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CLUSTERING FOR KNOWLEDGE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH-WESTERN ROMANIA

Mircea T. Maniu*

Abstract

This research starts from the analysis of Romania's regional development policy over the last few years, while introducing the argument of creating poles of growth, genuine innovative clusters, according to schemes that have been validated within the European Union. The research horizon is comprised within the realities noticed in the North-Western Region of Development, and the potential case of good practices identified in this regard is that of the Cluj Metropolitan Area, which reunites production and conception factors which are necessary for a sustainable and durable development, indicative of Romania.

Keywords: economic clusters, regional development, governance, innovation, the North-Western Region of Development, Cluj Metropolitan Area

Foreword

Romania's regional policy has been described in many sources as a classical exogenous effect of "Europeanization"¹ and it should be mentioned that actually EU initiated the regional approach in the early 90s, having in mind beyond all, the allocation of pre-accession funds, which

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¹ Daniel Dăianu, *Incotro se îndreaptă țările postcomuniste?*, Iasi: Polirom, 2000.

reverberated positively in the Romanian legislators' ears. Following the preliminary results, a *Green Card* concerning regional development and the *Law of Regional Development* (151/1998 – modified in 2004) were passed. Almost instantly, without any sort of real background investigation or consultation with local authorities, not to mention civil society, Romania was “split” into 8 development regions (DR). Though the law provides that existing counties were supposed to join a development region on a volunteer basis, nothing of the kind happened. The main point of the Government was to create a territorial frame of NUTS II type in Romania, implicitly designed in order to absorb EU money.

The scheme was drawing much from the 1976 *National Territorial Plan*, which imposed a development model having as its main target the diminishing of differences between counties and historical provinces (macro-regions). But the result, as assessed 20 years later, consistent with the communist obsession with industrialization, was that all the macro-regions developed heavy industries, obviously redundant, and inter-regional linking infrastructure was the least priority, and significant developmental discrepancies were still to be observed.² Not to mention that the 1968 administrative grid, still in place today, was again made operational for the purpose of undertaking the tasks of “regionalization EU style”. No wonder that today (2011) re-designing the administrative grid makes sense, though some out-of-place patterns (ethnic, medieval – voivodships revival, the “communist epoch regions”) were suggested as better options than the present-day framework.

Romania's present-day 8 DRs are more or less equal in terms of area and population, but lacking “coherence” from many other perspectives. Some of the country's DRs consist of counties which are traditional “competitors” over local aggregated markets, such as Arad and Timiș, Bacău and Iași, or Brăila and Galați, therefore their joint participation, as imposed by the Government, could easily lead to a lack of effectiveness. The typical *stop and go* policy adopted by Romania during the 90s along with other exogenous factors (corruption, misallocation, etc.)

² W. Patterson, *Rebuilding Romania, Energy, Efficiency and the Economics of Transition*, London: Earthscan, 1994.

made territorial discrepancies even more profound during transition than during communism. At this precise moment EU policies of the domain had to be implemented, so there is not much to comment about the design “lack” of other non-economic features that shape the “regional/provincial identity” and implicitly contribute to the process of either positive or negative branding the aggregated output of that specific region.

While more and more EU regions perceive the goal of adopting and adapting innovative procedures, of both content and image (PR) consistency, on the road to sustainable growth, it is still a far cry to say that such a perspective appears as valid within the Romanian current environment. In our opinion this situation could be attributed to a set of two factors: the administrative deadlock – DRs have no relevant administrative powers whatsoever and on the other hand to the fact that the innovative approach, consisting of specific investments (technology parks) modern infrastructure (highways, interlinked regional airports, dedicated IT networks, etc.) lag much behind. But as member states are imperatively requested to complete and launch the *ESFRI Roadmap Research Infrastructure* by 2015³, as main track for in the Innovation Union as a tool of Knowledge Society would be to generate dedicated regional policies. In this paper we forward the idea that innovative, “naturally” induced clusters, as opposed to common clusters, the “public” ones⁴, can better sustain growth.

What kind of clusters would fit in Romania?

Traditionally the territorial development of the various geographic areas (historical provinces/macro-regions) of Romania has been conducted through the so called factorial analysis. Interpreting the factors we can easily explain the various correlations of demographic, social, business, infrastructural, etc. - features that illustrate the process of economic growth

³ *European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures –ESFRI (2010) Strategy Report on Research Infrastructure – Roadmap 2010*, available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/pdf/esfri-strategy_report_and_roadmap.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none], 15 March 2012.

⁴ Mircea Maniu, *Regionalizare și inovare. Dezvoltare regională prin contribuția firmelor inovative*, Cluj-Napoca: EFES, 2009, pp. 54 – 56.

and development. But it should be observed that such a method is basically a classical one, more appropriate for a lesser opened economy. Once an economy becomes fully open towards larger frameworks, up to the one of the world level, the classical view becomes somehow obsolete, building primarily on factor endowment and predicting a trading model based on features extracted from a *Heckscher-Ohlin-Samuelson* factorial case. Clustering means more than analyzing the factors and business environment, it has to do with infrastructure, security, social life and overall living standards (measured through the *Human Development Index*) that act as country/region's attractiveness factors and are driving forces for investments and qualified labor migration towards that specific area.

As the political deciding factors in Europe and the more and more numerous innovation stakeholders become aware of the benefits of increased competitiveness of European regions from the viewpoint of the clustered development, various regional, national and European frameworks of the kind are put in place.⁵ Clusters, as seen here, are territorial-geographic concentrations of communities, firms, often SMEs, NGOs, etc. - which are interlinked and often share a pool of labor, business infrastructure (incubators) accounting and financial services, public and private services in general. But they cannot function unless a triad of micro, intermediate (*meso*) and macro levels of policies is effectively in place for that purpose.⁶ These policies could either bridge the gap between "true knowledge clusters" promoting innovation and clusters that mainly support competency to be used in a "manufacturing style" knowledge, or enlarge it, therefore pointing to the difference between strategic oriented clusters and traditional ones.

While clustering exclusively from an administrative standpoint implies lots and lots of political bargaining (re-tracking the limits of counties, re-considering the administrative status of various communities)

⁵ EC (2010) *Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020*, available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/smart_growth/com2010_553_en.pdf], 15 March 2012.

⁶ B. Martins-Rodriguez, J.M. Viedma-Marti, „The region's intellectual capital Benchmarking system: enabling economic growth through evaluation”, in *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 10, No. 5, 2006.

painful and time consuming negotiations, clustering several businesses following a process of social networking and therefore giving territorial consistency to a certain output, would fare much easier, as observed elsewhere.⁷ The easiest diffusion of knowledge, as transfer of good practices and success stories, but also as a consequence of clustering production units (mostly SMEs) with various layers of research units and higher education institutions, as well as the outflow of technical and/or managerial solutions cannot happen but in a larger territorial framework.⁸ There is a reasonable doubt that without larger framework institutional clustering, innovative companies would share their assets with other potential competitors and allow diffusion of technology or *know how* at any scale. Actually this type of association acts as a “risk minimizing tool” for the more and more interlinked industries that could end as clusters. It guarantees to a much larger degree than free market can do, that in a certain area all the productive factors are available in place, but also the necessary infrastructure and supra-structural regulations and institutions, that only the public layer of governance can offer.

We believe that a region has the potential to eliminate much of the intermediate levels of decision and therefore enable a more efficient development of all social and economic processes that occur with a precise territorial determination. The region induces that sort of multilayered cohesion (historic links that breed social identity on the one hand, economic links that forge peculiar interests on the other hand) that was exposed by the *social network analysis* – SNA.⁹ This sort of approach allows us to identify and concentrate our cluster research on the so called *alpha-clusters*¹⁰, industrial type of structures that are characterized by innovation above all (in other sources: *proto-clusters*; *emerging clusters*). These clusters would be far away from the traditional outcome of the urbanization

⁷ OECD, *Boosting Innovation: the Cluster Approach*, OECD Paris, 1999.

⁸ D. Paslaru, *Identificare clusterelor emergente în România*, București, GEA, 2006, available at [<http://www.gea.org.ro/documente/ro/clustere/identificareclusteredragospislaru.pdf>], 15 March 2012.

⁹ N. Reid, B. W. Smith, M. C. Carroll, “Cluster Regions – a Social Network Perspective”, in *Economic Development Quarterly*, SAGE, No. 4, 2008.

¹⁰ J. Schoales, “Alpha Clusters: Creative Innovation in Local Economies”, in *Economic Development Quarterly*, SAGE, No. 20, 2006.

process, agglomerations of factors entirely designed for the reduction of the transactions' costs. Alpha clusters offer "prestige", they provide the "feeling of belonging" to an elitist entity able to attract the best resources of a certain society, not only through higher incomes of all sorts, but through overall quality of life.¹¹ There are plenty of empirical arguments to assess that a pilot program of the kind could work for the NWDR of Romania.

Clustering in North-Western Development Region

NWDR is administratively gathering Cluj county, historically speaking the social-cultural capital city of Transylvania, and another 5 counties (Bistrita, Salaj, Maramures, Satu Mare and Bihor) of Greater Transylvania (including the historical provinces of Crisana and Maramures, as well as parts of Banat). It was and it is considered to be one of the most developed regions, owing that both to tradition and to the more innovative approaches that were quite common in the area, in a comparative, nationwide assessment. The essence of the regional approach in NWDR since the early 90s was embedded in the main idea to increase the attractiveness of the whole region and provide a reasonable ground for foreign investments. The region remains highly polarized in terms of GDP and income/capita and though several regional poles for economic development (Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Baia Mare and to a lesser extent Satu Mare and Bistrita) proved potential, the dissemination effect was fatally jeopardized by the centralized administrative framework. This leads to the interrogation about the effectiveness of the process, especially due to the fact that during the years of boom (2004-2008) NWDR proved to be a territory attracting many businesses, including high tech industries as well as various services de-located from abroad by multinational corporations.

Actually the demand for effectiveness pushes towards a different approach, implying "symbolic capitalization of the centre as opposed to the periphery" and "a zonal hierarchy computed in respect with the distance to the centre"¹² that allows to identify the morphology of that economic space, the status of its inhabitants and meanwhile generates a specific *centripetal dynamic* that generates a peculiar favorable attitude towards the centre. The

¹¹ J.M. Simmie, J. Sennet, "Innovative clusters: global or local linkages?", in *National Institute Economic Review*, 170, 1999, pp. 87-98.

¹² Casteigts, 1999.

very core of the cluster becomes an identifier of the people and output, just as the *proto urban planners* of the *Middle Ages* balanced very well the relationship between centre and periphery, by enhancing the role of the main square. Again Schoales¹³ underlines in this work the so called *location share differential*, practically imposing to regions to be different and get more different as benchmarked to a national or international entity. Belonging to the centre motivates (at least virtually) people, organizations, businesses, to perform better and to sustain a certain status. And the most pertinent example we can bring to surface would be the obvious *alpha cluster* of the region, the *Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA)*.

Initiated right after EU accession in 2007, but at the height of the economic boom in Romania, CMA would be an area of about 1500 square kilometers, about 450.000 inhabitants of Cluj and other 16 relatively small neighboring communities, having a multitude of economic branches and relevant production density, reasonable well developed infrastructure, educated workforce, competitive RD facilities, decent educational and health services and a pleasant environment.¹⁴ The project got somehow frozen in 2009, when the crisis hit, but not before generating lots of comments and *PEST* and *SWOT* type of analytical interpretations and even some informal follow-ups. No strategic planning of the town and area occurred since that moment without having at least some sort of CMA input. Even more, the identified development poles, other than CMA, started to think and act in a more comprehensive manner, beyond the formal *Regional Operational Plan* that would be the main channel of fund absorption, managed by the *Regional Development Agency (RDA)* of NWDR.

The present day outlook gives us reasonable grounds to assess that clustering for development, as expected in NWDR would occur along with a process of adopting more and more innovative paths. While the exogenous (read global) factors could play a larger role than domestic, governmental policies of the kind. But for the Romanian situation that would lead to the complete re-interpretation of the administrative

¹³ J. Schoales, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Primăria Cluj-Napoca (2009), *Pentru o dezvoltare durabila:viziunea, prioritățile strategice și industriile motoare ale ZMC; Polul de crestere Cluj-Napoca – Zona Metropolitană Cluj*, available at: [<http://primariacj.ro/docs/propiecte%20dezbateri/zona%20metropolitana/PIDU.pdf>], 15 March 2012.

“decision taking” levels. Just as the Romanian, economy is “peripheral” within the macro-frame of the EU in terms of a quantitative approach, full integration cannot but underline a scale of becoming more peripheral, or on the contrary, of getting beyond this situation. It is hard to assess at this stage if “de-periphery-zation” could be accomplished at regional level, or if the central government (the Romanian “French” type of governmental centralization being a relevant example in this respect) would accept to loosen the grip in this respect. That would imply approving a comprehensive de-centralization of the decision through the creation of regional fully empowered decision bodies, but pessimists should acknowledge that in a rather comparable situation, more than a decade ago, Poland went ahead on this path.

Conclusions

Present day sustainable development, in Romania or else, implies a complete review of the classical *growth stages* pointing to growth in cycles that are controllable due to the contemporary econometric instruments that are nowadays available to legislators. The example of the recent world crisis, and especially of its capacity to disseminate worldwide, brings under the scrutiny “the capacity to innovate” both in terms of technology and institutional forms of organizing the business world. Clusters, such as the one we have in mind – CMA, would offer, bluntly speaking a true “simplification” of the rather *fuzzy* and politically biased administrative pattern in place and would create the premises for a better quality of life in the region, thus enhancing the attractiveness of the area and generating a virtuous circle of development. Probably the triggering mechanism is located today in the arsenal of the central government, more than in the *lobby* that civil society could make in this respect, thus making the issue a matter of political will.

It is a fact that the interpretation of regional development occurs all across EU sometimes consonant and sometimes in spite of the typical European social and cultural diversity. Due to the long-term implications of this phenomenon, the political process that gives birth to new forms of governance could get more stage lights than expected. After all, pre-industrial Europe existed more or less in a regional shape and in many

parts (such as South-Eastern Europe) even in sub-regional forms¹⁵ and this situation was significantly encapsulated in the national patterns that followed during the industrial age. But present day “regionalization” appears to be generated firsthand exogenously, while the historical pattern is clearly endogenous. There are obvious new spatial dimensions of development in present day Europe, especially when we tackle the issue from the perspective of sustainability. This leads to the preliminary conclusion that a new type of scaling appears to be necessary for further effective developments. According to the principles, policies and general attitude, as well as many empirical findings, we build upon in this paper, we will state that clustered regional evolution could and would become an effective engine for propelling Romania through the XXIst century.

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FEDERALISM AND REGIONALISM IN ROMANIAN POLITICAL THINKING IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Bogdan Dumitru*

Abstract

After the 1918 Unification, one of the most widely debated problems of the interwar period was the administrative organisation of the Romanian state. The great complexity of the new state, composed of provinces with a different political, social, cultural, and economic background, provided the fertile ground for this debate. The setting up of a provincial level of administration and government was the most frequently discussed element of the administrative organisation of the state. This paper aims to analyse some of the most relevant projects of federal and regional organisation of the interwar period and to identify the main ideological trends regarding the federal and regional organisation of the Romanian state.

Key words: federalism, regionalism, regionalisation, decentralisation, unitary state

The achievement of a uniform administrative organisation throughout the territory of the Romanian state was a particularly important theme for debate in the period following the Unification of 1918, which mobilised a large part of Romanian intellectual and political elites. In order to find a viable solution which should achieve consensus amongst the

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parties involved in the debate, the political class needed to overcome a series of major obstacles, since in the area of public administration, legal provisions were conflicting. The highest stake was the establishment of an administrative system that would ensure local administrative autonomy, a problem which placed face to face the centralising regime of the Old Kingdom and the incomparably more decentralised regime of local public administration in the new provinces.

Within this process, the debate concerning the creation of a provincial/regional level in organising the state's administration was a constant element during the interwar period. The solutions offered in this respect ranged from a minimal regional administrative organisation or merely an administrative de-concentration based on regions to a federal organisation of the state.

Projects of federal organisation of the state in the interwar period

Georghe Grigorovici

Amid the conferences held by the Romanian Social Institute on the subject of adopting the new Constitution, Georghe Grigorovici, a social-democrat from Bucovina, pleads in favour of one of the most unusual forms of political-administrative organisation at the time. Although isolated within the context of doctrine tendencies during that period of time and without mentioning the technical details of the future state organisation, the proposal of establishing the state according to federative bases, upheld by Grigorovici, deserves great attention.

Grigorovici, as a participant in the political life of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy¹, was familiar with federalist ideas. In the Habsburg monarchy, reform projects of the Empire on federalist grounds were upheld by the heir to the throne himself, Franz Ferdinand, who found such collaborators as Romanians Aurel C. Popovici and Al. Vaida-Voevod. The federalist ideas of the heir to the throne gathered support within

¹ Petru Rușșindilar, *George Grigorovici și social-democrația în Bucovina*, Bucharest: Edition of the Foundation „Constantin-Titel Petrescu”, 1998, pp. 11-15. Henceforth, Rușșindilar, *George Grigorovici*.

contemporary political circles, and the Austrian Social-Democratic Party mentioned in its programme, as a fundamental point, ever since 1899, the transformation of Austria-Hungary into a federal state, relying on the respect for the ethnic identity of all nationalities.

Gheorghe Grigorovici, as the representative of the Romanian social-democrats from Bucovina in the Austrian Parliament, adopted his party's line, by asking for the federalisation of the Empire from the tribune of Parliament, through press articles or conferences.²

The author's analysis starts from the need to elaborate a new Constitution, following two extremely important events for the future of Romania: on the one hand, the agrarian reform and the appropriation of peasants, and on the other hand, the unification of the three provinces with the Old Kingdom.

According to Grigorovici, before proposing any form of organisation for the new state, two important elements needed to be taken into account: firstly, the fact that the new provinces were unified "willingly" with the Kingdom of Romania and secondly, that each province had had its own constitutional traditions prior to unification.³

The politician from Bucovina pleads in favour of accepting the birth of a new state after the Unification on 1918, profoundly different from an extended Old Kingdom. The post-war Constitution would thus have to acknowledge a state of affairs, by concluding a pact which would link the different entities, possessing, in the case of the former Austrian provinces, a certain degree of autonomy before the Unification. Grigorovici invokes the precedent of American constitutionalism, which allows for the birth of a new state structure, from the association of a series of states/provinces endowed with sovereignty.⁴

² George Ciorănescu, *România și ideea federalistă*, Bucharest: Encyclopaedical Edition, 1996, pp. 65-69.

³ Gheorghe Grigorovici, „Constituția sovietică și Constituția democratică”, in *Constituția din 1923 în dezbaterile contemporanilor*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1990, pp. 115-116. Henceforth, Grigorovici, „Constituția sovietică”.

⁴ Ioan Stanomir, *Libertate, lege și drept. O istorie a constituționalismului românesc*, Iași: Polirom, 2005, p. 86.

The challenge the Old Kingdom is facing in the attempts to unify with the new provinces and the regional conflicts are due to a misunderstanding of the nature of the 1918 Unification:

We are not facing a conquest of provinces or of an inferior territory by a superior state, hence it is out of the question to transplant there the forms of organisation from the kingdom, as it has fallen behind in administrative issues. [...] The kingdom and politicians from the old kingdom will not understand that we are not in the case of conquered territories.⁵

The expansion of the administrative organisation of the Old Kingdom over the new territories cannot be accepted, as it lacks administrative decentralisation, communal and city autonomy, all activities being coordinated and controlled from the centre. The Old Kingdom needs to organise a regime of administrative decentralisation, but this does not concern the people of Bucovina. They already benefit from the rights that a new law of administrative decentralisation could offer.⁶

The appropriate solution for overcoming this hurdle and for achieving the unity of the new state is seen by Gheorghe Grigorovici as being a political-administrative organisation on federal grounds, as federalism is the only instrument capable of adapting to a reality that the new citizens of the Romanian state perceive differently, compared to the elite of the Old Kingdom:

The case of Greater Romania is very difficult. The situation becomes even harder due to the fact that the kingdom and politicians from the Old Kingdom do not want to understand that we are not in the case of a conquered, harmless province, but we have the same case North America did, when states having a traditional constitution, with rights that were earned and with not merely a codified constitution, but one that applies genuinely in their social and political life as well, wish to unify. What happens in this case? Then, a special form of state is needed, the federative one, which is the most democratic form that can be conceived, as the federative form is the basis of the most powerful states from the

⁵ Grigorovici, *Constituția sovietică*, pp. 116-117.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 117.

point of view of war combat, as far as the army is concerned, and from the national, cultural and even national unitary state points of view.⁷

He equally accuses, along with other authors of that era, the ineffective manner of managing fiscal policies at the level of the Old Kingdom, namely the fact that the taxes levied by the central government are not subsequently found within the benefits of the community.⁸

Grigorovici perceives very thoroughly the attempts to organise the administration of centralist nature, designed by the centre: "What drives us, what makes us start the fight against any current of centralisation, is the tendency of slavery, springing from old Romania".⁹

Romul Boilă

Romul Boilă, through a study elaborated in 1931, entitled *Study on the reorganisation of the unified Romanian state*, furthers the federalist reflexion from Romanian political thinking in the interwar period. The reason that determined him to elaborate this study is the author's conviction according to which the constitution of the Romanian state, one with centralist tendencies, is inadequate to the conditions and characteristics specific to the Romanian society.¹⁰

The only solution to the crisis the Romanian state faces is, according to Romul Boilă, a reform of the political-administrative structure of the state, the concrete application of the principle of decentralisation¹¹.

Accusing the falsity of constitutional life, Boilă does not see any way out of this situation in the context of the respective political-administrative system: the political representatives of the nation are accused of irresponsibility, but the latter cannot be sanctioned since parliament is compromised, due to its manner of organisation and functioning.¹²

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

¹⁰ Romul Boilă, *Studiu asupra reorganizării statului român întregit*, Cluj: Tipografia Națională Soc. Anonimă, 1931, p. 3. Henceforth, Boilă, *Studiu asupra reorganizării statului român*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, loc. cit.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 6.

In the author's opinion, the governing system of the state created after the Unification of 1918 caused "utter disappointments and disillusionments", especially amongst Romanians from the unified provinces. Boilă rejects the allegations according to which the latter may have been dominated by a "regionalist mentality":

The adepts of an exclusivist and ferocious regionalism, serving nothing more than their personal and caste interests, are the ones to accuse the people of the united provinces of having a regionalist mentality. But who is it that fails to see the ostracising of our "brothers" from the "liberated" provinces and their exclusion from a natural and righteous validation, which should be meant for all the citizens of our unified State? Hence, in lieu of strengthening the much longed for unity of soul, blood brothers and fighters for the same ideal are suspicious and hostile to one another. The thirteen years that have passed since the unification have failed to attain their desired goal: the achievement of the unity of soul of the Romanian nation.¹³

The jurist from Cluj considers that at the basis of the difficult situation the Romanian state is facing lies the governing system inaugurated after 1918, "a centralising system, which every now and then raises its hideous head, disorganises, destroys everything and halts the accomplishment of this country and the happiness of its sons from the provinces, who have run with so much enthusiasm to the heart of the motherland". The only solution for improving this situation consists of radically altering the organisation of the state.¹⁴

The entire project relies on the idea of "*abandoning the centralist and exclusive idea of governing and law-making, which he regards as the cause for all evil.*" [underl. aut.].¹⁵

Concretely, the project provides for the abolition of the central Parliament and introduction of a *Council of State*, which will fulfil the attributions of the old parliament and would guarantee the unity and indivisibility of the State. This will be the central governing and law-making body of the Romanian state.

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

Central governing and law-making will be reduced in those matters and state issues that are directly connected to the existence, unity and indivisibility of the state. A *central government* will be created, with members recruited from within the *Council of State*, but the administration of common problems, with the exception of certain foreign and army affairs, will fall under the responsibility of the decentralised administration.

Article 6 of the ante-project divides the functions and services of the state between central and provincial institutions.¹⁶ Also, the state institutions are divided into central and provincial institutions. The central institutions are the King, the Council of State and the Central Government, while the provincial ones are the Diet and the Provincial Government. The Council of State and Provincial Diets will together constitute the National Representation.

The greatest innovation of the ante-project is brought by art. 10 and consists of the introduction of the *Diet* and the *Provincial Government*. The Diet will be composed of a single Assembly (unicameral system) and the total number of representatives will not exceed the one previously present in the central Parliament, in both of its Assemblies. Hence, the Romanian state will be divided into the following provinces: *Wallachia* together with Oltenia, Dobrogea, the Danube Delta and Snake Island, *Moldova*, together with Bessarabia and Bucovina, *Transylvania*, together with the Banat, Crişana, Sătmar and Maramureş.

The Provincial Diet has a legislative function and within its area of competence fall all the domains in which the *Council of State* did not reserve its right to law-making. *The Provincial Diet* will be composed of elected deputies and deputies for life.

At a lower level, the provinces are divided from an administrative point of view into *counties*, and the latter further into *commons*, which will not have any other attributions than the “purely administrative ones”. Moreover, counties are given the possibility to form administrative associations, whose organisation will be determined by each province individually.

¹⁶ The following section analyses the text of the ante-project from page 11 to page 62. Between pages 11 and 30 one can find the articles of the ante-project commented and motivated by the author, whilst between pages 31 and 62 there is the text of the ante-project itself.

Article 12 enumerates the domains that will fall into the area of competence of the central government and law-making: foreign affairs, army, railways, post, telegraph and telephone, maritime and fluvial ways of communication, aerial ways of communication, fiduciary circulation, customs policy, state loans and general security of the State. The administration of all other problems, with the exception of foreign ones, will fall under the responsibility of decentralised bodies at the level of provinces.

Article 13 enumerates the domains in which unitary laws will function or unitary fundamental principles will be established by the institutions of central law-making: citizenship, documents of civil status, name, migration, admission conditions to universities and public functions, brevets, measurements and weights, marking, artistic and literary property, imposition system, monopoly, penal law and procedure, civil law and procedure, commercial, cambial, maritime law and procedure, but the administration of all of the above will be dealt with exclusively by the provinces. All other areas not explicitly mentioned in articles 12 and 13 belong exclusively to provincial law-making and administration.

In conclusion, we can state that Boilă's project goes beyond the framework of administrative regionalism and proposes in fact the organisation on a federal state which relies on the Romanian historical provinces.

The administrative regionalisation

Unlike federalism, the administrative organisation on regional bases enjoyed large support in the interwar period and caused vivid political and doctrinaire debates. The cultural, political, economic and juridical diversity of the new state accomplished after the Unification of 1918 provided the suitable ground for seeking another formula of administrative organisation, opposed to the model of the centralised unitary state, of French inspiration. Prominent intellectuals from different areas - jurists, historians, sociologists, political figures, specialists and practitioners from the field of public administration - got involved during the interwar period in the debate regarding the administrative organisation of the Romanian state on regional grounds. By means of conferences and articles published in

various newspapers and speciality journals, they upheld and promoted the *region* as a fundamental element of the state's administrative organisation.

C.L. Negruzzi

In Iași, in the year 1919, there appeared a *Project of administrative decentralisation*, elaborated by C.L. Negruzzi, which was based on the idea of creating the administrative region and which can be included in the regionalisation tendency that manifests itself in the interwar period. Negruzzi starts from a firm condemnation of administrative centralism with the aim of promoting, besides communal and county interests, those pertaining to regions, germane to specific economic and cultural traits.

Negruzzi had in mind a regional system that relied on the artificial creation of three provinces endowed with juridical personality, regrouping the old Romanian provinces. Thus, the first comprised Oltenia, Wallachia and Dobrogea, with Bucharest at its core, the second Moldova, Bessarabia and Bucovina, with Iași as the centre, and the third included Transylvania and the entire territory of the kingdom comprised between the Tisa, the Danube and the Carpathians, with the centre in Cluj.¹⁷

At the level of provincial capitals, the main authorities and services of the state were going to be decentralised, under the form of General Directorates for Internal Affairs, Finances, Public Instruction and Cults, Agriculture, Industry and Trade, Railways and Public Works, Public Health, Justice and Post Offices. The only ministries that remained centralised in Bucharest were the ones of Foreign Affairs, War and Navy. Negruzzi does not make any confusion between decentralisation and de-concentration, as one might consider at first glance, since these Directorates were basically provided with a true autonomous status towards the centre, functioning in the interest of the province, and not only in their own right to make decisions within an administrative form of de-concentration. At the end of each budgetary year, the directors would submit for ratification and consideration a report addressed to the government, which included, apart from the general balance of the budget, an abstract of the activity of each department. It is very important that the government could not refuse

¹⁷ Manuel Guțan, „Istoria administrației publice românești. Regiunea administrativă”, in *Revista de drept public*, 1, 2002, p. 198. Henceforth, Guțan, „Istoria administrației”

ratification, which thus blocked any right of control of the provinces by the centre.¹⁸

At the level of each province functioned the *Council of the province*, a collegial administrative body that did not meet on a permanent basis, but only once a year, on the 1st of October, for one month, in the capital of the province. The Council would deliberate on all matters regarding the province and could disapprove, by vote, of the activity of the Council of Directors or a Director in particular, a case in which the latter were forced to resign. The high degree of autonomy of the provinces was reflected by the ability of the Council to control the activity of a body appointed by the centre even in the absence of prerogatives of administrative control of the centre with regard to the acts of the Council of the provinces.

Although Negruzzi's project provides for a high degree of autonomy, it remains within the borders of administrative decentralisation, as the Council did not have the right to law-making, unlike the legislative bodies of the state.¹⁹

Constantin Stere

For Constantin Stere, as Zigu Ornea acknowledges, administrative decentralisation was, without any fear of exaggerating, an obsessive sociological motive in his reform plans.²⁰ Ever since the beginning of the 20th century, Stere, in the pages of the newspaper *Viața Românească*, theorised a local administrative organisation based on the principles of administrative decentralisation. Amid the debates regarding the adoption of the Constitution of 1923, in the Constitutional Ante-project of the National Peasants' Party, Stere theorised a local administrative organisation based on two fundamental elements: the juridical recognition and establishment of the *village* and *province* as administrative-territorial units.

According to Stere, the refusal of an administrative organisation that revolves around the province, - a historical formation, with a "secular past of a special life", with particular mentalities, habits, cultural and

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 199.

²⁰ C. Stere, *Scrieri*, Edition, introductory study and notes by Zigu Ornea, Minerva, 1979, p. 620.

economic conditions, which forms a well-defined unit - is the reflection of a non-democratic governing concept:

The chimera of a mechanical levelling is bound to arise in souls that are emptied by a lengthy despotism, out of contempt for public liberties and citizen life - but under the regime of a constitution, based on the principle of national sovereignty, how could this ungrateful mentality have been born, due to which for the emancipated provinces, the unification had as a primary effect the disappearance of the seeds of local unification they used to have under foreign oppression?

Moreover, the projects that turn to an artificial administrative organisation, creating "fictional regions", combined from several distinctive territories, with no connections among them, motivate the need for this approach, on the grounds of state unification and consolidation, but in the author's opinion, these notions are wrongly understood:

This ingenious administrative *tailoring* [underlined by author] is motivated by the interest of unification! But such unification cannot be mistaken for a *union*. And we do not need a mechanical *levelling* [underlined by author], but an intimate union in spirit and feeling, which can only result from respect for the particularities and natural characteristics of all and from everyone's truly free activity. Real power can never spring from the monotony of an exterior mechanisation, but only from *organic diversity* [underlined by author], one that is filled with life.²¹

The Peasants' Party, Stere believes, is opposed to "tyrannical urges" that do not recognise the character of administrative unity of the provinces, and this refusal can negatively influence the actual national unity itself. The recognition of provinces as administrative units is further legitimised by the historical argument, since in Stere's opinion, while rural commons and even counties are "arbitrary and artificial combinations, created out of administrative necessities, provinces, on the contrary, are historical formations, each with its own particular destiny." Thus, Stere envisages the

²¹ *Anteproiect de Constituție întocmit de secția de studii a Partidului Țărănesc*, with a motivation by C. Stere, Bucharest: „Viața Românească” S.A., Tipografia „Universală”, 1922, pp. 44; 45-46.

introduction of a new level, the provincial one, within the administrative-territorial organisation of the Kingdom of Greater Romania, namely: Wallachia, Moldova, Transylvania (along with the Banat and Hungarian parts), Bessarabia, Bucovina and Dobrogea. In the future, it is mentioned the possibility to subdivide some of these provinces, but also on historical grounds: Wallachia and Oltenia, Upper and Lower Moldavia, Transylvania and the Banat (Hungarian parts included), Northern and Southern Bessarabia (the old Budgeac).

Constantin Stere remains true to his convictions and, in 1929, elaborates a new bill regarding the administrative organisation of Romania, which stipulates a large decentralisation of the country on the grounds of historical provinces. Nevertheless, the project does not go as far as federalisation, since it remains within the limits of administrative decentralisation.

There are other authors who sustain the introduction of the provincial/regional level within the framework of administrative organisation of the state. Among these, Paul Negulescu and Anibal Teodorescu are in favour of institutionalising the region as an administrative unit, considering that the organisation of the country on regions presents undisputable advantages.²²

Also, Nicolae Iorga upheld regional organisation amid the debate on the Unification Law of 1925, based on distinctive regional interests and to suppress arbitrary and artificial administrative divisions.²³

Ion V. Gruia, at his turn, militates for the division of the country into regions, amid an administrative reorganisation of the country on the principle of decentralisation.²⁴ Gruia draws attention to the distinction that has to be made between political and administrative decentralisation,

²² Anibal Teodorescu, „Viitoarea organizare administrativă a României”, in *Constituția din 1923 în dezbaterile contemporanilor*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 1990, p. 417; Paul Negulescu, Romul Boilă, Gh. Alexianu, *Codul administrativ adnotat*, Bucharest: The Institute of Graphical Arts „Vreamea”, 1930, p. 580

²³ Negulescu, Boilă, Alexianu, *Codul administrativ adnotat*, pp. 580-581.

²⁴ Ion V. Gruia, „Descentralizarea administrativă și organizarea regională a țării”, in *Revista de drept public*, Year I, no. 1, Bucharest, 1926. Henceforth, Gruia, „Descentralizarea administrativă și organizarea regională”; *Idem*, „Necesitatea regiunii în organizarea administrativă”, in *Reforma administrativă*, Bucharest: Editura Culturală „Regele Mihai I”, 1929.

accepting, just like M. Văraru and Paul Negulescu²⁵, only the latter. He notices the attempts by some doctrinaires and politicians to expand decentralisation to the political area as well, but he considers that the formula of local government and local autonomy, sustained by Iosif Iacob, has to be tempered. For the latter, "local government is the system of organising public administration in which the state gives its citizens, who live on a certain area of the state's territory, the right to exert on that particular territory, as distinctive subjects of law, the function of government and the administrative function".²⁶ Local government involves the right of citizens, who live on a defined area (common, county, region or province) of the state's territory, to govern themselves within the limits set by laws, namely the right to create statutes and bodies, establish their expenses and deal with their coverage, as well as execute their decisions by force and constraint (the governing function). Furthermore, local government means the right to execute laws, regulations and statutes in the abovementioned conditions (the administrative function). Local government comprises self-governing and self-administration.²⁷

Gruia believes that although the attempt to create a real form of political liberty by organising local autonomy was successful in countries with superior civic development (England, Germany, Italy), in Romania this objective is still at the theoretical level. He admits that one may speak, in the case of the Romanian people, about "a feeling of local independence", but one that is "bordered within an administrative decentralisation, for which it is apt".²⁸

In the administrative system envisaged by I. V. Gruia, the region will not become a tutelary institution, taking from the centre "attributions and means of tyrannising localities". It will have a deliberative body, the regional assembly, and an executive one, the permanent commission. The

²⁵ M. Văraru, „Centralizare și descentralizare”, *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială*, Year II, no. 1-3, 1920, p. 147; Paul Negulescu, *Tratat de drept administrativ*, vol. I, Book I, Third Edition, Bucharest: Tipografiile Române Unite, 1925, p. 563. Henceforth, Negulescu, *Tratat de drept administrativ*.

²⁶ Iosif Iacob, *Problema administrativă a statului român întregit*, Oradea-Mare: Typography „Biharia” S.A., 1923, p. 31. Henceforth, Iacob, *Problema administrativă*.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ Gruia, „Descentralizarea administrativă”, p. 87.

regional assembly will be composed, according to the custom of that period of time, of members for life and those elected by the councils of each county. The regional permanent commission will be composed of three delegates for each county and will be led by a president who will manage the administration and represent the region before justice. Gruia makes a distinction between the position of head of regional administration and that of representative of the centre in the region. The government will be represented in the regions by the county prefect from the centre of the region, who will have the right to supervise the execution of laws and regulations of public administration. He will represent the juridical personality of the state before justice, in its relations with the region. The latter was given substantial prerogatives in representing collective interests, especially economic ones.²⁹

The region portrayed by Gruia was to play a double role, not only as a decentralisation unit, but also as one of administrative de-concentration, while benefitting from a real administrative autonomy towards the centre.

Even though the region, as an administrative-territorial unit, enjoyed extensive support at the time, by both politicians and intellectuals, it also represented a target for criticism from the part of its adversaries. The most prominent at the time were C. Dimitriu and C. Georgescu, theorists of the Liberal Party in the area of administration. Essentially, all arguments against the region point to a single danger, namely the dissolution of the unitary national state, as a consequence of accepting an administrative organisation on regional bases. By means of such an organisation, the centrifugal tendencies that are still present in the annexed provinces would be fuelled. Moreover, the organisation on regional grounds would encourage the particularity of Romanian citizens of different ethnic origins and thus weaken the position of the state towards such minorities. On the contrary, when deciding upon the administrative organisation of the state, the law-maker must not encourage particularity, but take all possible actions to dissolve this phenomenon.³⁰

In conclusion, we can state that the ideological and political debate on the concept of *regionalisation* was a constant preoccupation in the

²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 98-99.

³⁰ See Negulescu, Boilă, Alexianu, *Codul administrativ*, pp. 583-586.

interwar period, manifesting itself with unusual vigour. In spite of this powerful debate, the *region* itself was never introduced into the system of territorial organisation of the Romanian state in the interwar period. Any attempt to institutionalise the region met with opposition from the Constitution of 1923, which, in art. 4, established the separation of the Romanian territory, from an administrative point of view, into counties and commons. The Constitution thus renounced the solution of the Peasant Party's project, stipulating in art. 2 the introduction of a new administrative level - that of the province/region.³¹

The authors who upheld and promoted the regionalisation of the state often lacked conceptual clarity. Terms and concepts were mistaken, such as *administrative decentralisation* and *de-concentration*, *administrative* and *political regionalisation*, *regionalism* and *separatism*.

One of the most common conceptual ambiguities of this period was that between *decentralisation* and *de-concentration*. Many projects which upheld and promoted the principle of administrative decentralization, in reality did not succeed in finalising more than an administrative de-concentration. According to the doctrine of the interwar period, the fundamental element which differentiates decentralisation from de-concentration consists of the election of the local authorities and of their rights to initiative and decision over local problems. Thus, according to Paul Negulescu, one of the most prominent public law specialists, but also to other authors of this period, we can speak about decentralisation when: "the solving of local or special interests are entrusted to authorities whose officials are elected by the electoral body; then we have decentralisation. If the local authority, elected by the citizens, has the right to initiative and decision over local needs, then we have a system of decentralization."³²

Unlike decentralization, which consists of the transfer of powers from the centre to elected local authorities, de-concentration represents the diminution in the concentration of powers and the transfer of the decisional powers from the central government to the inferior state authorities. In this manner, the concept of administrative decentralization was often wrongly

³¹ *Anteproiect de Constituție întocmit de secția de studii a Partidului Țărănesc*, p. 86.

³² Negulescu, *Tratat de drept administrativ*, p. 560; Gruia, „Descentralizarea administrativă și organizarea regională”, pp. 83-84.

used, designating administrative de-concentration instead of decentralization.

Regionalisation did not always mean decentralization. If in the opinion of C. Stere, the regional organisation of the State is inseparable from decentralisation, according to the meaning defined above, for other authors regionalisation implicitly means decentralisation, even without the decentralisation of the competences to a local level. One such example refers to the project of the Minister of the Interior, Constantin Argetoianu, entitled *Administrative Decentralisation and Regionalism*. Despite the fact that he uses the concept of decentralization, his project accomplishes administrative de-concentration rather than decentralization. If the commons and the counties remain in the same state, subordinate to regional authorities, or if regional authorities are accountable to and led by officials appointed by the central government, then the simple shift of powers from the centre to the deliberative and executive bodies of the region does not yet mean decentralization.³³ Neither of the authors who promoted the federal reorganisation of the country (Gheorghe Grigorovici and Romul Boilă), defined very clearly the status of local communities in the new federal states. Nevertheless, they asserted and upheld in their projects that the administrative organisation would be based on the principles of decentralization and local autonomy.

Another more or less deliberate ambiguity was that between political and administrative regionalisation. The majority of political leaders made no difference between administrative regionalisation and federalisation. Both modes of political-administrative organisation were refuted for the same reason, namely the threat they represented for the unity of the national state. Moreover, the assimilation of regionalism with separatism was determined by the same political priorities: unification, institutional and political integration of the new provinces in the Romanian State and the fact of overcoming the centrifugal tendencies in the new provinces.

Amongst the broad range of options expressed with regard to administrative organisation on regional bases, there are three main currents

³³ Constantin Argetoianu, „Descentralizare administrativă și regionalism”, in *Revista de drept public*, Year I, no. 1, Bucharest: Cultura Națională, 1926; See also the critique of I. V. Gruia of this project, in „Descentralizarea administrativă și organizarea regională”, pp. 94-95.

that can be identified, each with its own particular traits. Firstly, we may speak of a mixed administrative regionalism³⁴, which regards the region as a unit with a double function, of both administrative decentralisation and de-concentration. This is the leading ideological trend, one which perceives decentralisation based on regions from a strictly administrative point of view, thus moving away from the principle of political decentralisation and federalist options. The majority of the projects of regional administrative-territorial organisation in the interwar period fell into this category.

We can then identify a federalist tendency which, as it has been previously stated, although less frequently encountered in the context of doctrinaire debates during the interwar period, is important from the perspective of analysing political-administrative options of state reorganisation at the time. Gheorghe Grigorovici and Romul Boilă's projects regarding the federal organisation of the Romanian State fell into this category. Thus, one can identify a powerful autonomous tendency which supported and promoted the auto-determination of local and regional communities. This ideology perceives local self-governing as a positive intrinsic value and opposes centralising philosophy. We can find this tendency throughout the interwar period in different ways. These forms range from preserving and promoting the autonomy of local communities to the more radical regionalist and federalist claims, which challenge the entire political-administrative system.

Several different reasons underlie all these projects: the technical causes regarding the efficiency of the administrative action, on the one hand, and historical, cultural and political reasons on the other hand.

Technically, different authors blame the crises of functioning and organisation of the centralized political-administrative system and its inadequacy to the particularities of a heterogeneous society from multiple points of view. Furthermore, the historical and cultural arguments advocate the preservation of a regional institutional and historical peculiarity in the new State.

Political reasons have a great importance in this respect because the political-administrative organisation of the State has a major influence on the balance between social and political forces. The regional political

³⁴ Term borrowed from Manuel Guțan; See Manuel Guțan, *Istoria administrației publice locale în statul român modern*, Bucharest: All Beck, 2005, p. 308.

elite or emergent movements and political parties could perceive local autonomy or regionalisation as a means of maintaining power and influence at the local and regional levels, or as a basis for further conquest of power at the national level.³⁵

This aspect is a key element and helps us better understand the high stakes of the debate regarding the political-administrative organisation of the Romanian State in the interwar period. Romul Boilă's project is relevant in this regard. We can notice in the author's critique the frustration of a provincial elite that considers itself alienated from political and administrative power. Moreover, these resentments can later be found in *The Memorandum of the Romanians from Transylvania*, handed out to King Carol II in 1938, by the leader of the National Peasant Party (PNT), Iuliu Maniu.³⁶

Hans-Christian Maner also noticed the political substratum of the National Peasant Party's demands regarding decentralization and regional organisation of the State. He considers that by adopting the decentralising administrative law of 1929, the Peasant Party aimed to keep the power and influence at the local level by means of local authorities, in case it should be lost at the central level.³⁷

This autonomous movement will be opposed by a stronger ideological and cultural movement: political and administrative centralisation. Therefore, the third major ideological current in this regard is hostile to any type of regionalism. The arguments against the region pertain to the danger of dissolution of the national unitary state, as a consequence of accepting a form of administrative organisation relying on regional bases, which would fuel the centrifugal tendencies already existing in the historical provinces. Furthermore, the organisation on regional grounds would encourage the particularity of Romanian citizens

³⁵ See for example the Italian case, where the emergent socialist movement tried to use local autonomy as a basis for a further conquest of the power of the central state in Ernesto Ragioneri, "La formazione del programma amministrativo socialista in Italia", in Ernesto Ragioneri, *Politica e amministrazione nella storia dell'Italia unita*, Bari: Laterza, 1967, pp. 193-262 and Raffaele Romanelli, „Centralismo e autonomie”, in *Storia dello stato italiano dall'Unità a oggi*, a cura di Raffaele Romanelli, Roma: Donzelli, 1995, p. 146.

³⁶ See Stanomir, *Libertate, lege și drept*, pp. 152-158.

³⁷ Hans-Christian Maner, *Parlamentarismul în România, 1930-1940*, București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2004, p. 319.

of different ethnic origins and thus weaken the position of the state towards these minorities.

This attitude characterises mainly the National Liberal Party of the Old Kingdom. The idea of a regional or a federal political-administrative organisation was alien to the historical experience and to the dominant cultural background of the political liberal elite. The federal and regional ideas had not been accepted in the French centralized administrative system, according to which the Old Kingdom was organised.

One can better understand the limits and failures of regional demands, if we place the analysis of this debate in the context of the historical phase the Romanian State had been going through: the process of building the nation-state.

The Liberal Party, which dominated political life in the first decade after the 1918 Unification, decided to follow the centralized French administrative model, in order to integrate, institutionally and politically, the new provinces into the Romanian State, but also as a basis for the process of building the nation-state.³⁸ In these circumstances, any regional demand was seen as a threat to the unity of the national state.

The interwar Romanian experience, although tardy and with particular features, came amid and followed the general European process of nation-state building. I believe that a future comparative study of the Romanian debate and political-administrative system, along with the debates and evolutions of the political-administrative systems of other countries which embraced the Napoleonic centralised administrative model, will reveal quite interesting similarities.

A comparative analysis including France and Italy, despite the political, social, economic and cultural differences, could prove to be particularly useful, because these two countries adopted centralized administrative systems and represented a model worth following for the Romanian State. I think that such an analysis will provide us with a better insight into the role the French centralised administrative system played in

³⁸ See the similar option for a centralized political-administrative organization in other two countries, France and Italy, during the process of nation-state building. For France, see Pierre Rosanvallon, *L'État en France de 1789 à nos jours*, Editions du Seuil, 1990, pp. 95-103. For Italy, see Raffaele Romanelli, *Importare la democrazia. Sulla costituzione liberale italiana*, Rubbettino, 2009, pp. 17-97.

the process of Romanian nation-state building, as well as into the failures of regional and federal plans.

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THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY AND THE INEXHAUSTIBLE QUEST FOR ITS INSTITUTIONAL CONSISTENCY

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Abstract

The present article intends to assess the extent to which the Treaty of Lisbon can make at least a modest contribution towards strengthening the efficiency and visibility of the European Union in world affairs. In fulfilling this task we will proceed in two steps. Firstly, we intend to analyze the institutional innovations introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. Then we will discuss on how these changes might improve the external representation of EU interests and generate solutions for the well-known consistency problem of EU foreign and security policy. The purpose of this quest is at least two-fold. On the one hand we will be interested to appraise the extent to which the duality of the EU decision-making procedures was withheld, while on the other hand we will try to evaluate the potential of the newly-born European External Action Service to draw together the various existing instruments for foreign policy implementation and representation.

Keywords: Common Foreign and Security Policy, European External Action Service, Treaty of Lisbon

The EU rise to economic prominence in world affairs has led to increased demands to add strength to its rather soft power profile. On the one hand this was regarded as a logical step forward in the evolution of the EU as a *sui-generis* actor on the world stage. Since the EU capacity to act as a full-grown actor in a considerable range of economic policy areas was already firmly established it was considered that the time was ripe for EU to try to bring those areas connected traditionally with high politics to

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follow suit and contribute to the overall stature of the EU on the world stage. On the other hand, the difficulty of this enterprise was well-known to all those involved in taking the necessary decisions. As foreign policy has been seen generally as an exclusive prerogative of states, the advances towards establishing a common policy in this realm have always proved to be extremely difficult as they necessitate to overcome a good deal of sensitivities.

After two failed attempts in 1954 and 1962 to add a political dimension to the process of European integration, external relations came to mean nothing more than economic relations with 'third countries'¹. The preferred framework for conducting these relations was the Common Commercial Policy whose existence was largely guided by the European Commission on the basis of the so-called 'Community method'. At the end of a complex decision-making process, EU has become able to speak on behalf of all its members and to deal on an equal footing with its important trade partners in international commercial negotiations. One may play down the importance of such an impressive success by saying that trade was so and so at the heart of the European project from the very beginning and as a consequence there is no wonder that the Union has managed to perform so well in this realm. However, irrespective of its success in trade matters, the need for a more coordinated response to the international political challenges made it necessary for the European Union to try to envision ways for getting involved in this area, too. It was only in early 1970s that EU member states have designed a coordination mechanism known as the European Political Cooperation (EPC), which allowed them to speak with 'one voice' in a range of foreign policy issues in international affairs without being impeded to pursue national foreign policies. In comparison to the commercial policy that was part and parcel of the process of European integration and was placed from the very beginning under a supranational competence², EPC was meant to be maintained outside the institutional framework of the then European Community and

¹ K. E. Smith, „EU external relations“ in: Michelle Cini (ed.), *European Union Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 229.

² S. Meunier and K. Nicolaïdis, „The European Union as a Trade Power“ in: C. Hill and M. Smith, *International Relations and the European Union*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 249.

preserve the centrality of the nation-state in the process of decision making. Its very existence was subject to an 'intergovernmental method' of making decisions as opposed to the already mentioned 'Community method' reflecting as a matter of fact a deep division that marked the whole project of European integration from the very beginning, namely that between an intergovernmental or a supranational construction of this complex edifice.

With the entering into force of the Treaty of Maastricht, the EU made unequivocal claims that it would pursue from then on a foreign policy which was intended to be common although not necessarily single. Nevertheless, despite the high hopes that the EU's external policies could become more encompassing and consistent, the two separate policy making frameworks were kept alive with the only difference that the foreign policy decision making and competences were brought under the Union's umbrella but divided among the three pillars. Moreover, despite far-reaching commitments to go well beyond the established forms of already existing foreign policy cooperation and to start to coordinate their foreign policy through the existing common institutional structures on the European level, the member states maintained further their power to pursue their own foreign policy objectives. And this situation remained more or less the same as the following amending treaties – the treaties of Amsterdam and Nice – did nothing but to attempt to alleviate these problems without being able to provide clear-cut solutions. It was only after Amsterdam that we came to have a High Representative for CFSP, but his prerogatives did not allow him to distinguish himself as a vigorous voice of the European foreign policy since his position was stuck between the Council and its Presidency, on the one hand, and the Commission, on the other.

It was after all the praxis, the day-to-day activity in the realm of foreign policy that indicated that it is extremely difficult to uphold indefinitely a strict separation between the processes of political cooperation and economic integration and that it is necessary if not to completely break down the existing lines of demarcation, at least to attempt to scale them down. Otherwise the replication of work and responsibilities between different European institutions and agencies, the cacophony of voices speaking on behalf of the European Union and the delayed response to international crises would undermine the Union's credibility as an actor

on the world stage. Most obviously the lack of consistency appeared with increased clarity when the mechanisms of crisis management were brought under screening.³

The political scientists defined this deeply ingrained problem of the European Union's foreign policy in terms of a lack of coherence or consistency⁴ despite the attempt made by the European national governments to draw their institutions and procedures closer in order to improve the credibility of the Union as a foreign policy actor and its performance in defending its interests and values on the world stage. According to Simon Nuttal the consistency problem of the EU's foreign policy cannot be regarded as a single phenomenon, 'but a nexus of different problems' whose solutions are 'various and not always compatible'.⁵ He distinguished between three types of consistency – **horizontal**, connected to the extent to which the objectives of the different policies pursued by the European Union are consistent with one another, **institutional**, generated by the fact that different sets of actors, pursuing common objectives, but applying different procedures could produce outcomes that are not consistent with the initially agreed intentions, and, last but not least, **vertical**, related to the way in which national and EU policies accommodate with each other.⁶ For authors like Christopher Hill consistency of the European external action can be conceptualized from five different perspectives: (i) the former pillar structure of the European Union, ameliorated now to a certain extent by the Treaty of Lisbon, (ii) the different Brussels institutions with prerogatives in the realm of EU's foreign policy, (iii) the articulation and management of diverse EU policies, (iv) the relation between centre (the headquarter of EU foreign policy) and

³ See for instance the rough sketch of the complicated mechanisms of policy options and policy-making methods for articulating a crisis management response in F. Anesi and L. Aggestan, „The Security-Development Nexus” in: L. Aggestam, F. Anesi, G. Edwards, C. Hill and D. Rijks, *Institutional Competences in the EU External Action: Actors and Boundaries in CFSP and ESDP*, SIEPS 2008: 6-7, p. 117.

⁴ For a wider discussion on the semantic differences between consistence and coherence see S. Duke, “Consistency as Issue in EU External Activities” in: *European Institute for Public Administration*, Working Paper 99/W/06, pp. 3-5.

⁵ Simon Nuttal, „Coherence and constituency” in: Christopher Hill and M. Smith, *International Relations and the European Union*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 92.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 96-108.

the periphery (the delegations of the EU in various parts of the world) and last but not least (v) the relation between the EU and its Member States.⁷ Nevertheless, irrespective from which side one may decide to approach the problem, at the bottom of it is the fact that the European Union emerged as and continues to remain a particular kind of international actor, whose foreign policy does not fit long-established conceptions. While the efforts aimed at conceptualizing the EU as an actor in world affairs have generated extensive academic debate,⁸ the *problematique* of its external relations has remained under continuous consideration.

Given the limits imposed on this article, we intend to focus our attention solely on those issues that arise in connection with what according to C. Hill would be the different visions of various Brussels institutions⁹ and according to Simon Nuttal is simply called the problem of the **institutional consistency** of the European Union's foreign policy and evaluate them against the background of the innovations introduced in this realm by the Treaty of Lisbon. We consider that these aspects are of overriding importance given the fact that they take into consideration the linkage existing between the Union's internal processes of integration and policy-making and the development of the Union's external relations in general. From the very beginning, CFSP proved to be exceedingly bureaucratic and involved an outsized number of actors. As already mentioned the need for a much slenderer institutional arrangement that can avoid the existing competency overlapping that led to so many turf wars over the years was for long a far cry. The question that we attempt to answer is related to the extent to which the Treaty of Lisbon will be able to address at least partially this deeply ingrained problem of the external policy of the European Union.

⁷ Christopher Hill, "Introduction" in: L. Aggestam, F. Anesi, G. Edwards, C. Hill and D. Rijks, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-6.

⁸ For an overview of the current discussions on how the Europe's international role could be better conceptualized see I. Manners, „Global Europe: Mythology of the European Union in World Politics" in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2010, pp. 67-8.

⁹ The discussion cannot be limited strictly to the vision of the various EU institutions responsible for the CFSP. It will have to embrace nonetheless aspects that C. Hill referred to as being generated by the former pillar-structure and by the articulation and management of these policies.

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In answering this question we will proceed in two steps. Firstly, we are going to make a brief inventory of the institutional changes brought about by the Treaty of Lisbon for the CFSP. Further, we intend to assess the contribution of the Treaty to the unity of the EU's external representation and to discuss how the institutional innovations incorporated in the Treaty of Lisbon can offer inputs to solving the consistency problem of the EU's foreign policy. Against this background we will attempt to survey in the last part of this article how and to what extent the consistency problem can be addressed in the institutional framework created by the Treaty of Lisbon. From the beginning we want to emphasize that we subscribe to professor S. Duke's view that the institutional solutions cannot serve as a 'panacea for all of the perceived shortcomings of the EU's current external relations'.¹⁰ We share the opinion that their potential to rationalize the coordination mechanisms of the CFSP can be valued only when the practitioners start to make use of those institutional underpinnings through which change can be accomplished. However, we consider that the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty in conjunction with the experience of the past two years offer us already indications on the Treaty's limits and potential to redress the consistency deficit of the EU's external representation.

So, let's start by evaluating *what does the Treaty of Lisbon bring new in terms of institutional setup for the CFSP*. In the first place we will have a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who, in an effort to bring a '*rapprochement* between the 'Community pillar' over which the European Commission has the upper hand' and the more intergovernmental CFSP pillar,¹¹ will combine two formerly existing positions – that of High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy held for ten years by Javier Solana and that of Commissioner for External Relations occupied most recently by Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Although it is more than obvious that by merging the two positions it was intended to ensure a higher degree of coherence between EU's political objectives and

¹⁰ S. Duke, "Providing for European-Level Diplomacy after Lisbon: The Case of the European External Action Service" in: *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, 2009, pp. 212-3.

¹¹ M. Lefebvre and C. Hillion, "The European External Action Service: towards a common diplomacy?" in: *SIEPS European Policy Analysis*, vol. 6, 2010, pp. 1-2.

its various spending and assistance programmes¹² such as the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Development Fund, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument and the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation¹³ that need strong coordination with the European Commission, the Treaty states this objective in unequivocal terms, in Article 18 according to which he/she 'shall ensure the consistency of the Union's external action'.¹⁴

Apparently, the move can be regarded as a logical step in the effort of drawing the two institutions with responsibilities for the EU's foreign relations, but at the same time it is obvious that the job is marked with daunting challenges for the incumbent of the office. Baroness Catherine Ashton as the current holder of the position has to chair the quasi-monthly meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council, to coordinate external policies of the Commission by working in close cooperation with Trade, Development, Enlargement and Economic and Monetary Commissioners, plus other Commissioners when agenda items require their presence, to head the newly created European External Action Service, to preside over a number of boards of 'domain relevant agencies'¹⁵ such as European Defense Agency (EDA), European Satellite Centre (EUSC), European Union Institute for Strategic Studies (EUISS) or European Security and Defense Studies (ESDC), and last but not least to represent EU in CFSP matters and international organizations. Moreover, she will have to hold a delicate

¹² Speech by C. Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "Europe and the World", Athens, 8 July 2010 on [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_9936_en.htm], accessed 01 September 2011.

¹³ Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/427/EU) in: *Official Journal of the European Union* L 201/30, 03.08.2010, Article 9.

¹⁴ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (the Lisbon Treaty) in: *Official Journal of the European Union*, C115/13, 9 May 2008.

¹⁵ Antonio Missiroli, "EU 'Foreign Service': Under Construction" in: *Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies*, Policy Papers RSCAS, 2010/04, p. 10. See also Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service.

balance between the newly created EU diplomatic structures and the member states, especially the large ones.¹⁶

Then, on the basis of the Treaty of Lisbon an European External Action Service (EEAS) was created on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Treaty's entering into force, based on a Council Decision. Its main function would be to 'assist the High Representative in fulfilling his/her mandate'¹⁷, but apart from this the Treaty did not offer many clues as to how this body was going to function. These came to a some extent only with the Council Decision. Again improving coherence can be regarded as the most obvious *raison d'être* for this 'functionally autonomous body'.¹⁸ This is supposed to bring together the foreign services of the European Commission (including its delegations in countries and to the international organizations around the world which from now on will have to represent the Union and will have to act in close cooperation with the diplomatic and consular missions of member states), those of the Council Secretariat who used to assist the rotating presidencies, and diplomats of the member states. As we consider EEAS to be a major innovation for soothing the tensions between the national and supranational level of European foreign policy, that could foster in time the advance towards a 'unified diplomatic culture'¹⁹ we intend to discuss the issues concerning EEAS at length in the last part of this article.

As such the desire to streamline the foreign policy decision-making and the management of this realm is manifest in the institutional setup brought into existence by the Treaty of Lisbon. This is why we will next be interested to assess *what does the Treaty of Lisbon bring new in terms of unity of external representation of EU interests* as it was particular in this respect that

¹⁶ See at large the discussion proposed Hylke Dijkstra with regard to how the size of the Presidency might influence the relation between this institution and that of the High Representative in representing EU interests on "EU External Representation in Conflict Resolution: When does the Presidency or the High Representative speak for Europe?" in: *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)*, Vol. 15, Art. 1, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2011-001a.htm>.

¹⁷ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (the Lisbon Treaty), Article 27(3).

¹⁸ Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service.

¹⁹ T. Chopin and M. Lefebvre, "Three Phone Numbers for Europe: Will the Lisbon Treaty Make the European Union More Effective Abroad?" in: *Centre on US and Europe at Brookings*, US – Europe Analysis Series Number No. 43 January 06, 2010.

the lack of coherence was most obvious. From this perspective however the ways in which coherence is to be improved are less obvious than in the institutional arrangement. According to the Treaty we will have to reckon with three EU dignitaries with responsibilities for the Union's external representation: the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council.

According to Art. 18, Para. 2: 'The High Representative shall conduct the Union's common foreign and security policy. He shall contribute by his proposals to the development of that policy, which he shall carry out as mandated by the Council. The same shall apply to the common security and defense policy'²⁰. With regard to the Commission, the Treaty states that 'with the exception of the common foreign and security policy, and other cases provided for in the Treaties, it shall ensure the Union's external representation'.²¹ As established in Art. 15, Para. 6, 'The President of the European Council shall, at his level and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy'²².

To sum up, the Union will have again three voices who will speak on its behalf on the world stage, but at least the Treaty endeavored to recalibrate their roles for avoiding unnecessary overlapping and redundancies. Moreover, the Treaty reiterates the idea of consistency in relation to these institutions and the prerogatives conferred to them in Art. 21, Para. 3: '*The Union shall ensure consistency between the different areas of its external action and between these and its other policies. The Council and the Commission, assisted by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, shall ensure that consistency and shall cooperate to that effect*'²³. However, neither from this perspective was the Treaty capable of removing all the grey areas. One case in point is the situation of the

²⁰ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (the Lisbon Treaty).

²¹ *Ibidem*, Art. 17, Para. 1.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*.

development cooperation.²⁴ This is meant to add value to the moral profile the European Union is casting on itself on the world stage²⁵ as its declared objective according to Art. 208 is '*the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty*'²⁶. Nevertheless its provisions are to be found not under the highly intergovernmental Title V of TEU concerning the general provisions on the Union's External Action and specific provisions on the CFSP, but in the Part V of TFEU referring to External action by the Union. On the one hand, it is worth mentioning that it is for the first time that development cooperation is mentioned as an objective of the EU's external action²⁷. On the other hand, it is significant that development cooperation is regarded not merely as an accessory to CFSP, but a policy in its own right,²⁸ whose objectives have to be consistent with those of other EU policies relevant for its external action.²⁹

It is now the moment to try to appraise *what does the Treaty of Lisbon bring in terms of enhancing consistency to the EU's external relations*. Apparently, the answer is for the most part also not very encouraging. When looking to how the decisions are taken, it becomes obvious that the changes can be regarded as at best marginal. As far as the political decisions on CFSP are concerned they are to be taken in the Foreign Affairs Council (now meeting separately from the General Affairs Council) or in the European Council. As long as the decisions carry also an economic dimension, the Commission is also involved and its voice is necessary to be heard. According to Art. 22, Para. 2, '*The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, for the area of common foreign and security policy, and the Commission, for other areas of external action, may submit joint*

²⁴ S. Duke and S. Blockmans, "The Lisbon Treaty stipulations on Development Cooperation and the Council Decision of 25 March 2010 (Draft) establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service" in: *European Institute for Public Administration*, Working Paper 2010/W/01.

²⁵ I. Manners, "The normative ethics of the European Union" in: *International Affairs*, vol. 84, no. 1, pp. 68-75.

²⁶ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (the Lisbon Treaty).

²⁷ E. Koeb, "A More Political EU External Action: Implications of the New Treaty for the EU's Relations with Developing Countries" in: *Estratégia*, no. 26-27, 2009, p. 9.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

²⁹ Art. 21, Para. 3, Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (the Lisbon Treaty).

proposals to the Council'. If we add to this the provisions of Art. 30, Para. 1 stipulating that '*Any Member State, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, or the High Representative with the Commission's support, may refer any question relating to the common foreign and security policy to the Council and may submit to it initiatives or proposals as appropriate*', we have a more comprehensive view of how the decision-making is structured in this realm. Firstly, it is obvious that the right of initiative in questions relating to CFSP stays with the Council. The High Representative is enabled to submit proposals to the Council, for which he can request the Commission's support. At the same time, the Commission can submit proposals for other areas of external action, jointly with the High Representative. This basically means that the two separate decision-making procedures – the intergovernmental and the community one are maintained. Again it proves that the member states were extremely keen to have their voices clearly heard when it comes to CFSP, although they approved a slight intrusion of qualified majority voting in this area and maintained Commission's control over a number of policies with a strong impact on CFSP.

Under these circumstances it is necessary next to ask about *what does the Treaty of Lisbon bring new in terms of bureaucratic implementation*. At a closer look it seems that it arises particularly in this realm a chance for the Treaty of Lisbon to have a longer lasting legacy for the development of the CFSP. As already mentioned the Treaty gives birth to an entirely new body, the European External Action Service, that under the guidance of the High Representative is charged with the drafting and implementation of the EU *acquis* in the field of foreign policy consisting of the CFSP-related Presidency Conclusions of the European Council meetings and conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council, either stating strategic interests, objectives and general guidelines or issuing decisions for implementation and on operational action with the necessary instruments appended to them.³⁰

In essence, we are speaking about a hybrid institutional construction. The body enjoys financial autonomy since it has its own budget, which means that it can be assimilated to an institution, although its status was not elevated up to this level. Moreover, the body is endowed

³⁰ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union (the Lisbon Treaty), Article 22, 26 and 28.

with the 'legal capacity necessary to perform its tasks and objectives'.³¹ In spite of the attempts to have this body subordinated either to the Commission, or to the Council, it managed to preserve its autonomy from both. In the end, it was agreed that it will be placed only under the authority of the High Representative of the Union. However, in the negotiations that preceded the setup of this body, its autonomy came to be to a certain extent counter-balanced by the Parliament who managed to indirectly ensure for itself greater political control of EEAS's actions³² and full budgetary control powers.³³ Also the selection of personnel is to take place according to specific rules in the first phase and with the implication of the Member States, the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission³⁴ afterwards.

The EEAS diplomats are placed in an extremely favorable position since they are at the same time presiding over the working groups in the Council of Ministers where decisions and acts are negotiated, are in close contact with the Commission for working out the necessary details of the instruments that are to be employed and, last of all have to carry out the execution of the EU's foreign policy. Moreover, they have an information advantage as they hold responsibility for the reports and analyses that normally offer the necessary input into the whole process of negotiation.

All these elements suggest that EEAS can have a real contribution to the development and execution of EU policies equally ahead and behind the moment when the decisions relative to them are taken. They can contribute to increasing cooperation between EU institutions and between EU and the member states. Especially if we take into consideration the fact that national diplomats will be bound to return to their service of origin after serving temporarily in the EEAS, enriched of course with a European experience, we can expect that this will 'reinforce the European dimension

³¹ Article 2, Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service.

³² C. Cellerino, "The new External Action Service and the Lisbon Call for Coherence of European External Action: Issues of Accountability and Scope" in: *The Columbia Journal of European Law Online*, Vol. 17, 2010, p. 24.

³³ In this context, it is also worth to be mentioned that the implementation of the EEAS operational expenditure remains with the Commission's budget.

³⁴ Article 6(8), Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organization and functioning of the European External Action Service.

of foreign policy at national level'.³⁵ As a consequence we can look ahead to gains in terms of coherence in the formulation and execution of EU foreign policy and accordingly to a more effective and visible CFSP. The most important challenges appear to stem from the vagueness of the Treaty with regard to the ways in which the High Representative should fulfill her role of reconciling the two pillars together and take decisions that are realistic in the short term and ambitious in the long term as she is charged with giving the overall direction to this entirely new body.

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In order to sum up the most important findings of this research we need to proceed from the situation that characterized the external action of the European Union and the solutions found for the existing problems. As such the Treaty of Lisbon does not come up with ultimate clarifications. It does not alter the intergovernmental character of CFSP, it does not change significantly its decision-making mechanisms, it does not modify radically the positions of the existing institutions in the decision-making structures of CFSP. It rather subscribes to the policy of small steps towards transforming the existing fragmented actorhood of the European Union into a more coherent one. In doing so the Treaty looks at the institutional arrangements that might help inducing a catalytic effect for this transformation.

It is for sure that it does not suffice to scrutinize the institutional changes introduced by the Treaty in order to assess its added value in terms of coherence. As a matter of fact there will be the people - be they politicians and bureaucrats at both the national and European level alike - who will make these institutions work and will have to steer them within the existing legislative format in order to achieve the desired goals. At present, they have to assume that as long as the existing distance between the state level and the Community level persists it is difficult to forge a more integrated representation of EU interests on the world stage. In one of his first speeches in this capacity, the President of the European Council spoke of a convoy of 27 ships with 27 captains who need strategic

³⁵ G. Avery, "The EU's External Action Service: new actor on the scene", in: *European Policy Centre Commentary*, 28 January 2011.

orientation.³⁶ Apart from this however there will also be necessary a day-by-day common effort to translate into practice this strategic orientation so that the objectives can be achieved.

We consider nevertheless that with the creation of EEAS an important step was made in the direction of establishing a European diplomacy whose purpose will not be to replace national diplomacy but to help foster a genuine EU foreign policy. The new body in itself tends to reinforce a 'late sovereign order' at the EU level in which the purpose of diplomacy shifts from 'mediation between states' to 'the creation of 'an ever closer union''.³⁷ The enterprise *per se* is not without risks. It will need the states to offer it confidence and willingness to accept a common body dealing with extremely sensitive issues. It will need EEAS to be able to build trust in its capacity to manage in a European context the problems arising from a rapidly changing worldwide environment. It will need both European and national levels for redefining the understanding of Union's foreign policy. If successful, EEAS has the potential of launching a functional approach towards integration in the sensitive realm of foreign and security policy.

³⁶ Address by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, to the Collège d'Europe, Bruges "The Challenges For Europe In A Changing World", 25 February 2010 on [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/113067.pdf], accessed 01 September 2011.

³⁷ R. Adler-Nissen, "Late Sovereign Diplomacy", in: *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Vol. 4, 2009, p. 140.

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HANNIBAL IS IN THE CITY: SEVERAL REFLECTIONS ON CONTEMPORARY BARBARIANS. A SOCIAL-CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

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Abstract

For the renowned Polish philosopher Leszek Kotakowski, barbarism equates with the incapacity of persons or whole societies to reason and assume themselves critically. Barbarism is therefore the main ingredient of totalitarian regimes, dogmatic ideologies and discretionary practices. In the developed countries, the present economic and identity crisis has shifted the attention from the responsible Western barbarians to exterior ones, immigrants or foreign cultures being in this case the most convenient scapegoats. But, as the title of this essay metaphorically points out, Hannibal is not at the gates, it is inside the polis, ardently championing a diverse repertoire of discourses like democracy, human rights or free market in order to silently consolidate its hegemony at the expense of real rights, democracy and freedom. Material and political asymmetry is growing in the Western world, a clear sign of barbarization for social-constructivists like Nicholas Onuf. On the other hand, the West still possesses both the material (economy) and intellectual (modernity) resources necessary to overcome the crisis, even if the geopolitical configuration of the world is slowly shifting towards East. In social-constructivist terms, we can avoid the barbarization of this process by impelling actors to reshape structures through a protest culture that will claim alternative, less asymmetric constructions whenever the situation calls for it.

Keywords: barbarism, modernity, crisis, capitalism, agents, structures

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The problem

The West and the whole world, but especially the West and due to its fault – undergoes a major and plurivalent crisis today. Its economic dimension is surely the most mediatized one, but there are also structural problems of different natures, like economic, social, identity and moral ones. It is hard to say which comes first, although I am tempted to risk giving credit to the economic ones. But it would be at least imprudent to propose such a hierarchy. If Marx thought us something in the end, it was that he was never a Marxist after all. In other words, Marxism is a philosophy, a perspective, a living, auto-reflexive and first of all defined by a permanent regenerating process.

One of the main continuators and developers of Marx's thinking was Antonio Gramsci. Imprisoned during the major part of its intellectual life, Gramsci's work owes much, paradoxically, to the Italian fascist regime that convicted him of communist agitation. If he would have succeeded in escaping Mussolini's persecutions against leftist groups, it is highly probable he would have ended up in Stalin's gulags. Gramsci has convincingly argued that in the case of a 'historic bloc' (the expression corresponds approximately to Marx's 'production mode'), the structure and respectively the superstructure share the same hegemonic weight. Actually, hegemony, a term Gramsci introduced, is exercised especially through the superstructure. This consists in different 'philosophies' of social classes that, during historical periods determined by certain modes of production, compose 'history'. Unlike Marx, for which the superstructure is a direct consequence of the structures' form and content, Gramsci admits the existence of several philosophies displaced with ratio to the economic and social scaffolding on which they grew up. Here one has to take into account the 'philosophy of practice', critical philosophy, the attribute of critical intellectuals, which actively pleads for being aware of hegemony in the first place, than harmonizing the philosophies with the structure and their mixture in an unitary critic trough which the structure-superstructure duality is annulled and the hegemony of the historic bloc overcome. In short, this would be Gramsci's acceptance of the revolutionary process, one

in which dialectics has place within the structure-superstructure ratio.¹ Marx postulated, as we remember, that the dialectic process, historical materialism, takes place exclusively at the structural level: quantitative changes bring about, sooner or later, qualitative changes, i.e. the revolution.²

Today, I consider social-constructivism, which I will briefly discuss later and which massively recuperates conceptually elements of critical theory³ – the most appropriate scientific methodology for grasping in terms and eventually overcoming the structural problems which confront us now.

Barbarism and barbarians

Accordingly, we can say for sure only that we are in crisis, and the crisis is composed of several interconnected layers. What are the causes is the naturel question that comes next. Resisting the avalanche of interminable answers, I have decided for one only: barbarism. Before argumenting, the scientific common sense imposes defining the terms of the analysis. In Leszek Kołakowski's reading, barbarism represents the intrinsically incapacity of a culture or person to reason critically and especially self-critically. The incapacity to regenerate and progress, Marx would have probably said. And classical Europe reached a privileged global position, among other things, because 'This capacity to self-doubt, to renounce – to be honest, facing a powerful resistance – self-sufficiency and complacency' defines it. 'Ultimately', Kołakowski continues, 'we can say that Europe's cultural identity is consolidated by its refuse to accept any limited, closed form, from where the conclusion that European identity can

¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Opere Alese*, București: Editura Politică, 1969, p. 58.

² An excellent book which analyses the Marxist international sociology while opposing it to the Leninist political ideology, and in which Gramsci's name is in forefront id that of Vendulka Kubálkova and A. Cruickshank, *Marxism-Leninism and theory of international relations*, London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980. An excellent chapter regarding Gramscian political thinking is to be found in Leszek Kolakowski's, *Principalele curente ale marxismului. Prăbușirea*, (vol. III), București: Curtea Veche, 2010.

³ I have briefly analyzed critical theory's contribution to social constructivism in 'Dincolo de teoria critică. O posibilă inserare a filosofiei politice habermasiene în teoria relațiilor internaționale', in *Sfera Politicii*, nr. 138, 2009, pp. 96-113.

only affirm itself through uncertainty and anxiety'.⁴ But there are other reasons, just as important, which contribute in explaining European supremacy. I will discuss them on the next pages.

What does Europe and the West in general – especially the United States - have to do with the present crisis is truisitic: they bear the main responsibility. But, in the same time, the intellectual legacy of the same West contains the necessary resources for overcoming the present difficulties. And what barbarians and barbarism are we talking about in the end? About a barbarism condemned even by Marx in larger terms, namely ideology. I will use here a more specific sense for this concept: the incapacity to understand and relate to alterity through the prism of its fundamental legitimacy to exist. And, or, the undermining of empirical criterias to evaluate the theoretical in the name of a (barbarian) assault over reality in itself. Imposing therefore your images and perspectives as the only possible and desirable alternatives.

Now, one should notice that barbarians have two major features: they are of several kinds and they exist and act everywhere, regardless of the zone, region state or cultural environment taken into account. Furthermore, they exist even in ourselves in different dosages. So, one must be aware of snobbism, convenience, self-sufficiency, intransigency or pedantry. 'With them, no one is big. But without them, no one is alive', to paraphrase Constantin Noica with a memory quote, who wrote in his *Philosophical diary* about similar attitudes and behaviors: envy, pettiness, cowardness, hate.⁵

Let us insist a bit on Western barbarians, others like the Islamic ones, for example, being highly mediatized by now. I would classify them as 'hard' barbarians, including here religious fanatics and political extremists, respectively 'soft' barbarians, however no less dangerous, like the convinced followers of postmodernism. 'Hard' barbarians, Fascists, Communists and bigots, share with the 'soft' ones the contempt for the best product of European culture, to which we will return, modernity. The first want to preserve material, technical modernity, but to circumscribe it to a premodern grid of values, based on tradition, the preeminence of

⁴ Leszek Kołakowski, *Modernitatea sub un neobosit colimator*, București: Curtea Veche, 2007, p. 33.

⁵ Constantin Noica, *Jurnal filosofic*, București: Humanitas, 1990.

community over the individual, romantic heroism, on a organic conception over society and a 'love' relation between rulers and ruled, the first interpreted as virtue models, while the latter counting as obedience models. It is a historical fact that Fascism has its ideological roots in German romanticism, by which it was preceded with a century, more or less.⁶ Communists, on the contrary, aim to overcome modernity, reproaching it the exacerbation of freedom (read privileges) with ratio to social equality. Egaliberte, an idea discussed by Alex Callinicos following Etienne Balibar, assumes just the recovery of the equitable sense of unfulfilled modernity, of its failed promise to reconcile the two ideas in a fair and prosperous social framework. As moral guide, this idea is a real treasure.⁷ But as a political project, it degenerates into Leninism. Modernity never assumed more than harmonizing its ideals with social practices. However, Leninism confounds the two parts. As for bigots, the indivisibility of their truth and the rigidity with which they attempt imposing it as unique to all other forms of spiritual alternatives discloses them at once as irreconcilable enemies of pluralism.

But, as I have affirmed earlier, 'soft' barbarism is just as harmful and dangerous to the intellectual health of the West. Postmodernism, relativist moral nihilism, represents the last expression of Enlightenment's self-undermining once it renounced its pre-rational benchmarks, namely Christian philosophy, Kołakowski argues.⁸ Yes, Christian philosophy, because modernity was not necessarily born as a new paradigm, to use Thomas Kuhn's famous concept,⁹ but mostly trough a dialectic relation with Western Christianity, from which it 'emerged', as Marcel Gauchet pertinently argues.¹⁰ It is true that, due to its claim to possess the unique

⁶ See here Nicolae Râmbu's excellent work *Romantismul filosofic german*, Iași: Polirom, 2001. See also Ricarda Huch, *Romantismul german*, Humanitas: București, 2011.

⁷ See Alex Callinicos, *Egalitatea. Sărăcie și inegalitate în economiile dezvoltate*, București: Antet, 2004. Essays representative for Étienne Balibar's analyses can be found in *Masses, Classes, Ideas. Studies on Politics and Philosophy before and after Marx*, New York & London: Routledge, 1994.

⁸ Kołakowski, *Modernitatea*, pp. 26-50.

⁹ Thomas Kuhn, *The structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

¹⁰ See *Ieșirea din religie*, Humanitas: București, 2006 and especially *Dezvrăjirea lumii. O istorie politică a religiei*, București: Nemira, 2006.

and indivisible truth, the Catholic Church relates itself in a position structurally incompatible with modernity, on its turn configured by pluralism. Even Fernand Braudel admits Christianity to be 'the major component of European thinking, even of rationalist thinking which constituted against it and starting from it', but he does not forget to promptly add: 'to think against someone is to remain in its orbit'.¹¹ It is not my intention to make an apology to Catholicism. Not at all. On the other hand, as Kołakowski masterly points out, the critical spirit and the human rights idea from which modernity claims itself developed first of all within Christianity. The inviolability and intrinsic value of the human being, respectively the fertile tension between the metaphysics of the divine spirit, where the physical world was exclusively rejected as depository of sin and decadence and of pantheism on the other hand, which worshiped nature and the whole world as the supreme expression of creation – testify in this sense.¹²

A useful analogy in this stage of the discussion is that of the complex irrigation system which existed in Oltenia during the 'Ceaușescu era'. Although most part of the grains - people of second or third age nostalgically remember today the bucolic image of fields full of wheat or corn – were exported in order to finance a disproportionate industry which exceeded the internal energy supplies and the 'beloved leader' imported them from China, India and the Third World because he was obliged by his dissident, anti-Moscow posture, the Soviet Union being able to supply them quicker and cheaper and the products with which Ceaușescu strived to enter the Western market were of lower quality and ended up being sold, on credit, to the Third World – the mechanism could and should have been preserved after 1989 in the benefit of the society. It did not happen, everything was stolen – after a half of century of communist deprivations and highly cranked resentments, one can offer some extenuating circumstances, although not for the ex nomenklatura members,

¹¹ Fernand Braudel, *Gramatica civilizațiilor*, vol. II, București: Meridiane, 1994, p. 34.

¹² Kołakowski, *Modernitatea*, pp. 44-45. Interesting reflections on the relation between Christianity and rationalism, political or scientific, can be found in Alexis de Tocqueville's classic *Despre democrație în America*, București: Humanitas, 2005, vol. II, pp. 25-39, or in Jürgen Habermas, Joseph Ratzinger, *Dialectica secularizării. Despre rațiune și religie*, Cluj-Napoca: Apostrof, 2005.

metamorphosed, as in post-Soviet Russia, into oligarchs – and now, when we are borrowing in order to pay salaries and pensions in the first place, not to invest, we find ourselves confused and disillusioned.

It may seem contradictory to recognize the democratic virtues of Christianity and soon after to incriminate the ‘savage capitalism’ which ruined Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 1990s. But it is not necessarily so. Because modernity, on its turn, faced and it is still facing its own barbarian temptations, already mentioned: political extremism and moral relativism. And something else, as insidious and pernicious, but harder to spot due to the democratic camouflage it dull for so worn. Yes, capitalism. As the Inquisition represents the supreme expression of the ideologization and barbarization of Christianity, capitalism is correlatively, along with Fascism or Communism, a barbarization of modernity understood as reason, critical thinking and the ability of societies to differentiate themselves in relation to their pasts in order to progress, as Anthony Giddens argues¹³ - to differentiate in relation to, not to renounce past – a parasitism and suffocation of the free market based on free exchanges according to the Marxist equation merchandise – money – merchandise, monopolistically transformed in the direction money-merchandise-money; but the free market is not completely abolished, Braudel argues, and it continues to exist just as a legitimizing source of capitalism which claims itself from it, from free competition, while transforming free competition in exactly the opposite.

Matt Taibbi proves convincingly in a recent and easy readable book that free market needs speculators because the request and offer do not meet each other always face to face. To a certain extent, they are indispensable for lubricating the commercial process, buying from producers and selling to consumers for a certain commercial addition, of course. But when they are allowed, by the same state which was supposed to contain their activity, to expand their business indefinitely, they will create monopolies and increase the distance between consumers and producers to the point of their total separation. In this way, speculators will become the only or the most important clients of direct producers and they will sell everything they buy at arbitrary prices which tend to go up. Once

¹³ Anthony Giddens, Christopher Pierson, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: making sense of modernity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998

the market is completely controlled and the state becomes, on its turn, a speculator, an economic crisis is soon to follow: speculators can rise prices to the point of extreme, or lower them and borrow money to consumers at attractive interest rates to stimulate them in buying more. This is the exact mechanism that led to the real estate crisis in the United States. Giant financial corporations, the speculators, were ensured by the federal government against bankruptcy under the technical term 'risk absorption'. Their collapse, it was argued, would have triggered major economic short-circuits causing on their turn unemployment and social unrest. The government's position encouraged speculators to a behavior called 'predatory lending': once the safe mortgages were exhausted, 'subprime mortgages' were put in place. They had higher interest rates, due to the risks the bank or financial company was assuming lending money to poor people, many of them Mexican immigrants or Blacks. After the crisis hit, they were the first to blame, first of all by the companies they have lend them money just to obtain those higher interest mentioned above. Everyone knew this kind of credit was risky, but the banks pushed the maturity of the credits decades in the future, hoping they will never meet the financial judgment day. And they continued to borrow poor people money, often falsifying the paper work so they could ask for higher interest rates later. In this way, and in different economic fields, speculative bubbles have emerged, swelled and finally exploded in a series of crises that staked-out the entire economic history of America's 20th century. Trough inflation and by lowering interest rates the federal government was able to eventually overcome the problem by creating a new and bigger one instead. Lower interest rates affected the economies and safe investments of the population, which was basically forced to place their savings in riskier investments with bigger interest rates, nothing more than another bubble in the making. This is what also happened in 2008, only at an incomparable higher level. Companies like Goldman Sachs borrowed frantically, knowing the government will bail them out once the crisis will make its presence felt. New financial products like 'derivatives', 'credit default swaps' or 'securitization pools' appeared. The first are bonds with an unusual long maturity term and generally low interest rates, especially designed to attract money in different forms for future speculative bubbles. A credit default swap is a procedure by which a bank that lent a risky

credit, like a subprime mortgage, buys a warranty from a third part, to which it pays, let's say monthly, a certain amount of money, paying in the end approximately a quarter of the total loan. In exchange, the third part will pay the entire loan if the client defaults. In this way, colossal sums of virtual money, credit, were transformed apparently in liquid money and thereby allowing financial organisms which were engaged in this kind of practices among them and with the state – to borrow and in turn lend more money. 'Securitization pools' were common accounts banks created with this kind of credit cosmetized to look like money. The federal government helped the ongoing bubble by allowing the diminishment of 'marginal requirements' which was about 1/10, which meant that for every ten dollars borrowed, the bank had to have a reserve of one dollar in cash. The state also got involved, like a private actor, on the real estate market. Aware of the developing financial storm, the American banks, interested only in the high interest rates which they collected every month, sold many of these securitization pools and derivatives on the international markets. But once the American real estate market reached its limit and some of the people subjected to predatory lending started to default, the prices dropped and the bill came much quicker than expected. This time, some - not too many - of the banks and financial companies that did all this in the name of free market had to come to terms with bankruptcy when they looked, as usual, to the state for help. The real estate bubble, connected with other parallel ones, was simply way too large to be depreciated trough inflation.¹⁴

What kind of barbarism is this, to use the conceptual lens proposed above? Neither 'hard' nor 'soft', it could be named the capitalist (the historical process) or neoliberal (the highly speculative form global capitalism adopted at the end of the 1990s) barbarism, an ideologized combination of the two, although emphasizing the last one, the postmodern relativist and idealized agenda which claims for every discourse almost the same weight, thereby allowing neoliberal barbarism the protection of discursive legitimacy. But profit, theft and economic crimes posses an objective social existence that goes far beyond the simple 'textuality', to use Richard Rorty's term, abstruse, confusing, ambiguous and irrelevant due to social isolation and self-undermining relativism.

¹⁴ See Matt Taibbi, *Griftopia. Bubble machines, vampire squads and the long con that is breaking America*, New York: SPIEGEL&GRAU, 2010.

Turning back to the relation between modernity and the religious phenomenon, several years ago, in a far-reaching dialogue, Jürgen Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger, while discussing about the dialectics of secularization, reached a surprisingly unanimous conclusion: both religion and reason cannot exist without constantly balancing each other, reciprocally exposing their 'pathologies'.¹⁵

But the capitalist pathology escaped, until now, untreated (and many times, undiscovered) because a lot of reasons which cannot be detailed here and probably because it was the first to shout out: thief! But let us repeat the essential, namely the need to avoid the frequent and serious mistake of equating capitalism with modernity like Leninism and partially Marxism do, although Leninism on its turn is a pathology of Marxism which, on its turn, can be understood as a critical and radical form of modernity, an indispensable corrective, if you like, of Enlightenment. Should modernity be renounced due to pathologies it developed and will possible develop in the future, or should we correct these barbarian tendencies and hopefully, someday, prevent them? My bet is on the second position.

Was this an Eurocentrist discourse to this point? I consider that, in order to firmly grasp the profound stakes of the debate, it is necessary to renounce the multiculturalist fatigue. First of all, because it fragments societies, wakening not only their cohesion but also their civic capacity to mobilise in order to claim their rights from neoliberal, neocommunist or oppressive governments in general.¹⁶ Second, multiculturalism and to some extent political correctness are just masks ingeniously instrumented by our capitalist pathology in order to reconfirm and reinforce its own hegemony.

Let us briefly take into account the material genesis of capitalism or how Europe came to be the centre of the earth. Fernand Braudel, Immanuel Wallerstein and Eric Wolf explain: due to several geographic, political, economic and social particularities, not necessarily in this order. Surrounded by seas and oceans, Europe was basically invited to get out

¹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, Joseph Ratzinger, *op. cit.* Kołakowski reached the same conclusion earlier: *Modernitatea*, p. 49.

¹⁶ See here Alexandru Mamina, *Redefinirea identității. Pentru o social-democrație critică*, Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2010, pp. 43-45.

into the world. But China did it much faster and much better, even if it abruptly stopped at the beginning of the 15th century. Why? Because the immense northern border of the prosperous empire was frequently pierced by incursions made by some nomad tribes and its resources were mobilized in this direction. The times of sea travelling were over. In about two centuries, all marine skills were forgotten. How China's emperor did achieve this? And why is Chinese political culture much more authoritarian than the European one, if we are to politics? Let us start a response attempt by first taking into account material factors. In China people eat rice. Rice has a much better yield per hectare than wheat and, in southern China, it produces averagely two harvests a year. And there is plenty of time for a harvest of cabbage or carrots. Furthermore, rice does not need rotation or fallow ground. It grows in the same places for thousands of years. That is why it was able to sustain a huge demographic growth compared to that of Europe. But rice plantations do not care for themselves. Thousands of people are needed for this task. A central authoritarian rule, dominated by mandarins, becomes almost unavoidable, also to protect the crops and the Sky Kingdom from northern barbarians (far less dangerous than the barbarians the present essay deals with). Europe, on the other hand, fed itself with wheat. Better said, the European aristocracy. The commoners ate millet, rye or oat. But the point is that the yield of these cereals is much smaller than that of rice, they produce only one harvest per year and they need yearly or two years rotations and fallow ground. This is why Europeans are fewer and more individualistic, to force the argument. Without a central political rule, but hundred, even thousands of city states and small states which competed against each other in various ways, every one tried to obtain advantages on the expense of others. They encouraged inventiveness and progress in order to benefit from them and outrun their competitors, not necessarily from some noble humanistic and moral initiatives. This represented the crucial aspect of the initial development of capitalism. And there is something more: the Chinese, being so many, counted as cheap laborers, a fact which retarded a Chinese industrial boom. The Europeans, on the other hand, were fewer and therefore expensive, something which boosted industry. Why gun powder and paper that the Chinese invented centuries before they were introduced in Europe,

stagnated on their birthplace? Due to the absence of the competitive dynamic that structured the old continent, its capitalist propulsion.

Of course, material factors are just one part of this story, which would not be complete without the European critical capacities, previously mentioned, its specific culture, religion and so on. All play a major role in the development of European identity. Furthermore, all are important, although I incline towards the material dimension of this identity as the initial moving force of the whole process. One could argue nevertheless that other parts of the world were also opened to oceans and seas: Turkey or Greece, in the proximity of Western Europe, and, on the global map, the Americas, Africa or Australia. Why did they not develop according to the European model? First of all, they lacked the social, cultural, political or administrative fragmentedness of post-Roman Europe, impelled to resort to primitive types of economy that did for a long time without coinage and, consequently, major commercial breakthroughs.¹⁷ Furthermore, several hundred up to a thousand years later, that particular fragmentedness resulted in consolidated political diversity fueled by numerous types of competition. In turn, competition led to increased risk assuming, among others, in the form of financing inventions, which could gain advantage for some political units at the expense of others - both on land and oceans or seas. The Americas, Africa or Australia, all of them developed in far from similar social, political or economic circumstances. As for Greece or Turkey, who witnessed and sometimes took part more closely in the process of European global affirmation - one should remember, first of all, the long period of Turkish domination over Greece in the modern era. Therefore, for the purpose of the present argument, they can be treated as a whole. And let us remember another thing: the decline of the Ottoman Empire basically overlapped the ascension of Western Europe. Centuries of strong bureaucracy and central discretionary rule gradually increased the distance between a diverse, dynamic and now fully experiencing the industrial revolution Europe, on one hand, and a military weakening and economic

¹⁷ See in this regard Robert Heilbroner, *Filosofii lucrurilor pământești. Viețile, epocile și doctrinele marilor economiști*, București: Humanitas, 2005 and Glyn Davies, *A history of money. From ancient times to the present day*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002.

contracting empire.¹⁸ As in the case of China, although the two social and cultural units are highly different - the Ottoman Empire's progress was retarded by strong central rule and bureaucracy.

Until here, nothing bad, one could say, about the ascent of capitalism in Europe: progress, competition, inventions, and welfare. Welfare, yes. But not for everyone. Only for the elites. It is true that, gradually, capitalism improved the lifestyle of the commoners, but only to stimulate them to produce more. And also gradually, the gap between aristocracy and the masses kept on growing. But capitalism becomes really noxious when global expansion and the discovery (read exploitation) of the new world triggered massive enrichment desires for kings, aristocrats and merchants. Let us not allow ourselves to be fascinated by the pirate's treasures: they were only getting the crumbs. Slowly, credits, loans and banks emerged, along with the appetite for profit. And this led to the infamous colonial experiment and to the use and abuse of enormous quantities of resources and goods. The results of development, however, were disproportionately confined outside the spaces which held those resources. What is happening today with the Middle East oil can offer an insightful, although not exactly accurate analogy over the process.¹⁹

Gradually, our capitalist barbarism started to suppurate. 'A man which buys fish while it is still in the water may get only the smell in the end' says an old French proverb. The advice of this saying resumes rather accurately capitalism's developments and setbacks. The credits started to be exponentially amplified, the debts climbed threatening and the temptation of fast and substantial gain diverted the attention from reason, common sense and the widening economic gap. The distance between real and virtual economy increased until the whole mirage crumbled. Only to start

¹⁸ For a brief but interesting global account of Ottoman decadence during modern times see Robert van de Weyer, *Islamul și Occidentul. O nouă ordine politică și religioasă după 11 septembrie*, București: ALLFA, 2001.

¹⁹ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, vol. 1, 2, 3, *The Structures of everyday life. The limits of the possible; The Wheels of change, The Perspective of the World*, (London, Glasgow, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto, Johannesburg: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd, 1985, 1983, 1984); Immanuel Wallerstein, *Sistemul mondial modern*, vol 1, 2, 3, 4, *Agricultura capitalistă și originile economiei mondiale europene în secolul al XVI-lea, Mercantilism și consolidarea economiei mondiale europene, 1600-1750*, București: Meridiane, 1992, 1993; Eric Wolf, *Europa și populațiile fără istorie*, Chișinău: Arc, 2001.

again, with vengeance (see supra the brief discussion of some of the financial mechanisms that triggered the present American and soon to follow global economic crisis).

And now back to our Western barbarians. They are more important or more powerful than other culture's barbarians because the West itself became more powerful, through a complex of circumstances briefly sketched above. As we have seen, multiculturalism and political correctness basically elude the stake of the present's main problems. So does the debate between universalism and exclusivism. We are where we are today and from here we must start the claim for civil rights and social equality. Globally, modernity 'contradicts itself if, trying to avoid barbarian temptations, it concedes *others* the right to be barbarians (emphasis in orig.).'²⁰ Reason, discernment, critic and self-critic are not valid only for the West, but for everyone.

The social-constructivist solution

Before applying social-constructivist concepts to the barbarians and barbarisms identified below, we should turn our attention to the development and some of the central tenets of this new type of social theory.

Social-constructivism, a new international theory developed in the last years of the Cold War and actually a new sociological method, in a large sense, is experiencing today an enviable reputation. As a post-positivist theory – based on denouncing 'hard' scientific hypotheses which operate by distinguishing between the researcher and the object of research, respectively facts and values – it brings forward a new epistemology, one not so radical as the postmodern one, nor relativistic. In Emanuel Adler's terms, constructivism proposes a 'middle ground' between, on one hand, the restructuring of the scientific principles of knowledge and, on the other hand, the empirical validation of the affirmed results.²¹ Between the emphasis on interpretation existent in post-positivist philosophical currents, respectively the classic rationalist perspective of modernity, centered on the individual.

²⁰ Kołakowski, *Modernity's End*, p. 38.

²¹ Emmanuel Adler, *Communitarian international relations*, Routledge: New York, 2005.

Social-constructivism has deep roots in the innovative sociological approaches from the second half of the 20th century, a period in which the 'hard' social structures enounced and analyzed Emile Durkheim, even Max Weber, are undergoing major contestations. The accent lays now on processes, on social development. The implicit static scientific approach of the 19th century is is rejected in the name of the intersubjective dynamic of social groups, permanently constituted and reconstituted trough the interaction between agents (individuals, non-governmental organizations) and structures (political power, administrative, institutional or cutumiar networks), having a constitutive role in social functionality. The 'structures' create 'norms' and 'resources', Giddens argues. Norms represent the legal ways trough which agents produce resources. Throughout this process and trough a set of well defined practices, the agents effectively reproduce social structures outside which they cannot exist in the end. But agents are not passive instruments at the arbitrary of structures, but conscious subjects that can and must reconstitute structures, composed in the end by their own interactions. On their turn, the structures interact permanently, this dynamics constituting the society's moving force.²² Constructivists take the sociological distinction between agents and structures and extrapolate it at the international level. Anticipating the methodological confusion that can arouse in this point (agents can be individuals, political parties, states or international organizations and so can the structures, excepting the first mentioned category), Harry Gould proposes taking the problem into account on various social levels of analysis. 'The agent is the part; the structure is the whole. At the next level of analysis, the original structure/whole is now the agent/part, while at the inferior level of analysis, the original agent/part is now the relevant structure/whole'.²³ In other words, in a given city, the agents can be the citizens, and the city hall the structure. Then, at the next level of analysis, the city hall becomes the agent in relation with the county council or the relevant political parties in that specific county. Moreover, the county councils and city halls and the local

²² Anthony Giddens, *The constitution of society. Outline of the theory of structuration*, Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.

²³ Harry Gould, „What is at stake in the agent-structure debate?“, in Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf, Paul Kovert, *International relations in a constructed world*, Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998, pp. 79-100.

branches of the relevant political parties can be considered agents with reference to the government, the governmental agencies, main political parties, parliament, president etc. Finally, the government (state), along with different international organizations becomes agents in relation to the anarchic international system (free, dynamic, not ruled by a global state, a case in which international relations in the form we know it would cease to exist; international anarchy derives from state's internal sovereignty, on one hand, and their external independence, on the other hand, meaning therefore movement and uncertainties and not militancy oriented towards abolishing states itself, like in the case of the ideological sense of anarchy).

Interacting, the agents and structures build up the social environments in which we live. In this way, social reality, with all the objects and subjects that define it, is socially constructed. Material factors do not exist independent of our perception and ability to socially construct them by giving them specific roles in our day to day life. In this point, constructivism splits in several branches. Without going into details, we can distinguish between two major types of constructivism: one for which material factors exist also outside the social micro-climate that we bring into place, respectively a more radical constructivism, for which the whole world is socially constructed, including 'hard' material factors. In the first category, Alexander Wendt, a name at the forefront of the theory, considers that no matter how much we can socially construct the sea, we can still drown in it in several circumstances. In the same way, no matter how much we try to socially construct the reality of flying pigs, this would not be possible because, simply, pigs do not fly.²⁴ Furthermore, an enormous avalanche destroys the forest and the little village on the side of the mountain; regardless of the social construction of the lens through which it is perceived. And the list can go on. Therefore, there are natural forces, Wendt concludes, independent of the human will and the possibilities to influence them. What I have referred to as radical constructivists (the term does not designate a form of militancy but going all the way with the constructivist methodology and assumptions), from which I would mention first of all Nicholas Onuf, whom we will meet below – affirms that all reality a person or community can access during their life time is

²⁴ Alexander Wendt, *Social theory of international politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

socially constructed. This does not mean that the influence of natural forces is not recognized, not at all; what it means is the influence, the impact and the knowledge of this forces, eventually, cannot be something different than a superposition of social constructions. The sea can drown us in certain circumstances, yes, but drowning is a social construction, and so is the sea, to a certain point; none can exist outside human interpretations and actions which offers them sense and manages them in social accepted ways. Pigs do not fly, but only a human can imagine them doing so: this image is therefore, on its turn, a social construction. An avalanche is, accordingly, tragic just because people attribute it connotations like these; in the absence of the human factor, the avalanche would not mean anything. It would have a physical existence, nobody denies it, but it would be something outside the direct human experience and knowledge and it could not exist eventually as an avalanche. The denomination in itself, avalanche, reflects the social construction attributed to the phenomenon in a certain society; in other societies there are different denominations, each language expressing different, but interdependent to a certain degree, although not always - social constructions, respectively social constructions of natural phenomena that have the same physic effects, but which enter in social consciousness and realities, again, trough different, even if similar constructions.

Language, experience, culture, habits, tradition, fears, aspirations, hopes – all this social constructions indebted to the peremptory dynamics and flexible relations between agents and structures, gradually sediment identities. These are individual or social and they represent social constructivism's central concept.²⁵ Identities are not fixed, as they tend to be perceived by other theorists dealing with international relations like realists (conservatives), pluralists (liberals) or Marxists (social-democrats) – but flexible and dynamic, reflecting the ratio between agents and structures on different levels of analysis, from local to global.

Until now, social constructivism does not seem to help much in our efforts to analyze present day barbarians. It would appear to be rather descriptive and eclectic than analytic, besides confronting us with a methodological problem: barbarians and barbarisms are agents, structures or both? How do they interact, among them or with others, what are the consequences of those interactions and what identities are they struggling

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 224.

to produce? Even if, intuitively, we can observe that barbarians and the ideologies they advance are agents as well as structures, this would not make a notable or any contribution at all to our analysis. So let us move on to Onuf's radical constructivism, a much more useful tool in our methodological quest.

First of all, Wendt's constructivism does not benefit an appropriate methodology for social sciences, despite of its generous ethical intentions. The problem of empirical analyses is not at all negligible in social-constructivism, questioning in the end even its disciplinary status.²⁶ This minus is covered, in my opinion, by Nicholas Onuf's works. Onuf proposes, in order to solve the methodological dualism agent-structure, the concept of norms (*rules and norms*). Rules (laws in general, but also practices and habits) and norms (moral and behavioral dispositions that legitimize rules in a given society) are placed at the intersection between agents and structures, essentially constituting both parts. Agents use rule to follow their interests (defined as security, position and wealth), material and non-material, while for the structures rules stabilize and homogenize the social framework in which agents interact and by doing so they basically reproduce the structure itself. Each agent acts rationally, following to maximize its interest with minimum costs amid legislation and an ethic code both anterior and interdependent. From an external point of view, agents do not seem to always act rational, but this is due to the complexity of social existence and the impossibility to grasp it and less exhaust it in scientific terms. In their regard, agents act rationally, from which we can conclude that reason itself is a social construction dependent on the culture, values, interests and habits of societies, even if these different reasons can intersect and superpose on consistent levels.

Rules and the ways in which agents use them can also have unintended consequences. 'Whenever rules have the effect of distributing advantages unequally, the result is rule'. Rule, in Onuf's conceptualization, means leadership generated by social inequalities. Politics would represent a narrow and incomplete substitute for Onuf's 'rule'. Every society is 'asymmetric', unequal to a certain extent and needs rules and politics in order to exist and to administrate itself; but when that asymmetry grows

²⁶ Andre Kukla, *Constructivism and the philosophy of science*, New York: Taylor & Francis, 2002.

too much, it does so by generating tyranny.²⁷ Therefore the barbarian, absolutist temptation is permanently in the shadow of plural societies and it is up to us, the agents, to keep it there through rules as equitable and efficient as possible. In this way, the possibility of structural barbarization diminishes, although it never completely disappears.

Onuf renounces discourse analysis favored by postmoderns, proposing instead 'speech acts'. Discourse analysis, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe understand it, could have been useful in the present essay. In their conception, which is not at all relativist, discourses are mechanisms that strive to create social identities in certain social environments structured by conflicts and antagonisms. Based on the 'linguistic turn', which favors language and in general a 'reflectivist' approach to science, Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of discourse is the following: 'we will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call *discourse*' (italics in orig).²⁸ Therefore, discourses are strategies of fragmenting societies in order to re-legitimize and reinforce certain hegemonies upon them. Why I favor Onuf's social-constructivism over Laclau and Mouffe's discourse? Although social-constructivism appeared also after the linguistic turn and it is also reflexive in its methodological approach, and although Laclau and Mouffe transposed the concept of discourse from the postmodern field to that of social theory – discourses, in my opinion, do not grasp sufficiently enough the social realities that are supposed to articulate. Many of them are irrelevant in the day to day life. More important, and this is a critic John Searle addresses to social-constructivism itself, discourses fall in the logical trap of 'circular regression': if everything is discursively created, then the discourse itself needs discourse. But a theory can be validated only in relation with something else, not by its own concepts and methods.²⁹ I shall analyze next

²⁷ Nicholas Onuf, *World*, p. 22.

²⁸ Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and socialist strategy. Towards a radical democratic politics*, London, New York: Verso, 2001, p. 105. See also Lucian Vesalon, 'Populism și neoliberalism în discursul "modernizării statului"', in Sergiu Gherghina; Sergiu Mișcoiu, (eds.), *Partide și personalități populiste în România postcomunistă*, Iași: Institutul European, 2010, pp. 191-194.

²⁹ See John Searle, *Realitatea ca proiect social*, Iași: Polirom, 2000.

Searle's contribution to and also its pertinent critic of what I have called here radical social-constructivism.

From Searle's works in cognitive philosophy, Nicholas Onuf borrows the term 'speech acts'. 'We tell people how things are (Assertives), we try to get them to do things (Directives), we commit ourselves to doing things (Commissives), we express our feelings and attitudes (Expressives), and we bring about changes in the world through our utterances (Declarations)'.³⁰ From the five speech acts Searle proposed, Onuf uses only three, the first three to be precise: assertive, directive and commissives speech acts. According to a certain illocutionary model in a given society we are correlatively dealing with 'hegemonic societies' (the Indian castes), 'authorithary hierarchized societies' (authoritarian and totalitarian regime) and 'formally hierarchized societies' (democratic-liberal regimes).³¹ Expressives and Declaratives are not taken into account because, in Onuf's opinion, they do not produce relevant social effects. Speech acts are meaningless without in the absence of rules, rule and also resources (social wealth distributed by structures for agents, but mostly for themselves). Assertive speech acts create assertive rules (practices, habits) and hegemonic societies (assertive rule), directive speech acts produce directive rules and political authoritarianism (directive rule); finally, commissive speech acts create heteronomy, or the 'unintended consequences' mentioned above: agents which act rational but produce nevertheless irrational consequences. Therefore, hegemony is unavoidable in a form or another, Onuf argues, but the less asymmetric, the better.³² If the West built its identity on both directive and commissive rules, having in turn afferent rule, today, assertive rules and rule are becoming more and more important. This, I argue, is a consequence of barbarians and their actions. Assertive rules are technical, instructive and, what is most important, they eliminate any kind of critic by claiming to have sole possession of 'the truth' (in whatever form it suits them). With the debates out, hegemony can only become progressively asymmetric. Onuf warned about this in *World of*

³⁰ John Searle, *Expression and meaning. Studies in the theory of speech acts*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, viii.

³¹ Nicholas Onuf, „Constructivism”, in Vendulka Kubáľková, Nicholas Onuf, Paul Covert, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-78.

³² Nicholas Onuf, *World*.

our making, arguing about the aggressive publicity and increasing spectacle character of Western societies, instrumented by elites which legitimate their privileges through both premodern, ritualistic means (secular ceremonies of politicians, bureaucrats or managers) and also rational, modern ones, like managing social resources with scientific instruments and goals.

Turning back to Searle – which Onuf calls clearly a positivist³³ – he is dismissive about radical social-constructivism, accusing it of the same circular regression that I have applied to discourse theory. If everything is socially constructed, then social-constructivism itself needs to be socially constructed. Beside this methodological imputation, Searle is also skeptic regarding the emancipatory breath of social-constructivism, regarding it as naïve. So, is social-constructivism a theoretical trap? My answer is no and I will try to detail it further.

Searle's 'fundamental ontology' consists in 'particles' which find themselves in 'field forces' and create living or non-living 'systems'. Some living systems have evolved to the point where they developed 'conscience', which is nothing more than a bunch of cells located inside the brain; conscience is therefore a physical, material aspect. Some of those evolved systems also develop 'intentionality' or 'the capacity of the mind to represent objects and state of things from the outside world, different from itself'.³⁴ Furthermore, Searle distinguishes between subjective and objective epistemology and, respectively, subjective and objective ontology. If I like a painting more than another I place myself in the field of subjective epistemology. If I inform myself to find out where and when that painter, let's say Van Gogh, lived, I operate with objective epistemic data. In case I accidentally hit a rock, I also have access to subjective ontology: pain is something that, along humans, animals feel as well. One does not need a language to experience pain. It is a pre-linguistic sensation. And therefore, thinking can be also pre-linguistic. But this is where my knowledge stops. I cannot have access to objective ontology. Thought is the last resort that allows me to experience subjective ontology. Subjective and objective epistemology needs more than thinking, they need to be socially constructed. But, to be socially constructed, they need an objective ontology to relate to. Otherwise they become captives of the circular regression

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

³⁴ John Searle, *Realitatea ca proiect social*, pp. 18-19.

specter. In this way, Searle brilliantly objects to postmodernism's relativism: it is a question of epistemology, not one of ontology. Not everything that exists is relative, but everything that we know. And knowledge can be both relative and objective. Relative, because there are many scientific methodologies that provide access, within their own conceptualizations, to different kind of 'truths'. Objective, because they provide specific ways of analysis independent with relation to the researcher, although how a researcher choses its field of study is a question of husserlian phenomenology, and therefore not totally safe from subjectivity.

On short, for Searle mountains have an objective ontology that allows them to exist like mountains even in the absence of every human being or every living thing. For Onuf, on the other hand, mountains possess and undeniable objective ontology, but we do not have a single clue of what this ontology is and how to approach it. Mountains are social constructions accessible to us only as mountains. We have arrived here at the old philosophical dispute between realists, for which things exist as they do independent of how we perceive them, and nominalists, who argue that the label we attach to things makes them intelligible to us as things; outside this labels or names, the world is absolute meaningless. We can conclude that constructivism is divided today by a modern form of this controversy, which would pace Wendt on the realist side, along with Searle, although he is not an international relations scholar and Onuf on the nominalist side. But, changing the perspective, constructivism as a whole post-positivist epistemology can be placed in the nominalist side, while the philosophies that infuse intellectual life to the, let us call them pre-linguistic turn international relations theories, are realist.

So, can we save Onuf's radical constructivism from circular regression? Should we, in the light of the pertinent objections Searle makes against it? We should not forget that the world of humans is socially constructed on different degrees. Structures, for example, are socially constructed institutions that have sedimented in time and therefore achieved an objective existence. In relation to agents, however, they are less socially constructed. And, what is more important, they need to be permanently re-constructed in order not to distance themselves too much from agents and by doing this increasing asymmetry. As a social science,

constructivism deals primary with the social and political world. Its concepts cannot be applied to all scientific fields or all existence in general, at least not satisfactory. And as a social and political science, constructivism cannot renounce a normative vein in the absence of which it would be not only relativist and therefore postmodern, but also dangerous in the sense that it would probably tend to equate the Nazi or communist discourse to the liberal one. Politics and the social world in general are not only about how things are, but, infinitely more important, how things are and how *should* they be.

Last, but not least, constructivism means, beside concepts and methodologies, empathy³⁵: in order to properly relate to the other one, we must, first of all, know and understand him in his own terms. The converse is none the less true. Only after that we can begin to construct a solid and mutual advantageous relation. Idealistic? Maybe. But all progress the world experienced was animated by ideals. Ideals must not be confounded to politics, it is true, but they must act as a corrective against the barbarization of politics.

As for our barbarians, we can now return to them after this theoretical constructivist periplus. Although it seemed to syncope the conceptual continuity of the present essay, the brief discussion of constructivism operated in the above pages actually helps clarifying the stake and also some methodological details of this paper. Namely that present day barbarians use preponderantly assertive speech acts and rules in order to advance alternative constructions in the form of more asymmetric hegemonies and, nevertheless, barbarians act, on different social levels, both as agents and structures in attaining this goal.

Instead of conclusions: Hannibal was never at the gates, but inside

The contemporary crisis signifies the chance of modern identity to impose itself against barbarism and barbarians. I repeat: the chance of modern, not European identity; we have already established that this kind of postmodern dilemma do not belong to the present essay. We are looking for too long in a wrong direction. Barbarians were always and continue to

³⁵ Michael Shafir, *Radiografii și alte fobii. Studii contemporane, publicistică și pubelistică*, Iași: Institutul European, 2010.

remain among us, not at the gates. The manipulations that recycled over time popular prejudices in order to transform different ethnic, religious or sexual groups in escape goats are nothing but their work. The West is not besieged today by Muslim immigrants, Romanian or East European immigrants or China's rise. No. It is besieged first of all by its own barbarians. In a usual crisis, to say so, the structure is the first affected (in a social-constructivist, not Marxist sense). Agents can profit by re-elaborating new norms and rules through which to follow their individual or collective interests, flexibilizing in this way the structure and eliminating as much unintended consequences created by the unequal distribution of resources, among them political authoritarianism and, once again, capitalism – as possible. Yes, the capitalist barbarism, in no case economic competition or the individual's possibilities to affirm itself. Can we use the social economic, administrative and philosophic resources of modernity as remedy against the present crisis?

A very difficult question, especially due to the fact that the scale of the crisis confused both structures and agents. The latter no longer know what concessions to ask for, while the former, instead of facilitating a more equitable distribution of resources, they only perpetuate and even amplify the social downshift in the name of a temporary austerity which would soon trigger, through monetary means, healthy economic growth. But growth is, at least for the moment, nowhere at sight. Consequently, asymmetry is making its presence felt more often than usual. The case of Hungary's anti-democratic sideslip is the best contemporary proof in this regard. And growing asymmetries are the work of barbarians, who are once again besieging us in the open. They often pose as agents fighting alongside against oppressive structures; other times they pose as grieving and wise structures which understand present hardships and regret the painful and unpopular measures they were forced to put in practice for the agents' own good. But those measures create the opposite of what was hoped for. Social inequality is growing due to the persistence in distributing resources asymmetrically, tensions erupt on both agent and structure sides and directive rule is more and more probable. Historical examples of (barbarian) directive-assertive rule like Fascism, Nazism or Communism are relevant in this regard: barbarians will try to gain credit by promising social order, appearing as the Gordian knot cutters and

pacifiers of tired and disillusioned agents and reformers of unresponsive structures. If agents learned anything from history, now is the time to prove it. To the assertive and directive speech acts of the representatives of (neoliberal) structures agents can oppose successfully declarative and commissive speech acts. And not only speech acts, but also the rules incorporating them. Like Onuf had anticipated over two decades ago, even not if taking into account a future economic crisis of the scale and impact of the present one – growing assertivity is disbalancing the historic order of the Western world, leading to increased asymmetries and, consequently, barbarization. Barbarian agents (propagandists, political parties, different extreme movements, some multinational corporations or monetary institutions, dictatorial states) do nothing besides giving instructions about where did we end up and how we can overcome the present state of affairs. In other words, there is no other narrative but their own: we are invited to either be part of it or be part of it later, after regretting our initial imprudence. Critical approaches or debates, alternative constructions to be precise, are condescendingly dismissed as eternal wails which only complicate the situation further instead of resolving it. Barbarian structures, on the other hand, (some of them also agents, depending on the interactions and the social level of observation), distribute resources in ways that disadvantage social agents (people protesting in the streets, non-governmental organizations, human rights activists and any other form social organization condemning the work of barbarians) – but presenting it as the only possible and rational way to act. The meaning of rationality, like the meaning of much everything else, is therefore confiscated and becomes a privileged tool for elites preoccupied of consolidating their positions with the price of increasing asymmetries and the assertive rules and rule behind them. Hannibal is therefore in the city. And his powers are growing.

We should finally overcome the anarchistic conceptions of the possibility of existence and prosperity for agents outside structures. Wrong! Agents cannot exist outside structures and structures cannot exist outside agents. The activities of agents, whatever are they, can only reproduce structures which, on their turn, try to temperate the agents, even produce them in a consumerist way and thereby removing them from their real interests and possibilities of action. All that remains is the reproduction of structures in a direction as equitable as possible. But how can agents be

motivated to act when their carelessness only consolidates structures in undemocratic ways? I do not know. What I do now, to paraphrase Marx, is that they have only their chains to lose. What world could be gained after the crisis? Hopefully, a less asymmetric one.

I cannot finish without pointing out once again that my intention was not to praise the West, but to affirm a common sense truth, namely the West has, today, the most important material and intellectual resources to deal with the crisis. How it obtained them is another story. I am not implying the West will once again reconfigure the post-crisis world after its 'image and likeness'. This is no longer undesirable, but impossible. The structure of the post-American international system or the post-American world, as Fareed Zakaria refers to it,³⁶ with the risk of using 'hard' and general terms, belongs now, in Braudel's *longue durée*, to the populated East of the globe. It is neither the time nor place to start interminable discussions over a new international ethics, a new mentality and so on. This is already done by so many others. Let us just look at the migration of international capital in China and India. And to the growing Asian investments in research and exact sciences.³⁷ The crisis did not affect so much the emerging markets as it hit the global economic centre. The neoliberal speculations made the virtual prosperity of credits crumble like a house of cards, while China's monetary and mercantile policies, based on stocking liquidities, helps Beijing move more freely in the international financial chaos. But the price ordinary Chinese pay for this is barbarism. With other words, let us not desire another form of barbarism to replace our own types. This is nothing more than barbarism itself.

In a way, the undergoing global process is similar to what happened at the end of the 16th century, and at a considerable smaller scale, in Europe: the protestant northern part of the continent triumphed against the Catholic south. Was it Weber's protestant ethic that won? Or the phobia of predestination's uncertainties, which would have triggered wealth accumulations from the part of believers in order to please God, as

³⁶ Fareed Zakaria, *The post-American world and the rise of the Rest*, New York: Penguin Books, 2008.

³⁷ See in this regard Thomas Fiedman, *The world is flat. A brief history of the Twenty-first century*, New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

Hirschman expands the argument?³⁸ No one can deny that protestant ethics played a major identitary role in a more and more uncertain and basically forced to reconstruct itself space, as Catholicism kept the old social structures of the Roman Empire, immobile and little or not at all predisposed to accept the social-economic dynamics and the permanent risks entailed by capitalism. But the European north imposed itself first of all because it facilitated navigation by building smaller, cheaper and faster ships than the heavy Portuguese galleys, for example. And the costs of shipping merchandise, capitalism's moving force, become proportional much lower. Moreover, the wood or cereal reserves of the north impulse the development of a long distance transport network which the capitalist boom amplified exponentially, also profiting by the massive economic crisis that the south underwent at the end of the 16th century.³⁹ Wallerstein shares the same opinion. Although it considers that 'protestant theology reasons more with capitalism than Catholic theology' he does not forget to add that, 'On the other hand, it seems generally true that any complex system of ideas can be manipulated in order to serve a certain social or politic objective'. His conclusion resonates profoundly with that of Braudel's: 'Trough a series of accidental historical developments, Protestantism came to be identified, in a large extent, during the Reform, with forces that favored the expansion of commercial capitalism, within strong nation-states, and with countries in which these forces were dominant'.⁴⁰ Global south is today in a similar position to that of the European north approximately half of millennia ago.

The West can only hand over the 'torch' to a post-Western world to which's genesis we are assisting, occupying of course a central position in this maybe not so *longue durée* transition. I do not regret the new side of events and I am not complaining, like Oswald Spengler or Samuel

³⁸ See Max Weber, *Etica protestantă și spiritul capitalismului*, București: Humanitas, 2007 and Albert Hirschman, *Pasiunile și interesele. Argumente politice în favoarea capitalismului anterioare triumfului său*, București: Humanitas, 2004.

³⁹ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, The Wheels of change*, pp. 569-572.

⁴⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Sistemul mondial modern*, vol. 1, p. 220.

Huntington did, about the 'decline of the West'.⁴¹ I am just trying to understand it and plead, with the means available to me, for its fairness. Every system bifurcates, sooner or later, Wallerstein argues, and is to be replaced by another one. What we can and must do is warn and act against the barbarization of the world about to be born.

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⁴¹ See Oswald Spengler, *The decline of the West*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 and Samuel Huntington, *Ciocnirea civilizațiilor și refacerea ordinii mondiale*, București: Antet, 1998.

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**EU - SUI GENERIS ENTITY
CAN THE INTEGRATION MODEL BE REPLICATED?
AN EXPLORATORY INSIGHT TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

Raluca Oprescu*

Abstract

In the past two decades, there have been several attempts of certain developing countries to integrate at the regional level, whether in Asia, the Caribbean area or Africa. This paper aims to highlight the facts and traits that give authenticity to the European construction, to examine similar initiatives and to explain why a replication of the model in another area of the world is not feasible. The hypothesis of the research is that the pattern of European integration cannot be duplicated and would not be functional in another region. The target is to find relevant arguments to justify it but also to underline why EU is sui generis. Comparative regionalism and comparative economic systems are used to support this study.

Keywords: economic integration, comparative regionalism, Common Market, developing countries.

1. Introduction

The European Union is considered to be the epitome of regional integration and development. The unique context in which EU has emerged led to a particular path of evolution and determined a unique pattern for development. Even from the very beginning EU had evolved on multiple dimensions, both horizontally (by the geographic setting) and vertically (by the depth of the integration process). A decisive factor in

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achieving economic integration was the permanent evolvement and adjustment through gradual stages. Without consistency and persistence an integrationist group of countries cannot face the challenges of the world economy. The literature depicts the unparalleled success of the European integration. Most of the attempts of creating a similar model in Africa, Asia or the Caribbean have failed during time. There are reasons to believe that a similar Economic and Monetary Union cannot be achieved, at least not in the next decade. The paper investigates how this model tends to be applied in other regions of the world and it uncovers the particular features of regional integration on other continents. A strong emphasis is put on examining the uncommon architecture of the European Union in order to pinpoint what differentiates it from other structures that aim for economic, social and monetary integration.

The states become genuinely interested to join other countries in pursuing economic integration when they are driven by a common goal. That target often proves to be an increase of welfare of their citizens or a competitiveness boost. While many groups of countries aim for reaching at least the phase of an Economic Union, reality shows that most initiatives are simply Free Trade Areas or have turned into Custom Unions and Common Markets. The European Union has emerged in a unique context therefore its structure and competencies are distinct. The European archetype of regional integration binds values, institutions and coordination methods in a consistent, coherent and dynamic way. Specific dimensions such as economic convergence and social cohesion are both values and practices. The enlargements have brought tough challenges to the model. The union is a system and its components are "united in diversity". Common and national policies, coordination and cooperation, freedom and democracy all fuse together. The gradual stages of integration, starting with the Customs Union and up to the current Economic and Monetary Union, can be perceived as sequential trials of the member states to implement new methods for accomplishing regional integration. The coexistence and interaction of neo-functionalism, consociationalism, intergovernmentalism and multi-level governance is impossible to be found in another part of the world. Their blend was the underlying base that insured EU's survival and enlargement.

2. Literature review

Countries find a strong motivation to engage in regional integration due to the social and economic benefits of it. Larger markets, new trade and investment opportunities, lower barriers, increased competition or industry clustering are just some of the incentives mentioned by the literature. Nevertheless, integrated countries reap the benefits of cooperation, they proceed to joint reforms and develop their societies. However, these positive effects are neither automatic nor necessarily significant but it was empirically appraised that economic integration raises the level of economic wealth of the states. A favorable outcome depends on the type of arrangement, on the depth of integration and on the commitment that participating members have towards each other. The main challenge of any such process is to determine the optimal degree of integration. Too far-reaching integration targets are one of the reasons why such initiatives in Africa and the Caribbean has failed so far. On the other hand, accelerating the integration process beyond the possibilities of the member states can create more hurdles rather than positive results. This was the case of EU in most of its enlargement phases.

The standard explanations for the conflicts and failures of regional economic integration among developing countries have been concerned with the fairness of benefits distribution. If within an integrated community several countries are significantly more developed than others, the gains from being integrated are very unlikely to be distributed equally¹. The advanced economies tend to attract more new industries than the less advanced because they already have an infrastructure and disposable capital for investments. The potential consequence is a wider gap between the members. The developed countries expand even further while those striving to catch up will still lag behind.

Regional integration arrangements can revive the economies of the members through increased scale and competition, usually when countries, their endowments or both are small and the market size is limited. The

¹ Deike Fuchs, Thomas Straubhaar, "Economic integration in the Caribbean: The development towards a common labor market", *International migration papers*, No. 61, Geneva: International Labor Office, 2003, p. 2.

literature points out that economic integration links markets, enables firms to expand and national economies to become competition-driven, which determines a raise in the overall productivity. Income convergence and social cohesion are the goals of any integrationist group. However, extensive research has shown that more often the opposite happens. Yet, countries can benefit from cooperation as they struggle with their social and economic issues in a common way. Resource pooling, technology and knowledge spillovers lead to economic upgrading. Moreover, embedding regional cooperation in the economic integration improves enforceability. Integration is appealing to both developing and developed countries. For the first ones, economic junction is perceived as truly valuable but it entails a high level of commitment from both civil society, private and public actors.

Wallace² claims that EU is the only formal and institutionalized integration experiment that has survived and strengthened over time. The reason behind this fact is EU's *sui generis* structure of governance. Europe is a continent where countries are moving at different speeds but in the past 60 years, they walked on the same path of integration and inclusion. The uneven development maintains the dynamics of the union. Although the EU is not a federation *de jure*, it has many characteristics pertaining of this type of governance.³ International and European regional integration experience indicates that countries are hesitant to create supra-national bodies and transfer power to them as sanctioning authority.⁴ EU has struggled with such issues even from the beginning, and other regions now face the same challenge.

3. Building a replica of the model: an illusion or reality?

Economic integration is perceived as a dynamic process open to new members and new domains. The regional integration is carried out

² William Wallace, *Regional Integration: the West European Experience*, Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994, p. 57.

³ Thomas Risse, Tanja Börzel, *The European Union as an Emerging Federal System*, Jean Monnet Center at New York University, School of Law, 2005, p. 8.

⁴ Alemayehu Geda, Haile Kibret, *Regional Economic Integration in Africa: A review of Problems and Prospects with a case study of COMSA*, London: University of London, Department of Economics, 2002, p. 13.

simultaneously with globalization therefore both phenomena influence the relations between economic entities and challenge the role of national borders. In its current configuration, regionalism is an expression of the economic order in a redefining world. Nowadays, countries struggle less with gaining economic power and they bring together their efforts in order to attain further economic development. Although worldwide there have been a plethora of initiatives for integration, in various forms and degrees of intricacy, only EU has reached the most complex form of integration. In most of the cases (except for EU), countries have acknowledged integration as being a necessity rather than an opportunity. For instance, in the past two decades African countries have pursued different types of regional arrangements in order to accelerate their economic development. Another integration initiative is the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME or COMESA) which claims to have reached the status of an Economic Union and it aims to turn into a Monetary Union. While initiated in 1989 with 6 member states, the Single Market hasn't yet been fully implemented.

In the attempt to elucidate the dilemma of whether a similar architecture could arise, a starting point would be a brief analysis of what EU had originally intended to become and uncover the steps that turned it into an Economic and Monetary Union. The European Union aimed from the start to achieve more than a mere, static economic integration phase. Its target was to reach social integration and ultimately a political integration, which basically means that EU has hoped for the "unification of the masses" through shared decision-making processes. The first years of European integration are a synthetic expression of neo-functionalism. The European project started as an elitist community through the setup of the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) and the High Authority. The fusion of two strong sectors of the French and German economies has created a pressure for the integration to spread to related sectors. The integration further advanced by the emergence of common policies and by targeting social issues. Were any similar goals set for other groups around the world? The integration process is not completed when a Common Market or an Economic and Monetary Union are achieved, it continues by stretching in depth. The question that must be answered prior to considering a replica of this model is: what level of interdependence between states should exist for their economies to be assumed integrated? The researchers in this field

have suggested that truly integrated economies are not necessarily those which formally declare themselves as integrated.⁵ Reality shows that nations with high levels of trading and interaction with each other can be more integrated than those which signed formal agreements that pretend to integrate their economies. On the other hand, in EU's case the integration process did not aim for a particular status to be reached but it rather envisioned a process of permanent evolvement. It is clear that in any other area of the world, the circumstances of a potential integration would not be similar as those of EU. The experiences of the Second World War in Europe induced a feeling that national states have failed. This created a favorable context for the emergence of the European institutions, reflecting the confidence for an effective supranational governance. The integration started with three main purposes: the reconstruction of European economies and market mechanisms, ensuring regional cohesion and creating a framework for reconciliation. Conditions are very different in the present therefore the reasons for which certain countries seek for regional cooperation are distinct.

The depth of integration varies across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asia Nations) comprises of 10 countries including large economies such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippine but it is mostly an economic and geo-political organization. Since the establishment in 1967, there was a continuous expansion as the Free Trade Area had been set up. ASEAN is rather a regional forum which engages in multilateral dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region, and doesn't yet have the pattern of an authentic Economic Union. The countries intend to develop an Economic Community by 2015. The ASEAN regional cooperation currently involves economic, social and security issues. In 2007, the member states have signed a charter that is similar to a constitution. However, ASEAN does not stand many chances to achieve the stage of an Economic and Monetary Union in the near future due to several reasons. Firstly, there is a lack of democratic approach in terms of decision-making and negotiations proceed slowly. Secondly, although it does have an official Regional Economic Integration Agenda, in order to achieve its goals the group needs to carry out extensive and highly committed

⁵ Jacques Pelkmans, *Integrarea Europeană. Metode și analiză economică*, Ediția a doua, București: Institutul European, 2003, p. 73.

preparatory work. Moreover, some ASEAN countries still prefer using bilateral agreements and that is not nearly enough to sustain a common dialogue. In addition, markets still regulated in member states such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos or Burma.

There were several early initiatives for economic integration in Africa but particularly after the 1970s these attempts have intensified. The Common Market for Eastern and Southeastern Africa (COMESA), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) or SADC (Southern African Development Community) are the most prominent examples in terms of African integration. An authentic and strong integration group requires at least one or a few solid economies to sustain it, but that is hardly the case for this region. African states are small, domestic markets with a weak infrastructure and widespread social conflicts. Export industries are highly limited in their diversity as they failed to shift from primary products. Underdevelopment of human capabilities, the lack of production networks, a low value chain cannot support a solid regional development. Structural rigidity of their economies and political hurdles are also a point to consider. Ideological pluralism which is common in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Swaziland, Madagascar and other countries halts any real progress. For a regional economic group it is critical to have a sustained and unified political commitment in order to succeed. The importance of harmonizing macroeconomic and trade policies for enhancing economic integration cannot be overstated. Such issues had been a long-term problem for Africa.⁶ Any group of African countries are far from reaching *de facto* economic integration and from becoming a Monetary Union. Over the past decades, most countries have been struggling with overstated exchange rates and non-convertible currencies. Although there has been wide exchange rate liberalization policies, the weakness of their economies severely diminish their chances to support a single currency.

Another region of the world that aims for economic integration is the Caribbean Basin. CARICOM (Caribbean Common Market) was established in 1973 and it currently joints 12 members, among them Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica, Haiti, Antigua and Barbuda, Suriname. The group started as two linked entities, the Caribbean Community and the Common Market.

⁶ UNECA, *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa, Towards Monetary and Financial Integration in Africa*, 2008, p. 22.

CARICOM hasn't established a supranational federalist authority and that has allowed a relatively easy ratification of the founding Treaty of Chaguaramas. The economies in this area have faced a harsh external environment and internal declining conditions over the past 10 years. The Single Market of the Caribbean region has been enforced since 2006, but it is still consolidating. Completion entails developing a regional competition policy, common policies in transport, commerce, energy industries and it is expected to be finished by 2015. The group also intends to harmonize their financial regulations, taxation as well as fiscal systems and implement a Monetary Union. However, at this point in time CARICOM has a very low factor mobility and it lacks common critical policies that would allow for the integration process to speed up. Moreover, there are large asymmetries in terms of trade performance as some Caribbean countries experience large growth in exports and others lack a manufacturing sector. While this region is looking forward to the creation of a single currency which would instill price stability, induce intra-regional trade increase and would diminish the transaction costs between the members, the reality points that it is not fully prepared to engage in structural monetary reforms that are needed. It is unrealistic to believe that such a target would be met in less than 3 years. Nevertheless, there is some external pressure to deepen and accelerate the integration. The Caribbean Basin has been a long-standing strategic interest for the United States. The success of CARICOM has important implications for the American trade, immigration, investment and even national security policies.⁷ Although much smaller than all of its neighbor countries, CARICOM is increasingly becoming interesting for the US due to its proximity, unique geographic features and trade opportunities.

As shown above, the degree of disintegration in Asia and Africa is still high and this fact is a potential obstacle to the emergence of another economic union. Whenever EU enlarged itself, the integration has deepened considerably and new treaties were adopted that strengthened the union. Regional integration involves the embedment and the fusion of economic, social and ultimately political structures. While Europe seems to have had a certain propensity towards such an outcome, in Asia or Africa

⁷ John Hornbeck, "CARICOM: Challenges and Opportunities for Caribbean Economic Integration", *CRS Report for Congress*, January, 2008, p. 16.

the situation is much different. The evolution of regionalism in Asia does not show clearly a core economy that could support whole a group of integrated economies. Even today, EU is still built on a core-periphery model in which spillovers close the inequality gaps in development. Additionally, there is another consistent impediment to be addressed, the great variety of cultural and ideological values in Asia and Africa. Although for Europe the situation might seem similar, the differences are not essentially irreconcilable.

The economic integration in the Caribbean region has quite a history. However, despite sharing a Common Single Market intra-regional trade is still low and the labor mobility is not high enough to solve some of the structural issues within the markets of the member states. Small markets constrain economies of scale and they hinder the competition among firms. In order for economic integration to be achieved, the national productivity levels of the member states need to be somewhat even. Regional convergence is another problem that needs to be considered whenever a new group of economies aim for unification. Large discrepancies in income, human development or trade performance hinder and slow down the integration. Within an economic union the phenomena of production relocation usually takes place. Industries tend to relocate based on the comparative and competitive advantages of each member. That often leads to the creation of clusters or agglomerations. Neither in Africa or the Caribbean area has it occurred, although in Asia this have happened. However, there are not solid facts that would indicate an authentic economic integration solely on this basis. Asia, Africa and the Caribbean region certainly have lessons to learn from EU in terms of the entire integration process. The pillars that hold together such a complex structure are common institutions, common markets and common policies. For countries to truly develop synergies, there is a need for common institutions that can coordinate their actions. EU has tried to harmonize national policies but also to instill new supra-national ones.

Structural reforms are a prerequisite to supporting an integration initiative and they fail to be identified in the case of Asian and African countries. The areas that could potentially form a new group are still struggling with problems of liberalization and reduction of protectionism. As underlined earlier, for a regional economic group to be developed it

needs to have a core that would initiate and sustain the integration. In EU's case, the population concentration, capital and other resources in the Western countries have significantly contributed to the integration. Factor mobility is a critical element underlying any integration group. If the participating countries do not have the necessary structures, a union cannot hold due to the lack of pillars. EU has gradually built a land of freedom, security and justice. It is clear that Europe has no even formula, but in Africa and Asia pluralism is strikingly dominant. Another aspect worth mentioning is that ambitions are far more modest than those reported in the case EU's integration. The Asian institutional architecture of ASEAN is mostly informal and it does not exceed the phase of conferences and intergovernmental agreements which means that countries don't strive to tackle common social or economic problems. In contrast, the European integration has focused from the start on solving economic, social and even political issues. The members of ASEAN don't have an engine to propel them towards a genuine regional integration. Reaching the phase of a Monetary Union would be extremely difficult for another group of economies due to various reasons. The heterogeneity is one problem, since some countries are far more developed than others. Moreover, for particular countries that have a potential of gaining some international economic power, giving up on their own currencies involves taking a considerable risk. Also, national currency is a symbol of independence and sovereignty of a state. Briefly, a few reasons why none of the economic groups analyzed in this paper can achieve a Monetary Union include:

- significant divergence in economic policies and poor macroeconomic performance;
- lack or low factor mobility and weak regulatory institutions;
- limited mechanisms to handle external shocks;
- insufficient coordination in the design and implementation of sound monetary programmes;
- limited national and regional capacities.

4. The challenges of regional integration: Governing vs. Governance

The European integration is an international lesson in terms of both

governing and governance. National governments have involved a variety of non-state actors in this process and have developed a framework that have transcended borders. Governance implies governmental actions through public policy networks that includes both public and private sector entities. Governance entails that public institutions have the legitimacy to impose collective decisions and it involves representatives both from legislature and executive.⁸ Thus, governance often transcends traditional hierarchies of public institutions in the decision-making processes. Multi-level governance was a saving solution for EU as it pushed forward and supported the integration.⁹ Although this approach has created many problems, over time this alternative proved to be functional. Decision-making competencies were divided between actors on different levels (supranational, national and sub-national). European decision-makers have cooperated and developed a web of connections between all three levels.

The integrationist theories discussed in the previous sections explain the evolution of EU through multiple perspectives. The Asian, African and the Caribbean countries have completely different political platforms within their continents therefore their only solution for the moment is an integration based on intergovernmental cooperation. But the case of EU has clearly shown that is necessary to go beyond it and reach a phase of multi-level governance. One could wonder if there is enough openness in those regions to replace the traditional structures of governance with supranational institutions. Can the states accept a sovereignty dilution? In Europe, the institutions had been created at the cost of giving up some of the prerogatives of national states, as an expression of political will towards integration. If the model should be replicated, one major issue that needs to be addressed is the political will of the states involved. On the other hand, EU historically had faced great difficulties but it found the strength to overcome them. This shows an increased political commitment of all member states. It's impossible to assess to what extent a common political commitment might arise in Africa, Asia or other regions. However, if any of the current groups would seek for integration in the true sense, it would mostly be supported by intergovernmentalism. An integration process

⁸ Jane Jenson, Martin Papillon, Paul Thomas, Vincent Lemieux, Peter Aucoin, *Modernizing Governance: A preliminary exploration*, Ottawa, 2000, pp.117-130.

⁹ Dumitru Miron, *Economia Uniunii Europene*, București: Ed. Luceafărul, 2006, p. 267.

usually starts in the low politics areas which are not controversial and where national interests are not threatened. Just as it was the case of Europe, the areas of high politics are obstacles for further integration.

The Open Method of Coordination adopted by the EU enhanced the integration both positively and negatively. Coordination is ultimately a function of governance in response to complexity. The Community method of Jean Monnet has targeted a maximum of consistency with minimum means. The propensity towards cooperation paved the way for developing other governance methods in the European framework. Basically, the enlargements have amplified the diversity of integration methods. EU institutions with distinct responsibilities and competences were created in order to guide and support the advancement. Monnet's Community method based on the partnership between national and supranational actors was a pillar that brought consistency and persistence to their actions. The balance between the Commission (as an expression of supranational coordination) and the Council (as a function of intergovernmentalism) was the essence of this method that seems deliberately bypassed today. Setting limits through the Community method has created an even ratio of power between the national and supranational actors. The Commission and the Council had sustained the process of upgrading and acceding to new stages of integration. Supranationalism was strengthened by the powers of the European Parliament and the Court of Justice. These structures were created to manage the intergovernmental, national and supranational levels. EU's integration model is thus unparalleled through its institutional framework.

Intergovernmental coordination is a problem that involves the consistency of actions, decisions and instruments. There is still a slow progress on governmental reforms, especially in Africa. The governments aim for a fast poverty reduction but they fail to improve the economic governance. Regional integration depends critically on the diligence of member states to pursue convergent macroeconomic policies. Misalignments are disruptive for the economic integration efforts. Adhering to specific macroeconomic convergence criteria facilitates a high level of stability. Adopting a common fiscal and budgetary policy can enhance the benefits of economic coordination. The policies developed within the group act as a support. In the case of EU, they clearly

contributed to deepening the integration and were initiated because they searched joint solutions to common problems.¹⁰ Europe had to solve specific issues, which may not coincide with those in other geographical areas. Integration in another geographic area requires a different set of policies, customized to the regional specificity. Furthermore, the policy instruments should be different in order for them to achieve efficiency. Compared to any other regional group of countries, EU shows itself as a field prone to governance innovation. The proportionality and subsidiarity principles can additionally be improved with new principles of governance. Could a new similar group instill compelling governance? Developing common policies, upholding the freedoms that define a Single Market, the delineation of specific regional objectives are tough challenges which will need to be tackled. Balancing all the facets of integration is absolutely necessary in such a group. In EU's case, the economic and monetary dimensions had been the main focus and they achieved greatly, while the social side has a relatively poor performance. That is why the European economy strives to reinforce the European society. Although there was a substantial progress, EU still struggles with rigidity, efficiency issues and even transparency problems in some cases. The case of the European Union can be a lesson for other international groups of countries that aim to attain economic integration.

The success of a potential replica can also be assessed through another perspective. In terms of comparative economic systems, EU once again stands out. The European model is inclusive, while the Asian one is characterized by exclusion.¹¹ Inclusive models seek for a compromise and find the middle way. The European model is that of a competitive market economy. In this model, the social comfort is a goal and the economy is the tool used in achieving this goal, even if in reality this didn't yet happen. The European model is bivalent (economic and social dimensions) and aims to capture what is beyond the markets. The ultimate stake of EU is social cohesion which will eventually lead to political convergence. The complexity and the fine mechanisms that support this construction are

¹⁰ Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, p. 37.

¹¹ Marin Dinu, *Economia de dicționar. Exerciții de îndemânare epistemică*, București: Editura Economică, 2010, p. 66.

difficult to replicate regardless of the will and high commitment that a potential new union and could take, on the road to social welfare.

5. Conclusions

The European Union remains the most successful example of economic regional integration in the world and the only one that has stood the test of time. In the light of its genesis, evolution and institutional architecture the European Union is a *sui generis* entity. Its creation and the substantial progress that EU has made over six decades, reflects the particular circumstances of Europe as a continent. Tracing the steps and the challenges that EU continues to face leads to the conclusion that a replication of this model is highly unlikely to be successful. Reaching the Economic and Monetary Union stage was nothing but easy, and maintaining it especially in these times of economic and political uproar is definitely an enormous challenge. The unique structure of EU underlines the fact that regional characteristics are very important and they determine the evolution patterns. The framework itself is valid as an integration model but it does not seem viable to be applied today in another part of the world. The lack of leadership is holding back integration both in Africa and the Caribbean area. In Asia, the democracy as a pre-requisite of economic integration is lagging. Although many African and Asian nations claim to vigorously pursue an integration agenda as part their efforts to keep pace with globalization, their commitment hadn't been nearly as strong as in EU's case. It is difficult to appraise whether EU's accomplishments and evolution can be a roadmap for other groups of countries that seek for economic integration. However, this framework has proved its functionality even though it went through many hurdles. The idea of EU being a functional whole requires the parts to have a propensity towards synchronized and focused action. In other regions, there are no signs of a similar pattern. EU is an accumulation of diversity, asymmetries and discrepancies, a melting pot of cultural and linguistic plurality, of talent and knowledge. Its unique characteristics make the regional economic integration model to be unparallel in the world, as it cannot be replicated.

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**RELATIONS OF ROMAN CATHOLIC (RCC)
AND SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (SOC)
AFTER THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL**

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Abstract

The issue of primacy divides Roman Catholic (RCC) and Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) in theological field. Painful historical heritage from Second World War is also the great obstacle. Yugoslav atheistic state supported development of inter-church relations in acceptable proportion that would increase national relations in Yugoslav federation. It's fear related to possible "common front" against ideological system. Regional inter-church relations were initiated by Vatican and Pope Paul II, while SOC accepted it particularly in social field. Both agreed on common responsibility for evangelization of atheistic society. The variety of institutional forms of cooperation was also agreed, Common Commission for dialogue of SOC Council and Yugoslav Bishop Conference, and Theological Faculties Conferences in Post Second Vatican Council period. In post-conflict Balkan Societies, RCC and SOC agreed to continue common activities towards post-conflict rehabilitation and evangelization.

Keywords: SOC, RCC, Yugoslav State, Inter-Faculty Symposia, Joint Commission for Dialogue between SOC's Assembly and the Bishop's Conference of Yugoslavia (BCY), dialogue, cooperation, barriers.

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Introduction

Being “officially internally” divided from the mid 11th and 16th Century, Christian Church had faced many existential challenges. During 19th and 20th Century particularly Protestant churches initiated many activities founding Ecumenical Movement, with the mission statement to rebuild the Christian Unity through improved inter-church dialogue and cooperation. From the mid 20th Century both Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church officially started to consider themselves the pillar of that process, promoting their own different positions and approaches.

Historical mission of the SOC implies the testimony and application of original evangelic principles in given circumstances and time. Such approach has general social, political, individual and psychological character, encompassed in the concept of *Svetosavlje* as a philosophy of life.¹ One of the most significant determinants of Svetosavlje is *national*, which represents, above all, the framework and instrument for preservation of the church, cultural and political identity and self-importance of Serbian nation. From today’s perspective, it could be defined as qualitative factor of the universal concept of *pluralism*. It is of utmost significance to emphasize that national in this context had been considered just the *historical form* within and through which spiritual and ecclesial is to be implemented in. The Roman Catholic theologians testify that Saint Sava was church and political missionary and peacemaker.²

On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) is characterized by unificational and subjectivistic conception (*dogma on papal infallibility or inerrancy*) and more prominent hierarchical and organizational structure, whose factors are the other Christian churches.³ Its ecclesiology is of critically universalistic character, thus it logically tends to

¹ Јустин Поповић, *Православна црква и екуменизам, Светосавље као философија живота*, Београд: Манастир Пелије код Ваљева, 2001, p. 32.

² The titular Bishop of Bosnia Ivan Tonko Mrnavić (XVII century), Aleksandar Donković, Friar Andrija Kačić-Milošić, Ivo Pilar, PhD and Josip Smoldak (XX century), etc.

³ “Dogmatska konstitucija o Crkvi Lumen Gentium”, *Dokumenti Drugog vatikanskog koncila*, Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1970, pp. 91–205.

be applied at universal level. For the RCC, the Balkans is *terra missionis* and *antemurale christianitatis*, which in the historical context crucially influence the quality of its relations with the SOC. The Vatican generally acts towards the “outside” world guided by church strategy of “dialogue in concentric circles” (with Christians, other religions and atheists), by using “potentials” of given political circumstances.

With the above outlined theological issue, the most sensitive points in relation between the SOC and the RCC today are the events from the Second World War, in which one part of the Roman Catholic clergy in “the Independent State of Croatia” (ISC) participated in crimes towards clergy and believers of the SOC, but also towards Roma, Jews and Croats not loyal to pro-fascist regime, undoubtedly with the knowledge and approval of the Vatican.⁴ Painful events and heritage place in front of the two Christian churches the request for overcoming the problem through acknowledgment, repentance and forgiveness, with necessary demarcation of roles and responsibilities on the basis of universal “truth and justice”. Then we could speak of *the true inter-church dialogue* with major results in a broader interdisciplinary sense.

The Yugoslav State, RCC and SOC

The Church “management” and “melting pot” of the socialist (communist) Yugoslav state generally implied control and instrumentalization of religious for political purposes. In its relations with its religious communities, the state was guided by atheistic and secular premises, trying to exploit their peacemaking potential, in order to solve the national issue and gain credibility for its ideological position.⁵ By using repressive methods (pressures, blackmails, intimidations and even murders), and with the generally conciliatory position of the SOC, immediately after the World War II the Yugoslav state achieved to establish “cooperative” relationship with the SOC. In this regard, the RCC initially advocated the extremely conflict position, by criticizing the state ideology

⁴ Marco Aurelio-Rivelli, *L'Arcivescovo del genocidio*, Milano: Kaos Edizioni, 1999, p. 35.

⁵ “Информација о односу Католичке цркве и државе у СР Хрватској”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 24. јануар 1967, ф. 102, ком. 655, бр. 48.

and its atheism. Generally, both churches had a marginal and secondary position and role in Yugoslav society. The Yugoslav state supported the establishment of inter-church cooperation, afraid from the possibility of creation of “joint church front” that would threaten its ideological system.

With the *Protocol on Regulation of Relations between Yugoslavia and Vatican* in 1966, and with the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1975 on personal initiative of the Pope Paul VI, the relations between Yugoslavia and the RCC was increasingly gaining the form of cooperation and gradual achievement of the Vatican interests.⁶ Tito wanted the support from the Vatican in promotion of the state at international level, while Rome has sought a strategic expansion of religious and social influence of the RCC in Yugoslavia.⁷ The Yugoslav state was aware of that, with the tacit approval. From the strategic point of view, it is obvious that political interests had a secondary significance in relation to the church interests. In addition, in relation to the events in “ISC”, the Yugoslav state acted in a “managerial” way and irresponsible, *de facto* supporting the attempt of the RCC to relativize the historical events and put them *ad acta*, in the name of achieving the common vision of the future.

Vatican and SOC

In the development of relations with the SOC, the Vatican undertook the multidimensional initiative and activities. As for war crimes, French Cardinal Eugenio Tisserand and Bishop of Banja Luka Alfred Pihler have personally admitted the involvement and responsibility of the RCC.⁸ However, the RCC has not officially distanced itself and condemned the actions of one part of its members, which represents a great obstacle for the

⁶ “Депеша ДСИП и Амбасади у Риму, Италијанска реферада”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 14. октобар 1965, ф. 87, бр. 333.

⁷ “Забелешка о разговору Ивана Лазића и поречко–пуљског бискупа др Драгутина Нежића”, Београд: Републичка комисија за верска питања Хрватске, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, фонд 144, 25. мај 1965, бр. 08–112/1.

⁸ In early 1960s, Cardinal Tisserand visited Yugoslavia and its state leaders, and faced ignorance by representatives of the RCC in Croatia. In his *Christmas Epistle in 1963*, Bishop Pihler called the SOC for forgiveness of certain RCC’s actions, and proposed to his believers rapprochement with the SOC.

SOC. From the RCC's perspective, a very important "mediating" role in the development of relations with the SOC belongs to the *Greek Catholic Church* („Catholic Church“ of Eastern Rite or the "Uniatic" Church).⁹ It is important to know that the GCC acknowledges *the primacy of the Pope and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction* of the RCC. The SOC, primarily from the theological and historical reasons, such its position and role sees as an obstacle for improving the relations with the RCC.

In the period after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the two churches, however, shared a common consensus about the missionary activities in the global secular and atheist regional circumstances, with a readiness for dialogue and cooperation. In that sense, the Vatican supports the idea of supranationality and gradual global integration of churches through joint social activities (with the aim of *evangelization*), while the SOC to larger extent was and still is theologically and "nationally" directed, insisting on church criteria of dialogue and cooperation.

During consideration of the issue related to the establishment of the dialogue with the RCC in the early 1960s, the Serbian church had in mind the position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople as "the first in honour" in the structure of the Orthodox Church. That is why it firstly initiated the dialogue with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in order to achieve the principal consensus on the principles of dialogue with the RCC. The SOC was of the opinion that dialogue must be based on respect for fundamental principles of the Orthodox Church.¹⁰ After that, it has also established the direct dialogue with the RCC, whose emissary the Bishop Johan Willebrands visited Belgrade five times between 1963 and 1969. During these meetings, all essential issues were addressed related to relations between the two churches - the papal primacy, postulates and outcomes of the dialogue, appointing observers from the SOC to the Council, "decentralization" of the RCC, etc.¹¹ On that occasion, the Vatican sent a direct invitation to the SOC to appoint an observer to the Council, although

⁹ "Dekret o ekumenizmu i Istočnim katoličkim crkvama", *Dokumenti Drugog vatikanskog koncila*, Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1970, pp. 205-257.

¹⁰ „Писмо Патријарха Германа Патријарху Атинагори“, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 28. април 1960, ф. 64, ком. 512, бр. 30.

¹¹ "Дилпарић посетио Патријарха Германа на Његово тражење", Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 1962, ф. 64, ком. 492.

it continued to favour the Patriarchate of Constantinople as the main “partner”, which encouraged the “rivalry” among Orthodox churches. The Assembly of the SOC held on 10 May 1963 passed a principal decision to send its observers to the fourth session of the Council, based on previous pan-Orthodox approval, authorizing the Synod of the SOC to make the final decision on this matter.¹² The SOC had in mind that Greek Church held irreconcilable attitude toward the RCC, as well as that observers from the Russian Church had already been at the Council. By observing the decisions of the Rhodos Orthodox conferences (1961-1964), the SOC thought that each orthodox church should be left with a possibility to decide whether it will send observers (lower clergy and worldly theologians), which would not oblige the other Orthodox churches.¹³ In this sense, in May 1965, the Synod of the SOC obtained the final positions of other Orthodox churches and the Yugoslav state.¹⁴ After that, the Synod authorized Dr. Dusan Kasic and Professor Lazar Milin to attend the fourth session of the Vatican Council as representatives of the SOC.¹⁵ They passed on the SOC’s position to Cardinal Bea, according to which the main obstacle for the improvement of relations between the two churches was the spread of the RCC’s influence (“Uniatism”) at the SOC’s expense in the contiguous areas (above all in Croatia).¹⁶ Kasic and Milin concluded that convergence of the two churches in the theological field can not be expected in the near future, but that their dialogue was useful in the broader social, socio-charitable and peacemaking terms, given the secularist global tendencies.

¹² “Документ Архијерејског Сабора СПЦ”, Београд: АС, 20/зап. 57, 1963.

¹³ “Забелешка о пријему митрополита Дамаскина и епископа Фрушића код председника Моме Марковића”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 23. новембар 1964, ф. 77, бр. 519.

¹⁴ “Информација о пријему Патријарха Германа од стране председника Милутина Мораче”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 23. септембар 1965, ф. 86, бр. 295.

¹⁵ “Депеша ДСИП и Амбасади у Риму, Италијанска реферада”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 14. октобар 1965, ф. 87, бр. 333.

¹⁶ “Италијанска реферада—Текст депеше амбасади СФРЈ у Риму”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 25. новембар 1965, ф. 87, бр. 362/1.

During the 1980s, Patriarch German maintained permanent contacts with the representatives of the Nunciature in Belgrade. He also had a meeting with the Vatican State Secretary Cardinal Casaroli in early 1985, when they agreed on starting the dialogue between the two churches *at regional level* in Yugoslavia. The later establishment of *the Joint Commission for Dialogue between the BCY and the SOC Synod*, as regional form of transformation of global “dialogue of love” into theological dialogue, should be considered as a consequence of this principal agreement.

In the period of Patriarch Pavle (1990-2010), despite the socio-political crisis and the war in former Yugoslavia, the SOC continued to insist, above all, on respect for universal Christian principles. Rome invited its representatives to the Synod of European Roman Catholic Bishops at the end of 1991, in order to examine the issues related to evangelization of the continent in the changed social, political and economic circumstances. At the same time, the Pope John Paul II and the RCC have, through the Yugoslav state authorities, started an initiative for establishing *the direct dialogue between the Vatican and the SOC*.¹⁷ Although the SOC’s Synod “persuaded” its two representatives to travel to the Synod in Rome, the SOC’s Council, on its extra session in November 1991, decided that “for now” the dialogue with the RCC should be postponed, stating as reasons the war between Croats and Serbs, the positions of the Zagreb Cardinal Franjo Kuharic and certain members of the RCC in Croatia on causes of the war, proselytistic actions of “Uniates” in Orthodox countries, as well as principal positions of the Pope John Paul II on all presented issues.¹⁸ The position of the SOC had theological and ethical basis, but it also represented the diplomatic “defeat” in terms of direct presence and testifying its own positions.

In war circumstances, both churches have instigated a number of peace initiatives, with mutual consent that war is not a religious, but political category. However, they differed in terms of understanding of the causes of war, especially in terms of desirable political forms for

¹⁷ “Писмо Амбасадора Социјалистичке Федеративне Републике Југославије др Ивице Маштруко Његовој Светости Патријарху српском Господину Павлу”, Београд: *Архив Синода СПЦ*, 30. мај 1991, бр. 1111.

¹⁸ “Писмо Патријарха српског Господина Павла Његовој Светости Папи Јовану Павлу II”, Београд: *Архив Синода СПЦ*, 26. новембар 1991, бр. 2865.

overcoming the conflicts. Undoubtedly, the RCC has supported the dissolution of Yugoslavia, advocating the respect for the principle of self-determination of its nations, above all in terms of gaining independence of republics within their existing borders that were set up by the authoritarian atheistic (communist) regime after the Second World War. On the other hand, the SOC firstly supported the idea of preservation of Yugoslav Federation, probably pretending to save one state territory on which all Serbian Orthodox believers in the region would continue to live in. When it was no longer possible due to international political position and reasons, SOC clearly supported the importance of full respect of the rights to self-determination of all Yugoslav citizens, regardless of borders that were previously set up by the authoritarian atheistic regime. In this context, it was noticeable that the RCC tended to build "the future" on "new realistic basis", while the SOC expected all declarative principles that were advocated by the Pope and the RCC to be fully implemented in practice. SOC generally stated that the universal right of self-determination, previously given to other Yugoslav nations (Slovenians, Croats and Bosnians) by the International Community, should also be given to Serbs in Former Yugoslavia. In that context, it is of importance to underline that SOC took critical position towards the regimes in Croatia (pro-fascist) and Serbia (atheistic, authoritarian and violent). Such position pretended to be much more ethical than nationalist one.

Despite the fact that the SOC delegation did not arrive in Rome, Patriarch Pavle stressed that it didn't mean it was rejection of the dialogue with the RCC, pleading Pope John Paul to receive the Episcopal delegation of the SOC for "immediate, fraternal, inter-church dialogue on all presented issues".¹⁹ He wanted to directly confront the essence of the problem related to the development of the dialogue, while the RCC remained faithful to the universalistic approach, according to which there was not much space for regional problems. There were extremely negative reactions within the SOC regarding the development of the dialogue with the RCC, especially by some bishops and the Church's "basis".

Due to theological and political reasons, representatives of the SOC did not attend prayer meetings in Assisi in 1986 and 1993, whose "patron" was the RCC, because of the presence of representatives of numerous

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

world religions. Yugoslav state has, through the academic Stipčević and president of the FRY, Mr Dobrica Ćosić, tried to influence the SOC in terms of an urgent meeting between Pope and Patriarch.²⁰ Therefore, in March 1993 the SOC's Synod "persuaded" Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Amfilohije and Episcopo Irinej of Bačka to visit Pope John Paul II.²¹ The meeting took place in early April the same year, which was the first meeting between high representatives of the SOC and the Pope in the last 700 years. On that occasion, a principal agreement was reached to establish a direct contact through *a permanent representative of the SOC in Rome*. It was also agreed to organize a meeting between Pope and Patriarch, based on the decision of the SOC's Synod and the approval of other Orthodox churches.²² Cooperation between the two churches in cultural field was defined as important aspect and contribution to the development of new European relations.²³ It is important to know that the RCC was not directly requesting a meeting between Pope and Patriarch, but mostly indirectly, through the Yugoslav state. Through eventual meeting of the two primates, the Vatican wanted to gain broader Christian legitimacy of its actions, while the Yugoslav state asked for the Vatican's support in promotion of its difficult position in international relations (lifting of sanctions against FRY). Patriarch Pavle approached this issue based on the consent of all Orthodox churches (Decision of the Orthodox Primates in 1992), taking into account the positions of both the SOC's bishops and believers and Yugoslav state.

SOC AND RCC IN YUGOSLAVIA

The quality of relations between the two churches in Yugoslavia was significantly conditioned by the fundamental theological disagreements (papal primacy), painful historical heritage and strong influence and

²⁰ "Писмо Никше Стипчевића, члана САНУ и управника Библиотеке САНУ Његовој Светости Патријарху српском Господину Павлу 26. децембра у 8 сати ујутру", врло хитно, Београд: *Архив Синода СПЦ*, 29. децембар 1992, бр. 4244.

²¹ "Седница Светог Архијерејског Синода СПЦ 25. марта 1993", Београд: *Архив Синода СПЦ*, 1993, бр. 974/зап. 693а.

²² „Делегација Српске православне цркве разговарала са поглаваром Римокатоличке цркве Папом Јованом Павлом II—Папа изразио жељу да се сусретне са нашим Патријархом“, Београд: *Православље*, свес. 627, 1. мај 1993, рр. 1–3.

²³ "Документ Архива Синода СПЦ", Београд: 13. септембар 1993, бр. 2111/зап. 2011.

guidance of the Yugoslav state. In this case also, the RCC was undertaking open initiative, while the principal reservation of the SOC was a result of its difficult personnel and financial position. It was additionally burdened by “uncooperative” acts of the RCC and Yugoslav state, especially in Dalmatia, Slavonia and Macedonia.

In accordance with the guidelines of the Second Vatican Council, through *the Decree on Ecumenism* from 1974, the Yugoslav bishops have requested the improvement of relations with the SOC, based on common denominators and respect for differences. However, the declaratively promoted tolerance, coexistence and “equality” have not been properly implemented in practice.²⁴ In this fact, the SOC saw an insincere intention, so the SOC’s Assembly passed the decision in 1964 by which the contact with the RCC could be maintained only through its authorized church representatives. However, through the state influence, some higher and lower representatives of the SOC did maintain contact with the RCC, on which the SOC’s top management was not informed. In the period after the Council, representatives of the RCC in Yugoslavia sought solely “clarification” of the dogma of papal “infallibility” and the primacy of the Roman jurisdiction. They further affirmed their position by appointing Archbishop of Zagreb Šeper for Cardinal in 1965. In Yugoslavia, they were highly active in pastoral, socio-charitable, educational and publishing activity. They used the “deductive-theological” and organizational-institutional approach, establishing Ecumenical Commissions on the level of the Bishops’ Conference of Yugoslavia (BCY) and certain dioceses.

In regional relations, the Serbian Church maintained to insist on solving of all issues on the basis of original Christian values and principles, within the framework of *theological dialogue*. The subject of its criticism was the dogma on papal primacy and Roman jurisdiction, as well as the RCC’s tendency for expanding its influence at the expense of the SOC.²⁵ However, it remained faithful to “friendly” dialogue with the RCC, due to pastoral

²⁴ “Информација о односу Католичке цркве и државе у СР Хрватској”, Београд. Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 24. јануар 1967, ф. 102, ком. 655, бр. 48.

²⁵ Владимир Дакић, “Како се на Западу замишља поновно уједињење Црква”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, Архив Југославије, фонд 144, 1962, ф. 64, ком. 516.

reasons and promotion of Christian values in social life.²⁶ That is why its approach can be called a form of *church policy of missionary character*. The RCC also wanted the similar things, through principal conciliation and promotion of the common future based on Christian responsibility, with full respect for its “dogmatic-pyramidal” conception of the Christian Church’s structure. In May 1968, the SOC’s Assembly passed the decision that the SOC “would not be able to accept the dialogue with the RCC before the RCC in practice demonstrate that it has renounced its former relationship and methods towards the Orthodox Church, especially in the implementation of the Uniatism”.²⁷ In that period, priority for the SOC was the dialogue with Anglicans, Old Catholics, Lutherans and pre-Chalcedonian churches.²⁸ Moreover, the SOC’s top management was facing the need to bridge the gap between the readiness to dialogue with the RCC and the reserved attitude of its church “base”. The Vatican and the Pope Paul VI have also maintained the “parallel” connections with “the Macedonian Orthodox Church” (MOC), which represented a serious obstacle for the SOC.

In Yugoslavia, the RCC has initiated contacts between higher and lower clergy of the two churches, especially in inter-religious and multinational environments, most often during church holidays.²⁹ Therefore, in May 1966, the SOC’s Assembly “warned” its priests about “the increased activity of the RCC among Orthodox population”, emphasizing that official positions on relations between the SOC and the RCC are only those presented by the authorized high representatives of the SOC.³⁰ In this context, the ban imposed by the SOC’s Synod should be understood, by which priests cannot, without its approval, “until further

²⁶ “Документ Архива Синода СПЦ”, Београд: 10. септембар 1963, бр. 2842.

²⁷ “Документ Архијерејског Сабора СПЦ”, Београд: 1963, 20/зап. 57.

²⁸ “Документ Архива Синода СПЦ”, Београд: 22. децембар 1968, бр. 3474/зап. 759.

²⁹ “Одјек Концилских идеја у земљи”, Загреб: Републичка комисија за верска питања Хрватске, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 5. март 1966, ф. 93, бр. 94.

³⁰ “Информација о раду редовног заседања Архијерејског сабора СПЦ од 11. до 23. маја 1966”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 1966, ф. 95, бр. 261/1.

notice” maintain contact with the RCC.³¹ The Yugoslav authorities were stressing that the lower clergy of the SOC comes into contacts “spontaneously”, while the RCC does the same thing knowing exactly what it wants to achieve.³² The SOC’s reserved attitude was largely causing the direct interference and pressure by the Yugoslav state.

Throughout this process, the RCC saw itself as a corrective guide of joint activation of the two churches, with obvious, but cautious affirmation of its religious principles.³³ It pointed to the mutual responsibility of the two churches for inadequate “ecumenical” results, relativizing only the theological approach. It affirmed “universalistic melting pot” of various factors (theological, social and political). Political guidelines of the RCC, which were of de-ideologizing character and the later support to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, should be understood within this context.

Croatia and Slovenia

The painful historical heritage and subtle attempts to “convert” the SOC’s believers into the RCC, with the passive observation of the Yugoslav state, have determined the quality of the post-Council relations between the SOC and the RCC in Croatia. The Roman Church defended its “expansionism” with the need for joint fight against atheism. Given its very difficult situation regarding personnel and finances, the SOC could find its “ally” only in the Yugoslav authorities, which can explain its affirmative and cooperative relation with the state. The SOC expected the support in accomplishing the proclaimed principle of church pluralism, and improvement of its difficult position in Dalmatia and Slavonia. Otherwise being “socially forced” to large extent, SOC’s close collaboration with the

³¹ “Информација о односу Католичке цркве и државе у СР Хрватској”, Београд: Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 24. јануар 1967, ф. 102, ком. 655, бр. 48.

³² “Информација о неким аспектима стања и деловања верских заједница у Југославији”, Београд. Савезна комисија за верска питања, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 13. јануар 1970, Савезна скупштина, Одбор за унутрашњу политику, ф. 120, бр. SL.

³³ Frane Franić, „Progresizam ili revizionizam u Crkvi“, Zagreb: *Glas Koncila*, sves. 496, sv. 1, januar 1983, pp. 1–4.

authorities undoubtedly has to be criticised, at least from the theological point of view.

The RCC again used its centralistic and “deductive-educational” approach in improving relations with the SOC, especially in the Diocese of Dakovo (Bishop Bauerlein). A more open and closer relation between Bishop and Episcopate was achieved in Istra. Very significant contribution to the development of relations between the two churches was the meeting between Patriarch German and Cardinal Šeper in Sremski Karlovci in April 1968, which was initiated by Pope Paul VI, guided by the need for mutual social engagement of churches.³⁴ Even then, the SOC’s “basis” observed such tendencies in the relations between the two churches with a dose of reserve. During the meeting of the Archbishop of Zagreb (later Cardinal) Kuharić and Patriarch German in Belgrade in November 1975, the convergence of the two churches was generally agreed, on the basis of common theological denominators, through socio-charitable activity, for the purpose of evangelization of Yugoslav society. For a longer period of time, the key guideline in improvement of relations will be the sentence by Patriarch German in Jasenovac in September 1984: “Brothers, we must forgive, but not forget”. This message was obviously left as a guideline to the SOC and its believers, to live within the spirit of tolerance with members of the RCC, indirectly appealing to the conscience of masterminds and executors of crimes in “the ISC”. Since then, the SOC has continued to insist on respect for Christological criteria in development of relations, while the RCC was putting a greater emphasis on reducing problems to social level. In comparison with the RCC, such SOC position and approach seems to be more theological than social and “missionary” one.

The opposing positions of the two churches were particularly evident at political level in the early 1990s, which caused the “credibility” of theological discrepancies. Pressures, intimidations, threats and murders during the 1990s, have largely influenced the representatives of the SOC to understand the war in Croatia as *existential and defensive*, which could in practice ensure respect for the principle of self-determination also in case of

³⁴ „Сусрет српског патријарха Германа са кардиналом Шепером—трећим човеком Римокатоличке цркве“, Београд: *Православље*, свес. 27, април 1968, стр. 1–4.

Serbian people in Croatia.³⁵ This SOC's position was largely influenced by both Croatian regime and benevolent attitude of the major part of the RCC in Croatia towards its nature and actions. At the session of the Synod of European Bishops in Rome in 1991, Croatian bishops in one-sided way presented the causes and the consequences of the conflict in this republic, which proved to be a new obstacle to dialogue between the two churches. In that period, joint activity of the two churches was reduced to peace initiative of Patriarch Pavle and Cardinal Kuharić during their two meetings in Slavonia and Sremski Karlovci in 1991. Both churches have advocated for finding a "fair" solution, but did not to the same extent act in accordance with their principal agreement.³⁶ SOC continued unsuccessfully to call International Community and Croatian Government to allow return of more than 250 000 Serbian orthodox refugees in Croatia expelled during and after the war. Normalization of relations was achieved by Patriarch Pavle's visit to Zagreb in March 1999, when the significance of evangelizational engagement of both churches was brought back to attention, especially in the post-conflict societies.³⁷ However, the SOC in Croatia has continued to face the strong influence of Croatian state and *existential* challenge (situation in Dalmatia Eparchy, attempt to revive the "Croatian Orthodox Church"), which, above all, go in favour of the RCC's interests.

Somewhat better climate in relations between the two churches in Slovenia was a result of positive historical heritage, above all, support that was provided to Slovenian people by the SOC and its believers in the First and the Second World War. The SOC again remained consistent with its theological-deductive approach, and the RCC to a greater extent to its social-inductive approach. Again, the major point of disagreement was the Roman Catholic concept of papal primacy. Qualitative contribution to the progress in improving relations between the two churches at the regional level was an agreement between Patriarch German and Archbishop of Ljubljana Pogačnik in 1968 on the establishment of cooperation between

³⁵ „Саопштење са редовног заседања Светог Архијерејског Сабора Српске Православне Цркве од 9. до 24. маја“, Београд: Гласник Српске Патријаршије, 1991, стр. 110–111.

³⁶ „Порука јавности Светог Архијерејског Сабора СПЦ“, Београд: АС, мај 1995, бр. 70.

³⁷ Момир Лечић, „Патријарх српски Павле у посети Епархији загребачко-љубљанској и целе Италије“, Београд: Гласник Српске Патријаршије, 1999, pp. 65–68.

religious press.³⁸ They have reached agreement in terms of significance of joint information and educational activities, above all cooperation between the editorial boards of religious journals (annual meetings), which have established cooperation with both the Bishop's Conference of Yugoslavia (BCY) and the SOC's Assembly Commission. In this way, a certain regional and institutional "ecumenical network" was created, which would later result in establishment of cooperation between the Theological Faculties in Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Inter-church relations had a special significance in the multi-confessional and multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why the Yugoslav state paid a special attention to them, encouraging the improvement of relations. Again, the RCC has launched the initiative in relation to the SOC, which in this case responded in somewhat "more open" way.

Examples of the best relations between the representatives of the two churches in Yugoslavia were Episcopate of Banja Luka Andrej Frušić and Bishop Alfred Pihler.³⁹ In his *Christmas Greeting in 1964*, the Bishop called the RCC's believers to reconcile and unite with the SOC, acknowledging the responsibility of one part of the RCC for war crimes. He asked and asked the SOC and its believers for forgiveness.⁴⁰ The Bishop was actively involved in providing certain financial aid from Rome for the construction of the Orthodox Church in Banja Luka. At theological level, he too was unrelenting, insisting on joint social action of the churches, for the purpose of evangelization of Bosnian society. However, he was more "flexible" regarding the interpretation and implementation of the concept of papal

³⁸ Радомир Ракић, „Српског Патријарха посетио љубљански надбискуп“, Београд: Православље, свес. 39, новембар 1968, р. 1.

³⁹ „Информација о организацији и стању односа са СПЦ у СР БиХ“, Сарајево: Републичка комисија за верска питања БиХ, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 1969, ф. 118, бр. 04–127/1.

⁴⁰ „Božićna poslanica biskupa banjalučkog Pihlera“, Banja Luka, *Biskupski ordinarijat Banjaluke*, 1963, br. 1269.

primacy.⁴¹ Over time, the SPC's Metropolitans Nektarije and Vladislav of Dabar-Bosnia have established good relationships with their Roman Catholic colleagues. The same partially stands for bishops and bishops in Herzegovina.

The socio-political crisis and war have influenced the deterioration of relations between the two churches. The two churches were divided by a different understanding of the causes of war and ways to overcome it. In 1992 and 1993, Bosnian bishops even asked their colleagues in the world for support for military intervention of the international community against Bosnian Serbs. Representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, however, considered that call for war cannot bring peace.⁴² Patriarch Pavle, Cardinal of Zagreb Kuharić and Cardinal of Sarajevo Puljić signed *the Sarajevo Declaration* in 1994, requesting from all parties in the conflict to cease the war immediately. High representatives of both churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina were continuously stressing that the war was not religious but political, with indisputable presence of religious elements. The cooperation between the two churches in the post-war period was institutionalized within the framework of *the Inter-Religious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, which promotes reconciliation and establishment of the rule of law and affirmation of the principle of religious pluralism. It represents a body of *consulting* character, which by now has had the declarative results. Also, bishops and bishops met on regular basis in the period from 1998 to 2000 (Tuzla, Banja Luka and Sarajevo), promoting reconciliation, return of displaced persons, the need to establish the rule of law and the practical realization of the concept of "unity in diversity" as a primary objective of inter-church dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴³

⁴¹ Alfred Pihler, „Katolici i Pravoslavni—sedinjenje ili zajedništvo?“, Zagreb: *Glas Koncila*, knj. 14, sves. 434, jul 1980, str. 14–17.

⁴² “Писмо православне српске Митрополије загребачко–љубљанске Светом Архијерејском Синоду СПЦ”, Загреб: *Митрополија загребачко–љубљанска СПЦ*, 1. март 1993, Загреб, бр. 48.

⁴³ Niko Ikić, *Ekumenske studije i dokumenti—Izbor ekumenskih dokumenata Katoličke i Pravoslavne Crkve s propratnim komentarima*, Sarajevo: Vrhbosanska katolička teologija, 2003.

Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia

The ideal of proclaimed church pluralism and “equality” was achieved in Serbia owing mostly to the position of the Yugoslav state and the tolerant attitude of the SOC towards the RCC. Here, unlike the other parts of Yugoslavia, a certain reserve of the RCC caused by its minority position was noticeable. Lower clergy of the SOC was showing a reserve in terms of the final results of relations’ development, not questioning the importance of the social cooperation. The problem was the affirmation of the Greek Catholic Church’s position by the RCC, which has appointed the Greek Catholic Prelate Bukatko to the position of the Archbishop of Belgrade. For the SOC, that was an open obstacle for the improvement of relations.⁴⁴

Representatives of the churches wanted primarily to meet and get to know each other, in circumstances when in the mid-1980s Rome decided to carry out the territorial reorganization of the RCC in Serbia. Dioceses of Subotica and Zrenjanin entered the newly formed Metropolitanate of Belgrade. In multi-confessional Vojvodina, particularly active was the Diocese of Subotica, with substantial support from the Apostolic Nunciature in Belgrade. It particularly insisted on cooperation in *the cultural field*.⁴⁵ Patriarch German and the SOC supported the launching of *the Commission for dialogue of the BCY and the SOC’s Assembly*, because the theological dialogue has remained the focal point of their inter-church relations.

In war period, the RCC in Serbia faced certain pressures and threats, however, not even close to those faced by the SOC in Croatia. The RCC was mainly trying to preserve its own position, receiving *comprehensive support from the SOC* (the case of occupied RCC’s parish in Šabac, mediation of Patriarch Pavle and the SOC in finding the imprisoned Franciscan priest in

⁴⁴ “Информација о посети Изасланству др Габријела Бикатка, надбискупа београдског, на дан 9. септембра 1969. године”, Рим: ССИП, *Изасланство СФРЈ при Светој Столици*, поверљиво, 12. септембар 1969, бр. 179.

⁴⁵ “Информација о посети проте Веселина Петровића Комисији Војводине”, Нови Сад: *Комисија за верска питања АП Војводине*, поверљиво, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 3. мај 1968, ф. 110, бр. 179.

Bosnia etc.) and high state authorities, such as Dobrica Cosić's support to Archbishop Perko.⁴⁶ In the post-war period, during the initiated theological dialogue, all the differences came to the surface, but they did not deteriorate the very good relations between the clergy of both churches, and the RCC was pointing out that it was satisfied with its social and legal status in Serbia.⁴⁷

In the case of Montenegro, it can be concluded that the relations between the two churches were positively influenced by a specific social climate and historical heritage, in terms of positive contribution of the tradition. After the Council, the RCC advocated too "open" approach to the SOC in some places, which caused the SOC's reservations. Especially good relations were established in Boka Kotorska, where clergy and believers met on almost every holiday-related occasion.⁴⁸ At theological level, the RCC's approach was also very consistent and centralistic. An example of the existence of two churches with two altars in Sutomore, in which believers often encountered, remains the highest level of "theological and practical" cooperation between the two churches in the former Yugoslavia. Again, the SOC continued to insist on theological criteria for improvement of relations with the RCC.

In Macedonia, the Vatican has had an objective interest to support the "autocephality of the Macedonian Orthodox Church" (MOC) as a precondition for expanding its influence in this Republic. Bishop of Skopje Čekada has established a direct relationship with Metropolitan Dositej only when Metropolitan became an open actor of the schism with the SOC, which indicates that the RCC *de facto* supported "the separation of the MOC" from the canonical structure of the SOC.⁴⁹ This fact represented a significant problem for the SOC. In fact, the Yugoslav state played the key role by representing the "link" between Pope Paul VI and high

⁴⁶ Франц Перко, „Овде нема будућности“, Београд: *Вечерњи лист*, 25. септембар 1993, стр. 25.

⁴⁷ Belgrade Archbishop Perko has publicly emphasized this.

⁴⁸ „Депеша ДСИП и Амбасади у Риму, Италијанска реферада“, Београд: *Савезна комисија за верска питања, поверљиво*, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 14. октобар 1965, ф. 87, бр. 333.

⁴⁹ „Информација о контактима Митрополита Доситеја са представницима Католичке цркве“, Скопје: *Републичка комисија за верска питања Македоније, поверљиво*, Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 19. јануар 1965, ф. 84, бр. 21, ДБ.

representatives of “the MOC”. At the same time, the Vatican was hiding all contacts and meetings with the representatives of the “MOC” from the SOC.⁵⁰ Rome obviously thought that the separation process of the MOC should start “from below”, where the crucial role was given to the political factor, above all the Yugoslav state. Yugoslavian bishops were entirely following the Vatican’s position and approach.

Inter-Faculty Theological Symposia (1974-1990)

Since the mid-1970s, the two churches have established cooperation between the Theological Faculties as a form of educational and institutional attempt to review the most important theological issues, with the aim of creating a basis for a common practical and pastoral activity in Yugoslav society. Again, the SOC stayed loyal to its own “theological-deductive” approach, and the RCC to its unificational-integrative and social approach.⁵¹ The faculties’ cooperation represented *the regional-educational aspect of theological dialogue* between the two churches. In this context, communal prayers were practiced, where participants at Symposium met and became acquainted with each other. The initial “ecumenical enthusiasm” of the RCC in the early 1980s has evolved into seeing the differences “in the essentials”, whereas the political factor began to crucially influence the course of theological dialogue. Political disagreements in the early 1990s caused the Theological Faculty in Zagreb to leave the active inter-faculty cooperation.⁵²

⁵⁰ “Документ Републичке комисије за верска питања Македоније”, поверљиво, Скопје: Архив Југославије, Фонд 144, 11. јул 1966, ф. 94, бр. 02–130/1.

⁵¹ „Први симпозијум православних и римокатоличких теолога Југославије”, Београд: Православље, свес. 182, 15. октобар 1974, стр. 8–11.

⁵² Niko Ikić, *Ekumenske studije i dokumenti—Izbor ekumenskih dokumenata Katoličke i Pravoslavne Crkve s prpratnim komentarima*, ibidem, str. 243–244.

Joint Commission for Dialogue between the SOC'S Assembly and the Bishop's Conference of Yugoslavia (BCY)

The most significant level and form of cooperation between the SOC and the RCC is certainly the attempt of the two churches' leaders in the late 1980s to institutionalize contacts and meetings through the Joint Commission for Dialogue between the SOC's Assembly and the BCY. Again, the initiative came from the BCY and its representative Cardinal Kuharić, and was accepted by the SOC and Patriarch German as "evangelical imperative".⁵³ The SOC has openly and sincerely presented to the RCC all obstacles to the dialogue: responsibility of one part of the RCC for the events in war, new discrimination of the SOC in Croatia, as well as partiality of the RCC in terms of events on Kosovo and Metohija and situation with "the MOC".⁵⁴ The RCC's answer to all these was diplomatic and pragmatic, with an open tendency for relativization of historical for the purpose of turning to the future. Besides insisting on the need for evangelization in Yugoslavia, there were no clearer counter-arguments.⁵⁵ Such, for the SOC, largely ignorant position of RCC's regarding the most important issues, has caused the resistance of some bishops of the SOC and postponement of the scheduled session of the Joint Commission. During the war, the Commission was not active.

Its first meeting (this time between the SOC's Assembly and the Bishops' Conference of Croatia and Slovenia) was held in Zagreb in November 1998, and the second one in Novi Sad in February 2000, when it was generally agreed that cooperation between the two churches should be based on mutual respect for identity and freedom, with a strong pastoral-missionary responsibility and the need for a joint socio-charitable social

⁵³ "Писмо Светог Архијерејског Сабора СПЦ Председнику Бискупске конференције Југославије др Фрањи Кухарићу", Београд: *Архив Синода СПЦ*, 9. новембар 1989, бр. 2804/зап. 1312.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ „Pismo katoličke Biskupske konferencije Jugoslavije i njenog predsjednika Kardinala Franje Kuharića, nadbiskupa zagrebačkog, Njegovoj Svetosti Patrijarhu srpskom Germanu“, Zagreb: *Biskupska konferencija Jugoslavije*, 30. listopad 1989, br. 323.

approach.⁵⁶ Agreement was reached on a joint contribution to the return of displaced persons (especially in Croatia), as well as the need to engage in the field of mixed marriages.⁵⁷

Conclusion

The issue of *papal primacy* (his infallibility or “inerrancy”) and Roman jurisdiction at theological level, and painful historical heritage from the World War II at practical level, represent the key obstacles in the process of improvement of relations between the RCC and the SOC. Therefore, they are aware of existential significance of their cooperation in social field. In the post-Council period (1962-65), the Yugoslav state has encouraged the improvement of their relations, starting from the interest of overcoming national antagonisms in the Yugoslav Federation. At the same time, the Yugoslav state was trying to achieve the full control over the inter-church cooperation, afraid of the possible creation of a “joint church front” against its ideological system. Over time, its policy was increasingly “going in favour” of the RCC’s interests.

The establishment of regional relations between the two churches in Yugoslavia was initiated by the Vatican and Pope Paul VI, as an important aspect of the global “dialogue of love” between the two churches, which was expected to evolve into *theological dialogue*. In circumstances of theological disagreements, painful historical experience and atheistic environment, the RCC and the SOC have managed to agree on the need for joint social action, aiming at *evangelization of the society*. The evangelization implied the pastoral and the socio-charitable activity and responsibility. The RCC displayed the initiative again, often relativizing the theological and the historical for the purpose of improving relations. The SOC’s approach remained primarily theological, as well as socially responsible, taking into account the pan-Orthodox, international and domestic political factors.

The most important form of institutionalized cooperation between the two churches in Yugoslavia is the Joint Commission for Dialogue between

⁵⁶ „Сусрет Комисија за дијалог Светог Архијерејског Сабора СПЦ и Хрватске бискупске конференције“, Београд: Гласник Српске Патријаршије, 2000, стр. 62.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

the SOC's Assembly and the BCY, formed in late 1980s. In this regard, of great importance was the educational cooperation between Theological Faculties in Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade (1974-1990), with joint activities related to religious press in the country.

The war years have significantly jeopardized all the results achieved through inter-church activities. *Political factor* from the early 1990s caused the more open disagreement between the two churches in terms of viewing the causes of the war and concrete proposals for overcoming conflict. Cooperation between the churches became more intensive in the post-war period, in which they openly demonstrate responsibility and initiative in terms of improving relations, in order to contribute qualitatively to overcoming the negative legacy of the past and the region's "true" integration.

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TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH OF IMAGINATION AND ANGELS - THE TRANSCULTURAL HIDDEN THIRD: FROM ANDREI PLEȘU TO BASARAB NICOLESCU

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Abstract

Imagination is involved in a key-process within the construction of self-identity: interpretation as an exercise into self-consciousness. The angel is the perfect cultural expression of imagination (understood also as inspiration) and interpretation (angelus interpres). This paper takes Andrei Pleșu's innovative interpretation of the worlds of angels and grafts them upon Basarab Nicolescu's theories about the possibility of a hidden trans-cultural element able to work as a

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catalyst in the genesis of reality. The aim of this paper is to outline the constitutive power of intermediary zones within the algorithms of social visions and perspectives. This paper is not an argument for a new religion (angelology) but an attempt to find, by means of a transdisciplinary approach, a fertile intermediary dialogical and interpretative element able to transcend all religious prejudices and unite all transcendental intuitions through this very transcendence.

Keyword: transdisciplinarity, angels, imagination, intermediary spaces, hidden trans-cultural third, constitutive power, open society, transgression, transmission, translation, interpretation.

1. Introduction: contemporary social fragmentation; similarities between specialization and dogma

There is a need in today's society for a transcendental source of support and safety as a solution against an insecure, fragmented against itself and thus destabilizing world. The generalized state of insecurity springs from a rather absurd deepening of relativity as a trade-mark of the one-dimensional/ one track-mindedness of the modern man. *Living in late modernity, as Anthony Giddens puts it, has the feeling of riding a juggernaut: „Understanding the juggernaut-like nature of modernity goes a long way towards explaining why, in conditions of high modernity, crisis becomes normalized.”¹ The crisis-prone nature of late modernity brings about disturbing and unsettling states of mind within individuals by exposing everyone to a diversity of crisis situations which threatens the very core of self-identity. In the Giddensian interpretative framework, religion remains the supreme example of inner regenerative power:*

In modern times some forms of traditional authority continue to exist, including, of course religion. Indeed, for reasons that are to do precisely with the connections between modernity and doubt, religion not only

¹ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Self and Society in the late Modern Age), First published in 1991 by Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers; Reprinted in 1992 by Polity Press, p. 184.

refuses to disappear, but undergoes a resurgence.² Yet there is now a basic contrast with the past. Forms of traditional authority become only 'authorities' among others, part of an indefinite pluralism of expertise.³

Anthony Giddens points out clearly that there is a need for a flexible and creative approach to the religious experience, one permitting a more creative personal evolution throughout various cultural patterns (evolution which finds its most effective and synthetic expression in what is called "faith"), and which would not exhaust its potential and perspective in an interpretation or another:

What creates a sense of ontological security that will carry the individual through transitions, crises and circumstances of high risk? Trust in the existential anchoring of reality in an emotional, and to some degree in a cognitive, sense rests on confidence in the reliability of persons,(...)The experience of basic trust is the core of that specific 'hope' of which Ernst Bloch speaks, and is at origin of what Tillich calls 'the courage to be'.(...) Basic trust is connected in an essential way to the interpersonal organization of time and space.⁴

Fragmentation⁵ produces mono-dimensional attitudes and the artistic (in the sense of creative and innovative) act and part of our daily lives got to be relegated to a simple and derisory cliché:

Providential interpretations of history were major elements of Enlightenment culture, and it is not surprising that their residues are still to be found in modes of thinking in day-to-day life. Attitudes to high-consequence risks probably often retain strong traces of a providential outlook. We may live in an apocalyptic world, facing an array of global

² This key statement from Anthony Giddens, being also the very core-idea of our paper – that of demonstrating the need for a trusty and solid spiritual landmark in an out-of-control and chaotically-kinetic world: a warmly-humane return to the self in order to withstand an abstract chaos (cold, unstable and dangerous like the big dark universe itself).

³ Anthony Giddens, *op.cit.*, pp. 195-196.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

⁵ We understand by "fragmentation" the modern culture of specialists who claim absolute expertise over their fields of activity – most probably a reminiscence of the old religious intolerant dogmatism synthesized by Anthony Giddens in the formula "providential interpretation."

dangers; yet an individual might feel that governments, scientists or other technical specialists can be trusted to make the appropriate steps to counter them. Or else he feels that 'everything is bound to come out all right in the end.'⁶

Ann Aldén, one of the leading commentators of the religious aspects within Giddens's work shows the similarity in structure of both specialization and dogma:

In my opinion compartmentalizing (if there is any, in the strict sense) suffers from the same shortcomings as does claims of absolute truth where reason is not welcome as a critical voice. Both exclude or provide very little room for critical reasoning, a situation which leaves the individual believer in a vulnerable position.(...)In modernity we live guided by the knowledge and the insights at hand, conditioned by reflexivity.⁷

The keystone of philosophy it is its fundamentally "unresolved openness" [Unabgeschlossenheit] - the virtue of fallibleness (as Karl Popper called it), that is, a constitutive virtue and a pro-active way of avoiding falling back in a totalitarian visions that would surely enclose a society upon itself.

2. Applications on the theories of the interval: a dialogue and a transfer of meaning between religion and science

The phenomenon of creativity and inspiration takes place in the zone between ideologies, dogmas and various types of expertise. In such mediating places the dynamic of the shifts is very intense as it is based on constant interpretation. Faith (also understood as trust) and motivation appear as dialogical syntheses meant to provide the antidote for the risk-induced anxiety of the modern world (with all its cohort of misfortunes:

⁶ Anthony Giddens, *op.cit.*, pp. 130-131.

⁷ Ann Aldén, *Religion in Dialogue with Late Modern Society (A Constructive Contribution to a Christian Spirituality Informed by Buddhist-Christian Encounters)*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, Europäischer Verleger Wissenschaften, 2006, p. 57.

passive nihilism, alienation, estrangement, lack of motivation etc). And trust alone can connect the self back to itself.

There is (...) *an ontology of the interval*, a 'gradation' of it, that the image of the *ladder* from Jacob's vision suggests in a unmediated manner. Between God and the man there are *steps*, 'havens', different ontological densities, as there is between the man and anorganic matter intermediate kingdoms (...). The angels (...) reduce the distance that separates us from the absolute to a sequence of plausible segments. The angels are the filter of mystical knowledge. [...] Angelology [...] establishes the *stages* of a path and recommends the guiding of some intermediate beings, which control the *thresholds* between stages.

As simple hybrids, arbitrary entities composed of elements borrowed from God and elements lent to the man, the angels pass, for [...] modern world, to the category of the *imaginary*. The offensive of the dichotomies begins. A thing can be either real or unreal. The imaginary is unreal. Thus, angels do not exist, and God is once again exiled in the nebulous and unapproachable territory of the maxim of remoteness.⁸

Dichotomies appear in the form of binary oppositions of the sort: 'yes' and 'no', 'either - or' - while the possibility of an integrity that could simultaneously be both 'yes' and 'no', and which could make an integrated and functional connection between 'yes' and 'no' is excluded. And this is the condition of the enrolled modern man called by Herbert Marcuse the "*one dimensional man*."

In this essay we will place God beyond and above all possible levels of reality, and we will assume Him through the angelic instances, as voices of God, and as elements capable to transcend the possible worlds, and the layers of reality while mediating the distance between man and God.

At the level of this intermediate zone there is a protective screen (represented by angels), a permeable and selective membrane that insures the 'exchanges' between humans and divinity. The universalizing and

⁸ Andrei Pleșu, *Limba Păsărilor (The language of the Birds)*, București: Editura Humanitas, 1994, pp. 255-257, our translation and our italics.

globalizing experience is rendered possible solely through the understanding (and the afferent correct integration) of the dynamics and possibilities of these intermediate zones.

We will comprehend this membrane as the channel of communication between man and God and we will invest it with the liberty of movement and creation that the Democritian⁹ space is known to bring about.

Language in itself is impossible without this channel of communication – it is the space where the linguistic peacock displays the entire beauty of its plumage, and from the beauty of the possibility of this unfolding our inspiration and creative force emerges. The fragmentation and the separation introduced by the formalism of modernism completely suppress this space or it substitutes it with a wall. The angel transforms this wall into a mobile and adaptable borderline within which the entities, although they interpenetrate, still remain distinct – as it is the case in the Kantian logic of the synthesis between faculties which, although already inside the synthesis, do maintain a sufficient degree of individuality.

Thus, the stake of Andrei Plesu's thesis is to demonstrate that the interstitial spaces (*the spaces of the various densities Being of the transcendental*) are simultaneously hermeneutical, dialogical, angelic, and spaces of synthesis (however, one should notice it is not the case of a Hegelian synthesis but of a synthesis after the model of the mobile and adaptable borderline, inside which the elements, although they enter in complex networks of exchanges, still remain distinct and individuated) of different wave length and of different ontological frequencies. To put it in a simpler manner, Hermes equals Angel and it further equals the highest degree of

⁹ According to Democritus the empty space is just as important as the substantialized one as it allows the possibility of movement: "But Democritus' starting point resides in the fact that he believes in the reality of movement, as thought is movement. It is his point of attack: the movement exists, as I think and thinking has reality. But if there is movement, then there must be a void as well, which means that the non-being is as real as the being. Should the space be entirely filled, there could be no movement in it." Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nașterea Filosofiei (The Birth of Philosophy)*, Cluj: Editura Dacia, 1992, p. 116, our translation.

Kantian apperception. The angel is the catalyst that facilitates the passage of God into the world; it is the one who brings inspiration and creativity for humans. Although, from a theological point of view (Christian, Jewish or Islamic) the angels themselves are not living beings, they do manage to invest a living quality to the channel (medium) of communication between God and the man. This channel is the language becoming alive, with an "organic structure" of its own (that is, independent by our reason in its evolution); and so, in order to better understand the link between inspiration, creativity and a living presence of the language within ourselves, what we have to do is to consult the autobiography of the great novelists:

I have never found myself thinking much about the work that I had to do till I was doing it. I have indeed for many years almost abandoned the effort to think, trusting myself, with the narrowest thread of a plot, to work the matter out when the pen is in my hand.¹⁰

The most important emphasis within Andrei Plesu's book is that this intermediate level, where the transcendence is realized effectively and affectively, is nothing else but the very level of the soul – the *anima*, the zone that only functions in a creative and personal manner – the connector that gives ontological consistency and functional viability to the whole; the element which links the body and the spirit inside a live and functional unity. *Thus, the angel is the transcendental analogue of our transcendent soul:*

Angelology [...] as a discipline of the interval, it addresses the 'interval' within the man, meaning to his *animic* (A.N. from *anima*) level, placed between the body and the spirit. The human soul is a latent angel (...) It can 'activate' itself as a whole angelic entity only to the extent that it defuses its other 'latency': its demonic latency.

[...] However, in his effort, the soul is not alone before its own determination. It is assisted by its 'celestial counterpart', by the perfect expression of his nature, a sort of a sublime *alter ego* which serves it as landmark and collaborator. In consequence, our inner life is *acohabitation*,

¹⁰ Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1978, p. 131.

the soul-like existence is a *cohabitation*, an unceasing dialogue between our earthly soul and its 'angelic' counterpart.

Taken seriously, angelology could add to the 'abyssal' psychology, which constantly valorizes undergrounds, nocturnal and at times, impersonal levels, of our psychic organism, a *phenomenology of the heights*, attentive to the 'luminous', aural zone, profoundly personalized of the sole. The study of the 'roots' of the conscience would, thus, complete itself, with an evaluation of its 'nimbus'. A veritable 'psychology of the heights' would be interested not only by '*what motivates us*', but also by '*what inspires us*'. (...)¹¹

Although falling into the trap of locating the rich potential of the interval into a culturally-canonic formula ("angelology"), Andrei Pleșu reveals, in this passage from his innovative treaty on angels, the most important aspect involved in the issue, by showing that the soul (and his transcendental analogue, the angel) has fallen in disgrace and derision because of modernity's formalism mirrored in and perpetuated by its generalized mass production systems, which have atrophied man's creative instinct while throwing him in the commodity of the routine of binary logic (the '*either...or*', '*neither...nor*' type of routine). The high consequences of an interiorized binary system of thinking and acting, together with the non-acceptance of a third possible way, are detailed by Basarab Nicolescu in his study *What is Reality?*, with direct references to the historical religious roots of this mind-set and also to its contemporary consequences for the nations' spiritual health which should be materialized in wise and tolerant politics. The latter consequences being the absolutizing of all relativizations and an utter denial of the transcendental as constitutive level of existence:

However, on the social level, the logic of the excluded middle acts as a true logic of exclusion: good or evil, right or left, women or men, rich or poor, white or black. It would be enlightening to conduct a review of xenophobia, racialism, antisemitism or nationalism in the light of the logic of the excluded middle.

¹¹ Andrei Pleșu, *op.cit.*, pp. 258-259, our translation and our italics.

Today we live in a full pornographic fornication of the binary thinking. The binary logic of the absolute truth and of the absolute falsity acts with an immodesty that leaves one speechless. 'The battle of Good against Evil,' 'God is with us!' - so many slogans that make the crowds buzz into approvals and culminate with this incredible statement that sets out, without knowing it, a well-known Leninist slogan: 'Whoever is not with us is against us!'.

It is interesting to note the inversion operated by the totalitarian thinking towards the known statement from the New Testament: 'For whoever is not against us is for us.' (Mark 9:40). In the Epistle to the Romans (8:31), Saint Paul explains the meaning of this statement: 'Brethren, if God is on our side, who can be against us?'. (...)Killed in the name of God is God. (...) The murder of the transcendence is the fulfillment of the binary thinking. The relative becomes an absolute, so that it becomes possible to affirm anything and its opposite.¹²

The presence of a third term, that is independent of all binary systems, creates a fertile interval, that is, it inserts a "cannula" into all previous homogenous and hermetic monolithic structures and brings fresh "air" therein in the form of perspectives (perspectives gained by means of creativity and imagination): "...the faculty which normally mediates our access towards the heavenly hierarchies is a faculty of the soul: the imagination."¹³

This included middle manifests itself at the level of creativity and expressiveness by means of which it opens up society towards superior levels of the self and of the ethos – levels rendered metaphorically by Andrei Pleșu by the syntagm "heavenly hierarchies". Through its vivid (not in a biological sense but at the level of cause and effect) presence this included middle triggers phenomena of actualization or activation by means of which the levels of Reality "osmotically" agglutinate into a coherent and cohesive unified and functional (operational) open structure. A structure can be said to be open to evolution – in the sense of it assimilating new properties. According to Humberto Maturana the domain

¹² Basarab Nicolescu, *Ce este Realitatea? Reflecții în jurul operei lui Stéphane Lupasco (What is Reality? Reflections upon Stéphane Lupasco's work)*, Iași: Editura Junimea, 2009, pp. 20-21, author's translation.

¹³ Andrei Pleșu, *op.cit.*, pp. 261-262.

of existence of a simple or of a composite unity must be interpreted as “the domain of the operational coherences” within which distinctions make sense: “In other words, domain of existence of a simple unity is the domain of operational validity of the properties that define it as such, and the domain of existence of a composite unity is the domain of operational validity of the properties of the components that constitute it (...).”¹⁴ And, speaking together with Maturana of a „convergence of the theories of knowledge (as the title of the respective German collection of text says – „*Konvergenz der Erkenntnistheorien*”), we could say that the active presence of an included middle realizes, by means of imagination, a functional and viable „*reciprocity of opposites*” at the level of contemporary epistemology:

The logic of the included middle is able to describe the coherence between the levels of Reality, through the iterative process that involves the following steps: 1. A couple of contradictories (A, non-A) located at a certain level of reality is unified by a T state located at a next level of reality; 2. In turn, this T state¹⁵ is linked to a couple of contradictories (A', non-A'), situated at its own level; 3. The couple of contradictories (A', non-A') is, in turn, unified by a T' state that is located at a different level of Reality, the immediate neighbor of the level where the ternary is located

¹⁴ Humberto Maturana, “The Biological Foundations of Self Consciousness and the Physical Domain of Existence”, in Karin Obermaier, Volker Redder, *Beobachter (Konvergenz der Erkenntnistheorien?)*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1992, pp. 63-65.

¹⁵ According to Basarab Nicolescu, The power of this “T state” to bring contradictions together in a functional formula first originated in the visionary philosophy of Ștefan Lupașcu (fr. Stéphane Lupasco): “This is precisely Lupașcu's historical merit: he knew to admit that the infinite multiplicity of the real can be restructured, deduced, starting from only *three* logical terms, concretizing thus the hope previously formulated by Peirce. The rigorous development of his axiomatic formalism determined Lupasco to postulate the existence of a third type of antagonistic dynamics that coexists with that of the *heterogeneity*, which governs the living matter, and with that of the *homogeneity*, which governs the macroscopic physical matter. This new dynamic mechanism assumes the existence of a state of rigorous, precise balance between the poles of a contradiction, in a strictly equal quasi-actualization and quasi-potentialization. This state, called by Lupasco the *T state* (“T” being the initial for the ‘included third’ – or the ‘included middle’), characterizes the world of microphysics, the world of particles. The new dynamics acts as a conciliatory force between heterogeneity and homogeneity. The binary structure homogeneous-heterogeneous, which seemed to be that of the energetic antagonism, is thus replaced by a *ternary structure*.” Basarab Nicolescu, *Noi, particula și lumea (We, the particle and the world)*, Iași: Editura Junimea, 2007, p. 190, our translation.

(A', non-A', T). The iterative process continues indefinitely, until the exhaustion of all the known or imaginable levels of reality. In other words, the action of the logic of the included middle on the different levels of reality induces an *open, gödelian* structure of the ensemble of reality levels.

This structure has a considerable influence on the theory of knowledge, because it implies the impossibility of a complete theory, closed upon itself.

Indeed, according to the axiom of non-contradiction, the T state achieves the unification of the couple of contradictories (A, non-A), but it is also associated with another couple of contradictories (A' and non-A'). This means that we can build, starting from a number of mutually contradictory couples, a new theory, which eliminates the contradictions from one level of reality, but this theory is only temporary, because it will inevitably lead, under the combined pressure of the theory and the experience, to the discovery of a new couple of contradictories, located at a new level of reality. In turn, this theory will be replaced, as new levels of reality will be discovered, with still more unified theories. This process will continue indefinitely without ever being able to reach a completely unified theory. The axiom of non-contradiction comes increasingly stronger from this process. In this sense, without ever reaching an absolute non-contradiction, we can speak of an *evolution of knowledge*, involving all levels of Reality: knowledge is always *open*.¹⁶

Thus, a ternary logic is a logic that defies absurdity and establishes a functional model within society, an open model with a superior assimilative, integrative and thus unifying potential:

The real entity can thus reveal some contradictory aspects that are incomprehensible, even absurd from a logical point of view based on the assumption '*either* this one *or* the other one.' These contradictory aspects cease to be absurd in a logic based on the assumption '*both* this one *and* the other one', or rather '*neither* this one *nor* the other one'.¹⁷

Thus we see that the up-mentioned routine is the routine of the predetermined and perspectiveless patterns of "evolution" – patterns

¹⁶ Basarab Nicolescu, *Ce este Realitatea? Reflecții ...*, pp. 68-69, author's translation.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

biased by the past experience and, practically, locked by and in this very past experience (that is, unable to evolve, assimilate or integrate). Such models are not able to respond to deeper needs of the human being (which are, in fact, those fragile nuances which assure man's mental equilibrium), nor to grasp the multi functional and trans-conditioned complexity of existence in this world.

The level of the soul (with its transcendental [culturally acknowledged] analogue, the angel) is the level of the imagination. *Mundus imaginalis*¹⁸ as the catalytic third secretly hidden is inaccessible in a direct manner but its interstitial presence (in the point of convergence and synthesis of the levels of reality, in their vortex) changes the dynamic of the meaning of the human reality and even decides the orbit of its movement. It is the sine qua non condition for one's re-skilling (back) into himself by means of an authentically dialogical (multi- and trans-connected) approach of reality. The stake is a trans-cultural functionality, the demonstration of the existence of a common liberty space (the Democritian void that insures the possibility of movement) where our imagination (with its climax in what is generally acknowledged as "vision") can unfold and vascularize itself into a prolific, impinging and trespassing *unified* reality of functionally complemented values in the form of edifying *variables* (meant to encourage intellectual, moral and spiritual improvements visible in Karl Popper's formula of "Unabgeschlossenheit"). Such a reality, as Corin Braga shows, can only reach its cohesion and coherence as a historically-synthesized conceptual complex gravitating around a vivifying unity of actualization:

(...)'l'imaginal', or 'mundus imaginalis' (written in Latin), has its roots in an alternative tradition of the concept of imagination. Most surprisingly, Plato's philosophy, which depreciated images as copies of copies, also gave birth to another tradition, forged by his late disciple Plotinus in the 3rd century A.C.E. As is well known, Plotinus reorganized Plato's metaphysics in an emanation system, in which from the first principle, the One, derive, through successive emanations, the cosmic Intellect, the cosmic soul, and the material world. In this triadic system, the cosmic soul (*Anima mundi*)

¹⁸ Henry Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn Arabi*, Paris: Flammarion, 1958.

corresponds to the human psyche, and so to the human sentiments, passions, impulses and fantasy. Because of its consubstantiality to the *Anima mundi*, human imagination is no longer deprived, in Neo-Platonism, of ontological reality.

During the Middle Ages, while classical philosophy was 'forgotten' in Europe, the Muslims inherited, among other classical concepts, the Neo-Platonist emanation system. In Sufi mysticism, there are three levels of reality: the intelligible world of the One, an intermediary world, in which intelligible beings appear as individual figures, and the sensible world of the body and matter. The intellectual reality is accessible to pure intellect, the intermediary reality to *visionary imagination*,¹⁹ and the material reality to the senses. Contrary to physiological imagination, which produces unreal fictions, the visionary imagination has access to a transcendent reality. Angels, heavens, cities of God, etc., described in mystical visions, are ontological manifestations of the One. In order to describe these meta-psychological representations, the French philosopher Henry Corbin, who studied extensively the mystic experiences of Persian Zoroastrians and of Shiite Muslims, called them *imaginables*, ontologically real, in opposition to *imaginaires*, fictitious. He also called the intermediary level of reality *mundus imaginalis* (Corbin, 1958).²⁰

Mundus imaginalis, as a fertile intermediate zone, becomes a host for the processes of authentication. The history of the affirmation of the imagination as man's supreme faculty – capable to connect the transcendental with the transcendent (to provide a communicational channel between the two / to bring them in a state of dialogue) - is the history of man constructing, harmonizing and organizing interactively within himself (even at the biological level of the brain, *by means of a wise and creative use of the possibilities offered by language*²¹) and within the ethos of

¹⁹ Our italics.

²⁰ Corin Braga " 'Imagination', 'imaginaire', 'imaginal'. Three concepts for defining creative fantasy" in *JSRI*, No.16, Spring 2007, pp. 64-65.

²¹ Corin Braga claims that only in language such trans-real spaces acquire a vivid and authentic reality and influence (in the sense that language allows them to become constitutive) and, as such, he sees them first and foremost as linguistic realities capable (in consubstantiality with our active consciousness) to actualize and objectify intentions: "When related to '*l'imaginaire*', religion appears as a function of the human brain. It is no more a mere non-being, a '*néant*', although neither does it receive an ontological status. Imaginary

his society (*by means of a wise and creative use of public discourse as exercise into consensus*) a catalyst-like space of movement and projection capable to essentialize the otherwise void and biasing space from in-between faculties. This space is popularly and unscientifically associated with the “supernatural” – when it is in fact a phenomenological and even psychological actively-constitutive *topos* about which Andrei Pleșu goes as far as to say that it is an inner faculty specially created for perceiving other trans-dimensions of reality. As stated above, this zone becomes accessible if activated by imagination as a vivifying unity of actualization synthesized and refined culturally throughout the centuries and cultures:

(...) is the intermediate world between the world of the bodies (of material existence) and the world of the pure Intellect, of the spiritual existences. It is, following, the *world of the soul*, a world where the spirit and the body interpenetrate, a world of images, *imaginal*, but as little *imaginary* as the world that flank it. It is in this world that the ‘visions’ occur, the ‘revelations’, theophanies of all sort and the posthumous resurrection of the souls. In this world where there is no space and where time is reversible, the Absolute descends as much as it is necessary in order to show itself to its creatures. [...] This is the *world of the angels*. [...] *Mundus imaginalis* is at the boundary which separates the exteriority from the interiority. In order to manifest itself, it needs the imagination’s

phantasms are real as mental or psychic phenomena, but not as external beings. Through the concept of ‘*imaginaire*’, religion is to be explained as a constellation of mental patterns (or archetypes) generating a series of religious experiences and images. Jung would say that, as a psychiatrist, he is not qualified to say anything about the reality of God. What he can professionally say is that his patients do show and document the existence of an ‘*imago Dei*’, an image of God present in the human psyche. And although Jungian psychology is somewhat out of fashion nowadays, the brand new discipline of neurology seems to demonstrate, with the aid of *sophisticated* brain-scanners, that certain areas of the brain are specific only to religious experiences.

Finally, when related to ‘*imaginal*’, religion would claim its full ontological reality. ‘*Mundus imaginalis*’, the the transcendent world shown in mystical revelations, is no longer seen as an illusion, as a non-being, or as a mental phenomenon, but as a world out of our reach. Still, empirical evidence apparently cannot be brought in support of the theory of the actual existence of the supernatural. This is why the acceptance or the rejection of the ‘*mundus imaginalis*’ remains mainly an act of faith. ‘*L’imaginal*’ does not bring a theoretical testimony or proof for the subsistence of the sacred. Nonetheless, it linguistically evaluates it as ontologically real.” Corin Braga, *art.cit.*, pp. 67-67.

contribution of 'vera', of 'activating' of a inner faculty specially created for perceiving it. Without the intervention of this faculty, the imaginal world is simply a virtual existence, it is the external universe for a blind man.²²

According to professor Virgil Ciomoș, this is a new *mobile and mobilizing* space of movement between the acknowledged Kantian faculties of cognition, a space of freedom and expression influencing those faculties but still being able to resist any kind of assimilation of its potential into one of the faculties which it mediates (being able to maintain its identity-giving condition inherent to any active limit²³):

(...) we can not (simply) reduce the Kantian experience to that of a simple – static - assuming of the limit (...). Therefore, if we were to determine philologically the Kantian experience, we would rather say that it is, at the same time, Greek and Latin since, once assumed (*em-peiria*), the limit allows us, however, a certain architectonic 'shift' (*ex-perientia*).

The transition...be-falls, however, (and so to speak) only as 'long' as we are *at*, or better said, *in* the limit, that is, precisely in [a.n. full] transition(...). For just as long as we are inside the limit, can we 'overcome' it. Or vice versa: we can 'overcome' the limit only by somehow remaining 'in' it.²⁴

²² Andrei Pleșu, *op.cit.*, pp. 265-266-267.

²³ Here we make a direct reference to Gabriel Liiceanu's notions of „gravitational liberty” as „plasticity of the limit” – a plasticity philosophically acknowledged as „bringing into project”. The limit (the boundary) becomes therefore the one that gives identity to an amorphism, the one that transforms the substance of freedom into the very essence of freedom. Man's capacity to consciously construct his reality relies on assuming the ontological implications of the limit: „As flying is impossible outside gravity, freedom makes sense only when it is conditioned by limits. *Real freedom is gravitational freedom*, and it should be distinguished from the idealized and 'pure' freedom. In an area of non-gravitational freedom anything can happen. But precisely because *anything* can happen in such a space, *nothing* does happen.[...] The space of non-gravitational freedom, is the space of pre-being ([...] The limit is the *instrument* of our freedom that starts doing [a.n. things]).” Gabriel Liiceanu, *Despre Limită (On Limit)*, second edition, București: Editura Humanitas, 1997, pp. 5-6 and p. 11, our translation.

²⁴ Virgil Ciomoș, *Conștiință și Schimbare în Critica Rațiunii Pure, o perspectivă arhitectonică asupra kantianismului (Consciousness and Change in the Critique of Pure Reason, an architectonic perspective on Kantianism)*, București: Editura Humanitas, 2006, p. 80, our translation.

3. The management of illusion (fantasy, fantasizing, imagination, illusion and reflexivity)

Imagination is the supreme faculty of the humans as it allows us to integrate experiences in our trans-horizontal self and to “read” such experiences in a progressive and constitutive key, regardless of the orbit or the coordinates on which the Dasein’s openness toward the Sein takes place (we will understand “openness” as curiosity, passion, motivation, revelation). Imagination must not be confused with fantasy (a first manifestation of the larger phenomenon of creativity), fantasizing or with fancy (extravagant, sudden and capricious ideas, curiosities and inclinations are snobbishly/“snobbishly” allowed into becoming a tired baroque overflowing) and, if we were to contextualize it religiously and socially, we would bring into discussion liturgy within which, far from being a passive “art for art’s sake” hedonistic self-indulging moment (fantasizing), without an altruistic moral social value, imagination becomes a must, an active tool meant to creatively assure a connection with superior levels of reality by means of picturing transcendent and transcendental landscapes and of interpreting their value in our systems of motivation. Imagination helps us understand, anticipate and hypostasize.

Fantasy as opposed to *Fantasizing* is the first step one has to undergo in order to become imaginative and thus creative (and this is obvious from the simple and all-available observation according to which every bodily experience is accompanied by a nascent unconscious imaginary or fantasy component):

Fantasy means – to some people a manipulated affair rather like what a child’s comic is to a child. But fantasy goes deep into the personal inner psychic reality...It is all the time making the individual’s actual experience rich and real to them. In this way everything under the sun can be found in the individual and the individual is able to feel the reality of whatever is actual and desirable.²⁵

²⁵ D.W. Winnicott, “This Feminism” in C. Winnicott (ed.), *Home Is Where We Start From. Essays by a Psychoanalyst*, New York: Norton, 1986, p. 189.

D.W. Winnicott draws an important distinction between fantasy, fantasizing, and dreaming in the realm of inner reality, according to which dreams and reality operate at the same level of authenticity but day-dreams (fantasizing) remain an abnormality failing to fit any functional pattern within human personality.

[there is]... an essential difference...between fantasizing and the alternatives of dreaming on the one hand and of real living and relating to real objects on the other. With unexpected clarity, dreaming and living have been seen to be of the same order, day-dreaming being of another order. Dream fits into objects relating in the real world and living in the real world fits into the dream world in ways that are quite familiar. By contrast however, fantasizing remains an isolated phenomenon, absorbing energy but not contributing-in either to dreaming or living.²⁶

By this expression (fantasizing), together with Winnicott, we will understand a phenomenon of day-dreaming meant to fill-in some acute gaps, shortages and absences in a person's life (wishes and psychological needs); an essentially compensatory "faculty" meant to balance out and make up for things that are otherwise highly improbable to ever happen in that person's life. As such, fantasizing functions as a spiritual balm and psychological bandage and it consists in allowing yourself to "flow with the stream" without responsibility or care for the consequences of such permissivenesses (and the most notorious consequences appear when they seriously affect our concentration and efficiency). Being compensatory it is usually an automatic instinct for balancing on the part of our being – so one may fall into it without always notice what happens with him/her. *Fantasizing is perceived by Winnicott as the activity that paralyses the ability to dream: (...) fantasizing was a dead end. It had no poetic value. The corresponding dream however had poetry in it, that is to say, layer upon layer of meaning related to past present and future and to inner and outer and always fundamentally about herself.*²⁷

Yet, the worst thing about fantasizing is not its abnormality and incapacity to contribute constitutively in the shaping of a personality.

²⁶ D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1971, p. 26.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p.35.

When one is fantasizing he breaks from himself, somehow against himself as the fantasizing individual is out of contact with reality, prisoner of a mental no-man's-land and thus unable to get out of this neutralized and sterile area and re-attach himself to some functional value. Thus, "fantasy" stands in opposition to "fantasizing". *And here is the heart of the reactor of creativity: the problem of illusion. As Winnicott perfectly shows, illusion is the raw material of all the up-mentioned phenomena: fantasy, fancy, fantasizing, imagination, creativity, skill. And here is the very place where the Giddensian notion of reflexivity enters into play as we realize that it all amounts to a wise and appropriate (pragmatic) management of illusion. Modernity, in its progressive aspects is reflexive and thus creative because it uses illusion in a wise manner. Such a use of illusion gives us the much praised « self-identity » as it transforms risks into opportunities (this ability is called by Giddens « skill »).*

But, a bad management of illusion becomes the equivalent of a good medicine taken in overdoses and it transforms risks into opportunities for dogmas or rigid and tyrannical cannons of social security (at a collective level) or into painful personal dramas (at a personal level).²⁸ A bad management of illusion brings anxiety and it always ends up in fragmentation, alienation, and isolation – just as, at an inner level, fantasizing created dissociation.

Casparus Vos does not make a distinction between fantasy and fantasizing, wrongly interpreting fantasy as day-dreaming instead of what Winnicott's psychoanalysis has proven it to be – that is a first palpable manifestation of creativity that needs to reflexivity in order to be profitably and trans-culturally and trans-contextually developed):

Imagination is something other than fantasy. Fantasy is an escape from reality [a.n. here is the only but still important mistake within Vos's analysis – otherwise a perfect diagnosis], whereas imagination expands and enriches reality. [...] The liturgy leaves space for imagination. In this space our

²⁸ Let us recall the touching and almost mcbethian monologue from Virginia Woolfs *Between the Acts*: "This is death, death, death, she noted in the margin of her mind; when illusion fails." - Virginia Woolf - *Between the Acts* (1941), - a Project Gutenberg of Australia eBook-taken from [<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0301171h.html>], consulted on the 6th of December 2010.

relationships with God, our neighbor and the world can be creatively explored and deepened. This imagination brings people into contact with the kingdom of God where we find not solely peace but also discord, conflict and pain. The believer sees God as being present and working *within* the given, visible human reality.²⁹ Imagination makes it possible for us to encounter and experience God in his different ‚guises‘ under different circumstances. [...] The imaginative impulses in the liturgy can grow into an imaginative life within the community. That means that the faith-community enters the public domain by concentrating on moral integrity and offering this as a contribution to public life (Stanley Hauerwas). But this contribution cannot take the form of demands. The faith-community must approach the world at large with openness and respect. Society must be convinced and persuaded that certain values make sense and give meaning to life.³⁰

4. Elements of trans-mission and connection: angels as Hidden Third and as “living” presence of the medium

Thus, Marshall McLuhan’s formula ‘the medium is the message’ offers us the key regarding the angels’ role inside the agglutination of sense: the medium functions at the level of the articulations (in all possible ways, as conductor, accelerator, moderator, potentiometer and so on) while assuring, in an active manner, the creative combination of elements:

The angels, however, solve together with *the proximity crisis* also the *crisis of the interval*. They give consistence and life to this space, transmitting to the man God’s signs and to God they transmit the man’s prayers.³¹ [...] And

²⁹ Jongsma-Tieleman, P.E., *Godsdienst als speelruimte voor verbeelding. GthT*, 98[2], 1998, p.61, quoted in Casparus Vos, “Liturgical Language as Metaphorical Language” in Elaine Graham, Anna Rowlands (eds.), *Pathways to the Public Square; International Practical Theology* (vol.1) - Practical Theology in an Age of Pluralism, International Academy of Practical Theology, Manchester, 2003, Münster: LIT VERLAG, 2005, p. 310.

³⁰ Casparus Vos, “Liturgical Language as Metaphorical Language” in Elaine Graham, Anna Rowlands (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 310-311.

³¹ Andrei Pleșu introduces here the theme of the angel as channel of communication between man and God, as catalyst of man’s divination and of God’s humanizing in the sense that, in its light both man and God can see themselves better as they ‘inter-see’ one another.

the function of the angel is the very one of constantly covering, through a double movement, the interval between the earth and the sky. It is the Old Testament's vision of Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28₁₂): 'And he dreamt that it appeared to be a ladder, propped by the earth and with its top it touched the sky; and God's angels were climbing and descending on it.' [...] The solution of the Embodiment of the God that became man is nothing but the heroic, exceptional version of the same 'procedure'. By taking – through Jess Christ - a human face, God annuls the distance between himself and his creature through a massive, unrepeatable decision, according to the measure of the gravity of the human sin. But, '*the daily life*' of angels, their ascend and descent on Jacob's ladder, is a way of anticipating the *event* of the Embodiment, a way of preparing and maintaining it, constantly '**in the act**' [*in vivo* and *not in vivo*]. [...] The role of this intermediate register is to 'elucidate and bear people's things to the gods and gods' things to the people; prayers and offerings from beneath, demands and rewards from above.'³²

Together with the angels understood as *Hidden Third* we enter the territory of the transcultural.

The trans-culture (which we will place at the level of the angels' action) proposes to grasp the convergent unity of all cultural elements (past, present and possible) and the level of a third element of transposing; to bring unity and diversity in a dynamic relation within which the main word is 'and' (*and* unity, *and* diversity) however without trying for even one moment to claim the status of "the only culture out there" or of a super-culture. The trans-culture is not properly a culture in the standard meaning of the term but it does guide the possibility of culture. The trans-culture is, in our opinion, the main accomplishment and direction of the development within transdisciplinarity.

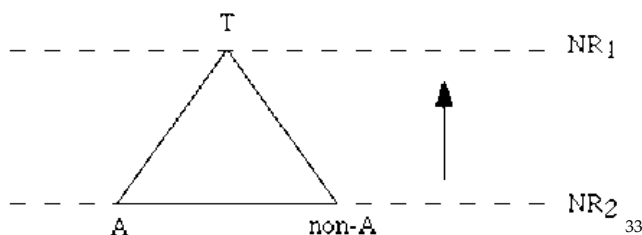
Transdisciplinarity remains a methodology, a pure functionality – without falling into the inevitable schematism of a certain philosophy or another.

Angels actively constitute this inter-face (this protective-screen) between the face of God (otherwise impossible to look at) and man's visage.

³² Andrei Pleșu, *op.cit.*, p. 252.

Like the angel, the Hidden Third, as it was represented by Basarab Nicolescu, appears in this equation as an interface between the subject and the object, not having to do properly neither with the subject nor with the object, and not even with an eventual divine origin or climax of the syntheses or synesthesia of the two. The Hidden Third is a particular element in the sense that it solely offers the possibility for a dialogue between antagonisms, and *does not replace* them, nor does it synthesize them. The Hidden Third is an accelerator which we will use to create perspectival spaces.

In the same time it behaves as a catalyst, therefore a substance that accelerates or decelerates a chemical reaction, without it itself to be modified. The Hidden Third assures the connection (through mobile bridges) between different levels of reality: *a* and *non-a* project themselves on another level of reality, through a phenomena of *paradox*, of *coincidentia oppositorum*, of oxymoron (which is not itself a Hidden Third by solely a necessary gate towards this Hidden Third, or better said the key that opens the gate of this Hidden Third). T= Hidden Third, which thanks to an oxymoronic phenomenon is simultaneously an '*a*' and a '*non-a*'.



Surpassing an opposition that belongs to the binary logic of the type *a* is not *non-a* – opposition from our daily reality level (RL2) – is realized on another reality level (RL1) through a phenomenon of projection:

³³ *NR1 = RL 1; *NR2= RL2 ; *RL= Reality Level

In order to obtain a clear image of the sense of the included third³⁴ let us represent the three elements of the new logic, A, non/A and T, and their associated dynamisms by using a triangle of which one of the corners is situated on one level of Reality, and the other two corners are situated on another level of Reality. Should we remain on a single reality level, any manifestation would appear as a struggle between two contradictory elements (...). The third dynamism, the one of the T state, is exercised on a different level of Reality, where that which appeared as separated (...) is actually a united fact (...), and that which appears contradictory is perceived as noncontradictory.

The appearance³⁵ of antagonistic couples, mutually exclusive (A and non-A), is produced precisely by the projection of T on the one and the same level of Reality. The one and the same level of reality cannot generate but antagonistic oppositions. It is, through its nature, *self-destructive*, if it is completely separated by the other levels of Reality.³⁶

At the very level of these separations religion intervenes as a connector of consciences into a higher level of apperception and trust (a generalized sense and feeling of security, solidarity and belonging into this world):

The sacred is *that which unites*. It regains, thorough it very sense, the etymological origin of the word 'religion' (*religare* – to bind), however it is not, through itself, the attribute of a religion or another³⁷: '*The sacred does not presupposes the faith in God, in gods or in spirits. It is ... the experience of a reality and the spring of the consciousness of being in this world* – writes Mircea Eliade. The sacred, being before anything an experience, translates itself through a feeling – the 'religious feeling' – of that which binds beings and things and which, consequently, causes in the depths of the human being the *absolute respect* of the alterities united by the common life on the one and the same Earth.³⁸

³⁴ Or „included middle” as we called it in previous quotes.

³⁵ In the sense of “semblance”.

³⁶ Basarab Nicolescu, *Noi, particula și lumea*, p.189, our translation.

³⁷ Therefore neither of an illusory angelology.

³⁸ Basarab Nicolescu, *Transdisciplinaritatea - Manifest (Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity)*, Iași: Editura Junimea, Iași, 2007, p. 147, our translation.

Once having appeared this Hidden Third transmits new synthesized energy back into *A* and *non-A*, "re-semantizing"³⁹ them. What we are dealing in here is a sort of a network-like determinism: *A* and *non-A* project themselves on another level of reality - in *T*; this *T*, once it has appeared, it makes the synthesis of the energies of *A* and of *non-A* and then projects backward emanations of synthesized energy which will make possible the cohabitation of *A* with *non-A*, as it puts them in a dialogical situation. Proceeding in this manner, we provide mobile bridges and fluctuant borderlines (not inexistent, but merely fluctuant, permissive and flexible) between levels of reality and also between entities from the same level.

This Hidden Third is nothing but the mysterious element which infuses and which assures the internal dynamic of the entire Heideggerian philosophy: "quelque chose qui, d'abord et le plus souvent, ne se montre pas, est en retrait, mais qui est, en même temps, quelque chose qui fait essentiellement corps avec ce qui se montre d'abord et le plus souvent de telle sorte qu'il en constitue le sens et le fond."⁴⁰

God is objectivised within the word, the word and God become as one, such as the will and the body are one in Schopenhauer's philosophy. But this objectivation does not equate with a direct transposing but with a 'filtered one' through an interface because, as it is written in the Apocalypse, a direct contact with divinity would be deadly⁴¹:

³⁹ Term coined by the authors and refers to the process of investing objects and/or entities with new meanings.

⁴⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Etre et temps*, Paris: Gallimard, 1986, p. 62. For reasons related to a better visibility, expressiveness and rhythm of the general idea we chose the French translation of this famous German text. English translation made by the authors: „Something that, first of all and most often, does not reveal itself, that is in retreat, but which is, in the same time, something which enters in a unity, in an essential way, with that which reveals itself first of all and most often in such a way that it constitutes its meaning and fund.”

⁴¹ In the Apocalypse of Saint John there is recounted the Saint's own experience when placed in the face of God. The imagistic of the description is astounding, revealing once more the fact that the man cannot withstand the full image of God without being overwhelmed.

12: Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands,
 13: and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast;
 14: his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire,
 15: his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters;
 16: in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.
 17: When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last,
 18: and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."⁴²

John is privileged and protected by God's own divine grace, as he says that "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead" but still he feels that His very presence brings with it his own ultimate demise. John's words can be interpreted literally, in the sense that he actually died before God's hand, and then he was revived through God's all powerful grace, or they can be grasped from a metaphorical angle suggesting that the man is not meant to attain the sublime as such (the infernal purity of an essence or another). The human being always needs an intermediary element to separate him from all forms and ontological levels and expressions of totalities (purities). Man needs the protective veil of the angels in order to enter in a relation with what was culturally acknowledged as "God" (maybe the most powerful and intense expression of the sublime).

In this sense Andrei Pleșu shows us the crucial role played by angels in the facilitation of the contact between God and the man – in the hermeneutic sense that they interpret for man the words of God and for God the words of the man (they decode and translate one reality level into the signals and intensity fluctuations of another). Therefore, this protective shield is a medium of interpretation and description by excellence, a medium of hermeneutics and of phenomenology. Thus, the angel that

⁴² <http://madeinatlantis.com/bible/apocalypse.htm>, Saint John's apocalypse, Chapter 1, verses, 12-18.

stands in the face of God (Isaia 63⁹) and interprets for us this face is called 'angelus interpres':

But, beyond the name, there always appears in the speculation of angelology the theme of an *immediately neighboring* supreme Presence. This '*immediately neighboring*' is the destiny of every angelic presence. The angel floats in God's 'atmosphere' (or, as Jacques Lacan said somewhere, 'il nage dans le significant suprême').⁴³

But the angel is also in the 'immediate neighboring' of man (...). Before becoming an *imitatio Christi*, the life of the accomplished man begins by being a '*vita angelica*', o *imitatio angeli*. Compared to the remote heaven of God, the angel's heaven appears to us as a heaven close at hand, as an *encouragingly accessible height*. The angelic world is humanity's 'ceiling', its proximate kind. The man has the angel's intuition every time - in his undertakings - he feels himself assisted, supported, 'inspired'.⁴⁴

In this new light, Andrei Pleșu makes a first daring interpretation of the biblical text, arguing that the closest entity to humans is neither God, nor other humans but the angel - the dynamic intermediary zone (*the "living" presence of the medium*) which assures the *safety and the feasibility* (both in the sense of a necessary equilibrium of "impacts") for all types of contacts. In this new light, we will understand "the other" (or "your fellow") from a religious imagery as something else than what the topoi of otherness instantly urge us to interpret (God, another human being, the neighbor and so on and so forth): a third element which acts as a *protective and selective membrane* assuring all our contacts with the entities of our reality levels and their afferent dynamics (it acts like the skin - the biggest organ of the human body which interprets the medium for us and as it translates its fluctuations into signals recognized by our body and mind). This is in true fact the element that is always the closest to us and in religion it bears the name of "angel" and in contemporary philosophy that of Hidden Third

⁴³ Andrei Pleșu, *op.cit.*, pp. 251-252, our translation.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 252, our translation.

The angels relativize man's solitude in the same way as they relativize God's solitude. They are by definition, *the ones that accompany*, the one's who are close to us. This being the state of affairs the spirit of the Biblical text –if not its letter – allows us to believe that the famous 'Love thy neighbor' can signify more than 'love the man who is at your side'. The angel is itself our 'neighbor': not the neighbor who is at our side, but the neighbor from the above. 'Love thy neighbor' is (...) an advice to love one's angel, to deepen the mystery of its proximity until it merges with God's proximity".⁴⁵

5. Conclusions regarding the power of transgression, translation and transition

The aim of this paper was to re-assert the generative power of interpretation (hermeneutics) and the constitutive dynamics of intermediary zones (which function as a catalyst-membrane, as a secretly Hidden Third which enables processes to enter complex webs of harmonization and synchronization). Up to now, angels were perceived as a cliché, that is as knowledge *in hand* – and we tried to extract them out of this captivity and to transform them into knowledge *at hand* (that is, not being captive of a hand [i.e. by hand we will understand a metaphor for a strict formula/super-imposed pattern]). We tried to re-invest angels with topical relevance – namely the relevance of the power of transgression, translation and transition as utmost potential of human existence. Advocating the need to mobilize concepts and to turn them fluid and flexible in an operational sense, in his *Etre(s) de passage*, Virgil Cîmoș states that man himself is a being which expresses its potential and its power of expression first and foremost through its capacity to pass from one level to another; to transform something into something else; to transcend all static, homogenizing and ultimately deadly-paralyzing pressures:

Etre de passage relève de quelque chose d'encore plus étrange que le passage lui-même et ses *résultats*. Il ne s'agit pas du simple fait que *tout* doit changer. Il faudra maintenant *changer* le concept même de l'être, comme celui du changement. Ainsi, l'être ne sera plus l'effet d'un passage,

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

fut-il celui de la naissance ou celui de la mort: il se donnera dans le changement meme ou, plus encore, en tant que changement.⁴⁶

Today, the role of intermediary spaces with their interpretational valences has to be exploited more than ever because “the world today is a world which has not yet found its optimum placement in the interval between extremes”,⁴⁷ and also because “it's not just about changing our image of the world, but rather about the recognition of a potential of life and of transformation regarding our world, our universe and, ultimately, our own place in the universe.”⁴⁸

The study of the intermediary zones wants to put in light the mobile architecture of the bridges between disciplines and between the levels of reality. Starting from the ideas that the knowledge is multiplied in every second, that the bridges moves and shift their shapes constantly, that new connections appear and disappear with the speed of light, the transdisciplinarity assumes the task of interrogating these bridges through the point of view of the subject but with the proper respect conferred on to the object. Thus it aims at the colonization of these spaces of potentiality and perspective with circulable *attitudinal routes*.

The philosophy has delayed or avoided the take over of these experiences of the intermediary zones, finding it more comfortable and surer to persevere in the legacy of its epoch, and this happens, as Basarab Nicolescu observed, not at all coincidentally:

There manifests an instinctive fear, arriving from the depths of our being, in the face of the acceptance of the *principle of the included third* – there is a

⁴⁶ Virgil Ciomoș, *Etre(s) de passage*, in Avant Propos, Zeta Books Publishing House, București, 2008. English translation made by the authors: “*Being of passage* depends of something even more strange than the passage itself and that which results from it. This it is not about the simple fact that *everything* has to change. One should now change the very concept of being, as it should be the case with that of change. In this way, the being would no longer be the effect of a passage, be it that of birth or of death: it would reveal itself in the change itself, or even more, as a change.”

⁴⁷ Andrei Pleșu, *op.cit.*, p. 268, our translation.

⁴⁸ Basarab Nicolescu, *Noi, particula și lumea (We, the particle and the world)*, Iași: Editura Junimea, 2007, p. 182, our translation.

*third element T which in the same time both A and non-A, as its acceptance would appear to question our own identity, our own existence.*⁴⁹

Thus, we can say that transdisciplinarity managed to give a viable response to the rather isolated and intolerant cultures of specialists (with their afferent claims of absolute expertise) by opening up a new special space of movement and of dialogue which traverses all levels of reality and, by traversing them, it gives them new meaning through the fact that it places them in a situation restructuration at the level of properties (Maturana).

For sheer reasons of transparency of the general idea of this study, we shall associate this special zone with what has been culturally acknowledged as “niche” – namely, an active, independent and relevant through this very independence space, a zone of expressiveness, signification and creation, as opposed to the sterile *locus*⁵⁰ of the cultures of specialists which devolved into ignorance, lack of motivation or enthusiasm, alienation, lack of inspiration and so on and so forth. In the zone represented by the Hidden Third (a zone which escapes all levels of Reality and unites them by this very impossibility to be assimilated) *we have assimilated the angel because it is a zone whose potential cannot be exhausted in a system- structure, nor can it be closed between fixed rules, lines of evolution or dogmas, on the contrary, it in-forms everything by means of and at the level of intersections - which intersections are in fact ‘intersections’*. In the case of geniuses, the moment of apparition of this Hidden Third corresponds in our view to the ‘A-HA’ moment (the divine moment of the inspiration – the moment of the apparition of the angel which translates the divine grace). The intermediate zone which the Hidden Third constantly models is a zone of *con-substantiality* – thanks to ‘its mobile architecture’ (the term belongs to Anaxagoras). The intermediate zone (the zone of the angel) is a zone that opens new horizons for those who have none, it is a zone meant to open the perspective while providing a correct and efficient articulation of the entities that it mediates. In our opinion the

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 187, our translation.

⁵⁰ Here we use the word „locus” with the connotation that it has in mathematics: the set or configuration of all points whose coordinates satisfy a single equation.

angel reveals itself firstly and foremost as a *living space of articulation*, as a *“living” quality of the medium: we are not talking about an organic being but about a certain quality of the medium which becomes alive when reaching an acute and sensitive-enough-to-nuances individual or collective consciousness.*

Thus, with the help of imagination, the absolute ceases to remain a static, canonical absolute – and it vascularises and diversifies itself in a creative and constitutive manner. Imagination and angels provide differential access to forms of self-actualization and empowerment. Thus the angel is the transcendental analogue of our transcendent soul. As a symbol of the *as the faculty which mediates our access towards the heavenly hierarchies and all imaginary (and imaginable) potentialities -the imagination - the angel becomes a „magical” intermediate between thought and being.* Through understanding and creativity the risk is transformed in opportunity.

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BOOK REVIEW

Valentina Gîdea, *Le premier <<non>> du général de Gaulle pour la Grande-Bretagne, Cluj-Napoca, EFES, 2010, 241 pp., paperback*

Lucian Bogdan *

Especially nowadays, when we bear witness to a new straining of relations between France and the United Kingdom, grounded upon the future of European integration, gaining an appropriate understanding of the ups and downs of bilateral relations between two of the E.U.'s most prominent members bears even greater importance.

Now as nearly five decades ago, the political dispute stems from what are essentially economic grounds: the future of the Euro and the creation of the European Financial Stability Fund in 2011/12¹ and the belonging to a continental, or Atlanticist free trade area in the early 1960's.

Therefore, Mrs. Gîdea's demarche, providing us with a pertinent insight upon the events having led to Gaullist France opposing to the U.K.'s accession to the European Communities, prove even more valuable, as looking at historic precedents may be the best way of understanding

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¹ For details regarding the current crisis, which had emerged from purely economic grounds, but spilled over onto the political realm, vid. "Euro in danger, Europe races for debt solution", *The Associated Press*, November 28th, 2011 and "Royaume-Uni - Européens, admettez que nous avons raison !", in *PressEurop - Le meilleur de la presse européenne*, December 12th, 2011, [<http://www.presseurop.eu/fr/content/article/1278271-europeens-admettez-que-nous-avons-raison>].

events happening before our eyes. Thus, let us proceed at exploring Mrs. Gîdea's volume.

The author starts by highlighting that, initially, at the onset of World War II, the leader of the Free French had favored close relations with the British, to the extent of achieving a Franco-British Union – “every French citizen shall automatically enjoy the quality of citizen of Great Britain and every British citizen shall become a citizen of France” (p. 5).

While we may appreciate that the aforementioned wording constitutes a precursor of the rights and liberties of European citizens as stipulated in the Maastricht Treaty, the author promptly underlines the fact that Charles de Gaulle was less interested in the grand European design, than in coaxing the British to the war effort against the common enemy, Nazi Germany. Therefore, while “the organizing of Europe [was] proclaimed in force, its rigor contrasted with the vagueness of the proposed formula”.

Besides, as remarks Mrs. Gîdea, Charles de Gaulle was vague in the usage of terms, often speaking of a “European <<federation>>”, but bearing in mind the less lofty construct of a confederation, as his purpose was the attaining of a “Community of sovereign nations” (p. 6).

A key point highlighted by the author since the early stages of her work is that de Gaulle would imprint a highly subjective character to France's foreign policy: while he openly “disliked Britain, he admired it” (pp. 9 sq.). Consequently, we may notice that while he would declaratively support cooperation between the two countries on pragmatic grounds, any more or less significant event would prompt de Gaulle's immediate backlash, who thus had the perfect opportunity of opposing France's natural antagonist².

Chapter 2 (pp. 12-42) is dedicated to Charles de Gaulle's European project, from the incipient stages of proposing a refined, more solid version of wartime alliance directed against German domination, to the famous butade “Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals”³.

² For, let us not forget, as the author remarks on p. 11, the French would constantly claim it was the British who were responsible for the “crises and problems arising amongst the European partners”.

³ This latter expression would be thoroughly scrutinized in Sub-Chapter 2.2.3, from its origins – actually, the initial wording being “From Gibraltar to the Urals” – and to the “end

An aspect which would prove crucial for the future of the European construct and can be traced (among other sources) back to de Gaulle's designs is the rejection of "an Empire formed by masters and slaves" (p. 13), all nations being placed on an equal footing. However – and hence a problem which would haunt Europe ever since – de Gaulle would not take integration on too deep a level, but rather insist on "bilateral relations between nations" (pp. 13-14).

Besides, as the author would later on reveal, while prominent French statesmen would favor a federalist European construct, de Gaulle would constantly act in favor of a more limited structure, in which France would not need to concede anything of its sovereignty or limit its "grandeur".

What is interesting to remark is that de Gaulle was not always consistent in his approaches, but tended to sacrifice principles for the sake of his country's immediate interests: thus, on one hand he would request a position of European primacy for France on the grounds of being a "numerous people", with "an Empire behind her" (p. 16), but would reject the same considerations from behalf of the British, who desired not to sacrifice relations with the Commonwealth when adhering to the Communities.

Moreover, as Mrs. Gîdea reveals, in pursuing the goal of a "total Europe", by 1947-1949 de Gaulle would show no problems in accommodating the former enemy, Germany, arguing that Franco-German co-operation was essential for the success of a United Europe (we may infer this was what the author meant, as it would be anachronistic to speak of "the European Union" back in 1949, as on p. 17).

Yet, to de Gaulle's praise, as underlined by the author, he was one of the first to oppose the partitioning of Europe and to provide a (fledgling) alternative to the great East-West divide of the postwar world. Thus, he would propose German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer a unified Europe, constituting itself into "a political, economical, cultural and humane grouping", capable of fending for itself in the superpower-dominated world (p. 18).

objective of [creating] an ensemble within whose boundaries both Occidental and Oriental nations of the Old Continent could cooperate" (p. 40).

Nevertheless, as one may see from Sub-Chapter 2.2.1, "The Pseudo-Federal Phase", it was precisely in order to establish France as Europe's hegemon, "replacing Germany", that he had wholeheartedly welcomed American aid in the form of the Marshall Plan. Mrs. Gîdea also reveals us the fact that it would be another French interest, that of accessing coal – a strategic resource - from the Ruhr basin, that would stir de Gaulle's interest (p. 19).

It would have been interesting to see how de Gaulle's agenda was coaxed with that of Europe's "founding fathers", to prompting further integration, aspect which is implied, but not detailed – probably as it would have meant a digression from the main object of the book which, nonetheless, dedicates a significant part to the history of de Gaulle's European project, constituting itself into an explanatory resource, not simply into an analysis of the diplomatic conflict of 1963.

Along with Mrs. Gîdea, we may also remark that, though militating for France's primacy, it was Charles de Gaulle who promoted the creation and actual empowerment of the Assembly of the Communities – precursor of nowadays' European Parliament – arguing that were states to cling onto their sovereignty and endow the Assembly with no relevant attributes, "it would be unable to solve any problem" (pp. 25-26).

We have already seen that de Gaulle's approach was ridden with contradictions; while the book herein duly evokes them all, perhaps more emphasis on their unfolding would have been welcome; yet, let us proceed, along with the author, to the next one, which, besides, constitutes the mainspring for most of the others: while pleading for European unity – perhaps the best means to avert war – as evoked in Sub-Chapter 2.2.2, de Gaulle favored a "Europe of States", in which "France played the leading role, that is, the guiding role" (p. 27).

Thus, insightfully argues Mrs. Gîdea, de Gaulle's designs were in fact motivated by "French nationalism, by the willingness to turn France into a grand power" (p. 27). Consequently, "the values of France [were] essential for the European construction" – a view which, we may appreciate, was rather meant at giving legitimacy to the Gaullist interests, than actually express goodwill.

Besides, the author had briefly mentioned de Gaulle's strategic view over Europe – the new political construction of the Communities being

meant to cover the whole stretch of land between the Rhine basin, the North and Mediterranean seas and up to the Russian steppes. Here one may see the military background in de Gaulle's political thinking – thus, the unification Europe was not only grounded on political and economic considerations, but upon strategic, geopolitical ones, as well – aspect which, we may appreciate, would prove instrumental in the further development of the dispute with the U.K. – for, basically, as in the Napoleonic days, a continental hegemon would oppose a naval power.

It would also be the military component that would scuttle two major projects of internationalization: first, in 1954, France would reject the European Defense Community Treaty, as de Gaulle argued states were “the only entities having the right to command and the power to be obeyed” (p. 30) and, later, in 1959, would withdraw from the military command of N.A.T.O., requesting the removal of American nuclear warheads from French soil.

Mrs. Gîdea makes an interesting case in comparing the views and positions held by de Gaulle with those of Jean Monnet, the first President of the E.C.S.C., or of leftist intellectual Denis de Rougemont who, though a devout Frenchman, would be two of the staunchest promoters of internationalism and of ideals behind the European construct (pp. 33-37). To put it briefly, while de Gaulle was bent on using the discourse of European integration to the avail of expanding French grandeur and achieve continental hegemony, Europe's “founding fathers” were nurturing the somehow opposite aim, of putting France to the service of the European edifice – and only afterwards reap the benefits of its success.

Part II of the book (pp. 43-70) analyzes the reasons having determined the deadlock between France and the U.K., emphasizing the key points on this undesirable, yet so real course. Chapter 3 is relevant in this respect, capturing from its very onset the gist of Britain's opposition to joining the Communities: “Great Britain could not accept the customs union, as a customs union could have isolated Great Britain from the Commonwealth and would have implied the application of common policies, such as the common agricultural policy, contrary at the moment of speaking to its interests”, potentially leading to “enormous losses” (p. 44).

This idea would be repeatedly conveyed by the author, who successfully identifies more iterations in which the U.K. maintained its

isolationist position, arguing it would be contrary to its national interests and to those of its partners from the Commonwealth to do otherwise. An interesting aspect is, nonetheless, that in 1960 Britain would be the initiator of the European Free Trade Association, promoting the phasing out of customs duties on industrial products between the member nations, in a move practically meant at replicating the economic advantages of the European Communities without the political implications of the latter (p. 47).

Mrs. Gîdea eloquently points out that by the 1960's Britain would increasingly feel the disadvantages of isolation⁴ and, subsequently, would try altering the state of affairs by filing for membership of the European Economic Community, in 1961. However, as the author promptly remarks (p. 59), the simple fact Britain would have gained from accession to the Communities was not in itself a reason for France to accept a country which had previously expressed, through the voice of Premier Churchill, its option for the "freedom of the seas", in detriment of the European alternative.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by the author, de Gaulle would not reject Britain's accession on purely whimsical grounds, but would bring forth a series of economical, political and military arguments⁵ justifying the use of veto from behalf of France. The identitary aspect would also be invoked, de Gaulle arguing that "we cannot have unity in Europe unless Europe constitutes itself into a political entity distinct from other entities" (p. 67) – which implicitly excluded Britain, too close an ally of the U.S. from the "family".

⁴ From the economical perspective, the U.K., which actually exported more to the European Communities than to the E.F.T.A., was disadvantaged by the customs duties its companies had to pay because of its non-membership and, from the political one, the Foreign Office appreciated that it would be detrimental for Britain to allow the evolution of so important event on the European continent as was the consolidation of the Communities to take place without her (Cf. Chapter 4, pp. 50-55).

⁵ These are evoked in Sections A through C of Chapter 5 of Mrs. Gîdea's work, and cover issues from the "very marking, very original traditions" of Britain and its low emphasis on agriculture, its maintaining of too close ties with the U.S., "Britain's impossibility to accept the *acquis communautaire*", or – aspect only indirectly related to Britain – American President Kennedy's desire to create a multinational force within NATO, which France could not accept.

Given this trend, one should not be surprised that, on January 23rd, 1963, France would conclude a treaty of friendship and mutual consultations with Germany – thus the country led by de Gaulle unequivocally expressing its continental orientation. Therefore, one should not be surprised by the wielding of veto power against Britain's accession to the E.E.C. (actually uttered by de Gaulle in a speech delivered earlier, on January 14th, 1963).

While until now, throughout the first two parts of the book, the tone had been dominantly analytical and explanatory, the author scrutinizing the events and commenting upon them from a rather detached position, of the omniscient narrator (if we may borrow the term from literary analysis), benefiting from the wide angle provided by the distance of about half a century, in Part III the perspective would change, the author taking a close look at de Gaulle's rejection of the British filing for membership in the press of those days (Sub-Chapter 6.1, pp. 72-87) and in the correspondence of French diplomats, as recorded from their posts in various European countries (Sub-Chapter 6.2, pp. 88-166).

We shall not explore every cited resource, as the author did it with the best available eloquence; let us just say that her work, consisting of reviewing two major French newspapers (*Le Soir*, *Le monde*), as well as the French-language *La Libre Belgique* and *Le Drapeau Rouge*, all consulted during Mrs. Gîdea's stage at the Marne-la-Valée University.

Let us just sum up the statistics and say that she used no less than 35 press articles only for the period of January 13th to 24th, 1963, which is more than revealing for the thoroughness and dedication for the work well done of the author of the volume herein.

And, even more importantly, she continues the thoroughness of her research, proving real abilities as historian, in Sub-Chapter 6.2, dedicated to the reflection of de Gaulle's decision in the diplomatic correspondence of those days. While at a first glance it may appear redundant to cite French sources for an event essentially caused by the same nation, it definitely is not, as French diplomats sent to the Quai d'Orsay priceless feedback from their station posts throughout Europe, commenting upon the way de Gaulle's decision was viewed by the key powerbrokers of Europe, as well as by their respective staffs responsible with foreign policy.

Moreover, let us note that this latter sub-chapter constitutes the main source of novelty brought forth by the book herein: while the previous chapters had indeed been valuable analyses of past literature, written by the most prominent scholars in the field – which Mrs. Gîdea meticulously inventoried and explored – most events were hardly new to historians.

Here comes in force Sub-Chapter 6.2, where diplomatic materiel, dug out from the archives – most documents constituting a premiere at least for the Romanian academia, and not few even for the French one – is given the floor. According to our count, no less than 66 diplomatic dispatches are cited in the aforementioned sub-chapter, their text being minutely scanned and corroborated with the previous narrative – in what constitutes a praiseworthy intellectual effort and, let us not forget, in a valuable resource for future scholars interested by the same topic – who now have the benefit of a valuable inventory they may consult, as it has been thoroughly compiled by Mrs. Valentina Gîdea.

Yet her inquiry does not stop here; on the contrary, its concluding part brings one more premiere: a S.W.O.T. analysis of the two main actors involved, France and Great Britain, thus highlighting the impact of de Gaulle's decision from this strategic planning perspective as well. Let us therefore, in the following, briefly explore Chapter 7 (pp. 167-178).

First and foremost, de Gaulle gained in popularity before the French people, the General turned statesman successfully appealing to his fellow citizens' patriotic feelings and fueling them up. We must underline this was not something new – but actually had started during de Gaulle's days as head of the Free French, and would help him in his postwar political career – but nonetheless being capable of rallying the crowds behind one's position does constitute a key to political success – and President de Gaulle was a master at using the image of General de Gaulle to coaxing public support to the point he is not viewed as merely another politician but, to evoke one of the quotations inspiringly chosen by the author, "one of the images of the fatherland" (p. 167).

Moreover, as Mrs. Gîdea points out, de Gaulle was aware of the nefarious effect of the defeat in the early stages of the war upon the morale of the French and, therefore, was willing to compensate this by bolstering his nation's prestige as a key country of the Unified Europe (p. 169). This

implicitly meant that France had to assert its leading position within the new institutional framework – and the wielding of veto power appears thus as a logical consequence.

On its part, Great Britain's position was bolstered by its prominent position within E.F.T.A. and its special relation with the U.S., which meant it could, to a certain degree, limit the losses from not being welcomed into the Communities (p. 175) – though we may appreciate this constituted a public relations fabrication of British politicians, rather than an accurate account of reality.

An interesting aspect remarked by the author (p. 176) is that, once it wielded its veto – in a display of strength – France could no longer back off, as it would have constituted a sign of weakness from its behalf and risked being thrown in isolation in the very European construct it tried to spur.

While, momentarily, France had taken the round – the wielding of the veto being thus an opportunity for de Gaulle – in the long run, underlines the author, its precedent actually slackened the foundations of the European edifice – which got to resemble with French domestic politics, frequently shaken by “unprecedented crises which are difficult to overcome” (p. 178).

Let us conclude our overview of *Le premier <<non>> du général de Gaulle pour la Grande-Bretagne* by reiterating our praise for the hard work done by the author in compiling a broad variety of sources, of browsing through a lengthy bibliography (67 books, articles from 9 periodicals, 9 dictionaries and encyclopedias, several online resources, as well as a consistent repository of archival materiel – of which a part is reproduced as annex to the book). Therefore, we appreciate that *Le premier <<non>> du général de Gaulle pour la Grande-Bretagne*, by Mrs. Valentina Gîdea is a praiseworthy work, worth reading by scholars, students and the general public interested in its topic of inquiry alike.

BOOK REVIEW

Lucian Butaru, *Rasism românesc. Componenta rasială a discursului antisemit din România până la al Doilea Război Mondial*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2010.

Artur Lakatos*

El presente libro representa una intervención interesante; analiza el antisemitismo interbélico en el entorno de Rumania con el objetivo de obtener unos textos y discursos provenientes del mundo cultural y académico. Es un trabajo interdisciplinario que presta atención, sobre todo, al análisis del discurso y conlleva muchas incursiones en filosofía e interpretación literaria. El punto fuerte del trabajo está representado por el hecho de que el término rasista, en su exacta aceptación en este caso especial, está definido justo al principio del libro.

El autor empieza el análisis desde los eventos del Congreso de Berlín en 1878, y comenta con detalle el problema del antisemitismo presente en el trabajo de Mihai Eminescu, ilustrando, a través de la actitud de este gran autor, la ideología específica del élite rumano en aquel período de tiempo sobre los derechos de los judíos en Rumania. Nosotros consideramos que este análisis es uno de los mejores, dado que está basada en un enfoque original y, en el mismo tiempo, en una gran bibliografía de éxito, a través del cual el escritor argumenta su tesis. Sugerimos, por si acaso, que se habría podido presentar, incluso brevemente, los aspectos

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antisemitistas del gran levantamiento campesino de 1907 que, a su vez, muestran una imagen bien definida del espíritu de aquella época.

El trabajo está estructurado en tres partes distintas, y cada una se enfoca en un gran centro administrativo y universitario: Iasi, Cluj y Bucarest. El segundo capítulo, *Antisemitismul la Iași. O analiză a discursului politic*, trata sobre la cuestión del discurso antisemítico de los intelectuales moldavios y presta atención sobre tres personalidades: A. C. Cuza, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu y Nicolae C. Pavelescu. La presentación se centra, sobre todo, en el análisis del discurso político, pero tampoco hace caso omiso a los aspectos históricos. Por ejemplo, el escritor subraya claramente que el "gracioso" A. C. Cuza pudo entrar a la vida pública solamente a través del apoyo inicial de Nicolae Iorga. Observamos con mucho agrado el enfoque, muchas veces irónico, del escritor acerca de estos personajes — tanto siniestros y oscuros, como graciosos—, desde el punto de vista intelectual y psicológico, enfoque basado en citas de sus propios trabajos. La defensa de Codreanu delante del juez está analizada irónicamente, en el caso del disparo del prefecto policial de Iasi, Manciu o teoría oscura de Paulescu, en cuanto a *Jidanii și alcoolismul* se refiere, en el cual afirma que los judíos no toman alcohol, sin embargo, envenenan deliberadamente a los rumanos con su vino falsificado. Las tesis de Cuza y Codreanu no están analizadas solamente desde el punto de vista comunicacional, sino también social-, psicológica- y económicamente, que se basan en las ideologías europeas de aquella época.

Aunque trata sobre las personalidades Codreanu y Pavelescu como algo anexo a la actividad más prolífica desde el punto de vista de la militancia antisemítica de A. C. Cuza, en las páginas 165-166 el autor hace una presentación sintética extraordinaria de la estructura del movimiento legionario, presentación que podría estar disponible en cualquier manual universitario o en cualquier revista de especialidad que trata sobre este tema.

La tercera parte, *Rasism la Cluj. O analiză a discursului științific*, representa una contribución aun más valiosa que el capítulo dedicado al antisemitismo en Iasi, ya que el discurso de A. C. Cuza y Codreanu había sido analizado, generalmente, en varias obras dedicadas a la vida política interbélica en Rumania y, particularmente, en obras dedicadas al movimiento legionario. En el caso de Cluj, el autor nos presenta los

estudios que hacen referencia a algunos intelectuales rumanos (Iuliu Moldovan, Iordache Făcăoaru, y los *epigonii* de Iuliu Moldovan), asuntos que hasta ahora han sido evitados en el *mainstream* de la historiografía rumana. Al mismo tiempo, al autor no se le olvida ni el antisemitismo de Transilvania —distinto en comparación con la región moldava y la parte sur del país—, y enfatiza más el carácter eugenésico del mismo. El autor coloca la naturaleza del discurso antisemítico en escrituras científicas o, mejor dicho, seudocientíficas, que extraen sus razones, ejemplos y datos de las ciencias médicas (sus autores siendo, en primer lugar, profesores e investigadores). Así, Iuliu Moldovan, figura prominente de la Sociedad Astra y del Partido Nacional Campesino, había sido médico licenciado en Viena y obtuvo el título de doctor en Praga, y el aún más radical, Iordache Făcăoaru, sacó el título de doctor en Sociología en Berlín. El análisis de los discursos antisemíticos y la síntesis hecho por el autor sobre ellos, está perfecta desde el punto de vista metodológico y del lenguaje utilizado. Sin embargo, consideramos que esta investigación pudiera tomar en el futuro dos direcciones: el primero sería el estudio de las influencias germánicas y austríacas, aunque mencionadas en la introducción en la problemática, el impacto de estas influencias en el pensamiento de los intelectuales rumanos de Transilvania no está aclarado suficientemente. Estaría interesante realizar en un futuro un análisis del impacto antisemítico húngaro y germánico sobre el pensamiento antisemítico rumano. Por otro lado, el autor no enfoca los movimientos de los estudiantes del principio de los años 20, que tuvieron como base un antisemitismo violento, en la cual se puso de manifiesto la figura siniestra de Ion Moța. Falta la descripción de estos movimientos, probablemente, por causa del nivel intelectual muy bajo del discurso antisemítico, ilustrado, entre otros, también por el periódico *Dacia Noua*, las formulaciones primitivas estando difíciles, de elevar al mismo nivel del discurso eugenésico desde el punto de vista estilístico.

El cuarto capítulo, *Administrație la București. O analiză a discursului juridic*, es distinta, en comparación con los capítulos anteriores, en la manera de enfoque: no aborda el problema en términos del discurso intelectual, sino de la de las medidas administrativas adoptadas por los sucesivos gobiernos de Rumania y otros organismos inferiores de decisión y ejecución, desde el problema de la ciudadanía rumana de

los judíos en Rumania Mare (Rumania durante el período de entreguerras), hasta el colapso de la dictadura real.

El período entre 1920-1936 recibe un planteamiento incomparablemente reducido en contra del período posterior al 1937. El autor no enfoca ni la presentación de los horrores del gobierno legionario de Antonescu.

En sus conclusiones, prácticamente, el autor revisa la bibliografía utilizada en los capítulos anteriores. Nosotros, en nuestra propia conclusión, podemos decir que este trabajo está bien documentado (hecho ilustrado también por los 197 títulos en la bibliografía) y valioso por los enfoques originales y las conclusiones pertinentes. Sin embargo, no ofrece, no puede dar respuesta a todos los problemas de la cuestión de alta complejidad del antisemitismo rumano de entreguerras, y de esta forma indica la necesidad de nuevas investigaciones en el campo.