures taken to combat poverty and progress, stressing that the social and economic inclusion of the Roma population must be a goal, emphasizing the need for policy and programs coordination.

The current strategy on Roma inclusion for the period 2021-2027, must be in line with the European Commission's demands in the new European Union strategic framework for Roma on equality, inclusion, and participation. It is a *de facto* continuation of the efforts to include Roma citizens and is built to meet the requirements of several programmatic documents. The objectives focus on several aspects, as well as the others, but they seem more dynamic and it focuses, *inter alia*, on elements of valorisation of the Roma cultural heritage.

The awareness of the precarious status of ethnic Roma and the risks to which they are subjected, by various non-state actors, have led to the development of organizations designed to act in their interest. The involvement of non-state actors in this equation is to be appreciated and comes to cover the dysfunctions of the protection system. The several

⁸ Approved by Government Decision no. 18 of 2015, published in Official Gazette no. 49 of January 21, 2015, amended by Government Decision no. 767 of 2015, regarding the amendment of the annex to the Government Decision no. 18/2015 for the approval of the Romanian Government's Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2015-2020.

⁹ Approved by Government Decision no. 385 of 2015, published in Official Gazette no. 463 of June 26, 2015.

hundred non-governmental organizations that operate reflect the growing ethnic mobilization in our territory, which will lead to a more active positioning of them in the sphere of society (Aidan, 2008: 15) and, why not, a possibility to draw the future public policies perspectives.

Overall, in terms of education, health, employment and housing, monitoring reports show both improvements in these sectors and shortcomings (European Commission, 2019a). Moreover, the recent Council Recommendations¹⁰ aim at improving horizontal and sectoral objectives through a series of measures that member states should take. Regarding national strategies, the reports (World Bank, 2014: 25) suggest that the strategies do not have an institutional and legal framework, and that the structures responsible for verifying its implementation at the community level do not have the necessary prerogatives to hold the authorities responsible for effective implementation accountable. This latest report suggests, among other things, the low capacity of local authorities to implement projects and achieve the objectives set out in the strategies and the need for more active funding. Criticisms also target the implementation and evaluation system introduced through the latest Inclusion Strategy.

Reading both the previous governing program (2020-2024) and the current governing program of the coalition of Liberals, Social Democrats and the UDMR¹¹, we conclude that there are elements of continuity in measures and policies regarding ethnic Roma, with an emphasis on cohesion, education, actions to prevent and combat forms of racism and intolerance and culture.

Government measures tend to be more elaborate in the current program. In accordance with both this act and in conformity with the Strategy not yet adopted, another measure concerns the establishment of Roma cultural institutions. Although a purely political document, it reveals the intentions of the current executive in the short and medium term. The section on national minorities brings to the fore some structural and substantive elements, namely: (i) *the commitment to adopt the Law on the Status of National Minorities by the end of 2022* and (ii) *the adoption of the Romanian Government's Strategy for Citizen Inclusion Romanians belonging to the Roma minority for the period 2021-2027 until the end of 2021*. Compared to the previous one, the current legislative commitment regarding the adoption of the Law on the status of the national minority provides a deadline. It will be interesting to monitor its compliance, given that the deadline for the adoption of the Inclusion Strategy (2021-2027) has passed.

5. Conclusions

This study wanted to answer the following question: *how sufficient are the actions by which the Romanian state supports non-discrimination and integration of the Roma community?* As we have identified, there is a whole philosophy of non-discrimination and integration of Roma citizens, built on the new post-December realities. The glimpse of these realities has led to a certain coercion of the decisive factor, which has crystallized into a continuous diversification and redefinition of both the legal framework and subsequent policies on non-discrimination and inclusion.

Surrounded by a special dynamism, the current of legislative and institutional adaptations, followed a structural logic: started at the constitutional level, they continued

¹⁰ Council Recommendation of 12 March 2021 on equality, inclusion, and participation of the Roma in the Official Journal of the European Union C93 /1.

¹¹ The governing program of the Coalition for Resilience, Development and Prosperity (2021-2024) can be accessed on: www.gov.ro.

with the rest of the legal acts in a relationship, theoretically, symbiotic. Non-discrimination, raised to the rank of principle, has, in fact, become an element on which the whole societal construction was later grafted, offering equal opportunities for the Roma ethnics as well. Although the state has intervened slowly, it has created a relatively complex legislative and institutional framework, but a much more operative and active approach will be required to slow down the perpetuation of these acts among society. The new strategy for preventing and combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech thus brings some novelties in identifying and reporting these unspeakable facts. In the same note, it aims to awaken the public consciousness by initiating projects with a special cultural value.

Specifically, the social injustice suffered by Roma ethnics is closely related to the involution of the general perspective of society and the lack of interventions and reactions from the community itself. Negatively reflected, it reveals the need for the state to intervene through affirmative action measures designed to compensate for the disadvantages and to eliminate the gaps in the various social fields. Although the affirmative measures already adopted are challenged, they do solve some of the corresponding problems in several spheres of social life, but despite their diversification and the number of beneficiaries, this process of compensation appears to be slow in relation to the Roma population, and needs to be extended and supported through associated facilities, as the reports suggest.

Given the complexity of the difficulties they face, various in form, content and manifestation, the state has taken certain concrete social, political and economic measures, based on end-of-outcome, strategic and high-level instruments, such as inclusion strategies. Although they formally provide a basic framework, they provide sound guidance for improving Roma life and have been developed in accordance with the requirements of regional and international partners. The precarious situation of the Roma ethnics required, among other things, an increased degree of diligence in drawing up and elaborating public policies.

In terms of policies aimed primarily at social measures, the state has had several initiatives with impact, in addition to generic strategies, and in close connection with the recommendations of specialists in the field. In the current Strategy, not yet adopted, the objectives aim at a series of aspects, just like the others, but more dynamic and focus, *inter alia*, on elements of highlighting the cultural heritage of the Roma ethnics. There are also several issues that need to be constantly improved and several deficiencies. According to most reports, even if the impact of some strategies has been relatively positive, progress is slow, and performance is weak. In the same vein, although there is progress, there is a need to see social and economic inclusion as a goal and to deepen policy coordination, a need to allocate sufficient funds and create more capable and complex monitoring, implementation, and sanctioning structures.

We conclude that the actions by which the state intervenes are complex, but poorly executed. Although there is a growing trend of ethnic mobilization, the state does not consider the Roma minority as a priority, the situation being different at the discursive level. We welcome, however, the fruitfulness of the cultural side of the Roma ethnics and consider that the implications will be special both in terms of public opinion and the degree as well as the actual integration. Even though the legislation and strategies, being comprehensive, are constantly optimized with provisions and measures that seem, *ab initio*, categorical and effective, the reality that the Roma face is different.

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VIII. BOOK REVIEWS

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ON CULTURE CLASS

*Gianina JOLDESCU-STAN**

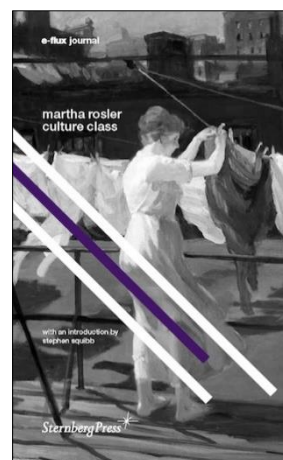
Book review of Marth Rosler, *Culture Class*, Sternberg Press, 2013

Keywords: *artistic autonomy, political art, gentrification, urbanism, creative class, the role of culture*

Martha Rosler is an artist that works in photography, videography, performance text and installation. Her art is a feminine approach towards everyday issues and specific matters such as war and national security climate through the lenses of art.

In her collection of essays, Marth Rosler follows the destiny of artists in the urban jungle, the way the environment affects the art and the way in which it is perceived. *Culture Class* is a book that includes essays that are considered to be representative for the written art of Martha Rosler. The first one, 'Take the Money and Run? Can Political and Socio-Critical Art 'Survive'?' describes the evolution of art during war, and the effects of post-war politics on artist and performance art. It is a very comprehensive and detailed essay on how artists can benefit from their culture without commercializing it, and the critical and comparing perspective of artist as part of the middle-class workers. This chapter of the book also approaches the difficulty that artists encounter in the process of internationalisation of culture and the 'loss' of originality in the process. The question that stands at the basis of this chapter is: 'deciding to be an artist means aspiring to serve the rich?', and the question remains unanswered, because the point of such a question is not to be answered, but to raise more and more questions.

The second chapter, 'Culture Class' is divided in three parts: Art and Urbanism, Creativity, and Its Discontents, and In the Service of Experience(s) and started from an invitation to speak about Richard Florida and the 'creative class'. The discussion on the subject start from Lefebvre's idea that 'the society has been entirely urbanizes' (Lefebvre, 1970). The complexity of the urban life is analysed, and industrial economy constitutes a starting point for the discussion on *Situationist International* (an international organization constituted by avant-garde artists, political theorists, and intellectuals). One of the slogans of situationists 'Culture is the commodity that sells all the others' is the starting point for the second part of this chapter: Creativity and Its Discontents. This part of the book speaks about the new vision on art, and the orientation on *production* rather than *vision*, making art less elitist. (Zukin, 1982), while the third part of the chapter discusses how newcomers influence the urban development and the evolution of art in cities such as New York, following their cultural, stylistic, and occupational integration.



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The last two chapters focus on gentrification, contemporary art, and revolution of art from Centre to Periphery. These chapters insist on the ideas described in the first chapters of the book related to idea of 'creative class' and follow a more political-oriented approach to the matter in case, including ideas such as: 'capitalism can increase inequalities and lead to catastrophic collapse', 'the new welfare-state appeared as a way to keep a large middle-class but failed because of the European social welfare model' (Roubini, 2011).

'Culture Class' is very complex set of ideas, based on solid research made by the author on matters of social and political aspects of culture, how crisis situations such as war and conflict affect the evolution of culture and how culture is perceived in the evolving state of urban development. Analysing the urban sociology and the thesis of creative class, Martha Rosler presents various points that raise questions with regards to the new purpose of culture and art in a globalised era. The style of Martha Rosler is direct, trenchant, and incisive, showing a strong feminist perspective on art and culture. In this book, she manages to present her historical and political analysis on the role of artists in urban gentrification and contemporary art.

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WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER?

*Adrian Ionuț BOGDAN**

Book review of Professor Dr. Valentin Naumescu, *The USA-China War for Supremacy and The Five Forces that change the World: Consequences for Romania*, Polirom Publishing House, 2021.

General Presentation

Published at the end of 2021, the book *The USA-China War for Supremacy and the five forces that change the world: Consequences for Romania* is a novel appearance at the level of Romania in terms of the field of study of international relations. The author is a career diplomat, former Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Consul General of Romania in Toronto, University Professor Dr. Valentin Naumescu. Structured in two parts, the book published by the prestigious POLIROM publishing house captures in a very analytical and meticulous way the current changes regarding the structure of the international system, mentioning scenarios or coalition possibilities, answering questions of remarkable importance regarding the further evolution of what international relations will become in the short and medium term. The valuable observations regarding the consequences that the rearrangement of the international system will have on Romania should not be ignored, also the elements that the author mentions in the second part of this book (the five forces that change the world), are worth looking at analysis as a whole and in a perspective of complementarity with the discussions regarding the international order and the actions/capabilities that states undertake intending to bring the evolution of the system to their benefit.



The First Part of the Book

The first chapter begins with one of Napoleon's most famous quotes about China: "Let China sleep, for if she wakes up, she will shake the world." Indeed, for more than seven centuries, Imperial China and the forms of government that succeeded it were in a continuous "isolationist sleep" (Kissinger, 2018: 129) that deprived them of the chance of involvement and influence in the international system. The events that the author considers important in the evolution and "awakening" of China are specified and concisely explained. The Communist Revolution, the Civil War, and later Deng Xiaoping's famous reforms that saved "Mao's China" (Kissinger, 2012: 108) from disaster and allowed the sustained and accelerated development of the People's Republic of China, a development that was continued in an even more accelerated by successive administrations. This chapter objectively and analytically captures the explanations for what enabled the existence of the Chinese miracle that surprised the world toward the end of the first decade of the new

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millennium. The "Long Western Crisis" as Professor Naumescu calls it, was represented by the involvement of the Euro-Atlantic world in a veritable war in the Middle East through the interventions of the US (Kaplan, 2020: 98) and its allies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria. Often weakly or erroneously (the inexistence of nuclear and chemical weapons in Iraq) argued, or motivated by the discrediting of former autocratic leaders (such as Muammar al-Gaddafi or Bashar al-Assad), the Western world's interventions in the East have generated more disorder than order, led to the deterioration of relations with the Arab world and allowed a favorable context for the "quiet" but rapid rise of China. In the fallout of the years 2000-2010, the supremacy of the victorious United States after the Cold War was significantly eroded (Friedman, 2020: 54), a fact that allowed the appearance in the international system of some revisionist ambitions on the part of Russia and China.

The perspective of the confrontation between China and the USA in the author's view must be analyzed in light of the evolution that the concept of confrontation has undergone. Today, a confrontation does not boil down to just conventional warfare, although this cannot be completely ruled out either. Professor Naumescu mentions the "Thucydides Trap" and the idea that the current hegemonic power and the immediately following opposing power will end up fighting each other militarily, but this reality of the geopolitics of the ancient Greek world is contradicted, says Naumescu, by the way, the US and the USSR clashed in the Cold War, not resorting to direct war, but clashing at the highest level.

Of course, the European Union is an actor that cannot be ignored in the perspective of the reorganization of the international system (Brie, 2006: 64), however, the internal problems and the institutional and post-Brexit crisis are open wounds in the European project. A new "Eurosclerosis" (Petrila, 2019: 32) can lead to the fragmentation of the European bloc, creating the premise of choosing any bloc by the European states. However, the stability of the EU still cannot be definitively called into question, just as the author does not launch any other hypothesis than that of the Euro-Atlantic alliance. Traditionally, Europe and America are cultural, state-wise, and ideologically similar, and neutrality of the EU, desired by China, will not be possible, even with Europe's economic dependence on Beijing's products and economy, says the author. Trump's mandate represented a distancing of the US from the European Union, but Biden's mandate represented the restoration of the Euro-Atlantic alliance.

Near the end of this part of the book, the author captures the increasingly unclear role that Russia will play in this new world order, even in the context of Moscow's increasingly aggressive foreign policy. The professor believes that Russia has few options left regarding its international positioning, offering three scenarios: the creation of the third pole of power in contradiction with the US and China, the adoption of neutrality in the conflict, and, finally, the support of China in this confrontation. The first scenario is highly unlikely due to the lack of economically or militarily important states for Russia to coalesce into a third pole, the second option does not lend itself to a re-emerging superpower like Vladimir Putin's Russia, so the third option remains only the alliance between Russia and China. Nor is the prospect of the Moscow-Beijing Axis a very happy one for Moscow, as the outsized ambitions of Putin's Russia, cannot be overshadowed by a secondary role behind China. Professor Naumescu was talking about this crack in the alliance between China and Russia as early as 2021, and they cannot be seen better than now in the current context of the Ukraine Invasion, when the People's Republic of China refused to recognize the Russian annexations of territories in September 2022.

And finally, Professor Valentin Naumescu presents four important scenarios regarding the escalation of the confrontation between the US and China, also presenting the possible consequences of each scenario for Romania. The first scenario is considered that of the "Cold War" between the US and China, but the current context is categorically different from that of the US-USSR confrontation. China is a completely different actor from the Soviet Union, and the United States has undergone major changes, so this new "Cold War" would be radically different from its predecessor. In the case of this scenario of bipolarity, Romania will benefit from all the attention that the Western states also benefited from during the Cold War (Naumescu, 2014: 89) developing, even more, its relations with the USA and the West. A second scenario is represented by the direct or indirect confrontation between the US and China, this being the most pessimistic scenario, leading to either an indirect proxy war, but there is always the chance of a real direct conflict. Of course, this second scenario is a catastrophic one, also because both nations are nuclear powers, and for Romania, such a situation would put it in front of fulfilling its duties as an ally of the US in a possible fight with Communist China. The third and fourth scenarios specified by Professor Naumescu rely on the self-implosion of China or the United States. The social and political problems facing the authoritarian communist regime in Beijing are obvious. Pollution, human rights violations added to the weakening of giant Chinese companies, and the possibility of political instability are elements that can blow up China's economy and international fortunes. The flip side of the coin, that is, the reverse scenario of an American decline (Ferguson, 2019: 29), cannot be completely ruled out, as the US has faced the most domestic crises in the nation's contemporary history in the past two decades, from the 2008 Economic Crisis to the Black Lives Matters protests. In the situation of those scenarios, Professor Naumescu believes that a possible fall of China will have net positive effects vis-à-vis Romania, but a fall of the USA could mean the beginning of the deterioration of the democratic regime in our country, so extremely disastrous consequences.

The Second Part of the Book

In this second part of the book, the importance of elements such as Education, Technology, Environment, Communication, or Ideology are causally mentioned and detailed. Professor Naumescu mentions that "these are the five forces that change the world", and this may prove to be true considering the importance of these factors in the existence of a state. A state with a high educational and technological degree takes on another importance in the international system, influencing as much the policies the state undertakes regarding the environment, but also the global communication channels it uses and possesses, as well as the ideological system of the state itself.

Conclusions

The USA-China War for Supremacy and the five forces that change the world: Consequences for Romania is a book of synthesis, analysis, and innovative research that succeeds in bringing to light, a series of questions that are at the heart of discussions in the field of international relations. Through some already confirmed predictions, the present work represents a real guide in understanding and deepening international relations, but also an important resource in organizing genuine academic debates regarding the scenarios suggested by the author of the book.

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ON DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE SUCCESS AND LOSSES

*Diana Cristina COSMA**

Book review of Gherghina, Sergiu; Mișcoiu, Sergiu & Mokre, Monica (2021), *Democratic Deliberation and Under-Represented Groups in Europe*, Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research”, (34):5.

The book is concerned with the analysis of the implication of the minority groups in deliberation with political, social, cultural or environmental ends, pointing out at situations of under-represented groups issues of inclusiveness, in several countries of Europe. It is co-edited by the following social and political scientists: Sergiu Gherghina, Associate Professor in Comparative Politics, Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Glasgow, Monika Mokre at the University of Vienna and Sergiu Mișcoiu, Professor at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.

The following lines are meant to help anchor the process of deliberation from a conceptual point of view. In the last two decades, researchers have started to give more space to the so-called „deliberative turn”. It was firstly tackled rather from a theoretical point of view, just to advance towards more practical enforcement, step by step [Chambers 2003: 307]. Although quite suggestive and indicative in its name, the process of deliberation has been approached, studied and problematised through a wide variety of domains and perspectives. When talking about deliberation, we are, in fact, talking about a transdisciplinary concept. In an effort to systemize the existing literature on deliberation, one could encounter, at a first-hand grouping, a normative and an empirical narrative. Abiding in the political science field of study, one can observe numerous multidisciplinary approaches to deliberative processes, in conjunction with psychology, philosophy, critical theory, pragmatic theories like those concerning policy-making. The book under discussion covers transversally the issue of inclusiveness, or, better-said, the lack of inclusiveness in the analysed processes.

The effort of providing a comprehensive definition of this complementary tool to political participation has been undertaken by a great number of theoreticians. One of the most indicative rests Gutmann's definition: "we can define deliberative democracy as a form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process in which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future." [Gutmann:7]. So one can observe why deliberation is more consistent than political participation. It is reflection-centric (Tamura



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2018:1), it means “working together” to clarify a disagreement, to decide in policy-making, to enhance legitimacy, when complying with its normative ideal and prescriptive endeavours.

The first chapter is entitled “Poorly designed deliberation: explaining the banlieues’ non-involvement in the Great Debate” and it is written by Professor Sergiu Gherghina and Professor Sergiu Mișcoiu. One of the most evocative matter is the particular definition in terms of identity, background and administration of the peripheral areas of Paris Metropole. By the means of seven interviews and one focus group carried out in 2019, the two professors established the four main reasons of non involvement: *the re-legitimation function of the debate, its lack of inclusiveness, mismatch of demands, and format of the deliberative setting* (Gherghina & Mișcoiu 2020).

The structure of the article is clearly organised. It firstly presents a wealth of theoretical argumentation in the incipient phase on non-participation in political processes, followed by the qualitative research explanation, by an contextualization of the research, a definition of the banlieues and an in-depth explanation of the aforementioned reasons for abstinence.

The Great Debate in France seems like providing opportunities for heavy research, in all of the steps of its happening. Its third stage, if we can refer to it as such, the aftermath of the action is highly indicative of the recruitment and conduct of the process as well. The concept of re-legitimation of the incumbent administration has been often invoked by the respondents. This allusion means that the Great Debate represents only a tool used to give voice to people’s dissatisfaction, in an attempt to regive credits to decision-makers. So, it has been perceived as specifically designed to consolidate the power, leaving on purpose aside preoccupations for ethno-cultural communities they cohabit with. The Great Debate was, in fact, aimed at the French middle-class, including the country-side, the traditional profession middle families. The banlieue are a totally different segment of population, possessing a distinct identity, facing issues such as the need for better housing, health and education infrastructure, security etc. Neglection does only suppress and increase tensions, being only a matter of time until crisis blows up.

One of this chapter remarkable conclusion is that it was not the lack of interest or the incapacity of the community members to understand and debate on specific issues that dishearted participation in deliberation in banlieues, as generally invoked by the existing literature, but rather the convoluted process of participation and the superficial, if not the void impact of their participation. Among the hundreds of thousands of e-mails and requests their demands would get lost. A case in point are the Muslim banlieues, needing funding for a mosque or more empowerment for imams at the community level, which was not at all on the Great Debate agenda. All the interviewed people were well-informed and knew the process of participation, but it was simply not the appropriate setting (Gherghina & Mișcoiu 2020).

One could basically argue that the findings of the research under discussion has virtually disqualified any deliberative capacity the Great Debate, which would find serious support among the critics [Dobler 2019].

The second chapter focuses on a more young democracy, entitled “Diaspora, deliberation and democracy: examining externally-sponsored initiatives for the development of local fora in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. This chapter is written by the Jasmin Hasić from the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, Political Science and International Relations Department and Aiša Telalović at the Journalism Development Network. Its particularity resides in the definition they assign to diaspora community: “ex-

territorialized minority”. This association with the regular, predictable minorities, ensures access to political decision-making. By its empirical study, the article checks if deliberation could be impregnated in six local governments of Bosnia, where agencies of foreign governments worked for the implementation of externally funded project to enhance democratic functioning of the institutions. Most importantly, it discusses on how the *underrepresented* diaspora community was involved in a post-conflict zone and what was the efficiency and sustainability of such an approach. Diaspora is considered to be resourceful not only financially, but also in terms of an alternative, mostly westernized experience, knowledge, lobby capacity etc. both for the national governments and for the local ones.

The structure of the article is classical. After the literature review, the author presents the epistemic method of research, which involved institutional analysis in 6 communities of Bosnia, an explanation of the Bosnian diaspora’s link with the nationals, and the final remarks.

One must observe how highly contributory for diaspora expertize literature, leadings ways to possible integration from abroad, if we can call it like this. Basically, integration without physical presence. Since diaspora pools resources for reconstruction and consolidation, why shouldn’t it be part of decision-making, as well. In general terms, the study concludes that the projects worked in favour of diaspora by raising their inclusiveness, but it is still not decently accomplished. The hope is that the institutional means of the interaction created could have a long-term impact, but the guarantees are considerably feeble [Telalović & Hasić].

The third chapter is entitled “If no vote, at least voice? The potential and limits of deliberative procedures for the creation of a more inclusive democracy” and it is written by Monika Mokre and Tamara Has. Their study has concentrated on the run-up to the municipal elections held in Vienna, in 2020, and has in its centre the residents who do not possess Austrian citizen status, and hence are not allowed to vote. Still, all decisions taken are binding upon them, as well. This status quo alters the state of democracy in Europe and contributes to social imbalances.

The article points out at shortages of deliberative democracy, mainly at the fact that deliberation rests merely a complement for political participation and could not approach itself problem solving stands. While the democratic deficit in Vienna is one of the highest in mature democracies, precisely because of the high migration mass, one third of the population being unable to vote. This is due to the the process of acquiring Austrian citizenship for third-country nationals, remaining one of the most difficult in Europe. More space for expression, is undeniably needed.

The study included deliberation sessions, in the form of a mini-public, gathering those who did not possess the right to vote, followed by a request of solutions from the political parties. It analysed a question register, drawn up together with the disenfranchised inhabitants. The conclusions drawn are that although deliberation contributes to raising the voice of those who are not able to vote, it cannot substitute the process of voting. The research theme is more than interesting and shows the complementarity of participation and deliberation. The method, however, might find critics of being too aggregative here and there [Mokre & Ehs 2020].

The next chapter is entitled “Democratic innovations in (subnational) constitution-making: the institutionalized case(s) of the Italian Provinces of Trento and Bolzano” and is written by Martina Trettel from the Institute of Comparative Federalism. The article looks at how deliberation could help reform the Statute of Autonomy of two Italia provinces

(Trento and Bolzano), by involving high input coming from the citizens. The article first presents literature elements related to constitution-making. It then passes to an analysis of the status of these provinces, describing their level of independency, namely to establish their own institutions, their way of governance, financial system, all enshrined in the subnational constitution under discussion, together with detailed technical aspects.

The novelty of the reforming process is precisely the involvement of deliberation in *Consulta* and *Convenzione*, subject to important internal diversity of these entities, in terms of language and identity.

On the occasion of deliberative fora, the study has found out interesting attitudes regarding minorities. The most popular two opinions were either advocating for loosening minority protection, through bilingual schools for example, or for maintaining the status quo. Special attention is paid to the linguistic division in design, as well, since the Province of Bolzano possesses national linguistic minorities. In order to make deliberation function, each participant used its mother tongue (German or Italian) and translators were provided. The province of Trento is rather more linguistically uniform, so minorities could openly join discussion. Here, the Ladins were preoccupied with strengthening their protection. So, the article demonstrates that language does not pose barriers in deliberation, but the technicalities rendering the resolutions consultative does not guarantee their implementation [Trettel 2021].

The following chapter relies on the dangers that hunt deliberation. “Using deliberation for partisan purposes: evidence from the Hungarian National Consultation”, is written by Daniel Orros and Paul Tap from Babeş-Bolyai University. The study focuses on how the elite populist radical right party FIDESZ, in Hungary, transformed deliberation in a tool to better scan and incorporate social atmosphere. It analyzes the National Consultation in 2015, establishing that this apparently innocent political endeavour turns out to be nothing more than a strategy of legitimizing the party lines. The aim is to secure votes and to investigate where to adapt the discourse, which is also called in literature authoritarian deliberation. The review of the literature reveals how deliberation may take over a top-down approach, compromising the quality of the process. Many parties actually use deliberation internally, which makes them more trustworthy and appealing for citizens, changing the public perception if they are genuine. However, cases of populists employing deliberation are popular, as they constantly raise discontents as matters of discussion.

The National Consultation was launched as an attempt to bring people closer to politics and a chance for the politicians to scrutinize the will of the citizens. By the means of 27 semi-structured interviews with Hungarian politicians and experts, the authors found out the real outcome of the Consultation, organised by the populist right-wing party. It seems that the strategic objectives of the FIDESZ were to obtain convenient migrant quotas determined by citizens, before the elections. The party allegedly influenced, through the wording in the questionnaire the answers people would give. Moreover, the consultation has only increased the rupture between parties, deepening the cleavage and the polarization, through the support it managed to obtain. In terms of normative objectives, the legitimizing factor is salient [Orros & Tap 2021]. One could argue that no matter how much a theory is worked on, those who will finally operationalize it, hold the power.

The next chapter brings to our attention an important aspect related to the quality of the content of deliberation, which is highly influenced by the composition. Under the title of “When citizens met politicians – the process and outcomes of mixed deliberation according to participant status and gender”, this article is the result of a research carried out by Kim Strandberg, Janne Berg, Thomas Karv and Kim Backstrom. The heart of the

research relies on a series of mixed deliberation, that were carried out on the occasion of a municipal merger in Finland, in 2018. The reason behind the mixed deliberative systems is the need for ensured inclusiveness, and the politicians could facilitate the integration of this principle. Discussions over the level of homogeneity or heterogeneity of the deliberative group remain active. On one hand, more homogeneity provides a less intimidating environment for the citizens to express their opinions, while, on the other hand, in homogenous environment, no reflection of the society can exist. This subject of research attempts to bridge, in some way, the representative and deliberative decision-making. The classical hypothesis of such deliberation concern, firstly, the disheartening presence of the politicians, who would immediately use their expertise and talent in order to dominate the talks. Secondly, females are expected to involve less, possibly inhibited by their condition of vulnerable group.

The event that provided the opportunity for this research were the inflamed negotiations between Vasa and Korsholm, two cities in Western Finland, trying to merge. The issue at stake was that, this merger would turn the Swedish speaking majority in Korsholm into a minority, in the newly erected municipality. The research design implied three deliberative sessions, mixing politicians with citizens, prior to the official negotiations. The findings of the study confirmed the fear only in the case of status. Politicians did dominate the discussions, but they also contributed as facilitators which meant that they basically ensured a smooth discussion, avoiding frustrating, unhinged situations. In terms of gender behaviour, there was none identifiable discrepancy in the inter-gender dialogue and assertiveness [Strandberg, Berg, Karv & Backström 2020]. The article approaches old, traditional shortages of democracy in an innovative, up-to-date fashion.

The last article is entitled “Looking to the future? Including children, young people and future generations in deliberations on climate action: Ireland's Citizens' Assembly 2016–2018” and it is written by Clodagh Harris. It tackles the use of Citizens Assemblies and Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action (JOCCA) deliberations on climate action, in Ireland. The unique feature of this case its preoccupation with the long-term effects of today's deliberation outcome, manifested through the advocacy for children and teenagers' seat at the table, as future generations exponents directly affected. One proposal related to the inclusiveness of younger generations in this sort of debates is that of an “enclave deliberation”, taking over the Irish Youth Parliaments. The *enclave deliberations* seem to represent the perfect venue for the ones who are traditionally marginalised or overlooked. It embodies a welcoming and safe space for these people to organise their ideas.

A divergent view is put forward in the context of the present discussion, between the futurists- teenagers as “citizens of tomorrow” and the presentists- rights-based approach, rejecting paternalistic drives. MacKenzie tries to bridge this differentials, claiming that the interests gap in present and future generations can be filled by the deliberative sessions, enhancing the societal input in creating useful and qualitative policies, which is also a form of legitimacy.

The Irish Citizen Assembly under discussion was a three stage- action. Deliberation comes second, after the information sessions and it is followed by decision-making. In a submission of policy recommendations, it turned out that only 3% were coming from children. This inequality reflected in deliberation sessions, show that the ones left aside needed to be treated separately, in the so-called enclaves. Their impact seems to matter. It surely does not hold the key to the utopic, perfect political scenarios, but makes the imbalances more bearable [Harris 2020]. This chapter almost closes the circle of

approaches, orienting on the future of policy-making. It also shows that, even if imperfect normatively and technically, enclave deliberation can be a very useful civic exercise, that might be developed later on in more complex venues.

Conclusion

The book touches up-to-date topics related to many aspects of contemporary politics, approached through creative, but realistic spectacles. It institutionalization for a better warranty that it represents a long-term project. A one-off exercise is not enough to create a pattern. Besides, the consultative role of the deliberation session renders it quite neglected by the politicians. A slight reform is asked in this sense, as well. This literature work is clear evidence on the transdisciplinarity of the deliberative processes. Inclusiveness cannot be separated from deliberation. While the prescriptive literature insists on the principle, in practice, things are moving slower than society might wish. Nevertheless, people get socialised with this practice. Time and exposure remain important.

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THE NEED FOR EDUCATION AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION FOR BETTER EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Laurențiu PETRILA*

Book review of Mircea Brie, Karla Melinda Barth, Dragoș Dărăbăneanu, Istvan Polgar: *Integrarea europeană și reforma educației românești. Comunicarea culturală și dialogul multiethnic*. Debrecen University Press: ISBN 9789634734251

Keywords: *education, European integration, multicultural dialogue, intercultural communications.*

The present work comes at a very appropriate moment considering the recent challenges regarding education both from a health point of view: SARS COV 19 (Simuț et. al.: 2021) and the multiple challenges related to European integration after Brexit .

Immediately after the global pandemic, a series of studies on education and the new paradigms of thinking regarding digital education appeared (Petrila et. al.: 2022) - a situation that put classical education formats to great test (Barth et. al.: 2022). When elements of ethnicity, multiculturalism, minorities, confessions are also involved, the equation becomes more complex, and this work comes to the aid of specialists who want to better understand these challenges in order to develop public policies regarding European interculturality and multiculturalism education.

The volume is also a guide on the need for education as a continuous form of modeling and monitoring human behavior. Through education, the citizen acquires the necessary skills to know how to react in multicultural contexts. In fact, education from an intercultural perspective is the link through which such a heterogeneous society as the population of the European Union today can generate rights and obligations for a consensus specific to European values (Brie et. al.: 2016).

The work is made up of six chapters that deal with the problem of the proposed subject from different perspectives and angles. The first chapter reveals a brief but almost exhaustive understanding of the education systems in the European Union. The next chapter comes naturally and deals with the different epistemological and conceptual approaches to learning about the European Union. The third chapter comes with a deeper problematization of the phenomenon, namely: the interdisciplinary perspective in learning about minorities. Chapter four comes as a turntable where the optimization elements of intercultural



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communication are analyzed, emphasizing the risk of the appearance of some forms of discrimination through educational programs.

The last two chapters focus on the analysis of the school curriculum regarding intercultural education in Romania, but also the necessary dialogue from the multi-ethnic perspective as an approach to the domain of European studies.

In addition to the elements related to the topicality and relevance of the subject, we must emphasize an important plus regarding the approach. Through this work, the ideas of specialists from different fields but related to the treated subject are brought to the table: the field of educational sciences, sociology, international relations and European studies, and even the field of theology. All these approaches from different scientific angles - corroborated with each other, help us to understand in a much deeper way inter-ethnic, multi-ethnic and even confessional overlaps (Brie et. al.: 2011).

The authors agree that an increase in intensity regarding the manifestation of intercultural education is important, which will subsequently ensure an increasing productivity between members of different socio-cultural spaces. Thus, by means of education and intercultural communication, the main theme of European integration can be realized and that helps those who are different to realize a series of fundamental principles for European cohesion.

Through this scientific approach, I believe that we are dealing with an analysis regarding the promotion of intercultural European values that must be seen as a pleasant effort regarding the consolidation of the European social space.

Through intercultural education and the updating of educational programs in which there are also ingredients of multiculturalism, many and inter-ethnic and confessional, we can say that we would have the chance for a much deeper European construction, and that Eurosceptic emanations would be reduced as much as possible.

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ON WHETHER DEMOCRACY CAN SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE

Nitin HINGARH*

Book review of Graham Smith, *Can Democracy Safeguard the Future?* Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, 2021, ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-3924-6

Keywords: *Short-termism, democratic myopia, Offices for Future Generations (OFG), Deliberative Mini-Publics (DMP), Diversity, Inclusiveness, Empowerment*

The Book *Can Democracy Safeguard the Future?*, written by Graham Smith in 2021, tackles the issue of whether democratic systems can provide long-term solutions for the future generations, with a democratic design approach of policy making for future generations.

Graham Smith is a Politics Professor at the University of Westminster, where he is also the Director of the Center for the Study of Democracy which belongs to the school of social sciences. His main research is focused on participatory democratic institutions, climate and environmental politics, and social economy.

The author structures his book into four chapters and an afterword, starting with an analysis of the causes why democracy fails to provide long-term solutions, then investigating changes which can be applied to existing institutions to deal away with democratic myopia, to later provide examples of new initiatives several governments have taken, and in the end, he proposes new solutions for the democratic systems to be more long-term focused and design decision making models with the future generations in mind.

Describing the tendency of democratic systems to take short-term oriented decisions, in the first chapter, the author calls it short-termism and provides examples such as climate change, the health system, infrastructure, and pandemics as clear representatives of democratic myopia. He further identifies the four main factors which drive short-termism, as in:

- 1) the absence of the future generations as an integral part of policy making
- 2) the electoral cycle with too short terms for politicians to see the creation of long-term policies as an advantage for their next electoral campaign
- 3) responsiveness to interest groups, especially the wealthy, providing a case in point with the wealthy and well-organized business groups benefitting the most from the decision-making process in the United States



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4) speculative capitalism as a shaper of thinking patterns in the modern society, with democratic governments frequently leaving decisions to the market, the latter already known as being focused on short-term economic decisions.

The author considers these four factors to be the ones restricting the ability of democratic institutions to provide long-term solutions. The author ends the chapter with the question whether we should renounce democracy and adopt more authoritarian regimes, providing well-reasoned examples why this is not a solution. In his view, it is still the democratic regimes which need to remain in place, should their institutions be reinvigorated, restructured, and designed for the long-term.

Examining the institutions that require changes in his second chapter, the author compares four significant institutions in several countries: the legislature, the parliamentary committees, the electoral rules, and the constitution. He states that the legislature is formally expected to defend political equality, although he admits that this might not always be the case, a fact which leads to democratic myopia. However, we also find suggestions for the legislature to focus on changing the existing internal practices or on a structural change with the aim of reshaping the electoral rules in mind.

The author continues by presenting examples of parliamentary committees in various countries and their initiatives. He analyzes the reform the Finnish Parliament has undertaken by being the first committee to adopt a long-term view across all its policy-making process. Other countries whose committees have taken a long-term policy making approach are Hungary, The UK, and Scotland. Although the last three countries mentioned here have not reached the extent to which Finland has committed, they are still worth mentioning as worthy examples of reform initiatives.

The electoral rules have also been considered by the author as an institution in dire need of reform, with a mentioning of two sets of proposals moving in opposite directions: on the one hand there was a strong argument against the deficient short electoral mandates, with the suggestion to extend the terms, and on the other hand the proposition to empower the young voters through various schemes:

- 1) giving parents the right to vote on their children's behalf
- 2) asking young people to voice their concerns and focus the policy decisions around those concerns
- 3) creating a surrogate group to represent the future generations
- 4) giving all citizens two rights to vote: one for themselves and one for the future generations.

While some of these proposals may be radical, they do make a strong argument that we need to give more consideration to future generations.

The last institution the author proposes for reform is the constitution. Here he walks us through constitutional reforms adopted by countries, such as Norway, which has adopted environmental rights for future generations, and Hungary which is determined to preserve its natural resources for the sake of the future generations. He continues by providing well-reasoned arguments why constitutions play an important role in safeguarding the future.

While proposals to reform these institutions come with very strong arguments, they often remain on the drawing table for several reasons, among which we can mention the public's trust in these institutions to protect the interests of the future generations over time.

Arguing that the changes in the existing governmental structure may prove inadequate to safeguard the future, the author proposes the creation of new institutions in the third chapter of this book, providing examples of successful initiatives in this area. He provides detailed descriptions of institutions such as The Committee for Climate Change

(CCC) in the UK, the Commission for Future Generations in Israel, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations in Hungary, and the Future Generation Commissioner in Wales, analyzing their roles, powers, and the reasons why they were successful or unsuccessful. He then proposes the idea of Offices for Future Generations (OFG) as one of the most important independent voices, emphasizing the idea that these bodies are created to remediate dysfunctionalities. While emphasizing all the advantages the OFGs could bring to the reform of the current decision-making system, the author also mentions their vulnerability in the fact that they lack a well-organized system, which could attract political support, and further proposes constitutional protection for these institutions. Although OFGs may be critical actors in changing democratic dynamics, their vulnerability prevents them from being considered a major part in the reform design.

In the fourth chapter the author proposes the public's participation in the long-term Governance as one of the most important solutions for the future generations. He does admit that the idea has been dismissed by many for the public's shortsightedness and their focus on everyday decisions, but he argues that the public can also bring merits to the decision table, such as inclusiveness, enhancement of the legitimacy of political decision-making, and the fostering of democracy practices worth passing on to the future generations.

He embraces the idea of participatory politics and provides the following reasons why it should be adopted:

- 1) it being a radical solution to resolve democratic myopia
- 2) its possibility to bring in deliberative democracy with public attendance
- 3) its ability to enable the public diverse voice (for the unborn and for the less represented segments of society, such as the women, the poor, the physically impaired).

The author proposes the Deliberative Mini-Publics as informed knowledgeable groups which could provide support for the established political institutions to take informed decisions not only for the wealthy, but for people in all walks of life.

He mentions that the DMPS would make a major contribution in:

- 1) better reflecting the public's experiences
- 2) being a viable solution to the lack of constituency for future generations, an attribute which can challenge short-term electoral drives
- 3) help the public and the political institutions become aware of their obligations towards future generations.

Taking all these points into account, we can define DMPs as a combination of design characteristics and actual practice that can promote empowerment, diversity, inclusiveness, and deliberation.

In his afterword, the author summarizes the importance of independence, diversity, deliberation, institutionalization, and empowerment as the key drivers for a reform of our democratic systems toward long-term orientation.

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PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW IN ROMANIAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Anca OLTEAN*

Book review of István Péter Németh, Zoltan Zakota, Sorin-Gelu Borza, Laurențiu Petrila (Eds), *Civil Szemle (Civil Society-Romanian Diagnoses, Különszám-2022- Special Issue 3, Civil Szemle Alapítvány-Due Press.*

Keywords: *Short-termism, democratic myopia, Offices for Future Generations (OFG), Deliberative Mini-Publics (DMP), Diversity, Inclusiveness, Empowerment*

The volume *Civil Szemle (Civil Society-Romanian Diagnoses)* published in 2022 under the coordination of editors István Péter Németh, Zoltan Zakota, Sorin-Gelu Borza, Laurențiu Petrila, contains a variety of interesting papers on which I tried to focus below.

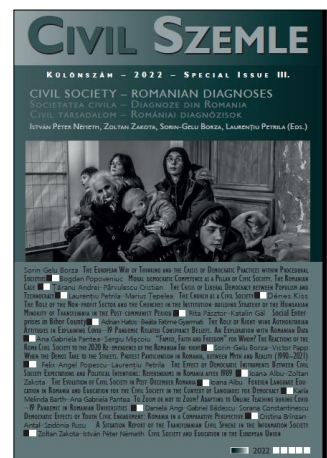
In the article of Sorin-Gelu Borza, entitled “The European way of thinking and the crisis of democratic practices within procedural societies”, the author wanders “How does the <<European way of thinking>>influence democratic practices?”. The analysis of history is dominated by the sense of good and European values in the European way of thinking. Modern rationalism distance itself from the mythologies of the Antiquity world.

In Europe, asserts Sorin Borza (Borza, 2022:6) the reinterpretation of history and of social becoming follows a “rationalist scenario” and “scientific objectivity”. Political modernity is linked and influenced by science and scientific prestige.

Concerning the legitimacy of political power, the author Sorin-Gelu Borza asserts: “The legitimacy of the political act in modern societies is grounded on a public consensus on an interpretation of everyday life. Any governance bases its authority on a grand recit (a great story) that entails an agreement. There is always an elite that creates the condition of putting into circulation a story that it uses to explain public actions” (Borza, 2022:7).

Political leaders, in the same time, speak the “language of the people”, considers the author. (Borza, 2022:7).

The author Sorin Borza points out that the competition in the domain of the philosophy generated certain crises starting to the end of 19th century such as the crisis of European humanity (Edmund Husserl), the crisis of unity of meaning (Jan Patočka) (Borza, 2022:8). Last, but not least, in the opinion of Sorin Borza, “The procedure for election, of political decision-making in democratic societies has always enjoyed the attention of the social sciences”. (Borza, 2022: 9)



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In case of major military crisis, the author observes the limits of the action of civil society asserting that “In practical terms, during the major military-political crises, the means of expression available to public opinion are dramatically limited and this is obvious, the best example thereof being the recent events in Ukraine”. (Borza, 2022: 13) Relatively to the conflict from Ukraine the author considers that these challenges require new formula of actions that are derived from the central set of values that lay the basis of the European Union. (Borza, 2022:14).

Bogdan Popoveniuc, in the article “Moral-democratic competence as a pillar of civic society. In memoriam prof. Georg Lind”, says that in his opinion there are many burdens of democratic legitimacy and one of them is “political consensus” (Borza, 2022: 21). The author also points out the existence of factors that erode the democracy and there are: the wrong doing of corrupted individuals, the incompetence of the bureaucracy of the democratic system, “illiberal governance and legislatures” which undermine democratic governance process. One of the discrepancies of the democratic power, underlined by Bogdan Popoveniuc, is that “Democratic power must be accountable, but it is kept accountable, in practice, only by those who are already in power”. (Popoveniuc, 2022: 21)

Considering the presence of moral values in the political sphere, Bogdan Popoveniuc notices the existence of an “axiological clash” between “democratic advance and resistance of traditional values” (Popoveniuc, 2022: 23).

In the opinion of Max Weber points out the author, reflected in Weber’s book, *The Protestant Ethic and the spirit of Capitalism*”, individuals who are decision-making factors in other professionals spheres (than politics) “are more willing to make, rather than follow, decisions in the public sphere” (Popoveniuc, 2022: 24)

In a state, asserts the author, exists state institutions and “voluntary associations” (“voluntary groups”) who express the will and are an Eurobarometer of the civil society. They are active in domains such as education, healthcare, religion, acting as NGOs, promoting democratic values. There are complementary structures to politics. (Popoveniuc, 2022: 25).

The more democratic society it becomes, the most present are undemocratic forces that undermine the respective society. In liberal democratic order, citizens are entitled to “lawful, social and ethical rights, that are granted by a governing body”.

Last, but not least, the author mentions moral-democratic education that can also be reflected by mass media and in the liberal democratic political discourse. The development of the ability of reasoning for political factors and citizens is important in the development of contemporary democratic society, together with democratic education that is considered by the author as a main pillar of the society. (Popoveniuc, 2022:38)

Andrei Țăranu and Cristian Romulus Pîrvulescu, in the article “The crisis of liberal democracy between populism and technocracy” define populism which developed during the time, mentioning that “Over the centuries, it has taken such forms as the traditional alliance between king, church and city mob”. (Apud Worseley, 1969: 241) The authors assert that including communist system had populist aspects. But they considered that the march of populism started in the years ’80 “but increased after the events from 9/11 2001 as a social reaction in the West against political correctness and multiculturalism” (Țăranu&Pîrvulescu, 2022:44). The economic crises after 2007 generated right wing movements and also determined the death of multiculturalism, is the opinion of the authors. (Țăranu&Pîrvulescu, 2022: 45) After the end of the economic crises, explain the authors, a new trend emerged in the political life and this is illiberalism. The authors consider that the

emergence of search engines such as Facebook can influence consumers' choices and the voters by the information they present.

Other actual trend is that between elites and citizens came up a social distancing while the populist parties increase their pressure.

In the opinion of the authors the populism criticized the voice of genuine elites of a state (political, economic, scientific) and uses popular "social and economic frustration" to win their cause. Moreover, nowadays the impact of populism is very much amplified by the "new media" point out the authors. (Țăranu&Pîrvulescu, 2022:48).

The authors mention "agrarian populism" very encountered in Central and Eastern European countries, an areal were "illiberal democracy" always win in the political life. Such expressions of "Agrarian populism" is the policy of Viktor Orbán in Hungary and the new Romanian party, very extremist AUR (in Romania) p.50. Populism does not unify nations, but divide them, they are pro free-market, but they oppose to globalization. The link between populism and technocracy often invoked can lead to the emergence of illiberal models where the interests of the "mob" are finally undermined.

Laurențiu Petrila și Marius Țepelea in the article, "The Church as a civil society. Introduction and short history", asserts that in the Roman Empire, the Christian believers tried to be model citizens of the Empire. Romanian Church was influenced by "Greek philosophy, Roman logic and ancient Roman citizenship". (Petrila&Țepelea, 2022: 61) The Saviour himself, concluded the authors, honored Roman laws and authorities. The difference between the Christians from Roman Empire and other citizens of Europe was relying in a superiour Christian morality (Petrila&Țepelea, 2022: 62). The idolatry of Christians for the Roman Caesar came as a consequence of a "natural feeling toward a state that ensures peace and prosperity for its citizens" (Petrila&Țepelea, 2022:63) An important place in the Christian religion belonged to the women who "visited the sick, took care of the poor, visited those imprisoned for faith and taking care of orphans" (Petrila&Țepelea, 2022: 63).

However, the authors point out that, along the history, the relation between Church and state was a "complicated one". After the end of the meeting from Milan, the relation Church-King, improved as the king was a supporter of God and Church. There were thinkers like Saint Augustin who were dissapointed by the role of the temporal power (state administration and leadership). The authors wander "is religion a threath to international stability, or can it be a tool for promoting peace?" (Apud Dark 2000: 24) And the answer is that church helped in the consolidation of totalitarian regimes in the name of this tight alliance, or it encouraged democratic movements, in Western Europe, when it was possible.

The authors quote the book of Max Weber, *Protestant Ethics and the spirit of capitalism* which revealed that certain values of protestantism helped to the development of modern economy. Then the authors are focusing on the relationship between religion and politics which influences each other and this aspect is very visible in United States where Christians brought their contribution to political decision making In USA (For instance, the evangelists in United States were active during the Cold War trying to pursue in Soviet Union a politice of acceptance of religios freedom).

The conclusion of the authors is that Church can influence globally the politics and decision-making of the political leaders.

Dénes Kiss in the article "The role of the non-profit sector and the churches in the institution-building strategy of the Hungarian minority of Transylvania in the post-communist period", wants to show in his study "how this institution building process looked like for Hungarians in Romania" (Kiss, 2022: 78). Among the needs of an ethnic minority, the author points out the need for education in the maternal language of the respective community (Kiss,

2022: 78). Other need for the respective communities is to create organizations of their own which to help, for instance to the solving of governance difficulties.

The author asserts basing his study on his bibliography that definitely it exists a minority non-profit sector. The author defines this way this cooperation in the non-profit sector: "The non-profit sectors typical of Western and Southern European countries are called the model of the European-style welfare partnership. In these countries, the non-profit sector is large, dominated by service organizations and operates primarily from public funds" (Kiss, 2022: 80)

In Romania, Hungarians are the most important community and they live in the Western region of the country, Transylvania. In 2011, the Hungarian community summed up 1,2 million inhabitants in 2011. These Hungarian institutions established in Transylvania nowadays are state-funded institutions, militating for the "preservation of cultural identity of the minority, these institutions are largely limited to serving cultural needs of the minority" (Kiss, 2022:83) Hungarians are represented in Romania by Democratic Union of Hungarians from Romania. Romanian and Hungarian state finances these institutions. The author points out the role of the Hungarian Church that is connected to Hungarian population, their members being mostly Hungarians. So Reformed Church and Roman Catholic Church receive great rapport from the Hungarian state. The author concludes that "Minority churches appear as bridges in relation to both states" adding that they play "a mediating role between the minority community and the Hungarian state". (Kiss, 2022: 89)

They wanted to show, in part of conclusion, that thanks from the support of Romanian and Hungarian state "the analyzed minority non-profit sector is characterized by the presence of a significant and diversified level of intermediary organizations". And not at last, the author wanted to show the role played by Hungarian churches in fostering the cooperation of Hungarian community with the Romanian state.

Rita Pásztor and Katalin Gil in the article "Social Enterprises in Bihor County" refer to the concept of social economy and to the concept of social enterprise. The concept of social economy was developed after the publication in 1994 of European Commission White Paper focusing on growth, competitiveness and employment. In the context of social economy, explains the author, there are developed social entrepreneurs. The authors find a definition for social economy that "can be defined as a totality of organizations that do not pursue a profit but seek to generate social advantages for communities or disadvantaged people" (p.98)

In Romania, in the opinion of the authors, social economy became present in strategic papers and sources of funding, asserts the authors, by EU funds provided by European Social Fund and Operational Programme for Human Capital between 2007-2013.

The research provided by the author is going to "explore the social reality of social entrepreneurs in Bihor County, to get an insight into their operation, typology as well as into their social impact". In Bihor County there are a lot of people with Higher Education Diplomas and the unemployment rate is insignificant. According to the data provided by Bihor County Employment Agency, there are 38 social entrepreneurs existent in Bihor County in October 2021.

The conclusion of the author is that the sector of social entrepreneurs is growing and developing in Bihor County. Many of such entrepreneurs focusing to help the disabled Romani community.

Adrian Hatos și Béata Fatime Gyarmati, in the article "The role of right-wing authoritarian attitudes in explaining Covid-19 pandemic related conspiracy beliefs. An exploration with Romanian Data", assert that the pandemic of Covid 19 lasts in Romania

since February 26, 2020 when it was registered the first case of infection. The authors assert that the number of cases of Covid-19 increased up to 100 until March 14, 2020. During the 2020 year, the number of cases of Covid-19 increased and also the restrictions and the necessity of the population to isolate as much as possible.

The perception of the population relating the pandemy of Covid 19 was more moderate than the impact of the news regarding the evolution of the pandemy of Covid 19: “According to a survey made in the first part of May 2020, almost two thirds of Romanians believed that the government and the Romanian media were exaggerating the dangers of the current pandemic. (Hatos&Gyarmati, 2022:122-123).

In the opinion of the authors regarding the subject of Covid 19, this was a subject that generated conspiracy theory beliefs. A few blamed Americans for the emergence of this pandemy, is the opinion of the authors.

Usually people who sustained such theories had a lower level of education, is the opinion of the authors. Also these theories are an expression of the stress generated by a society in crisis dominated by “uncertainty” and “lack of control” (Hatos&Gyarmati, 2022:125). This theory of international conspiracy in the issue of pandemy, false theory, offers to the stressed population the illusion of “controll”. The authors consider that extreme right political ideologies tend, usually to believe in conspiracy theories (Hatos&Gyarmati, 2022: 127).

The parties who monitored the crisis of Covid-19 in Romania was the Liberal Party helped by Save Romania Union and the opposition was constituted by Social Democratic Party.

The authors based their research on an online survey focusing on 623 Romanian adults having more than 18 years old. The hypothesis was confirmed by the members of the survey and the conclusion is that right wing parties attract conspiracy theories. There was a political polarization regarding the issue of Covid 19, but while the parties in the government do not usually adopt the conspirative theories in explaining the pandemic situation, the voters especially of the opposition parties often make reference to these theories. (Hatos&Gyarmati, 2022: 134)

Ana Gabriela Pantea and Sergiu Mişcoiu publish the article “Family, faith and freedom” for whom? The reactions of the Roma Civil Society to the 2020 re-emergence of the Romanian far-right”, an article that deals with “the perception of Roma activists of the emergence of the newly established Romanian right wing populist party –The Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR)”. (Pantea&Mişcoiu, 2022:147). This Alliance for the Union of Romanians had a nationalistic discourse displaying negative feelings towards ethnic minorities in Romania. (*Ibidem.*)

The authors remark the ascension of the populist forces (parties) in Europe, dissenting from the voice of ellites, their ideology “having the core principle that politics should be about acting in concordance with popular sovereignty” (Pantea&Mişcoiu, 2022: 148) Authors consider that populism “is xenophobic, politically naive and stubborn” and “suspicious” to democratic governance. (Pantea&Mişcoiu, 2022: 149)

Then the authors make the portrait of AUR (The Alliance for the Union of Romanians) that is an expression of “populism” and “nationalism”, having at its base conservative Orthodox ideologies. The author mention that the present article “deals exclusively with the perception of Roma civil society and discusses views from the Roma nongovernmental organizations regarding the AUR, without considering other vectors of the society, for example the Roma elite (a relativistic concept in the Romanian Roma

context) or political parties themselves (in 2021 a Romani party with self-proclaimed representation claim does not exist, and the former ones lost their legitimacy)” (Pantea&

Mișcoiu, 2022: 152). For Roma community in the context of economic crises and turbulent political life, the success of AUR in the elections of the Romanian Parliament from 2020 represented the advances of denial of the pluralism and of the inequality in inclusion politics is the opinion of the authors.

Roma population, in the opinion of the authors, see AUR as promoting the legacy of Fascist movement in Europe and they see AUR as a danger for the development of the relations between the Roma community and the majority of Romanians.

Sorin-Gelu Borza and Victor Papp in the article “When the demos take to the streets. Protest participation in Romania, between myth and reality (1990-2021)” analyze in their paper the demos participation in post-communist Romania as “Golania” and “mineriadele” from 1990-1991, “university square 2012”, “Post-Colectiv Political Revolution” from 2015, # “Rezist phenomenon” (2017-2019) and “Protest of Free Romanians” during the Covid pandemy. Understanding the public diplomacy manifested on the streets we can understand how it developed democracy in Romania, consider the authors. (Borza&Papp, 2022: 166)

The authors Borza and Papp points out the role of political myths in these manifestations development. These myths play a “mobilizing” and “performative” effect upon civic manifestations (Borza&Papp, 2022: 170) and they manifest in an “ideological context” (Ibidem.) Romanian society was influenced by “Manichaeic framework”, based on opposition between “good” and “bad”.

The authors believe that it was a relation of congruence between the “radical character” of the Revolution and post-communist political life (p.171.) It was a democracy born from violence, is the author’s opinion. It exists a cleavage between political forces appeared on political scene (“communism/anti-communism”). It started a process of an “original democracy” that was based on “neo-communists” in the first years of the Romanian transition period.

National Salvation Front –the main leading party from Romania undertook the role of “saviour” of Romanians, while PNȚCD and PNL, the former historical parties were perceived as enemies of the people. The episode with “Valea Jiului Miners” that came to vandalize the University Square is revealed by the authors and they were welcomed by president Ion Iliescu and Petre Roman in Bucharest. The episode “2012 –University Square Relouded” is surprised by the authors, these protests emerging in the context of global economic crises reverberations in Romania. Prime minister Boc was replaced after these manifestations with Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, but not for long time. In 2012 president Băsescu knew a spectacular revival, say the authors, and save the country from economic collapse.

Another event broght forward by the authors was “Colective 2015” or the political revolution as a protest for the death of young people in the tragedy of Club Colectiv.

And last, but not least, the events from “Rezist (2017-2019)” against the social-democrats who won the elections a year before, in 2016. In 2019, PSD lost the power.

The manifestations during the pandemy of Covid 19 started from the frustrations of the Romanian population in front of the “health crisis”, believing many in the theory of international conspiracy revealed by the pandemic crisis. The issue of vaccination and the introduction of green certificates generated some people’s discontent.

Felix Angel Popescu and Laurențiu Petrila in the paper “The effect of democratic instruments between civil society expectations and political intentions: Referendums in Romania after 1989” focus on two cases of referendum in Romania in the post-1989 period:

1. Referendum to amend Article 48 of the Romanian Constitution 2018 and referendum on justice 2019. The first referendum intended to replace the phrase “between spouses” with the more restrictive term “Between a man and a woman” putting the base of a fundamental right that a man and a woman could marry and begin a family life.

On May 26, 2019 it took place a referendum on justice. The topic of referendum was “banning amnesty and pardon for corruption offenses and banning of government from adopting emergency ordinances in the field of crimes, punishment and the organization of the judiciary, linked to the right of other constitutional authorities to report directly to the Romanian Constitutional Court on ordinances” (Popescu&Petrila, 2022: 200) Referendums in Romania, conclude the authors, by the massive absenteeism to vote could represent an “anti-system movement”.

Ioana Albu and Zoltan Zakota in the article “The evolution of civil society in post-December Romania” make the portrait of post- 1989 transition years mentioning the Revolution of 1989 that started in Timișoara on December 16 and spread in the whole country. In what concerns the development of civil society, it was born after Romanian Revolution. (Albu&Zakota, 2022: 207) Later on it was pursued a governance of “human-faced communism” instead of a democracy derived from the pattern of Western Europe. But civil society in Romania did not develop properly and “civil society organizations were forced to change or adjust, in turn, their purpose, objectives, activities and discourse” (p.208) The authors approaches the issue of the Constitution adopted in 21 November, 1991 in the context when the communist constitution had to be abolished. The new adopted constitution stipulated freedoms such as “the freedom of the individual, the freedom of assembly and association, the freedom of the press, the inviolability of the home and of property, the right to vote” (Albu&Zakota, 2022: 208). By the Law no. 21 of February 6, 1994, it was created the possibility that the civil society institution to emerge, the possibility to be created “non-profit and non-patrimonial associations and foundations”.

The transition period that followed after the Romanian Revolution of 1989 was dominated by a lot of problems. In the same time, Romanian society tried to implement models of development derived from the Western societies. Democratic system in Romania developed hand in hand with the Western societies: “Non-profit organizations reflect society and its degree of democratization. They represent the interest of its own members and of the community in which it operates and in some cases of the financiers it has. In the post-December history of Romania, there have been numerous cases in which civil society organizations have carried out partisan activities in the service of politicians or political parties” (Albu&Zakota, 2022: 215).

Ioana Albu in the article “Foreign language education in Romania and education for the civil society in the context of languages for democracy” asserts that access to foreign languages for children and adults is a priority of European Cultural Convention (Albu, 2022: 219). It was signed in 1954 and since then it implements the teaching and learning of foreign languages in Europe.

Slowly, plurilingualism gained more and more terrain and it was implemented through different projects on the territory of European Union as Europe was perceived as a “multilingual continent” (Albu, 2022: 220). Thus “The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” was disseminated widely through Europe, outreaching its borders. It was designed to provide a transparent and comprehensive basis for the development of languages syllabuses and curricula, teaching and learning materials and assessment of foreign language proficiency”. (Albu, 2022: 221). This happened in the context when a good command of languages was essential in the European states. The multiethnic

European environment and state impose the necessity to implement the idea of “multicultural education” that facilitates the integration of minority groups on the territory of European Union. (Albu, 2022: 225) Knowledge is approached from an intercultural perspective in multicultural education and multilingualistic education.

Last, but not least, the author emphasizes how important is in the Romanian society the mastering of foreign languages. It can mean the access to a better workplace.

Last but not least, the author quotes the European Commissioner Verhofstadt to emphasize “the need to preserve diversity and multilingualism as a way of promoting a truly Europe of citizens” (Albu, 2022: 227).

Other interesting articles belong to Karla Melinda Barth and Ana Gabriela Pantea on the topic of online teaching in Romanian universities during the pandemic of Covid-19, Daniela Angi, Gabriel Bădescu and Sorana Constantinescu on the topic of youth civil engagement in Romania from a comparative perspective, Cristina Brânzan and Antal Szidónia Rusu on the status of information society in the Transylvanian civil sphere and Zoltan Zakota and István Péter Németh regarding the situation of civil society education in EU. These papers approach subjects very in vogue in the European Union political and cultural landscape focusing mainly on the idea of civil society, the finality of Romanian transition to the world of European values, education in contemporary Romania, the pandemic and its impact on education and daily lives of Romanians, the way to democratic values in a society (Romanian) affected by the economic crisis, the importance of multilingualism on the territory of EU and in Romania. They offer us a broader perspective on the events that happened in Romania in the last years and in spite of difficulties we notice a continuous trend of development of the civil society and political environment in our try to adjust to European values and standards.

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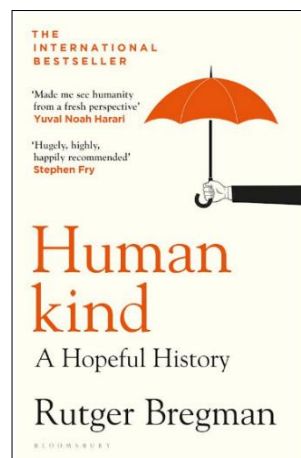
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ON HUMANKIND. A HOPEFUL HISTORY

*Michelle NICA**

Book review of Rutger Bregman, *Humankind. A Hopeful History*, London, England: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021 ISBN 9781408898956

Bregman is a Dutch historian and thinker, journalist and author, whose rather idealistic approach towards topics such as politics, welfare or globalization, is a nudge for the reader to revitalize their cynical views on traditional paradigms and look at them from a more progressive angle. He embarks on a multidisciplinary journey to investigate one of the most fundamental and divisive poles in social sciences: basic human nature. On the one hand, most famously represented by Thomas Hobbes' depiction of a brute, natural man, who needs civilization as a firm and controlling hand, on the other, represented by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's stance, that in fact it is exactly civilization that corrupted and ruined humanity's fair side. He creates a captivating argument for us to rethink the very premises that our current life was built on.



The assumption of the book is that humans indeed are rather decent beings by nature, but when projecting a negative perspective on human nature, it is exactly what gets reflected back. Bregman brings numerous arguments to back up his premise, such as evidence of evolutionary processes which led to the apparition of the homo sapiens, based on innate cooperation and collectiveness, putting a great accent on not necessarily the survival of the fittest, but also of the nicest “homo puppy”, as he puts it. He brings forth archeological evidence suggesting peaceful cooperation from pre-agrarian times, pointing at large scale collaboration between populations, like the case of Turkey's Göbekli Tepe temple, rather than proof of warfare and slaughter between brutes. He also uses as evidence studies based on the most unbiased humans to find today (infants and toddlers) who show an innate favoring towards fairness and cooperation, but he also reasons through the cases of some contemporary hunter-gatherer populations. Then brings forth a real-life case of Tongan children involved in a shipwreck in the Pacific, who acted anything but the way the famous and grim novel, Lord of the Flies depicts unattended, rudimentary humans would.

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While building a case for decency in humans, he also tries himself at treating the problem of the Holocaust. He points out solidarity between people hit hard during the war, who instead of turning into individualistic brutes, showed great sense of cooperation. Bregman also puts forth cases of simple soldiers on the front who were driven by camaraderie rather than extremist ideology and recurrently refused to directly aim at the enemy. The case of Nazi leaders is more difficult to tackle. He notes that distancing oneself, be it physical or psychological, from the other might be the answer. According to him, paradoxically, the same characteristics that are able to make humans friendly “homo puppies” is also what fuels the dark side which can create an “us” and “others” kind of approach, leading to cruelty and destruction.

Another section of the book faces faulty scientific findings and history, which have become some of the most fundamental tools in “veneer” theory backing up humans’ brutal nature lightly covered by a layer of civilization. The case of the Easter Island’s population and its presumed self-made cannibalistic extinction is actually more likely to be explained by the appearance of explorers and colonialists. A chapter on the Stanford prison experiment reveals that the guards’ cruelty to the prisoners was not actually a natural response to holding absolute power but rather something coached into them by those conducting the research. Moreover, bad science prevails, he argues, because of our quick and cynical tendency to cling to evidence backing up our innate brutality, while dismissing evidence that our actual natural response is much friendlier.

Another example is that of some Norwegian maximum-security prisons, where inmates roam freely, maintain the buildings, pursue hobbies, grow their food and actually eat meals with guards, who do not carry weapons. Here, recidivism is cut in half in comparison to traditional facilities and inmates are prepared to eventually return and get integrated into everyday life. The actually reasonable thing he points out to do is not denying the crime and the bad, but shifting the focus from it to finding a viable solution for the future and start working towards that. He challenges the traditional perspective, suggesting that by expecting better we actually get better.

According to him, Hobbes’ grim view on humanity seems to be winning the argument in the large, exactly because key institutions and mechanisms have been constructed with negative assumptions regarding human nature. Still, Stanley Milgram’s obedience experiments make place for human evil in Bregman’s perspective, but mostly as he finds, because of a methodological flaw of the researchers. Explained by him as our social instinct to conform, not necessarily following the good but rather the herd.

Bregman brings an exciting and challenging argument, relevant in and for social sciences, in a way which does not inspire the reader towards dichotomizing but rather towards looking at the world and what is happening in it, through different lens. Moreover, by not making a case to dismiss today’s reality and way of working, he stimulates the reader to embark on a moral journey through civilization itself, which according to Rousseau was the destructive element of our innate goodness. Instead of tearing down everything that it has brought with itself, learn ways to

navigate with it towards reviving and furthering human decency, cooperation, collectiveness.

An exciting inquiry and tonic for the idealist hiding in us, there are numerous questions that arise during this lecture. Bregman's message is a positive and moral one and stimulates the need to seek this decency in a whole wide range of dimensions surpassing our species, such as the environment and climate change, especially problems triggered and nourished by a "civilized" humanity. Perhaps, the direction towards a solution lies somewhere and somehow, like his idea of homo puppy, in the problem itself, which is more complex and intertwined.

In spite of some lacks and oversimplifications, this book brings its contributions as an element of inspiration and nudge towards having the courage to see and understand humanity in a less cynical, more flexible and constructive way. Perhaps after all, with or without civilization to nourish or hinder our decency, we are the designers of our nature now and we have a real opportunity to shape it into a more moral and sustainable concept and reality.

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